

**Communication for Conflict Resolution: The Pashtun Tribal Rhetoric for
Peace Building in Afghanistan**

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Abstract

Focusing on communication as an important means besides other efforts for conflict resolution in an asymmetric armed conflict in Afghanistan, this study looked for a rhetorical communication approach appropriate to Pashtun tribal setting in South-eastern (*Loya Paktya* region) Afghanistan. The study explored and found some perceived essentials of such persuasive communication by conducting face-to-face semi-structured in depth interviews with 17 participants. Thematic analysis was used to code and categorize data. Aristotle's rhetorical theory provided a framework for this qualitative study by narrowing down the focus to exploring credibility of the communicator (ethos), the rationality of the message (logos), and the emotional appeals (pathos), particular for the south-eastern Pashtun tribal setting, during communication. In addition, considering the relation between rhetorical and soft power theories in influencing the choice of an audience, this project also asked participants *if and how* communication in their tribal setting could be framed as an influencing power by attraction rather than by coercion. Therefore, soft power of which persuasive communication is a crucial part was also used as a theoretical framework for this study. The findings show the significance of persuasive communication in future conflict resolution efforts in Afghanistan.

I dedicate this master's thesis to my beloved mother who never got the chance to study herself but raised eight educated children in a warzone. Mom, your love has always been endless. I also dedicate this work to my dear father who always advised me to be part of the solution, not the problem. I also thank my wife, Wajma Samim, for raising our three beautiful children -- Nargis, Sediq, and Raihan - without much help from me during the two years of my M.A. Program. Without her love and patience I would not be able to finish this work.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Winning in most modern armed conflicts requires winning the will—the hearts and minds of the people who live where the conflict is being fought (Smith, 2006, as cited in Foxley, 2007). The effective use of communication is key to winning the population's support in a conflict (Foxley, 2007). British current MP who has been following Afghan conflict since 1980s, Holloway (2009) presents his solution for the current conflict in Afghanistan as follows:

We [the NATO allies in Afghanistan] should not reinforce failure. Instead, we should have a long look at why we are failing. There are no easy answers: there is no package of perfect solutions. But the way forward lies more in working with the grain of Afghan society, than in sending more troops to work against it. The last thing we needed is more “Big Army” (p. 15).

Holloway's solution to current Afghan conflict conveys two important points. First, military force, or hard power, is ineffective on its own to fix the Afghan situation. Second, grass-root Afghans should be approached in efforts toward building peace.

Hoffman (2009) quotes Lt. Gen. Aushev of Soviet army during its occupation of Afghanistan:

When we entered Afghanistan in 1979, people gave us a very nice welcome. Exactly a year later, 40 percent of the population began to hate us. Five years later, 60 percent of the population hated us. And by the time we were to pull out, 90 percent hated us. So we understood, finally, that we are fighting the people (p. 82).

The above quotations underscore the complexity of the study of conflict resolution in the case of current Afghan conflict, which has many causes necessitating scholars from different disciplines to study different aspects of the conflict. Accordingly, this thesis is a conflict resolution study centered to bring out and explore the role of communication among other means for conflict resolution. It focuses on south-eastern

region of Afghanistan, also called *Loya Paktya* or greater *Paktya*, where the majority of its population is Pashtun, the biggest ethnic group in Afghanistan (Gregg, 2009). The current violence caused by fighting between the International Security Assistance forces (ISAF) and the Taliban has caused a growing negative popular perception about the presence of the ISAF, particularly the U.S. forces based in the area. Such negative perception has caused an unwillingness among the local tribes, which prevents them from supporting the current peace building efforts in the country. Therefore the study explores some essentials of persuasive communication from the perspectives of the members and the experts on Pashtun tribal structure of the *Loya Paktya* tribal community. The findings of this study is hoped to help ISAF, particularly the U.S. forces based in the *Loya Paktya* area to build a better communication approach in order to remove this negative perception against foreign forces in the given tribal community.

Building on Aristotelian rhetoric and Joseph Nye's soft power theories, the study explores the ingredients of Aristotelian persuasion, and communication as a soft power, which are appropriate for the particular cultural domain of south-eastern Pashtun tribal community in Afghanistan. The findings of this study hope to inform the choice of south-eastern Pashtun tribal community and win their cooperation with ISAF to help with building peace.

Background

Afghanistan has been dominated by violence and war for over three decades since the Soviet invasion in 1979. Before the long war started, Afghanistan was one of the most peaceful and to some extent prosperous among the countries in Asia for half a century (Loyn, 2009; Maley, 2009). After the Soviets ended their 10 years of occupation in 1989, the conflict entered a

second stage, the civil war, which last until 2001 (Loyn, 2009; Maley, 2009; Swanstrom & Cornell, 2005). The Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the United States led to a U.S. invasion also called “Operation Enduring Freedom” (Swanstrom & Cornell, 2005, p. 2), or “U.S. – led invasion” (Loyn, 2009, p. 177), that more than 40 countries, led by the U.S., sent forces to Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to fight the Taliban regime and Al-Qaeda, blamed for the Sept. 11 attack (Loyn, 2009; Maley, 2009). Despite the fact that the U.S. led invasion ended the major military confrontations of the Soviet invasion and the civil war eras, a low-intensity conflict still continued, and the conflict entered its third stage that is still ongoing (Swanstrom & Cornell, 2005).

The first two stages of the long conflict brought many consequences to the war ravaged country and its people, which is now contributing to the continuation of the current conflict, which will be detailed in the following chapter.

The current stage of the Afghan conflict has also had many consequences, which have been the focus of many recent studies. One of them is the loss of many lives among civilians, foreign and local military personnel, and insurgents groups. Numbers from iCasualties (2011), a heavily researched website that keeps track of all Western military deaths in the so-called “war on terror,” and CBC News (August 2011) show that 1,782 Americans, 382 Brits, 157 Canadians, and 414 military personnel from other countries having force in ISAF lost their lives since the beginning of the military campaign in Afghanistan. Figures from the United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) show that “8,830 Afghan civilians lost their lives, as a result of the armed conflict in the country, only from 2007 to 2010” (UNAMA, 2011, p. 57). Despite the fact that anti-government elements are responsible for most of the civilian casualties (UNAMA, 2011), 77 percent of Afghan respondents in a 2009 public opinion poll said that the

potential for innocent victims from air strikes during military operations outweighs the value of these raids in fighting the Taliban (Cordesman, 2009). Civilian casualty is still the key irritant for Afghans (Cordesman, 2009). It's easy to see why: As the above figures show, the Afghans have suffered more than others. Shaw (2002) claims that after risk assessments have been carried out, the enemy killed only one American soldier in the same period that over 1,000 Afghan civilians were (predictably) killed by American bombs. Shaw's assessment is even from 2001 when American surge had just begun in Afghanistan.

The conflict has also left many Afghans homeless. Violence from ISAF and Insurgents confronting each other forced people to flee, which has had a devastating impact on Afghans' perception of the foreign presence in Afghanistan (Younes & Duplat, 2009). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 235,833 internally displaced people (IDPs) were identified nationwide; most of them fled their homes because of continued violence (UNHCR, 2008). Today more than 3 million Afghans remain as refugees in exile to escape economic hardship or targeted violence (Younes & Duplat, 2008).

The past and present armed conflict in Afghanistan is one reason that more than one in three Afghans (36%) lives below the line of poverty (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2010). The poverty level remains high despite the billions of dollars in aid that have been poured into the country (Younes & Duplat, 2008). In addition, the country has become No. 1 in the world for producing and exporting opium and heroin. Opium production in Afghanistan has increased more than 15 times since the Soviet invasion in 1979; now the country produces three-quarters of the opium in the world (Global security, 2009).

The actors in the current armed conflict in Afghanistan are both national and international. The Afghan actors are the government of Afghanistan in one side and the Afghan

insurgents on the other. The international actors are foreign military forces led by the United States fighting the international terrorist organizations including Al-Qaeda on the other side. Therefore, according to classification of armed conflicts Afghan conflict is an ¹internationalized internal armed conflict, in which other states have intervened. Due to the involvement of the U.S. and more than 40 other countries under the Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization-led command of ISAF, the third stage of the conflict has become the focus for many research studies worldwide.

Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

The long conflict in Afghanistan has a very complex nature and is rooted to multiple problems. Afghan military scholar and the former interior minister Jalali (2009) calls Afghanistan a “theme park of problems” (p. 12). Other military and non-military scholars focusing on the Afghan conflict describe and point to many problems behind the Afghan conflict. Swanstrom and Cornell (2005) in their article ‘A Strategic Conflict Analysis of Afghanistan’ divide the factors behind Afghan conflict as two interacting groups—²“structural factors, and ³socio-economic factors” (p. 5). Some of these problems interact with other problems and pose a big challenge for security and instability, which will be detailed in the following chapter.

Jalali (2009) points to two groups of problems, including domestic ones of incompetent Afghan security forces, ineffective governance, failure in law enforcement, and international

¹ Internationalized armed conflict is when the conflict is mainly between internal forces, but other states have intervened (Eriksson, Sollenberg, Strand, Wallenstein, & Gleditsch, 2002).

² By structural factors the author points to ethnic divisions, urban-rural population divisions, government failure, and external factors.

³ By socio-economic factors the author points to poverty, lack of physical infrastructure, narcotics, warlords, and finally land and water.

ones of intervention by neighbouring countries and regional power, and the fragmented military leadership among Afghan international allies. Similarly, Holloway (2009) argues that NATO has shown itself to be less of an alliance and more of a chaotic bureaucracy with self-interested nations in fighting their common enemy. “We [the NATO member states] have lacked the two text book requirement for winning an insurgency—Unity of command and Unity of purpose” (Holloway, 2009, p. 10).

Jalali (2009), Khan (2011) and Holloway (2009) point out to Afghanistan being a competing ground between regional and non-regional rivals (e.g., Pakistan against India, NATO against Russia, and the U.S. against Iran) and intervention by neighbouring Iran and Pakistan for their economically and politically motivated interests, as an obstacle on the way for peace in the country.

Holloway (2009) points to the implemented strategies and failure of the NATO allies to win the will of the Pashtuns as a factor behind the growing popular uprising in the Pashtun belt in Afghanistan. The U.S. and NATO’s ill-conceived and ill-informed military raids, extra-judicial detention of Afghans, and increasing the number of troops also undermined the perceived legitimacy of the foreign presence particularly among Pashtuns in Afghanistan (Holloway, 2009; ICG, 2008). In fact international forces welcomed when they deposed the Taliban regime are now facing a transition from “guest to becoming an enemy” (Dorransoro, 2009, p. 18) in the eyes of the ordinary populace. United States’ emphasis on centralization of power in Kabul and leaving tribal communities in the country without representation both in the central and local government widened the gap between public and the state, which subsequently left the tribes unwilling to cooperate with the government and its international allies for building peace. Hoffman (2009) argues that the Taliban exploit the state-public gap and recruit new

fighters from among the tribes. ICG (2008) points to the Taliban propaganda through their sophisticated communication strategy, which they use it not only to win the public support, but also to counter-persuade people against pro-government forces to win their will.

Younes and Duplat (2008) argue that the current negative perception of Afghans about ISAF is one of the main factors behind the continuation of the current Afghan conflict. Many public opinion surveys and polls indicate that the current stage of the Afghan conflict has grown a popular negative perception against foreign military presence in Afghanistan (Charney, Nanda & Yakatan, 2004; Cordesman, 2009; Tariq, Ayoubi & Haqbeen, 2010). Please see Appendix – A, Table – 1-3.

While there is no single cure for the complex situation in Afghanistan, scholars studying the Afghan conflict have suggested many potentially workable solutions for the conflict.

Holloway (2009) explains that the Taliban and Hekmatyar's faction of Hezb-e-Islami are the only two actors in the long Afghan conflict deprived from participating in post-civil war politics. Therefore Holloway supports the idea of fostering reconciliation with the two insurgents groups. However, Jalali (2009) thinks that disorganization of efforts by the government and corruption in the current reconciliation commission should be blamed for failing to reconcile insurgents so far.

Scholars have different perspectives about the number of foreign troops to solve to conflict in Afghanistan, too. Swanstrom and Cornell (2005) think foreign support is still pivotal to build a peaceful future in Afghanistan. Jalali (2009) suggests that an increase in foreign troops would buy more time, but is not a long-term solution. Holloway (2009) suggests a smaller less

visible, but vigorous foreign force. More troops can ⁴*clear* insurgents and *hold* the ground, but for the long term, Afghan security forces pave the road for the *building* phase of counter insurgency (Holloway, 2009). Holloway (2009) also speculates that the civilian approach is more effective in bringing the violence down in the country than the use of military force.

Another way suggested in previous works to help with conflict resolution was strengthening the state functionality. Decreasing corruption in the government, expanding government influence in insurgency-ridden areas, eradicating the culture of impunity and enforcing the law on everyone, and helping Afghan government to be accountable and able to deliver social and economic services to people will not only strengthen the government's legitimacy among the population, it will also uproot underlying grounds for insurgents' propaganda in the country (Holloway, 2009; ICG, 2008; Jalali, 2009; Swanstrom & Cornell, 2005).

While bringing cohesion among fractured ethnic groups in Afghanistan by promoting cooperation and uprooting tension is very important for over all conflict resolution in the country, scholars suggest that every individual ethnic group also has their own cultural values, which counterinsurgency should respect to win their support. Mockaitis (2003) supports a combination of conventional and unconventional efforts, which means using military power and a campaign for popular support simultaneously. Nye (2004) calls the combination of two "smart power" (P. 4). McCallister (2007) thinks that studying the values, beliefs, attitude, customs and traditions of the population creates an advantage for engaging in a counterinsurgency and irregular warfare; in Afghanistan it is the cultural code and the tribal ethos that should be studied.

⁴ Clear, hold, and build is a counterinsurgency approach that relies on troops mostly foreign troops. Indirect approach is the opposite where the counterinsurgency relies on indigenous force.

The above arguments by scholars clearly show the complexity of the Afghan conflict, which necessitates research in different disciplines, including communication. Also it is the lack of an in-depth study about the role of communication in conflict resolution for the current Afghan conflict that this study focuses on.

Rationale for the Study

The negative perception among Afghans about ISAF varies in different parts of Afghanistan. The greater the insurgency, the higher the level of violence, and as the higher the level of violence erupts, the greater the negative perception becomes. It is the rural Pashtun-dominated areas that show more support for the Taliban than urban and non-Pashtun dominated areas (Dorronsoro, 2009). Hoffman (2009) argues that the Pashtun belt in Afghanistan and Pakistan is the center of gravity for the insurgents and Al-Qaeda; without their support, the enemy will disappear. Hoffman (2009) adds that among Pashtuns, it is also the *Ghilzai* and *Kariani* Pashtuns, *Loya Paktya* tribal community one of them, whose young generation make up the newest Taliban fighters (Hoffman, 2009). Ruttig (2009) claims, “the coherence of the Haqqani network, [in *Loya Paktya*] is based on a combination of tribal and ideological loyalties” (p. 72). The Pashtun tribes in south-eastern Afghanistan are “the core audience... or the single most important driving force” (Gressang, 2001, p. 11) for the insurgency.

South-eastern Afghanistan is also an area of great security significance for the whole country (Gregg, 2009). Support from *Loya Paktya* tribes significantly helped maintain stability for different Afghan governments in the past. Gregg (2009) argues that “if the tribes chose to support the insurgency rather than to resist it, or simply chose to challenge the legitimacy of the state by refusing to work with it, the government would be rendered quite powerless” (p. 4).

Tribal engagement should be tried only in areas where tribal institutions are strong; a generic approach must be avoided (Jalali, 2009). South-eastern Afghanistan has a tribal system that remains more intact and stronger than in other parts of Afghanistan (Gregg, 2009; Ruttig, 2009). *Loya Paktya* tribes have their own traditional tribal institutions—tribal leader, tribal liaison with government, the decision-making body (*jirga*), and the Pashtun code (*Pashtunwali*) (Gregg, 2009; Rais, 2008; Ruttig, 2009), of which knowing is essential to frame communication opportunities with the tribes there.

Aside from the significance of *Loya Paktya* Pashtun tribal community as the target population for this research, there are many grounds for this project to explore communication as a potential means for conflict resolution in the particular cultural domain of south-eastern tribal community in Afghanistan. Haddock, Thompson, and Rabon (2002) argue that increasing public support is the strongest reason to have a communication strategy in the war against terror. Highlighting the deadly actions of terrorists during communication not only takes away their morale, but also gives an alternative to the people who have no alternative to the message full of hatred from terrorists (Haddock et al., 2002). Hence, effective communication is the one “which rings the bell” (p.16), and touches the will of the audience; it should consider the audience, their acceptable channels, and the effectiveness of the message (Haddock et al., 2002).

To win the will of the local population from the insurgency in Afghanistan, ICG (2008) recommends Afghan government and its allies to focus on their communication with people. Considering the significance of *Loya Paktya*’s location for security and peace in Afghanistan, and the issues, outcomes, and nature of the current conflict in the *Loya Paktya* region, and finally the importance of communication during counterinsurgency, this project focuses on communication for conflict resolution in south-eastern Afghanistan.

Overview of Thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. This introductory chapter provided a brief background of Afghan conflict, discussed the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the rationale for conducting this study on south-eastern Pashtun tribal community in Afghanistan. Chapter 2 provides a review of existent literature related to the concepts of conflict and conflict resolution. It also provides a review of the two theoretical frameworks for this study. Finally, it looks into the literature related to south-eastern Pashtun tribal community. In Chapter 3, the methodology used to conduct this research, the primary data collection procedure in Afghanistan, and the steps to analyze the interview data are discussed. Chapter 4 reports the findings and analysis. Chapter 5 discusses the findings in relation to the two theoretical frameworks. The final chapter concludes the thesis by discussing the limitations, future research direction, implications, and researcher's personal reflections.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The literature review for this study looks into four areas of studies that relate to communication for conflict resolution in south-eastern Afghanistan. First, the review examines studies that address concepts such as conflict (specifically the current Afghan conflict), conflict resolution (specifically by third-party intervention), and the role of communication during conflict resolution. Second, it explores the Aristotelian approach to persuasion (the classical rhetorical theory), and the soft power theory, which are the two theoretical frameworks of this study. Third, the question of why south-eastern Pashtun tribes are well positioned to play a third-party role in conflict resolution in Afghanistan is reviewed. Finally, the review looks at studies that elaborate on the role of tribes in peace-building efforts in conflict zones that are similar to the Afghan conflict (specifically, Al Anbar Province in Iraq).

Conflict

Definition of conflict.

The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (IESS) (2008) defines ‘conflict’ as a state of disagreement or incompatibility of goals between two parties. Vacchio (2000) describes conflict as a process that happens when one party (or parties) perceives another party or parties as being against its interests (as cited in Rose et al., 2007). Deutsch and Coleman (2000) state that the emergence of incompatible goals between people, groups, or nations leads to conflict as cited in Byrne and Senehi (2009). IESS adds that the term conflict is different from dispute. Conflict is long-term, and deep-rooted, while dispute is short-term and comparatively superficial (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 2008). Armed conflict is an open clash between two or more centrally organized armed parties, over government power and territory (Smith, 2004). The use of force in an armed conflict results in at least 25 battle-related deaths, and of the two parties, at least one should be the government of a state (Eriksson, Sollenberg, Strand, Wallenstein, and Bleditsch, 2002). Eriksson et al. (2002) say, “a state is defined as an internationally recognized sovereign government controlling a specified territory” (p. 619).

Levels of conflict.

Conflict has a generic nature that exists in interpersonal, intergroup, organizational, interstate, intra-national and international levels (Burton & Sandole, 2007). Byrne and Senehi (2009) add “intra-personal conflict” (p. 1) to the levels of conflict. Different disciplines have their own theoretical approach to understanding conflict (Axt, Milososki, & Schwarz, 2006). Economists are interested in game theory and decision-making, psychologists look into interpersonal conflicts, and sociologists explore status and class conflicts, while political

scientists concentrate on intra-national and international conflicts (Axt et al., 2006). For conflict resolution it is essential to know the issues that give rise to conflict (Axt et al., 2006). Of social conflicts, international conflict affects us all and therefore is the most important (Bercovitch, 2009).

Issues and sources of conflict.

There are many issues and sources in different conflict levels. Scarcity of resources, different values, contrary objectives, and change are said to be the sources of conflict (Bercovitch, 1984). Basic human needs--both material (e.g., food, shelter, physical security, well-being), and immaterial (e.g., identity security, recognition, autonomy, sense of justice)--lead to conflict when not fulfilled (Burton, 1988, 1990, as cited in Kelman, 2009). Issues for conflict could be wealth, power, and prestige (Weber, 1947, as cited in Axt et al., 2006). Deutsch (1973) identifies issues of conflict as control over resources, preference and nuisances, beliefs, values, and the nature of relationships. Territory, ideology, religion, language, ethnicity, resources, markets, dominance, equality, and revenge are also issues for conflict in different levels (Singer, 1996, as cited in Axt et al., 2006). Personal security, recognition, identity, and development are four of essential, universal human needs, and key to understanding social conflicts (Burton, 1992; Sites, 1990, as cited in Cook-Huffman, 2009). Identity plays a crucial role and is important to understand the dynamics of social conflicts (Cook-Huffman, 2009). Identities are constructed socially and are both individual and collective (Cook-Huffman, 2009). Collective identity, which is also called social identity, is one's self-perception as part of a group and has both devastating as well as can be a potential for positive social change (Stets & Burke, 2000, as cited in Cook-Huffman, 2009). Kelman (2009) says that collective needs for identity, along with fears for its survival, heavily contribute to the escalation and the continuation of conflict. Some

issues behind international and intrastate conflicts include territory, secession, decolonization, autonomy, ideology, national power, regional predominance, international power, and resources (Pfetsch and Rohloff, 2000, as cited in Axt et al., 2006).

Kinds and stages of conflict.

Sandole (2003) divides conflict using objectives, issues, and means. “Based on objective, it is either status-quo-changing or status-quo-maintaining; based on issues it is structural, which is to keep the system and non-structural, which is to end the system” (Sandole, 2003, p. 46). Based on means, it is a fight, a game, or a debate; in game and debate, one party is seen as an opponent by the other and the goal is to outwit and persuade one another, while in a fight the parties see one another as the enemy, and the attempt is to destroy the other (Sandole, 2003).

Conflicts have five general stages (Fisher, Abdi, Ludin, Smith, and Williams, 2000): pre-conflict, in which the tension between the parties is hidden from public view; confrontation, with low-level violence and occasional fighting; crisis, the peak of violence, with no communication and people being killed; outcome and post-conflict (Fisher et al., 2000). Based on intensity, conflicts are classified into violent and non-violent conflicts (Axt et al., 2006). Non-violent subcategory include latent, and manifest which are low intensity, while violent conflicts include crisis, severe crisis, and war, which are medium and high intensity; conflicts enter a violent phase when parties go beyond just seeking their goals peacefully (Axt et al., 2006).

Armed conflict.

Armed conflict is an open clash between two or more centrally organized armed parties, over government power and territory (Smith, 2004), in which at least one of the parties is a government of a state, controlling a specified territory (Eriksson et al., 2002). Based on the number of battle-related deaths, armed conflicts are divided into three subsets--minor,

intermediate, and war (Eriksson et al., 2002). In minor armed conflict, the number of battle-related deaths are at least 25 per year, but less than 1,000 over the entire conflict; in the intermediate level, the number of deaths are between 25 and 1,000 in one year, but at least 1,000 over the entire conflict; in war, the number of deaths are at least 1,000 per year (Eriksson et al., 2002).

Armed conflicts are also divided based on whether the conflicting parties are a state or non-statutory actors. Interstate conflict occurs between two or more states, while extra-state armed conflict occurs between a state and non-state group outside its own territory. The latter has two kinds—colonial war and imperial war (Eriksson et al., 2002). Internal armed conflict occurs between a state's government and an internal adversary; if another state intervenes; it becomes an internationalized internal conflict (Eriksson et al., 2002). Based on the given classifications, the current Afghan conflict is an internationalized internal conflict.

Asymmetrical armed conflict.

Asymmetric conflict has existed since the nascence of history (Davis, 2010). A 2006 international conference defined asymmetrical warfare as “an armed conflict, in which the conventional armed forces one party, which uses regular means, is opposed by an unconventional army using irregular means” (Baarda, 2009, p. 15). Boyer (2009) explains that three characteristics of asymmetrical warfare are the importance of the non-statutory actor, the focus on the weak and vulnerable rather than the enemy force, and finally guerrilla warfare and terrorism. Also in asymmetrical warfare, the irregular forces do not obey any rules (Davis, 2010) nor respect any humanitarian laws (Bowyer, 2009). This poses a big moral challenge to regular forces—the irregular forces not only target the civilian population, but also use civilians as shields, which blurs the distinction between combatants and civilians (Bowyer, 2009).

Gen. Smith in his book, *The Utility of War*, says that having transitioned from an industrial interstate conflict to a fight against non-statutory individuals and societies, fighting amongst civilians—in the living rooms, in the street and fields, and the fact amplified by modern media, are the attributes of today's asymmetric warfare (Taverner, 2010). Considering all the challenges of asymmetric war, the role of the population's support is pivotal in becoming victorious against an irregular opposition. Former ISAF commander General Petraeus's plan of creating security through indigenous security forces, with backup from civilian populations, supports reinvigorating tribal and community engagement in Afghanistan (Ross, 2010). While engaging local populations is key to fighting asymmetric warfare, avoiding misconduct, from being disproportionately and indiscriminately offensive to deliberately mistreating civilians, is crucial to the success and legitimacy of international forces (Boyer, 2009). Doing the opposite will undermine the soft power of the forces as well as their countries (Bowyer, 2009).

Current Afghan Conflict

The current Afghan conflict has its own characteristics and complexity. Afghanistan has been in conflict for more than 30 years. The conflict in Afghanistan is divided into three segments—the Soviet invasion from 1979 to 1989; the civil war from 1989 to 2001; and Operation Enduring Freedom, or the American-led occupation from 2001 until now. The civil war stage of the Afghan conflict had three segments: First the pro-Soviet communist regime fought the jihadist factions backed by Pakistan and the West. Second, different jihadist factions internally fought for control of the country. Finally, the Taliban battled the Northern Alliance (Loyn, 2009; Maley, 2009; Swanstrom & Cornell, 2005).

The Afghan situation is “deep-rooted” (IESS, 2008) and long. Therefore it is a conflict, not a dispute. There are five actors in the current Afghan conflict: two pro-state actors (the

Afghan government and its international allies), one ambivalent actor (warlords and their non-statutory militias), and two antagonistic actors (indigenous and non-indigenous anti-Afghan government forces) (Swanstrom & Cornell, 2005). Indigenous anti-government forces include the Taliban movement and the Hezb-e-Islami militia led by ⁵Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, while non-indigenous anti-government forces include Al-Qaeda and other international jihadist movements from Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and other countries (Swanstrom & Cornell, 2005). According to classification of armed conflicts in Eriksson et al. (2002), Afghan conflict is an internal internationalized armed conflict. This study does not focus on relations between any conflicting parties. Instead, it focuses on south-eastern (*Loya Paktya*) Pashtun tribes as a potential third party for peace building in Afghanistan.

The Afghan conflict is also an “armed conflict” (Smith, 2004, p. 3). Based on the number of battle-related deaths in Eriksson et al. (2002) and iCasualties (2011), the Afghan conflict is in the war subset of armed conflicts. According to the classification of conflicts in Fisher et al. (2000), the Afghan conflict, which is in the peak of its violence, is the crisis stage of conflict. The existence of non-statutory actors in the Afghan conflict creates an asymmetry in the strength and the way the regular forces (e.g., ISAF) and irregular forces (e.g., the insurgents) operate. Thus, the Afghan conflict is an “asymmetrical armed conflict” (Baarda, 2009, p. 15). Other specifics of asymmetric armed conflict also exist in the current Afghan conflict. For instance, the insurgents using civilians as shields (Bowyer, 2009), and using irregular means such as roadside bombs and suicide attacks on ISAF troops causing civilian casualties (ICG, 2008). Also insurgents using villages and residential areas rather than fighting ISAF in a front, face ISAF, as

⁵ Gulbuddin Hekmatyar was the leader of one of the 7 mujahedeen factions who fought against soviet invasion. His party is the only party deprived from participating in the post-civil war political process.

a conventional force, with the challenge of fighting the enemy among the civilians. When ISAF use heavy military power and air strikes, in many cases, besides killing insurgents they also cause civilian casualty (ICG, 2008). Unfortunately, civilians are caught in the middle and are affected more often than the conflicting parties.

The Afghan conflict is complex—it is rooted in multiple issues and different problems that individually and in combination contribute to the continuation of war.

Factors behind Afghan conflict.

The aftermaths of previous stages of the conflict.

The first two stages of the continuous conflict have brought many consequences to the war ravaged country and its people. The long war caused many death and injury to Afghans. Goodson (2001) claims 1.5 million to 2 million people died from 1978 to 2001, while Sarkees (2000) put, 1.3 million as the total battle-death from 1978 to 1992 (as cited in Benini, 2004). The country's physical infrastructure, including roads, hospitals, schools, irrigation, the communications system, and government buildings, was destroyed during the long conflict (Swanstrom & Cornell, 2005). The societal makeup of Afghan society, which was traditional and tribal, was harmed by the long conflict (Swanstrom & Cornell, 2005). Swanstrom and Cornell (2005) also points to other problems caused by the old conflict that become factors behind continuation of the current conflict. Swanstrom and Cornell (2005) divide those problems into two groups—structural factors such as ethnic tension, politicization of Islam and radicalization, vulnerability to foreign intervention, warlordism, and the socio-economic factors, such as poverty, lack of physical infrastructure, narcotics, land and water. Some of these consequences interact with other problems and pose a big challenge for security and instability. For instance, the drug industry provides an ample source of funds for insurgents; it helps them pay to recruit

new fighters and buy weapons (Swanstrom & Cornell, 2005). Similarly, poverty fuels insecurity; desperate and unemployed young men are vulnerable to recruitment by the Taliban, warlords, and to the drug mafia (Swanstrom & Cornell, 2005). There are also new factors that play behind extending current Afghan conflict.

The intervention of neighbouring countries.

The intervention by two neighbouring countries, Iran and Pakistan, for their economically and politically motivated interests, is one of the biggest problems behind the continuation of Afghan conflict, which different studies have looked into. Khan's article (2011) explains that Iran feels threatened by being encircled by the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan and Iraq and thus tries to increase the cost of war for the U.S. by providing weapons to the insurgency (Khan, 2011). Iran also fuels and exploits the tension between Shia and Sunni (the two main sects among Muslims) Afghans in the country (Holloway, 2009). Pakistan fears that a pro-Indian Afghan government will be established—and then Afghanistan will become a second front behind Kashmir between India and Pakistan (Holloway, 2009). The Durand line, the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan that Afghanistan still doesn't recognize because it divides Pashtuns, is another disputed issue between the two countries (Holloway, 2009). Despite the Taliban's religious fundamentalism, Pakistan still has substantial influence over Taliban through its intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) (Holloway, 2009). Pakistan is still a safe haven for Taliban insurgents who cross the border and carry out attacks in Afghanistan (Holloway, 2009).

Centralization of power in Kabul.

Centralization of power in Kabul, which was discussed in Chapter 1, is another factor that contributes to continuation of Afghan conflict. Holloway (2009) argues that the U.S. keeps

making the same mistake by the top-down reform approach to counter-insurgency—supporting the centralization of power in Kabul. Hoffman (2009) also criticizes the current concentration of power in Kabul, which leaves tribal communities without representation both in the central and local government, and widens the gap between public and the state. This is more important in south-eastern Pashtun tribal communities, which are from the *Gheljaies* and *Karianies*, two of the three major branches of Pashtuns in Afghanistan (Hoffman, 2009). In south-eastern Afghanistan, isolated by the Afghan government, the tribes rely on their local tribal structure to solve important local issues, which leaves the government out of the loop (Hoffman, 2009). Meanwhile, the Taliban keep exploiting such state-public divide by recruiting Pashtun tribesmen in south-eastern Afghanistan (Hoffman, 2009).

Negative popular perception.

Similarly the aftermaths of the third stage of the Afghan conflict enter a vicious cycle and contribute to further conflicts and produce new problems. ICG (2008) writes that “extra-judicial detentions.... ham-fisted or ill-informed raids have undermined the perceived legitimacy of the foreign presence and have become enduring symbols of oppression, particularly among Pashtuns” (p. 23). The longer the conflict, the more the violence; and as the violence continues, Afghans have begun losing confidence not only in the international presence but also in their own government (Younes & Duplat, 2008). Again, this loss of confidence, or negative perception among people makes them unwilling to take part in the efforts for peace building, which as part of the same vicious cycle intensifies and contributes to the continuation of conflict.

Afghan opinion polls.

Many public opinion surveys and polls indicate that a negative public perception has gradually grown among Afghans about foreign military, particularly U.S. presence in

Afghanistan since the foreign military surge began. A public opinion poll (Appendix – A, Table – 1) by Charney et al. (2004) claims that almost two-thirds (64 percent) of the respondents thought Afghanistan was going in the right direction, while only 11 percent thought the opposite. The numbers varied among different ethnic groups, and between rural and urban populations. About 51 percent of all Pashtuns, 62 percent of rural respondents, and 73 percent of urban respondents thought Afghanistan was on the right path, which means having peace and security, reconstruction, freedom and democracy (Charney et al., 2004). The wrong direction was blamed by 40 percent of respondents on the Afghan government, and 6 percent on too many foreigners (Charney et al., 2004).

A newer poll (Appendix – A, Table – 2) by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) shows how opinions in the country have changed from 2005 to 2009 (Cordesman, 2009). In 2005, 85 percent of the people surveyed thought that the U.S. move to oust the Taliban regime was positive, while in 2009, only 69 percent thought so (Cordesman, 2009). In 2007, 25 percent of the survey respondents blamed the U.S., NATO (pro-government actors) and the Afghan government for violence, while 36 percent blamed the Taliban (anti-government actor); in 2009, the numbers reversed, with only 27 percent blaming the Taliban and 36 percent blaming the U.S., NATO, and the Afghan government (Cordesman, 2009). In 2006, 67 percent of those surveyed thought NATO and ISAF were effective in providing security for Afghans, but in 2009, only 42 percent thought so (Cordesman, 2009). Local support in the areas with foreign troops declined from 67 percent in 2006 to 37 percent in 2009 (Cordesman, 2009). Only 14 percent viewed the U.S. presence unfavorably in 2005, compared with 52 percent in 2009 (Cordesman, 2009). In 2005 only 13 percent of the respondents thought attacks on U.S., and ISAF were justified, whereas it increased to 25 percent in 2009 (Cordesman, 2009). In 2005,

77 percent of the respondents thought Afghanistan was going in the right direction. In 2009, only 40 percent thought so (Cordesman, 2009).

A more recent Afghan public opinion survey (Appendix – A, Table – 3) shows a decrease from 56 percent in 2009 to 40 percent in 2010 of those who sympathize with the motivation of insurgents in all Afghanistan (Tariq et al., 2010). However, sympathy for insurgents still remains high in insecure areas; in the southwest, it is 52 percent, while in the southeast it is 50 percent (Tariq et al., 2010). Insecurity is still identified as the biggest problem in Afghanistan, while unemployment is second, and administrative corruption is third; followed by a poor economy, lack of education, and poverty (Tariq et al., 2010).

All three polls indicate that the current stage of the Afghan conflict has affected popular perception in Afghanistan. South-eastern Afghanistan, with a Pashtun tribal community, is currently an insurgency-ridden zone. The rate of negative perception there is one of the highest in the country. The negative perception and failure to remove that by Afghan government and its international allies is thought to pave the road for Taliban propaganda. Such popular negative perception has unfortunately not been addressed by the Afghan government and ISAF, yet (Gregg, 2009). But the Taliban insurgents have exploited it through their sophisticated communication setup (ICG, 2008).

The Taliban propaganda (communication war).

Taliban propaganda is another factor contributing to the complexity of conflict in Afghanistan. International Crisis Group (2008) writes:

Taliban has created a sophisticated communication apparatus that projects an increasingly confident movement. Using the full range of media, it is successfully tapping into strains of Afghan nationalism and exploiting policy failures by the Kabul government and its international backers (p. 3) ICG

To pass their message, the Taliban insurgents use both modern and traditional channels, mainly by considering the quickest way to reach their audience and the kind of media the different audiences use. Their website is in five languages—Dari, Pashtu, English, Arabic, and Urdu; the most extensive section is in the Pashtu language (ICG, 2008). For rural areas, where there is no internet and people are illiterate, the Taliban send their messages in pre-recorded DVDs, audio cassettes, night letters, and finally word of mouth. These choices offer the advantage of speaking directly to an audience, which is important in an illiterate rural Afghan society (ICG, 2008). The word of mouth, compared to other media, reaches a wider audience for the Taliban (ICG, 2008).

Taliban communication is not only to win public support; it is also for a “counter persuasion” (McKerrow, Bronbeck, Ehninger, & Monroe, 2003, p. 344) attempt against pro-government forces to win popular support. In their communication, the Taliban touch on local narratives and understand local grievances to win popular sentiment (ICG, 2008). They also undermine the legitimacy of the foreign military by stressing foreign failures, such as cultural misunderstandings, civilian casualties, and ill-informed and arbitrary detention (ICG, 2008). In addition, Taliban downplay their own mistakes; they justify their actions as jihad (religious appeal) and a fight for freedom (national appeal) (ICG, 2008).

Conflict Resolution by Third-party Intervention

Scholars working on conflict and conflict resolution use different concepts and give separate meaning to each. These concepts are “conflict prevention, conflict settlement, conflict transformation, and conflict resolution” (Fisher et al., 2000, p. 7). Fisher and his co-authors in, *Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action*, explain that:

Conflict prevention aims to prevent the outbreak of violent conflict; conflict settlement aims to end violent behaviour by reaching a peace agreement; conflict transformation

addresses the wider social and political source of a conflict and seeks to transform the negative energy of war into positive social and political change; [and] conflict resolution addresses the causes of conflict and seeks to build new and lasting relationship between hostile groups (p. 7).

Conflict resolution is defined as “the process of defusing antagonism and reaching agreement between conflicting parties, especially through some form of negotiation” (Gale Encyclopaedia of Psychology, 2001, para. 1). However, in this study I look at the phrase “conflict resolution” as two separate words—“conflict” means the armed conflict in Afghanistan, and “resolution” means finding a solution or breaking the cycle of the given conflict. I study and explore the components of persuasive communication from a third-party perspective—the members and experts of the south-eastern Pashtun tribes. The question that I answer at the end is this--how communication could become persuasive, first to change the current negative perception of Pashtuns in the *Loya Paktya* region, and second to influence the choice of south-eastern Pashtuns to help with peace building. Public support is necessary for political and military leaders engaged in a conflict (Kelman, 2009). Many experts and recent studies see Pashtuns in this area as a potential third party to begin breaking the cycle of the current Afghan conflict.

Despite the generic nature of conflict (Burton & Sandole, 2007), there is no single generic approach to conflict resolution in all forms of conflict (Bercovitch, 2009). All conflicts could be handled unilaterally, by one party imposing and benefitting more; bilaterally, through peaceful direct negotiations and reconciliation between the conflicting parties; or trilaterally, through various forms of third-party mediation and intervention (Bercovitch, 1984, 2009). In a unilateral process, the consequences are usually destructive, associated with high costs and extensive damages, while in bilateral and trilateral processes, the outcome is usually positive (Bercovitch, 1984).

A number of conflict researchers focus on third-party intervention in conflict situations (Axt et al., 2006). Third-party intervention consists of any action taken by an actor who is not a direct party to the crisis and designed to reduce or remove one or more problems in the bargaining relationship and to facilitate the termination of the conflict itself (Young, 1967, as cited in Bercovitch, 1984). In some cultural domains, traditional leaders are strong third parties (Fisher et al., 2000). In Afghanistan, for instance, it was the tribal leaders, not the central government, who helped individual communities live in peace side by side for generations (Fisher et al., 2000).

Third-party intervention can use mediation and/or arbitration, “the fastest growing area of practice in conflict resolution” (Childelin, 2003, p. 221). The third party has more authority in arbitration than in mediation (Childelin, 2003). Third-party intervention is important for all levels of conflicts—individual, intergroup and international (Bercovitch, 1984). Third parties use the tactics of motivating parties, reinforcing pessimism, and pressuring players to influence them and try to end a conflict. Pressure could include avoiding contact and/or refusing to provide any financial support to one party or the other (Pruitt, 2011). Third-party intervention incorporates peaceful measures such as negotiation, mediation, and facilitation, as well as coercive measures such as military, political and economic sanctions (Axt et al., 2006). Deutsch (1994) also highlights the role of third-party intervention using mediation, conciliation, and arbitration during conflict resolution. Threat and inducement are two other currencies used by third parties in some international conflicts (Kelman, 2009). The severity of the conflict and a high number of casualties can require more intense intervention (Robin, 1980, as cited in Bercovitch, 2009). The third party may side with one of the parties to influence the situation (Kelman, 2009). In

asymmetrical conflicts, between a powerful side and a weak one, the third party faces difficulties in decision-making (Sandole, 2003).

Some bases for third-party intervention include the long duration of a conflict, the complex nature of a conflict, and when bilateral efforts reach a dead end (Bercovitch, 1984). Third parties have their own reason to intervene. One or both conflicting parties may invite a third party; the continuation of the conflict may hurt the third party; and finally, third-party intervention may be a cheap and peaceful way to end the conflict (Bercovitch, 1984). Deutsch (2006) says neither negotiation nor mediation works in a conflict between a state and a terrorist group. Deutsch gives the following reasons: “they consider conflict as zero-sum or win-lose; they see their world view irreconcilable; they perceive no common interests between them; neither side believe the intention for negotiation in the other; and finally there is no third party to be able to persuade or compel the two sides” (2006).

Suggested Resolutions to Afghan conflict

Scholars studying the complex problems behind the Afghan conflict have suggested many potentially workable solutions.

Reconciliation.

Reconciliation with the Afghan insurgents is one avenue that the Afghan government has pursued to find peace. Scholars such as Jalali (2009) and Holloway (2009) support the idea of transparent efforts by the Afghan government to reconcile with both groups of Afghan insurgents. However, the corrupt reconciliation commission, which was particularly formed for this purpose has failed to reconcile and bring in the insurgents. Holloway (2009) argues that the

Taliban led by ⁶Mullah Omer, and Hezb-e-Islami led by Hekmatyar are the only two actors in the long Afghan conflict deprived from participating in post-civil war politics and should be approached through reconciliation. Bakashmart (2008) argues that violence becomes the only avenue for some individuals, because they perceive having no other means to participate in the democratic process or voice their dissatisfaction with status quo.

Good governance.

Swanstrom & Cornell (2005) suggest strengthening state functionality by decreasing corruption and reforming security, legal, and financial government sectors. Expanding government influence in insurgency-ridden areas will also strengthen the government's legitimacy among the population (Jalali, 2009). Eradicating the culture of impunity and enforcing the law on everyone will also build the legitimacy of the government in the eyes of people (ICG, 2008). Bakashmart (2008) states that it is the lack of socio-economic justice that leads to radicalization; religion acts as an amplifying factor only later. Knowing the contributing socio-economic factors (Swanstrom & Cornell, 2005) to the Afghan conflict, an accountable Afghan government, able to deliver social and economic services to people, will uproot underlying factors for insurgents' propaganda in the country. A honest government backed by tribal support is what Holloway (2009) suggests.

The use of military force.

Scholars have different perspectives about the number of international troops needed in Afghanistan to end the conflict. Taking into account the quality and competency of Afghan

⁶ Mullah Omer is the leader of Taliban insurgency. He was originally the member of Harakat-e-Enqelabi-Islami or the Islamic Revolution Movement, one of the 7 factions of mujahedeen who fought against Soviets during their invasion of Afghanistan. Omer formed the Taliban for the first time in 1995. Currently he is in hiding to avoid being killed by ISAF forces in Afghanistan.

security forces, some perspectives suggest that Afghanistan still needs international military support to reach stability. In 2009, at least 100,000 new reinforcements were supposedly needed to defeat the Taliban, although neither NATO nor the U.S. wanted to pay for the human and fiscal costs (Dorransoro, 2009). Jalali (2009) thinks more foreign troops will only buy time, but it is not an ideal solution for long term. Holloway (2009) argues that a smart civilian officer, with a generous budget and plenty of time to talk with local influential leaders, has much better effect than a military solution.

Working with people in conflict.

Bringing cohesion among fractured ethnic groups in Afghanistan by promoting cooperation and uprooting tension is very important for overall conflict resolution in the country. However, every individual ethnic group also has their own cultural values, which counterinsurgency should respect to win their support. Gen. Rupert Smith at the beginning of this paper gives enough significance for the popular support in fighting a modern asymmetrical war.

Mockaitis (2003) supports a combination of conventional and unconventional efforts, which means using military power and a campaign for popular support simultaneously; Nye (2004) calls it “smart power.” For Mockaitis this combination is crucial to gathering intelligence from the communities where insurgents operate, and persuading locals is essential to access such intelligence (Mockaitis, 2003).

McCallister (2007) thinks that studying the values, beliefs, attitudes, customs and traditions of the target population creates an advantage for those who engage in a counterinsurgency and irregular warfare. In Afghanistan he thinks it is the cultural code and the tribal ethos that should be studied (McCallister, 2007). McCallister (2007) recommends knowing

“what to do and what not to do, how to do it or not to do it, who to do it with or who not to do it with” (p.14) as part of the cultural operating codes in an asymmetrical war.

Communication and action.

A number of previous works have depicted the crucial role communication alone or combined with action plays during war on terrorism. Increasing public support is the strongest reason to have a communication strategy in the war against terror (Haddock et al., 2002). Highlighting the deadly actions of terrorists not only takes away their morale, but also gives an alternative to a population who has no alternative to the messages full of hatred from terrorists (Haddock et al., 2002). Terrorists also use both verbal and written communication to justify their presence, their deeds and their cause (Bressang, 2001).

ICG (2008) recommends the Afghan government and its allies to incorporate their actions with their communication, to win the will of the local population from the Taliban insurgency. It is very important to consider the audience, their acceptable channel, and the effectiveness of the message. Haddocks et al. (2002) state that effective communication is the one “which rings the bell” (p.16); it touches the will of the audience in their own language. Haddock et al. (2002) quote a famous World War II broadcast journalist who once said: “to be persuasive, we must be believable. To be believable, we must be credible, [and] to be credible, we must be truthful” (p. 10).

Theoretical Framework

Persuasion.

Howell defines persuasion as “communication intended to influence choice” (as cited in Larson, 2004, p. 11). McKerrow et al. (2003) define persuasion as “a process that changes

attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or behavior” (p. 11). Simons, Morreale, and Gronbeck (2001) say that persuasion is a human communication to influence and intended to alter the way others judge and act. However, it differs from other forms of influence, such as coercion or any form of inducement (Simons et al., 2001). A person’s judgment includes his “attitude, beliefs, and values while opinion is any verbalized judgment” (Simon et al., 2001). In persuasion, as with any other form of communication, the relations among the messenger, the message, and the audience are crucial to know. Aristotle says that one approach to persuasion does not fit all situations, and successful persuaders always adapt to the relevant context (Larson, 2004).

Hart (1997) says that persuasion is always driven by a persuader’s credibility (as cited in Simon et al., 2001). Credibility is affected by similarities between the audience and the persuader; displaying commonality in speech, dress, and manner enhances the attractiveness of a persuader in an audience (Simons et al., 2001). Making shared beliefs, values, and attitude between the persuader and the audience stand out increases the persuader’s overall credibility (McKerrow et al., 2003). However, in some occasions, looking different indicates that the persuader is an expert, well-informed and more reliable than the audience. One can ask a friend to choose coffee, but medical advice is more reliable from a doctor (Simon et al., 2001). Successful persuaders also establish bonds with their audiences, by expressing care and concern both verbally and nonverbally (Simon et al., 2001). Showing that you carry the interest of your audience in your heart will enable you to convince the audience (McKerrow et al., 2003). Dressing up what you say in an attractive language to the audience is also important (Simon et al., 2001). Linking your proposition to the beliefs and values that audience already hold, and knowing that the audience varies from ill-informed to well-informed, and with different levels of intelligence and education, facilitates information processing (Simon et al., 2001).

Credibility is also affected by perceived expertise; trustworthiness; personal qualities such as intelligence, honesty, dependability, and maturity; dynamism, meaning energy, passion, and enthusiasm; and the ability to punish, but also to reward (Simon et al., 2001). If the estimation of these qualities is heightened among the audience, the impact of the speech will be heightened (McKerrow et al., 2003).

Humans use persuasion in all aspects of their lives. Military forces using persuasion in communication to benefit themselves and hurt their enemies is no exception. Simon et al. (2001) point to militaries calling their own soldiers “freedom fighters”, while calling their enemies “terrorists.” Haddock et al. (2002) quote Professor Howard of Oxford, who says that the military’s perceived terrorist is someone else’s freedom fighter. Haddock et al. (2002) add that terrorists can be destroyed only if people perceive them as criminals rather than heroes.

Aristotelian approach to persuasion (classical rhetoric).

Aristotle theorized about rhetoric for the first time in the 4th Century BC. Aristotle defines rhetoric as “the faculty of available means of persuasion [and] this is the function of no other art” (Brummett, 2000, p. 146; Aristotle, trans, 2004, p. 6). Aristotle also says “rhetoric is the counterpart of dialectic” (Booth, 2004, p. 6). Some pre-modern rhetoricians defined rhetoric as follows:

Rhetoric is a bigger art with five smaller canons—invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery (Cicero); it is the science of speaking and the education of Roman gentlemen (Quintilian); it is the art of telling full truth, clearly and persuasively, when needed (Augustine); and it helps enlighten the understanding, please the imagination, move the passion and influence the will (George Campbell) (Booth, 2004, p. 6).

There are modern definitions too. Bitzer (1968) says that rhetoric is to alter reality by using discourse; Derrida (1990) says that there are no politics and no society without rhetoric; Lunsford (1995) states that rhetoric is the art, practice and study of all human communication (as

cited in Booth, 2004). Rhetoric is an academic discipline, the theory, practice, and critique of effective written and oral communication. It is also a socio-political skill in the use of language, as well as the use of certain discourse in certain contexts with certain audiences for the purpose of persuasion (Cline, 2006). Richards (1936) explains that rhetoric is the study of misunderstanding and its remedies. Frye (1963) calls rhetoric “the social aspect of the use of language” (as cited in Ohmann, 1971, p. 64).

Contemporary scholars highlight, juxtapose, and criticize classical and modern rhetoric. Thompson (1971) writes, “classical rhetoric is a compendium of so much wisdom that any sound new rhetoric must be an extension or a modification of the old and not a rejection of it” (p. 9). Brockriede (1971) argues, “the use of classical rhetoric was limited to a public address setting of one man talking to one audience, while today, both the speaker and the audience could be a group or groups of people” (p. 43). Booth (2004) argues that classical rhetoric was confined to male oratory, and it was used to win in politics; now, rhetoric covers all forms of communication including non-verbal. Ohmann (1971) claims that in traditional rhetoric the speaker imposed his will upon the audience in some way, whereas in modern rhetoric the emphasis is toward cooperation between the orator and the audience (Burke, 1951, as cited in Ohmann, 1971).

Rhetoric has faced harsh criticism in its history, too. Plato called it, the “art of degrading men’s soul” (Booth, 2004, p. 4). Locke (1669) called the artificial and figurative use of words a perfect cheat, insinuating wrong ideas and misleading judgment (as cited in Booth, 2004). The annoying fact is that rhetoricians are said to be stealing subjects from other fields such as English, communication and speech studies; also the word rhetoric is used as a label for bad reasoning (Booth, 2004).

Aristotle says that rhetoric is used in three different ways—to make the future (deliberative), to change what was fact in the past (forensic) and to reshape the view of the present (epideictic) (Booth, 2004). Also, Aristotle identified three major appeals in a speech—logos, ethos, and pathos—which still remain remarkably current today (Larson, 2004). Logos is the logic and rationale of the argument in the message (Griffin, 2009). For example, Aristotle emphasized creating common ground between the persuader and persuaded in a logic appeal (Larson, 2004). In communication with Pashtun tribes in south-eastern Afghanistan, one can play up the loss that the conflict causes both ISAF and the tribes. Similarly, if the conflict is settled, one can play up the victory for both ISAF and the tribes. Larson (2004) explains that some examples of a logic appeal include arguments about possibility versus impossibility, past facts, future facts, significance of an action, and results. It is important to include certain rationale from the past that Pashtun tribal members are familiar with. Aristotle advises persuaders to reinforce reasons that the audience already believes (Larson, 2004). McKerrow et al. (2003) say that the question of, “why your audience should believe you and do what you want them to do” should be met by rationale.

Brockriede (1971) argues that Aristotle limited ethos to a speaker’s character, which is revealed during speech. However, today’s audiences are touched by authoritativeness and reliability that speakers build up prior to any given discourse (Brockriede, 1971). A speaker’s honesty, sincerity, trustworthiness, knowledge, experience, expertise, dynamism, potency and sense of humor, if already known to the audience, increase the speaker’s credibility (Larson, 2004). As Brummett (2000) says, “we trust good men more and sooner” (p. 146). Accordingly, this study aimed to find out from participants the characteristics that make speakers credible in a Pashtun tribal setting in southeastern Afghanistan.

Pathos is the appeal to the passions or will of the audience (Griffin, 2009; Larson, 2004) that also stirs emotions through speech (Brummett, 2000). Brummett adds, “we give our judgment in different ways under the influence of pain and of joy, of liking and of hatred” (p. 146). Justice, prudence, generosity, courage, temperance, magnanimity, magnificence, and wisdom are some of the deep-seated values or virtues that Aristotle recommends as emotional appeals during a persuasive speech (Larson, 2004). Other emotional appeals Aristotle has highlighted are being independent, achieving prosperity, along with securing one’s property, friendship, health, fame, honor, virtue, among others that remain effective in today’s world (Larson, 2004). Rais (2008) explains, “Pashtuns are distinguished from other ethnic communities on the account of their tribal social structures and values of pride, independence, valor, and chivalry, which are known as *Pashtunwali*, [the Pashtun code]” (p. 30). This study aims to find out other important values in the Pashtun tribal context that should be appealed to during communication to the south-eastern tribal community.

Booth (2004) emphasizes the term “listening rhetoric” (p. 10), which he says is paying attention to the opposing view for reducing misunderstanding. Booth argues that people live in communities, practicing their own set of standards. Booth calls these standards “warrants” (p. 18) and describes the communities as the “rhetorical domains” (p. 18). While some domains are small and others are tiny, some domains have similar practices. Other domains have sub-domains that in practice might be slightly different (Booth, 2004). To be a successful persuader in any domain, one has to practice the concept of listening rhetoric, as mentioned in Booth (2004): “if you want to interact effectively with me, to influence me, you first need to understand me” (p. 72). Booth (2004) also says that any rhetorician who studies rhetoric should focus on only one or two domains if he or she is not a fool.

The ubiquitous nature of rhetoric makes war no exception. The role of rhetoric for community building during war has always been outstanding. Condit and Greer (2008) state that, maintaining, adapting, and revising a sense of community is essential for human survival. Kelman (2009) agrees and says, “[the] arousal of nationalist and patriotic sentiments, particularly in a context of national security and survival, is a powerful tool in garnering public support” (p. 176). Hogan (2008) says that although war is often viewed as the antithesis of rhetoric and it shows the failure of words to resolve conflict, the political will of the community to support war must be sustained. “No war efforts can long be sustained without continuous and effective rhetorical appeals” (Hogan, 2008, p. xxi). Even Aristotle (1383; 1384b) said that persuaders could evoke shame as an emotional appeal during war time, if they called the act of running away as a cowardice move (as cited in Carpenter, 2008).

The rhetoric of war can be used to forge a bond both within a military community and within a whole nation against a common enemy (Hogan, 2008). Carpenter (2008) adds that military decision-making and the outcome, either good or ill, is influenced by the rhetorical skills and the ethos of military commanders. One of the good examples of modern war rhetoric is from Churchill during World War II. The pre-existing British sentiment to fight Nazi forces and eliminate Hitler was tapped by Churchill’s speech on Aug. 4, 1947 (Condit & Greer, 2008). He used rhetoric to rally his people to fight a powerful military force the world had never before seen (Condit & Greer, 2008).

Soft power theory.

In most conflicts today, the key issue is to win the will of the people who live there. Communication is essential to that end (Smith, 2006, as cited in Foxley, 2007). To win the will of the people, one needs to influence their preference. According to Jisi and Nye (2009), three

kinds of power can influence people to do what power-holders want them to do—military power, economic power, and soft power. Military power and economic power are called hard power (Nye, 2004). Soft power is the ability to get what one desires by attraction, rather than coercion or inducement (Nye, 2004). In behavioral science, soft power is called the power of attraction (Jisi & Nye, 2009). Most studies focus on power at a country-to-country level, but Jisi and Nye (2009) state that soft power does not belong solely to countries; at the individual level, soft power is the power of attraction and seduction.

To succeed in information warfare, winning hearts and minds of people is essential (Taylor, 2010). Taverner (2010) explains the military use of soft power in the form of an information campaign. Traditionally, an information campaign was not taken into account in the core of military planning. Now, militaries have increasingly concentrated on winning what is called the “information high ground” (Taverner, 2010, p. 137). For instance, the American and British defense departments have acknowledged that the perception of the local populace in military campaigns is vital to reach a desired outcome (Taverner, 2010). Therefore, they are increasingly targeting both their adversaries and the population in a war zone by planning information campaigns (Taverner, 2010). Shaping the perception of an opponent’s supporters and neutral groups influences whether and how they will become involved (Taverner, 2010). Taverner (2010) adds that influence can come from knowing how locals think, their opinion leaders, what they want, and what causes hatred and attraction for them. Taverner calls it “soft intelligence that should come from in-place sources” (p. 141). Chong (2007) explains that today countries, even in their foreign policies deal not only with sovereign states; they also take non-statutory powerful individuals and groups into account.

Today's successful military commanders understand that battle has a psychological side as well as a physical side (Taverner, 2010). It is not just important to know what physical shape the enemy force is in; it is also important to understand how the enemy may be influenced (Taverner, 2010). As Taylor (2010) quotes Sun Tzu's dictum: "knowing the others and knowing oneself, in one hundred battles no danger. Not knowing others and knowing oneself, one victory for one loss. Not knowing others and not knowing oneself, in every battle, certain defeat" (p. 157). The ability to persuade people to listen to you, to understand what you are saying, and to support you, will also determine whether you win or lose (Taverner, 2010).

Nye (2010) argues that hard power enables countries to win the battle against extremism, but soft power better establishes democracy and human rights. Robert Gates, the former U.S. secretary of defense, asked the U.S. government to invest in the country's soft power by spending money on diplomacy, economic assistance and communications. He speculated that the U.S. military by itself could not defend the country's interests everywhere. Similarly, Nye (2004) argues:

The United States cannot alone hunt down every suspected al Qaeda leader hiding in remote regions of the globe. Nor can it launch a war whenever it wishes without alienating other countries and losing the cooperation it needs for winning the peace (p. XI).

Nye (2004, 2010, 2011) talks about another power called "smart power." Smart power is a strategy that combines inducement through money (or the so-called carrot), coercion by force (or the so-called stick), and attraction (Nye, 2004, 2010, 2011). In the 1990s, soft power failed to prevent the Taliban from supporting Al- Qaeda; hard power then deposed the regime in 2001. Rumsfeld, the former U.S. secretary of defense, once stated that the U.S. would not triumph if the number of new recruits by extremists exceeded the number of those killed or dissuaded from extremism (Nye, 2010). If the U.S. relies only on its impressive military, able to get the job done,

then U.S. foreign policy will be perceived as over-militarized (Nye, 2010). Human rights, democracy, and civil society cannot be supported by the barrel of a gun (Nye, 2010).

Bruce Berkowitz (2003) observes that in information-age wars, the victory usually goes to the side with more influence over technology and better access to the world's modern media. Nye (2010) says that consultation and listening are crucial to generate soft power. Nye (2010) argues, "in the information age, success is not merely the result of whose army wins, but also whose story wins" (p. 8). Some countries in the past have tried to hurt their opponents by putting restrictions on the media. Carruthers (2000) points to the British government's attempt to limit the Irish Republican Army's access to media as unsuccessful (as cited in Taverner, 2010).

According to existing literature, many similarities exist between rhetorical theory and soft power theory. For example, Aristotle recommends making logic appeals by promoting common ground between the speaker and audience. Meanwhile Nye (2004) argues that soft power rests on promoting shared values between the power holder and the one perceiving the power. While rhetoric is all about persuasion, "soft power is more than just persuasion or the ability to move people by argument, though that is an important part of it" (Nye, 2004, p. 5). The third appeal in rhetoric, pathos, is about appealing to the feelings of the audience. Soft power recommends that communication be a two-way street—done by listening to the audience and fine-tuning the message accordingly (Nye, 2004). Therefore this study draws on the relationship between the two theories and looks at the Pashtun tribal participants' perception of how communication can be organized to become influencing power.

Nye (2004) argues that in such a diverse world, all three sources of power—military, economic, and soft are essential, but to a different degree in different contexts. Nye also claims that soft power and hard power can support each other or intervene with each other in different

circumstances. In this study, the focus is directed more towards persuasive communication in a tribal context as a source of attraction or soft power, in the *Loya Paktya* region of Afghanistan. Exploring the relationship between hard and soft power could have been significant if the study focused on relations between the opposing parties in the Afghan conflict.

South-eastern Pashtun tribes

The *Loya Paktya* region is part of the Pashtun belt, which starts in eastern Afghanistan and runs all the way to south-western Afghanistan (please see appendix – A, figure - 3.). This part of the literature review will take a general look at all Pashtuns, while also describing some specifics about *Loya Paktya* and its Pashtun tribal setting.

Pashtuns, also called Pathans or Pakhtuns, are described as the largest tribally organized society around the world, living on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border (Barfield, 2007; Bernt, 2002; Karokhail & Schmeidl, 2006). Traditional Pashtun myth mentions the man Khalid ben Walid—a close lieutenant of the Prophet Mohammad—as the father of all Pashtuns (Bernt, 2002). Pashtuns form the biggest of all ethnic groups in Afghanistan (Barfield, 2007; Kakar, 2003; Rais, 2008; Ross, 2010). Pashtuns have dominated political power since King Ahmad Shah Durrani established modern Afghanistan in 1774 (Barfield, 2007; Ross, 2010). The Pashtuns in Afghanistan are divided into two main branches: *Durranies* in the southwest, and *Ghilzaies* or *Gheljaies* in the east and southeast. Some Pashtuns in south-eastern Afghanistan and in Pakistan also call themselves *Karianies* (Barfield, 2007; Hoffman, 2009). *Gheljai* Pashtuns have always played a dominant role during conflict, while *Durrani* Pashtuns have always ruled the country. Barfield (2007) writes that it is not only the non-Pashtun ethnic groups of Afghanistan that see the Pashtun domination of power since 1774 as monolithic; *Gheljai* Pashtuns think they did not get what they deserved, either.

The Pashtun tribal system varies from region to region (Giustozzi & Ullah, 2006). In the low lands, it is feudalized, hierarchical, and prone to state control; in mountainous areas it is egalitarian (Ross, 2010). Barfield (2007) states: “the Pashtun ethos in *Ghilzaies* is egalitarian—each individual is no better by birth than any other” (p. 11). The mountainous terrain in *Loya Paktya* made the areas less influenced by the state, and as a result, the tribal structure remained more intact and stronger than other parts of the Pashtun belt (Giustozzi & Ullah, 2006). The overall Pashtun tribe has many sub-tribes, and each sub-tribe is divided into smaller clans. The land is divided along those sub-divisions. Pashtuns use tribal order (sub-divisions) in times of both conflict and solidarity; a Pashtun always sides with the one he shares the nearest ancestor (Bernt, 2002). One phrase shows that: “me against my brothers; my brothers and me against our cousins; my brothers, cousins and me against the world” (Barfield, 2007, p. 11). In south-eastern Afghanistan, tribes are divided into two socio-political groups—the white faction and the black faction (*gund*) (Bernt, 2002). In conflict and in dispute situations one tribe sides with another tribe, only if they are from the same faction (Bernt, 2002).

Barfield describes a Pashtun as someone who speaks the Pashtu language, hails from a Pashtun father, and practices “*Pashtunwali*”—the Pashtun code of ethics. Scholars describe *Pashtunwali* in different ways. Barfield (2007) defines *Pashtunwali* as “a code of conduct [for Pashtuns] that stresses personal autonomy and equality of political rights in a world of equals” (p. 11). Kakar (2003) calls it “a customary law in rural Pashtun majority areas” (p. 1). *Pashtunwali* stresses honor above all else (Barfield, 2007). The code is composed of honor, hospitality, gender boundaries (or “*namus*”), and the institution of “*jirga*” (Kakar, 2003). Although Pashtuns, most of whom are conservative Hanafi Sunni Muslims, claim that *Pashtunwali* has Islamic base, Islamic scholars often see it as contrary to Islam (Kakar, 2003).

Adhering to *Pashtunwali* requires adhering to honour; without honor, a person is not considered Pashtun. Nor is he given any right, protection, or support from the community (Kakar, 2003). Roy (1990) calls it “a body of common law which has evolved its own sanctions and institutions,” and “code and an ideology” (as cited in Strickland, 2007, p.3). Strickland (2007) states that, not just soldiers, but diplomats and aid workers working in Afghanistan must understand the functions of *Pashtunwali*.

These are the different tenets of *Pashtunwali*:

Hospitality means feeding strangers and friends, giving presents, and defending guests (Kakar, 2003). Hospitality bolsters a person’s honour and social network, which leads to more authority (Kakar, 2003).

Namus is defined by anthropologists as defending the honor of women, which is not the same as honor bolstered by acting upon hospitality, for instance (Kakar, 2003). According to the rules for namus, men are restricted from stepping into any space reserved for women (Kakar, 2003).

The *jirga* system is the way tribes make common policy and decisions (Kakar, 2003). It aims to be an egalitarian decision-making body (Ruttig, 2009). Johnson and Mason, as cited in Ross (2010), states that 95 percent of the disputes in Pashtun areas are resolved by group consensus. In smaller *jirgas*, every experienced male can take part, but in a provincial or higher-level *jirga* there is a representation system (Kakar, 2003). A *jirga* does not have a chairman; therefore it lasts very long; until every participant consents to a final decision. A *jirga*, common among Pashtuns, has to be differentiated from a “shura” (or a council), which has a religious base and is common in other parts of Afghanistan (Kakar, 2003). Beside a *jirga*, there are other institutions such as an “arbaki,” “mesher” and “maliks” (Ruttig, 2009).

An arbaki is a tribal force consisting of single men from different tribes in one territory who implement the decisions made by the *jirga* (Kakar, 2003; Ruttig, 2009).

Tribal leaders or meshers and maliks are two other institutions in the Pashtun tribal structure. The *jirga* limits the credibility and power of the tribal leader, but his reach is still helped by giving hospitality, bringing resources to the tribe from the outside, and showing rhetorical qualities, sound judgment in the *jirga*, and gallantry in a conflict time (Bernt, 2003). During the long conflict, as security became a main concern for people, the ability to manage an armed group also became a criterion that added to the credibility of a leader (Giustozzi & Ullah, 2006).

Ross (2010) argues that the tribal structure in general has been weakened all over Afghanistan, both by globalization (e. g. migration) and the long conflict (e.g., the culture of the gun). However, the tribal system in remote areas remained comparatively unharmed. The fact that the tribal structure in *Loya Paktya* is still relatively intact, strong, and unified is what makes this region of Afghanistan particularly prospective to a tribal approach. More intact tribal institutions establish enforceable obligations on members of tribes in this region (Dorransoro, 2009).

Rationale for a tribal approach in Loya Paktya.

The negative perception among Afghans about international forces varies in different parts of Afghanistan. The greater the insurgency, the higher the level of violence, and as the higher the level of violence erupts, the greater the negative perception becomes. A major part of insecurity in the south-eastern region is because of the international forces' "modus operandi" (Gregg, 2009, p. 6). The negative popular perception of the foreign forces in south-eastern Afghanistan is among the worst in the country. The U.S. military, based in the area as part of

ISAF, is now perceived more as an enemy than as a guest—like U.S. troops were perceived when they first came to Afghanistan. In addition, ISAF soldiers have had little contact with locals, and their objectives remain vague to the tribesmen (Dorrnsoro, 2009).

It is the rural Pashtun-dominated areas in Afghanistan that show more support for the Taliban than urban and non-Pashtun dominated areas (Dorrnsoro, 2009). South-eastern Afghanistan or *Loya Paktya* is one of the insurgent-dominated regions when it is measured against the level and power of the insurgency in the country, too (Dorrnsoro, 2009). Similarly, Hoffman (2009) argues that Pashtun belt in Afghanistan and Pakistan is the center of gravity for the insurgents and Al-Qaeda; without the Pashtuns' support the enemy will disappear. Hoffman (2009) adds that it is also the *Ghilzai* and *Kariani* Pashtuns, [*Loya Paktya* tribes some of them], whose young generation make up the newest Taliban fighters. Ruttig (2009) in his book, *Loya Paktya's Insurgency*, claims that "the coherence of the ⁷Haqqani network [the biggest Taliban group in the area] is based on a combination of tribal and ideological loyalties" (p. 72). Ruttig's argument makes the Pashtun tribes in south-eastern Afghanistan "the core audience... or the single most important driving force" (Gressang, 2001, p. 11) for the given insurgents' network in the area. According to U.S. military in Gregg (2009), the Haqqani network is the most lethal Taliban organization and the main source of attacks against American and Afghan forces in south-eastern Afghanistan.

South-eastern Afghanistan is also an area of great security significance for the whole country (Gregg, 2009). Support from *Loya Paktya* tribes significantly helped maintain stability

⁷ Jalaluddin Haqqani was a jihadi leader who fought the Soviets' occupation in Afghanistan. He was also the minister of tribal and border affairs during the Taliban regime. He is originally from Zadran tribe in south-eastern Afghanistan. Currently his network, the Haqqani Network is led by his son Sarajuddin Haqqani. Haqqani Network is one of the main branches of Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan.

for different Afghan governments in the past. Olesen (1995) claims: “Pashtun tribes [once] formed the military and political backbone of the Afghan kingdoms, in the past” (p. 29). Gregg (2009) argues that “if the tribes chose to support the insurgency rather than to resist it, or simply chose to challenge the legitimacy of the state by refusing to work with it, the government would be rendered quite powerless” (p. 4).

Tribal engagement for peace building should be tried only in areas where tribal institutions are strong; a generic approach must be avoided (Jalali, 2009). South-eastern Afghanistan has a tribal system that remains more intact and stronger than in other parts of Afghanistan (Gregg, 2009; Ruttig, 2009). *Loya Paktya* tribes have their own traditional tribal institutions—tribal leader, tribal liaison with government, the decision-making body (*jirga*), and the Pashtun code (*Pashtunwali*) (Gregg, 2009; Rais, 2008; Ruttig, 2009); knowing those is essential to frame communication opportunities with the tribes. Dorronsoro (2009) adds that in south-eastern Afghanistan, the structure of the Pashtun tribes and their institutions establish enforceable obligations on tribe members. Also the stronger institutions equip south-eastern Pashtun tribes in Afghanistan with peaceful and coercive potentials for conflict settlement in the given tribal society. Gregg (2009) argues that a meaningful management of the abilities of south-eastern Pashtun tribes could help the overall effort to bring stability and security in Afghanistan; however, doing the opposite will make the increasingly difficult situation in the country more troublesome for both the Afghan government and ISAF (Gregg, 2009). The latter arguments clearly advocate the tribal approach for conflict resolution in south-eastern Afghanistan. Therefore this study focuses on communication to tribes as a means for conflict resolution.

Tribes for Conflict Resolution in Afghanistan and Other Conflict Areas

The word “tribe” means a group of people, organized and related to one another based on blood or genealogical ties (McCallister, 2007). Members of tribes harken back to one base ancestor, or “jid” (p. 24), but they may not be the direct descendants of that ancestor (McCallister, 2007). Early British anthropology used the term “tribe” for small ethnic groups living in underdeveloped areas. But in western territories of the Indian subcontinent—home also to Afghanistan-- the term “tribe” was always linked to nobility, pride, honor, honesty, and dependability; it never meant being inferior (Bernt, 2002). McCallister (2007) states that “tribes are political, economic and security systems” (p. 24), while Bernt (2002) argues that tribes are social structures, and the idea of calling a tribe a political system needs research. Both Bernt and McCallister agree that tribes should not be looked at as isolated people living in remote areas.

Giustozzi and Ullah (2006) say:

Tribalism and ethnicity are often lumped together, and both are blamed as main factors of turmoil, war and of the breakdown of state order, but there are reasons to assume that the tribal structure of Afghanistan is rather a factor of stability (p.12).

The long conflict in Afghanistan had a devastating impact on all parts of Afghans’ lives, and the traditional social structure of Afghan society was no exception. Although the long conflict damaged the tribal system, authors like Mason (2009) argue that the tribal system is not completely dead (as cited in Ross, 2010). Similarly, Gregg (2009) and Misdaq (2010) as cited in Ross (2010) agree that the tribal structure in the *Loya Paktya* region remains more intact than elsewhere in Afghanistan, which means it is still an asset to conflict resolution. Cathell (2009) argues that Tribes can be organized to fight the Taliban (as cited in Ross, 2010). Ross (2009) also writes from Grand and Blatt, who depict on their experiences as U.S. Special Forces officers in Afghanistan and says that the tribal engagement is the most effective technique for

counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. Ross (2010) and Jalali (2009) disagree with an all-inclusive tribal approach for peace-building in all over Afghanistan.

Some scholars take an even stronger stand against tribal engagement. For instance, Ross (2010) quotes Bernard Rubin as saying that turning the current Afghan tribal structure into its traditional shape is “making an aquarium out of fish soup” (p. 40). Foust (2010), a former researcher with the U. S. Army Human Terrain System (HTS), cannot define Pashtun tribes, and therefore does not support tribal engagement in the Pashtun areas (as cited in Ross, 2010). Matthews cautions against training the Pashtun tribesmen and recommends U.S. forces based in Pashtun areas occupy higher grounds in the Pashtun areas (as cited in Ross, 2010). However, his recommendation is based on the British colonial model between 1849 and 1947, when the Mehsod and Wazir Pashtun tribes from across the border in Pakistan fought British forces after being trained by them.

Others worry that empowering tribes will generate warlords, a very challenging phenomenon to future security. Conversely, Giustozzi and Ullah (2006) disagree and explain that the Pashtun belt in Afghanistan, especially those Pashtuns living in mountainous regions encompassing *Loya Paktya*, has never been a fertile ground for warlords. The egalitarian tribal structure there let few warlords emerge, and few of those who do last long (Giustozzi & Ullah, 2006).

The entire idea of tribal engagement for peace building and fighting the Taliban first came from U.S. military practices in Al-Anbar province in Iraq (see Malkasian, 2008, & McCary, 2009). Malkasian (2008) compares two approaches to counterinsurgency in Al-Anbar province in Iraq-the indirect approach, and the clear-hold-build approach. In the clear-hold-build approach, the U.S. forces in Iraq did the counterinsurgency operation by themselves; while in the

indirect approach, they used less of their forces and relied more on indigenous forces, both from local tribes and the Iraqi military (Malkasian, 2008). McCary (2009) writes, “The resulting marriage of tribal support and local knowledge, combined with U.S. military power, produced dramatic results almost overnight in a region previously considered lost behind all repair” (p. 14). McCary (2009) links the success of a tribal approach in Al-Anbar, Iraq, to U.S. military commanders who had looked for culturally accepted measures to influence tribes and to use tribal dynamics against the insurgency. The article quotes a deceased leader of Al-Anbar province who said: “Our American friends had not understood us when they came. They were proud, stubborn people and so were we. They worked with the opportunists, [and] now they have turned to the tribes, and this is as it should be” (McCary, 2009, p. 1). McCary (2009) points to tribal sheikhs in Al-Anbar as the traditional holders of power, men capable and credible, who decide whether their tribesmen serve as willing foot soldiers in the insurgency. McCary (2009) recommends that in other conflicts, such as the ones in tribal areas in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the same conscious assessment of local social patterns should be applied.

Pashtun tribal institutions, such as tribal leaders (the khan, or mesher), the decision-making body (the *jirga*), the tribal intermediaries with the government (the maliks), and the enforcement body (the arbaki), still remain very strong (Gregg, 2009). Among them the arbaki, a locally recruited tribal force, is well respected among tribesmen and has been used to protect the area against external aggression and to protect natural resources in the area (Gregg, 2009). Therefore, if the tribes are convinced to help with peace building members of the arbaki can provide a potential indigenous force to fight against the insurgency. That will in turn contribute to security in south-eastern Afghanistan.

Malkasian (2008) also discusses the main division between policymakers, military officers, and scholars about the counterinsurgency in Iraq. One group stated that the counterinsurgency in Iraq needed even more U.S. troops to protect the local population, but the second group argued that too many U.S. forces generated resistance by reinforcing the image of an occupation in Iraq (Malkasian, 2008). In Afghanistan, as well, the number of foreign troops has been continuously increased, but the outcome has only been more casualties for conflicting parties and the civilians. For instance, in 2008, 155 U.S. troops died; but in 2010, 416 U.S. troops died because of armed conflict with insurgents (iCasualties, 2010). The number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan was 48,250 (O'Bryant & Waterhouse, 2008) and currently it is 90000 (ISAF, 2010).

The above discussion presents clear examples supporting the necessity of an approach to local tribes for conflict resolution in an area of armed conflict. But neither Malkasian (2008) nor McCary (2009) highlight the communication approach that convinced Al- Anbar tribes to help with peace building efforts in the province. Green (2009) says that Afghan tribal engagement should be different than in Iraq; in Iraq tribes coexisted with Iraqi modern states in the past, while Afghan tribes did not. Green (2009) also says an Afghan tribal approach copied from Iraq is problematic. Lefever (2010) calls the creation of an Afghan national auxiliary police, from 2006 to 2008, and in areas with a shaky tribal system, a failure.

Barfield (2007) says that the U.S. troops look at *Pashtunwali*, the cultural code of the Pashtun tribes, as a magic bullet to end the conflict. However, Ross (2010) mentions that the U.S. military rewards killing the enemy more than situational awareness. Some obstacles to tribal engagement include tension between soldiers who favor fighting and those who support cultural expertise; problems with the military bureaucracy putting timely programs in place to raise

cultural awareness; and short tours for military personnel in Afghanistan (Barfield, 2007). The U.S. military has started three different programs to try to raise awareness about tribes, though—⁸CAOCL, ⁹MCIA, and ¹⁰HTS (Ross, 2010).

The above review of literature underscores the deep rooted and complex causes of the Afghan armed conflict. One of the factors behind the extension of the conflict is the growing negative perception in the Pashtun belt in Afghanistan where the violence from the current conflict has more negative consequences to the population there. Although south-eastern Pashtun tribal community, one of the regions in the Pashtun belt, still possesses a more intact and stronger tribal structure that gives them the ability to help with peace, such negative perceptions make them unwilling to help the current efforts for building peace. Unfortunately, there have been very few efforts by the ISAF forces based there to maintain contact with local tribes and to remove the negative perception against them. Considering the potentials in the given tribal community and the intensity of the conflict, this study explores the components of a persuasive communication approach, which is hoped to help ISAF to get the tribes out from their current unwillingness and involve them in helping to build peace in the future.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

Communication researchers use qualitative interview research (Warren, 2002), to study communication practices and processes (Keyton, 2006). Keyton (2006) adds that interview is a practical qualitative method to find out how people think and feel about their communication practices. Baxter and Babbie (2004) explain: “when a researcher wants an in-depth

⁸ CAOCL is Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning established in 2005 (Marine Corps, 2008.)

⁹ MCIA is Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (Marine Corps Base Quantico, n. d.)

¹⁰ HTS is Human Terrain System established in 2006 (U.S. Army Human Terrain System, 2011)

understanding of an interviewee's perceptions and feelings in his or her own words, a qualitative interview is the method of choice" (p. 326). Stewart (2002) explains that qualitative interview is used to produce descriptive data with great depth. It is also used to learn about events and interactions that cannot be directly observed (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Given that this study focuses on communication as a potential means for future conflict resolution in Afghanistan, and more specifically, the essentials of rhetorical communication in the Pashtun tribal setting in south-eastern (*Loya Paktya* region) Afghanistan, interview research as a method of data collection was determined to better suit to carry out this study. As such, qualitative interview method was employed to answer the following research questions that are based on literature reviewed in the previous section:

Research Questions

RQ 1: What are the essentials of communication to persuade members of the tribes to take part in conflict resolution and peace building in south-eastern Afghanistan?

RQ 1.1: What characteristics of speakers make them credible in a Pashtun tribal setting in south-eastern Afghanistan?

RQ 1.2: What important values in a Pashtun tribal context should be appealed to during communication to the south-eastern tribal community?

RQ 1.3: What important reasoning in a Pashtun tribal context should be appealed to for persuading the south-eastern tribal community?

RQ 2: How can communication become a soft power in order to influence the choice of south-eastern Pashtun tribes in Afghanistan to take part in conflict resolution and peace building?

Participants

Initially it was proposed to recruit 12 participants in two categories—9 tribal members and 3 experts on the south-eastern Pashtun tribal structure. However, more participants than expected wanted to take part in the research. Knowing that “the larger the sample, the lower the potential for sampling error” (Stewart, 2002, p. 55), I ended up recruiting a total of 17 participants—13 tribal members and 4 experts on south-eastern Pashtun tribes.

Sampling

Different non-probability sampling methods (Keyton, 2006; Stewart, 2002) were employed to recruit participants in both categories. Keyton states that when communication variables are believed to be distributed throughout a population, non-probability sampling is used (2006). Building on Keyton’s argument, this study, which explores persuasion (a communication to influence choice) and its variables in south-eastern tribal community of *Loya Paktya*, favored non-probability sampling method to recruit participants.

Since I covered south-eastern Afghanistan as a journalist, I was able to contact and recruit primary participants through my personal networks of friends and sources. Later I used “snowball sampling” (Keyton, 2006), in which primary research participants referred me to other possible participants (e.g., experts on the Pashtun tribal structure). Knowing that Pashtuns in *Loya Paktya*, the “target population” (Keyton, 2006), live in three provinces—*Khost*, *Paktya*, and *Paktika* (Gregg, 2009), “quota sampling” (Keyton, 2006) was used to recruit an equal number of participants from the three provinces. “Convenience sampling” (Keyton, 2006), also called availability sampling, was applied to interview only those participants who could travel to Kabul city to be interviewed (e.g., members of parliament from the three provinces).

Additionally, participants were chosen using certain inclusion criteria. Tribal members had to be member of a Pashtun tribe in the *Loya Paktya* region; have lived in the region at the time of recruitment; and represent a tribe at some level. Experts on south-eastern Pashtun tribes had to have an up-to-date knowledge of the history and setting of south-eastern Pashtun tribes, and be from the Pashtun ethnic group. Participants in both categories were required to be at least 18 years old.

Data Collection Procedure

Semi-structured, face-to-face interview (Warren, 2002) was applied as the only data collection technique. Although a face-to-face interview consumed more time and money to travel to the research area, or Afghanistan, for this study it was preferred over electronic interviews—email, messenger, or telephone (Opdenakker, 2006) for the following reasons. Email interviews were not possible due to the scarcity of the internet in Afghanistan and participants' low level of computer and internet literacy. Although telephone interviews were possible, developing rapport and relationships with participants over the telephone would have been difficult. Keyton (2006) argues that “without the face-to-face interaction and the corresponding nonverbal cues, the opportunity is missed to check out participant sincerity or confusion” (p. 270). Shuy (2002) favors in-person interviews for a complex research subject and for a higher response rate.

I obtained the approval of the Research Ethics Board (REB) before entering the field to collect data. The biggest concern for the REB was my safety and security during fieldwork. Therefore, based on the REB recommendations, all interviews took place in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. Observation, another common means of data collection in qualitative research (Creswell, 2009), of participants' communication process with ISAF personnel was not possible for security reasons in south-eastern Afghanistan.

All participants were contacted by phone, at least twice, before being interviewed. All 16 interviews took place from January 5 to January 25, 2011, in Kabul. Some participants were already in Kabul, but some traveled all the way from their provinces, and one from another country, to participate in the research. All participants were passionate about the topic and enthusiastically took part in the research study. This made building rapport and trust much easier.

Participants were interviewed in a comfortable place of their choosing and a convenient time –9 participants in their homes, and 6 in their offices. One group interview of 2 participants was held in a mosque. Interviewing participants in their homes was a concern during the review of the project by the REB; however, I explained to the REB that participants had the option of coming to the researcher. I also explained that interviewing the representative of a tribe in his home or office is a way of paying respect in the Afghan culture, which also put the interviewee at ease about his or her safety and security during the interview. In addition, it helped build trust between the researcher and participant.

15 participants were interviewed individually, while 2 were interviewed in a group. In group settings, participants often feel comfortable; comments from one participant trigger similar information from other participants (Stewart, 2002). However, in individual interviews participants share private information without being concerned about confidentiality and anonymity (Stewart, 2002). The duration of each interview ranged from 30 to 120 minutes and depended on the ability of the interviewee to understand questions and give concise answers. I had to simplify interview questions by paraphrasing them into plain and understandable language for some participants; the semi-structured interview gives such freedom to researchers (Keyton, 2006). Interviews were done in Pashtu, the primary language for both the researcher and the participants.

Interviews followed the steps included in an interview protocol already translated in the Pashtu language (please see Appendix - C). Before each interview, participants were given enough time to read the consent form and decide on their participation in the research study. I verbally reiterated and reemphasized the issues of voluntary participation, the right to withdraw from the research at any time during or after the interview, and the issues of anonymity and confidentiality (Keyton, 2006). Before the interview, individual participants and I signed two copies of the consent form.

After participants signed the consent form, all interviews were audio recorded for accurate and thorough translation and transcription. Stewart (2002) states that recording an interview allows the interviewer to catch details in answers, and follow up with focused questions.

Each interview started with warm-up questions (e. g., general questions about the security situation in *Loya Paktya*, background information on the participants, etc.). The transition was easily made to theoretical and in-depth questions. Knowing that concepts such as communication, persuasion, and soft power were new to most of the participants, a semi-structured interview offered a degree of flexibility to follow up and probe ambiguous and important issues and to paraphrase questions if participants did not understand (Baxter & Babbie, 2004). Therefore, a semi-structured interview was favored over a structured interview. An unstructured interview (Punch, 2005) was avoided, to stay focused on the specifics of this study.

I was concerned about participants possibly exaggerating or understating facts. One technique I constantly used to prevent too much subjectivity by participants was mirroring respondents' answers in the follow-up questions (Stewart, 2002) to get further details.

Similarities between the researcher and participants may enhance the quality of data and the level of comfort with participants, but the downside is that the researcher may not notice some interactions (Keyton, 2006). However, I used my Pashtun background as an asset to building rapport and trust, to bringing balance in subjectivity, and to making sure I was aware of any understatement or exaggerations by participants. My interviewing skills and experience as a former journalist in Afghanistan helped me in many ways. I knew the cultural “do’s” and “don’t’s” in interviewing tribal elders, chief of clans, experts, and ordinary Pashtun women and men. Keyton (2006) explains that “pleasant conversational posture..., the tone..., and nonverbal behavior” (p. 258) are very important while speaking to participants. Sitting on the floor (e.g., legs crossed); having a smile on your face; and showing that you are listening rigorously to your participant are a few important hints to remember when interviewing in a Pashtun context.

Another experience for me during research was interviewing two female participants. Considering the Pashtun gender boundaries (Kakar, 2003), I had to be careful during my interactions with them. I had to find common ground with the women to increase their response rate. Revealing that I am a father and a husband put the participants at ease. Reiharz and Chase (2002) recommends that “self-disclosure” and developing “sisterly bond” during the interview helps put female participants at ease.

Data Analysis

Corbin and Strauss (2008) define qualitative data analysis as “a process of examining and interpreting data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge” (p. 1). Data analysis, regardless of the analytical technique involves two distinctive processes—analysis and interpretation (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Analysis is labeling data to find

patterns, themes, concepts and propositions, while interpretation is giving meaning to those patterns, themes, concepts and propositions (Keyton, 2006).

Analysis in this study started from transcribing all interviews, analyzing the data produced by the interviews, verifying the data, and finally reporting the analysis (Kavale, 1996, as cited in Keyton, 2006). The process of analysis started only after completing the data collection in Kabul. Thematic analysis (Keyton, 2006), “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 3) was employed as an analytic method. The process followed a linear, step by step, thematic analysis—familiarizing myself with the text while transcribing it; coding; searching; reviewing; and defining themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006), before producing the report. Participants’ responses were translated and transcribed verbatim.

NVivo-9 computer software (Bazeley, 2007; Gibbs & Graham, 2002) was used to code the large amount of textual data (more than 120,000 words) produced from 16 interviews. NVivo-9 software, developed by QSR International, helps researchers easily organize and analyze unstructured information so that they can quickly arrive at findings (QSR International, 2007).

In this study, NVivo-9 was used to store, manage, search, retrieve, and code data, while the analysis was done by the researcher, as software cannot replace the human capacity to think, reflect, and analyze (Bazeley, 2007; Gibbs & Graham, 2002; Lacey & Luff, 2009).

For the second step, the whole data set, translated and transcribed earlier, was imported into the software for coding. Corbin and Strauss (2008) define coding as “extracting concepts from raw data and developing them in terms of their properties and dimensions” (p. 159). The coding process followed theoretical (deductive or top down) thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The credibility of the speaker, the logical appeal of the message, an emotional appeal to

the audience, and communication as soft power in a south-eastern Pashtun tribal setting made the four pre-determined overarching themes which derived from the research questions. In addition, data were examined inductively, or from the bottom up (Braun & Clarke, 2006) for emergent themes, if there were any.

All extracts from 16 items were examined for both surface (semantic) and underlying meaning (latent) under the four overarching themes as in (appendix – A, Table – 4). Recurrence, repetition, and forcefulness, the three criteria for coding data (Keyton, 2009), were taken into consideration while coding 16 interviews for themes under the four overarching themes. A unit of coding ranged from a single sentence to a complete answer composed of paragraph/s as in (Appendix – A, Table – 5).

Initial coding in NVivo-9, of the whole data set (16 transcribed interviews) produced 480 nodes (initial categories) which consisted of 1,464 references (coded extracts). Appendix – A, Table – 6, and 7 detail the contents of the generated nodes. Only theoretical nodes (79% of data) were the ones used for further analysis, while extra nodes (21%) were not.

At this stage, constant comparison (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) was used to find similarities and differences among 379 initial theoretical nodes (categories). I found that some extracts of the data from one category also matched the properties of other categories. In NVivo-9, the cross-coding technique addressed that issue. In addition, the high number of categories had to be brought under a small number of big themes. After comparing the dimensions and properties of nodes, all were collapsed under 13 big categories (themes). The tree-node technique in NVivo-9 was used to shrink the number of categories after constant comparison. In tree-node, different nodes became a child node under a parent node (Bazeley, 2007). Finally, the analysis revealed 13 themes, which are presented in a thematic map in Appendix – A, Table – 8.

Chapter Four: Results

A huge body of text (120,000 words) had been produced by 16 semi-structured in-depth interviews. This large body of data had to be brought to a manageable volume. After constant reading and comparison of the whole data in NVivo-9, 21% data was separated as 101 extra nodes (labels), while 79% data in 370 theoretical nodes were analyzed further. Please see Appendix – A, Table – 6. As detailed in the previous chapter, the constant comparison of the 370 theoretical nodes in NVivo-9, generated 13 themes, of which 10 were related to Aristotelian persuasion (rhetoric), and 3 themes were soft power-related. The property and dimension of the 13 generated themes are illustrated in Appendix – A, Table 9-12. In addition, please see appendix – A, Table – 13 for detailed information regarding participants' socio-demographic characteristics.

During the semi-structured interviews participants were asked about the building blocks of the three persuasion appeals (ethos, logos, and pathos) in the Pashtun tribal setting of *Loya Paktya* as a separate cultural domain. Participants' perspective have been used both in paraphrased and direct quotation forms to provide support for the themes discussed below.

Credibility of the Speaker

From participants' perspectives, speaker's credibility was revealed to play a crucial role in persuading the south-eastern Pashtun tribal community for peace building. Appendix – A, Table – 14, shows the overall coverage of three themes under speaker's credibility.

1- Credibility in the speaker-Pashtun relation.

Showing respect to Pashtun tribesmen, speaker being tribe-centered, and speaker's trustworthiness among tribesmen were found to be three variables in the speaker-Pashtun relation affecting speaker's credibility.

Showing respect to Pashtuns.

According to different participants, regardless of whether a speaker is known or unknown to tribesmen,¹¹s/he has to show respect to Pashtuns' values during communication, especially, their strong religious, national, and tribal values. Patang, a tribal leader from members' category who is also a former member of parliament (MP) and a tribal leader, explained that if ISAF troops want to work with tribes, first, they should respect Pashtuns' religious, national and tribal values. Naim, a participant and a current MP from the region also suggested that ISAF forces based in *Loya Paktya* have to demonstrate when talking to south-eastern Pashtuns that their goal is not to harm people's belief, neither have they come here to disrespect or harm the religion of Islam.

Being tribe-centered.

Several participants suggested that a credible communicator has to be someone who is tribe-centered rather than self-centered to become persuasive in the tribal community of *Loya Paktya*. Participants recommended that a speaker who has served the interests of his tribe is respected and popular among his fellow tribesmen. Participants also pointed that speakers who have served people's interests rather than working for their own fame and name are charismatic leaders. Dagar, a former MP from the region, recalled his campaign during the last parliamentary election that won him the seat:

I did not ask them to vote for me, but did ask them to take part in the election and show their valor and bravery. All my tribesmen became ready to take part in the election and voted to whomever they wanted to vote.

¹¹ The subject pronoun (He) is used for all opinion leaders (e.g., tribal leaders, religious scholars and spiritual leaders) in *Loya Paktya*, who are almost all male. If (S/he) is used, it means the speaker could be both known (e.g., local opinion leaders) and unknown speaker (e.g., a foreign soldier).

Sarwar, an expert of the Pashtun tribal structure from *Khost* province explained the story of a beloved leader from *Loya Paktya*:

We had a leader who was ready to lose but never withstood the loss of his fellow tribesmen; he helped people when he could. [Therefore] he had created a special place for himself in the heart of the people of *Loya Paktya*.

Haqbeen, a participant in experts' category and a Pashtu language scholar, argued that a leader with national sentiment never exploits communication opportunities for his personal interests. According to Patang, a trusted leader among the Pashtun tribes in south-eastern Afghanistan should be independent who should never serve his own interests or any military or partisan's interests. Shaker a current MP stressed: "A trusted leader never think of his own personal gains."

Trustworthiness.

The third element in the speaker-Pashtun relation from participants' perspective was speaker's trustworthiness among tribesmen in the given tribal setting. Speaker's trustworthiness was revealed to contribute greatly to a persuasive communication process in south-eastern tribal setting. Ismail, a tribal expert from eastern Afghanistan said: "strengthening the trust relation between speaker and the audience is crucial in persuasion." Khpelwak, a tribal leader from *Paktya* province explained:

Building trust among tribesmen in south-eastern Afghanistan is very important. If a person, who is not trusted by tribesmen, goes and asks tribesmen to help him solve a problem or dispute, people will not help him, since he might have lost trustworthiness among people, but if a trusted man or leader is sent to a village, tribesmen will show up [to help him].

Participants also pointed to ISAF soldiers and the issues that affect their trustworthiness among south-eastern tribesmen. Jalal a young participant from *Paktya* Province thought that "foreign soldiers will not be trusted unless they practice what they preach to people." Ismail

supported Jalal's point and said, "People are very smart and careful and they will never be deceived by false promises." Khpelwak recommended: "Talk and promise as much as your ability allows you." Shaker emphasized: "For foreigners to build trust and relation with the Pashtuns in south-eastern Afghanistan, they have to remain honest and committed to what they promise to tribes. Dagar explained: "how can we influence the Pashtuns? We have to be honest and committed to what we promise to people [the Pashtuns]. We need to respect people and must show everything in practice; what we say in words we must accomplish."

Dagar argued that those speakers who understand the language and the expectation of tribesmen are found to be trusted by tribesmen. Dagar also supported the idea of local tribal and religious leaders, selected by people, as better trusted and persuasive speakers. He added that the tribes in south-eastern Afghanistan respect their tribal and religious leaders who understand the will of their fellow tribesmen and share the pains and suffering they are going through. Similarly, Ismail supported the idea of local leaders as trusted communicators and said: "tribesmen listen to speakers from their own tribe, who have lived with them and speak their language."

Tawan, a tribal leader and an expert stated: "trustworthiness comes to being when a speaker has other qualities such as honesty, confidence, knowledge, experience, dynamism, power, and good behaviour with subordinates." Sarwar believed that today's trusted speakers are the ones who have the knowledge of the current devastating aftermaths of the Afghan conflict to the Pashtuns in south-eastern region of Afghanistan. Tawan also thought that the level of trust depends on how much power a leader has. Tawan added that the power of a leader depends on the level of backup the leader has amongst the tribesmen. Ismail argued that the number of men in a family and extended family of a leader indicates how powerful a leader is.

Sarwar indicated that despite having many good qualities, a leader may not be trusted by all people, but for sure the number of tribesmen who will support the person will outnumber those who do not support him.

2- Speaker's background.

A speaker's background was also found to be an important building block adding or deducting speaker's credibility in the Pashtun tribal setting in south-eastern Afghanistan. A speaker's background becomes important when the tribesmen know him. Therefore participants' observation of this variable was based on their institution of the tribal leader. A speaker's background was discussed in three main areas—speaker's affiliation history, speaker's family history, and speaker's personal history.

Speaker's history of affiliation.

According to participants, speaker's affiliation to and dependency on the government, foreigners, and the past and present political parties affect his credibility among south-eastern tribal community. Dagar pointed to those tribal leaders who always sit in the office of a district or provincial governor, as less credible in the eyes of their fellow tribesmen. Jalal argued: "foreigners in *Loya Paktya* have bribed some tribal leader with money in order to buy their cooperation; such leaders spend that foreign money to extend their influence on people and they are just leaders to make money." Ismail blamed widespread poverty behind some Pashtun leader's dependency on foreign diplomatic missions. He explained:

Khans and *Maliks* [two known opinion leaders among the Pashtuns] look for income resources from foreign embassies to keep their influence over tribesmen. Foreign intelligence agencies exploit the same opportunity and spread their influence among some tribal leaders; it is a blow to the fame and name of tribal leaders. People do not trust the tribal leaders as much as they used to.

Khpelwak suggested that such tribal leaders should be distinguished from those who are not corrupt. He explained:

There are many tribal leaders who like money more than anything else; they sell their homeland and their brother if paid, but there are many other leaders who do not trade their tribes and their homeland. The reason people do not come forward to help is because Americans rely on those leaders who are not respected among people.

In participants' opinions, another factor that would diminish credibility was speaker's political affiliation. Participants talked about two kinds of political parties—communist and jihadi political parties formed during the Soviet invasion, and the too many current political parties with ethnic bases. Tawan accused members of both communist and jihadi parties for past fighting and disagreement with one another, while Dagar blamed the past hostilities between different jihadi fictions to have damaged the tribal structure and its potentials. Ismail argued: “people will not believe in leaders who are part of any political parties.”

Speaker's family background.

Another variable that emerged during analysis of participant's perspective was speaker's family background, which seven participants from members' and experts' category thought to be affecting speaker's credibility in south-eastern Pashtun tribal setting. Shaker, Tawan, Ghoti, Ismail, and Khpelwak advocated for already-known speakers in *Loya Paktya* tribal setting to deliver the message to tribesmen, while Mekhawar's and Dagar's perspective was different.

Shaker said that a tribal leader having leadership history in his family is trusted among people. Tawan added: “being the son or grandson of a leader who has served the tribes well, adds to credibility of the leadership and people listen to his instructions... they [the children] become trusted leaders [one day].” Ghoti a former MP claimed that, although, a female member of the tribe does not usually become a tribal leader, her father and grandfather having the history of

leadership helped her to win enough votes to become a member of lower house in the Afghan parliament. She explained:

My father had represented my tribe in grand *jirgas* [the Pashtun tribal decision-making body] in the past. When I decided to run for parliament, people trusted me and voted for me... people still come to my house and ask me to help solve their problem.

Ismail also said: “a credible leader is someone who is from a family with leadership history among the tribes.” Khpelwak, who strongly believed in family history as an important factor in a leader’s credibility, gave this story as an example:

A person who had bought a camel complained to the seller that the camel he had sold him lied in the water and made all his cloth wet. The seller replied, ‘I had not seen him do that, but I had heard that his grandma did the same.’ If the father and grandfather of a tribal elder took bribe in the past he will do the same. Conversely, if the father and grandfather of one did not take bribe, he would not do that, either.

Mekhawar, also a two-time-MP from the region disagreed with family history adding to the credibility of a leader. He said that children and parents are not always alike in their abilities and intelligence. He explained:

Some of them [the children] do not have the competence of a shepherd; how can such person be authorized to make a decision about a whole big tribe; he may throw the whole tribe in the river [makes a big mistake]. We also have people whose father was a shepherd, but the son has the capacity and capability which can undertake a president’s responsibility.

Shaker’s perspective opposed Mekhawar’s argument. She explained:

Leadership in some tribes comes from generation to generation—the grand father is a leader and then the father becomes the leader and finally the son. People respect those whose father or grandfather have been great leader with good fame and name. People expect the children and grandchildren of the good leader to be the same as the father or grandfather.

Speaker’s personal history.

Thematic analysis of interview data revealed personal history as transforming the audience’s perception of speaker’s credibility during communication in south-eastern Pashtun tribal setting. Having lived in the tribal setting, legitimacy of past actions, impartiality in the past

decision-makings, having the knowledge of issues and disputes and how it was solved, having lived honorably among people, and having valued culture and religion of tribesmen were some of the variables related to personal history that participants discussed. Participants from both members' and experts' categories discussed personal history as a significant variable for the credibility of local speakers only. Ismail explained:

Whether a tribal leader or a religious leader, your talk will not be as credible as someone who lives among people; people think you do not share their gains and pains...in sum the local influential leaders are the best credible speakers than foreign soldiers in south-eastern Afghanistan.

Dagar claimed that his tribesmen listen to him because he is one of them. He explained: "I have lived among my people during difficult times; I have worked for them and solved their problems in the past. I do not think my people have forgotten about what I have done for them."

Akbar, a participant from members' category, also a senator from *Loya Paktya* region, argued that people will only listen to a speaker, if his past action does not contradict the advice he gives to people. He explained:

In the Pashtun society, it is common that people listen to a person who has not done the crime which he prohibits others from doing, and one who practiced the good actions which he advises others to do. It is common among all human beings, and Pashtuns are no exception.

Ismail said that speaker's personal belief gives legitimacy to what he says. He also said that the speakers' personal belief and characteristic become known as he keeps living in the same setting among the tribes. He elaborated:

If a speaker promotes patriotism, he has to have the quality in himself. Such messages [about patriotism] cannot be delivered by foreigners. [Now the question is] are foreigners ready to ask for help from a person who has those qualities?

Some human qualities and characteristics such as pride, bravery, and determination do not have physical presence to be seen; it has to be seen in ones character after that person keeps living among people for a while.

Sarwar signified the role of past decisions by a speaker as a factor affecting his credibility as persuasive on the Pashtun tribal audience. He explained:

Past decisions ending disputes are only credible if it was based on impartiality. People always keep memories of the past, and they trust those who have taken good actions for their tribes. Credibility of the past actions influences credibility of the present decisions among tribes.

Naim, a two times winner in Afghan parliament, gave a record of his own experience and his past actions adding to his confidence as well as his credibility among the audience during his election campaign speech:

When I became the MP for the first time, I got the approval to build a school for children who used to study in open area with no classroom, and under harsh weather conditions. Coincidentally, one of my campaigns in the second term parliamentary election took place at the same school. I was so proud and confident that day when talking to people in the school. A leader should always be proud of his performance in the past, not ashamed of what he has done.

3- Speaker's characteristics.

Analysis revealed personal qualities, skills and capabilities, patriotism and religiousness, and appearance and clothing, as variables of speaker's characteristics, which will change the credibility and influence of a speaker on the Pashtun audience in *Loya Paktya*.

Personal qualities.

Determination, honesty (e.g., veracity, truthfulness), courageousness (e.g., Bravery, fearlessness), being well-intentioned, generosity (e.g., hospitality), respectfulness, and being free of corruption were some qualities that participants thought would add to a speaker's credibility among tribal audience in *Loya Paktya*.

Different participants had different observation about honesty as a personal quality for a speaker. According to Sarwar, honesty is a crucial characteristic for tribal leaders who represent their tribes in peace talks. He recited a poem: "those words which come from heart, will find

their way in hearts.” Ismail said that speaker’s honesty has to be obvious to audiences, and that is when the message will be accepted. Shaker stated: “our people say that if you are honest, you are a good Muslim too.”

Dagar thought that veracity indicates honesty, and the speaker should never cover up the truth from the Pashtun audience. Mekhawar thought of honesty as being free from corruption. He said “even if a leader is talented, but corrupt, he may become a hassle for the tribe and will do business over the interests of the tribe.” Jalal, Sarwar, Dagar, and Piaworai said that keeping a promise is honesty. Sarwar further explained:

If a foreign soldier says, ‘foreign troops will not enter people’s houses without having the exact intelligence,’ and if such a promise is exercised, the second time the soldier delivers another message, he will be trusted by tribesmen in the area. Not only that, he will be respected and welcomed in the tribal community. However, if the promise is not kept and practiced, the tribes will not trust the soldier.

Jalal with similar observation recommended: “foreigners [ISAF soldiers] should start building trust among the Pashtuns. It means that whenever foreigners promise something, they have to keep that promise; if they keep promising but not accomplishing they will lose their trust among the Pashtuns.” Piaworai, a two-time-MP from the region said: “it is very easy to win the hearts and minds of tribal communities of south-eastern Afghanistan. The foreign soldiers must keep their promises and fulfill what they promise to tribes.” Dagar, too, blamed breaking a promise by ISAF soldiers and commanders as contributing to upsurge in the number of insurgents in the current conflict.

Other participants considered courageousness as an important quality in a known speaker among the Pashtun tribesmen. Tawan said that despite having no leadership history in one’s family, he will be trusted if he is famous for being brave. Tawan recalled the time of Jihad when

fighters were highly respected for fearlessness they showed during the fight against Soviets.

Shaker agreed and said: “a person who faces danger first is capable of leading others.”

Determination was revealed to be a personal quality that participants said to be admired by tribal community in *Loya Paktya*. Akbar stated that Pashtuns like someone with permanency, stability, and firmness in the position he takes. Akbar added: “a person has to have will power, and do what he says; Pashtuns do not like those who are hesitant, shaky, and unstable.”

Tawan, Shaker, and Ghoti considered being well-intentioned and being respectful, as other personal qualities adding to a speaker’s credibility.

Skills and capabilities.

Analysis of participants’ perspectives also revealed that capabilities and skills such as being expressive, well-informed, vocal, outspoken, dynamic, generous, and self-sufficient, add to a speaker’s credibility too. For instance, Shaker said that those known for their ability to find the cause of a dispute and the knowhow to solve it are credible people among tribesmen. Others thought being knowledgeable and well-informed is an asset to speaker’s credibility in south-eastern Pashtun society. Sarwar explained:

I am an educated person, but I may not have the practical knowledge a [local] tribal leader has. A tribal leader who has practical knowledge of tribal structure is a credible and trusted person among south-eastern Pashtun tribal community. The practical knowledge of one who speaks to tribes is very obvious to the Pashtun tribal audience.

Participants spoke of the need for speakers to have certain information when facing the Pashtuns. Shaker said speakers should be informed with respect to the history, territory, and language of the tribes. Ghoti said: “Pashtuns have their own social system; leaders, women, and young generation have their own places and positions in the given system.” Shahbaz, a participant from members’ category, also a military expert added: “people [Pashtun tribes in *Loya Paktya*] have their own code of ethics (*Pashtunwali*).”

Khpelwak said: “Foreigners should also inform and educate themselves about the values and habits of Pashtuns, and know what those habits and values are.” Ismail acknowledged that “people [tribes] have their local institutions and social arrangements, which foreigners do not know. Therefore they always cause trouble for themselves and for people.” Haqbeen agreed and explained:

The negative perception among people is a reaction towards actions taken by Americans. Foreign forces without knowing the spirit and mentality, traditions, and social structure, brutally bombed and killed innocent people, attacked people’s homes, which are condemned, illegal, and unacceptable actions.

Having education was said to be another asset that people in *Loya Paktya* admire in a speaker. It is because, his education enables him to bring new knowledge to the traditional tribal society, said Mekhawar.

Although hospitality and generosity add to speaker’s credibility, participants thought that only self-sufficient leaders and rich leaders could be hospitable and generous enough. Shaker said all Afghans appreciate hospitality. Patang added: “People come and visit him [a leader] and he has to have the financial ability to give food and shelter to them.” Akbar recalled the life of Babrak Khan, a well-known and credible tribal leader in *Loya Paktya* region, who was famous for generosity and hospitality.

Bader, another young participant from the region pointed that, even speaker’s vocal power matters to Pashtuns during a speech. Naim said that it is being expressive and clear when delivering a message, which adds to credibility of both known and unknown speakers among south-eastern Pashtuns. He gave an example:

People [need to know the fact] that Americans value their culture and customs. [For instance, Soldiers should say:] ‘we have not come here to disgrace or disrespect your culture and customs.’ If such clear messages are delivered, I think it will be very useful.

Patriotism and religiousness.

Analysis also revealed that passion and love for homeland as well as religiousness adds to overall credibility of a speaker, especially if combined with other personal qualities.

For instance, Khpelwak said: “Honoring our homeland is our honor.” Naim said: “A trusted leader is always patriotic; if Americans want peace, they should use those of our religious scholars and spiritual leaders who love our homeland and they possess a national stand.”

Shaker said: “Having Islamic belief is the first characteristic, which no leader could be an exception from in south-eastern Pashtun society.” Tawan said: “religious belief is the top characteristic that a messenger must have.” He added that without religiousness a person is not trusted, even if he is known for other good personal characteristics. Dagar added: “a leader who is against Islam is not a tribal leader.”

During the interview a follow-up question was asked about religiousness as a factor in a foreign soldier. Tawan answered:

People will know that the soldier is not [or may not be] a Muslim believer and they do not expect him to be religious and possess Islamic belief. In that case, tribesmen expect honesty, loyalty, and trustworthiness. But if a local leader who does not fast, pray five times a day, people do not accept him [as a leader], neither they respect him, or listen to him.

Appearance and clothing.

The analysis of participants’ perspectives indicated division between participants about physical build, disability, wearing beard, and the way a speaker dresses, contributing to speaker’s credibility in *Loya Paktya* Pashtun tribal setting. Some participants like Tawan thought that neither the appearance nor the attire is important. However, he added: “Wearing a beard is following the way of Prophet Mohammed. Despite the fact if a leader has other leadership qualities, wearing or not wearing a beard will not affect his credibility.”

All other participants agreed that physical build and disability does not add or detract from speaker's credibility. Sarwar gave an example:

We had a leader called Mamoor Ali Jan. Despite the fact that he had disability, what he possessed was honesty; he had a special love for his people. He was ready to lose, but he never withstood the loss of his tribe. He never liked luxurious life. He helped people when he could. He had created a special place for him in the hearts of people of *Loya Paktya*.

Bader, Akbar, and Sarwar thought that if a speaker wears traditional Afghan garb, the tribal community appreciates it. Sarwar said: "clothing adds to the beauty of human being, [and] if you wear old clothes, people will respect you less than if you wear new clothes." Bader said that Pashtuns in *Loya Paktya* have their own traditional clothe. He explained:

People respect you when you respect their traditions by dressing the way they dress. It is the turban and the turban crown that symbolize the Pashtuns. People do not like those leaders who do not dress in the traditional way the tribesmen do.

However, Shaker argued: "I think, showing honesty, compassion and sympathy to people and possessing good will for people are more important than the appearance of a leader."

Rationality (Reasoning to Pashtuns) in the Message

The second component of persuasion in Aristotelian approach is reasoning in the message that this research study explored. The findings revealed three themes—creating common ground, accentuating facts, and religion-based reasoning, under reasoning. Please see appendix – A, Table – 15 for overall coverage of these themes in participants' perspectives that derived from NVivo-9.

4- Creating common ground.

A total of fifteen participants during semi-structured interviews discussed creating common ground between a speaker and the tribesmen as an important building block for persuasion to occur in south-eastern Pashtun tribal community. Participants explained that a

speaker can create common ground with tribesmen in two different ways—highlighting the advantages that both ISAF and the Pashtuns share if the war ends, and also the disadvantages that both ISAF and Pashtuns share if the war continues.

Common gains in peace.

All participants agreed that both ISAF and the tribesmen would benefit in different ways if the current conflict ends. Their perspectives suggested that if such benefits are highlighted during communication with *Loya Paktya* tribal community, it will help persuasion. Sarwar explained:

First of all we have to explain what war and peace are; the difference between the two and the aftermaths of the two—good and bad. We have to explain to tribes that war brings destruction, disaster, chaos, and crises. It is an obstacle in the way of development. It destroys social arrangements in a society, while peace means love, brotherhood, and prosperity.

Participants suggested the following should be told to tribesmen. For instance, Jalal said tribes need to be told that “if the conflict is over, no foreign soldier whether American, British, or from other countries will die; [instead] they will return home sound and alive.” Sarwar suggested: “the end of the war will be the end of losing lives and money that foreign countries suffer from today.” Tawan focused on America’s worldwide reputation and said that U.S. soldiers should tell the Pashtun audience that “the worldwide hatred, which has grown against Americans, will decrease as soon as they end the war in Afghanistan.”

Ghoti said that the audiences always see what is in the message for them; the gains that Pashtuns will make after the conflict ends have to be included in the message. Mekhawar said that if he were a foreign soldier, he would say the following to the Pashtun tribesmen:

If you want to see development, get out of the current darkness; want your children to be educated, improve your economy, put an end to your current problems, want roads to be extended to your villages, earn a living with ease not with difficulty - we are here to help. People will listen and will come forward to help foreigners.

Other participants recommended the following reasoning to be included in the message. Sarwar said: “if the war ends, Pashtuns will start rebuilding their nation, capitalize in education, culture, and society. In addition they will be able to participate in the political process of their country.” Soldiers can say that establishment of peace will pave the road for further cooperation between ISAF and the Pashtun tribes, and cooperation between them is crucial for prosperity and development in the life of Afghans, suggested Haqbeen. Tawan also suggested: “Pashtuns will not live in fear anymore if the war ends. They will have a normal life—living in peace and friendship with each other.” Khpelwak said that Pashtuns would not be unpopular for the continuous fighting in their area. Mekhawar said that with peace there would be employment for people, which will subsequently prevent the oppositions to recruit their children as fighters. Jalal further explained:

The gain for tribes in *Loya Paktya* region is that they will be rescued from current misery, fighting, being attacked and harmed. The cruelty, which they suffer from right now will be over; unquestionably after that, people’s life will get better and war will end forever.

Piaworai recommended that the answer to the question of “what do I gain from the current conflict and what do you gain from the conflict” should be answered to tribes. He added: “a U.S. Soldier should explain the common advantages of the current fight for both sides.” Dagar gave an example of how such a message should be worded:

‘Hey brother, let’s work together. We will support you and you won’t let yourselves lag and get behind others. Anything we build, whether a school, clinic, or road is to put you at ease and for you to use. What do you do now? We say that you do not shelter the bad guys and we will not come to your village during the day or night.’ The tribe will definitely agree if you keep your promise; they will fight the insurgents if they use their area against foreign or government force.

Common losses if war continues.

There are certain losses that both Pashtuns and the ISAF face, which participants supported to be included in the message delivered to influence Pashtuns to join peace. Participants discussed terrorism and narcotics, which are both the aftermath of the long conflict in Afghanistan. Ghoti explained: “in my opinion the most common phenomenon that the current war generates is terrorism which affects both the tribes and the foreign forces.” She also added that although the cultivation of poppy is not common in *Loya Paktya* region, the product is exported through the region as well as to the whole world. Naim said that further conflict would only add to the complexity of the situation and expose both tribes and foreigners to many other challenges to reach peace.

Sarwar, Tawan, Akbar, Patang, and Piaworai said that all Afghans and the Pashtuns in particular comprise most of the victims in the current conflict. Tawan said that it is not only the Pashtuns and foreigners who face loss, but also all Afghans. He added: “if the war continues, our country will be destroyed, it will harm our unity, and our people will lose the opportunity to be educated; we will remain needy and dependent on others.” Sarwar said: “if we want to convince Pashtuns we have to tell them that it is the Pashtun who is killed, no matter which side he is with—the civilians, or the insurgents.” Tawan agreed and explained: “I have to say that there are more disadvantages that this war causes to us than [it does to] others.”

Tawan and Naim both recommended that the Pashtun audience have to be told about Americans facing certain problems, too. Tawan suggested: “the tribes should be told that it is not only them who die; ‘we [Americans] lose soldiers too, we face loss too. Our people will become dissatisfied if the conflict last longer.’” Naim added that both the U.S. economy and its

worldwide popularity are being damaged by the continuation of the current conflict in Afghanistan.

5- Accentuating facts.

From participants' perspectives, accentuating facts that the Pashtun tribes do not know or have doubt about is very significant in reasoning part of communication to tribesmen.

Participants suggested that during communication between ISAF and the Pashtun tribes, bringing attention to legitimacy of American presence, Pashtuns related facts, foreign and neighbours' interventions, and the Taliban related fact, will help persuade the Pashtun tribal community.

Legitimacy of the U. S. presence.

Participants thought that including the rationale behind the U.S. presence in Afghanistan has to be highlighted to the south-eastern tribes during communication with them. Participants recommended that national and international agreements behind U.S. presence, the fact that the U.S. was attacked by international terrorists who were based in Afghanistan, and that Afghan government still needs U.S. back up, are some of the grounds behind U.S. presence that should be highlighted in the message which will be delivered to the Pashtun audience.

Participants advocated for the following reasoning to be included in the message. Sarwar said: "foreigners who have come here based on an agreement from the United Nations are not invaders." The fact that many countries including the Islamic states and Afghanistan's neighbours consented to the decision that allowed foreign forces to come to Afghanistan has to be highlighted, said Piaworai. Piaworai also argued: "it was Afghanistan where U.S. was attacked from. Tribes should be told by soldiers 'now that we are still here, [it] is because your own government asked us to stay, and it is because they are still under threat.'"

Participants also thought the message should include an explanation of the objectives behind U. S. military presence and the fact that the objective is not to harm the religion of Islam or the Pashtun culture. Piaworai suggested that soldiers should say: “we have no animosity towards Afghans; we have come to protect our own country; we are not here to intervene and harm the religion of Islam, or the values of local people.” Participants also suggested that accentuating those objectives with evident examples from U.S. efforts in *Loya Paktya* would add to the legitimacy of their presence. The fact that development projects such as building schools, clinics, roads, which people need and foreign soldiers have implemented should be highlighted to tribal community, said Naim. “Who will build that for them? The foreign forces!” added Naim.

Taliban-related facts- raising awareness.

Analysis of participants’ perspectives also revealed that the realities of the Taliban insurgency, if highlighted, could become good reasoning to help persuasion for peace process in south-eastern Afghanistan. Shaker explained: “people are illiterate and they cannot analyze what the Taliban say to them or what the Taliban are doing to them. There is no one to ask where the Taliban get their support from.” She added that wrong actions of the Taliban regime such as fundamentalism, violation of women’s rights, and no policy for education, have to be highlighted in the message. During the time when the Taliban and Al-Qaeda ruled Afghanistan, there was no reconstruction, no law; these facts have to be highlighted during communication to tribal community, suggested Piaworai. Jalal suggested that the Taliban exploit unemployment and poverty among young Pashtuns and recruit them as their soldiers are other facts that must be included in the message targeting to unite south-eastern tribes. Bader recommended:

There has to be a strong team of religious scholars who should persuade people [and explain] that those [insurgents] who come to people by the name of Islam, religious

belief, jihad, and so on, are not what people think they are. If once people recognize such faces, the conflict is over.

Mekhawar said that the reality that “the Taliban are paid well by the neighbouring countries” has to be depicted in the message to the *Loya Paktya* tribes too.

Foreign and neighbours’ interventions.

The analysis revealed tremendous support in the voice of participants to highlight the external factors of Afghan conflict in the persuasive message to influence Pashtuns in *Loya Paktya* region for peace building. Akbar, Ismail, Patang, Piaworai, Tawan, Mekhawar, and Shaker were some of the participants advocating for such contents to be included in the message.

Shaker stated that Islam is being misused for political and economic goals by non-Afghan elements. Ismail explained: “the location of the current conflict is Afghanistan, the victims are Afghans, but the conflict itself is not an Afghan conflict; it is outsider’s conflict.” Ismail added that neither the technology and expenditure nor the ideology for the current conflict is Afghan’s.

Participants expressed concern about the ongoing intervention by Afghanistan neighbouring states and the analysis discovered enough ground for the issue to be included in the message. For instance, participants said that Pakistan wants to have their favourite government in Afghanistan that will serve their interests in the future. Pakistan was also thought by the participants to have interests in Afghanistan water as well as exporting its products to Afghanistan. Piaworai and Shaker both claimed that Pakistan supports the state of conflict in Afghanistan because of the disputed Durand line between the two countries that has divided the Pashtun tribes between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Shaker said:

The ominous Durand line has been the source of trouble for Afghanistan since its creation. Also Pakistan government never wants *Loya Paktya* region to have a system and live a prosperous life. Pakistan always wants Afghanistan to need Pakistan and obey what they dictate.

Patang and Tawan claimed that the opposition forces live in Pakistan, train there, and get sent from there to Afghanistan. Piaworai explained: “Pakistan has always motivated Afghans to fight each other.”

Other participants had similar thought about Iran. Iran was thought to exploit the sectarian division between Shia and Sunni Afghans. Iran was also thought to have problems, and fear from U.S. presence in Afghanistan. Therefore Iran is perceived to act very hostile towards the U.S. and the West and wants them to lose the war in Afghanistan. Other participants said that Iran wants to have a cultural and religious influence on Afghanistan. Water running from Afghanistan to Iran was perceived to be another issue that Iranians have concerns about in the future too.

Participants recommended that highlighting the non-Afghan motivations and intentions behind Afghan conflict would be informative to south-eastern Pashtun tribal community during communication for conflict resolution. Piaworai explained:

The explicit sentiment of the enemy [insurgents] should become clear to tribes. It is not Islam that the enemies are fighting for. It is a few countries that benefit from the current situation in Afghanistan and use Islam as their weapon. The vicious goals and intention of the two [neighbouring] countries should be explained to our tribal community.

Patang agreed and said: “it should be said [to tribes] ‘hey brothers, in fighting you do not benefit; you will be killed, injured, dishonoured. Pakistan and Iran are damaging you. After hearing all that, do you still want to be dishonoured?’”

Pashtuns’ own fault.

The analysis of participants’ perspective also showed that Pashtuns in *Loya Paktya* region have their own weaknesses, which contribute to the continuation of the current conflict. Participants advocated for these failures to be included in the message targeting the Pashtun tribes for peace building.

Ismail said that a Pashtun has to be told that “while the neighbouring countries privilege from the current conflict, the one who suffer, die, and are the victims of the conflict are the Pashtuns.” Tawan added that in causing current difficulties their own people [from tribal community] played a role, too. For instance, some of their own tribesmen introduced their personal rivals to foreign soldiers as insurgent in order to harm them. That, too, added to further suspicions between tribes and the Americans. Dagar pointed to the Pashtuns’ illiteracy and ignorance as their failure. He suggested soldiers to say to the tribes: “the opposition is your brother! It is your cousin or someone from your tribe, but why you are only blaming us for ill-treatment. We want to stop such ill-treatment if you stop the insurgents who are part of your tribe.”

Dagar pointed to Jalaludin Haqqani, the biggest insurgents’ commander in *Loya Paktya*, who is from Zadran tribe. He suggested that Zadran tribe must be asked to go and sit with him. “That is your children who fight under Haqqani network, please talk to them,” recommended Dagar to be told to the tribes. Dagar also suggested the following to be told to tribes:

Hey Pashtuns! It is your fault, not [ours] the American’s fault. You are responsible, aren’t you? It is your fault allowing those, who follow their personal interests, personal motives, and cause us trouble to come to your villages. It is you who have deprived and excluded yourself from being educated and to be compatible with others.

6- Religious reasoning.

Analysis of participants’ perspectives revealed that arguing with religious grounds is very convincing in the message to influence the *Loya Paktya* Pashtuns. For instance, participants advocated that tribesmen should be reminded that they are Muslims and their actions should be in accordance to Islamic and the teaching of Quran. Khpelwak explained: “we, the Afghans, are Muslims; we have a holy book called Quran. As Muslims our practices should be in accordance with Islamic and Quranic teaching.”

Jalal, Bader, and Piaworai suggested the insurgents' actions to be invalidated with religious reasoning. Piaworai gave an example: "[for instance] people should be informed that suicide is illegal in Islam. The Taliban have their own interpretation of Quran, but there has to be evident logic with which a religious scholar can talk against suicide attacks."

Piaworai recommended the fact that "Islam is the religion of brotherhood" should be instilled in people's mind. Both Piaworai and Sarwar suggested that Prophet Mohammad and his actions should be used as a role model in the message towards Pashtuns. The fact that the Prophet respected non-Muslims and signed treaty with them should be told to the Pashtun audience, added Sarwar. Sarwar argued that reasoning that people already believe in should be used to convince them. He said that such arguments could be as simple as this:

If we ask people whether we are Muslims, the answer is obvious! Yes! People should be asked whether they believe in God and Mohammad the messenger of God. The answer will be yes, then they should be asked, 'if you believe in God [participant raising his voice], why are you fighting! Our Prophet has negotiated with non-Muslims, why can't we do that?'

People are human and good believers; they will listen if examples are given to them and history of Islam is recalled to them, said Sarwar. Shaker recommended trusted religious scholars to be used for religious reasoning. Jalal said that if local trusted religious scholars are used to change people's mentality, it will work; it is because people listen to them.

Naim claims that religious reasoning is not so difficult. He recalled part of his debate with an extremist religious Imam, who promoted violence using Islamic reasoning. Naim thought his debate is a good example that could be used in a communication opportunity with south-eastern Pashtun tribesmen in Afghanistan, too. His answer to the given Imam was:

Look at the history of Islam's expansion from Saudi Arabia to Indonesia in the east and Africa in the west; it was not the force of a sword to expand Islam, but the moral and ethics among Muslims. That is why people converted to Islam... force has never been

used against anyone to join Islam. You should introduce the real face of Islam; you should not introduce Islam as the religion of violence.

Emotional Appeal

Emotional appeal, which is the third component of persuasion in Aristotelian approach revealed to be so significant in persuasive communication in the Pashtun tribal setting of *Loya Paktya*. After analysis, reinforcing what Pashtuns believe, Pashtun values, Pashtun weaknesses, and religious reasoning emerged under emotional appeal. Appendix – A, Table – 16 details the overall coverage of the given four themes by participants, which is derived from NVivo-9 software.

7- Reinforcing what Pashtuns believe.

Participants recommended that including in the message what Pashtuns already believe will touch their emotion and can help to persuade them to support building peace. Variables of this theme are as follows.

Mutual cooperation and friendship.

Dagar, Sarwar, Ismail, and Mekhawar were four participants who suggested that communication with Pashtuns should include mutual cooperation between ISAF and the Pashtuns. Dagar suggested soldiers to say:

‘We have come here to ask your opinion, and you blame us for ill-treatment; we want to stop that. We say that you do not shelter the bad guys and we will not come to your village, neither give us the opportunity or to the insurgents to come to your village.’

Dagar added that if ISAF remains committed to their promise, people will welcome such proposal and cooperate. They will even fight those insurgents who will use their village against foreign and government forces, said Dagar. Similarly, Sarwar advised soldiers to say: “we will never come to your village without your consent or permission. But you have to make a promise

to us that you will never allow the insurgents in your home and village who fire on us.” Sarwar gave an example of such an agreement in a district of *Khost* province: “in Zazi Maidan district tribes agreed that if foreign forces do not carry military operations in their district, local population will not allow the Taliban to use their district to attack foreign forces.”

Other participants suggested friendship between ISAF and tribes to be promoted throughout communication with south-eastern tribes. Ismail pointed to the Iran and Pakistan adversary towards Pashtuns. He said:

To be safe from these two rivals who have money and arms, Pashtun must rely on Americans. Americans, too, should rely on Pashtuns; walking in the same direction with Pashtuns will help Americans overcome the problems in Afghanistan and in the region.

Dagar proposed American soldiers to say: “let’s work together. We will support you and you won’t let yourselves lag and get behind others.”

Pashtuns’ benefit.

Ghoti, Naim, Tawan, Dagar, Haqbeen, and Piaworai were the participants whose perspectives during analysis supported the idea of *talking about Pashtuns’ benefit* to be included in the message for emotional appeals. Ghoti argued that it is common in any context audiences need to hear what is in the message for them. Haqbeen endorsed the idea of American soldiers saying to people, “we are here to help you build your country, e.g., to build the education system, generate electricity, build your factories.” Dagar suggested that American soldiers should say: “anything we build, whether it is a school, a health clinic, or a road is to put you [the tribes] at ease, and for your use.”

Tawan thought that security has to be emphasized in the message delivered to the Pashtun tribesmen in *Loya Paktya*. He explained:

What really people want more than anything else is security. Sometimes our people say that we do not want food three times a day, we do not want road. Life is very difficult

now a days. What we really need is security. If someone wants to win the hearts and minds of the tribes in our area, the best message would be a true message about bringing peace to people.

ISAF soldiers should show that they are ready to listen to the tribes, recommended Ghoti.

She explained: “If we go to the silent majority, the tribes, they will show enthusiasm to talk, especially if they are told that foreigners are ready to listen to them.” Dagar said that admiring the choice of the people is democracy.”

Pashtuns’ exclusion, ill-treatments, and taking the blame by ISAF.

The acknowledgement of current south-eastern Pashtuns’ exclusion and their ill-treatment revealed to be an emotional appeal, if used during communication with tribes. Dagar explained: “currently Pashtuns are ill-treated; they are accused of being Al-Qaeda...terrorists. Their rights are not given to them.” Shaker added: “whether Russians or American, they have caused trouble in the Pashtun areas. Pashtuns have always been affected and damaged, but little or no work has been done for them.” Ismail gave an example of south-eastern Pashtuns’ exclusion: “if we talk about *Paktika* Province, their total representation in the government might be very close to zero.” Shahbaz agreed and said “Look at the share that has been given to *Loya Paktya* in the government; it is not fair and just.” Tawan said: “knowing and pointing to the miseries and grievances of south-eastern Pashtun tribes during the long conflict affect the Pashtuns’ emotion in a speech communication. However, promising to work towards stopping the miseries and addressing the grievances has to be realistic.” Sarwar recommended: “people must be assured that the foreign forces will not conduct a military operation which will cause them [the tribes] more trouble.”

Some participants said that if ISAF take the blame for the mistake they made in the past could also become an emotional appeal towards *Loya Paktya* Pashtuns. Dagar pointed that ISAF

should accept the blame for some of their mistakes. He explained: “when actual talk starts, they [the foreign soldiers] should point to their failures within nine years of their presence in the country. They should say, ‘we will not repeat our mistakes again.’” Piaworai recommended that soldiers should apologize for their mistakes and say that it was because of their obliviousness to local cultural and values. Shaker suggested: “admission and asking for forgiveness soften the hearts of the audiences, and change their mind; they will think ‘if this American admits that he has made mistake, we may be able to work with him for having a better future.’”

8- Pashtun values.

Participants also suggested that speakers should point to a number of Pashtun values as an emotional appeal during communication with them. For instance, Ghoti said, Pashtuns need to hear from an ISAF soldier that their independence, religion, and Pashtun culture will be respected. Jalal added, “whenever Pashtuns’ culture, religion, homeland, honor, and their other values have been attacked, they have always defended themselves against it.” Naim added: “I will appeal to the same values as the Taliban do when they talk to people.” Akbar and Tawan claimed that behind the Taliban’s effective communication to influence people lie their appeals to Islam, nationalism, and independence.

Participants suggested that during communication the speaker should acknowledge a number of Pashtuns’ values related to independence and freedom in the message. Shahbaz explained: “Afghans withstand any problem, but they never tolerate to see their independence and or freedom becomes the victim of foreign invasion.” Ghoti said: “Pashtuns strongly defend and never give up the value of independence.” Piaworai said that it is not true to say that Pashtuns only care about their religious values; Pashtuns love their homeland too. Shahbaz suggested that in addition to freedom, because all Afghans shared good and bad times, happiness

and sadness, they have all made sacrifices for their homeland; this unity among ethnic groups in the past should be promoted during communication.

Analysis also uncovered that peace is a value among Pashtuns and their fights in the past for freedom and protection of their homeland should never be misunderstood to be for any other goals. Shahbaz said: “it is not true that *Loya Paktya* people were born with gun and they love war.” Ghoti added: “Pashtuns have always brought peace to Afghanistan.” Sarwar said: “peace is part of Pashtuns’ code of ethics; Pashtun tribes love and want peace and security more than anything else.” According to Ismail, it is not fair to say that Pashtun do not know the language of communication. *Jirga* [the egalitarian decision-making body] itself is a symbol of democracy and negotiation, which existed for long in the Pashtun culture.

Many participants recommended ISAF to point to the value of honour during communication with Pashtuns and assure them that their honour will be protected at all time by ISAF. By honor participants meant protecting their family and specially women. Ghoti, a female participant, recited a poem that is common among Pashtuns: “I will never forget about my homeland and my sweetheart! It means that they [Pashtuns] will die to protect their homeland and their honor [women].” Khpelwak said: “family members and women are a very big part of Pashtuns’ honor.” Dagar said, “The demand that our people make to both conflicting parties, ISAF and the Taliban, is that we want to live with our dignity and honor being protected. We do not allow either the insurgents or the ISAF to dishonor us.”

Participants’ perspectives also showed that valor, gallantry, chivalry, fame, name, and pride are some of the values among Pashtuns that should be appealed to during communication with them. Piaworai and Shaker said that the Taliban use these values in their propaganda to touch the will of Pashtuns. Similarly, Ghoti explained:

Pashtuns are famous for their bravery, and gallantry. They never want anyone to disrespect that fame and name. Pashtuns do not want to be called a warlord for the courage and valor they have shown in the past. It is because of that courage that we own our Afghanistan today.

Hospitality, also common among other Afghans is another value among Pashtuns that participants pointed to, which can become an emotional appeal. Sarwar suggested that, avoiding harming others in their home or village, a Pashtun principle, should be recalled by soldiers in their communication to the Pashtun tribes. Khpelwak explained hospitality in a simple language:

Pashtuns are very hospitable. When a traveler is in a Pashtun village, the people in the village will give shelter and food for the traveller in a best way possible; the foreigners who have come here are like a temporary guest. If they are harmed here in our territory, it is an embarrassment for us, the tribes of south-eastern Afghanistan; we are not supposed to harm the guests that once we asked ourselves to come and help us.

The analysis also revealed that some of the participants had opposing thoughts to using the Pashtun values as an emotional appeal during communication. For instance Tawan said: “people think that mentioning the history of Pashtuns and pointing to the pride of Pashtuns during a speech has been used as a tool to deceive them. It helped in the past but not now.” Sarwar added: “only telling words does not help.”

Ghoti disagreed and suggested that Afghans in general respond to a speaker who appeals to their religion and independence. She also suggested ISAF soldiers should include the “we respect and value your *Pashtunwali* principles” message in their communication to the Pashtun tribes. Shaker recommended that a speaker should recall history of Pashtuns to them.

9- Pashtun weaknesses.

Many participants from members and experts categories thought that telling Pashtuns about their weaknesses and failures, during communication, can become an emotional appeal too. Dagar said that if he were a soldier he would say to a south-eastern tribesman: “hey Pashtun! It is your fault not Americans’. Hey brother! We want to change your life to better. You need to

educate yourself; you have deprived and excluded yourself from being educated and compatible with others.”

Shakers said that Pashtuns should be told to wake up and know that they have always been busy fighting. She added: “now it is time that they should think of education, having schools with teachers, health clinic with doctors, they should have roads, have a happy life, have electricity; it is the 21st century - this will stir their emotions.” Khpelwak also added: “unless we become educated we will be continually exploited by others for their interests. We cannot differentiate between our friends and enemies, because we do not have education.” Naim said that Pashtuns should be encouraged to talk to those insurgents who are the members of their tribes. Naim said: “it is very easy for me to explain to those insurgents. Because they are fighting, the doors of our schools are shut; our young men have been deprived from education. If they do not stop fighting now, and if our children cannot go to school today, we will not have educated people tomorrow; others, outside our community, will make our decisions in the future.”

10- Religious values.

Analysis revealed that the message should point to the Pashtuns’ devotion to their religious values as an emotional appeal. Participants also suggested that paying respect to religious values during communication is an important emotional appeal that should never be forgotten by ISAF soldiers in their verbal interaction with Pashtun tribesmen of *Loya Paktya*. Ismail said that Pashtuns pay more attention to *Pashtunwali* in an Afghan-to-Afghan relation; while in a non-Afghan-to-Afghan relation it is the religious values they are attentive to.

Shaker explained: “Afghanistan is an Islamic country and *Loya Paktya* is part of that. Therefore, Pashtuns are very loyal to their religion.” Bader said that Pashtuns never tolerate

offense to their culture, independence, and their religion. Khpelwak said that it is an insult if Pashtun's religion is disrespected. Jalal said: "for Pashtuns in *Loya Paktya* region the first value is Islamic or their religious belief, which is followed by the Pashtun values." Tawan said: "Pashtuns take their religion so seriously." Piaworai explained: "people should be assured that Americans respect Afghan's religious beliefs. It is a very important principle in communication with tribes."

Dagar and Jalal told that the Taliban use religious appeals in their communication with tribes, too. Jalal said that the Taliban do not even pay money; they approach young men and stir their emotions by appealing to Islamic teachings. Dagar explained the content of a text message sent to him by the Taliban on his cellphone, which they touched upon religious issues.

The text message said 'aren't you embarrassed! Weren't you a holy worrier during the Russian invasion of our country? Didn't you witness how many young men were martyred for the sake of our national and religious values? Look at foreigners who do not respect our Islam; why don't you come with us.'

Haqbeen suggested that, "tribes should be assured that their beliefs, and their religion are saved and no one has the right to assault them." He asked ISAF soldier to state: "we do not want to intervene in your beliefs; we have a religion and we obey our religion too." Mekhawar said: "I will assure people that in every action we take even with foreigners, we will follow the principles of Islam." Ismail suggested: "one who talks to Pashtuns has to appeal to the value that Pashtuns think is endangered; if it is religion, you have to appeal to religious values." The fact that the insurgents give their fight a false name - fighting for the sake of Islam, and that they use Islam as a weapon in the current conflict, should become clear to people; doing so is an emotional appeal, said Ismail.

ISAF Soft Power in *Loya Paktya*

In addition to the three building blocks of Aristotelian persuasion, this study looked into the best kind of power that ISAF could use to influence south-eastern Pashtun tribal community. Three themes emerged from participants' perspective—communication as a soft power, communication combined with action and action by itself as a soft power. Please see Appendix – A, Table – 17.

11- Communication as a soft power.

Although a few participants expressed concern about communication as soft power to influence Pashtuns, the overall participants' perspectives suggested that it is one of the best means to influence Pashtuns in *Loya Paktya* to join peace process. For instance, Tawan said that only communication by itself at this time would not work. "It will take some time until the will of the Pashtuns is won," added Tawan. Sarwar said that some of the past mistakes that ISAF have made face them with many challenges on the way to peace in the Pashtun areas, but it is never too late to begin to talk to people.

Naim explained: "Americans will pay a lesser price for reaching their goals if they become ready to talk to Pashtuns." Sarwar said: "I strongly recommend ISAF to understand people's expectations and demands; communication leads to consensus, and it is the main part of conflict resolution." "Unless one respects the traditional values of the Pashtun society, [and] listens to Pashtuns, getting them to cooperate will be impossible," said Piaworai. Haqbeen said that negotiation; dialogue, consultation, and comprehension are very old and ancient traditions for peaceful conflict settlement among Pashtuns.

Analysis revealed that consultation with tribes obliges them to help with peace process. Shaker said: “I think consulting tribes is more effective than using military force; people should take part in making decisions [with ISAF].” Ghoti emphasized:

Americans with little contact that they keep with tribes and tribal leaders, and listening to wrong kind of advisers, have caused confusion among the public; people do not know whether ISAF is there to kill them or to help them.

Shahbaz explained, “Americans are egocentric; actions taken in a society should be in accordance to and with consensus of the people. The coalition forces [ISAF] never considered people’s demands and priorities. People’s interests were never considered.”

For communication to become soft power, participants’ discussions were centered on three issues—opinion leaders, communication channels and setting, and the message during communication.

Pashtuns’ opinion leaders.

The analysis revealed that participants from both experts’ and members’ category recommended ISAF soldiers to use local opinion leaders to deliver their message to tribes of *Loya Paktya*. Jalal, Mekhawar, Akbar, Haqbeen, Ismail, Khpelwak, Ghoti, Piaworai, and Naim all advocated for similar suggestions. Jalal explained:

Pashtuns listen to their tribal leaders more than anyone else. If one seeks to get Pashtuns out of the current unwillingness to cooperate for peace, Pashtuns’ leader should be approached; the combination of a good religious leader, a trusted tribal leader with the addition of a representative of the young generation can solve the problem really well.

Mekhawar explained: “I have told ISAF that there are tribal leaders who are very influential in south-eastern Pashtun tribal setting of Afghanistan who can influence and convince them [tribesmen] to work for peace” Naim said: “I have repeatedly said that Americans should try to win the will of tribal leaders, religious scholars and spiritual leader. These are the three influential groups on public mentality in *Loya Paktya*. Ismail explained:

Communication between tribesmen and foreigners has to be mediated through members of the local social structure who know the norms and ¹²language of the tribes. Without the mediation from the credible and respected members of the tribal community, and the help from translators who speaks the language of people, foreigners will not be able to communicate with people.

Ismail, Ghoti, Bader, and Khpelwak argued that currently ISAF either relies on translators and consultants who are not from *Loya Paktya* or the local leaders who are not credible among the tribes. “Lack of translators and interpreters who speak Pashtu [language] is one of the causes behind misunderstandings between the Pashtun tribes and ISAF based in south-eastern region,” Bader argued. Ismail said: “translators working with ISAF are oblivious to the culture, language, and traditions of Pashtuns.” Ghoti said that some of them are even adverse to Pashtuns there. Bader explained:

A translator is the bridge between foreign soldiers and public [in *Loya Paktya*]. A translator speaking Pashtu language will be able to act as a channel to pass on the complete message of Pashtuns to foreign soldier and the other way around.

Communication channel and setting.

Participants discussed the issue of communication settings and channels as very important in a communication to influence the Pashtun tribes. Although the use of modern media (e.g., TV, Radio and to some extent internet) have boomed after the collapse of the Taliban, participants’ perspective still supported the use of traditional communication channels and setting with south-eastern tribes. Ismail and Sarwar agreed that radio is the best among modern media to deliver the message, but it has to be in the language of people. Jalal said: “people still rely on their traditional ways of communication than using the new technology. We still have some people who do not know what a radio is.”

¹² Language here stands for expectations or demands of the tribes.

Jalal and Bader, two participants in the group interview, agreed that word of mouth is still a big medium for a message to reach south-eastern Pashtun tribes. Jalal and Bader said that a message could be sent to so many people before or after a prayer in a mosque, especially Friday prayer in mosque. The tribes of *Loya Paktya* will do anything if told by their religious scholars in the mosque,” said Piaworai. Naim said: “*hujra* [a tribal leader’s guestroom], *peerkhana* [a spiritual leader’s house], and mosques are the three places which American should try to have on their side.” Bader pointed that decision made by tribal gatherings [*jirga*] held in a shrine is well-recognized by tribesmen. Bader also explained that *chigha*, which is playing a special drum rhythm by the barber of the village, is the quickest way to gather people in the case of an emergency, (e.g., earthquake, fire, or flood) and could be used to get many people if a message is supposed to reach quicker. Bader also said that a message delivered in the district headquarter would reach the whole district population with the help of *Arbaki* (the tribal force).

The analysis also found the location for communication to occur as an important factor to persuade the Pashtun tribes of *Loya Paktya*. Face-to-face talk in a natural setting between tribesmen and ISAF soldiers was revealed to be favoured in *Loya Paktya* tribal setting. Shaker said that face-to-face communication gives people the opportunity to express their feelings directly to foreign soldiers. Ghoti learned from her election campaign and shared: “in *Loya Paktya*, unless you go to the Pashtun’s home or village, sit with him and talk in where he is comfortable, he will neither vote for you nor back you”

Ismail emphasized on practicing two-way-communication between ISAF and the tribes and recommended ISAF to listen to tribesmen first when communicating with them. He explained:

Foreign force must listen to what people say to them. It has to be face-to-face. After listening to people’s logic, the foreigners may be convinced. Foreigners think that their

logic is as good as their war technology, but it is not true. The social arrangement in where they are working is very complex and particular. People have their own logic, which will convince foreigners if they listen to.

Jalal said religious leaders and scholars should be present during the face-to-face talks. Jalal added that in a communication opportunity if religious grounds need to be given to people, it is well-received among people if a trusted religious leader does the job. Besides, the presence of religious leaders and scholars will assure the tribes that they have their representative with the foreign force, added Shaker.

Contents of the message.

Analysis revealed that the content of the message in communication adds to the power of communication as an influencing power. Tawan stated: “if ISAF present good justification, logic, arguments, and solution for a problem in their message, it will likely increases the soft power of their communication among the Pashtun tribes.” Naim said that it is the clarity of the message that will increase the soft power of ISAF’s communication among the Pashtun tribes. He added: “people should hear from the Americans that their culture and values will be respected. For instance, they should clearly say to the tribes, ‘we have not come here to disgrace or disrespect your culture and customs.’ If such clear message is delivered, I think it will be very useful.”

Other participants like Ghoti, Mekhawar, and Dagar said that communication has to be free of mistrust. Ghoti said: “foreigners do not rely on what tribal leaders suggest. They do not trust the Pashtun tribal leaders, and the negative popular perception against ISAF today is the result of that mistrust.” Foreigners always suspected that if they share information with tribes, the tribes would give the information to the insurgents, claimed Dagar.

Coercion versus attraction in the message.

Using soft language in communication to Pashtuns appeared to be very influencing among south-eastern Pashtuns. Akbar said: “we have advised American military leaders that they should never use intimidation either in communication or in their actions.” However, Akbar added that if force or intimidation is the only option to influence tribes; it is the Afghan government to use it, not the foreign force. The Afghan government cannot enforce the law by using soft language in communication as an only means, added Akbar.

Piaworai recommended: “showing softness is the most effective power; it is the use of force that our people have upraised against.” “Even if you use high pitch voice to tell a Pashtun to do something, he [the Pashtun] will never do what you want him to do,” said Khpelwak. “The softer you talk to Pashtun the more you can ask him to do,” added Jalal. Tawan pointed to a saying from a Pashtun leader, Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan, who once said: “if you talk soft to a Pashtun he will go with you to hell, but if you use force, he won’t go with you to heaven.”

12- Communication and actions combined.

The analysis also revealed that if communication is combined with or based on legitimate actions, it becomes more attractive and more convincing in the Pashtun tribal context in south-eastern *Loya Paktya*.

Participants advocated for actions and communication by ISAF to be in accordance. For instance Jalal blamed the fact that foreigners talk about human rights, but human right is violated by them in the Pashtun region. Similarly, Akbar said, “to say to the tribes, ‘I am helping to rebuild your education system, your roads, and help your economy revive’ and to cause them trouble at the same time do not work. We want to give a straight message to foreigners to stop this.” Ismail gave an example of conflicting message from Mujahedeen during the civil war.

“Why Mujahedeen and their political parties lost credibility among the people? It was because they preached Islam but practiced something else.” Jalal and Tawan agreed that the more one respects people’s traditions, the more successful he can be; but after people are troubled, it will be very difficult to get them join peace with Americans.

Analysis also showed that communication, which is based on past legitimate actions, becomes very influencing in south-eastern tribal community. Bader explained that if ISAF highlights the humanitarian and construction projects that they have funded in the south-eastern region it would help protect tribesmen against counter-persuasion attempt by insurgents. Bader continued: “people will say to the insurgents, ‘foreigners are not here to ruin our homes; look at the paved road foreigners have built for us.’ I had never seen paved roads in *Loya Paktya* in my life,” Bader also showed satisfaction with evident work foreigners have done for his district. He said, “Currently, we have nine high schools while we used to have only one. We have 28 primary schools while we used to have only three.”

13- Actions speak louder.

According to participants, action speaks louder by itself in the relation between ISAF soldiers and the *Loya Paktya* tribal community and it will likely affect the soft power of ISAF on the south-eastern tribal community. Participants’ perspective suggested that actions by ISAF soldiers should consider two important values of tribesmen—the religion and culture. Participants argued that ISAF’s actions indicate their intention, which also affect the level of trust between ISAF and the Pashtuns.

Participants advocated for protecting the Pashtuns’ culture of respecting the family territory and privacy during military operations by ISAF. Dagar said: “when American soldiers enter our villages they climb our rooftops for their own security; that is invading the privacy of

our families. They do not need to do that.” Amin, Haqbeen, and Naim said that ISAF soldiers enter people’s houses without their consent and permission. They all recommended ISAF to stop doing that. “Among *Loya Paktya* tribes, it is very barbaric move for a stranger to enter one’s house without the permission from the house elder,” said Haqbeen. Amin, a participant and a tribal leader from *Khost* added: “our custom and tradition do not allow a foreign soldier to enter one’s house without knocking their door.” Naim added that searching a Pashtuns’ house without his consent is damaging to his dignity and it becomes a jeer for which other tribesmen will taunt him forever.

The other issue participants emphasized was respecting women and children during the search operations, which will add to the soft power of ISAF soldiers among tribes in *Loya Paktya*. Mekhawar recalled a recent incident in Kondai village of *Loya Paktya* where ISAF soldiers had their sniffing dogs bite young children and women. Mekhawar claimed he had the video as evidence. Shaker, one of the two female participants, said, “women in *Loya Paktya* hide their face even from their brother-in-laws. Now imagine a foreign soldier unveiling their face, or searching them or their personal boxes.” Piaworai complained about U.S. special operation units and their mercenary Afghan counterparts, who are not part of Afghan National Security forces (ANSF). He said: “the mercenary forces break into women’s boxes and steal their jewellery; in the Pashtun culture such an action is the same as running away with a Pashtun’s wife” Jalal another participant pointed to foreign soldiers filming or taking pictures in the presence of the Pashtun women, which is an inappropriate act in the Pashtun culture.

Participants also recommended that ISAF soldiers must respect religious sacraments of people while operating in the tribal region of *Loya Paktya*. This will in turn add to their soft power to be able to influence people. Sarwar explained: “people’s religious sacraments must be

valued by ISAF soldiers, if their sacraments are threatened by anyone, people will not withstand it.” Naim explained:

Americans entered our mosques with their military boots on; imagine how such an action affects the Pashtuns’ mentality. I do not claim that American soldiers did that intentionally. No! They did not do that! It seemed normal to them.

Naim also talked about his experience in a meeting of many tribal leaders from south-eastern Afghanistan with a U.S. military commander who had worn shorts. He said it seemed very unethical in the Pashtun culture. He added: “although, wearing shorts in a meeting with tribal leaders or walking with their boots on inside a mosque may be unintentional or because soldiers do not know that, it makes grounds for Taliban’s propaganda about ISAF.”

Mekhawar said it is also the use of cruelty, without legitimate reasons, by foreign soldiers against people during ISAF’s military operations that Pashtuns hate. Dagar argued: “it is some of those ISAF’s past actions, which provoked people [Pashtuns] against them.” Haqbeen added:

The negative perception is a reaction of people towards actions of American soldiers. People not only grow a negative perception, they also join the opposition forces, or support them, or shelter them. Everyone knows that opposition elements cannot stay in an area unless they have local supporter.

To summarize, the above findings revealed 13 themes that signify the role of persuasive communication in future conflict resolution in Afghanistan. In doing so, the findings detail the ingredients of Aristotelian persuasion in the particular cultural domain of Afghanistan's south-eastern tribal community that can hopefully help in influencing the choice of its members for peace building. The findings also discovered the elements of a persuasive communication approach that will likely help increase ISAF soft power among south-eastern Pashtun tribal community.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This research study focusing on communication during conflict resolution in Greater *Paktya* region of Afghanistan explored the ingredients of Aristotelian persuasion, or the classical rhetoric in the Pashtun tribal setting of south-eastern Afghanistan, which is a particular cultural domain. Aristotelian persuasion has three building blocks—ethos, logos, and pathos. These three building blocks are also called the rhetorical appeals or the rhetoric triangle. According to Aristotle, these are persuasion strategies that have to match the situation and the setting where persuasion occurs (Larson, 2004).

In addition, knowing from Joseph Nye that soft power is the power by attraction rather than by coercion, of which persuasion is a crucial part, this study explored the question of *if and how* communication can become a soft power to influence the choice of *Loya Paktya* Pashtun tribes to take part in building peace. Therefore data collection and analysis centered on finding out the building blocks of such communication in *Loya Paktya* tribal setting.

The overall analysis in the study revealed 13 themes—ten under three appeals in classical rhetoric, and three under soft power. Chapter five juxtaposes the findings and the two theoretical frameworks as well as highlights the importance of the findings for future communication practices between ISAF and south-eastern tribal community for peace building in Afghanistan.

Persuasion (Credibility)

In classical rhetoric, speaker's credibility is the first building block for persuasion, which is also called ethos. Hart (1997) argues that persuasion is always credibility driven (as cited in Simon et al., 2001), and Brummett (2000) says that it is because "we trust good men more, and sooner" (p. 146). Some scholars discuss the use of rhetorical strategies during war too. For example, Hogan (2008) argues that even though war is an antithesis of rhetoric and it occurs

when words fail, martial decision-making and the achievement of a military commander during war depends heavily on his rhetorical skills. Hogan further explains that a credible leader can use rhetoric to forge the bond within a military force as well as to mobilize a community (e.g., a nation) against a common foe during a conflict. Condit and Greer (2008) point to Britain's Churchill rallying the British nation to fight Hitler's lethal force during World War II as a good example of using rhetoric during war. It was Churchill's credibility and rhetorical skills by which he tapped on nationalist and patriotic feeling among Britons to unite them against a common enemy (Condit & Greer, 2008).

Brockriede (1971) claims that Aristotle restricted credibility to what the speaker does in the speech itself, while today's audiences are more affected by the reliability and authority developed by the speaker prior to any given discourse. The findings of this study revealed many variables that affect speaker's credibility in the particular Pashtun tribal setting of *Loya Paktya* in Afghanistan. Some of these variables are specific to speakers who are known in the south-eastern Pashtun tribal community (e.g., their local leaders), while others can be observed in unknown speakers (e.g., an ISAF soldier), too. Findings revealed credibility variables in south-eastern Pashtun tribes under the speaker-Pashtun relation, speaker's background, and speaker's characteristics.

The Speaker-Pashtun Relation.

Findings revealed that remaining respectful of the religion and culture of the Pashtun audience in *Loya Paktya* tribal setting is a variable that affects speaker's credibility in the speaker-Pashtun relation. Similarly, Simon et al. (2001) found that successful persuaders always express care and concern for their audience as well as respect their feelings and ideas. Findings showed that the extent to which a known speaker (e.g., a local leader) is respectful of the tribes is

known from his background of having lived among the tribes, while in an unknown speaker (e.g., an ISAF soldier) respectfulness is demonstrated when the speaker starts speaking to the Pashtun tribesmen. McKerrow et al. (2003) explain that it is by showing good moral or speaking “in the language of beliefs and values of listeners” (p. 13) that adds to speaker’s credibility.

From participants’ perspectives, the credibility and ability of a speaker to persuade Pashtuns in south-eastern tribal community are determined by how tribe-centered or self-centered a speaker is. The variable of being tribe-centered is only important if the speaker is known to the members of south-eastern tribal community (e.g., a local leader who has lived in the tribal setting for a long time). However, Aristotle says that the speakers, who demonstrate good will by communicating a sense of caring about the audience, their needs, their statues, and their future, possess high credibility too (McKerrow et al., 2003).

Trustworthiness is another determinant in source credibility for persuasion (Simon, et al., 2001). Findings for this study also revealed trustworthiness to be quite a significant factor in speaker’s credibility in a communication aimed to influence south-eastern tribes in *Loya Paktya*. Trustworthiness from the participants’ perspective was found to depend on speaker’s background among south-eastern tribal community. In this study, local leaders such as tribal and religious, or spiritual leaders who have lived among the tribes were thought by the participants to be better persuaders since tribesmen are already informed about their trustworthiness.

Participants also indicated that ISAF soldiers (unknown speakers) could build trustworthiness if they stay in contact with a tribe/s over a long period of time. That way the tribesmen will be able to observe the trustworthiness in soldiers between different communication opportunities over that period. Trustworthiness in ISAF soldiers depends on whether the soldiers act upon what they promise to the tribes in the first communication

opportunity. As Shaker, one of the participants explained: “for foreigners to build trust and relation with the Pashtuns in south-eastern Afghanistan, they have to remain honest and committed to what they promise to the tribes.” Haddock et al. (2002) also state that consistency between message and actions make the next message believable.

Speaker’s background.

Findings revealed that speaker’s background is considered a significant factor in determining speaker’s perceived credibility among the members of south-eastern tribal community. Speaker’s background is quite important for local speakers only, who Pashtun tribes know them already. Findings showed that a speaker’s history of political affiliation, family history (background), and personal history (background) are the three variables that affect the speaker’s credibility among the south-eastern Pashtun tribes.

Political affiliation history.

A local leader’s affiliation with government, foreign military or diplomatic missions was revealed to decline the given leader’s credibility as a speaker. Regular contact with government authorities without consultation with the members of the tribes creates a suspicion that the leader may be there for personal reasons and interests. Participants said that those leaders who are always present in the office of a provincial or a district governor are considered less credible in the eyes of their fellow tribesmen.

Findings also revealed that association with foreign military or diplomatic missions in the country harms a leader’s perceived credibility and trustworthiness among his fellow tribesmen. In the past tribal leaders were economically self-sufficient. A tribal leader used his own resources (e.g., they were big landlords) to keep their influence among their fellow tribesmen. Because of the current widespread poverty in the country, some leaders look for resources (e.g.,

money) from foreign military or foreign diplomatic mission; they use these resources to remain influential among their tribes. Participants encouraged foreign military and diplomatic missions to stop paying tribal leaders to buy their loyalty. Participants further argued that inducing tribal leaders through payment to have them cooperate will harm the efforts for long term peace building. More importantly, participants thought that one of the problems behind ISAF's ill-informed military operations is the wrong intelligence, which comes from those local informants who are paid by ISAF.

Another factor, which findings revealed to diminish credibility of a local leader as an influencing figure among his fellow tribesmen, is his membership in a political party. Participants said that there are two kinds of political parties—former Jihadist and communist parties, and also many newly-formed political parties. Participants blamed the former Jihadi and communist parties for disagreement and continuous fighting with each other during the two first stages of the Afghan conflict. They were also blamed for their past attempts to weaken the tribal system in the country. Current political parties blamed for the ethnic and lingual bases behind their formation are thought to lack a national agenda for the whole country and its people. Hence, the members of those political parties are not trusted among people, and the Pashtun tribes in south-eastern Afghanistan do not listen to them.

Family history.

Findings revealed that in south-eastern Pashtun tribal community, family history of a leader has always affected his perceived credibility and trustworthiness in the eyes of his fellow tribesmen. Participants advocating for family history said that local leaders whose family members (e.g., father, grandfather, etc.) are famous for good services and impartial decision-makings in their past leadership are perceived as credible as their family members. Those in

favour of family history also argued that leadership among tribes in *Loya Paktya* is handed over from first generation to the second and so on (e.g., from a grandfather to a father and from father to a son).

Some participants did not favour family history and thought it to be an insignificant factor in one's perceived credibility among south-eastern Pashtun tribes. These participants argued that leadership qualities are not genetically transferred from parents to children. It is the personal qualities that matter; quality in one's father does not indicate quality in his son. "A shepherd's son may have the ability of a president, while a well-known leader's son may not have the ability of a shepherd," said Mekhawar, a participant.

Taking into account the two contrary perspectives this study recommends ISAF to take both family history as well as personal qualities into consideration when looking for influential local leaders to deliver a message in the event of a communication opportunity.

Findings also revealed that being the member of a large family with many male members (e.g., sons, grandsons, brothers, nephews, uncles, first cousins) increases a local leader's perceived credibility among his fellow tribesmen. Participants said that the larger the number of male members in a leader's family, the higher his power is perceived, and as the higher one's power is perceived, the more influencing he can be among his fellow tribesmen. Also, if a leader belongs to a bigger tribe (e.g., with larger number of households compare to other tribes), it implies that he possesses more power and therefore it helps him influence other fellow tribes. According to Simon et al. (2001), if a speaker is perceived powerful among the audience, it indicates to the ability of the speaker to use reward as well as punishments, which in turn adds to his power of influence.

Personal history.

In addition to family and political affiliation, findings revealed personal history (background) of a leader to affect the level of influence he has among his fellow tribesmen in south-eastern Pashtun tribal community. It is also the impartiality in the past decision-makings, and being known for delivering good services to his fellow tribesmen during good and bad times in the past that affect his credibility among the Pashtun tribal community in *Loya Paktya*. Also having remained honourable himself as well as honouring the tribes is considered to increase a local leader's credibility and influence on other members of the tribe. Therefore, considering those variables in selecting a local leader to deliver a message during a communication opportunity with south-eastern tribes will likely increase the effects and influence that the given communication is expected to have on Pashtun tribal audience.

Speaker's characteristics.

Findings revealed personal qualities, skills and capabilities, religiousness and patriotism, physical appearance, and finally, the way a speaker dresses, to affect speaker's influence on Pashtuns in *Loya Paktya* during a communication opportunity. Some of the variables discussed here were found in both known (e.g., local leaders), and unknown (e.g., ISAF soldiers) speakers.

Personal qualities.

Honesty was a personal quality which was found to have many subsets in its property for *Loya Paktya* Pashtuns. For instance, honesty, which is important for both a local leader and an ISAF soldier, was defined as an antonym for covering up the truth from tribesmen. Other participants defined honesty to practice what a speaker promise to the Pashtun tribes in a previous communication opportunity. In some participants' opinions, being free of corruption for a local leader means the leader is honest.

Findings also revealed that valour, bravery in a leader, is highly appreciated among south-eastern Pashtuns. Bravery by some participants was interpreted as fearlessness too. Participants said that valorous, brave, and fearless leaders are very influential among their fellow tribesmen in south-eastern Pashtun tribal community.

In addition the findings revealed that tribesmen listen and act on what they are told by those who show will power or determination, while hesitant and shaky speakers are not trusted by people of *Loya Paktya*. Well-intentioned and generous local leaders were also said to be credible and influential speakers who many people respect and listen to. Brummett (2000) also says that for persuasion, it is important for a speaker to demonstrate that s/he possesses good will for the audience.

Skills and capabilities.

This study found that being expressive and able to deliver a lucid and clear message to the audience is a skill, which adds to convincing power of a speaker in south-eastern tribal context. Strong voice (vocal power) is also a skill, which was found to affect the perceived credibility of a speaker among the Pashtun audience in *Loya Paktya* tribal setting. Similarly, Larson (2004) states that vocal quality, cleverness, word choice, eye contact and gestures are some of the skills that add or detract from speaker's ethos when revealed during the speech delivery. Aristotle called the choice of words and varying the vocal tone, rate, and volume, as part of artistic proofs in rhetoric, which heighten the mood during the speech making process (as cited in Larson, 2004).

In addition, if ISAF soldiers are well informed of social arrangements in the Pashtun tribal domain in *Loya Paktya*, it is very much appreciated and is an addition to speaker's credibility. McKerrow et al. (2003) also argue that credibility of a speaker is increased by "good

sense or talking from a position of experience and knowledge and of information tempered by personal experience” (p. 13), which supports the above finding. As such, ISAF is recommended to select those officers and soldiers, who are known for being articulate as well as well-informed of the warrants and social arrangements of the south-eastern Pashtun cultural domain, to deliver the message. Ill-informed speakers were believed by participants to be the ones who make mistakes and add to the popular negative perception against ISAF among the south-eastern Pashtuns.

Local leaders were recommended to have additional capabilities and skills, apart from being only well-informed which is recommended for ISAF soldiers. Having the practical knowledge of how the social arrangement in the tribal community works adds more to the credibility of a local leader; that is even more important than being educated. In addition, dynamic leaders who reach the tribes on time are also credible and trusted leaders that people listen to. Simon et al. (2001) argue that showing dynamism (e.g., energy, and enthusiasm) is a factor adding to a speaker’s credibility. Also, hospitable leaders were found to be credible and influential local leaders in *Loya Paktya* tribal setting.

Religiousness and patriotism.

These two variables were found to matter only if the communicator is an Afghan or a local leader from the tribal community. However, religiousness and love for homeland are not considered to be important in a foreign soldier delivering the message to the tribes; tribesmen will understand that the soldier is from a different country and may have a different religious background.

Physical appearance and clothes.

Larson (2004) says that even if a speaker is totally unknown to the audience, his body type, height, movements, clothing, and so on, might create an impression, while in a known speaker it is the honesty, knowledge, experience, or humour that the speaker may have reputation for. Simon et al. (2001) argue that if a speaker dresses the same as the audiences, it enhances his attractiveness, but on most occasions, if the speaker looks different, it makes him appear more knowledgeable and better informed than the audiences, which will add to his or her credibility.

Many participants ranked personal qualities and capabilities to be more important than what a speaker wears or how he looks like. However, a few participants indicated that *Loya Paktya* Pashtuns appreciate if a speaker wears the traditional garb, which is common among the Pashtun tribesmen in *Loya Paktya*. According to two participants, turban and the crown of the turban are the symbol of the Pashtuns in *Loya Paktya* region. Dagar, one of the participants, insisted that even if soldiers have their representative go to a village wearing civilian attire, when talking to people, he would be perceived as a guest and not intimidating at all as a soldier in military uniform is.

Persuasion (Rationality in the Message)

Rationality in the message is the second building block in Aristotelian persuasion, which this study explored in the Pashtun tribal setting in south-eastern Afghanistan. Findings revealed that reasoning makes a significant part of communication targeting to remove the negative perception of ISAF among south-eastern Pashtuns and get them out the current unwillingness to work for peace.

Other scholars highlight the importance of reasoning in the message as quite significant during communication aimed for persuasion. For instance, according to Simon et al. (2001), for

persuasion the idea in the message should be dressed up in a language which the audience finds attractive. McKerrow et al. (2003) say that a speaker should answer the question of “why should I believe or act as you desire” (p. 344), which passes through audiences’ minds. Aristotle found that a speaker should create common ground when reasoning with the audience (McKerrow et al., 2003). Aristotle also said that common ground can be built by telling the audience what is possible versus impossible, past facts, future facts, significance versus insignificance of an action, and the results of an action to the audience. Creating common ground, highlighting facts, and religion-based reasoning were the three rationality-related-themes that emerged from the data.

Common ground.

Gains and losses shared by both ISAF and the Pashtuns.

According to Aristotle, creating common ground between the speaker and the audience is a very crucial part of persuasion (Larson, 2004). Findings in this study revealed that the continuation of the current Afghan conflict causes many losses to both ISAF and Pashtuns of *Loya Paktya*, while both sides were thought to advantage in many ways if the war ends. It was also revealed that if the losses as well as the gains that ISAF and the south-eastern tribes share are highlighted during reasoning in communication between ISAF and the south-eastern tribal community, it will create common ground between ISAF and the Pashtun tribal community and it will bring them closer.

Participants gave simple, yet very effective examples to be used in such reasoning. For instance, participants explained that Pashtuns will enjoy peace, their children will go to school, and they will have an easy life if the conflict is ended. Similarly, American soldiers based in

south-eastern Afghanistan will return to their homes and the American people will not have to spend billions of dollars on war.

The fact that Americans and the Pashtuns lose more lives in the current conflict than others was strongly recommended to be highlighted during communication between ISAF and the south-eastern tribal community. Participants suggested ISAF to remind the Pashtun tribes that most of those who are killed either on the Taliban side or the civilians are Pashtuns. It was also suggested to be told to the Pashtuns that Americans have lost more lives than any other country in the current fight against terror. Reliable information could be accessed from iCasualties (2011) for ISAF casualty and UNAMA (2011) for civilian casualties to support such claim. At the international level it is the U.S. that is blamed more than any other countries for the current unrest in Afghanistan, while at the national level Pashtuns are blamed for supporting the Taliban and the current insecurity in the country. According to participants, including the later argument in the communication between ISAF and Pashtuns can create common ground and bring them closer to work for peace.

The findings also revealed that until the war comes to an end, the question of *what do you gain and what do I gain* from the current counterterrorism efforts should also be addressed by ISAF to south-eastern Pashtun tribal audience during communication with them. Hogan (2008) argues, maintaining the political will in the community to support war is not conceivable without rhetorical appeals.

Accentuating facts.

According to Aristotle, highlighting present and future facts about status quo by the speaker to the audience play a very significant part during persuasion (Larson, 2004). Findings of this study revealed that some of the facts that should be highlighted during communication

between ISAF and south-eastern tribal community are the legitimacy and objectives behind current U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, the Taliban related facts, external factors contributing to the current unrest in the country, and the Pashtuns' own fault that plays behind the extension of the current conflict.

Legitimizing and highlighting the objectives behind the U.S. presence.

Findings revealed that lack of proper communication between ISAF and the south-eastern Pashtun tribal community is behind ISAF objectives to remain vague among members of the given tribal community. Lack of communication was also found to contribute to the growing popular negative perception against ISAF in south-eastern tribal community. In addition, some participants blamed the lack of informed communication by ISAF for making the Pashtuns vulnerable to the lethal communication by Taliban insurgency in the area.

Participants thought that the major cause behind Pashtuns to doubt the legitimacy of the U.S. presence in Afghanistan is the lack of informed communication. Against such a drawback, participants recommended ISAF forces to highlight the following grounds for U.S. presence in Afghanistan to south-eastern tribal community. It is a fact that Al-Qaeda terrorists attacked U.S. whose leader Osama Ben Laden, now killed, had been sheltered by the Taliban regime. It is also true that the U.S. military did not come to Afghanistan arbitrarily as the Russian army did in 1979; it was decided in the United Nations and with the consent of Islamic countries. It should also be told that U.S. Presence is not to harm Islam or the Pashtun culture, but to help them build their country. The latter point should be supported by highlighting the evident efforts of U.S. in reconstruction and humanitarian works, especially in the *Loya Paktya* area.

Taliban facts.

Taliban are currently using religious appeals to win the will of Pashtuns and move them against foreign force. This research found that there are many current and past actions of the Taliban that could be highlighted to tarnish the Taliban image in the eyes of the Pashtuns. This approach is similar to “Hugh Rank’s intensification and downplaying theory” (Simon et al., 2001, p. 96). In Rank’s model it is to emphasize one’s own good and the bad points of the opposition (Larson, 2004). Findings revealed the following facts about the Taliban to be highlighted during communication between ISAF and south-eastern Pashtuns tribal community.

For instance, Taliban are being trained outside Afghanistan. Neither the ideology nor the expenditure and weapons the Taliban use is from domestic sources. Taliban and their non-Afghan backers in the current war use Islam as a weapon. Also, Taliban’s anti women, anti-education policies and their violation of human rights during their government should be accentuated in the reasoning to the Pashtuns tribe. It is also the Taliban, who favour irregular warfare in the villages and use civilians as a shield when fighting against international forces. One of the lethal weapons, the suicide bombing, which they use, has to be invalidated by religious leaders on religious grounds. This technique will change the present view of the Taliban among Pashtuns. In classical rhetoric it is called epideictic reality, which is made possible by persuasion (Booth, 2004).

External factors behind Afghan conflict.

In participants’ views, the role of the regimes in the two neighbouring countries was extraordinary in fuelling and prolonging the current Afghan conflict. The study found that ISAF communicators must highlight the economically and politically motivated interests of Iran and Pakistan in their communication, which will be informing the Pashtun tribal community. In

participants' views, both Iran and Pakistan's current duplicity in their politics is against all Afghans, particularly against the Pashtuns. These two countries are also against the presence of all western countries, but their center of attention is the U.S. presence in Afghanistan. One of the other issues that participants suggested to be highlighted during communication was the issue of disputed Durand line between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which divides Pashtuns between two countries.

Pashtuns own faults fuel conflict too.

During the analysis, Pashtuns own fault was found to be a very important issue reflected from participants' perspectives. Findings recommend the Pashtuns' own fault to be highlighted during future communication opportunities between ISAF and *Loya Paktya* tribes. Some of the Pashtun's faults are as follows. Both existing literature and participants' perspectives accepted the fact that most of those insurgents who fight against ISAF and the government of Afghanistan in *Loya Paktya* are members of the *Loya Paktya* tribal community. For instance, the leadership of Haqqani Network known as the most dangerous insurgents group in *Loya Paktya* region is from the biggest tribe in *Loya Paktya* called Zadran tribe. It is also some members of south-eastern Pashtun tribes who provide shelter to the insurgents, which cause harm for the tribes and for the ISAF. In participants' views, ISAF forces have no choice, but to retaliate if they are attacked by the insurgents; no matter where the insurgents are attacking from. ISAF soldiers should explain that ISAF do not need to enter a village or a house or trouble anyone unless a member of that village or home provides shelter to the ISAF's enemies in his home or villages.

Religious-based reasoning.

In Aristotelian approach to persuasion, persuaders are advised to reinforce what the audience already believes in (Larson, 2004). Findings for this study also discovered that

reasoning based on the religion plays a significant role in communication aimed to influence the Pashtuns choice for peace in south-eastern Afghanistan. Participants said that Pashtuns are committed Muslims, but having low level of education, being unaware of scientific logics of Islam, make them vulnerable targets to the Taliban's communication campaigns. This study found enough grounds from participants' perspectives to recommend ISAF personnel to use religious grounds from Islamic and Quranic teachings in their rational to convince Pashtuns to help with peace rather than to be neutral or back the insurgency. For instance, tribes should be told that if they are Muslims, they have to abide by Islamic principles. It is a fact that Islam is the religion of peace, which never favours violence. Tawan, one of participants, gave a good example; he said that the fact that Prophet Mohammad had good relation with non-Muslims and even signed peace treaty with them can convince the tribes to believe that cooperation with foreigners, who are not Muslim, is not against the principle of Islam.

Analysis of participants' perspective also advocated using Taliban propaganda material against the Taliban. Shaker, a female participant, said that Taliban's baseless arguments can be compared with verses of Holly Quran and Islamic grounds to inoculate the Pashtun audience against Taliban vicious propaganda. For instance, the stands of Islam towards suicide bombing is crystal clear; "killing one soul means killing the whole mankind, while saving one soul is saving the whole mankind" (Holly Quran, Surah Al-Ma'idah: Verse 32). Finally, instilling the soft powers of Islam in the minds of Pashtuns should be a great part of reasoning in communication opportunities with Pashtuns in south-eastern Afghanistan.

Finally the findings recommend that for the religious-based reasoning, the ISAF should use the presence of trusted local religious and spiritual leaders to legitimize their religious appeal

to *Loya Paktya* Pashtuns. Therefore ISAF was recommended to try to have the religious and spiritual leaders as well as the religious settings such as mosques on their side.

Persuasion (Emotional Appeal or Pathos)

Larson (2004) calls emotional appeal as “psychological appeals aimed at audience emotional hot buttons” (p. 58). Brummett (2000) says that audiences become the instrument of proof when emotion is stirred in them by the speech. He adds that human beings express their judgment in different ways under the influence of pain and of joy, and of liking and of hatred (Brummett, 2000). Aristotle proposed to promote happiness and speak against those which hamper happiness (Larson, 2004). Aristotle found that appeals to independence, prosperity, pleasure, securing property, friendship, good health and promoting one’s fame, honour, and virtue were effective emotional appeals in many contexts (Larson, 2004). Also, appeals to justice, prudence, generosity, courage, temperance, magnanimity, magnificence and wisdom, were some of the values to stir emotions (Larson, 2004).

This study also found that emotional appeal (Pathos), the third building block in classical rhetoric, can play a very important role during communication opportunities between ISAF and the Pashtun tribes, which is aimed for building peace in *Loya Paktya* region of Afghanistan. Findings showed that appeal to mutual cooperation and friendship between ISAF and the Pashtuns; ISAF admitting to and apologizing for their past mistakes; appealing to the Pashtuns’ religious and cultural values; and appeal to the Pashtuns’ weaknesses; are some of the emotional appeals that should be considered to be used during communication between ISAF and the south-eastern Pashtun tribal community.

Mutual cooperation, friendship, admission of own fault, and apologizing.

In many participants' views, Pashtuns' emotion could be stirred by appealing to mutual cooperation and friendship between the Pashtuns and ISAF. Participants recommended ISAF to say to the Pashtuns that Pashtuns cannot defend their interests against their internal rivals and external adversaries without the help of ISAF; neither will ISAF get anywhere unless they have the friendship and cooperation of the Pashtun tribes with them to fight the insurgency and terrorism in the region. Pashtuns should also become aware that friendship could only be possible if mutual cooperation is strengthened between the Pashtuns and ISAF. For instance, preventing insurgents to enter an area means no military operation by ISAF and no violence. Examples of such cooperation between ISAF and tribes in some districts have been highlighted in Chapter 4.

Another technique to touch south-eastern Pashtuns' will during speech is to admit that Pashtuns have been affected by the long conflict more than others, and their miseries should finally come to an end. The findings also found it advisable for stirring the Pashtuns' emotion to talk about the current exclusion of *Loya Paktya* from having enough representation in the central government, and trying to fix that. Acknowledging that *Loya Paktya* has received less attention in humanitarian and reconstruction projects compared to other provinces and promising to remove such lack of attention will become an emotional appeal, too. A good example of the later argument is building the highway linking south-eastern Afghanistan to capital Kabul as one of the last highways built since the collapse of the Taliban government in 2001.

Findings also revealed that the egalitarian culture of south-eastern Pashtun tribal community appreciates mutual respect in their relation to any other groups including the ISAF-Pashtun relation. According to participants, in order to show mutual respect, ISAF should admit

that some of their ill-informed operations have caused ill-treatment to locals in the past.

Apologizing for making those past mistakes and promising to avoid such mistake will be a great way of drawing on the Pashtuns' emotion during a persuasive speech with tribes.

Pashtun religious values.

Findings of participants' perspectives reflected the fact that Pashtuns rank their values as religion first, independence as second, and their local culture as third. This study found that in an Afghan-Pashtun relation it is the Pashtun's values that should be appealed to, while in a non-Afghan-Pashtun relation, it is the religious appeal to which tribesmen are attentive. Afghans are all Muslim and *Loya Paktya* is part of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Hence, appreciating and promising to protect the Pashtuns' religious sacraments during a communication opportunity between ISAF and south-eastern tribes can be a strong emotional appeal.

The study found that Taliban use emotional appeal to religion to win the will of Pashtuns. It was also found during the study that any desecration of religious sacraments, whether intentional or unintentional, could pave the road for the Taliban to exploit the Pashtuns' emotion for the sake of their own interests as well as against foreign forces in Afghanistan. Even in the non-Pashtun areas we have witnessed that drawing the cartoon of Prophet Mohammad in the Danish Newspaper or the recent burning of Quran in the state of Florida sparked widespread violence in all over the country, and because of which many Afghans and expatriates lost their lives.

Pashtun cultural values.

Findings revealed that peace, independence, unity, ¹³hospitality, gallantry, and bravery are some of many Pashtuns' values appealing to which touch the emotion of south-eastern Pashtuns. For instance, accepting that peace is part of the Pashtuns' code of ethics, and the culture of negotiation has a long history in the Pashtuns' culture, is an emotional appeal. Talking about *jirga* institution, the egalitarian decision-making body is a good highlight of such fact during a speech. If ISAF soldiers admit that allegation of Pashtuns being perpetual fighters is a misperception, it could become an emotional appeal. Pointing to the fact that *Loya Paktya* has never been a fertile ground for warlords can be an emotional appeal. Pointing to the gallantry and bravery Pashtuns have shown in their past struggles for the sake of their independence, is another emotional appeal during a communication opportunity in south-eastern Pashtun tribal community. *Loya Paktya* Pashtuns call themselves "the traditional king makers in Afghanistan" (Ruttig, 2009, p. 58), an acknowledgement, which could be, used as emotional appeal too.

In addition, playing up and admitting to the love of Pashtuns for independence, and unity with other tribes during a speech is an emotional appeal. As Kelman (2009) says that arousal of nationalist and patriotic sentiment is a powerful tool in garnering public support for security and survival.

Appealing to hospitality, which is an important value in the Pashtun culture, could be used as an emotional appeal towards south-eastern Pashtuns. Telling Pashtuns that they respect and never attack anyone in their home could be an emotional appeal and may turn the transition of ISAF soldier back from being seen as enemy to friends in the eyes of tribesmen, said Khpelwak, one of the participants. However, it is also important to know that those with guns

¹³ Hospitality has two meaning for the Pashtuns—giving food and shelter to a guest, and also protecting the Guest's security as long as the guest is in the Pashtuns' home territory.

(e.g., a foreign soldier) and attacking their home will not be perceived as guests among the Pashtuns, said Piaworai. There were opposing views among participants who thought appealing to Pashtuns' value may not affect the Pashtuns' emotions. For instance, Tawan, one of the participants, said that after Pashtuns have been given many unfulfilled promises, they perceive the appeal to their values as an attempt to deceive them.

Pashtuns' weaknesses.

In Aristotelian persuasion, appealing to the audience's weaknesses could touch their emotion by evoking shame (Aristotle, 1383, 1384b, as cited in Carpenter, 2008). Analysis of participants' perspectives revealed that in south-eastern Pashtun tribal setting appealing to the Pashtuns' weaknesses can become an emotional appeal, too. Findings recommended ISAF soldiers to highlight two weaknesses of Pashtuns during communication opportunities in south-eastern tribal community—the fact that some members of the Pashtun tribal community shelter insurgents in their homes and villages, and the Pashtuns' ignorance and illiteracy. Participants recommended ISAF to say that unless Pashtuns prevent insurgents from using their villages to attack ISAF, their area will remain the battleground between ISAF and the insurgents.

In addition to Pashtuns facing violence, no developmental projects will be implemented in their area. One participant said that unless Pashtuns get educated, they will be continuously misled by outsiders, especially those with economic and political interests in the continuation of the current Afghan conflict. The fact that the low level of education among the Pashtun tribesmen is behind their inability to differentiate between their enemies and their friends should be communicated to Pashtuns during different communication opportunities between ISAF and south-eastern tribal community. Pashtun tribesmen should become aware of the fact that in

today's Afghanistan it is education that will enable them to compete with their rivals, not the gun.

Soft Power

In addition to rhetorical appeals in Aristotelian approach for persuasion, this study asked *if and how* communication can become soft power in the *Loya Paktya* Pashtun tribal setting. Simon et al. (2001) argue that persuasion is a human communication to alter the way others think, feel, or act, but it is unlike the influence (e.g., by coercion or by inducement through payment). According to Nye (2004), if the currency for power is not coercion and/or inducement (hard power), it is soft power. In behavioural science soft power is called the power of attraction (Jisi & Nye, 2009). As such, persuasion is soft power too. Nye (2004, 2011) also says that persuasion is a crucial part of soft power. Taverner (2010) calls Information campaign [communication] a soft power of modern militaries; it is the core of contemporary military planning.

Although communication was found to be the most attractive power to influence south-eastern Pashtun tribal community for peace building, findings also revealed that a combination of good action and communication can become even more influential power towards the Pashtun tribal community. Findings also revealed that action by itself speaks louder in the ISAF-Pashtun relation and becomes a very influential power. Meanwhile, a few perspectives suggested that it would take some time for communication to become influential power, at least not before the level of negative perception among south-eastern Pashtuns about ISAF is lowered.

Communication as a soft power.

Findings revealed that consultation between ISAF and the Pashtun tribesmen, the level of trust in communication between ISAF and the Pashtun tribes, using the local opinion leaders in

communication opportunities between ISAF and the Pashtun tribal community, the use of local channels and setting for communication, and the contents of the message to affect the level of soft power for ISAF in *Loya Paktya* Pashtun tribal setting.

Negotiations, dialogues, consultations, and compromises revealed to be very old and ancient traditions for peaceful conflict settlement in the *Loya Paktya* Pashtun cultural domain. Nye (2010) plays up the role of consultation and listening to be very crucial in generating soft power. In south-eastern Afghanistan, consultation with tribes for decision-making by ISAF was thought to not only increase the ISAF's soft power but also oblige the tribal community in *Loya Paktya* to remain loyal to the decisions and subsequently cooperate in the implementation of those decisions. However, it was said that if ISAF personnel remain egocentric or keep relying on unaware and adverse cultural advisers, as they did in the past, it will further the negative popular perception in the area. Consultation is a two way communication which has also been emphasized in the work of many rhetoric scholars. For instance, Booth (2004) calls listening to opposite viewpoints "the listening rhetoric or LR" (p. 10). Booth adds that "whenever we manage to listen first and continue listening, we are far superior as rhetors [persuaders]" (p. 21).

Mistrust and suspicion were suggested to be avoided at all times during communication opportunities between ISAF and the tribal community. McKerrow et al. (2003) support this argument and posit that the more sincere a speaker is the better chances are there for him to change listeners' attitude. The findings revealed the role of cultural advisers and translators being deployed by ISAF forces in *Loya Paktya* region very significant for building trust during communication between ISAF and south-eastern tribes. Advisers and interpreters were recommended to be deployed in the south-eastern region only if they are familiar to the particular Pashtu language dialect and accent in the area, which are different than among other

Pashtuns. In addition, the interpreters and mentors were recommended to appreciate the local culture. Such a measure was thought to help avoid any misunderstanding during communication opportunities between ISAF and local tribesmen, which would in turn add to the ISAF's soft power to influence the Pashtun tribes for peace.

The findings also indicated that the members of *Loya Paktya* Pashtun tribal community, which possesses a more intact tribal structure and institutions, could be influenced by their own trusted opinion leaders more easily than by the speakers without any background in the given tribal setting. Therefore, ISAF, in particular U.S. forces based in the area was recommended by participants to distinguish local influential leaders (e.g., religious leaders, tribal chieftains, spiritual leaders and new educated young generation) and have them on their side during communication opportunities with the south-eastern tribal community.

Channels and settings.

Nye (2010) claims that "in the information age, success is not merely the result of whose army wins, but also whose story wins" (p. 8). Although ISAF was recommended to keep using modern media (e.g., TV, and Radio), many participants advised ISAF to channel their communication through traditional communication channels that are credible and trusted (e.g., mosques, shrines, hujra, Peerkhana, and etc.) among the tribes in *Loya Paktya*.

Findings revealed that members of *Loya Paktya* tribal community feel comfortable and influenced by communication happening in their own natural setting. Therefore they were in favour of ISAF's physical presence and recommended that ISAF should go to the tribes rather than asking tribesmen to come to them. This gesture will be perceived among the *Loya Paktya* tribal community as a way of paying respect to the tribes. However, it was recommended that soldiers have to avoid intimidating tribesmen when going in and out of the villages. Although

security issue would require ISAF to take measures, participants said tribes would help in minimizing such concern if their prior consent is sought.

Message contents.

Findings revealed that the way justifications, logic, arguments, and resolutions to different problems are presented in a message during communication opportunities between ISAF and south-eastern Pashtun tribes affect ISAF's soft power among the Pashtun tribes. Participants' discussions around justification, logic, and arguments in the message to increase ISAF's soft power among south-eastern Pashtun tribes reflect similar findings as under "Rationality in the message theme" in this chapter and Chapter 4. The latter indicates that, if ISAF uses reasoning in the message when communicating with south-eastern tribesmen, it will not only help them persuade the Pashtun tribes, but also build their soft power among the given tribal community.

In addition, ISAF was recommended to avoid intimidating language during their communication with south-eastern tribesmen; however, ISAF should inform the tribes about the difficult position they are in when an insurgent is given shelter by members of the tribes. Findings revealed that ISAF warning about the consequences of allowing the insurgents to use tribal territory against ISAF (e.g., civilian casualty and other violence caused during confrontation between ISAF and insurgents) is a legitimate right of ISAF. In addition, this study found that the government of Afghanistan as a long-term law enforcement entity could take a tougher stand in their communication with the tribes, but not ISAF.

Communication and action combined.

For ISAF to build their soft power to influence Pashtuns in south-eastern tribal community, the findings revealed that ISAF should focus on the agreement between what they

say to the tribes and how they act among the tribal community. Duplicity between communication and action was found to further Pashtuns' negative perception, create confusion among them, and heighten the level of mistrust between ISAF and the Pashtun tribal community. Participants recommended ISAF to highlight their evident good actions and efforts during communication with south-eastern tribal community.

Actions talk louder.

In addition to persuasive communication and focusing on agreement between communication and actions, the study also found that ISAF's actions during their interactions with *Loya Paktya* tribal community affect their soft power among south-eastern Pashtun tribal community. ISAF was recommended by participants to always take the Pashtuns' religious and cultural values into account during their military operations in *Loya Paktya* area. South-eastern Pashtun cultural domain was found to have certain warrants as well as social arrangements that one needs to consider during interacting with its members. One of them the findings revealed is the special position for women and children in the given tribal community. ISAF was recommended to respect women and children at all times whether its soldiers encounter them outdoor or indoor during their military operations.

The study found that cultural unawareness among ISAF soldiers results in cultural mistakes, which creates misperception about ISAF among the locals in *Loya Paktya* tribal community. ISAF soldiers may think that those mistakes are minor or not a mistake at all. For example, one participant found American soldiers entering mosques with their shoes as disrespecting the religious sacraments of Muslims. Another participant recalled an incident where an American military commander wore shorts in a meeting with tribal leaders.

Considering these statements, this study recommends ISAF soldiers to be aware of the cultural and religious practices—do's and don'ts before they are deployed in south-eastern Afghanistan.

Chapter Six: Conclusions

The collapse of the Taliban regime by a coalition of international forces led by U.S. in 2001 reversed the over-two-decade military confrontation in Afghanistan. However, the conflict still continued with a low intensity and gradually mounted to its very severe current stage. Due to the involvement of over 40 countries led by U.S., the current conflict has been the focus of the worldwide media since the beginning.

The current Afghan conflict is an internationalized armed conflict with a complex nature that many factors play behind its continuation. As there is no single cure for the complex situation, the conflict requires researchers to explore effective means of conflict resolution in different disciplines. This study explored communication as a possible remedy beside other means for the current conflict.

In the current asymmetric conflict, whenever, the two regular (the ISAF) and irregular (the Insurgents) forces confront, it is the local Afghan population who get caught in the middle and suffer more than anyone. In fact, many military experts blame ISAF's *modus operandi*, especially the ill-informed and ill-conceived operation by U.S., for the transition of ISAF from friends when they first came to enemies in the eyes of many Afghans, now. As the violence continues, a popular negative perception is growing among the Afghan people towards ISAF and particularly against U.S. military presence in the country. Taliban also exploit ISAF's failures such as cultural misunderstanding and civilian casualty to add to the negative popular perception. As a result, the popular negative perception enters a vicious cycle, which adds to the continuation and the intensity of the conflict.

The level of negative perception varies from one location to another in the country. In south-eastern *Loya Paktya* region, just like in other parts of southern Afghanistan, because of dominant insurgency and more confrontations between ISAF and the Taliban, the local people suffer more from the negative consequences of the continuous violence. As a result, a higher level of negative perception has turned tribes more against the ISAF forces than in other parts of the country, which prevent them from cooperating with the ISAF. Instead, local tribes either take a neutral position, or in the worst case, help the insurgency. *Loya Paktya* is also known for housing one of the lethal insurgents groups, the Haqqani Taliban Network. Please see appendix – A, figure – 2. Pashtun tribes in the area are the core audience for the given insurgent group. Against such a drawback, unfortunately, ISAF had very little contact with locals and hence their objectives remain vague to the tribesmen.

The current study also found that too much concentration of power in Kabul and the exclusion of south-eastern Pashtun and leaving them without enough representation in the government are other factors that have contributed to negative perception among the local populace.

Although, some scholars focusing on Afghan conflict claim that the three-decade-long conflict has harmed the traditional and tribal makeup of Afghan society, others claim that south-eastern *Loya Paktya* still possesses a more intact and stronger tribal system with many tribal institutions. Hence, it presents an interesting case for a tribal approach for conflict resolution. In addition, the Pashtun tribes of *Loya Paktya* have their own tribal code of ethics called *Pashtunwali*, “a customary law in the rural Pashtun majority areas” (Kakar, 2003, p. 1), of which knowing is particularly important to communicate with its members. Please refer to chapter 2 for details about *Pashtunwali*.

Third party intervention is the fastest growing area of practice in conflict resolution today. Possessing a stronger tribal system with influential tribal institutions enable *Loya Paktya* Pashtun tribal community to employ peaceful yet coercive measures as a third party to intervene and settle the current conflict. The tribal system and its institutions enforce certain obligations on its members. It is also the long duration, the complex nature of the current conflict, and the failure of unilateral and bilateral efforts so far to end the conflict, which make the bases for a third party intervention by south-eastern tribal community. The current conflict posing many drawbacks for south-eastern tribes is another rationale for the tribes to intervene in the current conflict.

Existing literature shows that tribes in *Loya Paktya* have always been important players in security, politics, and governance in the history of Afghanistan. Whenever they refused to work with the government, the government rendered quite powerless. It is also the geographical location of south-eastern Afghanistan, which was found very important for overall security in the whole country and particularly to the capital Kabul. Please see appendix – A, figure – 1. In addition, the higher level of negative popular perception as a contributing factor to the current conflict was taken into account for this study to explore communication as a remedy among other efforts for conflict resolution in Afghanistan. It is mentionable that the comparatively stronger tribal system possessing tribal institutions and a code of ethics presented the most attractive points to build upon the focus of this communication study on *Loya Paktya* tribal community.

This study used two theoretical frameworks: classical rhetoric - Aristotelian approach for persuasion, and Joseph Nye' soft power theory, of which persuasion is a crucial part. The study explored the property and dimension of the three building blocks in the rhetorical theory—the

ethos, the logos, and the Pathos, which are particular to south-eastern Pashtun tribal community. In addition, the question of *if and how* communication can become soft power was explored.

This study drew on qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews with 17 participants in two categories—the experts and the members of south-eastern tribes. 10 themes (see appendix – A, Table, 9-11) under three buildings of rhetoric were found with different dimensions and properties, which were particular to south-eastern tribal community. The study found many particular variables, which in participants' views add to the credibility of both known and unknown speakers among the Pashtun tribes of south-eastern Afghanistan. Some of these variables that affect a local speaker's credibility are political affiliation, family background, and personal background. Patriotism and religiousness were the two characteristics revealed to be particular to local speakers in the south-eastern Pashtun tribal community. In addition certain characteristics revealed that can add to credibility of both known (e.g., local leaders) and unknown (e.g., ISAF soldiers) speakers among *Loya Paktya* Pashtuns. For instance remaining respectful and appreciative of the local culture, and the religion and remaining committed to what is promised to tribesmen were important variables in foreign soldiers to increase their credibility among their Pashtun audience.

The study also found the ingredients of rationale and emotional appeals, which will possibly contribute to influence the choice of south-eastern Pashtuns for peace building. Three more themes (see appendix – A, Table – 12) were found, which answer the questions of *if and how* communication can become a source of soft power for ISAF to influence Pashtuns in south-eastern tribal community to help with building peace. In participants' opinion, listening and consulting the tribes, avoiding mistrust during communication, using the tribes' trusted channels and settings during communication with them, using their trusted opinion leaders during

communication opportunities, and avoiding intimidating language during communication were found to be effective communication tools to increase ISAF's soft power to influence the choice of Pashtuns in south-eastern tribal community for peace building. In addition agreement between communication and action, and actions alone revealed to be affecting ISAF's soft power too.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite much effort was directed to choose a representative sample, this study could not recruit more than 17 participants who could represent the tribes and people of *Loya Paktya* due to limited budget and time constraints. As a matter of fact, four extra participants in members' category and one extra participant in experts' category were recruited in addition to 12 participants that this study had originally proposed to interview. Nonetheless, future research should recruit more participants in order to represent not only the big tribes, but also the various sub-tribes and the clans living in *Loya Paktya* region.

Another limitation of the research study is the lack of participants who could represent ISAF forces that are based in *Loya Paktya*. Although, I contacted ISAF Headquarter by phone to gain access to interview its personnel, I was told that I could only have access to them if I was part of any big media outlet. That drawback prevented me from conducting naturalistic observation of an actual communication opportunity between ISAF and member of south-eastern tribal community. In addition, despite proposing to interview my participants in their natural setting, the security concern of the REB had prevented me from travelling to *Loya Paktya* region. Instead, all data collection took place in the central secure zone of Kabul city, the capital of Afghanistan. Although security is still a big concern for researchers to travel to south-eastern Afghanistan, future data collection can include naturalistic observation and interviews in participants' natural setting, which may yield higher response rate and richer data.

This research study as a general exploration of the three appeals of Aristotelian persuasion for future conflict resolution is hoped to inform further research studies in the area. Future research studies with less time and budget constraints could explore each of the given persuasion appeals in south-eastern tribal setting as separate projects. Also, from the Pashtun tribe perspectives, this study only explored how ISAF could build its soft power to influence the choice of Pashtun tribes in south-eastern Afghanistan to take part in peace building. However, future research studies could explore the effectiveness of soft power, hard power, and the combination of both which is called smart power in comparison with each other, not only in the ISAF-tribe relations but also in relation between ISAF and other conflicting parties.

Implications

The findings of this research - the building blocks in persuasion, or how communication can become soft power - could be an asset to building a mental model (e.g., how things work in relation to culture, attitude, emotions, values, authority, and finally persuasion and coercion) for ISAF soldiers based in south-eastern Afghanistan. Scholars studying conflict explain that in conflict resolution, knowing the issues of ideology, values, personalities, culture, and institutional context of a setting where the conflict is happening, is essential. The findings of this research study explored the same issues in the Pashtun tribal setting of south-eastern Afghanistan, which will hopefully contribute in future conflict resolution in the area. In simple language, the findings of this research is the same as a pair of cultural glasses that is not only necessary for ISAF soldiers, but also to the foreign diplomats and aid workers to wear when dealing and interacting with the members of the given tribal community.

Pashtuns being the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, the total population of Pashtuns in Afghanistan and in Pakistan make them one of the largest tribal societies in the world with

many similarities between the tribal systems in its sub-groups. It is also true that it is the Pashtuns in the region who suffer from the consequences of the current fight against terrorism the most. Therefore, the findings of this study will likely inform other research studies on conflict management and resolution in the Pashtun areas, both in Afghanistan and in the region. However, in order to find appropriate conflict resolution techniques in each different conflict zone, this study recommends undertaking separate studies and research to explore the context of the conflict area and look for remedies.

Personal Reflection

Although the findings of this study do not cover all aspects of persuasive communication of south-eastern tribal community in Afghanistan, I still believe it will likely add to the knowledge of those civilians and military personnel who work in *Loya Paktya* region of Afghanistan. Despite being an Afghan, this study contributed in many ways to my personal knowledge and understanding of the Afghan conflict, its problems, and the possible solutions to look for it.

Nobody can doubt the complexity of the Afghan conflict, and claim to have a single cure to the situation. Neither does this thesis claim that communication is the only magic bullet to fix the problem. There are other structural and socio-economic factors, besides the growing negative popular perception, that need to be addressed along with adopting an effective and persuasive communication approach.

Although there are many similarities among all Afghans, the multi ethnic makeup of the Afghan society makes it a diverse environment with many cultures in which employing one generic approach for conflict resolution is impossible. In the diverse cultural environment each cultural domain (e.g., different ethnic groups) has its own social arrangements. Hence, efforts

should be made to study each of those domains separately in order to be able to work with their members. It is especially significant to developing an effective communication strategy to influence the choice the people.

Jalali, an Afghan scholar, argues that an all-inclusive tribal approach for conflict resolution in all over Afghanistan will not be achieved; the tribal approach for conflict resolution in Afghanistan should be utilized only in those areas with strong tribal institutions (2009). Similarly, this study, which explored the role of persuasive communication in a tribal approach for conflict resolution is only relevant in the context of south-eastern Afghanistan.

Finally, the efforts for ending the conflict in Afghanistan should start from somewhere, and I personally believe that the stronger and unified tribal structure in the *Loya Paktya* makes this region an ideal location to explore tribal approach for conflict resolution. Some experts are worried that empowering the tribes will generate warlords. However arguments from other experts indicate that south-eastern Pashtun tribal community was never a fertile ground for warlords and therefore reject such notions and worries. In conclusion, I want to present two quotes: one from Thomas Gregg a scholar, who has worked in as well as written about south-eastern Afghanistan and its Pashtun tribal structure, and a second one from Gen. Rupert Smith cited in Foxley (2007) which I started this paper with. Gregg (2009) says:

A meaningful and well-resourced tribal policy in the southeast could help the overall efforts to improve stability and security. It is also true; however, that mismanaging tribal engagement in the southeast could end up aggravating the increasingly difficult situation faced by the international community and the Afghan government in the country more generally (p. 4).

To work for peace in south-eastern Afghanistan through a successful tribal engagement, winning the will of Pashtun tribes in the region is very important. This study finds that persuasive communication can play a crucial role through influencing the choice of the local population there. As Gen Rupert Smith posits, winning in most modern armed conflicts requires

winning the will of the people on whose territory the conflict is being fought, and the effective use of communication is a key to winning the population's support (Foxley, 2007).

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Appendix (Tables, Charts, and Figures)

Table 1: Public opinion poll (Charney et al., 2004)

	Favorable %	Unfavorable %
Afghan Government	57	35
Afghan President	85	10
United Nations	84	7
U.S. military	67	22
U.S. people	65	24
Jihadi leaders	29	64
Taliban	13	75
Personal security	64	35
Freedom of expression	78	12
Freedom of expression under Taliban	1	74
Participation in the coming election	Yes, 81 South 35%, Northwest 32%, Central 87%, East 89%, Northeast 90%, Central East 92%.	No, 10

Table 2: Opinion poll by CSIS (Cordesman, 2009)

	All country %	East %	South %
Support U.S. military	63	46	52
Oppose U.S. military	36	53	46
Support NATO	59	27	46
Oppose NATO	40	72	52
Attacks against NATO and U.S. military justified	25	47	44
Increase foreign troops	18	8	16
Decrease foreign troops	44	64	53

Table 3: A survey of Afghan people (Tariq et al., 2010)

Country on the right path	Northeast 57%	Northwest 57%	Central 52%	East 50%	Southwest 31%	Southeast 37%
Sympathy to armed opposition	Pashtuns 49%	Uzbeks 36%	Tajik 32%	Hazara 27%		
Security is the biggest problem			West 43%	Central 28%	Southwest 42%	Southeast 51%

Table 4: Examples of coding under four overarching themes

Credibility Example: Honesty is a crucial characteristic for a tribal leader who represents his tribe in peace talks.

Rationality example: Pashtuns will live in peace. They will not live in fear anymore. There will be normal life in peace and friendship among people.

Emotional appeal example: people should be assured that Americans respect afghan people's religious beliefs. It is very important principles in communication.

Communication as Soft power: Foreign force cannot talk directly to people. They should communicate to people through tribal leaders and religious scholars.

Table 5: Examples of coding units

Example -1: As I mentioned before, a leader in our tribal setting of *Loya Paktya* is someone who understands the feeling of his people. (Coded under "credibility of a speaker" theme.)

Example- 2 Ordinary people are caught in the middle and cannot appeal to the opposition groups or to the government. The government cannot protect people from being harmed by the opposition; the opposition cannot protect people from being harmed by ISAF and NATO forces. (Coded under "emotional appeals" theme.)

Table 6: Theoretical and extra nodes produced initial coding in Nvivo-9

All Nodes	Nodes	Reference	Over all coverage by participants
Theoretical Nodes	379	1,065	79%
Extra Nodes	101	399	21%
Total	480	1,464	100%

Table 7: Details and percentage of data analyzed (theoretical nodes)

All theoretical nodes	Nodes	Reference	Overall coverage by participants
Speaker's credibility (ethos)	109	297	29%
Reasoning in the message (logos)	83	269	22%
Emotional appeals (pathos)	64	190	17%
Soft power	123	309	32%
Total	480	1065	100%

Table 8: Thematic map of 13 themes under four overarching theoretical themes

Overarching Themes	Speaker's credibility	Reasoning in the message	Emotional appeal to audience	Communication & soft power
	1- Speaker-Pashtun relation	4- Common ground with Pashtun	7- Reinforcing what Pashtuns believe	11- Communication as soft power
	2- Speaker's background	5- Accentuating facts	8- Pashtun values	12- Communication and action combined
	3- Speaker's characteristics	6- Religious reasoning	9- Pashtun weaknesses	13- Action alone as soft power

10- Religious
values

Table 9: Speaker's credibility related themes

Credibility themes	Sub-themes	Participants	Reference	Overall coverage
1-Speaker-Pashtun relation		16	108	36%
	Showing respect to Pashtuns	9	13	12%
	Being tribe-centered	10	20	19%
	Trustworthiness	14	75	69%
2- Speaker's background		13	72	24%
	Affiliation history	9	19	27%
	Family background	6	19	26%
	Personal history	11	34	47%
3- Speaker's characteristics		15	117	40%
	Personal qualities	12	39	33%
	Skills and capabilities	14	45	39%
	Patriotism and religiousness	7	15	13%
	Appearance and clothe	5	18	15%

Table 10: Rationality related themes

Reasoning themes	Sub-themes	Participants	Reference	Over all coverage
4- Common ground		15	59	22%
	Common gains	7	12	20%
	Common losses	8	16	27%
	Gains and losses	12	31	53%
5- Accentuating facts		16	180	67%
	ISAF's	7	17	9%
	Pashtuns'	13	59	33%
	Taliban's	11	34	19%
	Foreign and neighbours intervention	13	70	39%
6- Religion-based reasoning		10	30	11%

Table 11: Emotional appeal related themes

Emotional appeal Themes	Sub-themes	Participants	References	Overall coverage
7- Reinforcing what Pashtuns		11	40	21%

believe			
	Mutual cooperation and friendship		
	Pashtuns' benefit		
	Exclusion, ill-treatment, and ISAF taking some of the blame		
8- Pashtun values	14	86	45%
9- Pashtun weaknesses	14	38	20%
10- Religious values	12	26	14%

Table 12 Soft power related themes

Soft power towards Pashtuns	Sub-themes	Participants	Reference	Overall coverage
11- Communication as soft power		16	201	35%
	Pashtun opinion leaders			
	Communication channels and setting			
	Contents of the message			
	Coercion versus attraction in the message			
12- Communication combined with action		14	69	12%
13- Actions speak louder		15	309	53%

Table 13: Demographic patterns among interview participants

Participants	Age Range	Sex	Province	Current Job	Role in the tribe	Tribe's name
Tribal Expert 1	over 55	Male	<i>Khost</i>	Tribal Expert	Tribal leader	Sabarai
Tribal Expert 2	35-45	Male	<i>Laghman</i>	Media	No	Eastern Pashtun
Tribal Expert 3	over 55	Male	<i>Khost</i>	Academia	Tribal leader	Sabarai
Tribal Expert 4	45-55	Male	<i>Wardak</i>	Academia	No	Wardak Pashtun
Tribal Member 1	over 55	Male	<i>Khost</i>	Military Analyst	No	Tani
Tribal Member 2	35-45	Female	<i>Khost</i>	MP	MP	Ismail Khail
Tribal Member 3	45 -55	Male	<i>Khost</i>	Senator	Tribal Liaison	

Tribal Member 4	over 55	Male	<i>Khost</i>	MP	Tribal Leader	
Tribal Member 5	45-55	Male	<i>Khost</i>	MP	Tribal Leader	Mangal
Tribal Member 6	35-45	Male	<i>Paktya</i>	MP	Tribal Leader	Zazi
Tribal Member 7	over 55	Male	<i>Paktya</i>	Former MP	Tribal Leader	Zadran
Tribal Member 8	over 55	Male	<i>Paktya</i>	No Job	Tribal Leader	Zadran
Tribal Member 9	25-35	Male	<i>Paktya</i>	Youth Union	Tribal Member	Zazi
Tribal Member 10	25-35	Male	<i>Paktya</i>	Youth Union	Tribal Member	Zazi
Tribal Member 11	45-55	Male	<i>Paktya</i>	Former MP	Tribal Leader	Zazi
Tribal Member 12	45-55	Male	<i>Paktika</i>	MP	Tribal Leader	Suliman Khail
Tribal Member 13	25-35	Female	<i>Paktika</i>	Former MP	No	Suliman Khail

Table 14: Speaker's credibility

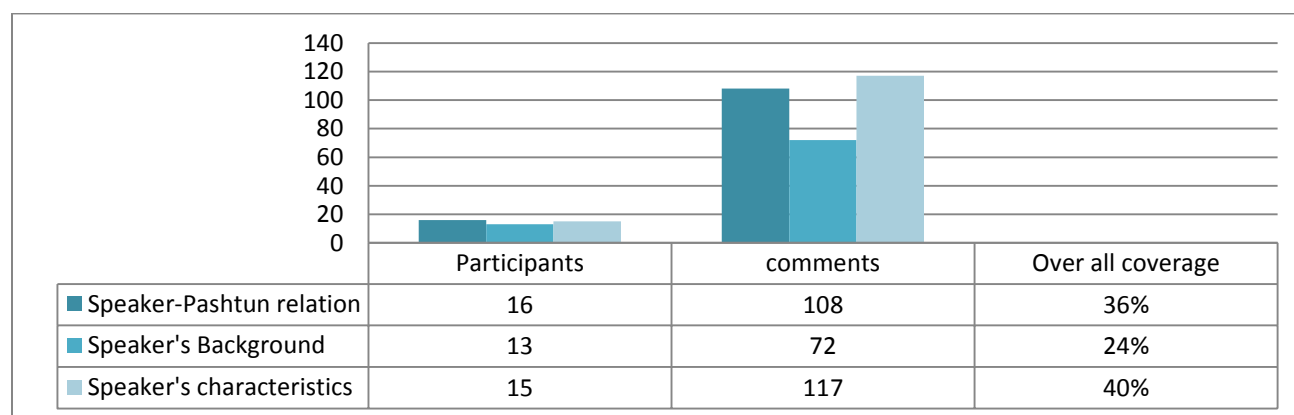


Table 15: Rationality in the message

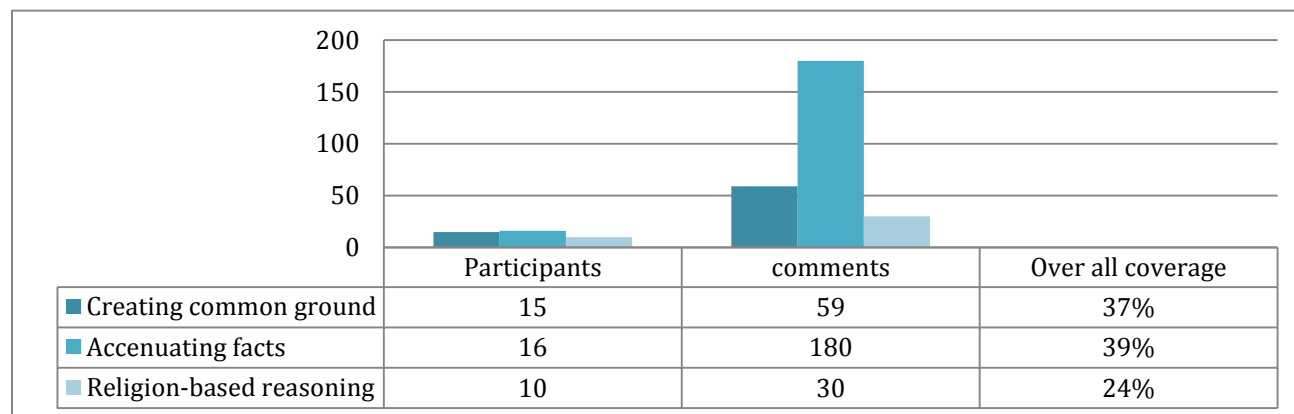


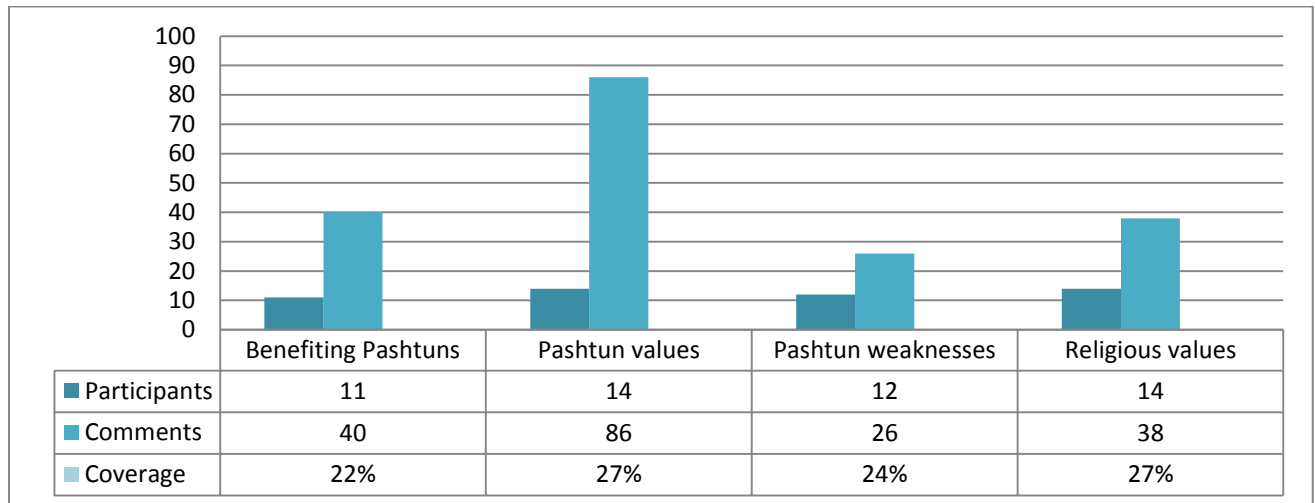
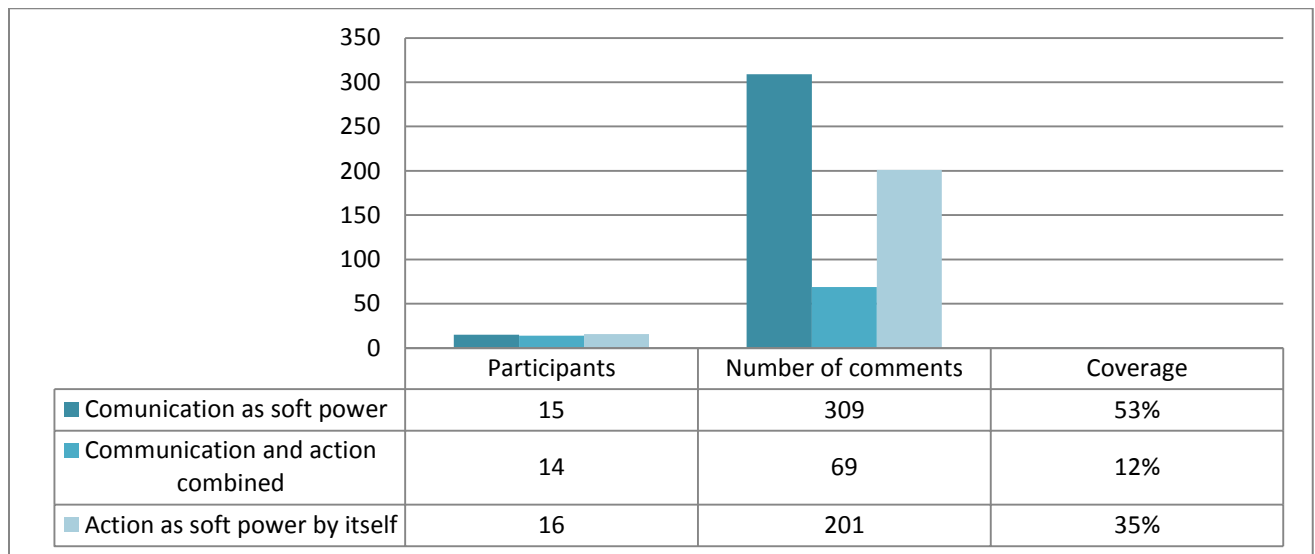
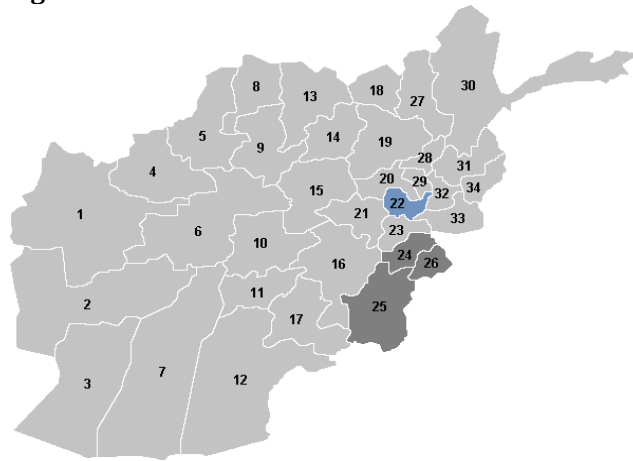
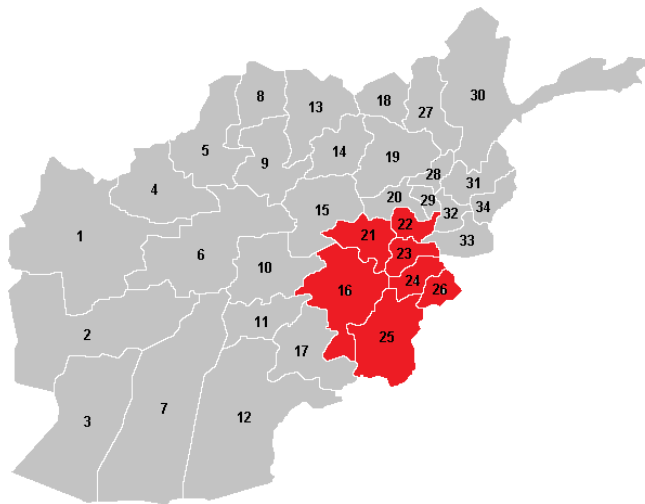
Table 16: Emotional appeals**Table 17: Soft power in Pashtun tribal setting**

Figure – 1: Loya Paktya region**Figure- - 2: Haqqani Network's area of operation****Figure – 3: Pashtun belt in Afghanistan**