

**Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Light of the
Afghan Experience Between 2005 and 2010:
How Did We Get Here, How Have We
Done and How Can We Improve?**

Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Human Sciences in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for an MA in Conflict Studies

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Dedication

Dedicated in memory of my grandparents, who were both civilians and soldiers during World War II.

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Acronyms

ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
COIN	Counterinsurgency
FM	Field Manual
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
ISAF	International Security Assistance Forces
JWT	Just War Theory
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PB	Peace Building
PK	Peace Keeping
UN	United Nations
US	United States

INTRODUCTION

Starting in 2005 interest in counterinsurgency ignited within military circles, policy sectors and academia. The increased interest in counterinsurgency (COIN) was due to the emphasis placed on population-centric counterinsurgency first in Iraq and then in Afghanistan. Although COIN was a popular topic, much of the discussion was overly simplistic. For example, John A. Nagl a former United States Army Officer and one of the preeminent COIN academics described COIN as “be polite, be professional, be prepared to kill” (Khalili 2010, p.17). David Killcullen, the author of *The Accidental Guerilla* (2008), *Counterinsurgency* (2010) described COIN as “armed social work” (2010 p.43). In the Canadian context, Bill Graham, Canada’s Foreign Minister from 2002 to 2007 sarcastically remarked that the Canadian forces were in Kandahar to “make love to the people” and “kill the bad guys” (Land and Stein 2007, p.186). These comments should have raised concern at the time, as the discussion surrounding COIN was simply not commensurate with the gravity of warfare and the security implications if performed unsuccessfully. This thesis was originally undertaken with the interest of elevating the simplistic COIN discussion. Initially researching COIN was frustrating as the academic resources were dominated by the ‘COIN Lobby’ a group of influential academics, commentators and generals who dominated the debate with a singular interpretation of COIN that obfuscates any discussion other than “winning the hearts and minds” and “protecting the population” (Micheals and Ford 2011, p.355). Within the past year research became easier in some regards as there has been an increase of articles critical of COIN. In the same vein the difficulty of the research increased for the reason that as the scholarship progressed, it became necessary to dig deeper into the confusing doctrine of COIN. The purpose of this thesis expanded to address

the current practice, the historical practice and the major debates within the realm of COIN.

Research Outline

Through a case study analysis in the first chapter, this thesis finds that the practice of COIN in Afghanistan from 2005 to 2011 highlights numerous assumptions in population-centric COIN doctrine. The assumptions in COIN doctrine include that insurgencies have the same goals and means of insurgencies 50 years ago; the precise level of coordination required for successful COIN is possible both between and within contributing nations and organizations; higher resources increase the probability of success; statebuilding as a major component of COIN can be completed in any context; civilians can be ‘won’ through development initiatives. Although not given its own section in chapter one, a repeated finding of this thesis is the assumption that COIN can be completed with minimal force. This finding will be addressed throughout all chapters. The final section of the first chapter analyses Canada’s COIN performance in Khandahar province. The second chapter asks, *What are the theoretical influences on population-centric COIN doctrine?* There we will chronicle the historical origin of the guiding phrases of COIN ‘winning the hearts and minds’, ‘clear-hold-build’ and ‘oil-spot’ and finds that the “profoundly a-historical” (Gumz 2009, p.553) use of the phrases have misguided COIN doctrine. The favorite COIN success story of Malaya is analyzed and the findings include that not only did the British COIN use far greater amounts of violence than widely believed but that the factors for ‘winning’ in Malaya were primarily outside of British influence. The additional factors that arguably could have been responsible for the victory over the insurgents were that the insurgents were ethnically Chinese and were considered separate from the majority of ethnic Malaysians

(Hack 2009, p.385). The Malayan insurgents did not receive any outside support (Stubb 2008, p.116). During the communist insurgency, the economy boomed and the government was able to provide a decent standard of living for the population thereby weakening communist claims of wealth inequality, et cetera (Stubb 1997, p.60). The fourth reason is that the British granted Malaya independence from colonial rule, thereby weakening another goal of the insurgents. Ucko (2009) states that had the British not granted independence “we would be most likely be talking about a misguided British defeat” (p.11). This chapter leads into a smaller discovery of this thesis that current COIN doctrine was developed through a selective interpretation of COIN history, in which successful COIN campaigns are attributed to superior methods and COIN failures are attributed to difficult contexts. The implication of attributing success to methods alone is that “perceived success becomes a model for future policy making” (Angstrom and Duyvesteyn 2007, p.48). Invoking the explanation that methods create success without acknowledging beneficial contextual factors inversely provide false confidence to COIN. Overall this chapter demonstrates that the unearthed history of COIN is brutal and not composed of stories about ‘winning hearts and minds’. It is for this reason that modern COIN theorists need to be challenged when they refer to classical COIN precepts or when they cite each other in a cyclical fashion. Foreign policy should not be determined by a practice of false verification whereby a COIN academic like David Killcullen, cites David Petraeus who in turn cites a sentence from the writing of a colonial era COIN theorist when “the sweeping assertion comprises a mere five lines in that text, completely unsupported by either examples or argument” (Jones and Smith 2010, p.439). The third chapter asks *How does International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and modern standards of justice affect the practice of COIN?* Although emphasis is placed on using minimum force in COIN doctrine,

counterinsurgents will inevitably violate some principles of IHL because insurgents purposely blend themselves into the civilian population. The chapter finds that counterinsurgents cannot be ethical, effective and legitimate in the eyes of all audiences – they must choose whom to please and whether it is worth the human and financial cost. The fourth chapter asks *What are the similarities and differences between peacebuilding and COIN?* The similarities are surprising in that the only substantive differentiation between the two is that COIN uses more violence and the motivation for interaction with civilians is done to win the war, not for humanitarian concerns. That being noted, elements of counterinsurgency will prove useful for new crises that cannot be appropriately handled by older ‘Pearsonian’ peacekeeping models (Travers and Owens 2008, p.702). The differences can complement each other in the 21st century. However, COIN’s association with peacebuilding activities becomes an inevitable vulnerability. COIN benefits from being associated with peacebuilding activities because peacebuilding activities receive high levels of public support whereas COIN does not. When eventual images of COIN violence surface in the media, it may lead to the public questioning the legitimacy of that specific COIN operation and all other COIN operations to follow. The fifth chapter asks *What are the similarities and differences between American and Canadian COIN?* While both hold significant similarities, there are differences resulting from the higher degree of resources available to the American Army and the different institutional culture within each respective force. As will be shown through examining the training of the Afghan National Army versus the Afghan National Police, the smaller resources available to the Canadian Army created better trained Afghan National Army Officers and in turn greater opportunity for success. The sixth chapter asks *What are the lessons learned from the population-centric COIN in Afghanistan and how can the lessons be applied in future COIN*

campaign? That the numerous lessons of what should have been done in Afghanistan amount to ‘everything and anything’ leads some analysts questioning the underlying logic of population-centric COIN (Robarts 2009, p.396). The sum of the chapters conveys that the practice of counterinsurgency in Afghanistan illustrates assumptions in COIN doctrine that need to be addressed before COIN is used in the future.

Key Terms

The key terms used in this thesis are counterinsurgency, insurgency, successful counterinsurgency, unsuccessful counterinsurgency, doctrine and practice. Definitions for insurgency and counterinsurgency have been taken from both the Canadian and American Counterinsurgency manuals. American definitions have been included because the Americans dominated counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. Since a component of this thesis examines Canada’s COIN activities in Kandahar, a Canadian definition should be acknowledged. Although presenting two definitions helps provide comparison, there is considerable overlap between the Canadian and American definitions due to the close relationship between the Canadian and American defence departments. In fact the Canadian definition for insurgency is sourced from the United States Marine Corps Joint Urban Warrior document. As quoted in the Canadian Counter-insurgency document, an insurgency is “a competition involving at least one non-state movement using means that include violence against an established authority to achieve political change” (*Counter-insurgency Operations* 2008, 102-4). As defined by the American Field Manual, an insurgency is “an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while

increasing insurgent control” (2007, 1-2). Counterinsurgency is *identically* defined in both the Canadian and American manuals as “Those military, paramilitary, economic, psychological and civic actions taken to defeat an insurgency” (*Counterinsurgency Operations 2008, 103-1; United States Field Manual 2007, 1-2*). The only difference between the two is that the Canadian Manual provides credit to the NATO document, whereas the definition is excerpted from, whereas the American Field Manual sources the definition from another American defence document.

It is interesting to note that current population-centric COIN is conceptualized as successful counterinsurgency, whereas enemy-centric counterinsurgency is conceptualized as unsuccessful counterinsurgency. The United States Counterinsurgency Field Manual 3-24 (US FM) defines successful counterinsurgency as “a struggle for the population’s support. The protection, welfare, and support of the people is vital to success. Gaining and maintaining that support is a formidable challenge. Achieving these aims requires synchronizing the efforts of many non military and agencies in a comprehensive approach” (*Field Manual, 1-159*). In a similar manner population-centric counterinsurgency is defined as:

depriving the insurgents of the support of the people, whose opinions are the primary deterrents to the war’s outcome. Social, political and economic reforms must be implemented...to redress the grievances that cause people to support the insurgents....counterinsurgents should use as little force as possible because the use of force tends to alienate the population (Moyar 2009, p.3).

Comparing the two definitions highlights the widely perceived connection between population-centric counterinsurgency as the method that is required for *successful*

counterinsurgency. Reflexively, unsuccessful counterinsurgency is perceived as enemy-centric. According to the US FM 3-24, unsuccessful counterinsurgency amounts to:

Overemphasize killing and capturing the enemy rather than securing and engaging the populace, conduct large-scale forces as the norm, concentrate military forces in large bases for protection, build and train host-nation security forces in the U.S military's image, ignore peacetime government processes including legal procedures and allow open space borders, airspace and coastlines (*Field Manual*, 2007, 5-1).

In a predictable manner, unsuccessful counterinsurgency is similar to enemy-centric counterinsurgency that is defined as “defeat[ing] insurgents by destroying their will and capabilities with coercion and armed force” (Moyar 2009, p. 3). The similarities between conceptualization of population-centric COIN as successful counterinsurgency and enemy centric as unsuccessful were highlighted because a key finding of this thesis is the unacknowledged role of violence in COIN. Population-centric COIN places emphasis on protecting the population and deemphasizes the use of force (Couch 2011; Killcullen, 2010; Sewall 2010; Spencer 2008). It presents protecting or ‘winning’ the population without the use of force. The second chapter provides insight into the historical use of force in COIN. A key theme throughout this thesis is that the use of force plays an essential role in restoring or creating legitimate order. Presenting population-centric COIN as successful and enemy centric COIN as unsuccessful creates the fabricated belief that counterinsurgency can be successful with minimum force.

The terms doctrine and practice have been included in the key terminology as they are referred to throughout the thesis but may be incorrectly interpreted without a specification of meaning. According to the *Canadian Oxford English Dictionary* (1998) doctrine is defined as “1.what is taught; a body of instruction. 2a a principle of religious or

political belief. b a set of such principles” (p.409). According to The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), doctrine is defined as the “fundamental principles by which the military forces guide their actions in support of objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application” (*Glossary of Terms* 2008, p.9). The word doctrine is used in reference to the American and Canadian Counterinsurgency manuals and the conceptualization of counterinsurgency. Doctrine refers to the theory as opposed to the actual practice or implementation of the idea. According to the Canadian Oxford English Dictionary (1998) practice is defined as “1 the actual doing of something; action as contrasted by idea” (p.1137). Doctrine is the codified idea of COIN, whereas practice refers to the implementation of COIN.

Literature Review

It is critical to investigate the subject of COIN because it is predicted future warfare will be asymmetrical and militaries will be incorporating counterinsurgency into their standard operating procedures (Melton 2009, p.16). With the prediction that future wars will be asymmetrical, it is important to research what has been done well and what should be improved for the future so that future COIN operations can be completed with precision. At the very least, discovering what has gone wrong in Afghanistan to prevent the mistakes in future COIN campaigns is of interest to both policy makers and military strategists. Researching COIN specifically in Afghanistan presents a rare opportunity in that the current COIN approach can be compared to the Soviet attempt at COIN (Goodson and Johnson 2011, p.578; Jones 2010, xxi) and that there has been an incredible amount of resources invested into the COIN effort in Afghanistan. In 2008 the United States spent

approximately 16 billion dollars per month in Afghanistan and there were 40 sovereign states contributing to the NATO led International Security Assistance Forces mission (D'Souza 2008, p.857). The current literature on the subject of COIN is primarily segmented into four groups. The first two groups segment themselves into the 'for' counterinsurgency and the latter two can be placed in the 'against' counterinsurgency category. The first group is dogmatic in its praise for counterinsurgency (Killcullen 2010; Nagl 2002). The second group takes the approach that there have been operational difficulties with counterinsurgency but that overall the practice should continue with a few minor adjustments (Marston 2010 & Malkasian 2010). The third group of literature suggests that population-centric COIN fails and that the United States Army should not try to win hearts and minds but force capitulation through "massive casualties, property destruction, and near starvation economic conditions" (Melton 2009, p.21). The fourth group of literature condemns the practice of COIN, refers to it as an act of imperialism and argues that COIN will always fail (Elkins 2004; Hopkins 2010; Khalili 2010; Marshall 2010; Polk 2007). Determining policy based on any single group of the above literature would be detrimental because as seen with Afghanistan, when an idea is embraced without being challenged (group one), there are countless resources spent and very little outcome. There is a deficit of pragmatic literature that realistically acknowledges COIN will be used again, investigates how it can be improved and articulates why it should be used with caution. This research fills a gap in the literature because it does not seek to condemn or condone COIN but seeks examine the practice of COIN in Afghanistan to highlight the assumptions in the doctrine of population-centric COIN that need to be addressed by strategists, academic and policy makers before it is used again.

Methodology

This research project will provide a qualitative case study analysis of the population-centric COIN as used in Afghanistan from 2005 – 2011 and will examine the doctrine of population-centric COIN. According to Creswell a case study is:

a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data procedures over a sustained period of time (Creswell 2009, p.13).

The practice of COIN in Afghanistan will be assessed through a comprehensive review of the literature regarding COIN. Comparisons to other COIN campaigns, such as Iraq and Malaya are made throughout the thesis to provide a comparison and historical grounding. Through a qualitative lens this thesis uses secondary sources from academic journals and think tanks and whenever possible, primary resources such as government documents. According to Creswell (2009), researchers should disclose their perspective of approaching the research topic. This research is approached with a pragmatic worldview that “looks to the what and how to research, based on the intended consequences – where they want to go with it” (p.11). This research project has been design to influence policy making in the event of future counterinsurgency involvement. For this reason, the theoretical framework chosen to guide this thesis is based on Michel Shafer’s 1988 book *Deadly Paradigms* in which he argued that counterinsurgency policy remained ‘inaccurate and counterproductive’ (Shafer 1988, p.4) primarily because of the ideological *paradigm* of COIN. In Shafer’s words a paradigm “...determines what are facts, what arrangements of facts are made, and how plausible each arrangement is considered” (Shafer 1988, p.36). Shafer’s main point is that the COIN paradigm holds several assumptions that hinder a

rigorous evaluation of COIN doctrine and in turn the doctrine determines the practice of COIN (Shafer 1988, p.4-9). Through a qualitative case study analysis of COIN in Afghanistan from 2005-2011, this thesis contributes to defence literature by showing that the practice of COIN in Afghanistan from 2005–2011 highlights assumptions in the doctrine of COIN.

Determining how to make COIN effective concerns military strategists, academics and policy-makers because the practice of COIN is a matter of operational success or failure, lives on both sides of the battle and international security. Referring to population-centric COIN in terminology such as ‘winning hearts and minds’ or ‘armed social work’ did not lead to a refinement of the theory or the practice and mislead the population-centric COIN operation in Afghanistan. This thesis contributes to the literature by analyzing population-centric COIN in Afghanistan and demonstrating that there are fatal assumptions in COIN doctrine that have been maintained by a tailored history of COIN. It is hypothesized that the experience in Afghanistan will contribute to doctrinal changes to COIN.

CHAPTER ONE: HIGHLIGHTING THE ASSUMPTIONS IN COIN DOCTRINE

Introduction

When the war in Afghanistan was launched in late 2001, it was widely known as the ‘good war’ in comparison to the Iraq war. As the results of the war in Afghanistan are tallied it is worthwhile to question why the ‘good war’ did not turn out as well as expected. The ambitious NATO plan that sought to turn Afghanistan into a stable democracy has been “reduced to leaving with some modicum of order rather than any sense of that elusive concept, victory” (Simpson, 2012). The answer as to why Afghanistan has turned out poorly is in part a response to the guiding question of this chapter, *What does the practice of COIN in Afghanistan from 2005 – 2011 reveal about the doctrine of population-centric COIN?* Through a comprehensive overview of literature regarding COIN in Afghanistan from 2005 – 2011 it appears that there were strategic blunders in the operation but the largest impediments were major assumptions in the population-centric COIN manual that guided counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. The assumptions that will be covered in this chapter are:

- Insurgencies have the same goals and means of insurgencies 50 years ago.
- The precise level of coordination required for successful COIN is possible both between and within contributing nations and organizations.
- Higher resources increase the probability of success.
- Statebuilding can be completed in any context.
- Civilians want to work towards the goals of the counterinsurgents.
- Civilians can be ‘won’ through development initiatives.
- COIN can be completed with minimal force.

With numerous assumptions in COIN doctrine, it is no wonder that COIN in Afghanistan has turned out poorly. This chapter will begin with a short discussion on the difficulties of

assessing COIN in Afghanistan, proceed with an examination of the assumptions in COIN doctrine listed above and provide an analysis of Canada's counterinsurgency effort in Kandahar. Examining the strategic blunders and assumptions in COIN doctrine that impeded success in Afghanistan necessitates a reconsideration of the viability of COIN in the 21st century.

Assessing COIN in Afghanistan

As the current war in Afghanistan is in its concluding chapter the results have been reviewed from “not going well” (Chin 2010, p.215), to “dismal” (Walker 2009, p.68). Assessing the results of counterinsurgency in Afghanistan is not a simple task as the assessment depends on the source, what statistic is cited and the presentation of the statistic. Sir Adam Roberts (2009) demonstrates that taking two different statistics will provide two very different answers of the outcome in Afghanistan. To demonstrate that the engagement in Afghanistan has made progress, he cites that roughly 5 million Afghan refugees have returned home to Afghanistan since 2002 (p.34). The increase in refugees returning home would indicate that people believe it is safe to return home and therefore that the counterinsurgents have strengthened the state to the point where it is able to provide stability for its citizens. Alternatively, to demonstrate that the engagement in Afghanistan has not been able to create a properly functioning state, Roberts cites evidence that only 8% of the Afghan government funding is gained through tax collection (p.42). Low tax compliance would indicate a weak government authority, that is neither recognized as legitimate by its citizens nor able to provide for the citizens. Taking both of these examples together, Roberts demonstrates that statistics can be used to spin the

perception of success or failure. Other scholars such as Hynek and Marton (2011) reject using individual statistics to measure ‘success’ or ‘failure’. They state that Afghanistan “...should also be assessed holistically, not in disaggregated, reductionist analyses of how much heroin is traded on the world market from Afghan sources or whether al-Qaeda operatives are present in Afghan territory” (p.7). Hynek and Marton expand their concept of holistic evaluation by stating that success is whether there has been an overall threat decrease in Afghanistan (p.7). Even a holistic assessment presents a negative prognosis. It may be argued that the threat to Afghans and to the international community has not been reduced. According to the United Nations the threat level for Afghans has increased as civilian casualties have consecutively increased from 2009 – 2011 (*Report of the Protection of Civilians* 2011, p.2). Furthermore, according to one report, by October 2010 the Taliban had shadow governments in 33 of 34 Afghanistan’s provinces (Grant 2010, p.12). If that is accurate, then once the international forces leave Afghanistan could once again become a host to international terrorist organizations and therefore the threat would not have decreased.

There is reason to be suspicious of evaluations regarding COIN in Afghanistan in that different sources may be motivated to prove their point of view. It is difficult to separate indicators of success from the motivation to prove success. After returning from a tour in Afghanistan in early February 2012, United States Lieutenant Colonel Daniel L. Davis, reported that “[w]hat I saw bore no resemblance to rosy official statements by U.S Military leaders about conditions on the ground” (Davis, 2012). Furthermore, others argue that the Effects Based Assessment Operations (EBAO) used by NATO to measure progress in Afghanistan is questionable as it rests on the coalition force assessment, who have the

“luxury of editing and obfuscating the statistics of success and failure to present the best gloss on their operations” (McKinley and Al-Baddaway 2008, p.61). McKinley and Al-Baddaway believe in future operations that there should be a “universally recognized authority to measure success of an intervention on a regular basis” (p.61). Additionally, Rietjens, Soeters and Klumber (2011) assessed the EBAO and found a “methodological nightmare” because there was inconsistent methodology between different regional commands and an obsession with numbers without taking into consideration qualitative factors (p.336). Downes-Martin (2011) argues that the lack of a sound assessment methodology has hampered policy decisions for the operation in Afghanistan (p.122). Downes-Martin states that “the continued use of junk arithmetic and flawed logic mobs decision makers of the most essential requirements that assessment is supposed to supply – sound verifiable and accurate information on upon which to make life and death decisions” (p.122). It is difficult to assess ‘success’ or ‘failure’ in Afghanistan as information is malleable, statistics can be spun to serve different interests and the EBAO holds considerable limitations. It can be safely concluded that COIN in Afghanistan has not been able to counter the insurgency. The final assessment of Afghanistan recorded as a ‘success’ or ‘failure’ will depend on the future domestic politics within Afghanistan and surrounding regions.

Mission in Afghanistan ‘Morphed’ into Counterinsurgency

It is important to highlight that the operation in Afghanistan did not start as COIN. The engagement in Afghanistan started with the goal of defeating the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, progressed into stabilization and statebuilding and then “morphed” into

counterinsurgency (Marten 2010, p.215). Engagement in Afghanistan started on October 7, 2001 when the US launched Operation Enduring Freedom to defeat the Taliban and Al-Qaeda (Aoi 2011, p.161). The United States and the Northern Alliance “swiftly defeated the Taliban regime and al-Qaeda leadership dispersed” (Aoi p.161). When Operation Enduring Freedom started there was no plan to follow up with nation building, yet there was acknowledgment that Afghanistan could not be left with a power vacuum (Daalder and Lindsay 2003, p.111). The Bonn Conference in December 2001 established the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) that “set the framework for an ambitious development agenda of economic reconstruction, state building and democratic governance...” (Suhrke 2011, p.228). In January 2002 the United Nations deployed 4, 500 soldiers under the International Security Assistant Forces to assist with supporting the Afghan government (Suhrke 2011, p.214). The United Nations was tasked with rebuilding Afghanistan and NATO led the International Security Assistant Forces in charge of security operations (Walker 2009, p.64). Since the summer of 2003 NATO has been in command of ISAF and each member of NATO made an individual contribution to Afghanistan. In 2005, with a Taliban resurgence, counterinsurgency efforts quickly progressed (Aikins 2010, p.23). In 2006 there was an acknowledgement from NATO that relying on the military was insufficient and that “greater investment in socio-economic development and good governance were urgently required” (Suhrke, p.229). The counterinsurgency intensified again with the American ‘surge’ in the summer of 2009. Afghanistan developed into counterinsurgency partly as a product of the division of responsibilities to NATO member states but primarily because of the operational error of not securing the Pakistan – Afghan border, which enabled the Taliban and al-Qaeda to regroup, rearm, and move freely between Afghanistan and Pakistan (Aoi 2011, p.190).

Not securing the border was a considerable blunder as controlling borders is incredibly important in counterinsurgencies (Brooker 2010, p.159). Gleis emphasizes the importance of controlling borders by asserting, “a counterinsurgency can neither effectively operate nor successfully withdraw without being able to control a state’s borders” (Gleis 2011, p.180). Some believe that had the OEF secured the border, the insurgency could have been defeated (Chin 2010, p.227). Not securing the Afghan border allowed the insurgency to grow to the point where the Taliban went from an annoyance to the main political challenger to the Karzai administration. The 2012 leaked NATO report *State of the Taliban* reported that the Taliban are still determined to win the battle in that “While they [the Taliban] are weary of war, they see little hope of negotiated peace. Despite numerous setbacks, surrender is far from their collective mindset” (*Pakistan Helping Afghan Taliban*, February 2012). Not securing the Afghan border made the mission far more difficult. However there were many other factors that contributed to the insurgency metastasizing, such as the basis of the operation directed by a doctrine that holds numerous assumptions. The remainder of this chapter will chronicle the assumptions in detail.

Assumption #1: Insurgents have the Same Goals and Means of Insurgencies 50 Years Ago

Current counterinsurgency doctrine enshrined in the United States COIN Field Manual 3-24 assumes that insurgents have the same goals and means of Maoist insurgencies. Under Maoist models of insurgency the goal is to replace the government. Modern insurgencies have changed in that insurgent motivations can vary from “ethnicity, religion, identity” to “succession or economic gain” (Chin 2010, p.223). Changes in the format of insurgencies should be expected in that insurgencies have existed throughout

history but have gone through different formats. According to Paul Brooker (2010) the author of *Modern Stateless Warfare*, in the past two hundred years alone there have been three major changes to insurgency formats. The three major insurgency changes have been the Nationalist Model from 1809–1930, the Maoist Model from 1930-1960 and the New Techniques and Technology Insurgency from 1960's – Present (p.2). Insurgencies will continue to change, as Brooker predicts by 2030 insurgencies will use cyber and biological weapons. Noting the variation in insurgencies is important as the goals and methods of an insurgency shape the form of counterinsurgency (Walker 2009, p.910). In the context of Afghanistan the goals of the Taliban and other insurgent groups are unclear. There have been changes from the 'old Taliban' of 1994-2001 to the often referred to 'Neo-Taliban' of 2002 – 2012. The old Taliban are summarized as the 'Quran and Kalashnikov' where as the Neo-Taliban are differentiated with their savvy use of technology, a slight ideological liberalization to attract a broader support base and an internationalization of the Taliban fighters (Giustozzi 2008, p.236). Giustozzi characterizes this change as "a process of transition, from an ultra-orthodox and narrowly focused interpretation of Islam towards an ultra-conservative but more 'political' and 'internationalist' interpretation" (Giustozzi 2008, p.236). The Taliban and al-Qaeda are just two insurgent groups in Afghanistan. The insurgents are not just comprised of Taliban fighters. Maloney (2008) reports "the insurgency has evolved year to year with different players playing greater or lesser roles" (p.202). In Kandahar alone, the other groups included parts of Al-Qaeda, Glubiddin Hekmatyar's 'Hezb-e-Islami' and the Haqqanni Tribal Network (Maloney, p.202). Other insurgent groups merely act as 'strategic spoilers' whose goal is to undermine the coalition efforts and the Karzai administration but not take on the role of government (Killcullen 2007, p.115). Walker highlights that the insurgency in Afghanistan "is a situation of

interwoven and conflicting tribal and ethnic-religious loyalties, often at odds with each other, not necessarily pursuing what the United States or Mao for that matter would perceive as a rational political goal such as the formation of a government” (Walker 2009, p.910). Different insurgent motivations are just one of many factors that separate modern insurgencies from the Maoist paradigm in the COIN manual.

Technology is another aspect that differentiates Maoist era insurgencies from modern insurgencies. Technology is what “makes insurgency so potent a threat, even to the once impregnable fortress of the West is that insurgents have developed a military and ideological reach undreamt of by their predecessors” (Jackson 2009, p.82). The internet alone has been an invaluable asset to the Taliban. First, the leadership of the Taliban can make combat orders from a distance and remain safe from counterinsurgent retaliation. Second, the Taliban has used the internet to recruit fighters from neighboring countries such as Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, but also from Yemen, Chechnya, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq (Chin 2008, p.224). The implication of recruiting from different countries creates a virtual endless supply of insurgents. Furthermore, the internet makes it very easy to spread insurgent or Taliban propaganda (Cronin 2006, p.85). This has important implications for defeating insurgencies as “the degree to which an insurgent or antagonist can acquire...support globally reduces even further need for local support. The presumption that insurgents still seek or need popular support from a neutral mass or ‘undecided’ requires reconsideration” (Hoffman 2007, p.77). The insurgents do not need as much local support, which radically changes the Maoist precept of the insurgents being the ‘fish’ in the ‘ocean’ of civilians. Finally the Taliban use the internet to collect information about coalition forces operations (Maloney 2008, p.214). The changing motivations, goals,

tools and independence from local support are a considerable departure from the Maoist conceptualization of insurgency. To its own detriment COIN doctrine has continued to conceptualize insurgency from a Maoist paradigm aiming at replacing the government, and depending on the population for support.

Assumption #2: Insurgents do not have supportive neighbors

Counterinsurgency doctrine assumes that insurgent support is limited within their nation. As Afghanistan has shown, insurgents can have numerous external supporters that can assist an insurgency and perpetuate the insurgency. Afghanistan has six neighbors, two of which, Pakistan and Iran, have provided support for the Taliban (Arreguin-Toft, 2005). As Pakistan's support for the Taliban was briefly addressed in previous sections, this paragraph will address Iran's support to the Taliban. It has been reported that arms marked from Iran are illegally imported and then sold on the black market in Afghanistan (Gioustozzi 2008, p.26). Iran is interested in the Taliban for two primary reasons. Iran is a Shiite nation that came close to war with primarily Sunni Afghanistan in 1998. Therefore cultivating a relationship with the various stakeholders in Afghanistan may help to avoid future conflicts with Afghanistan. In September 2011 Iran hosted an 'Islamic Awakening' conference which the Taliban was invited to attend (Ernesto, 2011). Ernesto states that "...the presence of the Taliban members suggests Iran has cultivated deeper ties with the insurgent group than was previously known and is stepping up efforts to influence its eastern neighbor as the U.S. role recedes" (Ernesto, 2012). In addition to the interest of cultivating a relationship with the Taliban, Iran may have been involved in Afghanistan to weaken the US efforts in Afghanistan. Iran and America have had a contentious

relationship and another country actively supporting an insurgent group that their foe is fighting is a traditional method of subversion.

When numerous outsiders support insurgents, the viability of defeating insurgents is low. The next chapter will discuss Malaya, the favorite case of successful counterinsurgency, and how the communist insurgents in Malaya did not have any outside support from neighboring countries or the Soviet Union. One of the factors contributing to the defeat of the communist insurgents in Malaya was because they had no outside support. COIN doctrine does not factor in that an insurgency can perpetuate indefinitely with outside support.

Assumption #3: Coordination makes perfect COIN

One of the most often repeated shortcomings of the counterinsurgency strategy was that there was a lack of unity of command and effort (Grant 2010, p.1; Marston & Malkasian, 2010, p.253; Giustozzi 2008, p.164). It is widely argued that success in Afghanistan is contingent upon unity of effort and unity of command. For example D'Souza (2008) states “[d]espite the large presence of the international community in Afghanistan, success in the counterinsurgency campaign will remain elusive unless the international community unifies its efforts through well-coordinated long-term policies...” (p.870). Hynek and Marton affirm that “...ISAF is a coalition effort that works only if the entire coalition puts sufficient effort into achieving common objectives” (2011, p.8). While the benefits of coordination are self-explanatory, it is questionable if the high level of coordination required for COIN is possible between state departments, let alone across

organizations and between states. The sheer number of actors in Afghanistan makes it impossible to achieve precise coordination. In 2008 there were approximately 40 sovereign states contributing forces in Afghanistan, numerous intergovernmental organizations such as NATO, the United Nations, 189 International non-governmental organizations, and 367 local non-governmental organizations, mercenaries and commercial actors (D'Souza 2008, p.857). It is highly questionable whether unity of command is possible across actors in Afghanistan, as singular organizations and individual nations had difficulty with unity of effort. Apparently within NATO there was minimal unity of command and unity of effort was 'patchy' (Farrell and Rynning 2010, p.694). Each member state of NATO had its own "national caveats or self imposed limitations" (Aoi 2011, p.200) and was constrained by limited operating budgets as "the public finances of most allies are under severe pressure" (Lindley-French 2010, p.18). Additionally, different NATO members were tasked to lead interconnected components of Afghanistan's nation building. The different approaches taken by different nations created dysfunctional Afghan institutions. For example, Italy was tasked with strengthening the Justice Department and the United States was tasked with training the Afghan National Police. Two interdependent institutions – the police and judiciary – were rebuilt by two different nations with different approaches. Aoi (2011) states "reflecting their different legal cultures and traditions, lead nation Italy and the US pursued different and uncoordinated strategies in the justice sector" (p.183). The result of the justice sector has been that rampant impunity and very few Afghans trust the judiciary (Aoi, p.183). Coalition missions can make an effort to improve coordination but will always be limited by national caveats for engagement, fiscal pressure and simply approaching the interconnected activity of COIN from different angles. Stabilization missions necessitate coalitions or multilateral forces because not even the United States

with the strongest military can stabilize countries unilaterally (Quinlivan 1995, p.69). Spreading the burden across countries creates coordination challenges that are embedded in the nature of coalition forces. Furthermore, coordination was a challenge within different arms of singular nations. As will be discussed later on in this chapter, even with a clear mandate for a ‘Whole of Government’ approach Canada had great difficulty with synchronizing efforts between the military and the Canadian International Development Agency. Finally, the challenge of unifying command and effort has been a challenge in prior counterinsurgency campaigns. Speaking in relation to Vietnam, Warner highlights that:

In effect, the counterinsurgents were fighting two utterly disconnected wars (political and military) – a problem derivative of the lack of command. The breakdown of communication between diplomats and military advisers contributed to the persistent lack of coordination. Once the United States became aware that the war could not be won unless it addressed both military and political issues...the situation had deteriorated to the point that the reforms could not have a sufficient impact (Warner 2007, p. 34).

Challenges with the unity of command are nothing new because coordination challenges are inherent in any COIN operation. Although success in counterinsurgency is commonly articulated as contingent upon unity of command and effort, the degree of unity required for successful counterinsurgency is unlikely to occur in coalition missions. While efforts can be taken to strengthen unity of command and effort in future missions, it must also be acknowledged that unity of command will always be a challenge in coalition missions and cannot be expected to singularly create successful COIN.

Assumption #4: Higher Resources Creates Success

It is commonly argued that lower resources in Afghanistan in comparison to Iraq is the reason for the lower level of success (Grant 2010, p.1). A comparison of the surges in Iraq and Afghanistan along with an analysis of the recommended ratio of insurgents to civilians will demonstrate that higher resources are not necessarily correlated with greater success. Iraq and Afghanistan have often been compared to each other during the duration of both wars. The attempt at counterinsurgency in Afghanistan was encouraged by the relative success of counterinsurgency methods in Iraq (Roberts 2009, p.34; Johnson 2011, p.396). Many more resources were contributed to Iraq than to Afghanistan – by 2008 the US spent \$608.3 billion in Iraq and just \$162.6 billion in Afghanistan over seven years (Killcullen 2008, p.43). Comparing the effect of the surges between Iraq and Afghanistan can help demonstrate that factors other than financial resources influence the outcome of COIN. Prior to the surge in Iraq, some commentators believed that Iraq was on the verge of collapse and there were frequent calls for withdrawal of U.S forces (Celso 2010, p. 186). The idea for the Iraqi surge originated from the report *Choosing Victory: A Plan for Success in Iraq* by Frederick Kagan of the American Enterprise Institute (Celso 2010, p.187). The Iraq surge consisted of 30, 000 additional troops sent to Iraq in 2007 to provide one last shot at success. Interestingly, the Afghan surge also consisted of 30,000 additional troops (Woodward 2010, p.314). Since the surge size was the same, the differences between the successful surge in Iraq and the unsuccessful surge in Afghanistan cannot be blamed solely on resources. The Iraqi surge is widely considered a success because it turned some of the most dangerous places in Iraq such as al-Anbar and al-Basra into safe zones (Celso, p.188). However, as stated by Dunn and Futter (2010) the troop surge was

“one of several factors that came together to bequeath the current relatively stability and security now experienced in most parts of Iraq” (p.197). The surge was successful primarily due to a coincidental splintering between the Iraqi insurgency (Dunn and Futter, p.197). Prior to the surge Sunni tribal leaders and al-Qaeda had a strategic alliance and acted as one insurgency group (Malkasian 2008, p.287). However, the Sunni Tribal leaders had already begun to turn away from al-Qaeda because of al-Qaeda’s “...killings of tribal sheiks, their attempts to impose Islamic law, and their nihilistic violence soon became too much for the Anbar Sunnis to bear...” (Celso 2010, p.192). The Sunni tribal leaders began to view the US coalition forces as less of a threat in the long run over al-Qaeda (Dunn and Futter, p.199). In what is referred to as the ‘Anbar awakening’, the U.S and Sunni Militia collaborated to clear al-Qaeda insurgents out of Anbar (Celso, p.192). Another noteworthy surge battle occurred in Basra at the end of March 2008. As in the previous example success was not entirely because of the size of the ‘surge’ but because of a splintering of insurgent groups in Iraq. During the Basra battle, the Shite Madhi Army that was controlled by Muqtada Al-Sadr was weak as Al-Sadr had been in Iran since 2007 for ‘religious studies’. Second, there was a split among Al-Sadr’s Madhi Army, in which some of the ranks wanted to distance themselves from Iran (Dunn and Hastings, 2003). These two cases demonstrate that the success of the ‘surge’ in Iraq was because of a coincidental splintering of insurgent groups, not the higher level of resources vis-à-vis the surge resources.

The 2009 Surge in Afghanistan

The surge strategy in Iraq and two key US military personalities were the catalyst for the surge strategy in Afghanistan. David Petraeus and Stanley McCrystal lobbied President

Obama for a surge strategy in Afghanistan (Woodward 2010, p.256-283). Both McCrystal and Petraeus were known as the chiefs of the ‘COIN Lobby’ – those who advocated for a population centric counterinsurgency policy in Iraq and Afghanistan (Micheals and Ford 2011, p.355). Petraeus is one of the authors of the US COIN manual and as he took command of the coalition operations in Iraq in February 2007, he was synonymous with the surge strategy in Iraq. McCrystal was the ISAF commander in Afghanistan during 2009 and was known for emphasizing the protection of Afghan civilians. When Stanley McCrystal and David Petraeus lobbied Obama for a 40,000 troop increase for Afghanistan, they presented that they needed 40,000 troops to assist with getting to the ideal of 400,000 to stabilize Afghanistan (Woodward 2010, p.264). Obama was rightly skeptical of the 400,000 figure McCrystal and Petraeus kept citing and justified that the number was necessary based on COIN doctrine. It is stated in the COIN Field Manual that a ratio of 20-25 counterinsurgents per 1000 residents is often considered the minimum troop density for effective COIN operations” (*Field Manual* 2007, 1-67). In a summary of a meeting between president Obama, McCrystal and Petraeus, President Obama pressed them on the number and asked “What evidence is there that this is necessary or doable?” No one had a good answer...The 400,000 number goal did not fit with his evidence based reasoning. It was a pipe dream illustrated with charts and abstract ratios” (Woodward 2010, p.264). This was an excellent question as the amount of resources necessary to stabilize an insurgency seems to be based on self-perpetuating assumptions regarding the necessary troop size. There does not seem to be concrete evidence that 20-25 counterinsurgents per 1000 inhabitants will create stabilization. Friedman (2011) writes “a great deal of scholarly research, ongoing military operations, and contemporary defense planning turns on basic assumptions about the role of force size determining counterinsurgency outcomes” (p.557).

Friedman tested 171 counterinsurgency campaigns since World War I and found that the current ‘rule of thumb’ of 20–25 counterinsurgents per 1000 inhabitants “has no discernible empirical support” (p.557). Furthermore, the base number for counterinsurgents and host nation security forces does not take into consideration factors such as competency – a factor in the Afghan security forces that have severely impacted the entire counterinsurgency campaign. Chapter 5 will explore the issue of training host nation security in detail. For the time being, the point is that there is little evidence to suggest that the rule of thumb of 20-25 counterinsurgents per 1000 inhabitants is based on concrete evidence rather than being a self-perpetuating myth that 20-25 insurgents is required for success. Ongoing assumptions in COIN doctrine determined policy decisions in Afghanistan as on December 1, 2009, President Obama announced the surge strategy of sending another 30,000 troops to Afghanistan. While assessing each operation in the Afghan surge is beyond the scope of this thesis, the general consensus is that the surge has not been successful in Afghanistan (Celso 2010; Fair 2010; Beadle 2011). For example, one component of the Afghan surge, the ‘Marjah’ offensive in Helmand turned out to be more difficult than expected (King 2010, p. 68). McCrystal has referred to the Marjah offensive as the ‘bleeding ulcer’ of Afghanistan (Goodson and Johnson 2011, p.577). Marjah has received poor reviews because “large areas of terrain are still not clear”, meaning that the Taliban are still present (Chivers 2010) and there is only a small Afghan government presence (Korski and Teuten 2010, p. 84). In sum, the Afghan surge did not work out as planned for reasons that are unaffected by financial resources. One of the reasons for the disappointing results of the Afghan surge has been the composition of Afghan society. Celso argues that in comparison to Iraq the surge was not successful because “Pashtun tribal structures are diverse, fractured and characterized by low levels of leadership fidelity,

where Sunni Sheikdoms are unitary and loyal to sheiks. The Pashtuns, moreover lack the secular, pragmatic orientation of the Anbar Sheiks that had facilitated its alienation with al-Qaeda” (p.193). Meaning that in Iraq the composition of the insurgent group assisted the surge, whereas in Afghanistan the internal rivalry between the insurgent groups did not have a complimentary effect. Military resources are a component but not a determinate of success in COIN.

Assumption #5: Statebuilding Can be Completed in Any Context

Statebuilding is said to be an integral component of current COIN doctrine (Ucko, 2009, p.9). The United States COIN Field Manual refers to a form of statebuilding in that “Success in counterinsurgency operations requires establishing a legitimate government supported by the people and able to address the fundamental causes that insurgents use to gain support” (*Field Manual* 2007, 6-1). While this sounds reasonable, statebuilding under fire, and especially in Afghanistan is an incredibly difficult task. It is a major assumption in COIN doctrine that the state constructed from the counterinsurgents perspective will work, be perceived as legitimate, and be able to address the concerns of civilians. Statebuilding in Afghanistan was emphasized as a ‘light footprint’ approach that was meant to “keep the international presence in Afghanistan relatively limited so as not to undermine emerging local administration and endogenous capacities” (Aoi 2011, p.256). Though a light footprint was stressed, the proposed statebuilding measures launched during the Bonn agreement demonstrated that “the UN was launching an ambitious statebuilding project to assist in creating permanent political institutions in Afghanistan founded upon democratic principles” (Aoi 2011, p.165). Even with a light footprint premise, statebuilding initiatives

in Afghanistan have been criticized as undermining national capacity to the degree that there is dependency on foreign support to uphold the Afghan state (Suhrke 2011, p.240). In comparison to other statebuilding initiatives, Afghanistan was a 'light approach'. One US Army officer stated, "We cannot spend seven times more in Bosnia and Kosovo than we do in Afghanistan and then pretend we are doing nation building" (Rashid 2008, p.189). Furthermore, statebuilding in the best circumstances is always a Catch 22 – the international community is always blamed for not doing enough but still doing too much that undermines the capacity of nascent states. In a poignant critique of the endless blaming in statebuilding, Roland Paris states "Simply put, if both the heavy foot print and the light foot print are problematic – what is the 'right' foot print?" (Paris 2010, p.343). With all the literature on statebuilding, figuring out the right footprint is at best a work in progress and at worst an unachievable goal. The following paragraphs will address some of the foundational concerns of statebuilding in Afghanistan.

Statebuilding in Afghanistan was based on a Western perception of legitimate authority, not Afghan perceptions of legitimate authority (Suhrke 2011, p.243). In general, statebuilding has been based on Western perceptions of authority based on building strong institutions (Paris 2004; Fukuyama 2004; Einsiedel 2005). For example in Francis Fukuyama's book *Statebuilding: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century* he defines a state in institutional terms as "the ability to plan and execute policies and to enforce laws clearly and transparently what is now commonly referred to as state or institutional capacity" (2004, p.7). There is a growing body of skeptics that challenge the idea that building institutions will successfully build states (Lemay-Herbert 2009, p.21; Fitzsimmons 2008, p.337). Statebuilding through institution building does not

automatically establish a legitimate state authority, as there are other factors such as ethnicity, religion, culture, et cetera that shape the perception of 'legitimate' authority (Fitzsimmons, p.337). Hebert states that effective statebuilding should incorporate "...the complex nature of sociopolitical cohesion, or what some refer to as nation-building" (Lemay-Herbert 2009, p.22). While there was some effort to incorporate Afghan perceptions of legitimacy such as the trusty 'age old jirga' in the statebuilding process (Barfield 2010, p.294), it is questionable whether any state authority would work in Afghanistan.

The repeated internal conflict within Afghanistan during the past two hundred years has led some to believe that Afghans will always "resist state power" (Lieven 2007, p.487) or more forcefully that Afghanistan is "ungovernable" (Barfield 2010, p.13). Barfield argues that the constant violent conflict in Afghanistan to expel foreign invaders or between different factions has resulted in an "autoimmune disorder" to national authority that would destroy "any state structure" (p.6). Some observers disagree with the argument that that Afghanistan is ungovernable and point to the stable period during the 1960's and early 1970's to demonstrate that Afghanistan is governable (Bumiller 2009). While the periods of relative stability are important to include in this discussion, Afghanistan has been defined more by violent conquest and internal upheaval than by periods of stability. No Afghan ruler has maintained control over the state for long without the threat or the actual infliction of significant violence (Barfield, p.4). Throughout Afghan history there has been a reciprocal relationship between autonomy and legitimate authority – so long as rulers provided autonomy to tribes, the tribes provided legitimacy to the governing authority (Barfield, p.5). The relationship between autonomy and political legitimacy grew stronger

with the Anglo Afghan wars of 1839 to 1878. The Durrani rulers expelled the British twice from Afghanistan through a method whereby rural and tribal militias were armed and paid by the Durrani ruler to fight the British. However by defeating the British, the Afghan tribes became stronger and did not want to share their power with the ruling Durrani elite. Barfield states “this set up a contradictory dynamic in which the Afghan rulers encouraged armed resistance to expel foreign invaders but then refused to share power once the war was over” (Barfield, p.5). After the second Anglo-Afghan war in 1878, Abdul Rahman wanted to centralize the government and earned the nick-name of ‘Iron Amir’ in that when he faced resistance to centralizing his authority, he waged a war so brutal war that there were no remaining rivals (Barfield, p.5). The rule of Iron Amir was the longest running authority and is cited as evidence that a national governing authority is possible – but requires an incredible amount of violence. Barfield states that “the level of violence it took to bring Afghanistan to such a state is often overlooked by historians and later political leaders, who instead lauded the Amir’s ability to bring order to such a fractured land” (Barfield, p.147). Afghanistan was governed by a central government that used a significant degree of violence. The role of violence in formations of states is something that is taboo but is a reality of how states have been historically formed (Tilly 1985, p.173). During the most recent period of rebuilding Afghanistan, a predictable use of violence may have better demonstrated the authority of the Afghan government. For example in an interview with General Sir David Richards, the ISAF commander in 2006-2007, he noted that force is required to create the perception of legitimacy in Afghanistan:

If you are an Afghan who has spent 30 years fighting, you have learned not to put faith in the wrong side, because it comes back to haunt you. Until we have demonstrated that we had the resolve and the capability to beat the Taliban decisively, we were not going to be able to win the ‘hearts and minds’. We like to think that the concept of ‘hearts and minds’ is all about soft power –

humanitarian aid, development projects – but in the Afghan context there is a *hard edge to it. First you have to convince people that you are going to win, militarily*” (RUSI interview with Sir David Richards, 2007, p.30).

The pursuit of a Western state with a social contract has not fared well in Afghanistan because of the ‘auto-immune disorder’ to national authority, ethnic rivalries and the custom of force creating legitimate authority. It is interesting that cultural awareness is stressed in counterinsurgency literature (McFate 2010) and doctrine (*Field Manual* 2007, 3-36) but that there was a major cultural presumption that constructing a democratic state would work in Afghanistan. COIN doctrine will have to develop deeper cultural awareness beyond what gestures mean to stop and go and not showing the bottom of one’s foot. The current doctrine of COIN is limited because its guidelines “blithely assume a population whose value systems are like ours, whose fundamental concepts about political order are consistent with representative democracy, universal individual rights and free market economies” (Hoffman 2007b, p.83). Future COIN campaigns will have to amend the conceptualization of how legitimacy is formed in different contexts beyond building institutions. The implication of Afghanistan is that COIN may have to move away from statebuilding and prudently acknowledge that counterinsurgency campaigns will require a higher degree of violence. Current COIN doctrine assumes that COIN can be completed through heart-warming activities but omits the historical use of force in COIN campaigns (Gumz 2009; Dixon 2009; Polk 2007). William Polk (2007), an insurgency historian argues that “... I hoped Vietnam would be the final lesson for Americans that no matter how many soldiers and civilians were killed, how much money was spent, how powerful and sophisticated were the arms employed, foreigners cannot militarily defeat a determined insurgency except by virtual genocide” (p. xvii). Edward Luttwak, a well know

COIN historian but FM 3-24 critic, states that despite the current population-centric COIN “clever tactics, all the treasure and blood that the United States has been willing to expend, cannot overcome the crippling ambivalence of occupiers who refuse to govern, and their principled and inevitable refusal to out terrorize the insurgents, the necessary and sufficient condition of a tranquil occupation” (Luttwak 2007, p.42). Violence is a necessary component of COIN and a primary reason why decisions to engage in COIN should be carefully weighed.

Assumption #6: Civilians Can be ‘Won’ through the Development Projects

It is an assumption in COIN doctrine and literature that the civilians want what is being proposed and will work towards establishing the goals of counterinsurgents. In COIN emphasis is placed on ‘winning’ the populace over to your side meaning, “victory will be afforded to the side that is most adept at influencing public opinion and generating popular support” (Spencer 2010, p.116). It is repeated that the counterinsurgents want to win the consent of the residents (Chin 2010, p.225) by establishing “the legitimacy of the government and its forces...” (Maloney 2008, p. 205). Recent field research in Afghanistan by Andrew Wilder (2012) directly challenges the “widely held assumption in military and foreign policy circles that development assistance” will contribute to successful COIN (Wilder 2012, p.2). Wilder finds that there is “little empirical evidence that supports the assumption the reconstruction assistance is an effective tool to win ‘hearts and minds’ or improve security or stability in COIN contexts” (p.2). It is a major assumption in COIN doctrine that civilians will pledge allegiance to the counterinsurgents or the central government because they received development projects that are supposed to ‘win hearts

and minds'. Nachbar echoes this point in that "improvements in providing services does not necessarily contribute to the government's legitimacy" (Nachbar 2012, p.34). As will be discussed in the next paragraph, development projects by counterinsurgents may actually be used in ways that counteract the goals of counterinsurgents.

In previous COIN campaigns the 'stick' was used to persuade people but that method is no longer acceptable and counterinsurgents now use a 'carrot' method (Duyvesten 2011, p.456). The carrot "is not without problems either" as it can create opportunistic behavior (Duyvesten 2011, p.456). COIN doctrine does not acknowledge that the populace may resist what the counterinsurgents offer or that the populace will manipulate the counterinsurgents initiatives to serve their individual / group interests. In Afghanistan there has been corruption and manipulation at both the elite and rural level. At the elite level, approximately 1 billion dollars leaves Afghanistan every year and goes directly into offshore banks accounts (Speigel, 2010). Similarly, there needs to be a consideration that regular Afghans are capable of manipulation. Mocking the simplistic assumption that all Afghans function from trustworthy intentions Jonathan Freeman states:

Surely such simple people, ardent, technologically unsophisticated people - like the mullah who speaks for the village, or the weeping mother who swears her slain son was a good boy and would *never* have shot at soldiers - wouldn't tell lies? While there is no justification for reverting back to Edwardian-era bigotry and assuming that all Orientals, especially South Asians, are compulsive liars, it would be equally wrong to assume the opposite or ignore the role of rumor and the likelihood of deceit in a place like Afghanistan (Foreman, 2007).

There is considerable documentation of Afghans manipulating development initiatives. Field reporter Matthew Aikins noticed manipulation while observing a quick impact project to fix a crushed pipe. The quick impact project involved negotiating a price

for labour with the landowner Gul Mohamed. Initially Gul Mohamed initially tried to extract a \$600 bribe from the Canadian Officer. After the pipe had been removed by Afghans and a new pipe installed by American soldiers the Canadian Officer, “made a short speech for the assembled onlookers. ‘Well, Hajji Gul Mohammed, as you see we’ve fulfilled the promise we made to you. I hope you know that we are here to help you rebuild Afghanistan.’” (Aikins, 2010, p.25). The next thing said from Gul Mohamed was “When are you going to fix the power for the mosque?” (Atkins, p.25). COIN doctrine is naïve in assuming that all residents will work towards the counterinsurgents goals rather than serving their individual interests.

In rare circumstances where residents want what the counterinsurgents are proposing, success is far more likely. It is in these circumstances that insurgents can be significantly weakened or expelled. For example, in the Nawa region, the counterinsurgency effort has been more successful because of the involvement of the citizens in expelling the Taliban. Chandrasekaran reports that:

“Locals chafed at the Taliban’s taxation, and they grew tired of the near constant firefight between the insurgents and a team of British police trainers holed up in the district center. Tribal leaders made it clear they wanted the bad guys [Taliban] out...” (2010, p.3).

When counterinsurgency doctrine expresses the goal of winning the population, it does not acknowledge that there will be resistance to counterinsurgent goals or manipulation from civilians. It is a rather large assumption to think that Afghans would suddenly work towards the goals of counterinsurgents because someone built them a school, a well or some other infrastructure project. There needs to be a re-examination of the assumption that

the civilians can be 'won' or will abide by the goals of counterinsurgents because of development projects.

Focusing on COIN Practice: Canada and Kandahar

Canada's involvement in Afghanistan since 2001 can be broken into two sections. The first section from 2001 to 2005 can be labeled as 'late generation peacekeeping mission' (Murray and McCoy 2010, p.178). After assisting with expelling the Taliban in 2001, Canada was stationed in Kabul from 2003-2004 to provide security and assist with overseeing the 2004 elections (Murray and McCoy 2010, p.178). The second period from 2005 to 2011 can be labeled as a 'transition mission to counterinsurgency' (Hope 2008, p.47). From August 2005 to 2008 Canada took on Provincial Reconstruction Team responsibilities for Kandahar (Holland 2010, p.288). While Canada did put in a strong effort - some analysts have argued that in proportionate terms it was the strongest effort of all NATO members (Zyla 2011, p.112) - it was not able to move past the 'hold' phase of 'clear – hold – build' formula. Brigadier General Jonathan Vance said of the Canadian Forces in Kandahar that "We did not have the capacity to do everything that needed to be done to achieve success through counterinsurgency. All we could do was not lose" (Brian Stewart Interview 2010, p.10). The first limitation of the counterinsurgency approach was that there were not enough troops to transition from 'clearing' the insurgents from Kandahar to 'holding' and then 'building'. This led to constant 'mowing the lawn' or clearing the insurgents on a regular basis but not being able to keep the insurgents away (Aikins 2010, p. 23). Marten states, "There simply haven't been enough CF [Canadian Forces] soldiers to manage counterinsurgency operations in the whole of Kandahar

Province” (Marten 2010, p. 215). It is important to note that the Canadian Forces could not have increased their troop levels (Granatstein 2011, p.443). Requests for back up troops were repeatedly made to ISAF but additional troops were not granted until it was too late. Granatstein (2011) argues that had ISAF granted troops earlier then “...the war might have proceeded differently and the growth of the Taliban there could have been checked” (p.437). Several other aspects beyond troop size impacted the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT).

A major concern in the Kandahar PRT was the disjointed manner of the 3-D approach. The 3-D approach - Defense, Diplomacy and Development - was publically launched in 2004 by Prime Minister Paul Martin (Murray and McCoy 2010, p.177). The 3-D approach has caused frustration in each respective department. Stein and Lang (2007) note that “Afghanistan was the first real test of the Three-D Policy, and officials from all three departments do not think that Canada has done as well as it could” (p. 260). The collaboration between Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Canadian Forces has received mixed reviews. According to Kenneth Holland “the Kandahar PRT is an excellent case study of civil-military cooperation” (Holland 2010, p. 278) but to others the Kandahar PRT demonstrates a lack of civil-military coordination (Murray and McCoy 2010, p.183) and has been “costly and wasteful” (Cornish 2007, p. 38). Cooperation became harder after the death of Canadian Diplomat Glyn Berry in 2006, as CIDA workers were not allowed ‘outside the wire’. That CIDA was not permitted to work outside of the wire “meant that 3-D was a farce...that meant that our soldiers had to do all the necessary tasks outside the wire” (Hillier 2009, p. 388). The experience in Kandahar demonstrates that there is a culture clash between the defence and development

component of the 3-D policy. For example, CIDA allots funding for development projects impartially with the goal of promoting local ownership and good governance (Capstick 2007, p.21). Half of CIDA's funding was given to multilateral agencies and another thirty-five percent flowed through programs administered by the Afghan government (Manley et al 2008, p.25). According to the Manley report the manner in which CIDA funds development did not provide the necessary visibility of Canada's efforts to promote peace and left little for "quick action projects that bring immediate improvements to everyday life..." (Manley et al., p.25-26). Project visibility would assist with 'winning hearts and minds' or at least cultivating a perception that the Canadians were a helpful presence and potentially assist with stabilization. However project visibility is not necessarily the best option. For example, there were concerns that the visibility of the Dhala Dam project was a target for Taliban attacks (Chase, 2008).

There has been a considerable amount of blame for the disappointing outcomes of Kandahar placed on the development arm of the 3-D approach (Holland 2010; Murray & McCoy 2010). It is true that significant problems have emerged within the three Signature Projects of the reconstruction of the Dhala Dam, strengthening School and the Polio Eradication program. According to the Canadian *Embassy* magazine the results of the Signature Projects as of May 2011 have been "...anything but positive" (Meyer 2011 p.2). In terms of the Dahla Dam, it was expected that by 2011 approximately 30,000 hectares of land would have benefitted from increased irrigation but by May 2011 only 5,300 hectares had benefitted from the dam. Furthermore, there have been significant delays and the expectation of 1,000 locally created jobs was over exaggerated (Meyer 2011, p.3). The second signature project of Polio eradication has 'failed' because the disease was supposed

to be eradicated by 2009 but instead increased in 2010 (Meyer 2011, p.4). The third signature project of improving education has not met its goals. As of May 2011 only 26 of the planned 50 schools had been built, only half of the 3,000 teachers had been trained and there were no plans to continue the projects after the Canadian withdrawal date of December 2011 (Meyer 2011, p.4). Furthermore, an investigation by the Canadian Associated Press in February 2011 found that the Kandahar Department of Education had vastly inflated the number of children attending school. According to the report, the Afghan Department of Education reported that 52,000 children were enrolled in Kandahar schools but the tally done by the associated press found only 19,000 children were registered (*Afghan enrollment fails to make grade*, 2011). Like the expectations for the Kandahar PRT, the expectations of the signature development projects were too high. Although the development workers have received most of the blame, it seems inaccurate to blame Kandahar on unsatisfactory development work. According to the Canadian International Development Agency, the Kandahar PRT had 3 Canadian development workers and 3 local Afghan workers stationed in Kandahar (*Review of the Afghan Program*, 2012). A few development workers cannot have been expected to make Kandahar PRT successful.

The biggest question that should be asked is whether Canada should have taken on a daunting challenge like Kandahar. Canadian defence leadership could have chosen another province in Afghanistan – such as Changcharan or Herat in western Afghanistan. Picking an easier province could have lead to greater success. Recent research points to Canada acquiring Kandahar through back door negotiations with ‘like minded’ allies such as Britain and Holland (Willis 2011, p.59). There are many reasons why Canada fought for Kandahar – proving itself as a dependable ally of the United States (Lang and Stein 2007,

p.191), revitalizing Canadian defence by proving it could take on real combat, not just peacekeeping (Holland 2010, p.279), building Canadian public support for the army (Lang and Stein, p.191), creating visibility of Canada's contribution to Afghanistan and finally by taking a strategic province, Canada would have to be included at the table for strategic planning in Afghanistan (Willis 2011, p.54). While a common counterargument is that there was not enough intelligence to know how strong the insurgency would become in Southern Afghanistan, Canadian Defence leadership took a large gamble by choosing Kandahar. Willis (2011) notes that prior to fighting for Kandahar:

...tougher questions should have been asked on the Canadian side about the country's ability to generate enough manpower and materiel. Even if a force of 2,300 was a not-unreasonable initial deployment (bearing in mind the UK started off with just over 3,100), planners could not have been blind to the fact that they were already sending close to the maximum number of soldiers available into theatre. There was little capacity for a ramp-up, and generals who knew they were entering terra incognita should have been concerned about that vulnerability (p.65).

Kandahar was an immense challenge and Canadian defence leadership could have opted for taking an Afghan province that was more in line with Canada's defence capabilities at the time. The explanation of what went wrong in Afghanistan cannot be blamed on a lack of coordination on CIDA's part or fewer resources than desired. Along with the numerous limitations of current COIN doctrine that created unrealistic expectations that leads to immense operational difficulties, Canadian defence leadership took on responsibilities greater than could have been realistically handled.

Conclusion

This chapter has covered operational errors, detailed numerous assumptions in COIN doctrine and addressed Canada's performance in the reconstruction of Kandahar. The specific assumptions included: insurgencies have the same goals and means of insurgencies 50 years ago; the precise level of coordination required for successful COIN is possible both within and between contributing nations and organizations; higher resources increase the probability of success; statebuilding can be completed in any context; civilians can be 'won' through development initiatives. Hindsight is always 20 / 20 – the borders should have been secured, the assumptions should have been challenged and Canada could have taken on a more manageable Afghan province. Before using foresight and identifying what should be changed for future COIN operations, we need to go back and unearth the historical record of COIN. Analyzing the history of COIN will demonstrate that we currently possess an "a-historical" (Gumz 2009, p.553) account of COIN, namely a tailored history which omits the role of violence in COIN. Chapter 2 will address the history of COIN and chapter 3 will address how the use of violence in COIN holds implications for the legitimacy and effectiveness in contemporary COIN operations. The numerous assumptions in COIN necessitate a reconsideration of the viability of COIN in the 21st century.

CHAPTER 2: THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF THE KEY PHASES OF POPULATION- CENTRIC COIN

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine three of the most commonly used precepts of population-centric COIN, highlight their origin, and question whether it is effective to re-quote these phrases after considering that the quotes contrast the methods used in each COIN operation. The three main precepts to be examined are ‘winning the hearts and minds’, ‘clear-hold-build’ and ‘oil-spot’. It is important to examine the roots of these precepts as they influence current counterinsurgency (Jones and Smith 2010, p.90). After examining the methods used it will be evident that the common historical narrative of counterinsurgency is “profoundly a-historical” (Gumz 2009, p.553). The final section argues that modern counterinsurgency theorists should be challenged when they simply cite one of the precepts, quote a theorist or mistakenly use Malaya as a framework for successful counterinsurgency because they have created “dangerously optimistic expectations for counterinsurgency today...” (Dixon 2009, p. 274). Since perceived “success becomes a model for future policy making” (Angstrom and Duyvesteyn 2007, p.48), unpacking ongoing assumptions in the history of counterinsurgency and challenging modern COIN theorists will contribute to sharper foreign policy.

Winning the Hearts and Minds

The phrase ‘winning the hearts and minds’ is the phrase most often used in COIN doctrine and literature but the most misunderstood. The phrase originates from British General (later Field Marshall) Gerald Templer, High Commissioner during the Malayan

Emergency. The British conducted counterinsurgency operations in Malaya from 1948 to 1960 to support the Malayan government thwart challenge to its rule by communist insurgents. Templer's direct quote was that "the answer [to the insurgency] lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but in the hearts and minds of the people" (Quoted in Lapping 1985, p.224). Another often used Templar quote in reference to winning hearts and minds is that "(t)he shooting side of this business is only 25 per cent of the trouble and the other 75 percent lies in getting the people of this country behind us" (Quoted in Cloake 1985, p.477). The term indicates that persuasion rather than coercion should be emphasized in counterinsurgency (Dixon 2009, p.354). The phrase 'winning hearts and minds' has become popular in part because Malaya is the most celebrated and cited example of successful counterinsurgency (Nagl 2008, p.191; Alderson 2009, p.28; Ucko, 2007, p.47). For example in the U.S COIN manual it states that "(t)he Malayan insurgency provides lessons applicable to combating any insurgency..." (2007, p.235). However as will be shown in the next paragraph, the phrase 'winning the hearts and minds' shellacs the operations in the Malayan Emergency.

Referring to the methods used in Malaya, Colonel David Benest notes that "...coercion was the reality, 'hearts and minds' the myth" (Benest 2007, p.118). Dixon stipulates that "the phrase hearts and minds does not accurately describe Britain's highly coercive campaign in Malay. The approach in Malaya did involve high levels of force, was not fought within the law and led to abuses of human rights" (Dixon 2009, p.355).

Many methods used in the Malayan Emergency contradict the assumption that the tactics were heart warming. It is seldom pointed out that the Malayan Emergency was called an *emergency* rather a *war*. Had the British called it a war they would have had to follow the

Geneva Convention. Terming the twelve year war as an ‘emergency’ was deliberate because as noted by the British colonial secretary in 1950, “if we call this war we should be pressured to deal with our prisoners under the International Conventions, which would not allow us to be as ruthless as we are now” (Quoted in Townshend 1986, p.157). This quote indicates that the British government deliberately termed the COIN an emergency so that they would not be obliged to follow international conventions. French notes that this was not an abnormal colonial practice in the sense that “The British conducted their counter-insurgency campaign within the law. But it was a law that they created themselves and it was one that left them with wide latitude to act coercively yet legally” (French 2001, p.132). Terming it an ‘emergency’ permitted flexibility for the British and allowed them to create their own legal procedures. For example, under Emergency Regulation 17-D, the British civil authority detained 35,000 Malaysians civilians and 17,000 additional Malaysians were deported (Townshend 1986, p.165). Reis (2011) notes that other regulations included:

the right to shoot without warning in war areas; or in all areas after due warning; or in order to prevent captured insurgents from escaping, which amounted to a potential blank check for summary executions; as well as virtually unlimited powers of detention, deportation, resettlement and collective punishment (p.254).

A second element that challenges the categorization of the methods as heart warming was that food was used as a weapon. (Townshend 1986, p.154; Nagl 2002, p.98; Stubbs, 2010, p.111). Stubbs states that “food control and food denial policies [were] a potent weapon” (2010, p.111). Templer withheld food from civilians believed to have information on insurgents. Furthermore, because the insurgents took refuge in the Malayan jungle, food rations were purposely too small to pass along to insurgents and cans of food were punctured to ensure that the food would spoil before getting to the insurgents. Many

insurgents surrendered because of a lack of food (Coates 1992, p.123). A third tactic used in Malaya was the Brigg's Plan, an involuntary resettlement operation that was named after the Director of Operations in Malaya, Lieutenant General Harold Briggs (Stubbs 2010, p.108). The Brigg's Plan was intended to disrupt and dismantle sympathizers of the communist insurgents in order to weaken their support network (Stockwell 1995, p.216). By the first year of the program in 1950 over 570,000 people had been forcibly resettled. Although the Briggs Plan did make it more difficult for the insurgents, there were limitations to the plan because "many resettlement centers ended up as super slums with atrocious living conditions" and "many insurgents were active within the resettlement camps" (Stubbs 2010, p.108). Finally, although food denial and resettlement programs were common place, there are at least two documented mass killings in the towns of Kachua and Batang Kali where there was "cold blooded massacres of innocent civilians" (Townshend 1986, p.164). It is believed that there were other examples of mass killings but the British simply did not collect evidence, thereby avoiding documentation of the killings (Bennett 2009, p.418). For the brutal methods that were listed above it is both inaccurate to associate Malaya with a 'hearts and minds' approach and to argue that the 'hearts and minds' approach caused the British to be successful. Some will counter argue that despite the details of the Malayan Emergency appear brutal to the modern reader, the methods were 'heart warming' when placed in the historical context of colonial powers suppressing insurgencies. In a historical contextualization of the British COIN methods in Malaya, Bruno Reis argues that even for the time period it involved a "significant measure of coercion both in principle and in practice" (Reis 2011, p.255). Reis compared British colonial counterinsurgency to French COIN (which is typically considered much more violent) and found that British methods were not all that different from the French (Reis

2011, p.266). Reis is not alone in finding similarities between British COIN and other colonial COIN campaigns. David French argues in *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency: 1945-1967* that the theory of British exceptionalism in COIN is misreading of the historical records and that British COIN shared many similarities with other colonial COIN operations (French 2011, p.104). It could be argued that the British in Malaya increased the amount of carrots but maintained a consistent application of sticks. Increasing the amount of carrots does not create a population focused COIN because even the Romans, who showed no hesitation in using brute violence to conquer new territories, used various combinations of sticks and carrots to solidify Roman rule (Luttwak 2007, p.40). Therefore, even when placed in historical context, evidence continues to emerge that the British did not develop a humanitarian COIN methodology in Malaya, but followed a script of terrorizing insurgents, coercing others and rewarding those who pledged allegiance to the counterinsurgents or central government.

A second counterargument to the point that Malaya is not an example of a 'hearts and minds' methodology, is that the more coercive methods were used at the beginning of the Malay counterinsurgency whereas the hearts and minds approach was used later on. This argument holds partial merit as the Malayan counterinsurgency can be broken up into three sections: 1948-1949; 1950-1952; 1952-1960. The period from 1948-1950 is classified as a phase of "counterterrorism and sweep" (Hack 2009, p. 404). This was a brutal time period in which the emergency regulations permitted mass arrests, lethal force, burning of villages, the Batang Kali massacre and public hangings conducted as a punishment for participating with the insurgents (Bennett 2009, p.428). The second period from 1950-1952 can be classified as the period of 'population control' (Hack 2009 p.404) that included

“the power to detain without trial...deportations, group punishment of villages including fines, detention of all persons in a specified area, control of food and sharp curfews, the death penalty for carrying arms, control of printed material and an identity card scheme for all adults” (Hack, p.388).

While the methods in the second period were less brutal than the first period, the methods cannot be classified as activities that constitute winning hearts and minds. The third period from 1952-1960 is classified as the ‘optimization phase’ (Hack, 2009, p. 404) wherein General Templer was the High Commissioner. During this phase there was the attempt to ‘win the hearts and minds “by improving amenities, improving elections, providing better security through police retraining, and subsequently as the security improved there were fewer disruptions in daily activities” (Hack 2009, p.411). Essentially during this phase the “military approach to counterinsurgency was replaced by a more political approach which sought to address many of the grievances of the population, thereby depriving the communist guerrillas of their base of support” (Stubbs 1997, p.59). Templer did this by providing “agricultural land, schools, roads, drains, public health facilities, places of public worship and community centers” (Stubbs 1997, p.61). The activities in this period are reflective of attempting to win hearts and minds. However, the approaches Templer used during the optimal phase were dependent upon a stable foundation that was created during the first two phases. It can be argued that Templer arrived at a good time in which winning the hearts and minds was possible after the brutal methods conducted in phase one and two. The initial brutal destruction of the insurgents was required to allow future constructive efforts with the locals (Reis 2011, p.272; Hack 2009, p.409). Therefore it is inaccurate to take the phrase ‘winning hearts and minds’ that

was reflective of the third phase of the Malayan counterinsurgency and apply it to the entire Malayan counterinsurgency. The next paragraph will discuss several contextual factors that were likely to have caused success in Malaya, thereby casting more doubt on the argument that the British were successful because of the supposed ‘hearts and minds’ methodology. Noting the beneficial contextual factors in the most celebrated COIN example is important because success in COIN is typically portrayed as possible through superior methods, whereas failure is blamed on contextual factors.

Alternative Factors of Success

There are several contextual factors that contributed to the overall success of the British in Malaya. First, the insurgents who identified themselves as the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) did not have popular support across Malaya. Given that the MCP was primarily supported by the Chinese community in Malaya, which made up 37% of the population, with the remainder of the people primarily ethnic Malays, the MCP was ethnically separate from the majority of the population (Hack 2009, p.385). A second factor was that the British did not have to fight an insurgency that was assisted by other nations or foreign actors. The MCP did not receive financial support from outsiders and Malaya’s two territorial neighbors, Indonesia and Thailand, did not provide any support (Stubb 2008, p.116). Third, during the counterinsurgency period the Malayan economy was booming as the Cold War stimulated the stockpiling of certain resources. Tin and rubber were the main export commodities sourced from Malaya and during the Emergency market prices for tin doubled in price and rubber went from \$0.40 cents in 1949 to \$2.20 in 1951 (Stubbs, 1997, p.60). The strong Malayan economy assisted with strengthening and therefore legitimizing

the authority of the Malayan state, thereby weakening the insurgents. Finally, the British were able to leverage independence of Malaya as a bargaining chip for the end of the insurgency (Reis 2011, p.274; Stubbs, 1997, p.64). Granting independence undermined one of key goals of the insurgents (Roberts 2009, p.37). Granting independence had a large effect in that “had the British simply refused to leave, we would be most likely be talking about a misguided British defeat” (Ucko 2009, p.11). These four factors significantly weakened the insurgency and provide an alternate explanation as to how the insurgency was suppressed. Keeping in mind the collusion of beneficial factors, it would be inaccurate to attribute the efforts of ‘winning the hearts and minds’ for success in Malaya. The lessons taken from the Malayan counterinsurgency will change once there is a broader acknowledgement that the hearts and minds activities were accompanied by coercion and brute force (Hack 2009, p.409). Considering the brutal force used and the favorable contextual factors it is inaccurate to identify the supposed ‘hearts and minds’ methodology as the sole cause for success in Malaya.

Clear-Hold-Build

What is now frequently referred to as ‘clear-hold-build’ was originally termed by Sir Robert Thompson as “clearing, holding, winning, won” (Thompson 1996, p.111). Essentially the term ‘clear-hold-build’ means “secure a base, establish a firm forward operational base, secure a controlled area, consolidate the controlled areas, and continue the extension of controlled areas” (Alderson 2009, p.34). In the words of Thompson (1966) the phrase meant that:

the army's role here is to *clear* the main insurgent units out of the area over which the government is attempting to regain control, and keep them out. Elimination of the units and the killing is a secondary consideration at this stage. After clearing, it is the role of the police field units supported by the regular police and civilian government departments, to *hold* the area, restore government authority and *win* the people to the side of the government (p.106).

The interesting aspect of Thompson's concept is that it was developed *after* the Malayan emergency and was not used during the Malayan emergency. The concept was originally disseminated in Thompson's 1966 publication *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malay to Vietnam*. Benest notes that "Thompson's principles were an exercise in post event rationalization rather than a basis of policy at the time" (2007, p.357). Thompson's thoughts on the Malayan Emergency were not novel; instead, "His writings represented his reflections on the campaign as a whole – the direction of which was formulated by Thompson's superiors" (Pritchard and Smith 2010, p.67). Thompson was influenced by the ideas of his predecessors' as he served under Templer as the deputy secretary of defence in Malaya from 1955-59, and the secretary for Defence in Malaya from 1959-61. Robert Thompson started work in Malaya under the command of Lieutenant General Sir Harold Briggs, the author of the infamous 'Briggs plan' resettlement (Alderson 2009, p.34). The effect of his predecessors thinking is evident in the phrase 'clear-hold-build', as it is a perfect sequencing of the phases in the Malayan counterinsurgency. As was previously discussed at length the first stage was the 'counter-terrorism and sweep', which could be also termed as *clearing* the insurgents; the second stage was 'population control' or which could be visualized as *holding* the territory and people; the third stage was the 'optimization stage' that could easily have been labeled as *build*. Thompson's explanation of the hold stage makes specific reference to isolated civilian camps that he termed

'hamlets' that is essentially the Briggs plan. Thompson stated that the purpose of the hold phase was "...to restore government authority in the area and to establish a firm security network. This involves the creation of strategic hamlets, the formulation of hamlet militia and the imposition of various control measures on the movement of people ..." (Thompson 1996, p.112). As previously discussed, the Briggs plan was created to isolate the population as the insurgents depended on the population for food and intelligence (Tilman 1996, p.411). When COIN theorists use the phrase 'clear-hold-build' they are not citing an original theorist who invented a phrase based on a case of successful counterinsurgency. Rather, they are citing an officer who summarized the three main stages in the Malayan counterinsurgency. Furthermore, it is questionable if the effectiveness of the Briggs plan can be replicated. The Briggs plan was successful because of the conditions in Malaya where the insurgents had had no external funding (Stubb 2008, p.116), were geographically limited (Stubb 2008, p.116) and only had the population to support them with food and intelligence (Tilman 1966, p. 41). The Briggs plan and the entire Malayan Emergency would not have been as successful if the same conditions in Afghanistan were present in Malaya such as external funding to support insurgents, permeable borders and the expectation of ethical conduct in COIN. Therefore, when theorists cite the 'hearts and minds' and then 'clear-hold-build' it results in misconceived counterinsurgency doctrine because the former inaccurately portrays the methods used in the Malayan Emergency and the latter summarizes the phases in the Malayan Emergency with questionable replication in modern insurgencies.

Oil Spot

The precept ‘oil-spot’ was developed by the French General Joseph Simon Gallieni, who was tasked with suppressing a rebellion against the colonial regime in Madagascar from 1896–1905. As defined by Gallieni the oil-spot method or *la méthode de la tache d’huile* literally meant a slow advance “from the center to the periphery” of a region through a “combination of political action with military action” with the intent of coming “into intimate contact with the populations, exploring their tendencies, their mentality and striving to satisfy their need in order to attack them through persuasion to the new institutions” (Gallieni 1908, p.47). The oil spot method can be visualized as oil spilling across a page. As said by Gallieni, “the most fertile method is that of the oil spot, which consists of progressively gaining territory” (p.326). The oil spot method was created with the idea that the civilians had to be protected from the insurgents and persuaded that working with the insurgents was not in their interest (Kid 2010, p.751). The threat of force was an excellent tool of persuasion. Gallieni ordered that military force should be displayed “to give the inhabitants a real idea of our military power and to be able to inspire their confidence in our protection” (Hellot 1896, p.49). Furthermore Gallieni “had local nationalist leaders in Madagascar put on trial and executed – sometimes on a scale that defies comparison with any war involving a western democracy” (Durand 2010, p.15). Methods differed from the population focused *bureaux arabes* to the military approach of *razzia*. The cooperative tribes of Madagascar were handled with the method of *bureaux arabes* (Kid 2010, p.738). The purpose of the *bureaux arabes* was to collect intelligence on the physical terrain, the political and social set-up (Kid 2010, p.738). The *razzias* included “indiscriminate slaughter not only produced the desired terror, usually the *razzias* also

yielded a rich booty in livestock and produce, a welcome alternation to military rations” (Kid, p.732). In other words the civilians who were ‘persuaded’ or surrendered were treated civilly, while those opposing the French were treated with coercion under the razzias. Gallieni created the term ‘oil-spot’ but for the spot spreading depended on coerced persuasion and the threat or use force, not through heart-warming activities that spread across a territory. Gallieni’s methods were typical of Colonial French counterinsurgency that used coercion and brutality liberally (Durand 2010, p.16). Considering the brutality used in the ‘oil-spot’ method, it is questionable if the phrase should be used in modern counterinsurgency literature in which there is an expectation for observance of the Additional Protocols of the Geneva Convention and a responsive domestic public.

Recycling COIN

The frequent references to the ‘oil-spot’ demonstrate the cyclical affirmation of counterinsurgency precepts that have largely gone unquestioned. For example, the ‘oil spot’ is referenced in population-centric counterinsurgency literature (Rid and Kearney 2010, p.257; Ucko 2009, p.74) and used in both the Canadian *Counter-insurgency* manual (2008, 3-10) and American COIN Field Manual 3-24 (2007, 5-17). The concept of the oil spot is reflected in the writings of David Galula, who was heavily influenced by the pupils of French COIN theorist Lyautey, who was the disciple of Gallieni (Rid 2010, p. 751). David Galula is referred to in the 2007 United States COIN manual (2007, 2-34) and in counterinsurgency literature (Ucko 2009, p. 96; Rid and Kearney 2010, p. 257). It is surprising that David Galula has become popular in COIN literature as he was an unknown name in French COIN until he was “re-imported back to France” after his name was

published in the US COIN manual (Durand, 16). Galula is not representative of French COIN (Durand 2010, p.16). As a second example of the cyclical pattern in classical COIN theory, there are similarities between the phrases of ‘oil-spot’ and ‘clear-hold-build’ that have not been sufficiently examined. Modern theorists note that the phrases ‘clear-hold-build’ and ‘oil-spot’ are similar (Ucko 2009, p.74). Others have argued that ‘clear-hold-build’ is a modern version of ‘oil-spot’ (Rid and Kearny 2010, p.257). However, there has never been sufficient research into whether the concept of the oil spot influenced Sir Harold Briggs, who influenced Sir Robert Thompson. Briggs’ description of his plan that he wanted to clear the Malayan peninsula “step by step, from South to North” (Hack 2009, p.385) is highly similar to Gallieni’s description of the oil spot “from the center to the periphery” (Gallieni 1908, p.47). Perhaps Sir Harold Briggs’ sudden death in 1951 prevented the further study of whether or not he had read Gallieni, but it seems that there was a strong similarity. If this is correct then ‘oil-spot’ and ‘clear-hold-build’ are more than similar concepts – they may be the same idea stated differently. Gallieni may have influenced Briggs and Briggs influenced Thompson the author of ‘clear-hold-build’. With the connection made between Gallieni and Galula and the proposed connection between Gallieni and Thompson, it can be said that classical counterinsurgency theory is cyclical.

There has been little advance in modern COIN doctrine, partly due to how modern COIN theorists present their work. Modern theorists tend to reuse one of the three precepts, select a few sentences from Gallieni, Thompson or Galula or just cite a COIN campaign to prove their point. Smith and Jones (2010b) speak to the practice of current COIN writers citing a theorist like David Galula as though the phrase was factual when “the sweeping assertion comprises a mere five lines in that text, completely unsupported by either

examples or argument” (p.439). Selecting a few sentences from David Galula or inserting one of the precepts does not indicate that what is being advocated actually works but is instead “in the defense and promotion of their doctrinal preferences” (Micheals and Ford 2011, p.370). For example, in the RAND publication *Rethinking COIN*, the authors state “(t)he British defeat of the Maoist insurgency was doctrinally significant...” (Mackinlay & Al-Badday 2008, p.10). However, as the reader is now aware, the lessons of Malaya are different after becoming knowledgeable about the un-heart warming methods and the contextual factors that contributed to success (Isolation of insurgents, booming economy, et cetera) that were outside of British control. Current COIN theorists need to be challenged when simply citing a precept, a theorist or a ‘successful’ case because their ideas influence foreign policy. Lackadaisical theorists have misdirected counterinsurgency methods that have cost an incredible amount of lives, capital and potentially missed opportunities for enhancing security. As said by Micheals and Ford, exposing COIN doctrine “to credible alternatives is arguably among the more significant challenges now facing the strategic studies and national security policy communities” (2011, p.371). COIN doctrine is not improved by citing COIN ‘experts’ like David Killcullen or John Nagl, who in turn cite singular phrases by Galula, Thompson or Gallieni.

Conclusion

This section has analyzed the roots of three popular precepts in counterinsurgency- ‘winning the hearts and minds’, ‘clear-hold-build’ and ‘oil spot’. It is clear that the main precepts commonly used in COIN literature are unrepresentative of the variety of methods used that all depended on brute force. The first section demonstrated that the phrase ‘hearts

and minds' is an inaccurate portrayal of the methods used in Malaya. It was shown that the phrase 'clear-hold-build' is a simple summary of the phrases in Malaya and that the collusion of contextual beneficial factors in Malaya, were likely responsible for the success in Malaya, not British methods. These beneficial factors such as no external support and geographic limitation are unlikely to ever exist in modern insurgencies. The third section demonstrated that considerable brutality was used in Madagascar where Gallieni developed the phrase 'oil-spot'. The final section demonstrated that counterinsurgency theory has cyclical patterns and modern counterinsurgency theorists who cite 'hearts and minds', 'clear-hold-build' and 'oil-spot' need to be scrutinized because they represent an inaccurate portrayal of counterinsurgency that will at best present lackadaisical scholarship and at worst will damage our foreign policy and security.

CHAPTER 3: BOTH JUST AND EFFECTIVE? THE CHALLENGE OF MODERN COIN

Introduction

In counterinsurgency literature and in the Canadian and American Field Manuals ethical conduct is emphasized as it is argued to create success, whereas unethical conduct impedes the mission (Wolfendale 2009; Couch 2010; Whetham 2011). It is said that ethical conduct is a “requirement of success not normative niceties” (Sewall 2007, p.209). David Fisher (2011) argues, “unethical military conduct at the tactical level, such as the ill treatment of civilians...can undermine the strategic objective of the campaign” (p.164). Underpinning the belief that ethical behavior creates success in COIN is the belief that ethical behavior creates legitimacy. Whetham articulates that “legitimacy itself is the battleground of this environment and winning the narrative of the situation is just as significant as winning any tactical engagement” (2011, p.19). Legitimacy has a “number of audiences” (Wall 2011, p.221) in both the civilian population and the domestic population. In the COIN battlefield both the insurgents and the counterinsurgents fight for the perception of legitimacy from civilians (Prisk 1991, p. 69). The American Field Manual states that success is achieved through establishing legitimacy (2007, 3-77). The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that the current interpretation of population-centric COIN is problematic because it presupposes that legitimacy is formed through (i) restraining the use of force and (ii) ethical conduct. The first section will briefly address how the laws of war are a method of rationalizing violence. The second section will discuss the effect of International Humanitarian Law on COIN and the difficulty of discrimination and

proportionality in COIN. The third section will discuss the merits of strategic necessity. The fourth section will discuss whether the expectation for ethical conduct is possible in counterinsurgency, considering that the history of COIN is brutal. This chapter concludes that it is difficult if not impossible for COIN to be both ethical and effective and therefore the decision to engage in COIN should be carefully weighed.

Narrating Violence to Create Legitimacy

Despite that some consider ‘ethical warfare’ an oxymoron, ethics and warfare have remained permanent companions (Whetham 2011, p.10). Warfare and ethics remain companions in that without ethical grounding, warfare would be “indistinguishable from mass murder” (Bellamy 2006, p.1). The roots of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) lies in the Just War Tradition, which holds pragmatic, not ethical, beginnings. Just War Tradition (JWT) originated in 5th Century BC in order to synchronize war with the Olympic Games and to avoid disturbing the agricultural season (Whetham 2011, p.68). Over several centuries JWT has had different forms based on whether the theorist was Augustine, Aquinas, Vito or Grotius (Brough, Lango & Linden 2007, p.1). JWT and its offshoots have helped rationalize violence as legitimate in some circumstances. Violence may remain ethical so long as it corresponds to widely held normative principles of IHL, such as discrimination and proportionate force (Kenton-Johnson 2010, p.2). In a similar vein, the emphasis on ethical conduct in COIN is a way of rationalizing COIN as legitimate. However, as will be shown in this chapter, the practice of COIN cannot be effective and held to modern ethical expectations because COIN is fought amidst civilians where discrimination is next to impossible. Although phrases such as ‘winning the hearts and

minds' narrate COIN, the expectation for ethical COIN is problematic because authority is not necessarily formed through ethical conduct and successful COIN requires a degree of force that many domestic audiences would find unpalatable. Before continuing, it should be highlighted that this discussion will only address the conduct during COIN. The discussion has been limited to the conduct during COIN because a discussion applying all three of the main principles of Just War Tradition - Jus ad Bellum, Jus in Bello and Just Post Bellum – to COIN could itself comprise a book. The malleability of Just War Tradition would make an expansive discussion. Dorn highlights the malleable applications of Just War Tradition by stating that “the just war criteria have been used as a simple checklist to declare a war as either just or unjust...If each criterion is somewhat satisfied, a proponent might declare the entire war just. Alternatively, if one criterion is not satisfied, an opponent might declare the war unjust” (2011, p.243). On the other hand, some question the validity of applying Just War Tradition to asymmetrical conflicts in which a government force that is held accountable, fights insurgents who are not held accountable (Crawford, 2003, p.95). Crawford questions whether the changes in warfare “means that Just War Theory no longer applies” (2003, p.95). Even if it were in the scope of the project to explore alternative paradigms for measuring ethical conduct in asymmetrical war, doing so would also have limitations as not all asymmetrical wars can be placed in the same category (Gross 2009, p.3). This analysis departs from the assumption that the decision to engage in COIN would be based on Jus ad Bellum, as was widely agreed to be the case with Afghanistan (Eishtain 2003; Walzer 2009). For the reasons listed above, this chapter focuses exclusively on the two most commonly agreed upon barometers for ethical conduct in war, the principle of distinction and proportionality (*Afghanistan Mid Year Report 2011*; Eishtain 2003; Water

2011, p.100; Whetham 2011, p.102).

The Influence of International Humanitarian Law on COIN

The main component of what is considered to be legal conduct in armed conflict is delineated by the Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Additional Protocols of 1977, the main body of International Humanitarian Law. The Additional Protocols were created to address intrastate wars. While the Additional Protocols of the Geneva Convention are expansive, there are two heavily weighed IHL principles in the literature surrounding counterinsurgency and asymmetric war; the principle of distinction between civilians and combatants and the principle of proportionality (Whetham 2011, p.102; *Afghanistan Mid Year Report 2011*; Water 2011, p.100). The principle of distinction is outlined in Section 48 of the 1977 Additional Protocol, which states “the Parties to the conflict shall at all times distinguish between the civilian population and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives and accordingly shall direct their operations only against military objectives” (*International Convention of the Red Cross, Section 48*). Distinguishing between combatants and civilians is the most often stressed principle in counterinsurgency. Sarah Sewall states that the “operational imperative is to prevent and minimize civilian casualties” (Sewall 2010, p.209). Dick Couch (2010) states that not only the discrimination between civilians and combatants, but the treatment of the civilians “is critical to mission success” (Couch, xix). Although discrimination is stressed in COIN literature, distinguishing between civilians and combatants in practice holds many difficulties. The first reason is that distinguishing between civilians and combatants in COIN can be close to impossible because civilians take on multiple meanings. For example, General Rupert

Smith states that in asymmetrical warfare “military engagements can take place anywhere: in the presence of civilians, against civilians, in defence of civilians. Civilians are the targets, objectives to be won, as much as an opposing force” (Smith 2005, p.3-4). Distinction is precarious as civilians fluctuate from prize to weapon in which they are “actively enlisted, coerced and fought over by both sides” (Levine 2010, p.39). In sum, one fights civilian combatants, amidst civilians, for civilians. Second, distinguishing between civilian and combatant is complicated by the insurgent purposely blends into the civilian population. Using the Maoist precept, the insurgent blends into the ocean as a military tactic. Unsurprisingly, the Taliban and al-Qaeda use this tactic in Afghanistan. Maloney (2008) notes that in Afghanistan, “combatants can vary from professional killers to farmers, with numerous layers in-between” (p.202). Anecdotally it has been reported that Taliban will pretend to be farmers and will create surprise attacks by dropping their rakes and picking up AK-47’s to shoot at passing convoys. Or in other instances where an insurgent farms by day but fights as an insurgent by night, when is it ethical to kill the insurgent? (Gross 2002, p.156). There are other situations whereby civilians will not directly participate in hostilities but will contribute to the insurgency. For example, the Taliban pays civilians to plant IED’s on the roads used by the Operation Enduring Freedom and the Afghan Militia Forces (Maloney, 2008, p.204). The principle of distinction is supposed to be upheld so long as the civilian “does not take a direct part in hostilities” (*Additional Protocol I*, 51). Even if the part-time insurgent or insurgent assistant would be classified as a non-combatant, it is stated in the *Laws of Armed Conflict* that the non-combatant should “generally” not be targeted (*The Laws of Armed Conflict* 1999, p.302). Knowing who is a civilian, non-combatant or combatant in COIN is highly difficult. Gross argues that “ordinarily, non-combatants are innocent: they pose no threat, do not take part in the

fighting and are therefore immune from direct harm. But this is changing as civilians assume combatant-like roles in asymmetric conflict (Gross 2002, p.13). Michael Walzer in his seminal book *Just and Unjust Wars* (2008), argues that the counterinsurgent war cannot be justly won. Walzer's reasoning is twofold in that when distinction between combatant and civilian is not possible, the rules of war assist the insurgent. Second, when distinction is not possible, the only way a counterinsurgent can win is through waging a war on civilians (Walzer, p.195-196). During insurgencies many civilians participate or contribute to the insurgency and it can be next to impossible to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants. While intelligence assists with distinction (Smith 2005, p.390; Nagl 2005 p.xii), there are many limitations with intelligence in COIN (Duyvesten 2012). There are often "exaggerated expectations" for intelligence in that "intelligence in conflict is rarely precise and never certain" (Gallagher 2011, p.4). Even with the best possible intelligence distinction in COIN will remain a challenge. While it is not new that a war may have just beginnings but unjust means, the expectation that COIN can be ethical needs constant reevaluation and reconsideration.

Determining Force

The proportionate level of force is one of the main issues in modern counterinsurgency. Proportionate force is the second most important emphasized principle of IHL. Section 51 of the Geneva Convention Additional Protocol I states that a disproportionate attack would be "an attack which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage

anticipated” (*Section 51*). The majority of COIN theorists argue for minimum levels of force and warn against the perils of an overreliance of force (Waters 2011; Whetham 2011; Wolfendale 2009). Among them is the well known David Killcullen, who states that “Some armchair chicken hawks...have argued that, contrary to recent evidence, you can indeed kill your way out of an insurgency and have even suggested that an intensely brutal and violent approach is the quickest and best way to suppress an insurgency” (Killcullen 2010, p.5). Similarly, Whetham (2011) argues that counterinsurgents should “not use more force than is required to achieve the required ends” (p.81). It is a frequent recommendation that commanders train their infantry to restrain the use of force in counterinsurgency (Couch 2010; Wolfendale 2009; Dowdall and Smith 2010). Couch argues that cultivating restraint will provide the soldier with his ‘Ethical Armor’ that will help the soldier with tactical ethics and observance of rules of engagement (2010, p.XV). As stated by Wolfendale, “cultivating restraint is an essential way of reducing the likelihood of unethical behavior” (2009, p.59). The logic is that restraining the use of force indirectly creates an environment of ethical behavior wherein the counterinsurgents increase potential for success. The United States COIN Field Manual identifies that restraining the use of force is an important element of COIN. Section 1-141 states that “counterinsurgents should calculate carefully the appropriate the type and amount of force applied and who wields it for any operation. An operation that kills five insurgents is counterproductive if collateral damage leads to the recruitment of fifty more insurgents” (2007, 1-141). The reasoning is that restraint weakens insurgent tactics and establishes legitimacy in the eyes of civilians. An overuse of force “...can lead to public disenchantment with counterinsurgency forces and corresponding support for insurgency” (Couch 2010, p.91). The dominant thought in modern COIN literature is that force should be kept to a minimum as restraint helps

infantry stay within ethical parameters of armed conflict that cultivates the perception of legitimacy in the eyes of civilians.

Strategic Necessity

While cultivating restraint is argued to strengthen counterinsurgency, it still does not provide direction for a force level that would be proportionate but still effective. If excessive force runs the risk of alienating civilians from counterinsurgents, there is also the problem that if not enough force is applied against the insurgent then the counterinsurgent will not be able to provide security to the civilians. Gray notes that in relation to violence in COIN, “the proposition that repression never succeeds is unfortunately, a myth. Half heated repression conducted by self doubting person of liberal conscience certainly does not work” (2005, p.223). An infantry that is too constrained by an ethos of restraint “cannot compete with the coercive power of the insurgents and thus cannot gain the support of the population” (Fiala 2008, p.6). A weak application of force whereby the counterinsurgents cannot protect civilians will create a weak perception of legitimacy from the civilians, thereby weakening the overall mission. Whereas it is believed that the use of force reduces legitimacy for the counterinsurgent, this is not true in the context of Afghanistan. According to Stapleton, Afghans are accustomed to the use of force to establish legitimacy (Stapleton 2011, p.251). Operation Medusa, conducted by Canadian forces in the fall of 2006 demonstrates the necessity of force in certain contexts. As reported by Lang and Stein, “...Operation Medusa was a stunning success, that more than one thousand Taliban fighters were killed and that the back of the Taliban had been broken. Freed of the Taliban, villagers were now welcoming back government officials” (2007, p.219). While the same

tactics used in Operation Medusa cannot be replicated in every context, it demonstrates that force plays an important role in counterinsurgency. According to David Lonsdale (2007), force should be used strategically because gaining legitimacy in counterinsurgency operations is not a “popularity contest” but rather “competition in authority” that requires the “threat or actual infliction of punishment” (p.95). Lonsdale calls for the concept of ‘strategic necessity’ to be used in counterinsurgency to determine whether force is required and the level of force that is required. Lonsdale articulates that strategic necessity “should not be concerned with the ultimate moral truth on a matter” but on the basis of how the action “will affect the attainment of the policy objective” (2007, p.157). The rules of engagement in Afghanistan were reported to be the “strictest rules in the history of insurgent warfare” (West 2011, p.160). Due to the strict rules, it is possible that not enough force was applied in Afghanistan, which prevented counterinsurgents from protecting civilians and therefore unable to establish legitimacy. This is likely the case because Afghans report that they are still scared for their safety. According to a national survey by the *Asia Foundation* in 2011, over half of Afghans are concerned about their safety (*A Survey of the Afghan People*, p.29). Recalling that counterinsurgency is a battle for legitimacy, it appears that more force could have been applied to establish legitimacy in Afghanistan. When not enough force is applied you fail to do anything more than ‘mow the grass’ which refers to the “repetitious treadmill of killing and capturing insurgents then waiting for more to take their place” (Frewen 2007, p. 2). While the majority of COIN theorists argue for restraining the use of force with the logic that “applying excessive restraint is less morally questionable than applying excessive force” (Dowdall and Smith 2010, p.21), force is required in COIN operations. In colonial counterinsurgency, brute force was used to establish legitimacy and then governance. The ethical environment was

much more permissive (Fiala 2008, p.6; Mumford 2012, p.154). It has already been discussed in the previous chapter that the British used violence liberally in Malaya. In a modern operating environment there is an expectation for ethical conduct and it would not be permissible to ‘drain the sea by filling the graves’ as was done in colonial COIN (Downes, 2007). Bing West (2011) speaks towards how imperial methods would not be acceptable today because the domestic populace of NATO would not “...tolerate deportations at the same time as \$500 million bribes, approve retaliatory executions or ration food. Galula would be portrayed as a racist war criminal” (p.160). The current population-centric COIN doctrine that emphasizes restraining force has detracted from the reality of COIN that requires killing and intimidation to establish legitimacy. The example of the Iraqi surge is a good example of the importance of force in COIN. Jeff Micheals, a COIN expert at King’s College, states that “[k]illing lots of people was a key element of the Iraq surge...which is to say that the Iraq case illustrated a considerable divergence from theory” as expressed in the United States Field Manual 3-24 (Quoted in Cohen 2011). COIN doctrine articulates that legitimacy is won through reducing force however if legitimacy cannot be established in the operational battlefield, then the counterinsurgent will likely lose the perception of legitimacy from its domestic population.

Domestic Legitimacy

With the expectation for ethical conduct from the domestic population and our increasing “ideas about justice”, it is becoming more difficult to both fight fairly and win (Fiala 2008, p.29). This can be exemplified by the Afghan detainee scandal, wherein Canada was guilty of ignoring evidence that Afghan detainees were possibly being tortured

once transferred to Afghan prisons (Chase 2008). That this was a major issue both in Canadian parliament and newspapers demonstrates that there is a low appetite for force in modern COIN operations. There has been considerable change in societies' expectation for justice just as recently as the Vietnam War. West (2011) highlights this change in that while coverage the Vietnam War as a journalist, he used to frequently cover stories about brutal torture and none elicited much of a response. If Bing were to report those same stories today "in 2011 they would all be sensations to the press" (p.160). Others have argued that it is not necessarily the press but the nature of democratic polities that expect ethical conduct during COIN. Merom states that "democracies fail in small wars because "of sensitivity to casualties, repugnance to brutal military activity and commitment to democratic life" (Merom 2003, p. 230). COIN requires both restraint of force but the application of brutal force. As stated by Evans "our ability to wage war justly seems at odds with our ability to wage war successfully..." (2005 p.108). The expectation that an insurgency can be won solely through activities that 'win hearts and minds' is illusionary. The necessity of brutal force in COIN should weigh heavily in the minds of decision makers and military leaders who decide whether or not to engage in COIN.

Conclusion

Afghanistan can be characterized as a situation where ethical behavior was prefaced over effectiveness in the field of operations. Afghanistan demonstrates that ethical behavior does not automatically lead to legitimacy. The point is not to undermine the importance of ethical conduct but to highlight that force is a requirement of establishing legitimacy. Previous COIN operations that shaped the current conceptualization of COIN, occurred

during a colonial era wherein the domestic audience of the counterinsurgents tolerated public hangings, group murders, food denial and relocation policies. Modern domestic audiences would not tolerate any of the brutal methods used in colonial COIN, as illustrated by the controversy created over the Canadian Afghan Detainee 'scandal'. Although the current COIN doctrine calls for ethical conduct and restraining the use of force, modern counterinsurgents cannot be ethical, effective and legitimate in the eyes of all audiences. Decision makers and military leaders have to choose whom they are going to please and whether it is worth the wager.

CHAPTER 4: COIN and Peacebuilding

Introduction

Despite that COIN is typically perceived to be only about ‘war’ activities, it actually shares many similarities with peacebuilding (Friis 2010, p.49). The first section of this chapter will highlight the similarities COIN holds with peacebuilding, peace-enforcement and peacekeeping. The second section will present arguments made in favour of differentiating between COIN and peacebuilding. The third section discusses how the Canadian Government specifically avoided characterizing the engagement in Afghanistan as war or counterinsurgency to create public support. It is highlighted that framing COIN as similar to peacebuilding strengthens the initial legitimacy of an operation but opens a liability because peacebuilding holds a basis as a humanitarian endeavor that clashes with the necessity of force in COIN. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that the overlap between peacebuilding and COIN can be useful for conflicts such as Afghanistan - where sole peacebuilding is insufficient to handle the challenges of conflict in the 21st century - but cautions against considering both operations as synonymous.

Similarities to Peacebuilding, Peace-Enforcement and Peacekeeping

This section will demonstrate the similarities by comparing the definition of peacebuilding, peace-enforcement and peacekeeping to COIN. Each peace term is similar to the others since peacebuilding and peace-enforcement evolved out of the concept of peacekeeping (Lambourne and Herro 2008, p.275). COIN and peacebuilding are similar in that they use a variety of methods in the attempt to establish or re-establish a legitimate

state government. Recalling that COIN is quite broad as it is defined as those “military, paramilitary, political economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency” (*Field Manual* 1-2). In other words, COIN can encompass many elements with the purpose of establishing a government. Similarly, the United Nations defines peacebuilding as:

a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development... peacebuilding measures address core issues that effect the functioning of society and the State, and seek to enhance the capacity of the State to effectively and legitimately carry out its core functions (Peacekeeping Operations 2008, p.18).

Both peacebuilding and COIN are similar in that they both aim to construct a functioning state.

Peace Enforcement and Robust Peacekeeping

COIN is similar to peace enforcement and robust peacekeeping in that it is legitimate to use force to create peace. The United Nations defines peace enforcement as:

the application, with the authorization of the Security Council, of a range of coercive measures, including the use of military force. Such actions are authorized to restore international peace and security in situations where the Security Council has determined the existence of a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression (Peacekeeping Operations 2008, p.18).

Similarly, robust peacekeeping includes “the use of force” with the approval of the Security Council (*Peacekeeping Operations*, p.34). Therefore, peace-enforcement and robust peacekeeping are similar to COIN in that the use of force is permissible, although some will object to this comparison because COIN uses a higher level of force than

peacekeeping. The different levels of force between peace enforcement and COIN will be addressed later on in this chapter.

Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping and COIN are similar in that a combination of factors can be used to support peace and stability. Based on the United Nations definition, peacekeeping has become an umbrella term that is:

a technique designed to preserve the peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted, and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers. Over the years, peacekeeping has evolved from a primarily military model of observing cease-fires and the separation of forces after inter-state wars, to incorporate a complex model of many elements – military, police and civilian – working together to help lay the foundations for sustainable peace (*Peacekeeping Operations*, p.18).

Specifically the explanation of the ‘complex model’ is very similar to the definition of COIN. Population-centric COIN and the ‘complex model’ of peacekeeping can include a range of activities from reforming state institution to building schools. Specifically in Afghanistan, both COIN and the complex model could both describe the range of efforts taken by the International Security Assistance Forces to build a functioning Afghan government. In sum, peacebuilding, peace enforcement and peacekeeping are similar to COIN in that they aim to create legitimate governments, the use of force is permitted if required and utilize a ‘complex model of many elements’ to pursue peace and stability.

Differences between Counterinsurgency and Peacebuilding

One of the differences between peacebuilding and counterinsurgency is the motivation for interaction with civilians (Friis 2010, p.50; Spearin 2008, p.374). It is argued by some that peacebuilding is motivated by a concern about human rights, whereas COIN is not motivated by human rights (Fris p.52). In peacebuilding aid is provided to civilians as an “...end in itself rather than a means to an end” (Spearin 2008, p.374). In COIN the civilian is referred to as the ‘center of gravity’ not because they represent a “moral imperative” but rather the civilian is a “means to an end” in order to reduce insurgents support from the population (Friis, p.52). In COIN civilians have strategic value because they help secure victory over the insurgents (Spearin 2010, p.374). Second, it is argued that peacebuilding is always undertaken with the consent of the governing authority, whereas COIN does not require consent. David Ucko (2009) argues that “[p]eacekeeping and peacebuilding form inappropriate bases of comparison” to counterinsurgency because peacekeeping and peacebuilding often seeks the consent of the government whereas COIN does not (p.10). While Ucko holds a point that peacekeeping cannot be compared to COIN for the reason that peacebuilding requires consent, he incorrectly places peacebuilding in the same category. Peacebuilding does not require consent. Furthermore, there have already been many cases of non-consensual peacebuilding, first beginning with Kosovo in 1999 (Cottey 2008, p.434). While gaining consent of the government is a factor that distinguishes peacekeeping from COIN, it is not a differentiation between peacebuilding and COIN.

A third argument is that COIN is not a neutral activity, whereas peacebuilding is impartial because it does not choose sides in a conflict. It is argued by Ucko (2009) that counterinsurgency or stability operations “actively seeks to bolster one party at the expense of another – there is no pretence of neutrality” (p.10). Ucko’s point is valid in that COIN is not a neutral activity. The purpose of COIN is to suppress insurgents and bolster the government. While COIN is not a neutral activity, the neutrality of peacebuilding is debatable. First, the concept of a neutral peacekeeping force that stands between two aggressive nations is a rare occurrence. Conflicts have changed and peacekeeping has morphed into peacebuilding to keep up with challenges such as intra-state war. Second, the activities in peacebuilding have been critiqued from being a colonial ‘mission civilisatrice’ (Paris 2002) to a “hybrid liberal-conservative-humanitarian mode of hegemonic governance” (Heathershaw 2008, p.620). From the methods of recent peacebuilding to the selection of countries in which peacebuilding occurs, it is a representation of values and partiality. Therefore, arguing that COIN and peacebuilding are different because peacebuilding is impartial is not necessarily a strong differentiation between the two activities.

The most debated difference between peacebuilding and COIN is the level of violence used in COIN in comparison to peacebuilding. The level of violence in COIN is a subject of debate. For example Bendana argues that COIN is distinct because of the level of force required and is the equivalent of “operational and conceptual basis for nationbuilding at gunpoint” (2004, p.9). Alternatively Mocktasis argues that COIN and peacebuilding are not very different in respect to the use of force in that since the 1990’s the use of force has been a component of peace operations (1997, p.48). Here it is important to highlight that

discussion of the similarities between COIN and peacebuilding have been compared under the paradigm of population-centric counterinsurgency which is a “kinder and gentler” version of COIN (Gilmore 2011, p.21). If the paradigm changed to enemy-centric counterinsurgency, the comparability to peace operations would rapidly change. If the format were to change to enemy-centric COIN, then the velvet glove of population centric COIN would just regress into an “Iron Fist of traditional war fighting” (Gilmore 2011, p.28). In Afghanistan, a population-centric COIN paradigm has been used and there has been direction from ISAF to use restraint and the minimum level of force required (Wolfendale 2009, p.59). Under population-centric COIN, the use of force will be higher than the use of force in peacebuilding but still less than enemy-centric COIN. This is a matter worth highlighting because population centric COIN continues to benefit from being associated with humanitarian activities and therefore legitimacy based on association. However once the inevitable images surface of the use of force in COIN then the legitimacy of that operation will be questioned and all other COIN operations.

Is there a danger to the differences shrinking?

There have been concerns raised by both humanitarian workers and the military that the increasing similarities between peacebuilding and COIN are dangerous. The primary argument made by the humanitarian side is that population-centric counterinsurgency discourse incorrectly blends a military force with a concern for development and human security (Gilmore 2011, p.28). Heathershaw (2008) argues that the encroaching similarities presents “humanitarianism as requiring military intervention” (p.618). Rubenstein argues that due to the population-centric COIN encroaching into peacebuilding, it is no longer

distinguishable and has become a new form of “imperial policing” (2010, p.457). Humanitarian actors feel that they lose their independence, neutrality and impartiality “in order to facilitate state-led counterinsurgency, ‘hearts and minds’ activities” (Spearin 2008, p.374). The uneasiness at blurring the distinction between humanitarian and military tasks has also been expressed by the military. According to Travers and Owen (2008), the Canadian defence establishment “has expressed its wariness of becoming social workers with guns. The fear is that development assistance activities distract from core tasks, raise the security risks, and complicate the battlefield” (p.685). There is also the concern that blending military tasks with humanitarian tasks creates mandate confusion (Zalberg, 2006a, p.420; Dorn and Varey 2008, p.970). When roles blend between humanitarian aid workers to soldiers the result can be detrimental confusion because “some operations are primarily humanitarian, or peace support or outright offensive combat” (Dorn and Varey 2008, p.970). Both military and humanitarian sides have expressed valid concerns with the encroachment of duties.

While the degree of overlap in Afghanistan has been higher than in previous cases of peacebuilding, the concern of overlapping duties and subsequent confusion between the humanitarian side and military is not new. Any change to traditional roles causes resistance from both humanitarian workers and the military. For example, during the 1990’s peacekeeping, there was discomfort expressed regarding the degree of civil-military integration (Zalberg 2006a, p.423). Zalberg (2006b) states that during the 1990’s “as the division between civil and military responsibilities rapidly blurred in peace operations, a debate erupted within military circles and among policy makers about what was, and what was not, outside the scope of the military” (p.15). Changes in the expectations typically

cause resistance from within the Army. For example, During the Cold War, Prime Minister Diefenbaker instructed the Canadian Army to prepare for “National Survival” in the event of nuclear attack. The ‘military brass’ fought the order because it required shifting preparation from the traditional battlefield theatre (Morton, 2003, p.76). Discomfort with the similarities and overlapping areas between peacebuilding and COIN is not new, but the increased overlap between peacebuilding and COIN suggests that there needs to be innovation in the realm of civil-military relations to handle multi-dimensional security challenges in the 21st century that require both military and humanitarian involvement.

Afghanistan Presented an Unchartered Challenge

A partial overlap of military and development activities will be required for certain conflicts. Older ‘Pearsonian’ peacekeeping methods are no longer sufficient for the majority of modern conflicts (Travers and Owens 2008, p.702). Harkening back to traditional methods of peacekeeping is insufficient in contexts such as Afghanistan where national conflicts have international implications and cannot be solved with buffer peacekeeping force. The engagement in Afghanistan was not undertaken to broker peace between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. The matter was the threat al-Qaeda posed to the United States and its allies. The initial purpose of the war was to oust the Taliban regime that provided refuge to Osama bin Laden. The war in Afghanistan started as the US led Operation Enduring Freedom with a ‘light foot print’ statebuilding approach and over time it developed into a counterinsurgency campaign led by ISAF (Aoi 2011, p.159). Afghanistan had peacebuilding, statebuilding and COIN going on at the same time. As stated by Windsor, Charters and Wilson, “the daily reality of UNAMA [United Nations

Mission in Afghanistan] and the NATO military effort was that war fighting, peacekeeping and aid were all delivered simultaneously” (Windsor, Charters and Wilson 2008, p. XXIII). A change in older methods of peacebuilding is not a negative; it may be what is required in specific interventions where peacebuilding is insufficient. Afghanistan represents an unprecedented example of statebuilding and peacebuilding supported by military force. It is difficult to predict the effect of one case without erring on speculation but Afghanistan will have a large impact on the practice of both peacebuilding and counterinsurgency. Tondini (2010) argues that Afghanistan will “be regarded as one of the most significant statebuilding interventions undertaken by the international community under a novel approach to post-conflict stabilization” (p.7). Ricigliano argues that the future of effective peacebuilding will be “integrated peacebuilding” that “combines traditionally, distinct disciplines such as human rights, humanitarian assistance, sustainable development, environment, conflict resolution, security, and the rule of law in order to be effective in today’s complex conflicts” (2003, p.445). Different elements of COIN, such as intelligence gathering and targeted force will likely be an important component of future peacebuilding.

The Framing of COIN

When a specific situation requires flexible solutions and soldiers are asked to be both ‘warriors and nation builders’ (Tamas 2009), it can seem like the political establishment is “dressing a military mission in humanitarian clothing” (Travers and Owen 2008, p.701). Although it was widely known by the Canadian public that Canada’s engagement in Afghanistan was not peacekeeping, “it was believed that it was not yet acceptable to speak in public of a counterinsurgency role for the Canadian Forces” (Marten

2010, p.216). According to Jean Christopher-Boucher (2009) who analyzed Canadian defence ministers speeches from 2001–2008, the characterization or narrative of the engagement in Afghanistan has varied widely among the three prime ministers who have held office during the duration of the war. Jean Chretien’s narrative was based on national security, preventing terrorism and obligations to contribute to NATO (p.724-730). Paul Martin’s strategic narrative advocated for spreading Canadian values abroad and security alliances (p. 724 –730). Stephen Harper’s narrative focused on humanitarian goals (p. 724–730). Furthermore, the word ‘war’ was never used in reference to Afghanistan by Canadian officials (Lang and Stein 2007, p.199). The terminology used to describe the reasons for engaging in a conflict holds political implications for public support. ‘Peacebuilding’ or ‘winning the hearts and minds’ is far more palatable to the public than ‘counterinsurgency’. COIN benefits from being publically associated or discussed as holding humanitarian motivations because it creates a narrative that COIN is a force used for good purposes and therefore legitimate. The current population-centric COIN that stresses minimum force and in a sense omits the use of force can become a liability when the press documents the inevitable use of force and brutality. Associating humanitarian activities with COIN helps provides legitimacy for COIN operations but becomes a liability in that it opens a wider zone for criticism of COIN operations.

Conclusion

In conclusion population-centric COIN is somewhat similar but not synonymous with peacebuilding. As the terminology of peace operations have expanded to incorporate a ‘range of measures’ and population-centric COIN has emphasized restraint, there has been

overlap between the two types of operations. Primary distinctions between the two are the motivation for interacting with civilians and the higher use of force in COIN. In Afghanistan, there was a large overlap between COIN and peacebuilding because the population-centric counterinsurgency called for restraining the use of force. Although there is a considerable overlap, some missions, require the full spectrum of tools available in COIN and others will require the boundaries of peace missions. Framing COIN in humanitarian terminology makes it palatable to a domestic audience but risks sacrificing operational effectiveness.

CHAPTER 5: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AMERICAN AND CANADIAN COIN

Introduction

Although Canadian and American COIN holds many similarities, there are notable differences. The first section of this chapter outlines the doctrinal similarities in each respective COIN manual. The second section debates whether or not the United States uses more brute force in COIN. The third section addresses several differences between American and Canadian COIN. The first difference is that the Americas have had more experience. Canada's COIN is still nascent, as Afghanistan is Canada's first substantive experience with COIN. Related to this factor is the second difference of institutional culture between the American and Canadian Armed forces. The institutional flexibility of the Canadian Forces will potentially assist with formulating a sharper COIN doctrine. The third difference is that the smaller resources available to the Canadian Forces have functioned as an asset because it promotes efficient use of resources, as will be shown with the different training of the Afghan National Police. Canada's national style of COIN is still nascent but is well poised to become a respected contributor in future COIN operations.

Similarities

The American and Canadian COIN Manuals are highly similar. Both manuals read like manuscripts for state-building, advise on full spectrum operations, comprehensive approaches and stress the importance of minimum force, training domestic security forces, etc. As the expression of official military doctrine, the manuals have garnered a

considerable degree of interest in both military circles and in the general public. In the first two months of its publication the American COIN manual was downloaded over 2 million times (Sewall 2007, p.xxiv). Similarly, the Canadian COIN manual has been reviewed as a “scintillating” read (Freeze 2009). The second similarity is that both the American and Canadian COIN manuals operate from the same definition of COIN that is “those military, paramilitary, political economic, psychological and civic actions taken to defeat an insurgency” (*Counter-insurgency* 2008, 03-1; *Field Manual* 2007, 1-2). A third similarity is that both doctrines are significantly formed out of British colonial counterinsurgency and slightly from French Colonial COIN (Feichtinger and Malinowski, 2012). Specifically American COIN is based on the British COIN tenets of “1) political primacy; 2) coordinated government; 3) intelligence and information; 4) separation of the insurgent from support; 5) neutralizing the insurgent; 6) longer term post-insurgency planning” (Chin 2007, p.9). Aspects of these six elements are evident in the Canadian 3-D or ‘Whole of Government’ approach that stresses diplomacy, development and defence as used in Afghanistan.

The influence of French COIN on American and Canadian COIN is tertiary. First, although the American COIN manual is heavily based on David Galula’s writing, his writing is not considered representative of French COIN because colonial French COIN is often considered to be brutal and Galula writes from a population-centric approach (Durand 2010, p.16). Prior to the 2006 US COIN manual publication, Galula was unknown in French military circles (Durand 2010, p.16). Second, the tertiary influence of French COIN on American and Canadian COIN is the use of the ‘ink-spot’ concept, named by French

Counterinsurgent Gallieni. The 'ink-spot' is referenced in both the Canadian COIN manual (2008, 308-3 and figure 5-10) and the second edition of the American COIN manual (2007, 3-106). Both COIN doctrines share the similarity of a heavy British influence and minor French influence.

Uncertain Difference: The Use of Force

American COIN is frequently reported as more violent than many other NATO member states. It is frequently argued that the Dutch (Chivers 2010, p.207) and British (Thorton 2009, p.215) who were in combat roles have taken a less violent approach than the Americans in Afghanistan. This point is worthy of address as British COIN is typically portrayed as superior because it is associated with the 'principle of minimum force', whereas American COIN is associated with using higher degrees of force (Larsdotter 2008, p.352). According to Betz and Cormack (2009) "the consensus has been that while the British 'got' counterinsurgency, the United States decidedly did not" (p.319). With numerous sources stating that American COIN is more violent, it would be quite simple to conclude that the American approach uses more kinetic force. However there has been no quantifiable study that American COIN uses higher degrees of violence. Many factors influence the 'style' of counterinsurgency. First, national caveats will dictate the type of engagement and different engagements will require higher levels of force. Although the Netherlands has identified itself as taking a less violent approach, part of the reason is that the Netherlands avoided direct conflict because they are "more risk averse to casualties on the field" (Chivers 2010). A second factor is that the region of a national force in Afghanistan affects COIN performance. The southern and eastern regions of Afghanistan

they are far “tougher nuts to crack” because it is a region with a heavy insurgent presence (Farrell and Gordon 2009, p.667). For the reason that the United States was stationed primarily in southern and eastern Afghanistan, more force had to be used to ‘clear’ the insurgents away. Some will counter-argue this point in that both the British and Canadians were in Eastern Afghanistan but have used less violence. The British were not necessarily less forceful than the Americans because the British strategy in Helmand was force intensive up until 2007 (Farrell 2010, p.568; Chin 2010, p.231). In the deployment to Helmand, British soldiers had to use air strikes, “massive firepower” and razed villages (Bennett 2010, p.468). Similarly the Canadian Forces, typically known as peacekeepers, underwent a “dramatic transformation” in the eastern province of Kandahar and “developed into a killing machine in which fighting formations quickly and aggressively pursue sources of fire, and pursue those opposing forces until they have withdrawn or have been neutralized” (Murray and McCoy 2010, p. 179). Suffice to say, the Americans were not the only rough forces in Afghanistan. The perception that the Americans use more force than all other nations requires further investigation. As has been discussed in this paragraph, national caveats and the stationing of forces affects the perception of the use of force. At this time there is not enough information to conclude that the American approach is in fact more violent than the British or Canadian methods.

Differences

Despite the similarities there are substantial differences between American and Canadian COIN. One major difference is that Canadians have had far less experience with

COIN. Whereas Americans have many experiences with COIN, Canada has had only two interactions with COIN. Canada's first interaction with COIN occurred during the 1899 - 1902 Boer War and Afghanistan is the second interaction Canada has had with COIN (Marten 2010, p.215). Given the large time difference between the two engagements and what some would argue the inadmissibility of the Boer war as a Canadian experience, it is safe to state that Canada's COIN style is nascent. Second, whereas the Americans have had a few formats of COIN doctrine, Canada's first and only COIN manual *Counter-Insurgency Operations* was published in 2008. The first format of a US COIN doctrine was a Marine Corp publication in 1940 entitled, the *Small Wars Manual*. There were several manuals published between 1950-1970 (Berger et al 2007, p.911). Another US manual was published in 1986 entitled *Field Manual 90-8 Counterinsurgency Operations*, another was published in 1992 entitled *FM-98 Operations in Low Intensity Conflict* and then the initial 2006 publication of *FM 3-24 COIN* and its 2009 revision *FM 3-24.2 Tactics in Counterinsurgency*. Although Americans have more experience with COIN, more exposure to be studied by academics and therefore opportunities to reformulate the 'American' approach it is unclear whether the American Army has solid lessons learned. In contrast there is emphasis within the Canadian Forces to harvest the lessons from Afghanistan. Canadian Lieutenant General Leslie Hicks believe COIN will become the norm of combat and states "It's not going to be peacebuilding anymore, its going to be COIN because the odds of us doing peacemaking between functional states is probably pretty low, ergo counterinsurgency" (Montpetit 2009). Keeping in mind that engagement in Afghanistan was the first war Canada has fought since the Korean War and the questionable COIN experience in the Boer War it would be premature to outline a Canadian approach to COIN

based on the performance in Afghanistan. For instance, recalling that one of the motivations for Canada selecting Kandahar was to shake its image as a peacekeeper and engage in real combat (Holland, 2010, p.279), the force used in Kandahar may be an aberration rather than the norm of Canadian COIN. It is possible that Canada may end up in future combat ‘clearing’ COIN activities or it may end up undertaking a more developmental ‘build’ approach. It is too early to predict a uniquely Canadian COIN approach.

Different Institutions

It may be that one of the largest differences is the institutional culture between the American and the Canadian Forces. Generally speaking, Americans are known for their bravado attitude and their preference to fight traditional wars that they conceive to be the ‘American way of war’ (Berger et al. 2007, p.928). Nagl (2002) argues that the American approach to war is defined by “an overreliance on technology, a faith in the uniqueness of the United States, and a remarkable aversion to the use of unconventional tactics” (p. 44). On the other hand, Canada as a ‘middle power’ has gone through several “rapid, often painful changes in the Canadian Forces” to fit the foreign policy challenges in the past century (Murray & McCoy 2010, p.172). Unlike the United States who through their sheer size can define the international security context, as a middle power Canada responds to the international security context. Keeping in mind that the institutional culture of a military has an impact on the lessons learned from a deployment, a military culture that encourages learning and innovation develops stronger doctrine (Nagl 2002, p. 5). It has been argued that the American Army has not been proficient with learning from their experiences in

small wars because their organizational culture does not promote learning and innovation (Nagl 2002, p.43; Aylwin-Foster 2005 p.14). It is a possibility that since the Canadian Forces as a middle power, that has gone through several changes, the institutional culture of the Canadian Forces may encourage developing better COIN practices. The institutional culture of the Canadian Forces may turn out to be an advantage over the Americans.

The Advantage of Smaller Resources

A major difference between Canadian and American COIN are the vast resources available to the American Army. The estimated 11.3 billion dollars Canada spent in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2011 is far less than the approximated US\$ 16 billion the United States was spending in Afghanistan per month in 2008 (Stiglitz 2008). As will be explained in this paragraph, excessive resources in COIN can create expedient solutions that are ultimately ineffectual. It is for this reason that a smaller amount of resources can enhance COIN operations. The different approaches taken by Germany and Canada versus the Americans in training the Afghan National Police demonstrate that smaller resources can contribute to successful COIN practices. Highlighting that the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) were both predominately trained by the US, the discrepancy between the ANP and the ANA cannot be explained as caused by a national 'style' of counterinsurgency. The discrepancy was caused by the United States contracting out ANP training to the private military company *Dyncorp*, while the ANA were trained by active duty Army officers. Training provided by active duty officers cost far less and created competent ANA officers (Cordesman 2009, p.30; Marston 2010, p.272). By comparing the different outcomes between the training of the Afghan National

Police (ANP) to the Afghan National Army (ANA) it will become clear that a higher degree of resources can actually weaken a counterinsurgency.

In 2002 Germany was tasked as the lead nation responsible for training the ANP. However, by 2003 the United States thought Germany's pace of training a few hundred officers per year was too slow and that Germany would not make the United States target of having 110,000 ANP trained by 2010 (Heiduk 2011, p. 376-377). The United States addressed the situation by taking control of approximately 90% of training (Heiduk 2011, p.378; Jones 2008, p.68). The police officers who underwent German training took part in a "three year training course and took classes on human rights, tactical operations, narcotics investigations, computer skills, and Islamic law" (Jones 2008, p.68). Conversely, the training provided by the United States via the private military company *Dyncorp*, ranged from a two to eight week course. In the eight-week course provided by *Dyncorp*, only one week was spent on police skills and the remainder of the time was spent on COIN and military training (Gross 2010, p.28). If recruits for the ANA were illiterate, then they only underwent a two-week training course. Given the estimate that 70% of the ANP is illiterate, approximately 70% of the ANP had only a two-week training (Heriduk 2010, p.378). At the end of their training the "recruits were given an Ak-47 and sent to their home districts" (Jones 2008, p.76). Afterwards, only 10% of the police officers were provided with follow up support. Considering that the ANP had minimal training and very little follow-up support it is unsurprising that only 50% of the ANP show up to work and that the ANA is often cited as being incapable and corrupt (Jones 2008, p.76). Training police from 2002 to 2009 via private military contractors cost the United States approximately \$7 billion

dollars. Comparatively during this same time period Germany spent \$200 million on police training (*Afghanistan Index 2011*, p.18). According to Thruelsen the money spent by the United States on ANP training “has been badly spent without significantly improving the tactical level performance of the police” (2011 p.628). The American training the ANP could have been similar to the American training of the ANA who “benefitted from being embedded into international trainers when they were they deployed into the field and almost always deployed with U.S and other coalition military forces” (Jones 2008, p.71). ANP training by the Germans and Canadians resembled the training for the ANA in that active duty officers were used. In Kandahar, the Canadian Forces used active duty Canadian police officers to train police in Kandahar and had far better outcomes than Dyncorp training (Holland 2010, p.283). The discrepancy between the ANA and ANP indicates that COIN cannot be outsourced. Porch states that “...the chaotic world of outsourced statebuilding deprives COIN of a strategic framework for success” (Porch 2011, p.253). Outsourcing the training of the ANP sacrificed the quality of the ANA and ultimately reduced the credibility of the government authority and in turn weakened COIN operations. The different approaches of training the ANP indicate that a higher level of resources does not necessarily increase success and that lower level of resources available to the Canadian Forces can be a strategic advantage in COIN operations.

Conclusion

The Canadian and American COIN manuals hold many doctrinal similarities such as the same definition of counterinsurgency, emphasis on a comprehensive approach, statebuilding and building indigenous security forces. Both doctrines are shaped from

primarily British COIN doctrine. There are a few distinct differences between American and Canadian COIN in that the US has had more experience with COIN and therefore opportunity to refine and reformulate the American approach to COIN. The United States approach is not necessarily better than Canadian COIN. As shown with the training of the ANP, smaller resources of the Canadian Forces can act as an advantage. Keeping in mind that one reason Canada took on the challenge of Kandahar to 'shake' the image of Canada as a peacekeeping nation, it is unclear what a Canadian style of COIN will emerge as a more violent 'clear' approach or a humanitarian 'build' approach. Although Canada's COIN approach is still nascent, it is likely that the American and Canadian approaches will always have doctrinal similarities with differences resulting from resources and different institutional cultures.

CHAPTER SIX: LESSONS LEARNED FROM AFGHANISTAN

Introduction

The lessons learned from COIN in Afghanistan will be shaped by explanations of what went wrong. This chapter will present different arguments as to what went wrong in Afghanistan and what some have argued should have been done. That the numerous problems chalk up to be ‘anything and everything’ leads one to question the foundation of COIN doctrine that calls for almost ‘everything’ to be done to defeat an insurgency. Depending on whether the mishaps of Afghanistan are chronicled as errors in *methodology* or the difficult *context* will determine the imprint Afghanistan leaves on COIN doctrine. The first possibility is that Afghanistan may be dismissed as an anomaly and will therefore not have an effect on COIN doctrine. The second possibility is that depending on the final outcome of Afghanistan, the lessons would be shunned, similar to Vietnam. The third possibility is that Afghanistan may initiate specialized formats of COIN such as a less ambitious version of COIN or counter-terrorism. Fourth, Afghanistan may result in challenges to COIN through a broader examination of its underlying assumptions. There is a cyclical desire to improve COIN but there needs to be a deeper probing of the assumptions in COIN and whether those assumptions preempt future success.

The ‘Key’ to Success

Even though it is widely stated that there is no “master key” (Shafer 1988, p.281) or “‘silver bullet’ set of COIN procedures” (*Field Manual* 2007, 1-155) there are a plethora of

opinions on what precise procedures to follow for successful COIN. For example, the US COIN Field Manual (2007) states that developing indigenous security forces is the “key” to successful COIN (6-1). Spencer (2010) argues “...counterinsurgency operations are all about people. People are one, if not the, key component to mission success in the contemporary operating environment” (p.11). Alternatively, Fitzsimmons (2008) argues that “effective governance is the key to ‘winning the hearts and minds’” (p.338). Lyall and Wilson (2009) argue “the key to success lies in the efficient collection of reliable information on population characteristics, including cleavages, power structures, and views of the counterinsurgent and the nature of the insurgents themselves” (p.73). These are just a few of many arguments in COIN literature that argue a specific method will create successful COIN. Similarly, there are numerous arguments of what went wrong in Afghanistan. Aoi argues that in Afghanistan “the key to effective counterinsurgency operations was above all judicial sector reform and the rule of law” (2011, p.193). Jones (2008) argues that the failure to establish governance in crucial “provinces such as Helmand and Kandahar have seriously undermined counterinsurgency efforts in Afghanistan” (p.132). Grant believes that “Operations in Afghanistan have not succeeded to date because, until recently, neither the correct strategy, nor the resources necessary to execute it, were in place” (2010, p.1). As explained at length in the second chapter, other explanations of what went wrong in Afghanistan include a lack of coordination (Farrell and Rynning 2010, p.694), that statebuilding is immiscible with the cultural context of Afghanistan (Hoffman 2007, p.83), insufficient resources (Marten 2010, p.215) and so on. Based on the wide ranging arguments as to what went wrong, a simple recommendation for future COIN operations would be to do everything that is supposed to be the ‘key’ to bring success (support and protect the people, train security forces, create governance,

accountability and justice, et cetera) and amend what went wrong (coordinate across actors, provide sufficient resources, have a clear strategy from the beginning, build governance structures that fit the local culture, et cetera). An elementary analysis would dictate that the mishaps of COIN in Afghanistan will be the lessons for the future. The arguments are especially far reaching and relate to the definition of COIN that is the “military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency” (Field Manual 2007, 1-2). The definition is intuitively sensible but practically undertaking all military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological and civic actions is impossible. According to Aikins (2011) COIN is “...deceptively simple, and ineffably complex...” and “COIN in other words, is the military’s’ *Theory of Everything*” (p.24). If successful COIN requires ‘everything’ but unsuccessful COIN can be blamed on anything, then there needs to be a deeper analysis of the viability of COIN.

Contextual Factors

Afghanistan is probably the most difficult place to conduct COIN and therefore some will argue that the *context* of Afghanistan is to blame rather than the methods. Goodson and Johnson (2011) argue that the terrain, resistance to any central authority, tribal allegiances and the proud rejection of modernization makes Afghanistan extremely difficult (p.578). Goodson and Johnson argue that the Soviets used similar methods to American COIN strategy but could not win the war in Afghanistan (p.578). The specific similarities are that the Soviets attempted to protect the population, created a reconciliation program and attempted to build competent Afghan security forces to carry Afghanistan forward (Goodson and Johnson 2011, p.578). If both the Soviets and Americans had similar

strategies but neither could win, then perhaps it is the Afghan *context* and not COIN *methods* that are to blame. However, explaining Afghanistan on context would not advance the study of COIN. As discussed in great detail in the third chapter, successful counterinsurgency is always attributed to superior *methods* and ignores *contextual* factors. Success in Malaya was attributed to British principle of ‘minimum force’ and Templer’s ‘hearts and minds’ approach but not the contextual factors of insurgents being ethnically separate from the Malayan population, insurgents having no outside support and a booming economy that strengthened the governments legitimacy (See Chapter 2). Similarly success in Iraq was explained through the ‘surge’ method but not the contextual factor of the splintering of insurgent groups (Dunn and Futter 2010, p.197; Celso 2010, p.192). The effect of context is largely invisible in chronicling COIN success but visible when explaining failure. Blaming Afghanistan on context inversely provides false confidence in COIN methods. The most important lesson of Afghanistan is that context and method are inseparable factors.

Ignored Lessons

In the worst case scenario, the lessons of Afghanistan may end up like Vietnam - removed from the institutional memory of the United States Army (Nagl 2002, p.172). Berger et al (2007) note that after Vietnam there was a desire to avoid any future small wars through the passing of the 1984 Weinberger-Powell Doctrine that “...was the antithesis of COIN and reflected the US military’s commitment to avoid another Vietnam and only engaging in more or less conventional warfare” (p.912). According to Record (2010) engagement in counterinsurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan may result in a ‘Vietnam Syndrome’ in which a favorite political line will be ‘No more Iraq’s or Afghanistan’s’

(p.80). Furthermore, because COIN is resource intensive without guaranteed results, Afghanistan may become seared into policy discourse as the ‘Afghanistan Line’. Similar to the debacle with the United States involvement in a peacekeeping mission sent to Somalia in the early 1990’s that ended up as the Mogadishu line. The Mogadishu Line “implied a sharp curtailment of American involvement in future armed humanitarian interventions” (Clarke and Herbst 1996, p.70). If a similar mentality forms around Afghanistan, there will be apprehension or outright rejection to learn from this experience. This would be the worst-case scenario because COIN will be used again and Afghanistan provides important lessons that both context and methodology determine success – not just methods as would be implied through casting Afghanistan as an anomaly.

Smaller COIN

COIN doctrine demands a level of resources that are next to impossible to achieve. For example, the doctrinal recommendation that there be a one counterinsurgent per 20 - 25 inhabitants cannot be achieved. According to Johnson (2011) who calculated that based on Afghanistan’s 28.4 million residents there would need to be approximately 568,000 to 710,000 counterinsurgents. In the summer of 2010, there were 153,500 coalition forces under ISAF command in addition to 134,000 ANA officers and 109,000 ANP bring the total to 396,500 counterinsurgent forces. This was “...no where near the U.S Army’s and U.S Marine Corps’ own doctrinal guidelines” (2011 p.390). The ratio of security forces is just one part of the multi-dimensional ‘comprehensive’ or whole of government approach that calls for statebuilding, building an economy, building a civil society, et cetera. Some have argued that because COIN is unrealistically resource intensive that in the future

counter-terrorism will be used rather than counterinsurgency. Goodson and Johnson (2011) argue that a counter-terrorism approach that "...is much more sustainable than the big COIN nation-building approach" (p.598). Whether counter-terrorism is adopted in lieu of COIN, we know from the past that after large military commitments there is a call to reduce the scope of future engagements. Shortly after the peacebuilding faze in the 1990's, George W. Bush repeatedly argued in the 2000 presidential election campaign, that America should "fight and win wars" rather than engage in "nation building" (Bush, 2000). Bush's future National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice repeated similar arguments that the American Army "is not a civilian police force. It is not a political referee. And it is most certainly not designed to build a civilian society" (Rice 2000, p.53). However, it was under George W. Bush's tenure that Iraq and Afghanistan developed from counter-terrorism to comprehensive population-centric counterinsurgency (Hassan and Hammond 2011, p.533). The fluctuation demonstrated by the Bush administration demonstrates that even when there is a political consensus to reduce intervention ambitions, military engagements can rapidly increase. If COIN were reduced to counter-terrorism it is likely that persuasive arguments will be made for increasing the mission and therefore creep into counterinsurgency. Population-centric COIN appeals to a broad political palette – we can kill the 'bad guys' and at the same time win the hearts and minds of the 'good guys'. If COIN is reduced to counterterrorism but then future engagements morph into COIN, then "when it's all over, the call to master counterinsurgency, to get it right this time, will once again be heard" (Young 2008, p.229). If the formats of COIN fluctuate but the assumptions go unexamined there will be more Afghanistan's and security discourse will continue to chase after the magic keys of counterinsurgency.

The Big Picture

The point is not to negate that COIN in Afghanistan did not go well because of both contextual and methodological errors but to expand the analysis to the paradigm of counterinsurgency. Roberts identifies that the commonly identified causes of failure seems to avoid the big question about the idea of population-centric counterinsurgency. Roberts states:

A major question, heavy with implications for international security, is how the setbacks experienced in Afghanistan are to be explained, especially within NATO member states. The UN may be accustomed to failure, but NATO is not. So far, the tendency has been to blame Pakistan, the messy NATO command, the poor attention span of US governments, the unwillingness of NATO allies to contribute, the weakness of Karzai, the corruption of his government, the shortage of foreign money and troops – in other words, to blame almost everything except the nature of the project (2009, p.49).

This thesis has probed ‘the nature of the project’ and has found that the problem with the current interpretation of COIN codified in the *US Field Manual 3-24* and the *Canadian Counter-insurgency Operations* is that it is a paradigm based on assumptions and constructed by a heavily edited history of counterinsurgency. There seems to be a small but growing doubt of the viability of COIN. For example, Johnson asks “What should be done when you know—or if your doctrine says—that success requires a set of resources that you know you cannot or will not devote to the problem?” (2011 p.396). Similarly, Egnell (2010) asks “fundamentally, if the hearts and minds approach is flawed, what is left of the activity we call counter-insurgency?” (p.298). The greatest lesson Afghanistan can provide would go beyond methods and context and question the underlying assumptions of COIN.

Conclusion

The lessons of Afghanistan depend on how the outcome is chronicled and the explanation will impact what methods are used in future COIN campaigns. This chapter has demonstrated that COIN doctrine needs to be re-evaluated because it is commonly argued that success is possible through mastering numerous 'keys' of counterinsurgency but failure can be blamed on 'anything and everything'. Alternatively the disappointing outcome of Afghanistan may be blamed on the context – that the terrain, people and culture were simply too difficult. Blaming the context would fit the general pattern of how failure is chronicled in COIN wherein success is attributed to superior methods but excludes contextual factors. Invoking the causation of superior methods when convenient provides false confidence to COIN. The most important lesson of Afghanistan is that contextual factors and the methods used are inseparable in contributing to COIN success and failure. Provided that the chronicling of success or failure in counterinsurgency determines the lessons learned, the lessons then shape the actions taken during future insurgencies. There will be more insurgencies throughout history and calls to intervene using specific formulas of COIN – perhaps counter-terrorism that will then morph back into population-centric COIN. This is why the worst-case scenario would be a Vietnam syndrome wherein Afghanistan is shuttered away and the underlying assumptions of COIN based on a tailored history of what brings success or failure would remain unexamined. The framing of what determines success or failure impacts the actions taken in future COIN campaigns. Considering the amount of blood and treasure COIN requires and the security implications if performed unsuccessfully, the costs are too high to let the assumptions in population-centric COIN doctrine rest until the next time around.

**FINAL CONCLUSION: HOW DID WE GET HERE? HOW HAVE WE DONE?
WHERE ARE WE HEADED?**

While the final result of COIN in Afghanistan has not been declared a ‘failure’, it seems headed for that end result (Nicoll & Johnston, 2011). There was confusion from the beginning of the war and the operation ‘morphed’ into COIN (Marten 2012, p.215). Amidst the confusion, in came the COIN Lobby who made COIN seductively simple and provided direction for the Afghan operation. They made COIN seem easy as “armed social work” (Killcullen 2010, p.43) and humanitarian because the “Afghan people would be the decisive terrain” (Petraeus, 2008). Members of that lobby (David Petraeus, Stanley McCrystal, John Nagl) solidified their version of population-centric COIN by making significant contributions into the publication of the United States Counterinsurgency Field Manual. The COIN lobby created their own narrative of what constituted population-centric COIN that was “based on a misleading description of counterinsurgency wars and a simplified history of key conflicts” (Rovener 2012, p. 228). It seems ironic that COIN was referred to as the ‘Graduate level of war’ (*Field Manual 2007*, 1-1), even though it presents a tailored historical of COIN and many fatal assumptions. The assumptions of current COIN doctrine addressed in this thesis are that the goals and means of insurgents are the same as insurgencies fifty years ago; that insurgents do not have outside support networks; that civilians can be ‘won’ through development projects and will work towards the goals proposed by counterinsurgents; that the underlying process of statebuilding in COIN can be completed in any context; that COIN is possible through precise coordination and that COIN can be completed with minimal force. With all these assumptions, the poor outcome of COIN in Afghanistan should not come as a surprise. With the future of

Afghanistan being placed on the questionable capabilities of the Afghan security forces, there is significant skepticism for Afghanistan's stability (Rubin, 2012) and in turn concern for the international security. For the reason that Afghanistan was a necessary war, we should have secured a clearer victory. While expecting a decisive victory would be unrealistic, the degree of success is questionable considering that the Afghan government requires significant financial support to thwart an oncoming civil war (Paris, 2012).

Some may reject the argument that Afghanistan demonstrates that there are fatal assumptions in COIN because the same COIN strategy was used in Iraq and resulted in successful outcome. As was argued in the first chapter, the 2007 surge in Iraq was credited with creating success in Iraq (Celso 2010, p.188) but the surge was not the singular catalyst for success. The surge occurred just as the Iraqi insurgency split and the Iraqi Sunni Sheiks that once fought alongside al-Qaeda, began fighting against them. A large component of the surge success was the coincidental split within the Iraqi insurgency (Dunn & Futter 2010, p.197). A second factor is that the surge depended on brute force, which was enemy-centric rather than population-centric (Micheals & Ford 2011, p.368) and considered a departure from the FM 3-24 (Cohen 2011, p.19). The Iraq surge does not prove that population-centric COIN works. Instead the Iraq surge proves that successful COIN depends on beneficial contextual factors and the application of brute force.

While this thesis has identified numerous assumptions in the population-centric COIN doctrine of the Field Manual 3-24, chief among them that violence is a necessary component, it is not intended to recommend that increasing the amount of violence would

successfully supplement the assumptions in the current doctrine. The degree of violence required in COIN remains an ambiguous concept. There are examples of COIN that used liberal amounts of violence and were unsuccessful (Vietnam, Algeria). Increasing violence or ‘sticks’ in COIN does not guarantee success. Similarly, this thesis demonstrated that the COIN used in Afghanistan refrained from ‘sticks’ and emphasized ‘carrots’ but has also been unsuccessful. With the knowledge that current population-centric COIN contains many assumptions yet with the awareness that increasing the amount of force does not guarantee success, future research should investigate what combination of sticks and carrots may be used in different contexts. Until then, this thesis encourages caution as the practice of population-centric COIN in Afghanistan from 2005-2011 reveals that there are numerous assumptions in population-centric COIN doctrine. The assumptions have been overlooked because of a tailored history that does not acknowledge the interconnected factors of methods, context and luck in determining success or failure. There needs to be a reconsideration of the current COIN doctrine for the amount of blood and treasure required in COIN operations cannot be wagered on a doctrine built from assumptions.

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