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Conference on Culture, Cultural Modeling, Counterinsurgency and Conflict Behavior

Kaufmann, Sarah

Naval Postgraduate School (U.S.)



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THE CULTURE AND CONFLICT REVIEW



Conference on Culture, Cultural Modeling, Counterinsurgency and Conflict Behavior

Sara Kaufmann, Matt DuPée and Matt Dearing, 4/1/2009

Conference hosted by the Program for Culture and Conflict Studies, Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, California March 24-25, 2009.

Introduction

An assorted mix of cultural experts, anthropologists, sociologists, government officials, and analysts convened on March 24th and 25th at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey California to discuss the impact culture has in both conflict behavior and counterinsurgency environments. International experts in modeling techniques provided additional insight into their methodology and the application of cultural modeling by using insurgent movements in Iraq and Afghanistan as case studies.

The Naval Postgraduate School's Thomas H. Johnson, Research Professor and the Director of the Program for Culture and Conflict Studies, respectfully hosted the enlightening two day conference aimed at exploring the importance of culture and its role in conflicts around the globe.

Experts provided analysis of culture in conflict environments throughout history, using Afghanistan, Ireland, the Arctic and Iraq as case studies. Understanding the importance of culture in conflict has prompted many government agencies and the military to create specialists who analyze the "Human Terrain" dimension of the battle space.

Panel One: Culture: Does it Really Matter?

Prof. Thomas Barfield, "Afghanistan: Culture, Customs and Justice"

Dr. Barfield, a professor of Anthropology at Boston University and also President of the American Institute for Afghanistan Studies, examined the role culture, customs and justice play in the diverse landscape of Afghanistan. One of the initial problems with cultural studies is the mere definition of the word culture, a definition that varies wildly within different fields of study. Economists and political scientists discard many of the all encompassing "kitchen sink" definitions of culture; the very same definitions anthropologists adhere to.

What we really want to know are the interconnections between society, economy, politics, and the only way to get a handle on that is to approach it in a holistic fashion. Discovering what habits exist in a given society, how one sees the world, how one interacts in the world; that's culture, it is learned behavior. This however, requires an open mind, and it is precisely why many anthropologists prefer to work alone rather than in teams wearing uniforms and carrying guns. The way people express their world is through their language, it is really a linguistic process and it is important to look at it like that and not study their world through translation.

European states and America all endorsed a centralized state government for places like Afghanistan because without it they cannot understand how law and order can exist. But in fact, what we see in a place like Afghanistan we have social order in places with weak or nonexistent states. Why is that? Because at the local level there is a cultural code of conduct, an evaluation of behavior that allows people to be evaluated without the need for government intervention or oversight. Of course the biggest example of this is Pashtunwali, a legal code that explains what's right, what's wrong but it is also a

standard behavior, more precisely, a standard of autonomy.

The important thing to remember is from an outsiders' view, particularly a military outsiders' view, is you are immersed in this local system. The question is what the interaction is; it's not state to state, it is individual to individual. Here the whole question of understanding what motivates people, it's not ideological, it's not necessarily economic motives, it could be larger cultural motives. When asking why culture matters in a context such as this, Professor Barfield believes it is understanding the world you are interacting with. With so many people now in Afghanistan, it becomes a significantly important question that has political, policy, and strategic ramifications.

Prof. Richard English, "Culture, Northern Ireland and the IRA"

Professor Richard English, from the Queen's University in Belfast, noted two important elements of the IRA case-study, world historical forces operating in the local arena: the tension between nation and state, (rivaling religiously infected nationalisms), and the use of political violence which veers between terrorism and something approaching insurgency or guerilla warfare. Culture plays an integral part in both the roots of conflict and in the resolution of conflict. It is sometimes asked whether the conflict in Northern Ireland was a religious conflict, a nationalist conflict or an ethnic-religious conflict, and of course it was all of those things. It's the interconnectedness of these elements that is important.

While explaining the roots of violent conflict and why conflicts emerge, the dynamic importance of culture is when culture is interwoven with other aspects of political resistance such as nationalism. Nationalism is a particularly powerful intersection of politics of community, struggle and power. Culture is important because it is interwoven within the larger context of these problems.

Mr. Barry Zellen, "On Thin Ice: Culture and the Arctic North"

Barry Zellen argued since the modern state first encroached upon the pristine and sparsely inhabited Arctic four hundred years ago, the Inuit of the Arctic have aspired to regain or at least to reassert their Aboriginal rights, cultural traditions, and tribal sovereignty over their homeland. As the Inuit learned more about the systems and structures of governance that were exported from Europe and later the newly independent capitals of North America, they found new ways to reclaim lost powers through innovative domestic diplomacy, negotiation, and various forms of political protest like Alaska's famous "duck-in," an off-season hunt to protest the impact of the international migratory bird convention on their subsistence economy and culture. When it comes to restoring political order, maintaining the peace, increasing security, and defeating insurgencies, understanding the underlying political topology, and the nuances of tribal identity and culture, can spell the difference between protracted war or enduring peace.

Whether a state has collapsed, is poised to collapse, or whether it has never fully asserted itself in its frontier lands, there are underlying systems of governance in place, a long history of cultural tradition to enable order to consolidate, usually of a tribal nature, that if empowered, and brought into a coalition with the state, can help to govern these territories that we sometimes label as "ungoverned" but which are in fact governed in a manner and at a level that is at heart tribal, and which is often, and at high price, overlooked. Fortunately, as America expanded, it discovered its Manifest Destiny could be achieved without recourse to arms, and instead of crushing its northern indigenous tribes, it could extend an olive branch to them – finding new ways to govern jointly, and by working together, tribe and state, to subdue the wild frontier, imposing a more gently achieved but no less enduring state of order. These lessons are especially useful today, and will likely remain so for decades to come, as we seek to bring order to an increasingly chaotic international environment.

Prof. Mohammed Hafez, "Culture and Suicide Bombers"

The Naval Postgraduate School's Dr. Mohammed Hafez explored the presumed relationship between the amorphous concept of "culture" and the very real phenomena of suicide terrorism. Can the strategic use of culture be used to explain the dramatic increase in suicide terrorism operations used by terrorist organizations? Rather than focus on Islam as a religion with a core essence that makes suicide terrorism possible, Hafez suggests militant groups selectively draw on some texts and traditions, and frame these as permissive of suicide bombings. So, rather than acting on an *inherited* tradition, these militants are acting on an *invented* tradition.

To be more concrete, those that wanted to conduct suicide attacks actually confronted a host of problems based on the inherited tradition:

1. In Islam, suicide is *haraam* (forbidden)
2. In Islam, killing civilians is *haraam*
3. In Islam, killing fellow Muslims is *haraam*

Yet today, Islamist suicide bombers obviously kill themselves, in order to kill civilians and fellow Muslims in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Algeria, and so on. To circumvent these clear and unequivocal inherited traditions, radicals must redefine suicide as martyrdom based on the intentions of the bomber, not his actual deed. To justify the killing of fellow Muslims, Islamists argue that modern day civilians are not neutral because they are citizens that pay taxes, elect governments, and support the economies of enemy states. -As for Muslims killing Muslims through suicide attacks, the radicals insist that their targets are mere nominal Muslims who, in effect, have committed apostasy by working of tyrannical secular regimes and for foreign powers occupying Muslim lands. It becomes clear that what the radicals draw upon is not an unproblematic tradition that clearly guides action, but one that requires framing, contextualization, redefinition, and reinterpretation.

What does this mean for the general topic of culture and suicide bombers? Culture cuts both ways. It can enable and it can constrain social action. Therefore, explanatory frameworks that overly rely on culture to explain suicide bombings are probably committing a fundamental attribution error. Dr. Hafez's analysis of Islamist suicide bombers suggests that militants are strategic users of culture—they selectively draw on traditions or inherited traditions and refashion them in ways that are quite original, modern, and an unorthodox. Their authenticity is synthetic, not organic.

Panel Two: Modeling Cultural Systems

Dr. Michael Gabbay, "Modeling Cultural Conflict"

Dr. Michael Gabbay, a senior Physicist with the Applied Physics Laboratory of the University of Washington in Seattle, presented his application of modeling techniques within the cultural conflict environment of Iraq. Identity remains the crucial intersection point between insurgent military and political strategies as insurgents seek to activate a preferred identity of a populace that reinforces an ideology; such as nationalism, class identification or along religious lines. Similarly, insurgents' strategic use of violence seeks to make a certain preferred identity most salient. Manipulation of these identities can be used to gain advantage over factional rivals as well as regime forces and counterinsurgents.

Through studying the myriad of insurgent groups operating in Iraq, two distinct categories of insurgent groups emerged; Islamist Nationalists and Jihadist Salafists. The Islamist Nationalists largely seek to preserve geographic and demographic integrity of Iraq, oppose federalism and agree to some inclusion of Shariah governance. Jihadist Salafists, also known as "pan-Islamists," or "global jihadists," seek a new Caliphate, demand a strict Shariah government, and display virulent hostility toward Shiites. The goal in creating a factional mapping representation is to develop a compact representation of political structure of leadership networks. Elements of factional representation include: ideology, strategy, cooperative links between groups, and overall influence of the group. The addition of the ideology component is an important extension over standard social network analysis. Furthermore, identifying what type of targets various insurgent groups attack allows for the identification of shared network indicators; joint communiqués (leadership level), joint operations (foot soldier level), and the prominence of some groups over others.

The modeling of Iraqi insurgent groups under these criteria help answer critical questions such as why do insurgent groups have different portfolios of claimed target classes even though they operate in a common strategic environment?

Prof. Marc Tyrell, "The Use of Evolutionary Theory in Modeling Culture and Cultural Conflict"

Professor Marc Tyrell from the Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies (IIS) at Carleton University in Ottawa discussed the applied use of evolutionary theory in modeling culture and cultural conflicts. Over the past 150 years in the social sciences, evolutionary theory has been misapplied, misunderstood, hijacked by megalomaniacs, and attacked by people who have no concept of what a theory is. Throughout the time that it has been in intellectual play, however, it has proven to be the most robust theoretical explanation we have for change over time.

There have been a lot of changes, refinements and arguments about evolutionary theory since Darwin's day, and we now have a much better, albeit much more complex, idea of how it works and, perhaps

more importantly, what parts of it can and should be applied outside the area of biology. Professor Tyrell intends to outline one possible application of Darwinian evolutionary theory to “culture.”

For example, in the first case, Mosul and governance, we can see that many of the existing institutional barriers to change had been removed during the occupation. This, however, meant that people defaulted “back” to their real source of security and governance – the tribe and neo-tribe. Attempts to impose a governance structure totally at odds with that default value were doomed to fail. However, reconstructing the battlespace by looking at the reality and by sharing the “authorship”, allowed for the co-construction of a narrative that would be acceptable for both sides. This narrative, in turn, is a symbolic structure that, with time, will embed itself back into Iraqi culture, gaining emotional connotations amongst the population by lived experience.

There are certain implications of the cultural coding system being partially communicative (i.e. stored outside the individual). In cultural evolution, for example, the coding system is much more subject to “mutation” both initially and on a day to day basis. Furthermore, cultural evolution is inherently, partially Lamarckian, i.e. the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Also, these “inherited” cultural codes may be very strongly embedded in the neurological structures of the brain as a result of early childhood learning; a “learning” that is often stored in narratives.

Can a Darwinian evolutionary theory of culture be predictive without either falling into the determinist or teleological fallacies it has in the past? I believe that it can be, but with only a limited time horizon. In any given workspace at particular points in time, there are only a limited number of options available in order to compete effectively. Which option(s) will be chosen by a group will be constrained by their closeness to existing cultural narratives in both form and lived reality. Perhaps this explains why Muslim sympathy for Al Qaeda was so high in the 1980's (opposing an invader), and plummeted after the September 11th attacks (attacks on civilians).

Prof. Armando Geller, “Modeling and Cultural Phenomena”

Professor Armando Geller has argued for a holistic, problem-driven research design that is couched in a generative socio-scientific framework and that explicitly takes into account socio-cultural, -political and -economic realities. If we want to know why people act in particular ways, knowing about their culture appears to be a useful starting point. Culture, besides personal experience and situational constraints, provides a context in which individuals’ behavior and cognition is situated. If we want to develop a true Weberian *verstehen* of how and why individuals interact with each other within social entities we must also adopt a cultural perspective.

Knowledge about the socio-cultural context, hence, contributes to our understanding of social reality. In a conflict perspective one would rightly assume that the main focus is on what is known as political culture. The importance of classical socio-cultural factors should, however, not be underestimated. Human behavior and reasoning does not only shape socio-cultural context in an anthropomorphic fashion, it also reflects it. Culture influences individuals’ cognition and behavior and therefore also indirectly influences the way social aggregates evolve and how they are eventually shaped. These products of culturally induced reasoning and behavior themselves influence individual reasoning and behavior. Complexity science inspired social science refers to this and similar processes of up- and down-scale causation as emergence.

Modeling conflict in the tradition of generative computational social science affords to do so in various ways. First and foremost it can be based on a problem-driven research design that puts into the foreground the issue of investigation, i.e. conflict, and not the methodology. Secondly, affording the usage of case-studies in formalized research is important for two reasons. (a) Case studies are often based on qualitative data, the type of data usually available in conflict through qualitative researchers, Non-Governmental Organizations, and the (high-quality) media. (b) Case-studies usually conclude with a number of (hopefully well-grounded) generalizations, which can be used as stylized facts to inform model design as well as agent cognition and behavior. To draw implications for the target system of policy relevance or ?just scientific value from a construct valid model is by far more intuitive than from a Popperian theoretical model.

Panel Three: Anthropology and Studies of the “Human Terrain”

Col. Mark Crisci, “The Human Terrain System”

Colonel Mark G. Crisci is the Director of Project Development, Human Terrain System, TRADOC, Fort Monroe, VA. The vision for the HTS program is to provide decision makers with socio-cultural understanding to enhance achievement of desired outcomes across the spectrum of conflict. The mission of HTS intends to recruit, train, deploy, and support a dedicated, embedded social science capability; conduct operationally relevant research and analysis and to develop and maintains a socio-cultural knowledge base in order to enable culturally astute decision-making, enhance operational effectiveness, and preserve and share socio-cultural institutional knowledge.

The components of the HTS include:

- Human Terrain Teams (HTT)/Human Terrain Analysis Teams (HTAT)
- Reachback Research Center (RRC)
- Subject Matter Expert Network (SME-Net)
- Map-HT Toolkit
- Social Science Research & Analysis (SSRA)
- Program Development Team

HTT and HTAT are developed as teams, not individuals and are organized and trained accordingly. The teams are regionally focused, modular, and include special staff capability. The teams are attached on orders and operate in direct support of the BCT and RCT. The teams provide operationally relevant human terrain information and assist in the integration of efforts related to socio-cultural knowledge. The mission of the RRC is to provide comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and timely social science based research and analysis accessible across multiple domains to support human terrain assets. RRC locations include Newport News, VA and Fort Leavenworth, KS.

Prof. Anna Simons, "Anthropology, Culture and COIN"

Anna Simons, Professor of Defense Analysis at the Naval Postgraduate School, offered a blistering critique of some of the recent attempts to incorporate anthropological studies within combat environments

Dr. Swen Johnson, "Human Terrain Analysis: Concepts and Principles"

Swen Erik Johnson, Ph.D. is the Chief Social Scientist at SCIA, LLC, a company that specializes in socio-cultural intelligence analysis. Swen Erik Johnson, Ph.D. is the Chief Social Scientist at SCIA, LLC, a company that specializes in socio-cultural intelligence analysis. Dr. Johnson conceived the Department of Defense's first Human Terrain Analysis Team (HTAT) in 2005 and since then has gone on to form HTAT's across the community.

Contemporary human terrain studies date back seven years, when retired US Army Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Peters published 'The human terrain of urban operations' (2000). Peters has written more than 20 books, yet is more widely known as a neoconservative pundit. For years, Peters has espoused a bloody version of Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' thesis. He has argued that the US military will have to inflict "a fair amount of killing" to promote economic interests and a "cultural assault" aimed at recalcitrant populations: "There will be no peace ... The de facto role of the US armed forces will be to keep the world safe for our economy and open to our cultural assault. To those ends, we will do a fair amount of killing. We are building an information-based military to do that killing ... much of our military art will consist in knowing more about the enemy than he knows about himself, manipulating data for effectiveness and efficiency, and denying similar advantages to our opponents." (Peters 1997: 14)

Peters has also argued that it is the "human architecture" of a city, its "human terrain... the people, armed and dangerous, watching for exploitable opportunities, or begging to be protected, who will determine the success or failure of the intervention." He describes a typology of cities ('hierarchical', 'multicultural' and 'tribal') and the challenges that each present to military forces operating there: "the center of gravity in urban operations is never a presidential palace or a television studio or a bridge or a barracks. It is always human."

Dr. Johnson intends to designate the principles of Human Terrain Analysis by establishing the HTA's "10 Commandments" which currently stands at 8 core principles:

1. *The Focus of HTA*
2. *The Need for an Inductive, Data-Driven Approach*
3. *The Necessity of Liaison*
4. *The Skill Set of the HT Analyst*

5. *The Use of Open Source Data*
6. *The Temporality of HT Data*
7. *The Use of Geospatial Predictive Modeling*
8. *The Training Component: Where is the Workforce?*

Panel Four: Culture and COIN

Mr. Kip Porter, "Cultural Impacts on COIN in Nuristan and Northern Konar"

Kip Porter is an intelligence analyst at the U.S. Army's National Ground Intelligence Center. He serves as a General Military Intelligence Analyst and specializes in sociocultural dynamics in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region. Kip Porter, an intelligence analyst at the U.S. Army's National Ground Intelligence Center, offered insight into the cultural impacts on COIN in the rugged northeastern corridor of Afghanistan. Mr. Porter identified the numerous population groups that inhabit this region and spoke about how the evolution of Islam in the region and conflicts with traditional ways of life in the area has left a lasting impact on the area's diverse group of residents.

In order to formulate a more "natural" administrative structure and a more coherent approach to COIN, one should look to the evolution of political administration in this area and entertain the notion that maximum effectiveness in the political administration and the conduct of COIN in this area may best be achieved by implementing a model similar to that which existed prior to the Communist regime in Afghanistan.) Similarly, Mr. Porter believes to counter the insurgent activity in this region today, we must understand the nuances of these organizations and how they function as well as understand their differences in order to be able to reduce cohesion among them and/or drive wedges between these groups and the local population

Professor James Russell, "Iraq, COIN and Culture: 172nd Stryker Operations in Mosul, Iraq, 2005-2006"

Professor James of the Naval Postgraduate School presented the interconnection of COIN and Culture through an Iraqi case-study (172nd Stryker Operations in Mosul, Iraq, 2005-2006), which is also the subject of his upcoming book. Dr. Russell's research plan includes a detailed look at the military innovation in war, in other words, the development of capacities not initially present when organization arrives on battlefield. What happened to US ground forces in Iraq COIN operations without joint doctrine to guide operations; no initial plan for post-conflict; confused national level leadership; broken interagency process; lousy civil-military relations.

In Iraq, organically generated innovation produced tactical and operational success in spite of, not because senior leadership. The process is not top-down.

The research includes a series of battalion/brigade studies of tactical operations starting in the fall of 2005-Spring 2007 and includes inductive analysis from cases; commander interviews, unit products, plus secondary reporting. How does this study relate to culture in conflict environments? The process of strategic interaction in war is operationalized through organizations -- ours and theirs. We have our cultures; they have theirs. Theirs aren't unified; neither is ours. Military operations consist of a function of a diverse array of organizational competencies. Organizational cultures exhibit themselves in dissimilar learning styles that in turn produce different innovation processes that manifest themselves in combat over time.

One size doesn't fit all; what worked in Mosul might not in Tal Afar or in Christian villages east of the Tigris. This factor is a critical queue regarding cultural intelligence collection. For example, the city of Mosul sits astride one of many ethnic, tribal, and religious fault lines in Iraq; Kurds to the north and east; Sunni Arabs to the west; mixed Christian communities to east. The city is divided. There are many mixed neighborhoods, although Sunni Arabs and Kurds live on different sides of Tigris River. The insurgency divides along similar fault lines in the north with regional twists. For instance, Tal Afar, a city not far from Mosul, has more than 70 sub tribes alone. These factors alone highlight the critical importance culture and cultural intelligence plays in understanding the true local dynamics in a conflict environment, especially within a COIN application.

Mr. Alexei JD Gavriel, "Cultural/Ethnographic Intelligence Support to COIN Ops"

Alexei Gavriel, is a member of the Canadian Forces who recently returned from deployment on Operation ATHENA in Kandahar, Afghanistan, where he served as an Intelligence Analyst. Mr. Gavriel

proposed to de-mystify the practices of anthropology by integrating its unique concepts and collection methodologies into two formal intelligence disciplines: Cultural Intelligence & Ethnographic Intelligence.

Several misunderstandings and misconception regarding Cultural Intelligence exist. Cultural Intelligence is not the uncovering of a hidden or secret code that allows the user unrestricted control over a population just as there are no secret handshakes or passwords. These misconceptions likely stem from further misconceptions about what 'culture' is. Cultural Intelligence is an intelligence discipline which analyses cultural knowledge to assess or interpret how it impacts, influences, and affects the operating environment, adversary, and operational planning considerations. Cultural Intelligence has strategic, operational and tactical level implications.

Strategic:

- Understanding the social structures and ideologies insurgents model their organization after.
- Gets inside adversary decision making cycle.
- Rebuild a nation that reflects local values.

Operational:

- Define Human Terrain of the Commander's AOR (Atmospherics).
- CIMIC – How do indigenous values shape dispute resolution?
- What socio-cultural factors fuel the conflict?
- Psy Ops – Build an IO campaign that speaks in a manner receptive to locals.

Tactical:

- Identify friends from enemies.
- Don't turn potential friends into enemies through cultural insensitivity.
- Convey proper respect and appreciation for local culture ('us' vs. 'them')

Lt C (P) Michael R. Fenzel, "Tactical Measures to Achieve Strategic Effects"

In the battlespace of Afghanistan, the insurgents, whether Taliban or other factions, are like rats and our forces are like water. Whenever we flow the rats scamper away and hide to fight another day. There has been a significant shift in the way the insurgents in Afghanistan operate over the last three years. The Taliban no longer care how they are viewed by the local population, openly targeting local civilians who work for the government or with Coalition forces. In 2005, there was a sense of ideological competition between views of democracy and theocracy, both of which posed a set of pros and cons for locals to consider. The Taliban now operate with others such as Al Qaeda to forcefully attempt to return to power by any means. Ultimately this strategy is likely to backfire and result in a Taliban defeat, the real question is just how long it will take for this defeat to materialize.

Some factors can be undertaken by the Coalition to help reduce negative incidents that can tarnish our admirable goals and intentions. First, collateral damage. Every errant mortar round, every errant air strike that kills civilians goes a long way in hurting our strategy at all levels. To combat an insurgency, measures must be taken to protect and ensure the safety of the local population. The second one is development money; there are certain sectors and areas that could use money spent more wisely, more efficiently and effectively.

LtC Fenzel served as a Deputy Brigade Commander in Afghanistan for the 1st Brigade of the 82d Airborne Division in Regional Command East (2005-06). One year later, he returned to Paktika Province for 15 months as the commander of 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment which became Task Force Eagle, responsible for the border districts of Eastern Paktika and 400 kilometers of border frontage with Pakistan.

Brig. (retired) Feroz Khan, "Pakistan, COIN, and Culture"

Feroz Hassan Khan is a former Brigadier general in the Pakistan Army, currently on the faculty of Department of National Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey California. For most of its existence, Pakistan has been dominated by a view that it faces an existential threat from India. All of Pakistan's governments have seen national security almost exclusively through this prism at the disservice of economic, political, judicial and social demands.[1] Today it continues to find itself at a crossroads with a growing strategic threat in terms of India's emerging force doctrines, internal security threats to the viability of the state, and a massing insurgency within the disputed tribal borderlands on

the west. Facing threats on multiple fronts, Pakistan must meet the real challenge to reorient its military forces to face them all, but how? In October of 2008, a joint session of parliament unanimously passed a resolution calling extremism, militancy and terrorism a grave danger to the stability of the nation state.^[2] The leaders underscored that cross-border attacks would not occur on other countries and all foreign fighters would be dispelled. Still, Pakistan has not been able to strike a precision balance between the asymmetric problems it faces of internal extremism and external conventional threats.

This brief argued that three factors help explain Pakistan's hesitancy in shifting towards a counterinsurgency focused military. First, India's evolving force posture threatens a near-term conventional conflict that could threaten the very existence of the state. Pakistan has always sought to maintain a viable defense against conventional and nuclear attack from India and only with meaningful international assurances will Pakistan shift its force posture away from India. Second, a persistent deficit of trust exists with the United States that compels reluctance on Pakistan's part. Unilateral impatience and verbal arm-twisting on the part of the US towards Pakistan does not build sufficient confidence between the two nations, particularly while Pakistan is attempting to achieve a balanced relationship between the civilian and military apparatus. Third, the unpopularity of the "War on Terror" and operations in Afghanistan have created a domestic legitimacy problem for civilian leaders in Pakistan. Cooperation with the United States is politically damaging for politicians as they attempt to cater to both their diplomatic partners and a restless domestic population. Each reason alone cannot fully explain the failure of Pakistan to evolve towards a more nuanced counterinsurgency strategy, but together they help provide a clearer framework for why Pakistan's military remains conventionally focused.

Panel Five: The Challenges of Culture and Afghanistan

Mr. Alexander Evans "Data challenges in Pakistan's Tribal Areas"

Alexander Evans is First Secretary (Political) at the British High Commission, Islamabad, Pakistan. It is apparent the challenges facing western Pakistan, home of the Federally administered Tribal Areas (FATA), is not completely different from the challenges faced by British colonialists at the turn of the 19th century. British policy during the colonial period revolved around two elements: foreign policy, securing areas by deploying troops forward to protect the internal areas of British India, and closed border policy, the strategy of working with the tribes in the tribal area to serve as a buffer zone. Both policies largely failed.

The interaction with the tribal communities has persisted since the colonial era. In 1914, over 1 million rupees was spent in the frontier areas paying off tribesmen. Most of the money went to local Khassadars, local tribal policemen, to help secure the trade routes and traversable roadways. At this time period there were about 400,000 men able to fight with about 250,000 carbines and rifles among them. Malik continued their use of informal government structures despite the presence of British forces. During the time, the British faced two major objectives: protecting India from invasion and keeping the trade routes open. The British eventually conducted a counterinsurgency campaign in the South Waziristan area beginning in 1936 which lasted until 1946. The key lesson of this time period is local intelligence, local deep knowledge of the tribes.

The challenge we face today is both familiar and different. The strategic threat of international hostile actors revolves around their sanctuaries close to or located in the tribal areas. The Waziristan area, a region outside the control of British forces in 1936 is still an area outside the Pakistani government's control in 2008 and 2009. The FATA area remains a serious threat to British interests. Radicalized British citizens, whose family origins tend to come from the Kashmir region, are traveling to Pakistan to be trained and indoctrinated in camps located in the FATA region. Trying to reeducate ourselves and alter our policies regarding Pakistan under extremely difficult circumstances is a key concern facing British policymakers today. The raging insurgency across the weakly defined/defended border in Afghanistan which is seen by locals as a legitimate Pashtun uprising against a foreign invasion, and the second more localized insurgency occurring throughout the FATA led by regional and local warlords are two of many such challenges facing the region. The fact that there has been only five PhD's conducting original field research in the FATA since 1947 is a real problem. There is a glut of field research from the 1930's and before, but there is only so much one can do with faded maps and tribal data that are grossly outdated. The crucial aspect of field research, deep local knowledge of the tribal areas, has prompted fresh attempts to gather such data. To see some of the latest examples of such field research, visit www.understandingFATA.org

Ms. Marina Kielpinski, "Afghan Culture and Data Challenges: Personal Experiences"

Ms. Marina Kielpinski has extensive field experience in Afghanistan, with on-the-ground expertise within the development community, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). She is the author of the *Kunar Handbook*. The recent demand by military organizations to focus and rely on cultural intelligence puts many field researchers and anthropologists in a tricky position. Culture is not something you can force learn in two to three weeks, it takes time, sometime years, to fully understand what is important at the local level. It became clear after the US military tasked me with coming up with a provincial handbook for Kunar (northeastern Afghanistan) that I realized just how hard this seemingly simple task really is.

Transportation is a real challenge in many parts of Afghanistan, but in Kunar it becomes nearly impossible to travel by car due to the lack of roadways. Even so, when approaching rural Afghans, seeing you hop out of a Humvee with soldiers is not going to prompt a revealing conversation with the local villagers. Trust is a major component in cultural intelligence gathering, again, something that takes a long time to develop. Reaching out to our Afghan colleagues can be extremely helpful and useful. Instead we tend to fall into the trap of relying upon other English speakers as our points of contacts, often just recycling the same information again and again. When asking who is responsible for gathering cultural data in Afghanistan, largely the military, such as the Army with HTS, but is this the right approach? If not who is? Certainly this type of question raises a lot of secondary issues that need to be discussed in depth.

Mr. David Phillips, "Challenges Associated with Cultural Data"

Pashtun culture in Afghanistan is one of the most complex in the world, changing from valley to valley, making it an incredibly difficult case-study and unfortunately many researchers, sociologists and anthropologists studying and working in Afghanistan just don't know the right questions to ask. When confronting Pashtuns, who predominantly make up the core of the Taliban movement, it becomes increasingly difficult to get accurate information. Storytelling, oral communication and memorization are very strong factors in the Pashtun culture, getting them to open up is another matter. The problem with many tribal societies is getting them to open up. Meeting up for the first time can be very awkward for both parties, knowing what to ask them may be hard and dancing around topics is usually the norm.

Establishing a rapport, some type of trusting relationship with these societies is crucial. It takes time to get to know the important personalities and takes multiple meetings before a comfortable atmosphere evolves, only then they may answer the questions you want to ask. Another critical factor is who these types of tribal communities accept governance, whether from the top down models (Dostum, Ismail Khan) or a bottom up approach, Gul Agha Sherzai, a Barakzai warlord, who attacked Kandahar in 2001 with less than 250 men. There tends to be a cohesion point within tribes which centers on very few charismatic leaders, Mullah Naquibullah from the Alokozais a good example and Gul Agha Sherzai and before him his father, Haji Latif. With the Alizai in Helmand province, the cohesion seems to be at the subtribe level. The Akhundzada subtribe of the Alizai fought a pitched battle against the Alizai from the Bagrhan district, same tribe but major differences between the subtribes. The battle left over 800 Alizai tribesmen dead. These are the types of issues that need to be researched, documented and understood to help better understand what is happening at the local level.

Sara Kaufmann, Matt DuPée and Matt Dearing are Research Associates at the Program for Culture and Conflict Studies at the Naval Postgraduate School.

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