# Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan

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The limitations of military doctrines and practice are often exposed, not by arguments, but by events. Thus it was mainly events in Iraq and Afghanistan that exposed the inadequacies of the so-called 'revolution in military affairs' – an idea that was popular in the United States from the mid 1990s until at least 2003.[1] Now, Afghanistan – and the situation in Pakistan with which it is inextricably linked – is proving to be a harsh test of the revived ideas of counter-insurgency.

Afghanistan was always likely to be a difficult theatre of operations for outside military forces. Seeing this (and perhaps also because he did not want an ongoing distraction from the future invasion of Iraq, for which he was already lobbying), then-US Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said in November 2001:

> In fact, one of the lessons of Afghanistan's history, which we've tried to apply in this campaign, is if you're a foreigner, try not to go in. If you go in, don't stay too long, because they don't tend to like any foreigners who stay too long.[2]

The wars in Afghanistan in the nineteenth century have been the foundation for a view of the country and its peoples – especially the latter – as

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unusually resistant to any kind of foreign influence or control, actual or perceived. David Loyn, the veteran BBC reporter on Afghanistan who has charted these previous conflicts, argues that mistakes are being repeated today because of a neglect of the study of history. He charges that the United States and Britain have failed to understand the extent of resistance in Afghanistan to anything that looks like foreign control.[3]

The war in 1979–89 between the Soviet-backed government of Afghanistan and its mujahadeen adversaries contributed to the collapse of the Soviet empire – not only proof of the fateful consequences that may flow from war in Afghanistan, but also one driver of the present war. The channelling of much international aid to mujahadeen groups through Pakistan reinforced the fateful link between events in Pakistan and those in Afghanistan. The power of non-state groups and regional military chiefs, and their tendency to rely on threats and uses of force not controlled by any state, became more deeply ingrained than before in both Afghanistan and the frontier areas of Pakistan. The religious element in Afghan politics did not disappear with the departure of Soviet forces in 1989. Indeed, within a few years religious warriors trained in the hard school of combat against Soviet forces in Afghanistan were to turn up in a wide range of other locations, including in the former Yugoslavia. These legacies of the war against Soviet control remain most important in Afghanistan itself. The problems of non-state violence, regional rivalries and the religious element in politics are not new to Afghanistan, but they were reinforced. Above all, the old instinctive suspicion of foreign projects is still there.

Following the withdrawal of the last Soviet forces from Afghanistan in January 1989, there was an internal crisis and civil war that has never really ended. The first phase was only partially concluded on 26 September 1996 when Kabul fell to the Taliban, which established a theocratic style of government throughout the areas under their control. The United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan, or Northern Alliance, continued to control an area of northern Afghanistan and to challenge Taliban rule. Following the 11 September 2001 al-Qaeda attacks on the United States, direct US and coalition military intervention in Afghanistan changed the character of this continuing war. It became, for a few months, a war between sovereign states

– the US-led coalition versus the Taliban government of Afghanistan. In November–December 2001 the US-led intervention, and the military campaign of the Northern Alliance, toppled the Taliban regime, which had been supported by al-Qaeda. Initially there was much enthusiasm in Kabul and elsewhere for the incoming International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), but this situation was to change.

The international war in 2001 had been superimposed on two more enduring conflicts: between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance, and between the United States and its allies against al-Qaeda terrorists. Both continued. The war against al-Qaeda and related terrorists, now based in Pakistan as well as Afghanistan, carried on without interruption. In addition, there was growing resistance in southern Afghanistan to the new regime. This insurgency began relatively slowly, so that its seriousness was not recognised for some time. It is commonly labelled the 'Taliban insurgency' – a description that may conceal the possibility that the sources of support for the insurgency have been more numerous than the label 'Taliban' suggests, or that the ideology of the Taliban may have evolved. The insurgent movement has drawn on elements of both Afghan and Pashtun nationalism; it has operated alongside traditional forms of social organisation and systems of justice; its recruiting has been facilitated by Afghanistan's high levels of unemployment and by the fact that it is able to pay its soldiers good money; and its willingness to support poppy cultivation adds to its support in certain provinces while exposing the incoherence of the various NATO countries on this issue.[4] None of this is to suggest that all those forces labelled 'Taliban' should be seen simply as heroic patriots or as Pashtun traditionalists. Ahmed Rashid has written:

> The United States and NATO have failed to understand that the Taliban belong to neither Afghanistan nor Pakistan, but are a lumpen population, the product of refugee camps, militarised madrassas, and the lack of opportunities in the borderland of Pakistan and Afghanistan. They have neither been true citizens of either country nor experienced traditional Pashtun tribal society. The longer the war goes on, the more deeply rooted and widespread the Taliban and their transnational milieu will become.[5]

Into this ongoing conflict a new element was added from 2005: the involvement in combat activities of contingents of the NATO-led ISAF. Initially the UK had taken the lead in organising ISAF in January 2002, followed at six-monthly intervals by other 'lead states' until NATO as such took over in August 2003. ISAF's remit gradually extended across Afghanistan, and in some provinces came to involve direct combat.[6] By 2006 ISAF comprised troops from 32 countries. Those deployed in the southern provinces of Afghanistan became increasingly geared to a counter-insurgency campaign, the transition to which resulted in uneven burden-sharing between NATO member states. NATO had put itself in the unenviable position of staking its impressive reputation on the outcome of a distant and little-understood war in a country well known to be a graveyard for foreign military adventures.

The involvement of outsiders has one further special characteristic: it is based on short-term tours of duty, so there is remarkably limited institutional memory, especially as regards knowledge of local communities and political traditions. Few outsiders involved in international civil and military work in Afghanistan have learned the relevant languages.

*There is remarkably limited institutional memory*

One feature of the ongoing war in Afghanistan that distinguishes it from some other post-Cold War US involvements has been that the US-led forces had, at the start, significant allies within the country: originally the Northern Alliance, then the government of Afghanistan. This made the Afghan involvement different from some of the other conflicts in which the United States has been involved, including Iraq in the first years of the US-led presence and Somalia over a much longer period. But this apparently favourable situation had inherent limitations and was vulnerable to change. The Northern Alliance, even at the best of times an unstable coalition, never controlled all of Afghanistan. The Afghan authorities conspicuously lacked the bureaucratic back-up that provides the essential underpinning of most governments around the world. The Pashtuns generally resented the Northern Alliance's US-assisted victory in December 2001; and when, around 2003–04, the Pashtuns came back strongly in the government (thanks to the new constitution and law on political parties), Afghan

opinion critical of the United States found a voice. Indeed, the boot was now on the other foot, with minorities complaining of Pashtun nationalism and structural exclusion.

Afghanistan's neighbours – including China, Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – all have legitimate interests in the country and its long-running conflicts. Many other states, including India and Russia, also have legitimate interests in whether Afghanistan can manage to stay together, make progress in development, and attract refugees back. The relationship with Pakistan is the most complex, and has contributed most to Afghanistan's ongoing divisions. The Pakistan connection has deeply affected events in Afghanistan in all the wars there since the Soviet intervention in 1979. Throughout, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has had a major, and not always controlled, role. In the 1980s Pakistan, with massive Western support, provided crucial assistance for the anti-Soviet rebels in Afghanistan. Then from 1994 onwards there was extensive Pakistani official support for the Taliban movement in Afghanistan.[7]

In the ongoing war in Afghanistan a number of consequences have flowed from the Pakistan connection. The first is that, since Pashtuns on either side of the border are more likely than most others to view the Western military presence in Afghanistan as illegitimate, there is inevitably a trans-border hinterland for the insurgency. Second, since Pashtuns play a large part in the Pakistan Army, and in the Frontier Corps which comes under the Ministry of Interior, there are built-in difficulties in Pakistani government attempts to impose Islamabad's rule by force on the Pashtun-inhabited areas.[8] As a consequence, the insurgency in southern Afghanistan is likely for the foreseeable future to have safe base areas inside Pakistan. Like so many border regions in the world, the Pakistan–Afghanistan border presents excellent opportunities for the organisation and continuation of insurgency.

This leads to a third consequence of the Pakistan connection: the strong pressure on the United States to take the war unilaterally into Pakistani territory. US policy towards Pakistan notoriously lacks strategic coherence.[9] The fact that Washington considers the Pakistani authorities unreliable, with certain elements willing to pass on intelligence to America's enemies, means that the US military role on the territory of Pakistan cannot be based on close

military cooperation. As a result, US military action in Pakistan is bound to be perceived as an infringement of Pakistan's sovereignty. George W. Bush's presidential order of July 2008, authorising US strikes in Pakistan without seeking the approval of the Pakistan government, while an understandable reaction to a troubling situation on the border, risks further destabilising a country that is a crucial if deeply flawed ally.[10]

### Revival of doctrine

Contrary to myth, counter-insurgency campaigns can sometimes be effective. Doctrines and practices of counter-insurgency – the best of which draw on a wide and varied range of practice – have a long history.[11] The revival of counter-insurgency doctrine in the past few years has been driven primarily by events in Iraq, but also, if to a lesser degree, by the development of the insurgency in Afghanistan. This revival is hardly surprising. The response of adversaries to the extraordinary pattern of US dominance on the battlefield was always going to be one of unconventional warfare, including the methods of the guerrilla and the terrorist; and in turn the natural US counter-response was to revive the most obviously appropriate available body of military doctrine.

The key document of the US revival of counter-insurgency doctrine is US Army Field Manual 3-24.[12] It is very much an Army and Marine Corps manual: the US Air Force refused to collaborate in the exercise. Improbably for a military-doctrinal document, it has been in demand with a general readership in the United States. It has been heavily accessed on and down-loaded from the Web, and is available as a published book from a major university press.[13] Although it has some flaws, it is a significant contribution to counter-insurgency literature. By contrast, the UK has not produced any major new manual. This is partly because the British had extant doctrine,[14] but also because there was some opposition to counter-insurgency doctrine on the grounds that it would result in the same hammer being used on every problem. Sir John Kiszely, until 2008 director of the Defence Academy of the UK, offered the down-to-earth reminder that 'every insurgency is *sui generis*, making generalizations problematic'.[15]

The 'comprehensive approach', central to both the US and UK doctrines, essentially means the application of all aspects of the power of the state

within the territory of which the insurgency is being fought. The apparent assumption that there is a state with real power is the key weakness of the approach, especially as it applies to Afghanistan. Before exploring this in more detail, it may be useful to glance at the problematic nature of assumptions about the political realm in the counter-insurgency doctrines inherited from past eras.

## The lessons of history

The US manual revives and updates doctrines that were developed in the Cold War years in response to anti-colonial insurrections (some of them involving leadership by local communist parties). It relies especially heavily on two sources.[16] The first is David Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare* – one of the better writings of the French thinkers on *guerre révolutionnaire*.[17] The second is Sir Robert Thompson's *Defeating Communist Insurgency*.[18] Both placed emphasis on protecting populations as distinct from killing adversaries – a crucial distinction which implies a need for high force levels.

According to the Introduction, the new US manual aspires to 'help prepare Army and Marine Corps leaders to conduct [counter-insurgency] operations anywhere in the world'.[19] This might seem to imply a universalist approach, but the authors emphasise that each insurgency is different. The foreword by Generals David Petraeus and James Amos is emphatic on this point: 'You cannot fight former Saddamists and Islamic extremists the same way you would have fought the Viet Cong, Moros, or Tupamaros; the application of principles and fundamentals to deal with each varies considerably'.[20] The US manual also emphasises the importance of constantly learning and adapting in response to the intricate environment of counter-insurgency operations – a point which strongly reflects British experience.[21]

Past exponents of counter-insurgency doctrine have generally placed heavy emphasis on achieving force ratios of about 20–25 counter-insurgents for every 1,000 residents in an area of operations. Noting this, the manual states: 'twenty counterinsurgents per 1000 residents is often considered the minimum troop density required for effective [counter-insurgency] operations; however as with any fixed ratio, such calculations remain very dependent upon the situation'.[22] This emphasis on force ratios is contro-

versial. In any case, in Afghanistan there appears little chance of achieving such numbers. If the entire country with its 31 million inhabitants were to be viewed as the area of operations, a staggering 775,000 counter-insurgents would be needed. Even if the area of operations is defined narrowly, and even allowing for the fact that not all have to be NATO or other foreign troops, the prospects of getting close to this force ratio must be low.

*There is little chance of achieving such numbers*

A flaw in some past counter-insurgency doctrine has been a lack of sensitivity to context and, in some cases, an ahistorical character. Some specialists in counter-insurgency have seen their subject more as a struggle of light versus darkness than as a recurrent theme of history or an outgrowth of the problems of a society. Examples of such an ahistorical approach to the subject can be found in the French group of theorists writing in the 1950s and early 1960s about *guerre révolutionnaire*. Some denied the complexities – especially the mixture of material, moral and ideological factors – that are keys to understanding why and how guerrilla and terrorist movements come into existence. Colonel Charles Lacheroy, a leading figure in this group and head of the French Army's *Service d'Action Psychologique*, famously stated: 'in the beginning there is nothing'.[23] Terrorism was seen as having been introduced deliberately into a peaceful society by an omnipresent outside force – international communism. It is a demonological vision of a cosmic struggle in which the actual history of particular countries and ways of thinking has little or no place.

A related fault in some counter-insurgency writing was the tendency to distil general rules of counter-insurgency from particular struggles and then seek to apply them in radically different circumstances. The campaign in Malaya in the 1950s, because it was successful in ending a communist-led insurgency, was often upheld as a model, and is described favourably in the new US field manual.[24] Although they do not appear to have been elevated into formal doctrine, certain lessons drawn partly from Malaya were subsequently applied by the British in Borneo and Oman with some effect. However, successes such as that in Malaya can be great deceivers. Attempts to apply the lessons of Malaya in South Vietnam in the 1960s largely failed.[25]

The main reason was that conditions in Vietnam were utterly different from those in Malaya. In Malaya the insurgency had mainly involved the ethnic Chinese minority, and had never managed to present itself convincingly as representing the totality of the inhabitants of Malaya. The insurgency was weakened by the facts that the Chinese minority was distinguishable from other segments of society; Malaya had no common frontier with a communist state, so infiltration was difficult; and the British granting of independence to Malaya undermined the anti-colonial credentials of the insurgents. In South Vietnam, by contrast, the communist insurgents had strong national-ist credentials, having fought for independence rather than merely having power handed to them by a departing colonial power.[26] At the heart of the US tragedy in Vietnam was a failure to recognise the unique circumstance of the case – that in Vietnam, more than any other country in Southeast Asia, communism and nationalism were inextricably intertwined.

One lesson that could have been drawn from the Malayan case is that it is sometimes necessary to withdraw to win. The new US manual places much emphasis on the fact that the United States withdrew from Vietnam in 1973 only to see Saigon fall to North Vietnamese forces in 1975.[27] It does not note a contrary case: the UK promise to withdraw completely – a promise that was followed by the Federation of Malaya's independence in 1957 – contrib-uted to the defeat of the insurgency in Malaya.[28] The value of such promises needs to be taken into account in contemporary counter-insurgency efforts and indeed counter-insurgency theory. This is especially so, as the idea that the United States intended to stay indefinitely in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to build networks of bases there, had a corrosive effect in both countries and more generally. The decision of the Iraqi cabinet on 16 November 2008 that all US forces will withdraw from Iraq by 2011 is evidence that a guarantee of withdrawal is seen as a necessary condition (and not simply a natural consequence) of ending an acute phase of insurgency.

### Other weaknesses

One weakness in the US manual, likely to be remedied in any future revi-sions, is the lack of serious coverage of systems of justice – especially those employed by the insurgents themselves. The references to judicial systems

in the manual are brief and anodyne, almost entirely ignoring the challenge posed by insurgents in this area.[29] Insurgencies commonly use their own judicial procedures to reinforce their claims to be able to preserve an existing social order or create a better one. The Taliban have always placed emphasis on provision of a system of Islamic justice.[30] In the current conflict, taking advantage of the fact that the governmental legal system is weak and corrupt, they have done this effectively in parts of Afghanistan.

This leads to a more general criticism. In addressing the problem of undermining and weakening insurgencies, both traditional counter-insurgency theory and its revived versions in the twenty-first century place emphasis on the role of state institutions: political structures, the administrative bureaucracy, the police, the courts and the armed forces. The institutions are often taken for granted, and assumed to be strong. Indeed, the current British counter-insurgency doctrine stemmed from a project started in 1995 to capture the lessons and doctrine from Northern Ireland. A common criticism of much counter-insurgency practice is that it was enthusiastically pursued by over-powerful and thuggish states, especially in Latin America.[31]

Today, counter-insurgency theories risk being out of joint with the realities of assisting the so-called 'failed states' and 'transitional administrations' of the twenty-first century. These problems are not new; one of the problems that undermined US counter-insurgency efforts in Vietnam was the artificiality and weakness of the coup-prone state of South Vietnam. Yet the central fact must be faced that in the two test-beds of the new counter-insurgency doctrines of recent years, Iraq and Afghanistan, state institutions have been notoriously weak. Indeed, in post-colonial states generally, where insurgencies are by no means uncommon, indigenous state systems tend to be fragile or contested. The role of the state in people's lives, and in their consciousness, may be thoroughly peripheral or even negative.[32] So when the US manual speaks of 'a comprehensive strategy employing all instruments of national power' and stresses that all efforts focus on 'supporting the local populace and [host-nation] government',[33] it is necessary to remind ourselves that support for government is not exactly a natural

*State institutions have been notoriously weak*

default position for inhabitants of countries with such tragic histories as Iraq and Afghanistan. On the other hand, General Petraeus worked on the manual after two tours of duty in Iraq, with an eye to applying it there, and then did so to some effect when he was commander of the Multinational Force-Iraq. In 2009 the Iraqi government is looking stronger than in the first years after the invasion. The fact that a government is weak in face of insurgency does not mean that it is necessarily fated to remain so.

Of the many critiques of the US revival of counter-insurgency doctrine, one of the most searching is an American Political Science Association review symposium published in June 2008.[34] Stephen Biddle of the US Council on Foreign Relations queried the manual's fundamental assumption when he stated that

> it is far from clear that the manual's central prescription of drying up an insurgent's support base by persuading an uncommitted population to side with the government makes much sense in an identity war where the government's ethnic or sectarian identification means that it will be seen as an existential threat to the security of rival internal groups, and where there may be little or no supracommunal, national identity to counterpose to the subnational identities over which the war is waged by the time the United States becomes involved.[35]

Biddle also pointed out that the US manual has little to say about the comparative merits of waging counter-insurgency with large conventional forces as against small commando detachments, on the relative utility of air power in counter-insurgency, and on the willingness of democracies to support counter-insurgency over a long period. Further, the manual does not fit particularly well the realities of Iraq, where the insurgencies are far more regional and localised in character, and more fickle in their loyalties, than were many of the communist and anti-colonial insurgencies of earlier eras. As Biddle says, the negotiation of local ceasefires between insurgents and US commanders has been of key importance in Iraq.[36] Such webs of local ceasefires, valuable despite their fragility, do not come from counter-insurgency doctrine. These criticisms are another way of saying

what General Petraeus knows, that all doctrine is interim, and some parts are more interim than others.

The need to adapt doctrine, so evident in Iraq, applies even more strongly to Afghanistan, a subject about which the US manual says remarkably little.[37] The key issue is whether the revival of counter-insurgency doctrine really offers a useful guide in a situation where there are some distinct elements in the insurgencies, where negotiation with some of the insurgents may have a role, and where the state does not command the same loyalty or obedience that more local forces may enjoy.

After a difficult year in 2008, the US and Afghan governments began to place increased emphasis on local social structures. The US Ambassador to Afghanistan said at the end of the year that there was agreement to move forward with two programmes: first, the community outreach programme, 'designed to create community shuras' (local councils); and second, the community guard programme, which is 'meant to strengthen local communities and local tribes in their ability to protect what they consider to be their traditional homes'.[38] While neither programme was well defined, the move in this direction was evidence of willingness to rely on a less state-based approach than hitherto.

## Air power

Since October 2001 air power, which mainly means US air power, has played an important part in military operations in Afghanistan. The apparent success of the use of air power in October–December 2001 was deceptive: a major factor in the Taliban's defeat was the advance of ground forces of the Northern Alliance. Since then, the role of air power in the Afghan conflict has been a subject of contestation, principally between the army and marines on the one hand, and the US Air Force on the other. A key issue has been whether air power is a major instrument in its own right, or is mainly useful in supporting ground forces. Self-evidently, the US and NATO ground forces in Afghanistan, widely dispersed and few in number, frequently need air power in support of their ground operations. In military terms, a 'light footprint' on the ground inevitably means a heavy air presence.

Those planning coalition military operations in Afghanistan have shown awareness of the dangers of reliance on air power – especially of the adverse consequences of killing civilians. On occasion they have even claimed to have set an aim of no civilian casualties.[39] While this aim actually goes further than the strict requirements of existing law applicable in an international armed conflict, in practice it has not been achieved. Many factors have prevented its realisation: shortage of ground forces, differing approaches of individual commanders, poor intelligence, the heat of battle, weapons malfunction, the co-location of military targets and civilians, and the frayed relationship between ground and air forces operating in Afghanistan.[40] A Human Rights Watch report in September 2008 summarised the situation:

> In the past three years, the armed conflict in Afghanistan has intensified, with daily fighting between the Taliban and other anti-government insurgents against Afghan government forces and its international military supporters. The US, which operates in Afghanistan through its counter-insurgency forces in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), has increasingly relied on airpower in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations. The combination of light ground forces and overwhelming airpower has become the dominant doctrine of war for the US in Afghanistan. The result has been large numbers of civilian casualties, controversy over the continued use of airpower in Afghanistan, and intense criticism of US and NATO forces by Afghan political leaders and the general public.

As a result of *Operation Enduring Freedom* and ISAF airstrikes in 2006, 116 Afghan civilians were killed in 13 bombings. In 2007, Afghan civilian deaths were nearly three times higher: 321 Afghan civilians were killed in 22 bombings, while hundreds more were injured. In 2007, more Afghan civilians were killed by airstrikes than by US and NATO ground fire. In the first seven months of 2008, the latest period for which data are available, at least 119 Afghan civilians were killed in 12 airstrikes.[41] That last figure increased dramatically when it was revealed in October 2008 that 33 civilians had

been killed in a single US airstrike on 22 August. Such incidents do serious damage to the coalition cause. Largely as a result of the long history of such incidents, there has been a strong anti-coalition reaction. As early as 2006 the Afghan parliament had demonstrated its concern about coalition military actions, and such expressions of concern have subsequently become more frequent. Meanwhile, President Hamid Karzai, whose authority has been diminishing, has made a number of criticisms of the coalition forces, calling for an end to civilian casualties, and even stating that he wanted US forces to stop arresting suspected Taliban members and their supporters.[42]

## Judging progress

Assessing results in counter-insurgency wars is by nature a contentious task, and involves difficult questions about the appropriate methodologies. Sometimes unorthodox methods of analysis yield the most valuable answers. The war in French Indochina from 1946 to 1954 provided a classic case. When a French doctoral student, Bernard Fall, went to Vietnam in 1953, the French authorities claimed that the war was going well, and showed maps and statistics indicating that they controlled a large proportion of the territory. But Fall soon realised that French claims about the amount of territory they controlled were exaggerated, or at least lacked real meaning as far as the conduct of government was concerned. He reached this conclusion both by visiting Vietminh-held areas, and by inspecting tax records in supposedly government-held areas: these latter showed a dramatic collapse in the payment of taxes, and thus indicated a lack of actual government control.[43] In Afghanistan, payment of taxes, or rather the absence of payment, works as a measure of the government's lack of control. As Astri Suhrke has shown, taxation constitutes a uniquely small proportion – in 2005 it was only 8% – of all estimated income in the national budget.[44]

By one key measure serious progress may appear to be being made in the Afghan war. The numbers of refugees returning to Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban regime at the end of 2001 are one possible indicator of a degree of progress. According to The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which played a key part in the process, between 1 January 2002 and 31 December 2007 4,997,455 refugees returned to

Table 1. **Refugees returning to Afghanistan, 2002–2007**

| 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1,957,958 | 645,864 | 879,780 | 752,084 | 387,917 | 373,852 |

Afghanistan (see Table 1). This is the largest refugee return in the world in a generation. It is striking that even in 2006 and 2007 (years of considerable conflict in parts of Afghanistan) the returns continued, if at a reduced rate. In the whole period 2002–07, the overwhelming majority of refugees have been in two countries: Iran, from which 1.6m returned, and Pakistan, from which 3.3m returned.[45] Impressive as these figures are, four major qualifications have to be made:

- First, they have to be understood against the backdrop of the sheer numbers of Afghan refugees: at the end of 2007 Afghanistan was still the leading country of origin of refugees worldwide, with 3.1m remaining outside the country. Thus in 2008, even after these returns, Afghan refugees constitute 27% of the entire global refugee population.
- Secondly, not all returns were fully voluntary. Within the countries of asylum there have been heavy pressures on these refugees to return, including the closing of some camps.
- Thirdly, experience of many returning refugees has included lack of employment opportunities in Afghanistan, and in some cases involvement in property disputes. There has been mismanagement and corruption in the Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation. Some refugees live in dire conditions in makeshift settlements. All this has created much disappointment, bitterness and anti-government feeling.
- Fourthly, displacement continues. In the past two years unknown numbers of returnees have left the country again. The number of internally displaced persons within Afghanistan has also increased, especially due to the fighting in the south, and now stands at about 235,000. Some returnees have seamlessly become internally displaced persons.[46]

Other developments confirm this sobering picture. The Afghan army remains relatively small and highly dependent on outside support. As for the insurgent forces, they appear to have no shortage of recruits. Large numbers of fighters are able to cross into Afghanistan, mainly from Pakistan, and the Taliban can also employ many locals, especially in seasons when other work is in short supply. The fact that the esti-mated unemployment rate is 40% means that insurgents continue to have opportunities for recruitment. In Kabul and other cities, terrorist attacks, once rare, have become common. Serious observers have reported an atmos-phere of disappointment and bitterness in Afghanistan in 2008.[47]

*Insurgent forces appear to have no shortage of recruits*

The UN Secretary-General's report of September 2008 states bluntly that the number of security incidents rose to 983 in August 2008, the highest since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 and a 44% increase year-on-year, and that 'insurgent influence has intensified in areas that were previously relatively calm, including in the provinces closest to Kabul'.[48] It reports some successes in the campaign against poppy cultivation, and it strongly endorses the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, adopted at the Paris Conference in Support of Afghanistan, held on 12 June 2008. However, it confirms the picture of the state of progress in the war against the Taliban which has also been depicted by other sources, including the sober report by General David McKiernan, the top US Commander in Afghanistan, who, at the same time as seeking specific troop increases, has rejected simple notions, and indeed the terminology, of a military 'surge';[49] and the US National Intelligence Estimate on Afghanistan, a draft version of which was leaked in October 2008, and which stated that the situation there was in a 'downward spiral'.[50] One grim statistic of the downward spiral is the casualty rate of IFOR and *Operation Enduring Freedom* forces in Afghanistan. Fatalities have increased each year from 57 in 2003 to 296 in 2008.[51]

As so often in counter-insurgency wars, the most useful assessments may be those of independent witnesses who, just as Bernard Fall did in French Indochina, have deep knowledge of a society and a healthy open-

mindedness about the contribution that outside forces can make to security. Rory Stewart, who walked across Afghanistan in 2002, and later retired from the UK diplomatic service to run a charitable foundation in Kabul, is perhaps Fall's nearest equivalent today. He has argued that 'we need less investment – but a greater focus on what we know how to do'. He is specifically critical of increases in forces:

> a troop increase is likely to inflame Afghan nationalism because Afghans are more anti-foreign than we acknowledge and the support for our presence in the insurgency areas is declining. The Taliban, which was a largely discredited and backward movement, gains support by portraying itself as fighting for Islam and Afghanistan against a foreign military occupation.[52]

The present campaign in Afghanistan is unlikely to result in a clear victory for the Kabul government and its outside partners, because the sources of division within and around Afghanistan are just too deep, and the tendency to react against the presence of foreign forces too ingrained. The war could yet be lost, or, perhaps more likely, it could produce a stalemate or a long war of attrition with no clear outcome. The dissolution of Afghanistan into regional fiefdoms – already an accustomed part of life – could continue and even accelerate.

To some it may appear remarkable that Afghanistan has not reverted more completely to type as a society that rejects outside intrusion. Part of the explanation may be that this is not the only natural 'default position' for Afghans: there have also been countless episodes in which Afghan leaders have sought, and profited from, alliances with outsiders. A second factor is the 'light footprint' advocated by Lakhdar Brahimi, special representative of the secretary-general for Afghanistan: for all the limitations of this approach, and the many departures from it since it was enunciated in 2002 with specific reference to the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), no one has convincingly suggested a better one.[53] A third factor is that – notwithstanding the disastrous killings of civilians as a result of using air power – there has been a degree of restraint in the use of armed

force: this has been important in at least slowing the pace of the process whereby the United States and other outside forces come to be perceived as alien bodies in Afghanistan. The interesting phenomenon of application of certain parts of the law of armed conflict – namely the rules of targeting – as if this was an international war is part of this process.

## The role of the United Nations

The UN has some remarkable achievements to its credit in Afghanistan. It helped to negotiate the Soviet withdrawal, and since then it has remained engaged on the ground. It gave a degree of authorisation to the US-led effort to remove the Taliban regime in 2001, it has authorised ISAF and has provided a legitimate basis for its expanded roles throughout the country, and it has been involved in the many subsequent efforts to help develop Afghanistan, not least by assisting in the various elections held there since 2001. It has assisted the largest refugee return to any country since the 1970s.

Despite these achievements, the UN's roles have been more limited than those of the United States and its partners, especially in matters relating to security. That the UN's role in this crisis has been modest is not especially surprising. Neither the terms of the UN Charter nor the record of the Security Council justify the excessively high expectations many have had in respect of the council's roles. It was always a mistake to view the UN as aiming to provide a complete system of collective security even in the best of circumstances – and circumstances in and around Afghanistan are far from being favourable for international involvement.

International legitimacy, moreover, is never a substitute for local legitimacy. The council's acceptance of regime change in Afghanistan was justified once the Taliban had refused to remove al-Qaeda, and did much to legitimise the aim of regime replacement, which could otherwise have seemed a narrowly neo-colonial US action. Yet there is a danger that such international conferrals of legitimacy can contribute to a failure to address the no less important question of securing legitimacy in the eyes of the audience that matters most: in this case, the peoples of Afghanistan and neighbouring countries.

### The NATO framework

In Afghanistan NATO is involved in ground-combat operations for the first time in its history, far from its normal area of responsibility and against a threat very different from the one it had been created to face. NATO involvement in Afghanistan is widely viewed as 'a test of the alliance's political will and military capabilities'.[54] It is an exceptionally hard test. Indeed, the implication that the future of the Alliance hangs on this test is reminiscent of earlier views that US credibility was on the line in Vietnam.

NATO's involvement in Afghanistan is in sharp contrast to its conduct during the Cold War, when it repeatedly and studiously avoided involvement in colonial conflicts – the French wars in Indochina and Algeria, the Portuguese wars in Africa, the British in Malaya, the Dutch in Indonesia and so on. Individual members were involved, but the alliance was not. NATO also avoided involvement in post-colonial conflicts or, as in Cyprus, limited itself to an essentially diplomatic role. Now NATO has become engaged, with little public debate, in a country with all the hallmarks of a post-colonial state undergoing conflict, especially the lack of legitimacy of the constitutional system, government and frontiers.

NATO's role in Afghanistan began in a problematic way, and so it has continued. The day after the 11 September attack, the NATO Council stated: 'if it is determined that this attack was directed from abroad against the United States, it shall be regarded as an action covered by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, which states that an armed attack against one or more of the Allies in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all'.[55] When Washington gave this offer the brush-off, preferring to have a 'coalition à la carte' in which there would be no institutional challenge to its leadership, there was disappointment and irritation in Europe. The war in Afghanistan in October–December 2001, while effectively conducted under US leadership, was also one chapter in the story of the declining size of US-led wartime coalitions.

However, NATO rapidly came back into the picture, not least because Washington came to recognise the need for long-term assistance in managing societies that had been freed from oppressive regimes by US force. NATO has been directly involved in Afghanistan at least since 9 August

2003, when it took formal control of ISAF. It was in autumn 2003 that an upsurge of violence that was part of a deteriorating security situation began.[56] ISAF's notably broad UN Security Council mandate involves it in a wide range of activities, including reconstruction and economic development, and military and police training. Since 2006 ISAF has undertaken an expanded range of responsibilities in Afghanistan, involving combat as well as peacekeeping, in an expanded area which includes provinces in which conflict is ongoing.

*European leaders have wisely kept the level of rhetoric low*

It is truly remarkable that the reputation of the longest-lived military alliance in the world, comprised of states with fundamentally stable political systems, should have made itself vulnerable to the outcome of a war in the unpromising surroundings of Afghanistan. There is much nervousness about this among NATO's European members, and this may explain the reluctance of European leaders to make the kind of ringing statements that often accompany war. Knowing that the outcome of any adventure in Afghanistan is bound to be uncertain, they have wisely kept the level of rhetoric low.

There may be another reason for the reluctance of many leaders of European member states to make strong endorsements of their participation in the war in Afghanistan. Many of the claims that can be made in favour of the Afghan cause are also implicitly criticisms of the involvement in Iraq. From the start in 2001, the US-led involvement in Afghanistan and the subsequent involvement of ISAF have both had a strong basis of international legitimacy that was reflected in Security Council resolutions. In Afghanistan there was a real political and military force to support, in the shape of the Northern Alliance. In Afghanistan and Pakistan there were real havens for terrorists. In Afghanistan, up to 5m refugees have returned since 2001. To speak about these matters too loudly might be to undermine the US position in Iraq, where the origins and course of the outside involvement have been different, and where the flow of refugees has been outwards. NATO leaders, anxious to put the recriminations of 2003 over Iraq behind them, may be nervous about highlighting the differences between Afghanistan and Iraq.

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.

The various reasons that have been given cannot be lightly dismissed. For example, the lack of NATO unity in certain operational matters has been striking. Different contributing states have different visions of ISAF's role. The most obvious difference is that the United States, Britain and Canada tend to see it, albeit with some variations within each country, as encompassing a counter-insurgency operation, while Germany and some others see it more through the lens of a stabilisation mission. These positions are not polar opposites, and each may have validity in different provinces of Afghanistan, but the clash of perspective on this issue does not assist cooperation of forces in difficult operations. Daniel Marston has gone so far as to conclude that, 'as of 2007, the main problem impeding coalition forces' successful application of counter-insurgency was decentralization of responsibility'.[57] The inability of member states to agree on a straightforward and defensible common set of standards for treating prisoners in the Afghan operations is symptomatic of deep divisions within the alliance. Anxious not to be associated with shocking US statements and practices in this matter, and insufficiently staffed and equipped to hold on to the prisoners they capture, other NATO members have drawn up separate agreements with the Afghan authorities, embodying a variety of different approaches to how prisoners should be treated once in Afghan hands. There are serious concerns that some detainees handed over to the Afghan authorities on this basis have been maltreated.[58] The complexity of the command-and-control arrangements in Afghanistan is greater than that in past counter-insurgency campaigns. Debates about this have inevitably reflected the US desire that more contingents in ISAF should become directly involved in combat operations, and the concern of some contributors that this should not happen.

Although ISAF is now under a US commander, and the continuous rotation of senior posts is ceasing, the arrangements for coordinating the work of the three distinct forces – ISAF, the Afghan National Army and the US-led *Operation Enduring Freedom* – continue to pose problems.[59]

The provision of forces in the numbers required for ISAF has been a highly contentious matter within NATO states. Granted the scale of the problems in Afghanistan, the levels of the three distinct forces are widely seen as low, yet in many NATO member states there is a reluctance to increase the commitment. Opinion polls in five NATO member states with a high level of involvement in Afghanistan show the public to be highly sceptical about it.[60] An increase in such numbers risks running into opposition in many NATO states, and also further antagonising Afghan opinion.

Political divisions have never been far from the surface, and will no doubt be projected into future explanations of what went wrong. Continental Europeans can convincingly blame the Americans and the British for having taken their eye off the ball in Afghanistan in 2002–03, foolishly thinking that the war there was virtually won and that they could afford to rush into a second adventure in Iraq. Americans can blame the Europeans for putting relatively few troops into ISAF, and being slow to back them up when the going got rough in 2006–08. A less blame-centred explanation might be that the reconstruction of Afghanistan, and the pursuit of counter-insurgency there, was always going to be an extremely difficult task; that there are limits to what outsiders should expect to achieve in the transformation of distant societies with cultures significantly different from their own; and that it never made sense to invest such effort in counter-insurgency in Afghanistan without having even the beginnings of a strategy for the neighbouring regions of Pakistan.

## Impact on international security

The problem of Afghanistan – including the complex interplay of international actors who have pursued their interests there – has had an impressive impact on international security issues in the past generation. It contributed to the end of the Cold War and indeed of the Soviet Union itself. The Taliban regime's failure to control al-Qaeda activities launched the United States

into the huge and seemingly endless 'war on terror', and also resulted in the UN Security Council claiming unprecedented powers to affect activities within states. The Afghan war has embroiled NATO in a largely civil war thousands of miles from its North Atlantic heartlands.

For the future, the greatest impact of Afghanistan on international security may turn out to be highly paradoxical. It is obvious that Afghanistan, along with Iraq, has called into question the idea that the United States, in its supposed 'unipolar moment', could change even the most difficult and divided societies by its confident use of armed force. But it is not only the ideas of the neo-conservatives and their camp-followers that are in trouble. In many ways the involvement of NATO in Afghanistan was textbook liberal multilateralism: approved by the UN Security Council, involving troops from 40 democracies, coupled with the UN Assistance Mission, and with admirable aims to assist the development and modernisation of Afghanistan. The very ideas of rebuilding the world in the Western image, and of major Western states having an obligation to achieve these tasks in distant lands – whether by unilateral or multilateral approaches – may come to be viewed as optimistic. Or, to put it differently, and somewhat cryptically, Afghanistan may not have

*NATO in Afghanistan was textbook liberal multilateralism*

quite such a drastic effect on the American *imperium* as it had on the Soviet one in the years up to 1991; but it may nevertheless come to be seen as one important stage on the path in which international order became, certainly not unipolar, and perhaps not even multipolar, but more based on prudent interest than on illusions that Western ideas control the world. Afghanistan may contribute to greater caution before engaging in interventionist projects aimed at reconstructing divided societies.

Despite all the difficulties encountered in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, in the US presidential election campaign in 2008 both Barack Obama and John McCain promised to increase the US commitment to Afghanistan in 2009. There was little prospect either that the insurgency would subside or that Washington would tip-toe out of the war. Furthermore, both candidates advocated continuing and even extending the practice of

using US force against Taliban and al-Qaeda targets in Pakistan. The war's international dimension, and its significance for international security more generally, was set to continue.

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The Obama administration's policy planning for Afghanistan is based on the sound presumption that the Afghan problem cannot be addressed in isolation. Although many countries have a potentially important role in any settlement in Afghanistan – especially Iran, with its large numbers of Afghan refugees and its major drug problem – Pakistan is at the core of this approach. Granted the indissoluble connection between Afghanistan and Pakistan, any policy in respect of the one has to be framed in light of its effects on the other. At times it may even be necessary to prioritise as between these two countries. The simple truth is that Pakistan is a far larger, more powerful and generally more important country than Afghanistan. If the price of saving Afghanistan were to be the destabilisation of Pakistan, it would not be worth paying. A principal aim of the United States in the region should have been, and indeed may have been, to avoid creating a situation in which that particular price had to be paid: yet at least once before, in the Soviet–Afghan War in the 1980s, that, or something very like it, is what happened.

The main conclusion of any consideration of the Pakistan factor in the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan has to be that the policy of the United States and allies – to strengthen central government in both countries – has been operating in extremely difficult circumstances, has been pursued erratically, and has been largely unsuccessful. While it is not obvious what the alternatives might be, the general approach of backing non-Pashtuns in Pakistan and Afghanistan risks exacerbating the Pashtun problem in both countries. Three distinct causes – Pashtun, Taliban and al-Qaeda – have become conflated. It should be a first aim of Western policy to reverse this dangerous trend.

Because of the grim prospects of a stalemate, a war of attrition or worse in Afghanistan, and also because of the advent of new governments in Pakistan

in 2008 and the US in 2009, there has been at least the beginning of consideration of alternative policies. Two stand out: each in its way addresses directly the growth of the insurgency, and is based on a recognition that the Pakistan dimension of the problem has to be considered alongside the Afghan. Both options take into account the central requirement of any approach, that it be geared to ensuring that neither Afghanistan nor Pakistan offer the kind of haven for organising international terrorist actions that Afghanistan did under Taliban rule.

The first option centres on negotiation with Taliban and other Pashtun groups. The first question to be faced is whether, on either side of the border, there are sufficiently clear hierarchical organisational structures with which to negotiate. The second question is whether Afghan Taliban/Pashtun goals are framed more in terms of control of the Afghan state along the completely uncompromising lines followed by the Taliban in the years up to 2001, or in more limited terms. Whatever the answers, negotiation in some form with some of the insurgent groups and factions is inevitable. Indeed, in an informal manner some is already happening. Combining fighting with talking is quite common in insurgencies, not least because of their tendency to result in stalemate. Yet it is never easy, and is likely to be particularly difficult for those on both sides who have chosen to see the war in Afghanistan as a war of good against evil. It is also likely to be difficult if, as at present, the Taliban believe they are in a position of strength. A critical question to be explored in any talks is whether, as some evidence suggests, the Taliban leaders have learned enough from their disasters since seizing Kabul in 1996, and in particular from their near-death experience in 2001, to be willing to operate in a different manner in today's Afghanistan.[61] The scope and content of any agreement are matters of huge difficulty. Some agreements concluded by the Pakistan government in the past few years are widely seen as having given Taliban leaders a licence to continue supporting the insurgency in Afghanistan. This serves as a warning of the hazards of partial negotiation. Yet the pressures for negotiation are very strong, and a refusal to consider this course could have adverse effects in both countries.

In October 2008, after a two-week debate that was not always well attended, the Pakistani parliament passed unanimously a resolution widely

interpreted as suggesting, above all, a shift to negotiation. It was a complex package, in which the parliament united to condemn terrorism and at the same time was seen as 'taking ownership' of policy to tackle it. The resolution said that regions on the Afghan border where militants flourish should be developed, and force used as a last resort. It opposed the cross-border strikes by US forces in Pakistan, but at the same time indicated a degree of support for US policy. It called for dialogue with extremist groups operating in the country, and hinted at a fundamental change in Pakistan's approach to the problem: 'we need an urgent review of our national security strategy and revisiting the methodology of combating terrorism in order to restore peace and stability'.[62] At the very least it provides one basis for the incoming US administration to recalibrate the United States' largely burnt-out policies towards Pakistan.

The second option under discussion involves a fundamental rethinking of security strategy in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. On the Afghan side of the border it would call for some increase in ISAF or other outside forces, especially to speed up the pace of expansion of the Afghan army, and thereby provide back-up so that areas from which the Taliban have been expelled can thereafter be protected. It would also call for cooperation in security matters with local forces and councils, with all the hazards involved; for expansion of aid and development programmes, especially in urgent matters such as food aid in areas threatened by famine; and for a serious effort to address the widespread corruption which makes a continuous mockery of Western attempts to bring reform and progress to Afghanistan. On the Pakistan side it would involve a protracted effort to develop a long-term policy (hitherto non-existent) for establishing some kind of government influence in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and for a joined-up policy for addressing the Taliban and al-Qaeda presence. On both sides of the border it would necessitate reining in the use of air power in ways that reduce its inflammation of local opinion.

It is highly improbable that either of these options on its own could provide a substantial amelioration of a tangled and tragic situation. However, a combination of the two – both negotiating, and rethinking the security strategy – might just achieve some results.[63] It would need to include other

elements, including a strong and credible commitment to leave as soon as a modicum of stability is achieved. Such a combination would need to be pursued in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. It could only work if the new US administration rejected the worst aspects of previous policies, and pursued the matter with more consistent attention than in the past. It would be likely to result in some unsatisfactory compromises, and might build on, rather than fundamentally change, the pattern of regional warlordism so rooted in Afghanistan. Yet if the war in Afghanistan is not to have even more fateful consequences for international order than those seen in the past three decades, it may be the direction in which events have to move.

## Acknowledgements

## Notes

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[2]  Paul Wolfowitz, on CBS TV, 'Face the Nation', 18 November 2001, transcript available at http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2442.

[3]  David Loyn, *Butcher and Bolt: Two Hundred Years of Foreign Engagement*

*in Afghanistan* (London: Hutchinson, 2008).

[4]  On the Taliban's history of supporting opium production, which became the mainstay of their war economy in the late 1990s, see Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: The Story of the Afghan Warlords* (London: Pan Books, 2001), pp. 117–24.

[5]  Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: How the War against Islamic Extremism is Being Lost in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia* (London: Allen Lane, 2008), p. 401.

[6]  UN Security Council Resolution 1510 of 13 October 2003 expanded

ISAF's sphere of operations to other parts of Afghanistan. By the end of 2006, now operating under NATO, it had responsibilities in virtually all Afghanistan.

7   Rashid, *Taliban*, esp. pp. 26–9, 45, 90–94 and 137–8.

8   On the extent of Pakistani help to the Taliban, see Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*; and Seth Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan* (California: RAND Corporation, June 2008), available at http://www.rand.org/hot_topics/afghanistan.html.

9   For an indictment predicated on the assumption that a serious policy could be devised see US Government Accountability Office, *Combating Terrorism: The United States Lacks Comprehensive Plan to Destroy the Terrorist Threat and Close the Safe Haven in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas* (Washington DC: GAO, April 2008).

10  Eric Schmitt and Mark Mazzetti, 'Bush Said to Give Orders Allowing Raids in Pakistan', *New York Times*, 10 September 2008.

11  For an excellent overview, from the late nineteenth century to Afghanistan, see Marston and Malkasian (eds), *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare* (Oxford: Osprey, 2008). Marston's chapter is notably critical of the failure of the United States and its allies to train and equip soldiers for counter-insurgency (p. 220).

12  *Counterinsurgency*, US Army Field Manual 3-24 and Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army et al., 15 December 2006). This publication has a short foreword by Lt-Gen. David H. Petraeus (who played a key part in its preparation) and Lt-Gen. James F. Amos. Henceforth, *US Army Field Manual* 3-24. Available at http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-24.pdf.

13  The manual was issued by a publishing firm as *The US Army / Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: US Army Field Manual no. 3-24 and Marine Corps Warfighting Publication no. 3-33.5* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007). This edition has a new foreword by Lt-Col. John A. Nagl, and a new Introduction by Sarah Sewall.

14  UK Army Field Manual, vol. 1, *The Fundamentals*, Part 10, *Counter Insurgency Operations (Strategic and Operational Guidelines),* last revised in July 2001. The approach it laid out and its principles are still regarded as valid. Its biggest problem was the context in which it was set. It makes no mention of coalition operations, or the problems of operating in other people's countries, the religious and cultural dimensions, and the effects of information proliferation and information operations. The task of updating it started in late 2005. It is still in development. The Ministry of Defence's Joint Doctrine & Concepts Centre's short (23 pages) *The Comprehensive Approach* is a more general survey intended to be relevant to a wide range of operations; the word 'counter-insurgency' does not appear in it. *The Comprehensive Approach*, Joint Discussion Note 4/05 (Shrivenham, Wiltshire: JDCC, January 2006), available at http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/MicroSite/DCDC/

OurPublications/JDNP/. The UK Ministry of Defence Joint Doctrine Note 2/07, *Countering Irregular Activity Within a Comprehensive Approach* (UK Ministry of Defence, March 2007), has not gone into general public circulation and has not been greeted with enthusiasm in the army.

15 John Kiszely, *Post-modern Challenges for Modern Warriors*, Shrivenham Papers No. 5 (Shrivenham: Defence Academy of the UK, 2007), p. 14.

16 *US Army Field Manual 3-24,* Acknowledgements, p. viii. Three sources, all cited at length in the text, are listed at this point. (The third, not discussed here, was an article in the *New Yorker* in January 2005.) See also the Annotated Bibliography at the end, which cites a wider range of sources. It omits key critical writings on the subject, most notably Peter Paret, *French Revolutionary Warfare from Indochina to Algeria: The Analysis of a Political and Military Doctrine* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964). The omission of this title reflected a view that it is hard to get Americans to take on board French doctrines on counter-insurgency.

17 David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964). Galula died in 1968. His work was belatedly published in France as *Contre-Insurrection: Théorie et pratique* (Paris: Economica, 2008).

18 Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1966).

19 *US Army Field Manual 3-24,* Introduction, p. ix.

20 *US Army Field Manual 3-24,* Foreword. The Moros, perhaps the least known of the insurgents cited, have been involved in an armed insurrection in the Philippines.

21 *US Army Field Manual 3-24,* p. 5-31.

22 *US Army Field Manual 3-24,* p. 1-13.

23 Col. Charles Lacheroy, 'La Guerre Révolutionnaire', talk on 2 July 1957 reprinted in *La Défense Nationale*, Paris, 1958, p. 322; cited in Paret, *French Revolutionary Warfare from Indochina to Algeria* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964), p. 15. Paret comments that 'nothing', in this case, means 'the secure existence of the *status quo*'.

24 *US Army Field Manual 3-24*, pp. 6-21 and 6-22.

25 See especially Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, pp. 17–20.

26 The geographical, sociological, political and ethnic differences between Malaya and South Vietnam were evident to knowledgeable observers even while the Vietnam War was still ongoing. See Bernard B. Fall, *The Two Viet-Nams: A Political and Military Analysis* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1963), pp. 339–40 and 372–6.

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28 See, for example, the obituary of Sir Donald MacGillivray, the last British High Commissioner for Malaya, *Times,* 28 December 1966.

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30 Rashid, *Taliban*, pp. 102–3.

31 See, for example, George Monbiot's ebullient attack on how US counter-insurgency training was implicated in the work of death squads in Latin America over many decades,

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33 *US Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 2-1.

34 Review Symposium, 'The
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as Political Science and Political
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and 350. The four contributions
to this symposium are by Stephen
Biddle (347–50), Stathis N. Kalyvas
(351–3), Wendy Brown (354–7),
and Douglas A. Ollivant (357–60).
The symposium is available at
http://www.apsanet.org/imgtest/
POPJune08CounterInsurgency2.pdf.

35 *Ibid*., p. 348. See also the excellent
contribution of Stathis N. Kalyas, who
argues (p. 352) that by adopting the
people's-war model, the authors of the
manual assume that the population
interacts either with the government
or the insurgents. This leads them to
conclude, incorrectly, that if the insur-
gents are removed from the equation
the people will move closer to the
government.

36 *Ibid*., pp. 347–8 and 350.

37 *US Army Field Manual 3-24*, pp. 1-9
and 7-6. These brief references to
Afghanistan do not describe the ele-
ments that make the Afghan conflict
unique.

38 US Ambassador William B. Wood,
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December 2008, available at http://
kabul.usembassy.gov/amb_
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insufficient priority to the provision of
surveillance aircraft. Thom Shanker,
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its own Aviation Unit', *New York
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Watch, September 2008), p. 2, available
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47  For example Peter Beaumont, 'Afghanistan: Fear, Disillusion and Despair: Notes from a Divided Land as Peace Slips Away', *Observer*, 8 June 2008, pp. 34–5.

48  'The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security: Report of the Secretary-General', UN doc. S/2008/617, 23 September 2008, paras 16 and 18.

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50  See, for example, the report of the draft National Intelligence Estimate on Afghanistan at http://www.nsnetwork.org/node/1017.

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58  See Adam Roberts, 'Torture and Incompetence in the "War on Terror"', *Survival*, vol. 49, no. 1, Spring 2007, pp. 199–212; and the Amnesty report *Afghanistan – Detainees Transferred to Torture: ISAF Complicity?* (London: Amnesty International, November 2007), pp. 20–30.

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Texas, 2 May 2008. Available at http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=49769. The coalition of forces acting in support of the Afghan government consists of three basic elements. The first is the Afghan National Army, which has a modest manpower level of about 57,000. The second is ISAF, which now comprises some 51,350 troops from 40 NATO and non-NATO countries. The largest contingents are those of the United States, with 19,950 troops, and the United Kingdom, with 8,745. The third basic element is the force of well over 10,000 troops (almost all of them American) who are part of the US *Operation Enduring Freedom*, which focuses particularly on the counter-terrorist mission in Afghanistan. Information on ISAF troop numbers and areas of operation from http://www.nato.int/.

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