Opportunities & Threats

Integrating and synchronizing influence in counterinsurgency and stability operations

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INTRODUCTION

'When Allah created the world, He saw that there was a lot of rubbish left over, bits and pieces and things that did not fit anywhere else. He collected them all together and threw them down on to the earth. That was Afghanistan,' the old man said. (Rashid 2000: 7)

I will never forget the first time I googled 'Uruzgan' back in the winter of 2005: I got only five hits of which three were identical. I urge you to try this today.[1]

Being one of many who had developed a heightened interest for asymmetric threats in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks, I enrolled in the Terrorism & Counterterrorism class of Edwin Bakker in 2008 at Utrecht University. Bakker introduced me to "Al Qaeda" by Jason Burke, in which the different manifestations of the terrorist organization are systematically described, from its inception as a group of transnational *mujahedin* to its current form. Burke asserts that while Al Qaeda's core may currently suffer severe limitations in operational capability and mobility, its main function is that of a symbol. This symbol is so powerful that it manages to inspire and recruit followers not only in the world's "belt of instability", but also home-grown in wealthy Western countries. It manages to do so by utilizing modern communications media with surprising subject matter expertise. This was my introduction to the intangible, informational nature of the "barbaric" terrorist attacks seen on television. When interviewing Section 2 (S2) intelligence officers of the Dutch Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) on their experiences with conducting "counterinsurgency", I noticed they had struggled not only with comprehending the complex, inaccessible cultural environment, but also with operationalizing their assignment. Although regular attempts to expand the "oil spot" of control had been made, Task Force Uruzgan (TFU) simply lacked the manpower to hold new won territory and conduct a textbook counterinsurgency. Likewise, the PRTs supposed "state building light", was almost a *contradictio in terminis:* The reasonable time and cost to "fix" a country like Afghanistan vastly exceeds the maneuver space of Western politicians, national interest and the contribution of a PRT. And how does one exactly alter the relative position of the government vis-à-vis the population? Additionally, they explained how they tried to map Uruzgan's multifaceted society, identifying points of leverage and using the PRT's unique tools to pragmatically reshape local politics and improve stability. Other observations were the surprising similarities in approach by the insurgents and counterinsurgents, and the frequent downplaying of the Taliban's role in causing Afghan instability. This induced me to regard counterinsurgency as a competition for influence and the importance of the cognitive dimension herein.

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[1] Interview S2 PRT 3, July 2nd 2010

There is small but growing body of literature surrounding this subject, and still lots of uncharted terrain. A process that *has* been substantially documented is marketing: influencing target groups for commercial purposes. Using its proven theories and methods, marketing has already been used for non-commercial goals and poverty reduction strategies. While I argue that the TFU PRT's were *de facto* conducting influence activities in support of stabilization or counterinsurgency operation, I have identified a lack of intra-organizational integration and synchronization of this effort. In this thesis, I want to explore the possibilities of using the principles of social marketing, as pioneered by Philip Kotler, to obtain leverage during stability operations. My main question therefore is:

HOW CAN PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES DERIVED FROM SOCIAL MARKETING BE INCORPORATED TO INTEGRATE AND SYNCHRONIZE "INFLUENCE" ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS CONDUCTED BY THE TASK FORCE URUZGAN PRT'S, DURING STABILITY OPERATIONS?

My case study is limited to the effort of an element of the Dutch operation in Uruzgan province, and its findings are not necessarily representative for the Afghan conflict or counterinsurgency as a whole. Manifestations of insurgency may vary greatly over time and space, and so must its remedy. Nevertheless, exploring tools of "soft" power is a necessity, especially as rising costs are part of the opposing strategy and the negative informational consequences of the use of force have become increasingly significant. Discussing soft power, I recognize that a military perspective in a predominantly political struggle is limiting. However, no other organization currently has the unique capabilities in logistics, transportation, force projection and legal legitimacy for entering and maintaining a similar presence in highly unstable environments. Furthermore, counterinsurgency has traditionally been a military occupation which had its influence on most literature and historical accounts. Nevertheless, this does not mean I regard counterinsurgency as a purely military discipline; it has simply structured the debate. While Dutch operations in Uruzgan province, former home of Mullah Omar and a major Taliban recruitment pool, have been criticized for avoiding combat, the so-called "Dutch approach" has also garnered substantial international acclaim: being "NATO's flicker of light" according to the Economist (2009). History will tell if any success is translated to long term changes, but the mission will likely have a lasting impact on the Dutch armed forces.

1. TASK FORCE URUZGAN: OVERCOMING THE SHADOW OF SREBRENICA

At the end of their four years engagement, the Dutch military can leave knowing that during their mission advances in both security and development were made in Uruzgan, especially in comparison to other Southern provinces such as Kandahar, Helmand, and Zabul. This can be attributed, amongst other things, to the Dutch bottom-up development strategy that engages community leaders. Additionally, they invested in research and analysis, which helped to tailor operations and projects to the local context and take into account the fractures in the social and political landscape. The uncertain future of Uruzgan after the Dutch departure, however, has created a security vacuum that the Taliban has been attempting to exploit. The first half of 2010 has been indicative that the steady trend to improve stability in Uruzgan may no longer be as smooth as anticipated. (The Liaison Office 2010: 55)

On the 1st of August 2010, Dutch ISAF operations in the Uruzgan province of Afghanistan have ended with a transfer of control to the American led Combined Team Uruzgan. From its inception, Task Force Uruzgan represented both a highly ambitious and controversial element of Dutch foreign policy. The political debate discussing a possible extension of the mission led to the fall of the Balkenende IV administration, prompting the Prime Minister to publicly lament the probable loss of a Dutch G20 seat. The combined costs of the diplomatic, military and development efforts are estimated to have been about two billion euro (Chin-A-Fo 2010: 4) An arguably much higher cost has come in the form of twenty-four killed and one hundred and forty wounded soldiers, inflicted during what has been regarded as the Netherlands' highest combat intensity military operation since Korea. (Derix 2008: 1) On the 22nd of December 2005, the Dutch ministers Henk Kamp (Defense), Ben Bot (Foreign Affairs) and Agnes van Ardenne (Development cooperation) informed parliament of a pending NATO request:

After having ousted the Taliban-regime at the end of 2001, the International community has taken pains to assist the Afghans in the establishment of a stabile, democratic state, in part to prevent the country to become a refuge for terrorism and a source for international instability. (…) The deployment in the South mid-2006 enables ISAF to contribute to the stabilization of this region. (2005: 4-6)

On February 12th 2006 Dutch parliament agreed with a 131-19 majority to a two-year deployment in Uruzgan. (Rashid 2009: 358) Shortly after this decision, opposition parties feared a blurring line between the state-building activities of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the American counterterrorism operations of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). This hesitancy should be viewed in the context of the 1995 Screbrenica massacre, which Dutch peacekeepers were unable to prevent. (Rashid 2009: 358) A fierce debate erupted whether it would turn out to be a 'fighting-mission' or a

'reconstruction-mission' (Parliamentary Commissions for Foreign Affairs and Defense 2006: 19) to which Colonel Hans van Griensven, later commander of the 2nd Task Force Uruzgan rotation, dryly remarked that: "*the words 'reconstruction-mission', 'fighting-mission' nor their interpretation exist in our Defense-doctrine.*" (van Griensven 2007: 6. In: Dimitriu & de Graaf 2009- 616). While these two supposed types of operations continued to dominate the political and media debate, the reality was a bit more complicated. What would be known as Task Force Uruzgan (TFU) became part of ISAF Regional Command (RC) South and numbered around 1200 personnel, who would either be based in Kamp Holland ([sic] after the minister), located in Uruzgan's provincial capital Tarin Kowt, or in the smaller Forward Operating Base (FOB) Camp Hadrian in Deh Rawod. TFU consisted of a Battle Group (BG) of mobile infantry and supporting units such as engineers, howitzer fire support and medical and logistics personnel. Separate from TFU, the Dutch also contributed a Special Forces element, and an Air Task Force consisting of transport helicopters, apaches and F16's. (Doctrine Divison 2008: 22).
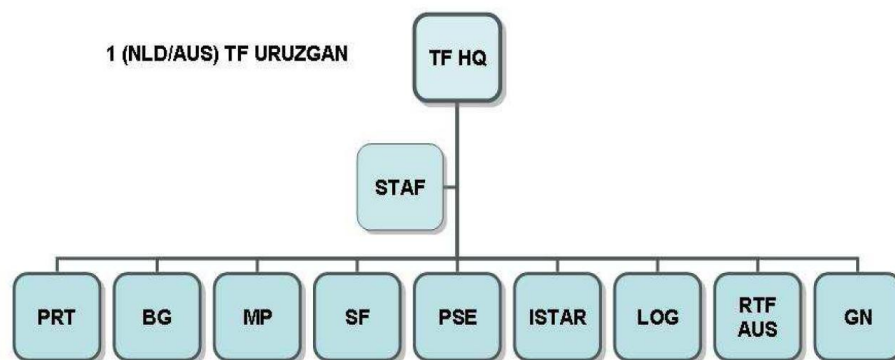
Figure 1. TFU Organizational Chart (consult Glossary for reference (Doctrine Division 2008: 22))

1.1 THE PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM

However, the "core" (Bot et al. 2005: 4-6) of TFU was to be a 'Provincial Reconstruction Team' (PRT), a relatively new concept developed and first used by the U.S. armed forces in Afghanistan in 2002. The PRT, a 'comprehensive' non-kinetic military instrument for reconstruction and long-term state-building, acknowledged the interdependency of the security-development dyad, and was intended as a temporary solution until the security situation permitted regular development actors (The UN, NGOs and other international organizations) to take over. To further stress its comprehensive nature, Dutch PRT's were designed so that a diplomat or other civilian representative would eventually assume command, as happened in 2008. Reconstruction activities were not only undertaken to improve local livelihoods and win 'hearts and minds', but also to create employment and strengthen the local administration. (Doctrine Division 2008:1-18) Projects to improve infrastructure benefited local economy and the influence of the

central government, but also expanded ISAF's freedom of movement and complicated the placement of IED's One might argue that a military supported state-building agenda, including programs for Security Sector Reform (SSR), anti-corruption and poppy eradication, is not feasible within a limited political timeframe, especially in an underdeveloped and unstable area such as Uruzgan. Civilian elements from foreign affairs and development cooperation within the PRT tended to use a planning horizon up to thirty years, sometimes clashing with military need for "quick impact projects"[2]. The different NATO PRT's shared little more than a name: the PRT model had no fixed strategy, nor any means of performance assessment. (Rashid 2009: 198) Its broad and flexible objectives, mixed with national interests have generated roughly three different PRT models: A relatively small American model with about a hundred personnel, consisting of mainly force protection and focused on quick impact projects for winning popular support. A slightly bigger British model mainly dedicated to SSR and a German model containing between 300-450 personnel with a strict separation between the military and a significant civilian component (Eronen 2008: 14-23). One should be careful when trying to comparatively judge these models: The civil-heavy German model for example was facilitated by a favorable security situation in the North, but has been criticized by the UN for its paralyzing security measures. Several PRT's also engaged in conflict mediation, with some notable successes. (Rashid 2009: 199) Although PRT's are NATO's main tool to expand its influence (and by extension that of the Afghan government), their long-term effectiveness cannot be supported by hard evidence. While establishing indicators of success may be a very complex endeavor, one should not underestimate the symbolic public relations role of the Provincial Reconstruction Team, which is arguably its main reason of existence (Grandia Mantas 2010: 490). ISAF commander General Petraeus has described NATO operations as "a comprehensive, civil-military *counterinsurgency* campaign" (Ackerman 2010: 3. Emphasis added), Although the Dutch military has also adopted this terminology, its domestic use in public has been very limited. This is likely due to negative historical connotations (Dimitriu & de Graaf 2009: 617) and the surprising absence of a general Dutch word for the phenomenon. In order to understand and evaluate the framework of TFU operations, a critical look at the different interpretations of counterinsurgency is warranted.

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[2] Interviews S2 PRT 7, 7th of July 2010 and S2 PRT 8, 22nd of July 2010
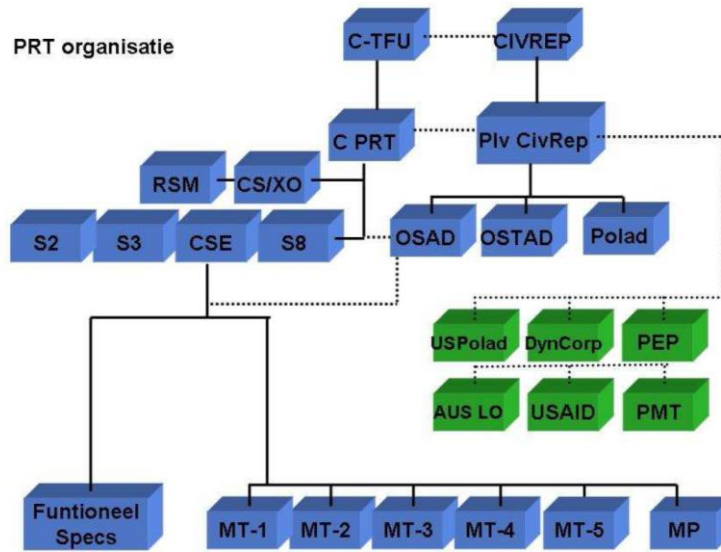
Figure 2. PRT Organizational Chart (consult Glossary for reference (Doctrine Division 2008: 22))

2. COUNTERING THE INSURGENT: COMPETITIVE STATEBUILDING?

I was always joking that we needed to do the same things the ancient Romans did: build roads and count the population. But no matter how bad you may want it, you know it's impossible to do.[3]

"In counterinsurgency the population is the prize, and protecting and controlling it is the key activity. The war, therefore, is where the people are: you win or lose it a village at a time, and you secure villages and gain access to the people by controlling valleys, roads, and the heights that overlook them, in that order of priority." (Kilcullen 2009: 73)

In order to define counterinsurgency, a logical starting point would be to define *insurgency*, the phenomenon the former aspires to counter. I prefer the definition of Thomas Mockaitis, who makes a clear distinction between *terrorism:* a generic term for all violent action that is political in aims and motives, *subversion:* all non-violent activities to achieve support for overthrowing the established order of a society, and *guerilla* as a form of irregular warfare using hit-and-run tactics to harass a less-mobile conventional opponent. The insurgent is an actor who uses a combination of these methods in his attempt to overthrow a constituted government and establish control over a certain area (Mockaitis 1990 in: Kitzen 2008: 128). This combination varies and depends on the insurgents capabilities and perceived effectiveness. For example, the Taliban largely favored the use of terrorism and IEDs over guerilla engagements after having suffered substantial losses in the period 2006-2007(Farrell 2010: 585). Likewise, Mullah Omar has regularly revised the Taliban "rules of engagement" to prevent alienating the local population (Afghanistan Islamic Emirate 2009: 1-31). Having defined insurgency, describing counterinsurgency as "military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency" (Department of the army 2006: 1-1) might be a broad definition, but it is important to stress that its contemporary interpretation by ISAF is hardly uniform. Put simply, there are two broad historical approaches to COIN: The first might be exampled by the Syrian Hama massacre, the military defeat of the LTTE (Tamil Tigers) in 2009 and perhaps some colonial counterinsurgency operations such as the Boer and Aceh wars. In this variant, very high levels of force and coercion are used at the expensive of the population in which the insurgent hides, such as extensive shelling (Syria & Sri Lanka) and concentration camps (South Africa), "draining the water to kill the fish" as Mao Zedong would have said (1937: chapter 6). A recent qualitative comparative study from RAND

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[3] Interview S2 PRT 3, July 2nd 2010.

indicates a long term fallacy of repressive counterinsurgency, considering successes either exceptions or short lived (Paul et al. 2010: 98). Whether Sri Lanka for example will achieve "positive" peace without addressing Tamil grievances remains to be seen.

2.1 CLASSICAL COUNTERINSURGENCY

Considering the additional judicial and ethical *problematique* of a repressive policy, contemporary authors turned to another approach, which had been codified in the sixties and seventies by veterans of Malaya, Algeria and Northern-Ireland. This "classical" school stresses a very high force ratio (20:1 according to David Galula (1967: 21.)) of disciplined soldiers maintaining high restraint, to live for a considerable period among the population to protect it, secure its loyalty, and to acquire intelligence on the insurgent and his support networks. In the words of David Kilcullen:

"Classical counter-insurgency (…) is 'population-centric'. It focuses on the population, seeking to protect it from harm by - or interaction with - the insurgent, competing with the insurgent for influence and control at the grassroots level. (…) dealing with this broader social and political dynamic, while gaining time for targeted reforms to work by applying a series of tailored, full-spectrum security measures, is the most promising path to ultimately resolve the problem." (Kilcullen 2009: XV)

This competition for access and influence has, in more palatable words, been described as the effort to win the population's "hearts and minds", which I interpret as respectively the *will* that the counterinsurgent will prevail (hearts), and the *belief* that he is actually capable of doing so (minds). This approach would require restraint, legitimacy, addressing grievances and a long-term commitment by the counterinsurgent. Reality indicates a rather grey area riddled with dilemmas. For example: resettlement programs, as used by the British in Malaya and the Americans in Vietnam, were potentially effective instruments of counterinsurgency because they separate the population from the insurgents. However, these programs were obviously highly unpopular and alienated the population from the counterinsurgents. Richard Nixon's controversial advisor Charles Colson supposedly said: "When you have them by the balls, their hearts and minds will follow" (Kalyvas 2006: 115). Nevertheless, disrupting contact between the insurgent, his coercive toolbox and propaganda on one hand and the populace on the other is a necessity of executing counterinsurgency. This is especially important when the population is the primary source of the insurgent's tangible support. (Paul et al. 2010: 99) Military scientists have attempted to adapt classical counterinsurgency to the new realities of a globalized world. This supposedly 'Neo-classical' approach would have to deal with challenges such as urbanization, extremist religion, information technologies and influencing perceptions (Hoffman 2007: 73-82). Delivering a comprehensive

combination of security, development and justice would eventually gain the populace's support (See figure 3). Unsatisfactory results in Iraq and Afghanistan have yielded countless publications about counterinsurgency (COIN), including a massive revision in 2006 of its U.S. Army field manual: FM 3-24 "counterinsurgency", its first update in twenty years (twenty-five years for the U.S. Marine Corps) (HQ dept. of the army 2006-vii). This "doctrinal gap" is exemplary of what has been regarded as a lack of institutional learning by Western militaries (Kalyvas 2006: 163 and Ucko 2009: 177). This is despite abundant historical experiences with COIN environments: Kenya, Malaya, and Northern-Ireland in case of the British, The Philippines and Vietnam for the United States, Algeria and Indochina for France and the Dutch Indies for the Netherlands, just to name a few examples.
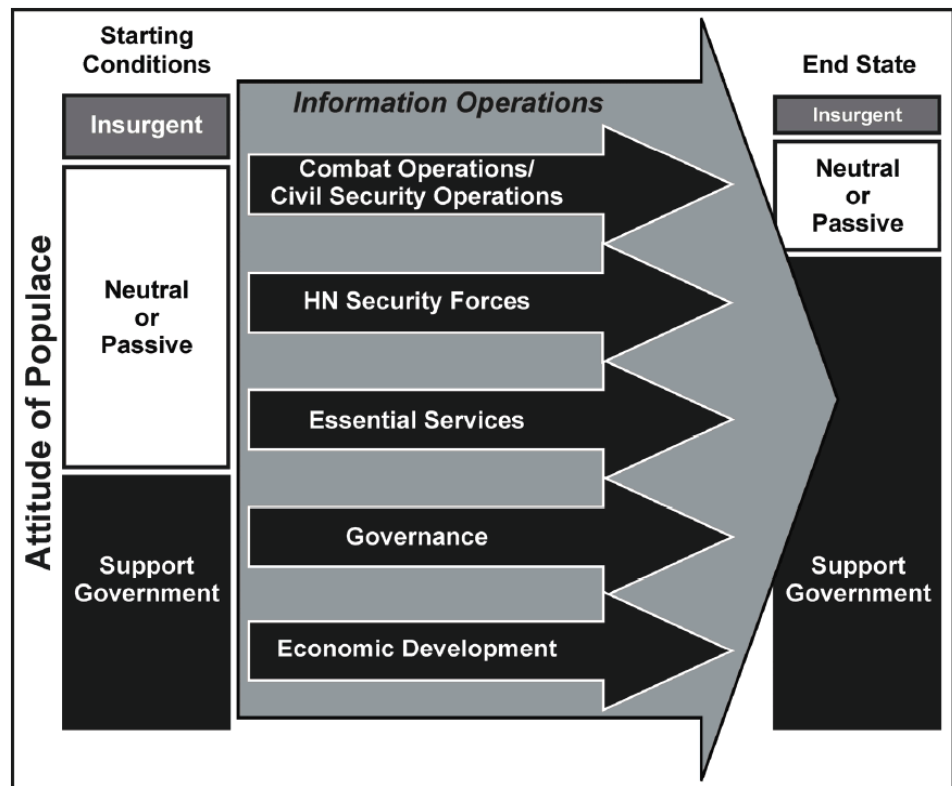

Figure 3. A modern, comprehensive approach for winning popular support in COIN (Department of the Army 2006: 6-6)

2.2 A COUNTERINTUITIVE DISCIPLINE

Admittedly, actual COIN successes are few and have rarely been without controversy. Counterinsurgency can be a rather messy, slow and complicated affair, similar to "eating soup with a knife" in the famous words of T.E. Lawrence "of Arabia"(Lawrence 1927: chapter 33). Its protractedness, restraint and cultural sensitivity tend to be counterintuitive for Western troops trained for high intensity combat. A conventionally trained soldier will, even if he is thoroughly infused with COIN mantras, tend to instinctively react with his traditional *skills & drills* when put under pressure (Lemieux, Jason. 2010 – 2 and[4]). Adaptation to COIN is not just a matter of competence, but also of Western military culture, with its tendency to focus on decisive grand-scale battles between regular forces, a doctrine that could be dated back to Carl von Clausewitz's writings on (Napoleonic) warfare or perhaps even to the hoplites of ancient Greece (Kitzen 2008: 125). The Americans were confronted with the limitations of their military mindset in Vietnam, where the traditional emphasis on firepower alienated the population, and where bodycount, for lack of better alternatives, was used as a measure of success. In the words of a anonymous high officer in Saigon: 'I'll be damned if I permit the U.S. Army, its institutions, its doctrine, and its traditions, to be destroyed just to win this lousy war' (Jenkins 1970:3 in Kitzen 2009: 3). The (lack of) strategy for, and the escalation of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have shown that too little has changed in this respect. Most literature on COIN, generally written from the perspective of a military counterinsurgent, has the inherent tendency to be biased, equaling the insurgent's asymmetrical tactics to immoral behavior (Kalyvas 2006:37). The insurgent on the other hand, may perceive himself a revolutionary, freedom fighter, holy warrior or post-modern swashbuckler. More importantly, he may be perceived as such by others. This might be a cliché, but it reinforces the need to observe an insurgency from a detached, conceptual perspective. Indeed, while insurgency and COIN might seem two "distinctly different operations" (Headquarters department of the army 2006: 1-1), both might also be defined as a "process of competitive state-building" (Kalyvas 2006: 218), in which both parties perceive themselves as a development actor fighting for the loyalty of the population, a view supported by several of my interviewees.[5] While a biased, practical approach to counterinsurgency might be suitable for tactical military planning, they fail to deal with the complex realities of asymmetric conflict, the "greed & grievances" of its actors, and the often heterogeneous nature of an insurgency. While enthusiastically consulting the lessons from the historical sources, the authors of contemporary COIN doctrine seem to assume that some of its basic premises can in some way be circumvented by modern military technologies, tactics and training. Assuming Galula's 20:1 force ratio hits the spot, Afghanistan would require at least one and a half million counterinsurgents, a long shot for even the most optimistic estimates (Central Intelligence Agency 2010). My interviewees questioned some of TFU's attempts to

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[4] Interview S2 PRT 7, July 7th 2010.

[5] Interviews S2 PRT 3 on the 2nd of July 2010, S2 PRT 7 on the 7th of July 2010, Staff Officer Info Ops TFU 7, August 20th 2010 and PsyOps TAA TFU 5/6 on the 27th of September 2010.

"expand the oil spot". After the Taliban had been chased out, they would eventually return because TFU, the Afghan National Police (ANP) or the Afghan National Army (ANA) had no capacity to hold the newly conquered terrain.[6] Although disrupting to the insurgents, it would also likely anger the locals, whose villages and fields were used as a battlefield by unfamiliar ISAF troops. History and qualitative comparison have clearly demonstrated the protracted nature of insurgency. To sustain domestic support, intervening Western counterinsurgents are therefore waging a constant battle against the clock, while "there are no COIN shortcuts" (Connable and Libicki 2010: 153).

2.3 THE AFGHAN CONFLICT

Does ISAF even face an insurgency? Recent studies of the Afghan conflict paint a picture of a Taliban that does not fit the classic insurgent picture: the organization lacks ideological homogeneity, de-evolutionized into different criminal networks and distanced itself from a great part of the population, who continue to support it on pragmatic rather than on ideological basis. Moreover, the Taliban is arguably not even the main destabilizer of Afghanistan, a country that suffers from widespread corrupt institutions (Meredith et al. 2010: 8). One should indeed be cautious when talking about "the Taliban". All attempts to map the organization indicate a wide system of networks and sub-networks, with cleavages on tribal, religious, criminal and ethnic levels, in addition to individual motivations ranging from religious transnational fanaticism to basic subsistence needs, poppy exploiting interests and even the simple human desire for excitement. Hardly all powerful actors hostile to ISAF and the Afghan government consider themselves part of the Taliban. Meredith et al. argues that all insurgencies suffer a kind of "death", on which one part will continue their political struggle by peaceful means, and the other armed and profiting from conflict, devolves into a criminal organization, turning the insurgency's means into ends. (2010: 5) Whether the Afghan conflict currently constitutes an insurgency very much depends on the broadness of the definition used for the latter. Pashtun nationalism, religious extremism, regional power-politics, feudalism and the narcotics trade are only some of the many dynamics of the Afghan conflict. The conflict becomes even more complex when framing it in the context of a global insurgency, driven by a civil war within Islam and a backlash against globalization (Kilcullen 2009: 5-22). Contemporary counterinsurgents face a heterogeneous, dynamic and evolving adversary who eludes most traditional interpretations of COIN (See figure 4).

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[6] Interviews S2 PRT 7 on the 7th of July 2010, S2 PRT 8 on the 22nd of July 2010, PsyOps TAA TFU 5/6 on the 27th of September 2010, Staff Officer Info Ops TFU 7 on the 20th of August 2010
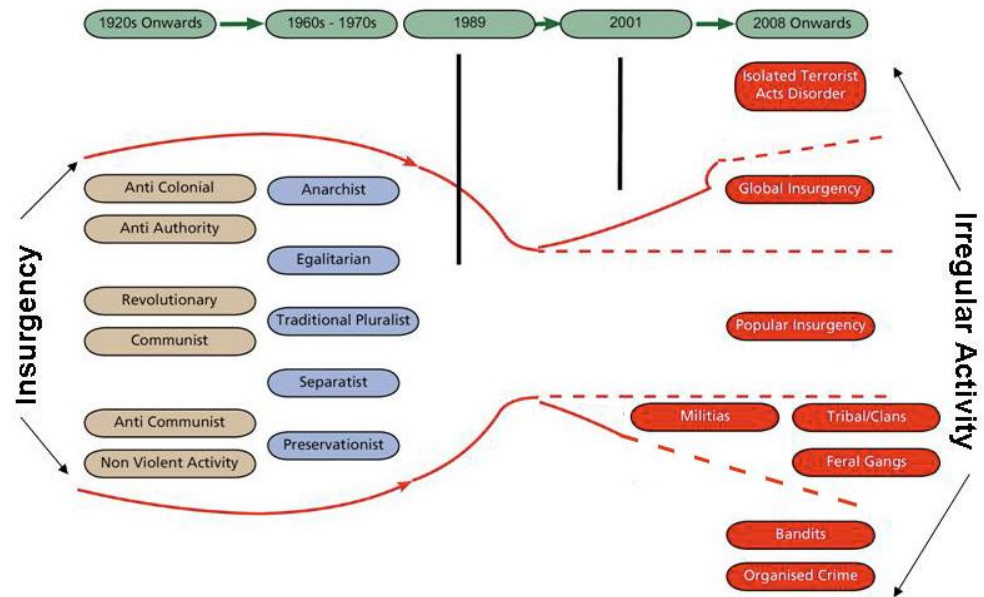
Figure 4. The changing face of insurgency (Ministry of Defence 2009: 2-A-5)

Lack of success or failure to implement is no excuse to throw the baby out with the bath water, but our current understanding of contemporary phenomena falls short. The tactical and operational implementation of countersinurgency may be difficult; they are at least complemented by a solid bibliography. No such framework exists for a *strategy* dealing with contemporary asymmetric challenges. Strictly speaking, counterinsurgency is rather a collection of tactics and operational procedures than strategy. ISAF is therefore *de facto* trying to execute a state building, and/or exit-facilitating strategy. The famous phrase "tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat", often contributed to sixth century BC Chinese general Sun Tzu, is rather troubling in this context. The need for a political strategy does not only stem from the post 9/11 'war on terror , but from a longer trend of lower intensity conflict, peacekeeping operations, transnational crime and "securitization" of state failure since the ending of the cold war (Ucko 2009: 135). Creating such a strategy, requires, among other things: "Deciding whether our interests are best served by intervening in, and trying to mitigate the process of political and religious ferment (…) or by seeking instead to contain any spillover of violence or unrest into Western communities" (Kilcullen 2009: 297). These two options have ignited a lively debate between proponents of the "direct" classical "counterinsurgency" and proponents of an indirect counterterrorism or 'foreign internal defense' approach, with a much smaller footprint of special forces and advisors (Ucko 2009: 174).

Asymmetric warfare is about finding the cheapest way to raise the costs for your opponent to unacceptable levels. Osama bin Laden described AQ's strategy as sending:

two mujahidin to the furthest point East to raise a cloth on which is written al-Qaeda, in order to make the generals race there (...) to suffer human, economic and political losses without achieving for it anything of note (...) so we are continuing this policy of bleeding America to the point of bankruptcy. (Kilcullen 2009: 29)

Classical counterinsurgency is obviously not the way out of this trap. Nor is it likely that Western societies are willing to provide the necessary troop ratio, or the required time for such a commitment. The same goes for state building, which is further exacerbated by the desire to implement out-of-place state institutions. Moreover, intervening is reactionary and thus essentially defensive, and cannot substitute a long-term strategy for dealing with a global insurgency. To avoid oversimplification, such a strategy will not constitute of one single silver bullet or any other "easy" solution. Nor is such a multi-pronged approach within the goal and scope of this thesis. Instead, I want to shift focus to an essential though underappreciated element of contemporary asymmetric conflict. Boiling down to its essence, hearts & minds and terror & propaganda, employed by both insurgents and counterinsurgents are tools in a struggle for *influence*. In most insurgencies, the population is the main source of tangible insurgent support, and therefore crucial for its existence. (Paul et al. 2010: 98-99) Similarly, the COIN force is dependent on the very same population for information. Liberal democratic counterinsurgents also require national support to sustain their policies, and the clash for influence continues in the realm of public relations and propaganda. Ultimately, "it is in men's minds that wars of subversion have to be fought and decided." (Kitson 1971: 31)

3. THE COGNITIVE DIMENSION: INFORMATION AND INFLUENCE

Main Entry: in·flu·ence
Function: noun
1 a : the act or power of producing an effect without any apparent exertion of force or direct exercise of command b : corrupt interference with authority for personal gain
2 : the power or capacity of causing an effect in indirect or intangible ways (Merriam-Webster 1996)

Beat the insurgents and malign actors to the headlines. Preempt rumors (…) Challenge disinformation. Turn our enemies' extremist ideologies, oppressive practices, and indiscriminate violence against them. Hang their barbaric actions like milestones around their necks. (Petraeus 2010: 3)

Cognitive influence is an essential though barely understood element of asymmetric warfare. Insurgent intimidation, propaganda and terrorist tactics have been well documented in classic COIN literature, calling for the need to protect the population from the insurgent (Galula 1964: ix). British Brigadier Carleton-Smith stressed: "Our plan for the Taliban was to try to undermine their strategy, rather than merely fight their forces. Their strategy seemed to be more one of influence, intimidation, and the provision of parallel shadow government than of tactical engagement. Therefore the aim was to marginalize their influence in the centers of population" (Farrell 2010: 582). While separating the insurgent from the population should starve it from a, if not the most important source of support, influencing the insurgency itself requires decomposing it. The political or religious hardcore might not easily be persuaded or deterred, but an organization is usually made up of more components, factions and supporting elements, that may very well be susceptible to pressure or incentives. Actual commitment and motivations may vary greatly, ranging from religious zealousness, greed, power, genuine grievances, fear, family or clan honor, xenophobia, the need for basic income to the simple thrill of being part of an armed movement. Therefore, the insurgency, like the population needs to be treated as a heterogeneous entity that needs to be thoroughly mapped and discriminately targeted (Davis 2010: 2-4). But this recognition is yet to be broadly adopted: "The information side of AQ's [Al Qaida's] operation is primary: the physical is merely the tool to achieve a propaganda result. (…) In military terms, for AQ the 'main effort' is information; for us, information is a 'supporting effort.' (Kilcullen 2009: 300). Acts of terrorism create physical casualties at first, but their secondary cognitive effects (widespread fear and corresponding (policy) behavior) are the primary *desired* effect. The IED likewise, although lethal and highly disruptive, mainly poses a danger because of its cognitive informational effects: It shows the population that a

technologically superior force can be harmed, it undermines counterinsurgent morale and most important of all, it erodes domestic support for the COIN operation. Another example of how tactical tools can be used to achieve operational or strategic effects in asymmetric conflict is a highly successful raid by American Special Forces against the Jaish al-Mahdi "death squad" in March 2006. After eliminating sixteen opposing forces, capturing another sixteen, the rescue of a hostage and the discovery of an insurgent weapons depot, the American and Iraqi forces depart from the location. After forty-five minutes, even before the Coalition forces returned to their compound, images were posted on the internet suggesting the Americans had entered a mosque and executed sixteen civilians during prayer. In fact, the insurgents had removed all weapons from the site and shifted the bodies before publishing staged images and accompanying them with a compromising tale. The story was quickly picked up by the press and the unit was put on non-active pending investigation. By sheer luck, a U.S. combat camera team had been present during the raid quickly absolving the troops of blame. It remains doubtful whether the PR damages, especially in the regional press, could ever be undone. The unit's commander concluded that he would never perform a raid again without either a helmet mounted camera or camera team. (Matthijssen 2010: 525-526) The Taliban also extensively uses propaganda and disinformation campaigns. Much less known is their use of "rules of engagement" forbidding Mujahedin to mutilate, steal and photograph executions. This "rules and regulations" booklet also stresses avoiding innocent civilian casualties in suicide bombings. (Afghanistan Islamic Emirate 2009: 4-9) Additionally, an extensive Taliban public relations apparatus covers the political developments of all ISAF nations and is available for commentary 24/7. (Righton 2010: 2)

3.1 Military Influence Activities

Like insurgencies, the mind as a battlefield is no new phenomenon for militaries. Military commanders of the ancient world were well aware of the importance of domestic support for continuing their campaigns, moreover, intimidating dress, rituals and battle songs can be found throughout many pre-industrial societies. The enormous scale and civilian involvement of 'total war' led to modern institutionalization of the concept in the early twentieth century. A distinction was made between *psychological warfare*, aimed at enemy combatants, and *propaganda* directed at domestic civilian audiences. It was not until the interbellum that dissemination techniques allowed for reaching the populace of the opponent, a practice that was expanded throughout World War 2. Around the same time, the development took place of what we would now call public affairs. After the Cold War, "psychological operations" (or PsyOps) became confronted with a new world order in which intra-state conflict became increasingly prevalent. These conflicts entered Western households through television, and the 'CNN-effect' urged policy makers to act against this human suffering. For all involved in these kinds of peacekeeping missions or humanitarian interventions, the focus shifted to interaction with the population instead of the enemy, and PsyOps had to adapt to a broad range of

non-traditional military activities, such as civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) and public affairs. In a globalized, multi-dimensional theater in which operations are conducted among the population (such as COIN), the artificial lines between PsyOps, CIMIC and public affairs are blurring while their significance is increasing. The designation Information Operations (Info Ops) is an attempt to integrate and define these efforts (Taylor 2008: 1-11). Because Information Operations is very much a developing niche, its numerous definitions run amok (OTCO 2010: 2). NATO defines Info Ops as:

A military function to provide advice and coordination of military information in order to create desired effects on the will, understanding and capability of adversaries and other NAC [North Atlantic Council] approved parties in support of Alliance mission objectives"

This Definition for Information Operations has often been criticized for being too broad and too vague (Chuka 2009: 91). In an attempt to remedy this, the U.S. Army has categorized Info Ops activities under broad information tasks (See fig. 5).

Task	Intended Effects	Command and Control	Information Protection	Operations Security	Military Deception
Intended Effects	Inform and educated internal and external audiences Influence the behaviour of target audiences	Degrade, disrupt, destroy, and exploit enemy command and control	Protect vital intelligence on friendly forces to hostile collection	Deny vital intelligence on friendly forces to hostile collection	Confuse enemy decision makers
Capabilities	Leader and soldier engagement Public Affairs Psychological operations Combat camera Strategic communi-cation and Defence support to public diplomacy	Physical attack Electronic attack Electronic warfare support Computer network attack Computer network exploitation	Information assurance Computer network defence Electronic protection	Operations security Physical Security Counter-intelligence	Military deception

Figure 5. U.S. Army Information Operations (Chuka 2009: 94)

 Alternatively, the Canadians make a distinction between orders of effects and desired effects on both the physical and psychological plane (See fig. 6). For example: the construction of a well for fresh water and improvements in sanitation (physical) may be the first order effect of the activity, but the secondary effect, improved local relations with coalition forces (psychological), is the primary desired effect (Chuka 2009: 92).
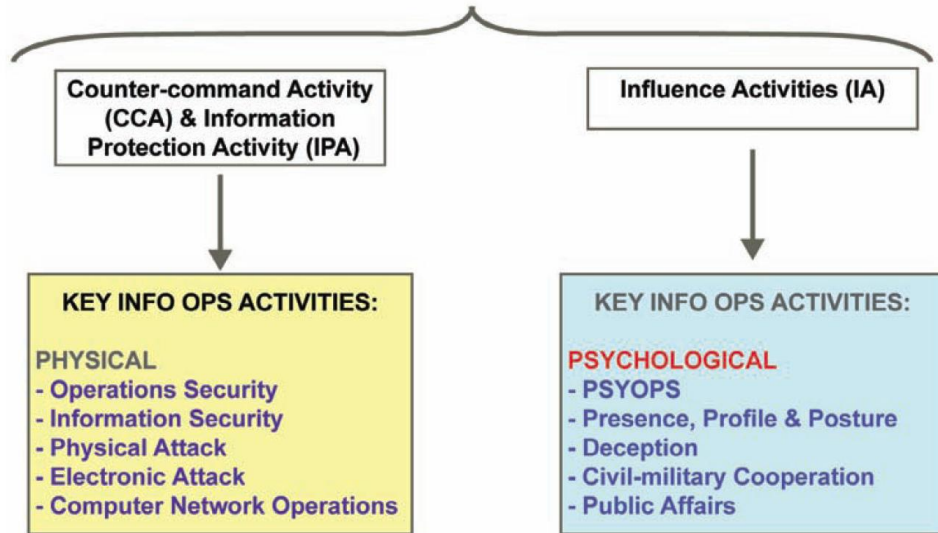
Figure 6. Canadian Army Information Operations (Chuka 2009: 93)

While the Canadians consider Influence Activities to be part of the psychological dimension of Info Ops, the British argue that it should in fact be the other way around (See fig. 7).
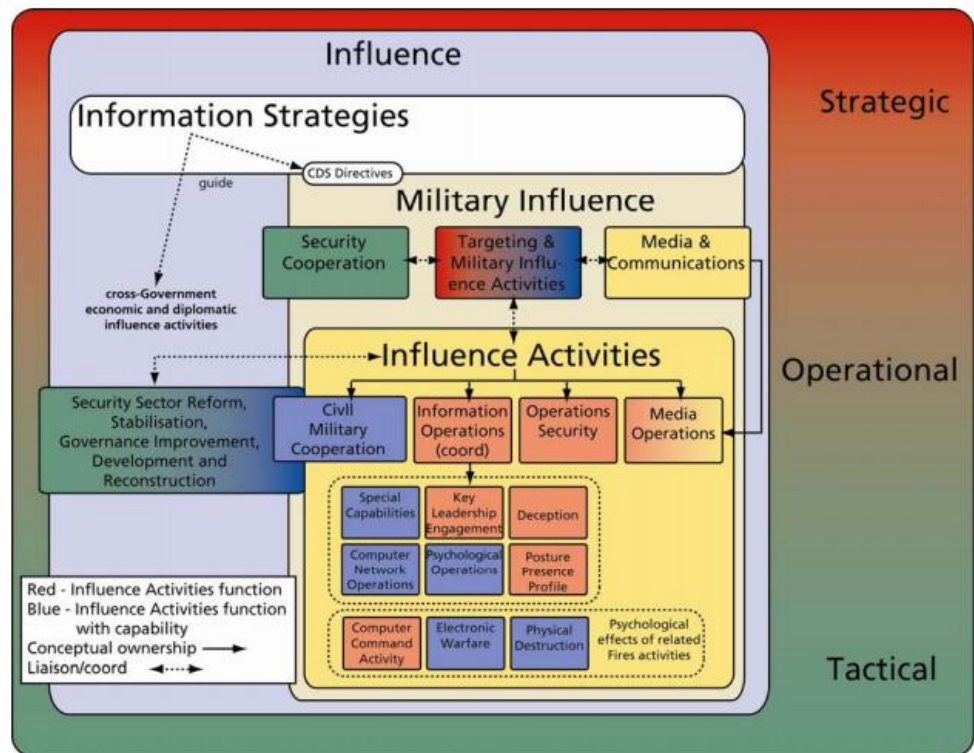

Figure 7. British Army Elements of Influence Activity (Ministry of Defence 2009: 6-7)

Furthermore, they have adopted a far broader conception of "influence" including an over-arching information strategy and a civilian component.

3.2 A NEW APPROACH

One could go even further and argue that 'every activity in an area of operations should be planned and executed as an influence activity, coordinating messages of any nature.'[7] This last definition mimics the Obama administration's interpretation of 'strategic communication' (STRATCOMM), or *the orchestration of actions, words, and images to achieve cognitive effects in support of policy and military objectives.* (Matthijsen 2010: 520) Finally, a very similar definition for "influence operations" is given by RAND:

"Influence operations are the coordinated, integrated, and synchronized application of national diplomatic, informational, military, economic, and other capabilities in peacetime, crisis, conflict, and postconflict to foster attitudes, behaviors, or decisions by foreign target audiences that further U.S. interests and objectives.(…) While we argue that influence operations focus on communications, to be effective, these activities need to be synchronized, coordinated, and integrated so that communications and real-world "sticks" and "carrots"—and other means of influence—operate together as part of larger, coherent strategies" (Larson et al. 2009: 2-4) (See figure 8).
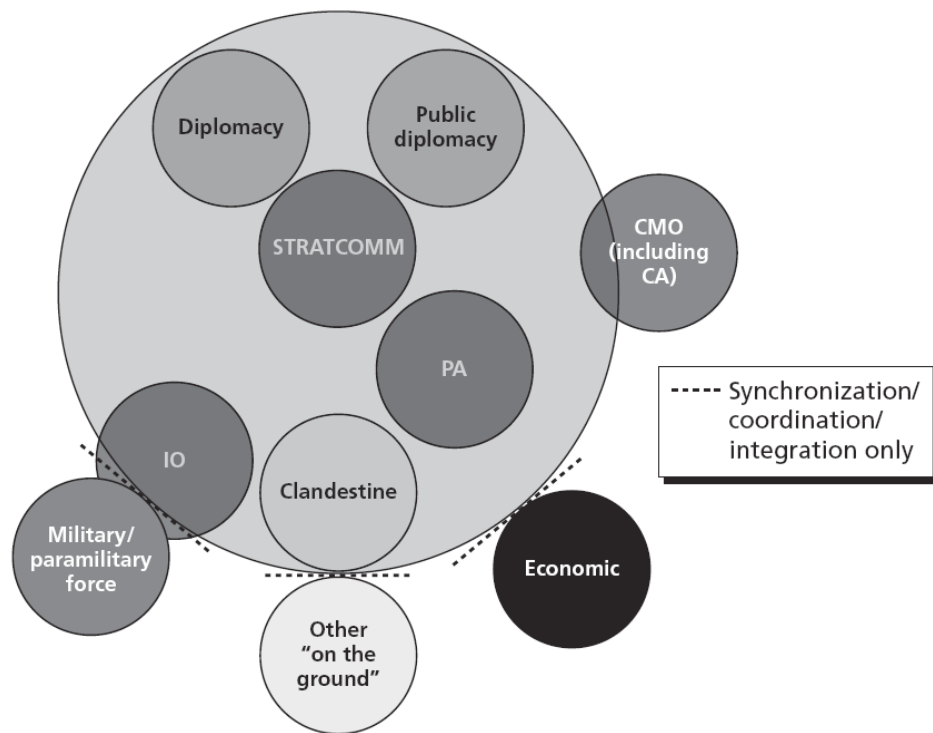

Figure 8. RAND Elements of Influence Operations (Larson et al. 2010: xiii)

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[7] Interview Staff Officer Info Ops TFU 7, August 20ᵗʰ 2010

Rather than a separate activity, it would be a overarching strategy that should synchronize and coordinate information, be it in words, images or actions, in order to project a consistent message or narrative to certain target audiences. While InfoOps mainly tries to influence decision making capacities (be it persons, systems or processes), influence operations and STRATCOMM attempts to influence perceptions, attitudes and behavior by focusing on the cognitive dimension. They acknowledge communication to be a two-way process, requiring understanding as well as engaging these audiences. Process being paramount here, makes the question of related activities and capabilities largely irrelevant. Both are, contrary to what the name strategic communication suggests, not limited to the strategic level but applicable to all levels of conflict. For counterinsurgency this would mean that: 'At the global level, this effort is about winning the "war of ideas." At the theater level, the task is to combat asymmetrical adversaries, while establishing security, transforming the basis of government and extending the legitimacy of host nations' (Collings & Rohozinski 2010: 1) Integrating the information dimension into our thinking requires a holistic approach to warfare conflicting with traditional Western military culture. (Wass de Czege 2010: 7-8) To make things worse, actual cognitive or informational effects are notoriously hard to measure in contrast to conventional kinetic action (Rowland 2010: 7). Illusions of "information bombarding", or false impressions that information superiority is a simple matter of resources and effort should be avoided. Continuous feedback is a fundamental requirement. If the intended message does not resonate with its target audience or is not paralleled by consistent actions, little success can be expected. The intervening "stranger" is always at a disadvantage when playing this game (Wass de Czege 2010: 11) The cognitive dimension does not only apply to all levels of conflict, but to all forms of military conduct, physically and verbally, intended or not. This is not limited to prudent Rules Of Engagement (ROE) and "simple" consistency: the decision to drive a convoy through someone's crops to avoid IEDs also has an informational effect.[8] So does a culturally insensitive cordon and search operation.[9] And a narrative claiming an improved security situation loses all credibility when troops are ordered to switch to heavy ballistic protection and armored vehicles. National audiences should also be taken into the equation. Rushed 24-hour reporting increases the difficulty of countering disinformation (Helmus 2007: summary xiv). The importance of domestic support in open, democratic societies does not require many examples, and is especially relevant due to the protracted and brutal nature of intrastate conflict (Bunker 2010: 3). An asymmetric environment requires countering insurgent propaganda and discrediting his strategy in the eyes of the population. Perhaps the most daunting task is convincing the people of your agenda. The battle for hearts and minds goes beyond acquiring sympathy and limiting collateral damage, it is about convincingly arguing that you will be able to offer them a better, legitimate and more credible future in face of fervent violent and/or popular insurgent opposition. Considering TFU's limited resources to capture and mainly hold terrain, an InfoOps

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[8] Interview Staff Officer Info Ops TFU 7, August 20th 2010
[9] Interview S2 PRT 7 on the 7ᵗʰ of July 2010

officer advocated stopping unattainable efforts to expand the oil spot. He suggested creating "little paradises" instead, providing security and expanding development activities in areas already held. These should work as a magnet for the Afghan government's cause by essentially creating informational effects.[10] But again, if a powerful narrative is not reflected in other conduct, its effects may be lost: "The critical problem in American public diplomacy directed towards the Muslim world is not one of 'dissemination of information' or even one of crafting and delivering the 'right' message. Rather it is a fundamental problem of credibility. Simply there is none." (Rashid 2009: lvi) In order to create messages that resonate with all different target groups within the population, insurgent motivations, grievances and conflict root causes need to be identified, no easy task by any accounts. This is especially true in non-Western cultures, such as Afghanistan: Imagine a political campaign in an area ridden with violence, (Flynn 2010: 11) illiteracy and a vast number of peoples' speaking languages alien to you. There is limited infrastructure and little media accessibility, the existence of most of the constituency is unknown, let alone the vast range of their cultural features, sympathies, affiliations and socio-economic conditions.

3.3 INFORMATION SUPPORT TO INFLUENCE

The TFU PsyOps Support Element (PSE) also struggled with these issues. The PSE consisted of about thirteen persons, including a staff and four Tactical PsyOps Teams (TPTs) who went into the field to acquire feedback on PSE products. Since the Dutch military does not have a dedicated psychological operations unit, they lacked specialists with a relevant background and had little time to prepare for their assignment. A common PSE product was the use of flyers, on which for example the Taliban is discredited or locals are encouraged to report Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). This medium of communication has been criticized for not reaching Afghans, who are supposedly less susceptible to these kinds of visual stimuli than Western consumers.[11] Likewise, expensive U.S. made TV advertisements have been ridiculed for Afghanistan's widespread lack of television sets or even electricity. The same can be said about the distribution of ISAF newspapers in a mainly illiterate country. (Svet 2010: 1-2) One of my S2 interviewees had to intervene when a PsyOps banner saying: 'The Taliban are killing your children' was about to be distributed in a village that turned out to be predominantly inhabited by the parents of local insurgents. He suggested instead focusing on their group identity, which had been suppressed by the majority Popolzai before finding refuge with the Taliban. Under the new government they were equal, and would not need insurgent protection anymore[12]. As the importance of the cognitive dimension in asymmetric conflict is increasingly acknowledged, militaries have tried to adapt existing structures to provide a framework for expanding influence. So far, they

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[10] Interview Staff Officer Info Ops TFU 7, August 20th 2010
[11] Interview PSE Target Audience Analyst TFU 5/6, September 27th 2010.
[12] Interview S2 PRT 8, July 22nd 2010.

mostly constitute an arbitrary selection of somewhat correlated activities, rather than truly integrating and synchronizing influence throughout all military conduct. My InfoOps interviewee, STRATCOMM and RAND's influence operations propone such an approach, but reality indicates we are far from such an implementation. "In any situation, whatever the cause, there will be an active minority for the cause, a neutral majority, and an active minority against the cause." (Galula 1964: 53) In a counterinsurgency, it is mainly this neutral majority's decision making that needs to be shaped: Informing the counterinsurgent about IEDs, actively participating in peaceful political process and sharing information are all desired behaviors of the population. But more often, inaction (e.g. not placing an IED or otherwise actively supporting the insurgency) is a more attainable objective when the populace is faced with insurgent intimidation. Modest influence aims should not be underestimated: sufficient deterred or dissuaded undesirable actions can, in addition to saving actual lives, have a cumulative effect on insurgent behavior. (Davis 2010: 21) In order to integrate "influence" into COIN planning mechanisms, I will explore a two-pronged approach: First, presenting a theoretical framework for enhancing influence using social marketing principles, and second, incorporating intelligence as a research tool for identifying key players, needs, grievances and target audience analysis in a complex and hostile environment. Creating a tailored influence strategy requires substantial understanding of the human terrain. (Ward 2003: 22) In a pre-industrial, complex and very unstable country like Afghanistan, acquiring this kind of information demands an extensive and particular kind of intelligence. I will start by comparing the *de facto* adaptation of TFU's PRT intelligence with historical accounts and lessons of intelligence in a COIN environment.

4. INTELLIGENCE: INFORMATION SUPPORT TO HEARTS AND MINDS

Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them: "Go up into the Negev yonder, and go up into the hill country, and see what the land is, and whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many, and whether the land they dwell in is good or bad, and whether the cities that they dwell in are camps or strongholds, and whether the land is rich or poor. (Numbers 13:17-20)

Information is a key resource in irregular war. (Kalyvas 2006: 174)

Task Force Uruzgan was supported by an extensive intelligence apparatus, including UAVs, Human Intelligence (HUMINT) teams, electronic warfare and geographical analysts. In addition to these, there was the All Source Intelligence Cell (ASIC), the PsyOps Support Element (PSE) and the intelligence sections (S2) of the Battlegroup and Provincial Reconstruction Team. The PRT was further reinforced by a Cultural Advisor (CULAD, formerly Tribal Advisor or TRIBAD) and a Political Advisor (POLAD) for mapping the human terrain. The PRT S2's main eyes and ears outside of the gate were the Mission Teams (MTs) technically a CIMIC unit with ample hands-on experience with their respective mission areas. Current Dutch army intelligence doctrine LD-5, applicable during all TFU rotations defines *intelligence* as: 'the product of the collection and processing of information on foreign powers, enemy or potential hostile (elements of) regular and irregular forces. In addition to information about (potential) mission areas and corresponding circumstances, the term is also used for the *activity* leading to the product and for the *organizations* involved' (Koninklijke Landmacht 2006: 10). Traditionally, military intelligence has dealt with the topics 'weather, terrain and enemy', providing corresponding information to staff officers and commanders in support of policy-and decision making. The 2006 doctrine prefers a slightly different 'weather, terrain and *threat*', the latter constituting both enemy and potential negative influencers of mission outcome. Its goal is primarily to maximize the effects of offensive activities, and secondarily to protect one's own forces. Furthermore, intelligence contributes to the 'situational awareness' of the commander, enabling him or her to act proactively. (Koninklijke Landmacht 2006: 15) Every intelligence product has gone through similar phases, also known as the intelligence cycle. I have used this cycle as a basic framework for interviewing S2 intelligence officers of the PRT. LD-5's interpretation constitutes of four phases. Although five or more phases are not uncommon, they roughly constitute the same process (See figure 9).
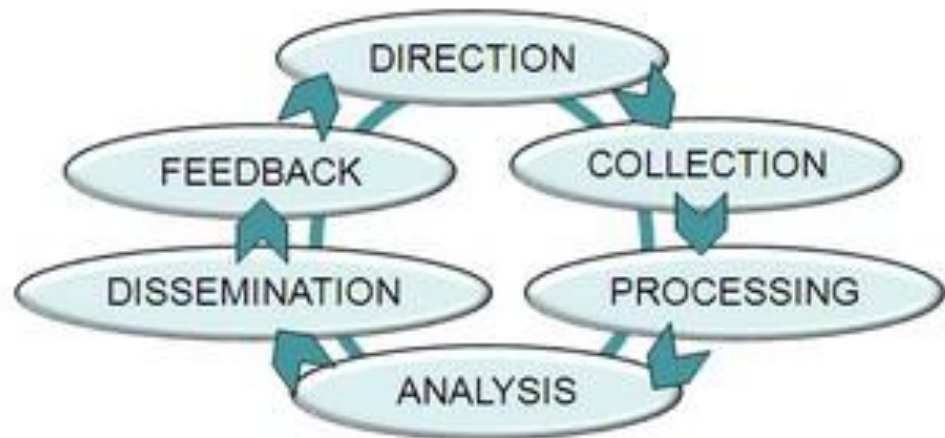
Figure 9. The Intelligence Cycle

Direction involves establishing the intelligence requirements by the commander, and dividing these in main- and sub questions, and planning the collection activities. *Collection* entails timely provision of the desired information and managing the collection processes. *Processing* is required to turn the information into intelligence by collation, evaluation of its credibility, analysis, integration and finally interpretation. The product is then distributed to the relevant consumers through *Dissemination*, directly, by briefing or added to consumer accessible databases, special maps or other information systems. This last phase also facilitates a certain level of feedback, where new intelligence requirements can be established.

4.1 INTELLIGENCE IN COUNTERINSURGENCY AND STABILITY OPERATIONS

Intelligence has quite a unique position in counterinsurgency operations, adapting to this position has been, and still is difficult for an organization primarily structured for conventional warfare. Dutch military intelligence during the Cold War benefited from the assumption that it was dealing with a relatively predictable enemy. It had established the gaps the massive Warsaw Pact land forces would have to use to move through Germany, and its numbers, tactics and maneuvers could fairly easy be monitored by satellite or "imagery intelligence" (IMINT). By assessing "weather, terrain and enemy" intelligence supported the commander's decision-making and the execution by the S3 operations officer. Monitoring an enemy that lives and hides among the population, is something else entirely. Even if that population is not actively or passively assisting the insurgent, fear for retaliation will likely coercive them to decide against exposing him. Frank Kitson and David Galula, veterans of Malaya and Algeria respectively, are both proponents of a "policing" approach of intelligence in COIN operations, stressing the need for a localized,

sophisticated criminal investigation capability. Indeed, the organizational structures of an insurgency often mimic that of a criminal organization, and illegal sources of income can even become an end of their own. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has often been accused of having turned from a Marxist-leninist revolutionary guerilla into a Narcotics based criminal organization. (Meredith et al. 2010: 5) Investigation tools such as social networking software and biometric enrollment were eventually introduced, but were not used to their full potential by all S2's due to lack of training or finding the systems overly complicated.[13] Locating an opponent that effectively hides among the population requires the eyes and ears of that same populace, which would be provided by successful "hearts and minds": 'Intelligence is the principal source of information on guerillas, and intelligence has to come from the population, but the population will not talk unless it feels safe, and it does not feel safe until the insurgent's power has been broken.' (Galula 1967: 50) One way around this paradox is creating possibilities for the population to safely interact with the counterinsurgent. In Northern Ireland, regularized interactions through checkpoint facilitated a sharing opportunity for the population. (Jackson 2007: 79) The PRT had a "PRT house" in Kamp Holland especially for this purpose. Financial or other compensations were a main motivator for "walk-ins,"[14] although visiting the PRT house in Tarin Kowt could hardly be done unseen which deterred all but some.[15] 'Everyone knows, when you are going to the PRT house you are either A: Taliban, B: a strong neutral player, or C: already publicly designated as government.'[16] Alternatively, the PRT received information by telephone or on patrols. Sometimes they had to be a little creative, for example claiming they had stopped a patrol to ask the way. One village elder even suggested to be publicly arrested in order to speak freely, a proposal which was understandably denied. In the end, the PRT house was primarily used as a conference room for talking with local powerbrokers, established informants and contractors.[17] To further increase the amount of usually low-grade, although ultimately vital information, every soldier has to participate in the collection effort. (Galula 1964: 80) In an asymmetric environment, Low-level troops are both the main consumers and producers of intelligence, due to the flexible and localized manifestation of insurgencies. Top-down intelligence structures are unfit to deal with these realities. (Teamey and Sweet 2010: 25) The PRT S2s regularly (de)briefed patrols for this reason, and collected information through Mission Teams. Technically, the MTs were a CIMIC tool for initiating and managing development projects outside the gate. Because every Mission Team had its own operational area with their own network of contacts, powerbrokers and informants, caused one to complain that 'we're basically doing HUMINT'[18] [Human Intelligence] All my interviewees agreed that the line between the two was very much fading[19] This meant that the S2 had to instill the Mission Teams and cultural and political

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[13] Interview S2 PRT 8, July 22nd 2010.
[14] Interview S2 PRT 5, July 1st 2010.
[15] Interview S2 PRT 7, July 7th 2010.
[16] Interview S2 PRT 3, July 2nd 2010.
[17] Interview S2 PRT 8, July 22nd 2010.
[18] Interview S2 PRT 3, July 2nd 2010.
[19] Interview S2 PRT 8, July 22nd 2010.

advisors, with neither intelligence training nor background, of the PRT's intelligence requirements:

One day this MT guy was complaining about the delays of his road construction project, telling me that the road was filled with debris and bottleneck passages. I realized that this was basically an IED heaven, and I immediately rushed him to the engineers. There is useful information everywhere, but people do not always realize it.[20]

The situational awareness differed from fair to good between mission teams. (…) Some would not understand that an intelligence analyst is very much interested in background information, whether someone was angry, wore expensive clothes or if his wife was present during the meeting.[21]

4.2 POPULATION CENTRIC INTELLIGENCE

The direction phase is the most important one; you never get any answers if you ask the wrong questions. Therefore, you're assignment must be clear, what does a PRT do? We chose a kind of statebuilding light: Enhancing the position of the Afghan government towards the population. Questions that arose were: How is the present situation? What tools do we have to influence it? Who is in charge? What leverage do we have over him?[22]

That asking the right questions matters is stressed by Major General Michael T. Flynn. In a disparaging paper on the U.S intelligence community's efforts in Afghanistan, he asserts the current perceived lack of relevancy of 'asking the right questions'. Flynn argues a shift from "enemy-centric" to "population-centric" information, or "the social, ethnographic, cultural, economic, and political elements of the people among whom the force is operating" (Kipp and Lau 2006: 8) (See figure 10).

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[20] Interview S2 PRT 3, July 2nd 2010.
[21] Interview S2 PRT 7, July 7th 2010.
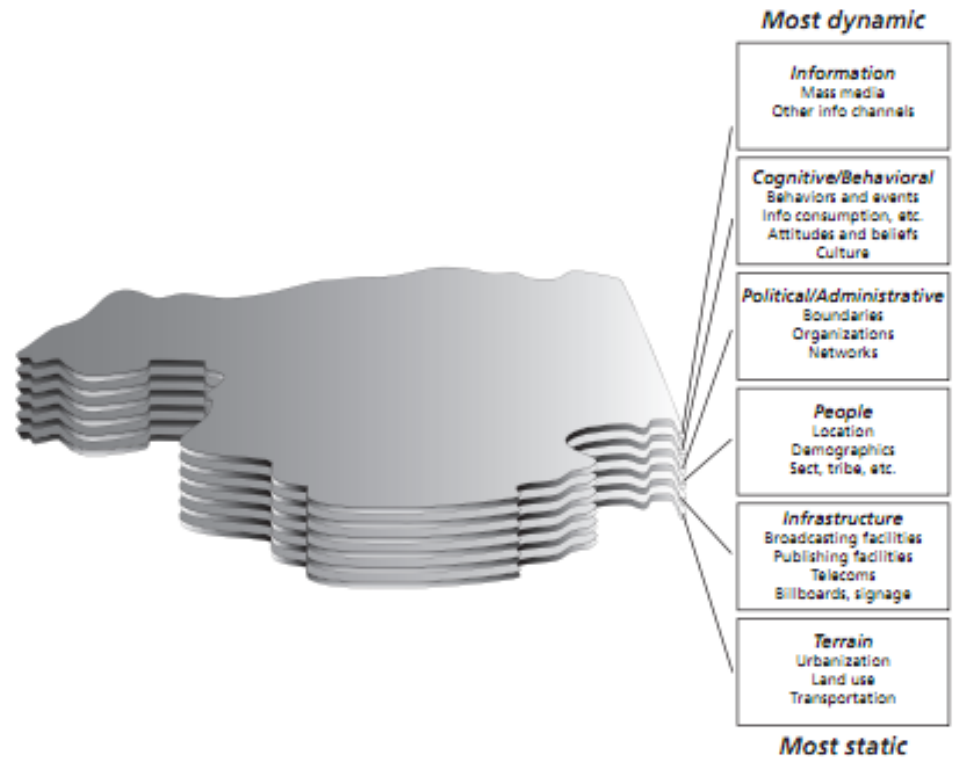[22] Interview S2 PRT 3, July 2nd 2010.

Figure 10. Critical information for leveraging popular support (Larson et al.2009: 45)

 "This vast and underappreciated body of information, almost all of which is unclassified, admittedly offers few clues about where to find insurgents, but it does provide elements of even greater strategic importance – a map for leveraging popular support and marginalizing the insurgency itself" (Flynn 2010: 7) Note that Flynn departs here from classical COIN authors such as Kitson and Galula who, though stressing the importance of hearts and minds, argue that physically defeating the insurgents is required to succeed. All my interviewees acknowledged the need for a robust combat-ready element in any counterinsurgency force. This is required for force protection but also for providing security, disrupting insurgents and as a credible deterrent ("minds"). But they also agreed that ISAF lacked the required resources by a long shot to conduct a classical counterinsurgency in Afghanistan, and that the combat oriented part of TFU was overemphasized vis-à-vis essential non-kinetic units.[23] Furthermore, several argued that the Taliban was hardly Afghanistan's biggest problem, instead pointing fingers to the corrupt Afghan government and ongoing tribal conflicts.[24] It is interesting to question what it is that should be countered here, a heterogeneous insurgency as just a symptom of a "constantly changing chaotic cannibalistic state"? (Meredith et al. 2010: 1) One S2 explained that he was mainly interested in the original ongoing tribal conflicts, Taliban

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[23] Interviews S2 PRT 7 on the 7th of July 2010, S2 PRT 8 on the 22nd of July 2010, PsyOps TAA TFU 5/6 on the 27th of September 2010, Staff Officer Info Ops TFU 7 on the 20th of August 2010

[24] Interviews S2 PRT 8, July 22nd 2010, S2 PRT 7, July 7th 2010 and PSE Target Audience Analyst TFU 5/6, September 27th 2010.

were frequently hired as mercenaries herein.[25] An earlier rotation argued that his business was not weather, terrain and enemy, but rather 'opportunities and threats'. He told me that the TFU intelligence elements had a hard time appreciating the multi-dimensional nature of the conflict. Most were primarily interested in the Taliban, but to alter the relative position of the government they would also have to comprehend and engage the tribal hierarchies and other powerful actors. That turned out to be more difficult than previously thought, 'we are used to a 2-dimensional reality, government versus enemy.'[26] Put otherwise, "Current intelligence systems and organizations still remain primarily structured to support commanders in physical combat." (Kipp and Grau 2006: 5) One major attempt to remedy these shortcomings is the American Human Terrain System (HTS), which is largely inspired by the Vietnam-era Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program. Both programs were built on the conviction that their respective wars "would be ultimately won or lost not on the battlefield, but in the struggle for the loyalty of the people." (Kipp and Grau 2006: 3) HTS uses Human Terrain Teams (HTTs) consisting of social scientists such as anthropologists and economists to gather and support the counterinsurgents with cultural data. This out-of-the-box approach has fueled resistance among social scientists who fear endangering their profession and militarization to some kind of "mercenary anthropology." (González 2007: 19) TFU had no Human Terrain System but used cultural advisors and human terrain analysts as a specialized source for population related data instead. The PRT intelligence contribution was valued highly by the G2 because its developmental nature made it a natural supplier of population-centric intelligence.[27] Looking at the population rather than at the enemy can also affect decision-making processes. Working in a complex human environment, TFU commanders and operational officers were often forced to look to their intelligence officers for current "opportunities & threats", favoring intelligence or "intel"-driven structures. There was disagreement among my interviewees on whether PRT operations were truly intel driven, but intelligence definitely played a more dominant role in planning processes. Putting understandable critique of lacking capacity and influence on decision making, which can be found within all organizations aside, the lack of preparation of S2 officers was surprising to me. Like PsyOps, intelligence is not considered a specialization (like the U.S. military MOS) among Dutch armed forces, which would sometimes lead to a 'ragtag crowd'[28] of intelligence personnel. Most striking was the S2 of PRT 4, whose deployment was rushed to the point where he even lacked the introductory intelligence course prior to his departure.[29] Effectively establishing leverage among complex societies requires a professional intelligence apparatus with more population centric elements. The Dutch armed forces might want to rethink the role of intelligence on the contemporary battlefield, as future deployments may very well involve similarly invisible and unpredictable adversaries. Already being a specialization in the militaries of many NATO allies, professionalizing

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[25] Interview S2 PRT 5, July 1st 2010.

[26] Interview S2 PRT 3, July 2nd 2010.

[27] Interviews S2 PRT 6, July 8th 2010; S2 PRT 7, July 7th 2010 and S2 PRT 8, July 22nd 2010

[28] Interview S2 PRT 5, July 1st 2010.

[29] Interview S2 PRT 4, June 29th 2010.

intelligence would not require reinventing the wheel, and is a far more credible goal than restructuring the whole military for counterinsurgency operations, whatever that may entice. Using population centric information to repurpose military counterinsurgency tools for influencing decision making requires a different framework than traditional geographical effects based planning. I will explore this notion in the following chapter.

5. Social Marketing: Integrating and synchronizing the counter narrative

In order to actually operationalize the abstract concept of influence, clear objectives are a prerequisite. Essentially, effective influence during stability operations would entail persuading actors to peaceful political process, and deterring or dissuading them from (supporting) the insurgency and other destabilizing actions. (Larson et al. 2010: 82) This behavior focused approach is critical. Although attaining popularity is an important benefit to the counterinsurgent, it may be of little use when the population is being intimidated or already predisposed towards the insurgent. In some areas, the counterinsurgent will never win popular support. In others, popular support will not translate to increased stability. Social marketing is all about selling behaviors. It is the "process that applies marketing principles and techniques to create, communicate, and deliver value in order to influence target audience behaviors that benefit society (…) as well as the target audience." (Kotler and Lee 2008: 7) Arguably as old as advertising itself, social marketing was officially coined in 1971 in the article: "Social Marketing: An Approach to Planned Social Change by Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman. Commercial marketing aims to sell a tangible product or service for financial gain, while social marketing aims to sell a behavior for both individual and societal gain. Naturally, deciding what is in the best interest of an individual and society is a matter of perspective. Social marketing has been mainly used for relatively uncontroversial topics such as donating blood, anti-smoking and fighting poverty, not the violent political dynamics of an insurgency. Nevertheless, creating a perception of mutual gain that outweighs the perceived costs is a powerful principle. The "brand" of the counterinsurgent may be very appealing for a number of reasons (democratic institutions, reconstruction) but its costs (insurgent retaliation) may simply be too high (Trent and Doty III 2005: 71). Marketing in pre-industrial and unstable societies is obviously not the same as in Western communities, and planners will face limitations acquiring the desired data. However, a comprehensive population-centric intelligence apparatus as I have advocated in the previous chapter is probably the next best thing for conducting market research. Despite its differences, social marketing shares several characteristics with its commercial brother:

- Customer orientation: the offer needs to appeal to the audience
- Exchange theory: perceived benefits equal or exceed perceived costs
- Marketing research throughout process: Audience's needs, desires, beliefs attitudes
- Segmented audiences: Strategies must be tailored to the former
- All four P's are considered: Integration of Product, Price, Place and Promotion
- Results are measured: Feedback is critical
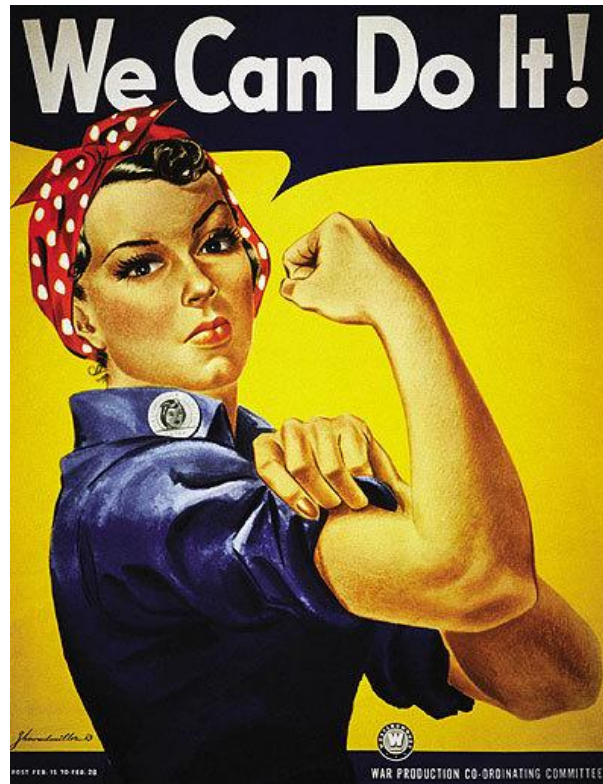
(Kotler and Lee 2009: 55-56)

Figure 11. Social marketing *avant la lettre*: "Rosie the Riveter" was used
for recruiting women in the workforce during World War two

A simple starting point for influence planning would be to conduct a SWOT analysis. This
entails mapping Strengths and Weaknesses (internal factors) and Opportunities and
Threats (external factors) of an organization. Conducting such an analysis on the
counterinsurgent, host government and (elements of) the insurgency will quickly map
the competitive environment and highlight areas of focus. Next up is segmenting and
targeting the market. A market segment is a group who share a similar set of needs,
wants, and preferences. Major variables in determining these are demographic,
geographic, psychographic and behavior-related. Considering our goal, the last variable
is essential for determining "the level of anticipated support to counterinsurgent
presence and objectives" (Helmus et al. 2007: xvi). The others can be used for describing
the segments and further tailoring a strategy. Dealing with limited resources, one or
more of these segments must be targeted. There are several models to do this, which I
will not all list here. One example is Alan Andreasen's Multiple Factors model, which
scores segments according to criteria such as:

- Size (of the segment)
- Incidence (of undesirable behavior)
- Severity (of undesirable behavior)
- Defenselessness (what segments can "take care of themselves?")
- Reachability (access to, and homogeneity of the segment)

- Readiness to change ((Pre-) Contemplation, Preparation/In Action, Maintenance)
- Costs (compared to other segments)
- Responsiveness (to counterinsurgent tools)

(Andreasen 1995: 177-179 in: Kotler and Lee 2009: 117-118)

It should be noted that the target audience does not always have to be the ultimate target, like focusing on parents when trying to curb teen smoking (Larson et al. 2010: 102). An influential person (village elder) or facilitator (trader who smuggles weapons on the side) could be used for this. After targeting an audience, the next step is determining which desired behavior to accept, reject, modify or abandon. It is helpful to initially focus on one specified measurable behavior, after adoption you can move on to other increasingly ambitious behaviors. According to Icek Ajzen, the best predictor of someone's behavior is his or her *intention* to perform the behavior. This is determined by the person's attitude towards the behavior, the subjective norm or perceived social pressure by influential actors and the perceived behavioral control, or the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior (Ajzen 2005 in: Kotler and Lee 2009: 144). If the behavior passes the actor's perceived cost-benefit analysis, and if no *actual* lack of skill or environmental constraints prevent it, the behavior is likely to be adopted. (See Figure 12)
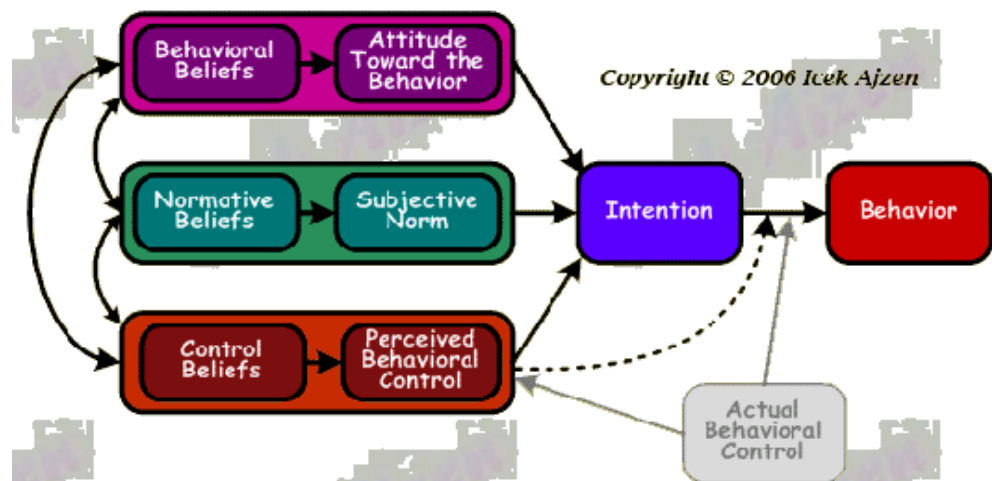
Figure 12. Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen n.d. http://people.umass.edu/aizen/tpb.diag.html)

In addition to the target's intention towards a specific behavior, you should also consider its *impact* on your objectives, the level of *support or resistance* it generates among policy makers, facilitators, the media and other critical actors and its *consistency* with your narrative, resources and expertise. In order to get someone to adopt a behavior, you have to first identify its benefits, barriers and competition. There are four broad approaches for beating the competition: First, increasing the *perception of the benefits* of the desired behavior. And second, increase the *costs* of the undesirable behavior.

Likewise, you can also attempt decreasing the cost of the desired behavior and decreasing the perceived benefits of the competing behavior (Kotler and Lee 2009: 178).

5.1 THE MARKETING MIX

Consider this example: synthetic fertilizer from Pakistan is used extensively by farmers in Uruzgan, but is also a main ingredient for IED's, the insurgent's weapon of choice. Simply outlawing synthetic fertilizer would ruin crops, cause public outcry and encourage smuggling and joining the insurgency. Building a factory for non-ammonium nitrate fertilizer in Uruzgan would create employment, (increase benefits desired behavior) reduce transportation distances (decrease cost of desired behavior), and allow for regulating ammonium-nitrate based fertilizer (increase cost undesirable behavior). Effective communication channels (village elders, religious leaders) may be adopted to inform farmers of the advantages of local fertilizer. They may be further persuaded by subsidizing the purchase of local fertilizer, with a cumulative effect on employment and security.[30] A traditional marketing toolbox consists of the four P's: Product, Price, Place and Promotion. A tailored combination of these makes up the marketing mix of a specific case. The *product* can take on all sorts of forms: an idea, service, person, organization or information for example. It consists of three product levels: an augmented product (tangible objects and services to support behavior change), the actual product (the desired behavior) and the core product (benefits of the desired behavior) (Kotler et al. 2002: 196). In the example given earlier, subsidies and a nearer fertilizer distribution point would be the augmented product. Buying local, non ammonium-nitrate based fertilizer the actual product, and lower prices, shorter distances, employment and security the core product. *Price* concerns (dis)incentives of both monetary, and nonmonetary nature, such as time, effort or discomfort. In the context of an insurgency, deterrence or disruption can be considered an increasing cost strategy. The augmented product of the fertilizer example provides increased price benefits. In addition, the costs of the undesirable behavior are increased by regulating ammonium nitrate fertilizer. *Place* is "where and when the target market will perform the desired behavior, acquire any related tangible objects, and receive any associated services" (Kotler and Lee 2008: 247). This can entail bringing the location closer, (as in the example) or making it more appealing and accessible. Paving a road to complicate IED placement (undesirable behavior) is also a place strategy. Finally, *promotions* are "persuasive communications designed and delivered to inspire your target audience to action"(Kotler and Lee 2009: 208). Promotion involves creating a message and deciding how, and through which communication channels or messengers it is disseminated. When the counterinsurgent has established sufficient understanding of the target audience, he will know which messages the target is already receiving, through which channels and whether the

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[30] The government of Afghanistan has banned ammonium nitrate fertilizer earlier this year.

messages resonate with the target. Insurgent promotion is generally successful exactly because he has superior understanding of the target audience, and may serve as an example. My TAA interviewee discouraged using posters of mutilated people to discredit the Taliban: wounded Afghans had become such a common sight in the streets it did not nearly have the effect that a similar image would invoke in Western societies.[31] As I mentioned before, people in non-industrial societies prefer using oral traditions and storytelling to pass on information rather than images. Even Westerners rely more on their own networks of family and friends for information than traditional media (Trent and Doty III 2005: 72). Like in the example, influential individuals can be far more effective media than radio messages, flyers and television advertisements. Key Leader Engagement (KLE) is a powerful instrument for influencing decision making in hierarchal communities, and TFU frequently attempted to cultivate these partner based relationships.[32] Frequent rotations are potentially very damaging to carefully established contacts, and increasing overlap might benefit maintaining a supportive network among powerbrokers (Helmus et al. 2007: 178).

5.2 BRANDING THE COUNTERINSURGENT

Another typical marketing principle is *branding*, or using symbols, discourses and narratives to identify the creator or seller of a product. The (host) government can be considered a brand, ISAF is an affiliated brand and the insurgents are the competing brand, the population is under pressure to support these competing brands. In counterinsurgency, the core narrative aims to convince the people that the government and its international supporters "can deliver a better future in terms of security, justice and material wealth"(Ministry of Defence 2009: 1-7) than the insurgent brand, and must synchronize all his tools to consistently support this narrative. Successful branding in counterinsurgency requires countering propaganda and expectation management, or "striving to under-promise and over-deliver" (Petraeus 2010: 3). A counterinsurgent who strives to appear credible must stick to the truth, which puts him at a disadvantage in a rushed 24-hour media environment, where disinformation is not always verified and retractions are of low-profile. Intra-organizational information consistency and the quick and decisive countering of propaganda is therefore an absolute necessity. Kinetic action should be consistently explained, its impact monitored, its damage rebuild or compensated and the burden should be placed on the insurgent adversary (Helmus et al. 2007: xiv-xvii). A final requirement for planning influence is evaluation. This has proved to be notoriously difficult[33], especially in a contested non-Western environment, but creating Measures Of Effectiveness (MOE) is simply not a luxury, but imperative. It may be next to impossible to measure percentages of "loyalty towards (counter)insurgent",

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[31] Interview PSE Target Audience Analyst TFU 5/6, September 27th 2010.

[32] Interview S2 PRT 5, July 1st 2010.

[33] Interview PSE Target Audience Analyst TFU 5/6, September 27th 2010.

and polling attitudes and beliefs cover only a part of the population's decision-making process. Focusing on actual behavior is, as I have argued before, a far more promising approach. Future MOE models require linking the counterinsurgents action (message) with its effect (behavior). In a famous example, the number of cabbages on market stalls in Bosnia were linked to successful stability operations: "The more cabbages, the better the supply chain, the roads, the market economy and, critically, the confidence of locals to both grow crops and venture out to market them" (Rowland and Tatham 2010:8). Still, establishing causal links remains exceptionally challenging , it will require mapping psycho-social characteristics of the target group, and advanced holistic modeling using system dynamics. Preparing intelligence personnel for these challenges is not impossible, and essential for effectively targeting the limited resources of the counterinsurgent in consistency with its message. From a marketing perspective, most TFU influence planning has been limited to promotion, often through non-resonating Western channels such as flyers, instead of utilizing and synchronizing all the counterinsurgent's instruments, overt and covert, military and non-military, kinetic and non-kinetic, direct and indirect. In order to win those coveted hearts and minds, counterinsurgent planning demands a comprehensive behavior focused approach, which in turn requires thorough understanding of the target and his environment, beliefs, capabilities and competing messages. Social marketing can provide the basic framework to do this.

6. CONCLUSION

I established earlier that public decision making is a focal point when attempting to counter an insurgency. This decision making is under great pressure from insurgent intimidation and propaganda, or it may favor the insurgency for providing services, out of real and perceived grievances caused by the counterinsurgent, ethnic and ideological loyalties or other motivations. Although the counterinsurgent often enjoys superior resources, he faces strong competition on the cognitive level with an adversary who has established situational understanding, an extensive network of contacts and a resonating, tailored information strategy. This competitor is not bound to any laws or truths except its own, putting the counterinsurgent at a severe disadvantage. The ongoing struggle to close the gap on socio-economic and cultural understanding has been covered in chapter four. A Provincial Reconstruction Team is a potentially powerful instrument for collecting and analyzing population-centric information. The use of target audience analysts, specialized advisors and actively engaging the population with social patrols, Mission Teams and Human Terrain Teams (by the U.S.) are all promising developments in this respect. This kind of information is vital for creating and effectively disseminating a resonating counter narrative, conflict mediation, addressing grievances, gaining credibility, goodwill and ultimately shaping cognitive decision making and behavior. Although there are ample military activities specifically designed to achieve these effects, they have not fully synchronized their information requirements with, or had insufficient access to, existing intelligence resources. Furthermore, these activities are conducted as separate efforts, rather than part of an overarching influence strategy. Kinetic activities, reconstruction projects and key leader engagements can, and often do, have stronger informational effects than flyers or press conferences. The initiative needs to be reclaimed in the information war. A intel-driven pro-active policy for countering insurgent propaganda and exploiting opportunities is desirable. Credibility herein is essential, and the counterinsurgent should therefore stick to the truth. Combat camera teams and helmet cams can provide supporting images to the counter narrative. When one acknowledges the importance of cognitive influence in counterinsurgency and stability operations, a behavior focused approach should be integrated in planning. The model based on social marketing I have presented is only a starting point. Such a model requires not only a synchronized inter-organizational effort, but has information requirements exceeding the current capabilities of the intelligence organization. Professionalizing intelligence, psychological operations and information operations is an essential preparation for contemporary asymmetric conflict, and so is developing sophisticated Measures Of Effectiveness. I am not trying to present the silver bullet for COIN here, because it likely does not exist. Some governments cannot be made popular, and some insurgencies cannot be made unpopular. They are complicated, protracted affairs which are consciously exploited by organizations such as Al Qaeda as an effective attrition strategy. Patience, restraint and a Joint overarching strategy for dealing with a global insurgency is the way forward.

GLOSSARY

ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
AQ	Al Qaida
ASIC	All Source Intelligence Cell
AUS	Australia
BG	Battle Group
CIMIC	Civil Military Cooperation
CIS	Central Information System
CIVREP	Civilian Representative
CMO	Civil-Military Operations
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CSE	CIMIC Support Element
CS/XO	Executive Officer
CULAD	Cultural Advisor
DIVI	Defense Intelligence and Security Institute
FOB	Forward Operating Base
GN	Engineers
HTS	Human Terrain System
HTT	Human Terrain Team
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
IMINT	Imagery Intelligence
InfoOps	Information Operations
IO	International Organization
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISTAR	Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance
KLE	Key Leader Engagement
LO	Liaison Officer
LOG	Logistics
MOB	Main Operating Base
MOE	Measures Of Effectiveness
MP	Military Police
MT	Mission Team
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OPSEC	Operations Security
OSAD	Development Cooperation Advisor

OSTAD	Development Cooperation Tribal Advisor
PA	Public Affairs
PEP	Poppy Elimination Program
PMT	Police Mentoring Team
POLAD	Political Advisor
PPP	Presence, Posture and Profile
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PSE	PsyOps Support Element
PsyOps	Psychological Operations
ROE	Rules Of Engagement
RSM	Regimental Sergeant Major
RTF	Reconstruction Task Force
S2`	Section Intelligence
S3	Section Operations
S8	Section C4I (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence)
SF	Special Forces
SSR	Security Sector Reform
STRATCOMM	strategic communications
TAA	Target Audience Analyst
TFE	Tactical Force Element
TFU	Task Force Uruzgan
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UN	United Nations

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APPENDIX I : TFU, TFE, AND PRT ROTATIONS, UNITS AND COMMANDERS

TFU-1. 11 Airmobile Brigade; August 2006 - January 2007. Colonel T.Vleugels

TFE-1. 12 Infantry battalion Air assault Regiment van Heutz; August-November 2006

PRT-1. 42 Tank battalion Regiment Huzaren Prins van Oranje; August - November 2006

TFU-2. 13 Mechanized Brigade; February- July 2007. Colonel H.v.Griensven

TFE-2. 17 Armored infantry battalion Garderegiment Fuseliers Prinses Irene; December 2006 - March 2007

PRT-2. 11 Tank battalion Regiment Huzaren van Sytzama; December 2006 - March 2007

TFU-3. 11 Airmobile Brigade; August 2007 - January 2008. Colonel N.Geers

TFE-3. 42 Armored infantry battalion Regiment Limburgse Jagers; April-July 2007

TFE-4. 13 Infantry batallion Regiment Stoottroepen Prins Bernhard; August-November 2007

PRT-3. 41 Armored engineer batallion; April-September 2007

TFU-4. 43 Mechanized Brigade; February-July 2008. Colonel R.v.Harskamp

TFE-5. 44 Armored infantry battalion Regiment Infanterie Johan Willem Friso; December 2007- March 2008

TFE-6. 45 Armored infantry battalion Regiment Infanterie Oranje Gelderland; April-July 2008

PRT-4. 14 Field Artillery Unit; October 2007- March 2008

TFU-5. 11 Airmobile Brigade; August 2008 - January 2009. Colonel .C.Matthijssen

TFE-7. 11 Infantry battalion Air assault Garderegiment Grenadiers en Jagers; August - November 2008

PRT-5. 11 Armored Engineer battalion ; April-September 2008

TFU-6. 13 Mechanized Brigade; February-July 2009. Brigadier General T.Middendorp

TFE-8. 12 Infantry battalion Air assault Regiment van Heutz; December 2008 -March 2009

TFE-9. 11 Tank battalion Regiment Huzaren van Sytzama; April - July 2009

PRT-6. 101 CIS battalion; October 2008 - March 2009

TFU-7. 11 Airmobile Brigade; August 2009 -January 2010. Brigadier General M.v.Uhm

TFE-10. 17 Armored infantry battalion Garderegiment Fuseliers Prinses Irene; August-November 2009

PRT-7. 11 Mobile Artillery Unit; April September 2009

TFU-8. 43 Mechanized Brigade; February-July 2010. Brigadier General K.v.d.Heuvel

TFE-11. 13 Infantry battalion Air assault Regiment Stoottroepen Priens Bernhard, December 2009 - March 2010

TFE-12. 42 Armored infantry battalion Regiment Limburgse Jagers; April-July 2010

PRT-8. 43 Reconstruction company; October 2009 - March 2010

PRT-9. 1 CIMIC battalion; April - September 2010