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REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

16 November 2011

ATZL-CI

SUBJECT: Counterinsurgency Lessons Learned

1. The focus of this lessons learned collection is on fundamentals of counterinsurgency and insurgency, and execution of counterinsurgency, to include Security Force Assistance and Stability Operations. Other aspects of operations that are already satisfactorily covered in Army literature are not included, such as Counter IED, Combat Operations, Site Exploitation, Personnel Recovery, Force Protection, and general warfighting function lessons from Intelligence, Sustainment, etc .
2. Each lesson is identified with the word "Topic", followed by a topic name. The topic line also includes a reference to the applicable level of application: tactical, operational, strategic, e.g., (T/S/O, T/O, etc). One or more paragraphs follow the topic line which includes a discussion and/or recommendation. Each entry also includes a reference to a type of unit associated with the originating source.
3. Lessons in this document are first derived from unit after action reports and interviews with recently deployed unit leaders. Many other sources such as studies and scholarly articles are also reviewed and considered for operational as well as strategic lessons. This document is continually updated as more lessons are researched. I encourage units or personnel to contribute observations, insights, and lessons for consideration for this collection. Send in any form desirable to [coin@us.army.mil](mailto:coin@us.army.mil) or the above street address.

//signed//  
JOHN PAGANINI  
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Director

# Counterinsurgency Lessons Learned

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## Counterinsurgency Lessons Learned

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### I. Overarching Considerations and Design

#### A. Strategic/National Command Authority/COCOM Lessons Learned

(no lessons recorded at this time)

#### B. General Lessons Learned

##### Topics:

- [Pre-Deployment Counterinsurgency Training \(T\)](#)
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- [COIN Pre-Deployment Training Tips \(T\)](#)
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- [Relationship Building is Personality Dependent \(T/O\)](#)

##### 1. TOPIC: Pre-Deployment Counterinsurgency Training

(Brigade Commander comments): I spent most of my time on the company commanders. I had a program where I would do physical training with them all morning on a Friday, and then in the afternoon we would talk about a certain portion of counterinsurgency, or fighting in general. Over time I got to know all of their personalities and their characters very well. And that allowed me to pull out some company commanders that I did not think were going to do well over there, and to put in the right people, in the right companies, and I was reliant upon the company commanders to train their companies on everything that I was talking about. So, I used the 40+ company commanders to distribute the COIN ethos, and really the brigade's ethos of the way we were going to fight, down to the lowest level. I used the battalion commanders to do the same thing with their lieutenants. When I was doing these leader-development days with company commanders, I was expecting battalion commanders to do the same with their lieutenants. And, I think I developed the best set of company commanders that I've ever seen in any brigade.

Source: OEF BCT Commander Interview, AUG11

##### 2. TOPIC: Counterinsurgency Common Operating Picture (COP) (T/O)

How an OEF Brigade Commander created a COIN COP:

Usually when people ask about COP they're talking about 'what slide do you want up on CPOF' that shows everyone what's going on. It doesn't really apply to this fight,

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because you're talking about political dynamics, and development issues, and security, and intelligence, all wrapped up into one, which you can't really show on a slide, effectively.

Once I was over there, every day we went out and I saw two or three of my company commanders and spent time with them, and their counterparts. I listened to what they were doing, and what they needed, what their assessment was, and then just spent some personal time with them before I would leave -- to see how they were doing. That was extremely valuable. I would bring an S2 representative, usually my assistant S2, and an operations representative, usually my S3, and they would get to hear, and see what was going on at the lowest level. We would then come back that night, we'd have an executive session, with all the decision-makers on the brigade staff, XO, and all primaries, and they would brief what they saw that day, from the company commander's standpoint. We would level the bubbles across my entire brigade staff to see what X company commander needs and what his problem set is and how that fit into what I would then talk about within the big brigade/company construct.

I used the accompanying staff officers to tell the story, because by the end of a day like that, I was done, I was spent. I had seen everything, I had talked all day, and I had just done the evening update, and then we would go into my office and do the executive session, and I would rely on those who went with me to be the fresh set of eyes to tell the story to all the staff who usually did not leave our base. It created understanding within the staff, and it allowed me to give some guidance at the end that everybody would understand, and it allowed everyone on the staff to visualize what was going on. Source: OEF BCT Commander Interview, AUG11

### **3. TOPIC: Counterinsurgency Ethos = Relationships (T/O/S)**

OEF BCT Commander Reflection on COIN Ethos:

For us it was the personal relationship. Everything was around the personal relationship that you built with a key person in a town, or your Afghan counterpart, or that a Private built with his Private counterpart on patrol. Some people have a hard time with that. They just want to walk through an area and they want to act like they're securing it, and they want to get back to their base, and so on. You have to talk to people. You have to take that time, and sometimes it's very frustrating, you need a lot of patience, because you are going to hear the same gripes and complaints in some places that have gotten them projects, or have gotten them some assistance or money in the past. You've gotta get through that and just get to know them as people, and get them to know you as a person. Because, especially for Afghan's, that's everything. I believe right now that in many cases, I have friends who were actually Taliban, but they would never have allowed anything to happen to me because they knew me as 'Martindale' and not just the brigade commander in the city. That's the way they operate. And the same can be true of your Afghan counterparts. The security forces, if they have a real issue with you, a negative one, can be your enemy. So, getting everyone to understand that is important, I think. The Afghan and the Pashtunwali culture, in particular, is about your

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personal relationship, and they'll go either direction on you. If they really don't like you, and don't trust you, it doesn't matter if they're ANA or ANP. You're going to suffer.

Source: OEF BCT Commander Interview, AUG11

### **4. TOPIC: Campaign Planning and Formulation of End-States (T/O)**

How an OEF BCT Commander Devised and Monitored Line of Effort End-states

We actually built a campaign plan, and we lined it up so that it would go a year after we left, and then along our lines of effort, we had what we thought were realistic end-states that we wanted to achieve before we left. We redid it about every three months. My targeting cell would revise the way we tracked it, and would revise the metrics that we were using and bounce it off what I thought, because nobody had a better understanding of the whole brigade area than I did. Just like nobody would have a better understanding of the battalion or the company than those within it. And the metrics you might have used in Kandahar City wouldn't apply to Arghandab. So, that's where the commander's art comes into it, when you're talking about how far you are along the security or governance line. It's really tough in doing that because you're not necessarily meshed with the regional commanders' plan. Because your area is different; in the same way that a battalion is different from a brigade, your area may be different from his whole region, and you're focused on some different things than the region is. In some cases articulating that to your commander becomes difficult. You can have friction between the brigade level and the division level because you're looking at things different ways. It's really important to discuss that with General Terry, or General Carter so that we were all on the same sheet.

Source: OEF BCT Commander Interview, AUG11

### **5. TOPIC: Pre-deployment Training and Task Organization in the Battalion (T)**

How an OEF Battalion Commander focused pre-deployment training, and task organizing the battalion: as you were conducting your pre-deployment training, what importance did you place on the COIN training for your soldiers and how did you go about that?

Discussion: First of all we knew COIN training was going to be critical to the Area of Operations (AO) we were going to be going into. I think one of the things that was helpful to us is we knew early on, as we started to re-task organize a heavy formation, that we were going to go to this specific AOR in the Arghandab River Valley. It helped us tailor, not only our COIN training approach to it, but what we wanted to accomplish, our objectives. As we built our training plan we took a stair-step approach, and first of all what we did is as we started our re-task organization where we combined and moved infantry squads to armor companies and armor crew members to infantry companies, that took place in late October and we deployed the following May. So, we did that as early as we possibly could and I would encourage anybody else that's in a similar circumstance to start that task organization as early as possible. The other thing that we learned about applying skill sets was, just like cavalry men, when you bring infantry soldiers to armor companies and vice versa, you bring a group of skill sets that complement each other.

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One of the things we were happy to see is, despite the fact that a lot of our armor crew members did not have the same set of dismounted infantry skills that the line infantry companies did. They brought other skill sets like movement techniques, dealing with the public, tempo, things like that that we weren't anticipating which actually complemented each other, which was interesting to see. As we started to focus in on our COIN training, what we did is we first looked at how we could decentralize to the lowest level. So our focus was really at the squad level and below because we knew that most of our operations would be conducted at the squad level, and up, in some cases to platoon. As you know, that's consistent with COIN doctrine, fighting at the lowest level. Empowering junior leaders, early on, team leaders and squad leaders, we found to be very important. So, we started with a fire team live fire training. Early on, we went rapidly into key leader engagement training at the squad-level and below. That would be a piece of pre-deployment training that I would continue to emphasize, because to be successful we found in theater if you're going to be pushing squads out and they're conducting operations combined with the Afghan Security Forces (ASF), and with other units, you've got to get leaders trained at the lowest level and able to deal with the local population at the lowest level. So, it's not the platoon leader, it's not the platoon sergeant, it's really the squad leader that's doing that 85% of the time. That was a key area we focused on.

Source: OEF BN Commander Interview, AUG11

### **6. TOPIC: Effectiveness of Language Training (T/O)**

How an OEF BN Commander viewed the benefit of language training:

Discussion: The one area that we spent a lot of energy on that I would recommend that we didn't see the bang for our buck was on language training. Because, what we found was that the Pashtun areas in southern Afghanistan and the tribal dynamics were such that unless you could speak Pashtun fluently the people looked at you suspiciously. My recommendation would be to focus more on the basic language requirements like, "stop", "go," greetings of the day, maybe a vocabulary of 30-100 words or phrases. We spent a large amount of time, money and energy sending a lot of folks through a dismounted language training course, where we sent squad leaders, we spent over a million dollars on this and in hindsight I don't think that we got what we wanted, in my opinion. If I had to do it over I would peel that back. Now, I think it depends on the operational environment you're going in to because this part of Afghanistan it didn't pay off. Maybe in eastern parts, or I know definitely in Iraq, it would have paid off a little bit more -- it might just be subject to the AO.

Source: OEF BN Commander Interview, AUG11

### **7. TOPIC: Application of Counterinsurgency Principles (T/O)**

An OEF BN Commander discusses applying counterinsurgency principles:

Regarding COIN principles, as they're written in FM 3-24, is there anything about that that's erroneous? Is it weighted too heavily toward population-centric, and might encourage leaders to not use security operations when they should? What do you think about that?

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Discussion: I think that the principles in 3-24 are right on target. I think if they are applied correctly they achieve the effects we want. However, as with all doctrine, you have to look at the circumstances that you're in and apply a dosing of those principles properly. Whether it's an emphasis on security at a certain point, or an emphasis on development at another point, what I would say is it's a constant balance of those COIN principles, and you have to have an assessment, or a reassessment process within your organization to be effective. Despite the fact you may not have as much kinetic, the enemy always has a vote, and then suddenly something kinetic will happen, which if you don't immediately reestablish your security dominance, after you're in the hold phase, you can lose the momentum quickly. And that could be something as basic as one spectacular attack; a vehicle-borne IED. It could be an assassination, and we realized to some extent that there were some catastrophic events that would cause us to lose some momentum. For example, the assassination of a district governor, or the district police chief, who were both effective, you're seeing that right now in Kandahar Province, with the assassination of AWK, the Kandahar City mayor. The Taliban realized they needed to go after a different tactic and that's why they're doing it. So, trying to anticipate the enemy's next course of action is always critical. Overall, I would say as long as you use 3-24 and the principles behind it as your baseline, then leaders need to take it and apply it to the specific circumstances. So, if you apply the doctrine the way we should, I think that it's right on.

Source: OEF BN Commander Interview, AUG11

### **8. TOPIC: Counterinsurgents in Afghanistan have four critical goals (T/O/S)**

- 1) Protect the population and build relationships!
- 2) Prepare the Afghan Security Forces to defend their own communities.
- 3) Force the insurgency into irrelevancy where they will expend 100% of their resources on survival/defense, and 0% on offensive operations.
- 4) Build and/or strengthen GIRoA capability

Source, Div HQs AAR, OEF, JUN10.

### **9. TOPIC: Winning the Population (T/O/S)**

Our battlefield is the Afghan people. We dominate our partnered AO through the support of the local populace, gained with positive interaction at every opportunity. These efforts include: combat actions to defeat enemy forces, reconstruction efforts to mend the ravages of thirty years of war, and fostering governance and security to bring stability to our partnered AO. It mandates a deliberate link between combat operations and civil military operations, done by design in every operation. If we fail to **OWN** the population, then we give the enemy an endless source of recruits, sanctuary, and logistical support. If we succeed, we gain intelligence on the enemy, deny him sanctuary and support, and limit his recruiting base. Do not underestimate the complexity of this battlefield. It is a human one fraught with the perils of personal agendas, shifting loyalties, long standing tribal feuds, and in some cases, unrealistic expectations. Win the trust and confidence of the people; this is how we will force our enemies out of the AO.

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Source, Marine Bn AAR, OEF, DEC10.

### **10. TOPIC: COIN Pre-Deployment Training Tips (T)**

- Train troopers on the technical skills needed to assess and support construction projects.
- Train troops on the mental aspect of COIN such as negotiation skills, how to influence ANSF, tactical questioning.
- Conduct OPDs to discuss ANSF Expectation management and Afghan levels of corruption.
- Develop scenario based training for all troopers utilizing EST and the simulations center.
- Train troopers on how to use interpreters.
- Always emphasize ANSF in the lead for all operations
- During JRTC allow more time for scenario development before kinetic attacks interrupt.
- Have projects scenarios at JRTC
- Learn 100 key words.

Source, BCT AAR, OEF, SEP10

### **11. TOPIC: Counterinsurgency Training Before Deployment (T)**

OEF Squadron Cdr describes COIN training during pre-deployment

Discussion: I think we started with the basics a little bit, but fairly heavily on marksmanship, and we did do some close quarters marksmanship and close quarters battle, and then transitioned into more of a dismounted patrolling type scenario that was run primarily by brigade. We focused heavily on key leader engagements and fighting in villages. I don't know if I would necessarily train that way again, I think sometimes we get lost in the mantra of counterinsurgency. As you really take a look at counterinsurgency and what we're trying to do, anytime someone is shooting at you, all of the counterinsurgency manuals, they don't really apply anymore, it is back to FM 7-8, infantry and platoon tactics, scout manuals, and those things that we have grown up as our bread and butter. I would prefer if we got rid of the phrase, "react to an IED," to me an IED is just a mine, we've had mines going on in our Army for hundreds of years and that is one of the seven or eight forms of contact (if you really want to count civilians on the battlefield); so, it's really 'react to an obstacle.' And the things we do with an obstacle are no different than the things we do with an IED. Sometimes I think when we try to slap new labels on things that really are basic tactics that we've had in our Army for a long time, we forget that we have those skills, and we think we have to learn something new, rather than just retrain stuff we already do know.

Source: OEF Squadron Cdr Interview, AUG11

### **12. TOPIC: Operational Visualization (T/O)**

OEF Squadron Commander describes visualizing operations as end-state, tasks, goals and objectives

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Discussion: I had what I call my operational visualization, everybody's got their campaign plans and people will talk about that. I'm not a believer that at the battalion/squadron level that you have a campaign plan. One of my problems with campaign planning at this level is, it leads to the belief that somehow you're going to win in twelve months. That leads to us fighting this ten-year war, one year at a time. When I looked at my operational visualization, I said, 'what is this thing going to look like?' What do I think the endstate should look like? Then I developed from that four key tasks, and you'll recognize these key tasks as primarily lines of effort in other people's models. They were: security, partnership, governance, and development. I put them in that order because we also took Galula's model of separate, connect, transform, and I said if we are accomplishing the first two key tasks of security and partnership we are separating; if we are accomplishing the second and third key tasks of partnership and governance, we are connecting; and if we were accomplishing the last two key tasks of governance and development, we're now transforming. Then underneath each of those key tasks, I came up with three or four goals that I wanted to do, so for security there would be three goals, and then I'd run a line across, and said here are the objectives that link to those goals. I went back through something I understood from my years in the Army and I came up in the training Army, so training management was something I understood the most. So I went back to goals and objectives and I looked into what we do at the squadron level, so every three months I would then go back and take a look at my operational visualization and figure out how we were going to meet our goals and objectives. Did those need to change? About every three months we had published a new operational visualization that tried to keep us in line with where we were going, although the endstates never really changed.

Source: OEF Squadron Cdr Interview, AUG11

### **13. TOPIC: Relationship Building is Personality Dependent (T/O)**

OEF Squadron Commander discusses building and maintaining relationships

Discussion: That part of the equation is so personality-dependent. The guys that have the personality to go in and talk to the villagers did a phenomenal job, and what I really think we came to was, we talk about it in train up, but it doesn't really sink in until you get out there, and there are guys in your formation that are really good at talking to people. If you're a leader that's not really good at talking to people, you have to find that guy who is. It doesn't mean you have to cede authority to him, it just means when you go in to sit down you bring him with you. We got really good at it and we established some really good relationships, but it really developed over time with leaders understanding that strengths and weaknesses and figuring out who do I need to put here? When do I need to send Sergeant Jones to go talk to the villager that just came up to the patrol base? When do I need to go talk to the village elder? It was a very unique place to work because the Italians and the Spanish have been there for a while, the politics of those two countries affects how they are able to conduct the fight. Typically we will have a lot better relationships with the locals. I think that's part of our culture too, we are a very accepting culture and we don't really care if you're Afghan, whether you're African, whether you're Russian, it doesn't matter to us. If you're willing to fight, you're on the team and I think that helped us as we developed we had very

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good relationships with our Afghan partners. Continuing to maintain relationships with my Afghan partners that doesn't alienate my Italian and Spanish, higher-level of leadership that I was working underneath -- that became one of the biggest challenges I faced.

Source: OEF Squadron Cdr Interview, AUG11

### C. Interagency Integration

(no lessons recorded at this time)

## II. Insurgency

### Topics:

- [How you see your enemy in Afghanistan is not necessarily how he sees himself. \(T/O/S\)](#)
- [Understanding Insurgents \(T/O/S\)](#)

#### 1. TOPIC: How you see your enemy in Afghanistan is not necessarily how he sees himself. (T/O/S)

In counterinsurgency, if you don't understand who your enemy *thinks* he is, and what *he* thinks and believes he is doing, you're essentially fighting the wrong war. Remember, fighting an insurgency is a battle of perception and your enemy is presenting an image of himself to the local population, **based on the story he truly believes about himself**. If you're countering some other image of him than the one he is presenting to his own people through his own culture, you're not only in a completely different ballpark than the enemy, you're not even playing the same sport.

Source: Division HQs AAR, OEF, JUN10..

#### 2. TOPIC: Understanding Insurgents (T/O/S)

The insurgents are clever. Don't make the mistake of underestimating your enemy, and thinking that just because your enemy is illiterate, he is also stupid. He will try to use the local culture to turn civilians against us when we fail to understand the importance of local social values. **Cultural Understanding doesn't mean understanding that the Afghans have a culture. Cultural Understanding means changing your own behavior to the greatest extent possible in order to protect the population, exploit enemy mistakes, and gain the people's allegiance to their legitimate government.** Don't let the enemy take the weapon of cultural knowledge out of your hands and use it against you. Your enemy is not afraid to die. He believes that to die in battle against the infidel is an express ticket to paradise. He has not yet figured out that the *Mullahs* sending him to die are in no hurry to get there themselves.

Source: Division HQs AAR, OEF JUN10.

## III. Intelligence in a Counterinsurgency Environment

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## A. Operational Environment

### Topics:

- [Understanding the Culture \(T/O\)](#)
- [Understanding Pashtun Tribal Hierarchy \(T/O\)](#)
- [Adapting to the local culture \(T\)](#)
- [Cultural Awareness \(T\)](#)
- [COIN \(T/O\)](#)
- [The Cultural/Human Dimension \(T/O\)](#)
- [Understand the People \(T\)](#)
- [Innovation \(Provincial Coordination Center\) \(T/O\)](#)
- [Understand the OE \(T\)](#)
- [Ops with Afghans \(T/O\)](#)
- [Human Terrain \(T/O\)](#)
- [Human Terrain \(the Elders\) \(T/O\)](#)
- [Conducting a Jirga, Meeting, or Negotiation \(T/O\)](#)
- [Searching Afghan Personnel \(T\)](#)
- [How should female Afghans be searched? \(T\)](#)
- [ASCOPE Assessments \(T\)](#)
- [Relationship building \(T\)](#)
- [Operational Environment Pre-Deployment Training \(T\)](#)

### 1. TOPIC: Understanding the Culture (T/O)

You should understand that units will likely be viewed by many people in Afghanistan as an occupying foreign power, even though our presence is supported by the Government Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA). Other more moderate segments of the population might view us as necessary, but “unwanted guests.” In order to defeat this perception, the Soldiers must show the Afghans that we are trying to be the best guest, neighbor, or even “Afghan” that we can be. Here’s how:

- Learn their values system and respect it!
- Learn what it means to be polite in an Afghan context and always incorporate this in your dealings with people.
- Learn how the locals greet each other and use it.
- Learn as much of the language as you can. You don’t have to be conversant, but you must show that you are trying.
- Learn as much as you can about the social, economic, political, familial, and tribal background of the people you interact with. Often times just demonstrating that you’re making an effort to learn will buy you a lot of credibility, and will go a long way toward building a relationship.

Source: Division HQs AAR, OEF, JUN10.

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#### 2. TOPIC: Understanding Pashtun Tribal Hierarchy (T/O)

There is actually an invisible hierarchical structure at work in Pashtun tribal society, one which has been missed by most Western analysts. This critical hierarchy is a direct outgrowth of the elaborate genealogies discussed earlier, and is called "Nikat." Nikat, which comes from the same linguistic root as the word for "grandfather," means, essentially, "pedigree," and it describes the relative position of a person to the ancestor. As Olaf Caroe noted, every male has a social position in the Khel superior or inferior to every other male based on the directness of his genealogical descent from the founding ancestor. Thus, for example, the first son by the first wife has a higher social and political importance than the third son of the third wife of the same father. Over time, these relationships become extraordinarily complex, yet exert a pivotal influence on tribal decision making, because the views of males with greater Nikat, from more important lineages, carry greater weight in the Jirga. When visiting a village to meet with elders, it is advisable that you use local government resources to pre-identify the high-Nikat (important) elders in the Jirga and ask to meet with them. Not everyone with a white beard is an important elder: Having tea with three whitebeards in the Jirga doesn't do you any good if they are the village idiots.

Source: Division HQs AAR, OEF, JUN10.

#### 3. TOPIC: Adapting to the local culture (T)

The bottom line is that leaders will need to adapt to the local culture and understand it's rhythms. The goal is to first gain acceptance and then gain a voice at the table. Consider the following written by Gary Anderson for the *Small Wars Journal*:

*"Americans are afraid of being used in relationships with the locals. To this, I say;" What do you think you are there for?" If you are not useful, the locals won't want anything to do with you. You are going to want something out of the relationship and your counterpart will expect something in return. In tribal, agrarian societies people see negotiation as a **zero sum gain**. They expect there to be overt winners and losers in any hard negotiation process and they want to be the winner in things that they deem to be important. They will graciously deign to make sacrifices for you in areas that they don't consider to be important. Your job is to be a "good loser" in giving up certain concessions in areas important to them even if what you are giving up is not really important to you, but it is usually a good idea to let them feel the pain that you yourself do not really feel in "losing"."*

Source: Division HQs AAR, OEF, JUN10.

#### 4. TOPIC: Cultural Awareness (T)

It is important for units not to forget cultural awareness training. The use of interpreters, understanding customs and basic language skills can increase you effectiveness, especially when you first arrive. One of the first tasks you will most likely do is be introduced to a village elder and if you don't know how to say hello or shake his hand, it will only hinder your ability to start a relationship. Also, Islam is the cornerstone of the Afghan culture, and every green tab leader needs to understand its basic principles and to also understand how it can impact your operations. Holidays such as Ramadan or

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customs such as praying 5 times a day will impact your patrol schedule and, most of all, it will impact what the Afghan Security Forces will do for you. The best cultural/human dimension training we did was when we actually brought in Afghans for leaders to talk with utilizing an interpreter and receive feedback from the Afghans about cultural interactions. Leaders will have to find time to study culture and history on their own by conducting professional reading, but the training the unit went through was more than enough. No matter how much reading or training you conduct, it can only prepare you so much; a lot of cultural training is learned hands-on, and leaders will have to adapt quickly. When you first get into country, stop and talk to the local nationals who work on your FOB, get to know them, especially if they are from the area you are operating in. Often they have more information about your AO than you will. I never miss an opportunity to talk to certain individuals and ask them questions about the enemy. Source, BCT AAR, OEF, MAR07.

### **5. TOPIC: COIN (T/O)**

One of the major innovations in Logar Province was actually first suggested by the Governor, and then put into action by the battalion commander and our company: the creation of the Provincial Coordination Center (PCC). This C2 node is a meeting place for ANSF forces (ANP, ANA, and NDS) to discuss security issues, coordinate for mission support, and to decide on mutually supporting responses/QRF missions. Prior to this creation, there was really no system established and most things were to be coordinated over the phone or various meeting spots throughout the Province. The PCC has empowered the ANSF and also created more of a partner relationship between forces. Every mission, with the exception of re-supply convoys and security meetings, includes some combination of ANA or ANP support. These combined missions build ANSF credibility as a legitimate and competent arm of the GOA, and they show U.S. cooperation with Afghans that temper arguments of occupation. Source, BCT AAR, OEF, MAR07.

### **6. TOPIC: The Cultural/Human Dimension (T/O)**

The human dimension is the toughest part of a counter-insurgency fight. An NCO taught me a saying, "Be polite, but ready to fight." Each commander should engrain this phrase into the company spirit and into each Soldier. Learning either Pashtu and Dari will go a long way in building mutual cooperation with your ANSF partners and GOA officials. You will learn more when you get into country. But be inquisitive and perceptive when conducting engagements with local nationals, and try to pick up on the simple/useful phrases: (hello / how are you? / where is \_\_\_? / wait one moment / are we ready? / sorry / thank you / what is your/his name? / please / help / etc. Culture and manners are also very important—the most important is to recognize elders and letting people enter doors first. You as a leader have to learn all of it: culture, language, and conducting proper engagements.

Source, BCT AAR, OEF, MAR07.

### **7. TOPIC: Understand the People (T)**

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At around the fourth month of command and conducting combat operations I discovered that the key to success in Afghanistan is the people. It was during Eid, the entire company was operating out of FOB Zormat, and we had just suffered our second ambush within a three-day period. Thankfully, there were no injuries during this one and as we had come to expect there were no casualties taken by the enemy that we could find. The attack had taken place along a well traveled route, in the middle of the night. We have nothing to show from the attack except that we traded rounds. I'm not disappointed with this fact but with the fact that it seems like we're off target. The killing of the insurgents that night would have been seen as a success. Yet there would be more insurgents because of this. The local people by the nature of the Afghan culture know who conducted the attack. I've probably met or talked to one of the attackers during a Shura. Ironically, they continue to ask for support from us. The thought occurred to me that I've been off target in trying to attack the insurgency force for force. Instead, if we target and win the influence of the people they will either influence or turn in the insurgents. At a minimum the insurgency will come to us instead of us chasing ghosts in the middle of the night. If we alienate the people through unfocused violence, abandon them after we get a target, or use them to our own gains, the people will continue to shelter and quietly support the insurgents to their own gain through our unknowing support.

Source, BCT AAR, OEF, MAR07.

### **8. TOPIC: Innovation (Provincial Coordination Center) (T/O)**

One of the major innovations in Logar Province was actually first suggested by the Governor, and then put into action by the BN Commander and our company: the creation of the Provincial Coordination Center (PCC). This C2 node is a meeting place for ANSF forces (ANP, ANA, and NDS) to discuss security issues, coordinate for mission support, and to decide on mutually supporting responses/QRF missions. Prior to this creation, there was really no system established and most things were to be coordinated over the phone or various meeting spots throughout the Province. The PCC has empowered the ANSF and also created more of a partner relationship between forces. Every mission, with the exception of re-supply convoys and security meetings, includes some combination of ANA or ANP support. These combined missions build ANSF credibility as a legitimate and competent arm of the GOA, and they show US cooperation with Afghans that temper arguments of "occupation."

Source, BCT AAR, OEF, MAR07.

### **9. TOPIC: Understand the OE (T)**

- Develop an OE Briefing prior to deployment that covers the lines of PMESII (political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure)
- Troops developed detailed Data base for villages. Label homes and take pictures of the family in front of their home.
- Know and understand the needs v/s wants of the populace to prioritize your operations.
- Conduct census operation IOT determine who lives where and what they need.
- Understand who the power brokers are.
- Don't just focus on the enemy understand why there is enemy in the OE.

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- Figure out how to get the ANSF to work together as a unified front. Identify what the populace believes to be the district borders. Source, BCT AAR, OEF, SEP10

### 10. TOPIC: Ops with Afghans (T/O)

One of the things I learned early on was **joint means joint**; if you are not doing things with the ANA or ANP integrated with you, you won't be as successful; you won't be seen as legitimate. I personally found it easier to work with the ANP—they were more flexible and I had developed personal relationships with them. To get involved with the ANA, you have to get inside their higher HQ planning cycle, giving them time to plan, etc. If you are going to do a larger mission (cordon and search, etc.), then you will work with the ANA; but if you've got a quick opportunity to act based on a piece of actionable intel, it is quicker and more effective to call up the ANP and get them to send a couple guys with you. So it is important that you develop relationships with them.

Source, BCT AAR, OEF, MAR07

### 11. TOPIC: Human Terrain (T/O)

Take time before deployment to learn about the people, the tribes, the language, the history, the culture, the religion, etc. You don't need to know every tribe, just the ones in your AOR. Understand counterinsurgency doctrine—the people are not the enemy. They are the key to winning. They are stuck between CF and the enemy. They are ruthlessly threatened and punished by the enemy for just talking to us. Keep this in mind when dealing with them. Make the people your friends, and do not treat them like the enemy does. Understand the tribal system and where the bases of power lie. Just because there is a democracy does not mean the locals support it. They have been supporting their tribal elder (Malik) forever. Do not equate this with insurgency; most want to live peacefully. Build solid relationships with all the local players (Maliks, Mullahs, Governors, Doctors, ANA Commanders, Local Militia, ANBP Commanders, etc.) Find out who has the power base in every town in your AOR. The local population is stuck between a ruthless enemy who kills them for even talking to us and/or the Coalition. Remember this when you are talking with them and they are telling you that the insurgents have never been here.

Source, BCT AAR, OEF, MAR07

### 12. TOPIC: Human Terrain (the Elders) (T/O)

The key to IO is leveraging effective systems and leaders. There are 29 shuras—29 groups of elders in this valley. They are the primary voice of the people, the primary conduits to stability in this area. When we first got here, they were not leveraged, nor was the ulema (the religious shuras). I got lucky and got a very effective governor—Governor R. We consolidated those 29 shuras and created a mega shura—and then brought the ulema into that. With Governor Raqman's great diplomatic efforts, we brought them together, found common ground, and started to solve and address issues. As we did that, the stability started to become apparent. Stability and security in this area started to flow outwards. It started to work here. My role in that is more as a supporting effort to Governor R. Any unilateral action is counterproductive, and we will feel the effects of it.

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Source, BCT AAR, OEF, MAR07

### **13. Conducting a Jirga, Meeting, or Negotiation (T/O)**

A Jirga (council) is the primary means of conducting community business in Afghanistan.

When should goals, interests, and requests be discussed? Do not approach the initial meeting expecting to discuss goals. The first meeting, in fact, the first few meetings, should focus on the goals and interests of the Afghans. Many Afghans use these meetings (either formal gatherings or tea services), to get acquainted with their guests and to determine whether someone is serious and worth their time. While this runs counter to the traditional norms of negotiation, specifically as it pertains to learned negotiation practices in Iraq, it will prove to be a more successful approach in attaining long-term cooperation. Such occasions should serve as listening and learning experiences. A good communicator will allow Afghans to probe for pieces of his agenda, but will provide only small segments. These introductory meetings are not full Jirgas, but establish an expectation that further, more formal meetings will follow.

Source: Cultural Guide

### **14. Searching Afghan Personnel (T)**

Discussion: Afghanistan is a closed and conservative society. When an Afghan must be searched, great care must be taken to avoid offending the individual. How do Afghans view being searched? Afghan culture places extreme value on personal honor; a pat down or body search may be taken as an offense against that honor. Some may see the need for security and consent, while others will continue to see it as an affront to their privacy. Segregated search facilities should be used for men and women. When inviting Afghans to meetings, it may be helpful to inform them in advance that there will be security procedures that will be equally applied to all guests, such as pat downs or metal detector screenings. However, many Afghan men understand the need for increased security and are likely to comply if they are treated with respect.

Source: Cultural Guide

### **15. How should female Afghans be searched? (T)**

A male should never search a female Afghan. Afghan culture strictly forbids women to touch, even communicate with men to whom they are not related. The search of Afghan women must be conducted in private and by other women to avoid undue negative attention or possibilities for Taliban propagandist operations. The Taliban has taken pictures of Afghan women being searched by Western women, but changed the picture to make it appear as if the Afghan woman was being assaulted by a Western male. The Taliban seeks propagandist like this to manipulate the Afghan populace; these searches provide potential material for propagandist. When possible, Afghan counterparts from the ANA or ANP should conduct home searches or pat downs. Afghan-to-Afghan contact will be more easily accepted.

Source: Cultural Guide

### **16. ASCOPE Assessments (T)**

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ASCOPE assessments are a good way to summarize key village information for new units or as a quick reference for commanders. We collected ASCOPEs from companies throughout the deployment, and are able to digitally pass it on to incoming units.

Recommendation: Continue to refine the ASCOPEs that you receive during the RIP Process. Ensure that each unit is familiar with the existing ASCOPE for their AO, and provide regular updates to the existing ASCOPE to ensure the most accurate information for villages in the AO is available to all.

Source: OEF Infantry Battalion AAR, APR10

### **17. TOPIC: Relationship building (T)**

Discussion: For better or worse, success in the Huta hub is primarily dependent on relationship building. Regardless of how tactically proficient the unit is or their adherence to ROE and COIN tenants, leaders' abilities to develop personal relationships with local national formal and informal leaders is required to be successful.

Recommendation: Leaders must keep this in mind at all times and understand the effects each and every decision will have on their personal relationships with people. At times, leaders will have to compromise, be humble, or sacrifice other demands that would lead to short term gains to maintain and strengthen relationships. In the Pashtun culture, insult will kill relationships and there must be a constant effort to help leaders save face. If you damage the relationship, there may be no mending of it and the units' ability to succeed, its safety, and influence will be severely affected.

Source: OEF Infantry Battalion AAR, APR10

### **18. TOPIC: Operational Environment Pre-Deployment Training**

OEF BN Commander describes gaining understanding of the OE prior to deployment.

Discussion: I think this was a success for us because we realized how important the operational environment was. The first thing we did is we started over seven months out, assessing the operational environment, down to the squad leader level. For example, seven months before deployment, squad leaders and up were getting overview briefings on the OE, the terrain, the people, the tribal dynamics, that was seven months before deployment. Then as we approached six months before deployment, we started having a VTC every two weeks with the unit downrange. We picked select topics that we wanted to discuss and we brought leaders from the platoon on up to eavesdrop and participate in those. It was about getting as many leaders exposed to the OE as early as we could. The third thing we did as we got closer, we brought in people that were exposed to that OE to talk to soldiers and leaders at all levels; and what I did is after the PDSS, I brought back and gave the entire battalion briefings on what to expect. What I believe that did is it put us into the operational environment with enough of a comfort zone to not be dismayed at what we saw when we arrived. I think we went in relatively well prepared for what we saw.

(Source: OEF Bn Cdr interview, AUG11)

## **B. Effects of OE**

(no lessons recorded at this time)

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### C. Intelligence Operations

#### Topics:

- [Company Level Intelligence Cell \(CLIC, Marines\)](#)
- [Company Commander as an Intelligence Officer \(Company Perspective\) \(T\)](#)
- [Developing IR and PIR and Task Organizing the Intel Leadership \(T\)](#)
- [Establishing CCIRs and PIRs in the Battalion \(T\)](#)
- [Patrol IR Collection \(T\)](#)

#### 1. TOPIC: Company Level Intelligence Cell (CLIC, Marines) (This entry applies similarly to the Army Company Intelligence Support Team) (T)

It's not just about the CLIC, it is all about the CLIC. You need to have very savvy Marines running your CLIC and some savvy Marines as platoon CLIC representatives as well. If the battalion gives you an analyst, even better. My CLIC chief has no other real duty than to sit in the CP and churn out products. The CLIC will be the clearing-house and fusion center for information flowing in both directions. The CLIC is often seen as merely the "funnel" through which information and intelligence flows between the company and the battalion S-2. The CLIC needs to be more than just an S-2 "rep" at the company level. The CLIC needs to have the skill set necessary to organize, analyze, and understand all of the information and intelligence available. Our CLIC, although intelligent and hard-working, simply did not possess the skills needed to replicate the functions of the battalion S-2 at the company level.

Invest the time and training to develop the CLIC prior to deployment. Any formal schools or on-the-job training they can receive from the battalion's S-2 will be beneficial. Specific skills such as the Raven system, biometric systems, CPOF, and Marinelink are just some of the areas where I've identified shortfalls within the company. Choose your CLIC chief and platoon reps early and wisely. Ensure they tie in with the battalion S-2 early on. If the battalion S-2 is not running CLIC training at least once a week, start demanding it. Impress upon your platoon commanders that the platoon CLIC representative's PRIMARY job is to do whatever your CLIC chief needs. Ensure your CLIC representatives can fly the Raven. Take pictures of everything and develop a system for information collection and collation. My CLIC had a lot of information but it was not catalogued and collated in any way that facilitates retrieval or analysis. Source, Marine Bn AAR, OEF, DEC10.

#### 2. TOPIC: Company Commander as an Intelligence Officer (Company Perspective) (T)

I let fires, maneuver, and "grunt stuff" dominate my time and energy early on in the deployment. I should have been thinking intelligence analysis, IPB, ASCOPE, lunar cycle and pattern of life. My CLIC gathers and collates information and the S-2 pushes info from higher but I am the only one who can even attempt to "turn the map around." Bottom line – the only way to get ahead of the enemy's decision cycle is to constantly

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and thoroughly analyze every scrap of information you can get your hands on and try to “see” patterns.

Understand up front that you are your own best intelligence analyst. Strive to have intelligence drive operations. To do this you have to make intelligence analysis a priority. Start trying to get inside the enemy’s head. That is harder than it seems because we don’t think like he does. Spend as much time on SIPR reading intelligence summaries and unit situation reports as possible.

Source, Marine Bn AAR, OEF, DEC10.

### **3. TOPIC: Developing IR and PIR and Task Organizing the Intel Leadership (T)**

An OEF Brigade Cdr answers how he developed Intelligence Requirements:

Regarding intelligence, how did you develop your IRs? How were they answered primarily? Soldiers on the ground?

Discussion: No. It was answered at multiple levels, in multiple ways. The biggest thing was going back through and relooking the PIR. I let my S2 and my assistant S2 take my PIR and turn that into IRs. Unless it was something really specific, that was something I delegated down, and then I would review it about every two or three months. What I would do is, I would sit down with my assistant S2, first in her class at West Point, Marshall Scholar, all-Army triathlete, and then went to Hawaii and deployed to Iraq, and came in to the Brigade and I didn’t really get a chance to even get to know her through the train-up until we got over there, and then her capabilities rose to the top immediately. Between her and the S2, both very capable, very intelligent, but the Asst S2 was actually my S3 for intelligence, she fused everything. She went with me and my S3 on all the battlefield circulation she could afford to go on. So, she knew it almost as well as I did. She knew the set, the terrain, the enemy and everything because she heard it from company commanders and she could feel free to ask them whatever she wanted, and she would talk to the COIST team who’s also there, and had a direct link to everybody. The S2, on the other hand, was in a role that he didn’t relish, but we had to put him in, and that was to be the XO for all the intel entities that fell in on us when we got there. I mean, you have people coming out of the woodwork when you get over there. He had a bigger staff than my XO did, within his intel S2 shop. Between all the different interagency assets and contractors and balloon operators and everything you could imagine, they all work for him, and so he had to be the one prioritizing everything and doing the task supervision for all of his intelligence section while the Asst S2 was the one who would know about everything. Meaning, know about this guy (an insurgent, etc), and all the background on him, whereas the S2 was the coordinator, he was the Chief of Staff for Intel.

Source: OEF BCT Commander Interview, AUG11

### **4. TOPIC: Establishing CCIRs and PIRs in the Battalion (T)**

How an OEF BN Commander developed and answered information requirements

Discussion: First of all CCIR work was established based upon critical components of the fight over a long period of time. My staff and I, I gave them some guidance, and we evaluated the previous unit’s CCIR and then made a few changes, and then

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subsequently, we conducted essentially almost a, what I would call a quarterly review of CCIR. As we moved from the clear phase to the hold phase to the build phase, that required some changes to the CCIR. However, it is much more challenging in a long-duration COIN fight to answer PIR or CCIR than it would be in a higher op tempo fight. It almost has to be a forcing mechanism from the commander down. For example, if you had a PIR about specific enemy leaders reemerging in the area, that one could partially answer the PIR, but it became a challenge to maintain focus over time on CCIR, once everybody knew the environment.

Because it isn't like a motorized rifle regiment main body coming, ok, that's a clear and definitive trigger that requires action. Honestly, CCIR became less important over the course of our deployment as leaders at all levels understood the environment. It became easier for leaders to recognize challenges or impacts in their environment as they understood it better and better. I relied less on CCIR throughout the course of the year-long deployment.

Source: OEF BN Commander interview, AUG11

### 5. TOPIC: Patrol IR Collection (T)

OEF BN Commander describes process for collection of intelligence by patrols: Your patrols that went out daily, and you had lots of them, how do you feel that worked? As they would come back from patrol, get a debriefing somehow, get that up to the COIST and then up to your S2, how did that whole process work?

Discussion: It worked, there were always challenges, and first of all, it's a discipline challenge to send out squad after squad, hundreds of patrols that all have multiple IR that can be answered effectively. That's a good training tool that units preparing for a COIN fight should go after. Early on what we saw was typically patrols would go out with one IR, well, what if a squad leader could possibly answer two or three? He may have a primary IR to go to this village and assess the need for a well. But if he's in that village and in the past an insurgent leader has operated out of there, why can't he take that IR with him as well? So he achieves multiple effects. So, as we understood our environment, we understood and built relationships with the population; multiple IRs were able to be answered more rapidly because we knew what to ask. The soldiers and leaders also developed a second sense for the operational environment.

The second sense was that leaders and soldiers knew when something was out of place. It's common sense, but when the guy that's always plowing his field at this time, isn't out there, that's an indicator. You can't train some of that. Some of that is just based on experience; but I would say that building a training base down to the squad on what really is an IR and how do you answer it, and how do you conduct key leader training so that you can answer it without the person you're talking to really understanding what you're trying to achieve.

Also, as squad leaders built personal capacity, then we added more IR on. That also helped us build our intelligence network; because when we arrived our HUMINT, where we were at, SIGINT was very, very limited, there's only two cell phone towers in the

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Arghandab River Valley. We knew we had to transition more to HUMINT collection, which is a tough challenge because you have to build relationships to do that. As we cleared, we held, our HUMINT collection increased exponentially because people saw the success the government was having. I personally built my own HUMINT collection network. The district governor built his own HUMINT collection network, separate from others, so it allowed us to confirm what we were seeing because we would get it from multiple sources. I think it all goes back initially to the security; if you build a level of security people can use that to apply the other lines of effort rapidly, and then it's almost a snowball effect to get everybody else on board.

Source: OEF BN Commander interview, AUG11

### IV. Counterinsurgency Operations

#### A. Lines of Operation

**A1. Combat Operations/Civil Security Operation** (consists of securing the population; separating insurgent from population; countering crime; securing national and regional borders; integrating with HN security forces)

##### Topics:

- [Unit Main Effort \(T\)](#)
- [Weighting the Unit Main Effort \(T\)](#)
- [Unit's Decisive Operation \(T\)](#)
- [Shaping the Main Effort \(T\)](#)
- See also related topic under COIN Approaches: [Application of Clear Hold Build as an Approach in Counterinsurgency \(T/O\)](#)

##### 1. TOPIC: Unit Main Effort (T)

How an OEF BN Commander described his Unit's main effort: Talking about counterinsurgency operations, as you experienced them, what was your unit's main effort?

Discussion: The population was the main effort, and we knew that the population would be critical because what we saw when we arrived was a population that was heavily intimidated, a huge amount of fear, and little or no support for the local government. So we had to shape that quickly. In our effort to do that we focused first on gaining a level of security as every unit probably does, all three lines of effort (governance, development, and security) were working simultaneously. But the first three months of combat with us, security was our paramount line of effort, with governance second and development third; just because of the environment, the level of insurgency was significant there. The enemy had sanctuary, had freedom of movement, throughout the Arghandab Valley; had essentially a level of intimidation over the population that the population would go to the Taliban, to the insurgents, to seek help, to seek medical assistance, for the level of capability that the insurgency had at that point. So we focused first on the population, but we did that through gaining a level of security so that

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they could feel like the government forces were in control and had dominance over the area.

Source: OEF BN Commander Interview, AUG11

### **2. TOPIC: Weighting the Unit Main Effort (T)**

How an OEF BN Commander weighted his main effort (linked to preceding item).

Discussion: We weighted it through a series of over 25 company and battalion-level operations. What we did is, we went in and cleared out these sanctuaries. We found them, pulled out caches, killed insurgents, and that allowed us to not only build rapport with the population, because they saw the success the government forces were achieving, but also it helped us build a HUMINT collection network because once security started to be gained in these sanctuaries, we rapidly followed up with development. So, roads went in, wells went in, other projects went in and those efforts together started to turn the population after about the third month, back towards the government, because they saw not only did the government bring them a level of security, but it brought them an increase in quality of life -- day-to-day, their lives improved. They didn't have to walk to the next village to go to the well because they had their own well. Things like that, that they knew that only the government and the other security forces could provide, and that the Taliban couldn't provide for them.

Source: OEF BN Commander Interview, AUG11

### **3. TOPIC: Unit's Decisive Operation (T)**

How an OEF BN Commander reflected on the decisive operation (linked to preceding item):

Discussion: The decisive operation was the clearance of the southern part of the Arghandab River Valley, and then the clearance of the northwest part of the Arghandab River Valley. Where we were at, this is the district center right here for Arghandab, and if you look, here's Kandahar City down here, and you've got essentially this huge green zone, you've got a mountain range that runs right here, that kind of breaks up Kandahar City with Arghandab. Arghandab is extremely important to Kandahar City because there's a perception that if security is good here, that it's good in the city. Because, the people in Kandahar City would say, if security's not good here, are we next? Are we going to see a change in security operations? What we found when we arrived was, first of all, this was the farthest north on either side of the river, this is Senjaray, so there were no coalition or government forces north of this at all. None. No one even went up there. Then what we also found was this critical area, this is called Chaman down here, this whole area was important for the insurgency because this is the last cover and concealed location before they'd go in and out of Kandahar City. They'd hide caches of weapons here and conduct planning operations, we found terrain models, things like that. So this was my decisive op because I had to control this for the city.

Source: OEF BN Commander Interview, AUG11

### **4. TOPIC: Shaping the Main Effort (T)**

How an OEF BN Commander shaped his main effort (linked to preceding item):

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Discussion: First of all, shaping it was going after a series of clearances that were immediately followed up with development and government operations. For example, what we would do is we would go into a village, led by the Afghan Police Force, and they would clear the village. We would push all of the fighters out. Immediately following that, we would bring in requests for development. Do you need a well? What do you need help with? And as soon as that went in the district governor, who was one of my partners, and I would come in so that the government is seen by the people. In many cases prior to this, there was no district leadership that came down (to the villages), they couldn't. We were fortunate that the district governor (who became the district governor about two months before), was not adverse to getting out and about. What we found is echeloning that security, you set conditions rapidly, that had a huge impact on the population because they saw the Taliban leave, they saw development rapidly follow, they saw a government that was listening to their needs and fulfilling some of them, I won't say all of them, and that helped maintain the hold in keeping the Taliban from reemerging and getting back into those areas. So that was kind of the concept that we used. One of the ways we sustained the hold and went into the build throughout the district was we went in and started doing these, what I call "soft-knock search operations." For example, communities, villages that had been held under the government's control for many, many months, what we still did was we would go back about once every two or three weeks, and we would schedule to have the police go back into the community, even if there were no signs of the insurgency there, they would go in and we built these soft-knock operations where the Afghan Police were always in the lead, they would move in, we would provide an outer cordon with coalition forces, then we would go back.

Source: OEF BN Commander Interview, AUG11

**A2. Host Nation Security Forces** (consists of developing concept of HN forces; identifying and recruiting leaders/recruit members; establishing training infrastructure; developing organizational infrastructure; providing for basing and training; employing HNSF with COIN Force advisors).

### Topics:

- [Combined ISAF/ANSF Company Operations Center \(COC\) \(T\)](#)
- [ANSF Led Operations \(Company Perspective\) \(T\)](#)
- [ANSF Training 1 \(T\)](#)
- [ANSF Training 2 \(T\)](#)
- [ANA and ANP Integration \(Company Perspective\) \(T\)](#)
- [ANSF Proficiency \(Company Perspective\) \(T\)](#)
- [ANSF IED Detection \(T\)](#)
- [Patrol Briefing and Debriefing \(T\)](#)
- [Dissemination of Declassified Records of Releasable Detainees to HN \(T/O/S\)](#)
- [Definition of Police Primacy \(T/S/O\)](#)

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- [Drugs and Corruption \(Company Perspective\) \(T\)](#)
- [Internally resourced ANSF partner teams receive little or no training on partnership issues \(T\)](#)
- [General ANSF Partnership Principles \(T/O\)](#)
- [Partnership \(T\)](#)

### 1. TOPIC: Combined ISAF/ANSF Company Operations Center (COC) (T)

At the beginning of the deployment we conducted a RIP with the British Army, who had two separate COCs; one for the British and one for the ANA. As we progressed through the deployment we shifted to a combined COC with nothing but positive results. We now have more redundancy in communications (both their radios and ours) as well as a greater shared situational awareness. Through separate reporting, we were able to confirm information as well as target location of suspected enemy. The obvious language barrier and the limited number of interpreters pose some issues, but nothing that we have not managed to resolve. We have a “cheat sheet” with the most commonly used phrases posted in the COC. We have also taught the ANA how to give the MEDEVAC MIST report should anyone get injured. Their battle tracking has increased remarkably. They have their own pin for the map and will move it as they receive updated position reports from any un-partnered patrols. The combined COC has opened the door for more interaction as well as a better battlefield picture.

This is an absolute must for success of our mission and it gives the ANA more of a voice in operations. Although they will continue to C2 in their own way, they have definitely pickup on the TTP's that we use. Continue the combined COC and increase their COC responsibilities every day.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, DEC10

### 2. TOPIC: ANSF Led Operations (Company Perspective) (T)

Although they lack some fundamental military skills, the ANA and ANP know more about the enemy and the local populace than we ever will. If given the opportunity, they will lead and conduct operations with success. During one of the major operations, the intelligence provided by the ANSF was spot on. They know where the enemy moves, how he conceals himself, and how he interacts with the local populace. We've increasingly relied on their input with nothing but positive results. They have also begun ANA only patrols with positive results. If they feel they are involved in the planning, they will rise to the occasion and offer tremendous insight to your operations.

Ensure you incorporate the ANSF into everything you do. We've had no issues with operational security. They attend our planning and intelligence meetings and provide a tremendous amount of information. While they still need training in some basic areas, don't underestimate their intelligence assessments or their ability to plan and lead operations.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, DEC10

### 3. TOPIC: ANSF Training 1 (T)

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According to ANA doctrine, "Training for warfighting is the ANA's number one priority in peace and in war" (ANA-1: The Afghan National Army, pg 6). Because of the size of the AO and numerous partnered PB locations, the Embedded Training Team (ETT) was consolidated at the two district centers, Musa Qal'eh and Now Zad. These were the ideal locations to train the ANSF command elements and staff while leaving the partnered positions to execute the training plans established. The companies currently conduct training around their operational schedule. Although this has been beneficial, it is difficult to conduct classes and balance a high operational tempo. Also, with classes being taught at the company, platoon, and squad level it is difficult to maintain a standard for training across the Kandak.

Recommend establishing Battalion level schools within the Kandak. Similar to our Battalion Corporal's Course or our Battalion Machine Gunner's Course, the ANA should establish internal schools to ensure proficiency within their ranks. They need to conduct internal assessments, identify shortfalls, develop periods of instruction, and train their soldiers according to their doctrine. We need to show them how we do it and assist them as they develop training plans. This will develop their planning and competency and set them up for long term success. The ETT should periodically establish three to five man teams to rotate between positions in order to standardize basic and refresher training.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, DEC10

### **4. TOPIC: ANSF Training 2 (T)**

Discussion: ANSF development is the LOO the average Marine can most affect. There is training involved with every partnered patrol. However, ensuring that the daily instruction adds up to tangible results is challenging. ANSF units will rotate out of your position every month or so and it's difficult to partner the same ANSF with the same squads to ensure integrity.

Recommendation: Set up a daily schedule to train ANSF. Most ANSF are willing to learn everything they can from the Marines because they see how the Marines conduct themselves on patrol, and how they react in firefights. It gives the ANSF incentive to be more like the Marines. A spreadsheet with photos of the ANSF, the events trained, hours trained on the events, and their proficiency is highly recommended. Employ the same tracking methods as you use for Marines in garrison. Do not segregate yourselves from the ANSF. Playing a game of soccer or volleyball each day with them will increase morale and their trust in the Marines.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, MAY11

### **5.TOPIC: ANA and ANP Integration (Company Perspective) (T)**

The ANA and ANP have their own strengths and weaknesses. While the ANA are more trained in infantry skills and are generally more respected than the ANP, they are most likely not from the province where they are stationed. The ANP, while not always respected among the locals, look more professional and are from the area. I think that the perception is slowly changing with the ANP, but there are still many locals who distrust them. We typically try to incorporate both the ANA and ANP on patrols, which

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have had positive results. During the more kinetic operations, we tend to partner with the ANA for the operation and have a plan to immediately follow up with an influx of ANP. Our patrolling schedules have been tailored to incorporate prayer time and with the issuing of Night Vision Devices, the ANSF are also willing to patrol at night. Capitalize on the individual strengths of the ANA and ANP.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, DEC10

### **6. TOPIC: ANSF Proficiency (Company Perspective) (T)**

The proficiency of the ANA company that I am partnered with is adequate, all things considered. They are basically trained in patrolling operations and squad sized formations and movement. They have a basic understanding of weapons handling and employment however, they refuse to actually handle their weapons properly. This is a leadership issue vice a training issue because their leaders don't care how they handle their weapons. They carry M16A2's, AK-47's, and some RPK's and M249's. We try to partner every patrol with ANA or ANP but only have about an 80% success rate. A typical patrol from my company position (75 Marines and 45 ANA located) consists of 8-12 Marines and 5-8 ANA. Their conduct on night patrols/OP's is probably the most problematic. There is always a chance they will just go to sleep. Have your squad leader identify this to an ANA NCO on the spot and then the Commanding Officer (CO) or Platoon Commander can address it with the ANA commander later on.

Identify your leaders who show the most interest/proficiency in working closely with ANSF. Start training them now to be your direct liaison. Plan to run a basic training package. This should consist of weapons handling, fire and movement, cordon and search, personnel searches, Vehicle Checkpoint (VCP) operations, ROE, law of war and detainee handling. You might also want to think of running an NCO Academy as well.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, DEC10

### **7. TOPIC: ANSF IED Detection (T)**

While the ANA and ANP do not have all the equipment for IED detection and disposal, they are extremely successful in finding IEDs by identifying significant terrain, recognizing markers and indicators, and judging atmospherics. Their ability to read the terrain on dismounted patrols has yielded a 90% IED confirmation rate on suspected IED sites.

Make every effort to partner with ANSF during all dismounted patrols. Include the ANSF in route planning in order to identify historical IED sites, alternative routes, and provide atmospherics from previous patrols and local engagements.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, DEC10

### **8. TOPIC: Patrol Briefing and Debriefing (T)**

Patrol briefs and debriefs are an important part of the mission in order to build situational awareness before the patrols and to provide lessons learned and intelligence for future patrols. The ANSF need to be involved in both the brief and debrief for their development as a professional unit as well as the valuable information they can provide.

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Set and enforce timelines for patrol briefs and debriefs. Don't accept Marines or ANSF being late for these events. As the partnered units develop, increase their involvement in planning, briefing and debriefing until they can competently do it on their own.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, DEC10

### **9. TOPIC: Dissemination of Declassified Records of Releasable Detainees to HN (T/O/S)**

Using Foreign Disclosure Officers, the Division Provost Marshal Office declassified the records of all releasable USD-N detainees being held in US custody. These records, which included known terrorist and criminal information, photos and personal data, was translated and distributed to host nation (HN) forces across the OE. Compiling and sharing these declassified records aided the HN Police in vetting the detainees before the final release list was issued, and helped acquire warrants for violent criminals to support their transfer to HN authorities in support of the Rule of Law. These efforts helped mitigate the potential release of wanted criminals within the OE. Continue to declassify, produce and distributed detainee data and records in order to support Detainee Operations and the full spectrum of combat operations. During the ARFORGEN Train/Ready phase, Provost Marshal Offices should train the following collective tasks to support Detainee Operations: Coordinate Police Intelligence Operations (19-7-5000) and Coordinate Host Nation (HN) Police Building Operations (19-7-4005).

Source, Div HQ AAR, OIF, OCT10

### **10. Definition of Police Primacy (T/O/S)**

The term "Police Primacy" was defined many different ways during OIF 10-11. The term was used as a measure of effectiveness for the Iraqi Police Force. The achievement of "Police Primacy" was defined by USF-I J5 and discussed with HN police leaders. However, at the operational level, the definition and standards of the end state would often change. The differences and changes in the definition of "Police Primacy" caused confusion and misunderstanding throughout the OE. Furthermore, with a lack of a consistent definition, "Police Primacy" could not be a measure of effectiveness in achieving a legitimate force. Units experienced difficulty in helping their Iraqi partners achieve "Police Primacy" in a timely manner due to the changing end state and definition. The definition and end state of "Police Primacy" must be agreed upon and remain constant throughout the theater of operation. Any changes and new developments should be clearly articulated from higher headquarters. During the police engagement process, leaders should work closely with their HN counterparts to obtain clear and common understanding of the terminology and expectation in achieving it. To support these efforts, units should train these tasks: Coordinate Police Intelligence Operations (19-7-5000); and Coordinate Host Nation (HN) Police Building Operation (19-7-4005) during the ARFORGEN Train/Ready phase.

Source, Div HQ AAR, OIF, OCT10

### **11. TOPIC: Drugs and Corruption (Company Perspective) (T)**

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I would estimate that 15% of ANA smoke marijuana. I have told my Marines that if they see it and don't report it then I will hold them accountable. Corruption is also endemic. It is part of the culture to take a little off the top. The ANA get paid by direct deposit and have no ready access to cash; there is no bank anywhere in the battalion AO. The ANA get cash by running smalls shop on every post they occupy. They will try to gouge the Marines for soda, cigarettes, and bread. Also be wary of extortion of CERP funds and other contracted projects.

Don't think you will eradicate drugs or corruption amongst your ANSF. While in the population there is an acceptable level of drug use and corruption, draw a hard line and don't tolerate it when you find out about it. Prepare your Marines for it. Ensure they understand not to tolerate it either.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, DEC10

### **12. TOPIC: Internally resourced ANSF partner teams receive little or no training on partnership issues (T)**

BCT manned numerous ANSF partnership cells at levels from the Brigade down. There are many ANSF systems in place to resolve issues dealing with operations, training, logistics and administration. BCT Soldiers on the ANSF partnership teams received little training on these systems which is normally provided to formal ETTs. Partner teams learned much of the necessary and basic skills while on the job. This prevented them from being effective immediately in some areas as they learned to resolve issues or mentoring their partners through the issues using existing ANSF systems. Examples: MOI/MOD 14 processing continues to be an issue, however most teams did not learn about them until after they started working with their partners).

Recommendation: Identify SMEs within each partnership element during pre-deployment train-up. Train each team's SME on the systems and organization of the ANSF and the coalition force training organization (e.g. NTM-A/CSTC-A) during pre-deployment training. Alternatively, coordinate with the Consolidated Fielding Center (CFC) and IJC-ADAB to conduct an induction course for the SMEs

Source: OEF BCT AAR , NOV10

### **13. General ANSF Partnership Principles (T/O)**

- Improve ANSF capacity to work independently
- Don't micromanage; let them do it themselves
  - Be present and available
  - Correct critical mistakes
  - Keep them action oriented
  - Be patient

Lessons Learned:

- Positive Observations
  - Improved understanding of the threat through INTEL sharing & collaborative (ANSF & ISAF) analysis
  - ANSF capability & confidence significantly increased by partnerships and ISAF combat force multipliers

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- Increased ANSF professionalism through staff-to-staff interaction
- Challenges
  - ANSF logistic processes require increased focus and attention
  - Manning and equipping of OCC-R/Ps
  - ANP building positive reputation with local population - continued emphasis needed

Source: ANSF Partnership Lessons Learned, MAR09

### 14. TOPIC: Partnership

Partnership with ANSF is much more than going out on patrol with them and jerking them around.

Recommendation: Real partnership consists of building camaraderie, personal relationships, conducting joint planning, MRs, and keeping focus on how to increase the capacity of the ANSF. Conducting joint patrols takes significantly more preparation time, planning, patience, and some mitigated risk taking. When you coordinate for a partnered element, you must ensure you get a unit with a leader. Use him - conduct planning with him, get his ideas, control his element through him, and empower him. In the unit's infancy, pair the partnered Soldiers one on one with your Soldier. Once they become more proficient, use them as an independent element. On patrol, give them responsibilities, assign them three or four PIRs to encourage them to engage the population, and keep them informed. Incorporate the leader in any KLE you do and encourage him to lead it -- plan and rehearse this beforehand. Once you return from patrol, incorporate the ANP/ANA into your debrief. They often have good ideas or observations you wouldn't normally pick-up. Reward them with something that will make them excited about partnering in the future. There is a lot of literature on mentorship/partnership. Yet, the best I've seen is still TE Lawrence's 27 Articles.

Source: OEF Infantry Battalion AAR, APR10

**A3. Essential Services** (consists of supporting/establishing sewage treatment plants; trash collection; potable water; electrical power; transportation network; schools and colleges; and medical clinics/hospitals)  
(no lessons recorded at this time)

**A4. Governance** (consists of supporting/establishing concept for governance; identify and recruit local leaders; establish local/regional/national agencies and departments; develop local/regional/national policies and ordinances; re-establish justice system; and support and secure elections)

#### Topics:

- [Civil Military Operations \(T/O\)](#)
- [Building Government Capacity \(Company Perspective\) \(T\)](#)
- [Local Leaders \(Company Perspective\) \(T\)](#)
- [Perception of GIRoA \(Company Perspective\) \(T\)](#)
- [Liaison with Elders & Decisions about People to Work With \(T/O\)](#)

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### 1. TOPIC: Civil Military Operations (T/O)

CMO is the interaction of military forces with the civilian populace to facilitate military operations and consolidate operational objectives. Civil military operations are the activities of a Commander designed to gain the support, loyalty, and respect of the people for their government. CMO is about PEOPLE; is a COMMANDER'S program; is conducted across FULL SPECTRUM operations; must be INTEGRATED EARLY in the planning process; is NOT LIMITED TO CA forces only; must be FULLY RESOURCED for it to be effective

General Tips for CMO:

1. Don't make promises you can't keep
2. Talk to the population in short, concise, direct sentences
3. Must check periodically with the common people about conditions
4. Scrutinize complaints carefully and skeptically; complainers tend to be opportunists
5. Build up prestige of local law enforcement as quickly as possible
6. Corruption in an organization is seldom isolated; it's more often pervasive
7. Don't be too impressed or too depressed by initial assessments; learn to work beneath the surface
8. Liberated populations become very dissatisfied much quicker than you will anticipate
9. If operating in a very centralized society, expect all decisions to be referred to you by local officials/populace
10. Be mindful of any loss in status policies will cause to local groups. They will resist, actively and passively
11. Few civilians will speak the truth to you; most seek to manipulate you for their advantage
12. You must thoroughly wargame populace and resource control measures
13. If there is a flaw, it will have an adverse impact much sooner than you think
14. Military mission is paramount
15. Use indirect, rather than direct influence over population (use local administration)
16. Maximize use of local medical personnel/facilities for civilian casualties
17. If forced to use military medical care, limit to life-saving, then limb or eyesight
18. Must prevent military looting or "souvenir hunting" of civilian goods
19. Evacuation as a last resort (resource intensive)

Source, Div HQ AAR, OEF, JUN10

### 2. TOPIC: Building Government Capacity (Company Perspective) (T)

There is no real semblance of any government in any of my villages. We have started with the local power structure, but in many areas it is difficult to define. We continue to encourage elders to attend the District Governor's weekly elder shura with no results. I have had some pretty in-depth political discussions with elders throughout my AO and they all understand the political process. They understand that they need to "elect" local leaders who then need to tie into the district government by attending the official "elder shura" but they are still hesitant to take the first step.

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Start from the ground up. Always seek to link the locals with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA). If you take the lead on everything they will let you. They have to make the effort to work with the government on their own.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, DEC10.

### **3. TOPIC: Local Leaders (Company Perspective) (T)**

Upon arrival in our AO we attempted to identify and contact all the local elders. Three months into the deployment, I'm still not sure who the local elders actually are. Many are reluctant to identify themselves for fear of enemy retribution. Our success has been in gathering small groups together to discuss issues while taking note of who does most of the talking. Most likely it won't be the elder, but the information will get to him.

Additionally, there might be several different elders in each village. You don't need a shura to discuss topics of importance with the locals, either. Often times, you get more input during an impromptu shura held on the side of a road than you do with an elaborate shura held at the PB.

Meet the locals and talk to whoever will talk to you. Avoid singling individuals out and speak to groups whenever possible. Don't feel like you aren't making progress because you don't know all of the elders. Ensure that each patrol leader knows the talking points that you want the locals to hear and takes advantage of every opportunity to engage them.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, DEC10.

### **4. TOPIC: Perception of GIROA (Company Perspective) (T)**

I came into the AO with the intent to get the locals to trust me and my Marines. By extension, I wanted the locals to trust ANSF/ ISAF also. If you are sincere and do everything you can to help the people and keep them safe, they will see that. Afghans can read you like a book. They know that the only way things will really change is if GIROA succeeds. In many villages that have strong Taliban influence, the locals have never seen a government official other than ANSF. They take this to mean that the government does not care about them and has no ability to affect them. I have now changed my strategy to try to build trust in GIROA, first and foremost.

Get civilian government officials out to your AO. Have them sit down with elders in their villages and on their terms. Listen to the complaints and grievances of the locals but always point them towards GIROA for resolution.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, DEC10.

### **5. TOPIC: Liaison with Elders & Decisions about People to Work With (T/O)**

We need to work extremely hard to empower the elders, but work extremely hard to win the IO campaign with the younger males and get them involved in the process. It may run contrary to the prevailing wisdom of seeking out the elders for all decisions, but the reality is that any decision they make has very little behind it. Additionally, the elders understand that we can change things for the better through our presence; the younger generation is not convinced of this. Focus efforts on identifying and creating incentives for the younger generation to support Coalition Forces, and by extension the elders, and

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then target IO to exploit those efforts and engender support for the leadership of elders. Make decisions early as to which elders can be trusted to work with GIROA and arrest those that prove to be untrustworthy.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, DEC10.

**A5. Economic Development** (consists of mobilizing/developing local economic activity; initiating contracts with local businesses to stimulate trade; rebuilding commercial infrastructure; supporting broad-based economic opportunity; and support a free market economy)

### Topics:

- [Nesting Reconstruction and Development Plans \(Company Perspective\) \(T\)](#)
- [Commander's Emergency Relief Project \(CERP\) \(Company Perspective\) \(T\)](#)
- [Projects for COIN Effects and Transition \(T/O\)](#)
- [Use of CERP \(T\)](#)
- [Shuras and Development Projects \(T/O\)](#)
- [CERP/FOO/DODRP \(T/O/S\)](#)
- [Money as a Weapon \(T/O/S\)](#)
- [CERP \(T\)](#)

#### 1. TOPIC: Nesting Reconstruction and Development Plans (Company Perspective) (T)

There is a common misconception that the number of projects in an AO is directly related to progress in the COIN fight. The urge is to engage the local leaders, find out what they wanted or needed, and work on getting it for them. That, we thought, would put them on our side. More importantly, the number of projects isn't as important as the accomplishment of something visible within the first 90 days. All the initiative, planning, and tracking is overshadowed if you cannot produce tangible results and the competence to see a project through until completion. In doing this, what we failed to realize is that it is very easy for the companies or platoons to circumvent the battalion if the reconstruction effort is not nested properly. Not to say that projects cannot be managed at the company or platoon level, but it is imperative that all projects are tracked at the battalion level and that each project is aligned with the overall reconstruction plan. Before I donate school supplies to a local school, I need to know if it is recognized by the Ministry of Education. If not, then it doesn't have certified teachers and they are not being paid by the government. If we clean the kariz system, who will be responsible for maintaining it? It will also require some kind of government oversight in order to maintain the systems if they cross tribal boundaries. For every small project we do, there are second and third order effects at a higher level.

Ensure that the battalion publishes a reconstruction plan and that it is understood at all levels. Consult with the Civil Affairs team on each and every project and ensure that it meets the overall intent and is sustainable. Focus on the projects that sustain or

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improve existing infrastructure instead of creating new ones. Projects such as digging wells and cleaning irrigation canals have both immediate and long-term impacts. They also improve the daily lives while increasing agricultural output.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, DEC10.

### **2. TOPIC: Commander's Emergency Relief Project (CERP) (Company Perspective) (T)**

CERP is a program to enable commanders to respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction requirements within their AO by carry out programs that will immediately assist the indigenous population. CERP is intended for projects that can be sustained by the local population or government and cost less than \$500K per project. CERP is used to assist the Afghan people, not ISAF or ANSF personnel. A third of the way through the deployment we had each platoon commander trained as a Purchasing Officer (PO) and one of the Sergeants or SNCO's trained as a Pay Agent (PA). This streamlined the entire process of paying claims and beginning projects. It also allowed the civil affairs team at the battalion level to focus on building a plan for the AO and other larger scale projects. To stimulate economic growth we have identified a mix of short-term, mid-term, and long-term projects. Short term projects have included several electrical transformer repairs, repairing of downed power lines, and various water pump installations. These short-term small projects are relatively easy to do, and if the project is under \$5000, it can be signed off by the Battalion Commander. We hire local contractors (village experts), buy the required parts/equipment and pay for the labor. We don't pay them until the project is done. Mid-term projects have included refurbishing schools and Mosques. The process is similar; it just has to be approved at a higher level if the total cost is over \$5000. In those cases we generally pay 20% up front and the rest when the project is done. The one long term project we have is building a school. This is more involved because we needed to tie into the Ministry of Education – the Civil Affairs Group (CAG) helped facilitate. Schools are the key and the people know it. I hear from LNL's all the time, "we have been at war for 30 years – I am uneducated and all I know is this. I want something better for my children." The catch with schools is keeping it going. It is easy to build a school, but who is going to teach? Who is going to pay them? How will it be supplied? Your CMO will have to tie into the Ministry of Education for guidance.

Get smart on how CERP funds work (USFOR-A Pub 1-06). Focus on small projects first; electricity, mosque improvements, well pumps, irrigation canals, road improvements, etc. Talk to the locals and see what they want/need. At a minimum, have a PO and PA trained within each company. If possible, have a PO and PA trained at the platoon level. Identify the individuals early and conduct the training in coordination with RSO&I training.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, DEC10.

### **3. TOPIC: Projects for COIN Effects and Transition (T/O)**

CERP project selection, execution and evaluation must reflect measurable COIN objectives of building interdependent relationships between the host government and the population. Projects must be simple enough for communities to execute and sustain,

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the government to add value and for us to manage remotely through agents. Our processes must be transitional, cannot create unrealistic expectations, and augment community self-reliance sufficiently so the population perceives value in having a government.

Project selection for COIN effects is fundamentally about reducing the challenges to project success while creating incentives for cooperation. Projects that are too complex prevent genuine cooperation between the formal and informal governing bodies and do not advance (or even undercut) the objectives. Project execution in conflicted environments is challenging, meaning the inputs must be reduced to the minimum necessary for achievement of the objectives. Host government participation and community involvement are the primary COIN dynamics being sought. Negotiations must support progress toward COIN effects and are a critical component of project selection.

Project management is focused on project execution and evaluation and fundamentally about the information necessary for the responsible employment of scarce resources. Without sufficient or accurate data, project managers may make decisions that do not advance (or even undercut) the objectives. Data collection in conflicted environments is challenging meaning the indicators should be reduced to the minimum necessary for determining progress toward and achievement of the objectives. Indicators on host government participation and community involvement are the primary COIN indicators worth tracking despite the challenges of collection, analysis and oversight. Without evidence of actual COIN effects, the assumption should be that the project does not advance COIN objectives. Although perception is important, indicators should focus on actual behaviors that are observable and measurable.

Source, ISAF CAAT Report, OEF, APR11.

#### 4. TOPIC: Use of CERP (T)

- Use CERP to teach the governmental process.
- Empower the Shura to suggest projects and then resource local contractors for bids.
- Use bulk CERP as your primary means to give to the community, lots of small projects are often have more impact than one big project.
- When using contracts you must anticipate what projects the populace will ask for and get the process started prior to them asking for it. IOT do this you must know the OE and what the needs of the people are.
- Use Projects to gain security. If a village is safe reward it with projects.
- Small Mosque improvement projects will show we are not there to destroy their religion, which is a common INS IO message.
- Give ANSF credit for projects.
- All soldiers need to be trained on how to read and execute a statements of work.
- All troopers need to be taught about FOO funds and the CERP Process.
- Send troopers to TEC schools and work with the CORPS of ENG to train soldiers on basic construction
- Get copies of 5-35 ENG Field Data Manual to platoons

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- Know what the local cost of materials and services is in your OE Source, BCT AAR, OEF, SEP10

### 5. TOPIC: Shuras and Development Projects (T/O)

(1) Discussion: Shuras are the easiest and best way to get a message out to the people and serve as the primary form of local governance. Decision-making is generally done behind the scenes and shuras serve to air grievances and bring issues to light.

(2) Recommendations: Shuras are the proper venue to talk about development projects as well as other issues. Be careful not to subvert the local established government through shuras. It's very easy to take on the persona of town mayor but you must avoid that whenever possible. If you become seen as the adjudicating authority on matters in town then you have taken that power away from local government. ANSF can help speed up the process in any matters pertaining to the locals. Make sure they understand that you are here to help them, not the other way around. Any gifts (water, tea, etc) you can provide during the shuras will entice attendance; however, it may attract the wrong people. Be careful not to bypass local government for infrastructural projects.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, MAY11

### 6. TOPIC: CERP/FOO/DODRP (T/O/S)

Discussion: CERP/FOO money is essential to solidifying gains made in controlled areas. The more flexibility the company has in approving and paying for projects the better. Right now, we have all of the platoon commanders and platoon sergeants as the Purchasing Officers and Pay Agents, respectively. While this ensures an appropriate level of maturity and responsibility is present, it also places additional responsibilities on the platoon's leadership. Training during RSO&I was all but useless and there are still major friction points every time PO/PAs go to disbursing.

Recommendation: There needs to be adequate training for all PO/PA's IOT avoid the many common pitfalls associated with these non-kinetic fires. It would be best to identify who the main PO/PA's will be well in advance and have them take the Army online course. Additional training implemented into Mojave Viper with role players may be another possible way to improve the use of these funds. This is a major force multiplier, the earlier you tackle this beast, and the better off your unit will be upon getting into country.

Recommend one PO and one PA at each platoon. While it may not be necessary for each platoon, it gives the unit the flexibility. At the battalion level, a staff officer or SNCO should be appointed to manage each pot of money. Additionally, the battalion will have to continually conduct detailed coordination with disbursing for each pot of money in order to reduce the time required to complete paperwork and reconcile/draw funds. Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, MAY11

### 7. TOPIC: Money as a Weapon (T/O/S)

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Discussion: A very effective set of programs exist in country, which when taken as a whole, allow you to do just about anything you want with money as long as it's not immoral or illegal. The difficult thing is that nobody seems to have a handle on all of the pots of money, and so you must figure it all out yourselves. Something that worked well for us is to have a subject matter expert for each pot of money and then to have these SMEs deconflict projects. Another key part of these programs that was overlooked and which hurt us when we RIP'd was that we had not completed all the paperwork and training needed to draw money before we got to our Platoon and Company positions. Had we done this leg work up front, it would have saved us a lot of pain in terms of pulling back Marines in key leadership positions to draw money and in coordinating over great distances with disbursing, contracting, etc. back at Camp Leatherneck.

Recommendation: It is highly recommended that prior to deployment, units identify Pay Agents and Certifying Officers for the various pots of money and bring with them filled out electronic versions of the required paperwork. Also, during the RSO&I period at Leatherneck units should make sure their pay agents draw all of the funds they need and that they get off of the helicopter with cash in hand so projects don't get stalled during the RIP process.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF, MAY11

### 8. TOPIC: CERP (T)

Discussion: Companies use CERP several times each week, however, starting CERP accounts and managing them involves a heavy amount of paperwork. Most uses are for battle damage caused during day to-day operations, usually \$20-\$100 for damage to fields from Strykers traveling off-road. Commanders also use CERP for small projects to gain local trust. Because of the restrictions on CERP funds, it is crucial to have company level CERP agents. Each agent must go through training and complete paperwork to draw funds. This is further complicated as the training classes are rarely offered and fill up quickly during RSOI.

Recommendation: Ensure all Pay Agents and Project Officers are qualified prior to arriving at KAF. Money managers, S-4's, and Executive Officers, at a minimum, must be familiar with Money as a Weapons System-Afghanistan (MAAWSA) in order to be successful early.

Source: OEF Infantry Battalion AAR, APR10

## B. Inform and Influence Operations

### Topics:

- [No form of contact with the population is insignificant! \(T/O\)](#)
- [Each leader must know what \*his or her\* message really is and then stand by it. \(T/O\)](#)
- [Dos and don'ts for media relations at the tactical level \(T\)](#)
- [Information Operations Integration \(T\)](#)

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- [Radio in a Box \(RIAB\)](#)
- [Key Leader and Street Level Engagements \(T\)](#)
- [Female Engagement Teams in Rural Afghanistan Key Takeaways \(T\)](#)
- [Female Engagement Teams in Rural Afghanistan \(T\)](#)
- [BCT Radio Network \(T\)](#)

### 1. TOPIC: No form of contact with the population is insignificant! (T/O)

There are many “laws” of counterinsurgency, but this is arguably the most important thing to remember because fighting an insurgency always boils down to a battle of perception – specifically, a battle over the population’s perceptions of: their government, it’s security forces and their allies; the insurgent forces; and their best bet for the future. Each and every time you have some form of contact with the population (direct, indirect, lethal, non-lethal, etc.) you are, for all intent and purpose, sending a message. This is important to grasp because whether you realized it or not, your actions, for better or worse, will communicate something to the population. It is up to you to decide whether this message will be positive or negative because whichever it is, this “message” will directly contribute to how the population, and even our Afghan counterparts, will ultimately view us... whether or not they will cooperate with and trust us. The phrase, “perception is everything,” is never more true than when fighting an insurgency.

Source, Div HQs AAR, OEF, JUN10

### 2. TOPIC: Each leader must know what *his or her message* really is and then stand by it. (T/O)

Set the conditions for successful transmission of the message by building relationships. Then ensure that the unit’s actions do not controvert or undermine the message, our values as American Soldiers, nor the stated Commander’s Intent and Communications Strategy of the higher headquarters. Here are some tips to help planners and leaders:

- Coordinate with your Battalion FSO or Brigade Information Operations officer (S7) to ensure you’re operation is sending the right message.
- Develop your communications plan with your ANSF counterpart and seek messaging enablers the population trusts to echo your message.
- Create message cards containing your Company’s or Battalion’s talking points in English, Dari, and Pashtu. Distribute down to the Soldier level.
- In Combined Action, ensure your Afghan counterparts have the right message as well. When possible, get them in front of the media, even if his forces were a supporting effort. Leverage your Translator to ensure it is delivered right.
- Coordinate with your BCT PAO to train both leaders and Soldiers to deal with media and locals, focusing on delivery and staying on message.

Source, Div HQs AAR, OEF, JUN10

### 3. TOPIC: Dos and don’ts for media relations at the tactical level (T)

- The media is not your buddy. They will report what you say. If you don’t want to see your name by a quote – don’t say it, you are ALWAYS on record

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- Stay in your lane
  - Stay on the record
  - Discuss only first-hand knowledge
  - Stay brief and concise. Use simple words, avoid jargon and acronyms
  - Listen, pause, think and then answer
  - Maintain professionalism
  - Answer only one question at a time
  - Speak directly to the reporter
  - All contact with Media —On The Record
  - Be honest and forthright, never lie
  - Talk Facts, Don't Speculate
  - OK To Say —I Don't Know Or —I Can't Answer, but NEVER say —No Comment
  - Do not discuss politics per AR 360-1
  - Do not discuss ROE
  - PROTECT OPSEC!
- Source, Div HQs AAR, OEF, JUN10

### **4. TOPIC: Information Operations Integration (T)**

Ensure you have an IO plan because the enemy has one as well. Everything you do can have either positive or negative IO impacts. The locals are extremely susceptible to rumors. A successful IO plan can identify rumors and correct them before they spread. Marines need to be aware of the battalion and company IO plan and use every opportunity to engage the locals and use the talking points.

Incorporate IO into everything you do. Take pictures of everything you do. The locals will believe a picture more than they will believe your words. Perhaps the greatest IO message you can send is through your actions. If your Marines and the ANSF you are partnered with are professional, courteous, and culturally aware, then half of the IO fight has already been won.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF DEC10.

### **5. TOPIC: Radio in a Box (RIAB)**

RIAB is another tool to convey IO messages. RIAB messages that are in response to civilian casualties (CIVCAS) and IED finds need to be on the RIAB immediately in order to combat Taliban IO messages. We have established a request box in the local Bazaar, which allows for anonymous reporting from locals as well.

Work with RCT in establishing approved templates for immediate release of RIAB messages. The RIAB should also have a dedicated linguist. Establish a set schedule of when IO messages should be played on the RIAB so LNL's can incorporate it into their daily routine.

Source, Marine BN AAR, OEF DEC10.

### **6. TOPIC: Key Leader and Street Level Engagements (T)**

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- Determine who the village leaders are. This will often be the person that is the richest and owns the most fields. This person may live outside of the village and has the final say on decisions when they are in the area.
  - The key leader may not be the person talking during your KLE. Watch the talkers body language and see who he looks at for approval.
  - Utilize KLE/SLE for IO purposes. ANSF should have the lead during these events. Prior to the mission work with ANSF to develop themes and IR's for the mission.
  - Empower the elders during KLEs but make sure they are tied directly into GIROA
- Source, BCT AAR, OEF, SEP10

#### 7. TOPIC: Female Engagement Teams in Rural Afghanistan Key Takeaways (T)

- **Definition of engagement:** Efforts to establish ties of trust and respect between local nationals and the Coalition with the end-state being local national support, trust, and respect for the presence of Coalition forces in their area.
- **“Female engagement” includes engaging both men and women.** Female engagements will occur through the men of the community.
- **Women are a critical, yet often overlooked, demographic in counterinsurgency strategy.** This is a key demographic in gaining popular support; however, engaging women is a delicate, refined process that requires a keen understanding of cultural sensitivities.
- **Female engagement teams are not collection assets.** Female engagement initiatives that promote the use of females as collection assets can seriously impede engagement processes, scare women away, and put local women in danger.
- **Men are not the only decision-makers in the community.** Women hold significantly more sway in the household and the village than is often understood or immediately apparent. It is by understanding the means through which they exercise that influence that requires greater understanding by the Coalition.
- **Pashtun gender prohibitions are designed to protect Pashtun women, not Western women.** Afghan men interact differently with Western women. Often seen as a “third gender,” Afghan men will approach CF women with different issues than are discussed with men. For this reason, engagements are necessary with both men and women. As a result, many of those cultural prohibitions are not applicable with respect to Western women involved in female engagements.
- **Afghan and Iraq women are very different.** Therefore, female engagement in Afghanistan cannot be framed by Western and Iraqi biases, and cultural awareness is vital to successful female engagement processes. Afghanistan is also at an extremely different level of social development in 2010 than was Iraq in 2006-2009 when the majority of the USMC female engagement occurred.
- **Female engagement is not an Afghan Lionness program.** While security will inherently be part of the mission for any Marine, the primary goal is not to conduct female searches.

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- **All politics in Afghanistan is local politics.** In light of this, broad-stroke programs that do not anticipate or account for the very local nature of Afghan culture and politics risk causing more problems than solving them.

Source, Marine Brigade Report, OEF, MAR11

### 8. TOPIC: Female Engagement Teams in Rural Afghanistan (T)

It is crucial to understand that projects, engagements, and any events having to do with women must first be conducted through the men. Western females working in Afghanistan is an anomaly especially in the countryside, and could be seen as threatening and suspicious when unaccompanied by male counterparts. In many cases, local nationals will never have seen Western or Marine women before, and because cultural sensitivities of women traveling on their own, may certainly be perceived as something to fear. As the fate of King Amanullah and Queen Soraya demonstrates, reforms for women in rural Afghanistan must not be rushed. While it is certainly not the aim of female engagement to instill any Western cultural standards upon Afghan men and women, it cannot be perceived as such through a local lens. For this reason, FETs must engage with men on any projects regarding work, schooling, healthcare, or otherwise. By bypassing the men in accessing or providing services to women, there is a much greater risk of backlash and will lack critical local buy-in necessary for sustainable progress. See source document for best practices.

Source, Marine Brigade Report, OEF, MAR11

### 9. TOPIC: BCT Radio Network

Company/Troop Commanders often times designated FSOs to manage their Radio-In-A-Box network. As a result, most company and troop commanders did not have the visibility or interest in the performance of their RIABs. Similarly, FSOs were more often interested in focusing on their traditional FSO duties than managing the RIAB stations entrusted to them. In general, Company Commanders and FSOs showed little initiative in addressing the lack of oversight and care.

Recommendation: Place command emphasis on the quality and performance of TF RIABs. Incentivize performance by inspecting RIABs and creating a quarterly award for units who have the best RIAB operation in the AO. Hold units accountable for poor performing stations.

Source: OEF BCT AAR, NOV11

## C. Counterinsurgency Approaches

### Topics:

- [Application of Clear Hold Build as an Approach in Counterinsurgency \(T/O\)](#)

### 1. TOPIC: Application of Clear Hold Build as an Approach in Counterinsurgency (T/O)

An OEF BN Commander describes the success of ANSF development and the application of the clear, hold, build approach: Do you think your Afghan counterparts,

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with all the experience of those 70+ operations, that those will be lessons that stick with them?

Discussion: I do. Because...the district police chief, he saw the success they were bringing. He saw and he understood the importance of tying in with the population. I'd like to think that they will, I think they saw the success that they were having with it. The other thing that I think was critical was, when we arrived, we had over 50 SIGACTs a week at our battalion, over 50. That was everything from mounted IEDs, to large buried IEDs out in this route. We had dismounted IEDs every day in the orchards, usually PMM mines, initiating homemade explosives. We had small arms fires attacks. It was bad right when we arrived. As we got ahold of security those SIGACTs diminished; we knew we were having success when it was still early October, from essentially August to early October, we had done all these clearance operations, and we got low-level signal intercepts that indicated that one guy wanted to leave early, 'I want the fighting season to be done because not only are they killing all of my friends, but the local population isn't burying our dead.' When we started to hear those we knew that we were having an impact on the enemy, and that the tide was starting to turn. What I would also offer to units is we saw how bad it was, so we maintained the pressure consistently throughout the rest of the year we were there. What I mean by that is this: we built a series of obstacles because we saw the enemy use the river as a mobility corridor to conduct operations on both sides. What we did is, in the winter time we went in and put in over fifteen significant obstacles up and down here to canalize movement. We didn't tell the population that they couldn't move, but you just had to take these routes; we got the district governor to buy into that and put the word out as to why we were doing it. We focused it on development so hard that over a ten-month period we spent \$9.5 million dollars, and built so many roads that it gave us freedom of movement in here that was not there when we arrived. All those conditions continued because we anticipated that what we needed to do was in the Spring be able to maintain the pressure. What we found, which surprised me a little bit, is because we maintained the pressure throughout the Winter so strong, the enemy reassessed the Arghandab and said, 'we can't go back in there in force because they're too strong.' So when we left at the end of June, we were down to two or three SIGACTs a week. It was three, three SIGACTs, it was an amazing difference. And all the reporting and intelligence we were getting was the enemy decided to focus elsewhere because not only had the capability of the Afghan Police grown, but the government was in control; you could see that by the actions of the people. When we first got there, there would be maybe 10 or 15 people who would go to the district center to see the district governor. When we left it was upwards of 500 people a day. Part of that is because success breeds success, and when we would put in a road here, the next village over would say, 'hey, we want a road,' and that created momentum that helped build this process. I'm very pleased to see that those COIN principles, applied effectively, have a big impact.

(Source: OEF BN Cdr interview, AUG11)

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**D. Assessment and Metrics**

(no lessons recorded at this time)

**E. Targeting in a COIN Environment**

(no lessons recorded at this time)

**V. Leadership and Ethics**

(no lessons recorded at this time)

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### **The Nature of Counterinsurgency**

(FM3-24, para 5-1)

Counterinsurgency (COIN) operations require synchronized application of military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions. Successful counterinsurgents support or develop local institutions with legitimacy and the ability to provide basic services, economic opportunity, public order, and security.

Counterinsurgency: Those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency (JP1-02).

### **Five overarching requirements for successful COIN operations**

(FM3-24, para 5-2)

1. U.S. and HN military commanders and the HN government together must devise the plan for attacking the insurgents' strategy and focusing the collective effort to bolster or restore government legitimacy.
2. HN forces and other counterinsurgents must establish control of one or more areas from which to operate. HN forces must secure the people continuously within these areas.
3. Operations should be initiated from the HN government's areas of strength against areas under insurgent control. The host nation must retain or regain control of the major population centers to stabilize the situation, secure the government's support base, and maintain the government's legitimacy.
4. Regaining control of insurgent areas requires the HN government to expand operations to secure and support the population. If the insurgents have established firm control of a region, their military apparatus there must be eliminated and their politico-administrative apparatus rooted out.
5. Information operations (IO) must be aggressively employed to accomplish the following:
  - a. Favorably influence perceptions of HN legitimacy and capabilities.
  - b. Obtain local, regional, and international support for COIN operations.
  - c. Publicize insurgent violence.
  - d. Discredit insurgent propaganda and provide a more compelling alternative to the insurgent ideology and narrative.

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### **Historical Principles for Counterinsurgency** (FM3-24, paras 1-112 – 1-136)

#### **Legitimacy Is the Main Objective**

The primary objective of any COIN operation is to foster development of effective governance by a legitimate government. Governments described as “legitimate” rule primarily with the consent of the governed; those described as “illegitimate” tend to rely mainly or entirely on coercion. Commanders and staffs must continually diagnose what they understand legitimacy to mean to the HN population. The population’s expectations will influence all ensuing operations.

#### **Unity of Effort Is Essential**

Ideally, a single counterinsurgent leader has authority over all government agencies involved in COIN operations. The goal of these connections is to ensure that, as much as possible, objectives are shared and actions and messages synchronized. Achieving this synergy is essential.

#### **Political Factors Are Primary**

Political factors have primacy in COIN. The political and military aspects of insurgencies are so bound together as to be inseparable.

#### **Counterinsurgents Must Understand the Environment**

In most COIN operations in which U.S. forces participate, insurgents hold a distinct advantage in their level of local knowledge.

#### **Intelligence Drives Operations**

Without good intelligence, counterinsurgents are like blind boxers wasting energy flailing at unseen opponents and perhaps causing unintended harm.

#### **Insurgents Must be Isolated from Their Cause and Support**

It is easier to separate an insurgency from its resources and let it die than to kill every insurgent. Dynamic insurgencies can replace losses quickly. Skillful counterinsurgents must thus cut off the sources of that recuperative power. Urban insurgents, however, are especially difficult to isolate from their cause and sources of support. As the HN government increases its legitimacy, the populace begins to assist it more actively.

#### **Security Under the Rule of Law is Essential**

The cornerstone of any COIN effort is establishing security for the civilian populace. Without a secure environment, no permanent reforms can be implemented and disorder spreads. When insurgents are seen as criminals, they lose public support. Illegitimate actions are those involving the use of power without authority—whether committed by government officials, security forces, or counterinsurgents. Such actions include unjustified or excessive use of force, unlawful detention, torture, and punishment without trial. Efforts to build a legitimate government through illegitimate actions are self-defeating, even against insurgents who conceal themselves amid noncombatants and

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flout the law. Any human rights abuses or legal violations committed by U.S. forces quickly become known throughout the local populace and eventually around the world. Illegitimate actions undermine both long- and short-term COIN efforts.

### **Counterinsurgents Should Prepare for a Long-Term Commitment**

The populace must have confidence in the staying power of both the counterinsurgents and the HN government. Preparing for a protracted COIN effort requires establishing headquarters and support structures designed for long-term operations. At the strategic level, gaining and maintaining U.S. public support for a protracted deployment is critical.

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### **Contemporary Imperatives of Counterinsurgency**

(FM 3-24, paras 1-138 – 1-147)

#### **Manage Information and Expectations**

Information and expectations are related; skillful counterinsurgents manage both. Achieving steady progress toward a set of reasonable expectations can increase the populace's tolerance for the inevitable inconveniences entailed by ongoing COIN operations. U.S. agencies trying to fan enthusiasm for their efforts should avoid making unrealistic promises. Managing expectations also involves demonstrating economic and political progress to show the populace how life is improving. Both counterinsurgents and the HN government ensure that their deeds match their words. They also understand that any action has an information reaction.

#### **Use the Appropriate Level of Force**

Any use of force generates a series of reactions. There may be times when an overwhelming effort is necessary to destroy or intimidate an opponent and reassure the populace. Extremist insurgent combatants often have to be killed. Counterinsurgents should calculate carefully the type and amount of force to be applied and who wields it for any operation. An operation that kills five insurgents is counterproductive if collateral damage leads to the recruitment of fifty more insurgents. In a COIN environment, it is vital for commanders to adopt appropriate and measured levels of force and apply that force precisely so that it accomplishes the mission without causing unnecessary loss of life or suffering. Escalation of force (Army)/force continuum (Marine Corps) refers to using lesser means of force when such use is likely to achieve the desired effects and Soldiers and Marines can do so without endangering themselves, others, or mission accomplishment. Who wields force is also important. If the HN police have a reasonable reputation for competence and impartiality, it is better for them to execute urban raids; the populace is likely to view that application of force as more legitimate.

#### **Learn and Adapt**

An effective counterinsurgent force is a learning organization. Every unit needs to be able to make observations, draw and apply lessons, and assess results.

#### **Empower the Lowest Levels**

Mission command is the conduct of military operations through decentralized execution based upon mission orders for effective mission accomplishment. Under mission command, commanders provide subordinates with a mission, their commander's intent, a concept of operations, and resources adequate to accomplish the mission. Thus, effective COIN operations are decentralized, and higher commanders owe it to their subordinates to push as many capabilities as possible down to their level.

#### **Support the Host Nation**

U.S. forces committed to a COIN effort are there to assist a HN government. The long-term goal is to leave a government able to stand by itself. In the end, the host nation has to win on its own.