THE JOURNAL OF POLITICAL STUDIES

Editorial Committee of The Journal of Political Studies
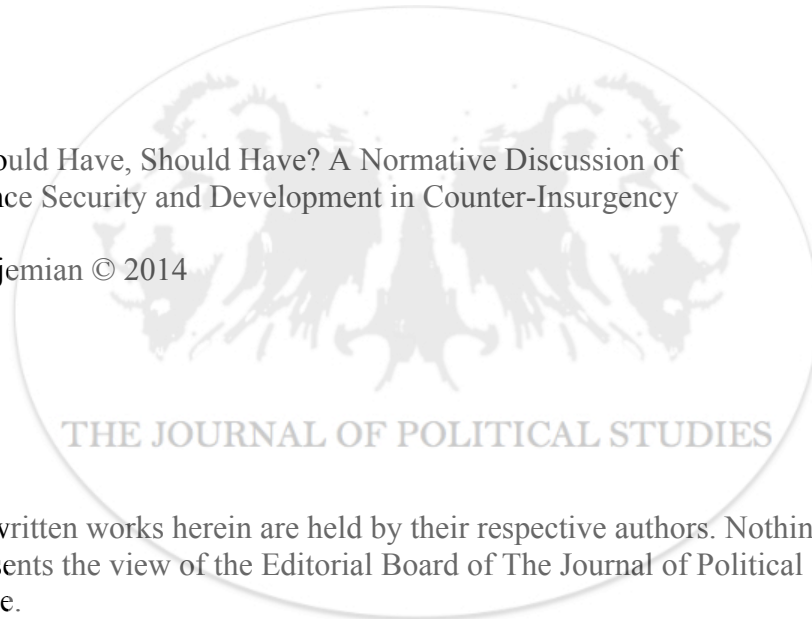
The Journal of Political Studies is a private company located in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Contents

Articles

THE JOURNAL OF POLITICAL STUDIES

Afghanistan… Could Have, Should Have? A Normative Discussion of the Need to Balance Security and Development in Counter-Insurgency Strategy
By: Christopher Ajemian

This article will discuss the need to balance security with development within counterinsurgency environments. It will accomplish this through the perspective of the NATO experience of counter-insurgency warfare within Afghanistan and parallel this with a normative form of how operations in Afghanistan should have been executed. Ultimately, this article will maintain and defend the notion that it is not possible to have security without development. Furthermore, in order to institute security and development in an insurgency situation, states must incorporate aspects of political reform and balance them with other factors of socio-economic development, and military securitization. To show this, this article will divide itself into four separate parts.   First, this article will establish the vital and necessary conceptualisms for security, development, insurgency, and counter insurgency. The second segment will demonstrate how security is fundamentally tied to counter-insurgency (COIN) strategy, so any conversation of security must include COIN as a key aspect of it. The third portion of this article will discuss a normative view of how the relationship between security and development should progress. More concretely, how security should work and how it must be balanced with economic and political reforms, in order to take advantage of an intervening force's strengths and their available time frame for operations. The final aspect of this article will validate the case with an analysis of how events in the Afghan war prove the necessity of having security and development together. Moreover, how a failed balance of human security and political-economic development created the struggling mission that we see today.

Conceptualisms of Terms

For this article we will use a conceptualism of development that is defined as "human development for a greater quality of life for all. It therefore encompasses healthcare, education, poverty reduction, gender equality, disaster preparedness, infrastructure, economics, foreign aid, governance, human rights, environment" and issues that are associated with these[1]. With regards to security, this article will avoid the large discourse on the difficulties in conceptualism. Although discussed by numerous authors, such as: Murray, Sunga, Roosevelt, and Tadjbakhsh, these theoretical discourses are beyond the scope of this article. Instead, the definition of security used in this article will simply conceptualize security as human security that seeks for the "prevention of violence" [2]. Finally with regards to what insurgency is this analysis will use

---

[1] Oxford University: 2013

[2] Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy: 2007; 9

the same conceptualism as the United States Department of Defense as "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict" [3]. Therefore, counter insurgency efforts are the "comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances" [**(Ibid)**].

The Relationship of Counterinsurgency with Securitization and Development

In the face of new security threats, and intrastate conflict, one of the largest security threats faced by international militaries today is insurgency. Despite western military capability, these tactics continue to extract defeat and endless costs on modern militaries. There are few better examples of this in action, then in the contemporary conflict in Afghanistan. In this case, it is logical to connect proper security, especially with regards to Afghanistan, and the correct implementation of COIN. Simply stated, since the most dangerous threat to our military is insurgent based attacks, it is vital to understand counter insurgency so that we can fully understand operational security.

Counterinsurgency situations are by no means a new phenomenon. Clausewitz 's trinity model still applies very clearly in a counter-insurgency environment[4]. Ultimately, the basic nature of war is intact. Actors in conflict are out to pursue their own policy agendas. Insurgencies depend on striking at the weakest points of an apposing force in order to weaken their enemy by seemingly endless small strikes rather than a few decisive military blows [**(Ibid)**]. A crucial part of the insurgency strategy is to work with local populations. As Mao Tse-Tung famously described in his work on guerrilla warfare, "the people are the sea that the revolutionary swims in" [5]. Acknowledging and alleviating the threat of insurgency, is crucial for our understanding of the relationships between war, security, and development. Due to the nature of local population dependency implicit in insurgencies, a logical and effective method of removing insurgents is to remove their support base. This is done by repairing the source of complaints and negative feelings held by the local population towards an intervening force. By doing this, a security force can, in a metaphoric sense similar to Mao's words, remove the water so the revolutionary can no longer swim freely. It is from this background in trying to tackle security and insurgency that our discussion about the role of development plays a vital part.

---

[3] Department of Defense: 2007
[4] Buckley et al: 1995
[5] Mao: 1961; 91

A Normative Viewpoint on Counterinsurgency in Contemporary Conflict

Clearly military securitization can only go so far to addressing the root of dissatisfaction within effected populations. This is why it is extremely difficult to have proper security without political and economic development. This is an emerging mindset, and need for a new counterinsurgency strategy is also reflected in the literature. Galula depicted this in his work when he advocated for a counter-insurgency strategy that is composed of eighty percent political and only twenty percent military intervention [6]. In addition, revisionists such as David Killcullen outline a more detailed model for counterinsurgency. Learning from the war in Iraq, Killcullen structures the optimal counterinsurgency strategy on three basic pillars that enable for control of a conflict zone: (1) security (2) political effectiveness and legitimacy, and finally (3) economic development [7]. This model is pictured below. It emphasizes how control of a country's population is not composed of primarily of a military component. Furthermore, the need to have security is fundamentally linked to meaningful and legitimate economic and political development [Ibid]. The success of counter insurgency, and as a result overall security, is therefore dependent on meaningful political and economic reform. Kilcullen also adds to his normative ideal counter insurgency by adding on traditional "ink spot" method of counterinsurgency, where an intervening force must first secure an area, hold it, build and develop it, then move to the next area [8]. Together, these strategies were the normative bedrock of ultimate NATO COIN strategy in Afghanistan.

The there are a few factors that should also be included if we desire to create an optimal normative view of how to foster proper security within an insurgency. Although not included in the mainstream

---

[6] Galula: 1964; 88
[7] Kilcullen: 2006
[8] Mills: 2006

implementation of COIN, time is a factor that is crucial when discussing counter insurgency. As discussed earlier, insurgent tactics usually strike at a well-equipped enemy's weaknesses. Among many other weaknesses that traditional military's usually face, time is a commodity that an intervening force has a limited supply of and local opposition forces has an endless supplies of. As a result of this, insurgencies can bleed their enemy's over years in a low intensity conflict while the traditional military has to make maximum impact in a small and highly scrutinized timetable for action[9]. This maximum impact is difficult to achieve due to the fragmentation of implementation that occurs in wartime between various militaries, NGO's, donor groups, and IGO's. Each of these organizations has there own specialties, tactics, conceptualisms and objectives that differ from each other, and some cases even conflict [10].

What one can gather from an analysis of security, and counterinsurgency is that overall security, and ultimately control, cannot be attained through military action alone. The ideal security operation must make deliberate action to win over local populations. This must be done through a triumvirate of well-coordinated and synchronized actors who adjust their intervention between Kilcullen's three pillars of control. However, time and cultural human terrain must determine when they are prioritized during the conflict. In a similar fashion to a DJ knowing the correct moment to change tone and tune, an intervention force must be ready to change its priorities and energy at the optimal moment. The initial stages must emphasize military securitization to remove the main opposition. After this is done emphasis must quickly be placed on political reform and socio-economic development. This will legitimize the intervention and remove the base for insurgency. If the order is hampered, unequally distributed or not well coordinated then the entire process can be derailed. Military security without economic and political reform will lead to an insurgency. While too little military securitization and only a political and poorly secured development will lead to ineffective reform and later failures.

More specifically with regards to security, it is important that it is channeled into a human security element. This means not only securing military operations, but also making sure that justice and the prevention of civilian local level crime and ambient violence are the number one priorities for security forces [2,11]. From this the local population will have not only the perception but also the reality of real security and the foundation for trust in an intervention force [12]. With regards to political intervention, reforms that are made must be made to coincide with local culture, and be representative to all regions and groups within the

---

[9] Van Creveld: 1991; 239
[10] Layton: 2012
[11] Ledwidge: 2009
[12] Kain: 2013

country. Insurgency is based from political and cultural roots. So its solution is to solve the core issues, not just dealing with military confrontation. If a newly created political reform is seen as ineffective and not representative of the communal will, it will not be respected and the opposition will attack it[13]. Finally, with regards to development, aid systems must be put into place but they must be sustainable. High priced, extremely audacious and unmaintainable projects merely help the opposition by promoting corruption and showing the flaws in interventionist policy. Instead, coordinated economic development that seeks to employ a bottom up, local level, and basic development is ultimately more sustainable and productive to overall goals [14, 15].

The Reality of Security Within the Afghan Counterinsurgency Environment

From the earlier statements, the argument that security cannot properly materialize without development should be apparent. However, additional evidence supporting this notion can be found in the failures that have defined the NATO experience in Afghanistan. If we analyze the strategy that went into Afghanistan with the normative view from earlier in this article, we can clearly see the need for policy reform and the need to have security and development work in synchronization. If we look into the history of the recent conflict we can see an originally light security footprint that was extremely effective at destroying the military opposition [16]. One acquaintance in I met in Afghanistan, Matt Trevithick, described how in the opening stages of the intervention had Panshiri Northern Alliance fighters charging on horseback armed with AK-47 rifles and laser pointers at Taliban defenses. When combining the versatility of the Afghan anti-Taliban fighters and the firepower of the US Air force the NATO coalition removed most pro-Taliban and Al Qaeda forces in a few weeks. However, this relatively easy entry into the conflict did not last long. The diplomatic agreements in the Bonn Convention and the later political reforms that were installed were not representative of the domestic demographics. Members of Tajik, Panjshiri, and Hazara populations that were anti-Taliban were selected for key political positions and sponsored by foreign regimes. However, these leaders ultimately proved to only inflame pre-existing civil war ethnic tensions between Pashtuns and minority groups in Afghanistan (Harrison: 2009). In addition, the aid efforts made into Afghanistan have been extremely fragmented, and led by top down initiatives that promote pragmatic consolidation on the ground and corruptive inefficiency [17, 14]. Fragmentation is also present across NATO members. Training

---

[13] Harrison: 2009

[14] O'Connor: 2013

[15] Stewart: 2011

[16] Barfield: 2010

[17] Kandiyoti: 2009

methods, salaries, and tactics have been presented differently throughout the conflict by each organizing entity (USAID, NGO's. European Governments, UNAMA, etc.). The result of this has led to an ineffective government that is rife with patronage, corruption, and has the public perception as a western puppet [16]. Moreover, aid and governance changes have not affected the poorest and most politically and economically disadvantaged areas of Afghan society, but only created additional animosity and inequality [15]. As a result it is no mystery as to why the insurgency continues to thrive in Afghanistan since many do not have a democratic way to express their frustration at the lack of socio-economic alternatives available to them. This is especially true in the Pashtun areas of Southern and Eastern Afghanistan. This can be verified by numerous accounts that are not only in popular media.

One account comes from Ehsan Saadat, a resident of the Pashtun areas in Afghanistan. In addition to being a project manager with a with a well respected Afghan based social research NGO, the Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization, was a combat interpreter embedded with western special forces in the beginning of the war in Paktia province. Having contacted him, he stated that not only is security impossible to foster without development, but also there were vital errors made in the beginning of the war that explained the creation of the contemporary insurgency. Shortly after the fall of the Taliban, development aid was mainly spent on Tajik areas of the country. Pashtun regions, while being originally secure, were ignored due to ethno-political differences with the ruling elite. As time progressed, the inequality of development aid coupled with almost non-existent political representation sowed the seeds of hostility with the newly created government. Now it is seemingly too late to change this trend since these areas are the most dangerous areas in the country for development groups [18].

Simultaneously happening alongside with the above factors, civilian deaths and cultural misunderstandings still continue to hamper Afghan perceptions of the (ISAF) International Assistance Force and the Afghan government [19, 20, 21]. As a result of the worsening insurgency, the security of the country has deteriorated even further. This has led to an increasingly difficult environment for political and economic development. This pattern reveals a paradox, where development is vital for security. However, security is also vital to ensure that development can be implemented. More recently this relationship has been in a downward spiral where, as one American soldier stated "The idea in COIN is: Secure, Hold, Build. Now we're building, trying to secure, and not holding a lot" [14]. On top of this, these failures have not been lost on

---

[18] Saadat: 2013

[19] Dreyfuss: 2013

[20] Ahmad: 2012

[21] Press TV: 2013

the current Karzai administration which seems to be breaking off ties from its NATO allies and is preparing to accept a system where the insurgency again becomes part of the oligopoly of power within the country for the foreseeable future [22].

<div align="center">*Concluding Remarks*</div>

This article discussed whether it is possible to have security without development through paralleling a normative vision for the early intervention to the contemporary realities on the ground. It ultimately maintained that it is not possible to have security without development. The article then shifted to discuss how in order to institute security and development in an insurgency situation; states must incorporate aspects of political reform with other factors of socio-economic development, and military securitization. This analysis did this by dissecting the discussion into four separate parts. It first established the conceptualisms for security, development, insurgency, and counter insurgency. Then, it demonstrated how security is fundamentally tied to counter-insurgency strategy. After, it created a normative view by using the existing literature to show how the relationship between the security, development, and counterinsurgency should develop. Finally, it showed how the underlying thesis, of the need for security to have development, was proved through the failures of the British and NATO experiences with counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. Moreover, how a failed balance of human security and political-economic development created the distressed mission that is at work today.

Having recently lived and worked in Afghanistan, the struggles and the humanity at stake within the country's difficulties are personally and painfully evident. The mistakes of the hasty intervention of 2001 have proven to be extremely difficult blunders to recover from. Wartime security and development are still contemporary issues that even the most powerful states seem to have an infantile grasp of. This is especially true with regards to insurgencies. However, at the end of the day the plurality of actors involved, and their different goals and agendas create an anarchic situation that is difficult to pull into an overall success. It is often difficult to find guidance in such an operational environment. As is true with many things and despite the honest work of many actors, as Henry David Thoreau stated, "there are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root" [23]. We must make sure to amend our approach to security and development, if we are to ever to strike at this root. If not for the sake of geo-politics and economic progress, then we must make these reforms for the sake of humanity.

---

[22] Sukhanyar & Nordland: 2014
[23] Thoreau: 1854

Bibliography

- Ahmad. 2012. Cultural sensitivity key to U.S. role in Afghanistan. [online] Available at: http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2012/08/31/cultural-sensitivity-key-to-u-s-role-in-afghanistan/ [Accessed: 12 Nov 2013].

- Barfield. 2010. Afghanistan. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Buckley *et al.* 1995. *A Model of Insurgency: Reflections of Clausewitz's' Paradoxical Trinity' Lessons for Operational Planners Considering Conventional Forces in Unconventional Operations.*

- Dreyfuss. 2013. Afghanistan's "Green on Blue" Nightmare | The Diplomat. [online] Available at: http://thediplomat.com/2012/10/insider-attacks-and-the-afghan-drawdown/ [Accessed: 9 Nov 2013].

- Galula. 1964. Counterinsurgency warfare. New York: Praeger.

- Harrison. 2009. Afghanistan's Tyranny of the Minority. [online] Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/17/opinion/17harrison.html?_r=0 [Accessed: 10 Nov 2013].

- Kain. 2013. *Master Class on Private Military and Security* Companies. [Lecture]. Contemporary War: Changes and Continuity at the University of Edinburgh. 12 November 2013

- Kandiyoti. 2009. Gender In Afghanistan: Pragmatic Activism, OpenDemocracy. Available at: http://www.opendemocracy.net. [Accessed: 10 November 2013]

- Kilcullen. 2006. "*Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency*". U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Conference, Washington D.C. [online] Available at: http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/uscoin/3pillars_of_counterinsurgency.pdf [Accessed 14 November 2013]

- Layton. 2012. *Grand Strategy: leaving Afghanistan | The Strategist.* [online] Available at: http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/grand-strategy-leaving-afghanistan/ [Accessed: 11 Nov 2013].

- Ledwidge. 2009. *Justice and Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan: A Missing Link.* The Rusi Journal, 154 (1), pp. 6-9.

- Mao. 1961. On guerrilla warfare. New York: Praeger

- Mills. 2006. *'Calibrating Inkspots: Filling Afghanistan's Ungoverned Spaces'*, RUSI Journal

- Sukhanyar & Nordland. 2014.The New York Times: In Prison Release, Signs of Karzai's Rift With U.S. [online] Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/14/world/asia/afghanistan-releases-prisoners-over-us-objections.html?_r=0 [Accessed: 16 Feb 2014].

- O'Connor. 2013. *Can Development Win a Counterinsurgency*?. [online] Available at: http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/dispatches/features/2011/fighting_the_tali ban_one_irrigation_project_at_a_time/can_development_win_a_counterinsurgency.html [Accessed: 10 Nov 2013].

- Oxford University. 2013. International Development. [online] Available at: http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/International_Development-2012.pdf [Accessed: 13 Nov 2013].

- Press Tv. 2013. Afghans rap US-led killing of civilians. [online] Available at: http://www.presstv.com/detail/2013/09/22/325339/afghans-rap-usled-killing-of-civilians/ [Accessed: 12 Nov 2013].

- Saadat, E., e_saadat@hotmail.com 2013. RE: Development and Security. [email] Message to Ajemian, C. (cajemia@gmail.com). Sent 26th November 2013.

- Stewart. 2011. *It is Time to End the War in Afghanistan.* [video file]. Available at: http://www.ted.com/talks/rory_stewart_time_to_end_the_war_in_afghanistan.html

- Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy. 2007. *Human Security.* London: Routledge.

- Thoreau. 1854. Walden. Raleigh, N.C.: Alex Catalogue. Pp. 8

- US Department of Defense. 2007. *Joint Publication 1-02: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms.* [online] Available at: http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf [Accessed on 12 Nov 2013]

- Van Creveld. 1991. *The Transformation of War.* New York: Free Press. Pp. 239