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**NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan/Combined Security Transition**

**Command-Afghanistan (NTM-A/CSTC-A): Building a Sustainable,**

**Legitimate, Effective Afghan Security Force: A Holistic Perspective**

Trip Report by: COL Cindy Jebb & COL Richard Lacquement

18 December 2009

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to provide our observations and preliminary thoughts concerning the way ahead for NTM-A/CSTC-A based on our work as part of the Quick-Look Assessment team from 3-19 December 2009. We both had the pleasure to work closely with members of the command whose professionalism and enthusiasm were deeply inspiring. The command confronts great challenges as it pursues a mission vital to coalition success. We are qualified optimists about the potential success of the mission. The most important source of our optimism for

eventual mission success comes from our observations of the tremendous talent and dedication of the individuals assigned to this command. We were also heartened by our interaction with individuals from other commands and with many impressive Afghan partners.

COL Jebb primarily worked with the Afghan National Army (ANA) Development office while COL Lacquement primarily worked with the CJ5. Both offices are comprised of selfless, dedicated, and smart professionals. Of particular note, COL Jebb had the terrific experience to interact with senior advisors to the Ministers/General Staff (COLs Mike Barbee, Jim Campbell, Fred Manzo, Tom Donovan, and Kevin Cotten, as well as the senior advisor for ANA

development, COL David Henley); COL Lacquement benefitted immensely from the support and collaboration of many CJ5 officers, particularly, COL Don Bigger, COL E.G. Clayburn, LtCol Steve Tilbrook and LTC Norm Fuss and from JAG, COL Tom Umberg.

While here, we both sought to understand the needs of NTM-A/CSTC-A on behalf of our home institutions (USMA and USAWC), so that we can best match faculty skill sets, interest, and availability to provide future support if requested. At the very least, this experience will facilitate reach-back efforts for the future. We were able to learn a great deal due to the open command climate and everyone’s generosity with his/her thoughts and time. Finally, we offer our sincere gratitude to LTG Caldwell, Dr. Kem, and CAPT Mark Hagerott for enabling this fascinating experience and to MAJ Jon Klug for coordinating the visit and support.

Although we provided input to teams working on specific quick-look tasks, this trip report reflects a more holistic perspective of NTM-A/CSTC-A drawing on input from many people across several organizations. This report begins with an overview and a brief summary of key issues. Subsequent sections address the political, economic, and social landscape; corruption; ANA recruitment, training, retention, employment; ministerial development; NTM-A/CSTC-A organization; and critical uncertainties that may drive success or failure. We describe a way ahead for future collaborative work with NTM-A/CSTC-A. We also provide a list of interviewees and a brief summary of selected trips and meetings.

We will attach the quick-look focused assessments and recommendations relating to

ANA Development (enclosure 1, coordinated and edited by COL David Henley and COL Kevin Cotten) and planning (enclosure 2, coordinated and edited by LtCol Steve Tilbrook).

OVERVIEW

Interestingly, this trip began on the same day that President Obama gave his speech at West Point. In that speech, he called Afghanistan and Pakistan “the epicenter of the violent extremism practiced by Al Qaeda.” He stated the following overarching goal: “to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to prevent its capacity to threaten America and our allies in the future.” To meet this goal, the President stated the following objectives: “deny Al Qaeda safe haven…reverse the Taliban’s momentum and deny it the ability to overthrow the

government…strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan’s security forces and government so that they can take lead responsibility for Afghanistan’s future.” [emphasis added]

NTM-A/CSTC-A’s mission statement is: “…in coordination with key stakeholders, generates the [Afghan National Security Forces] ANSF, develops capable ministerial systems and institutions; and resources the fielded force to build sustainable capacity and capability in order to enhance the GIRoA’s ability to achieve stability and security in Afghanistan.” (October 2009)

NTM-A/CSTC-A’s challenges are immense. First and foremost is the challenge of growing a sustainable, legitimate, and effective force in a short time period (increase ANA to 134,000 and the Afghan National Policy (ANP) to 96,800 personnel by Oct 2010). The requirements of the ongoing war create tremendous pressure to grow the ANSF and get new units into the fight as quickly as possible. This immediate pressure often creates tension with the long-term strategic goal of building an ANSF that can lead the fight effectively with minimal reliance on external support. Quality and quantity need not be in competition but often are. Second, NTM-A/CSTC-A

must assist Afghanistan to stand up these security forces so that they are linked to the central government and valued by the local population throughout the country. Afghanistan is the epitome of the phrase, ‘all politics are local,’ and the country has never been controlled entirely from the center. Third, the country is extremely diverse across several dimensions: geographic, ethnic, tribal, religious, political, economic, and cultural. Hence, a cookie-cutter approach is not appropriate. Instead, each locale requires a depth of focused understanding to best address its specific issues and its connectivity to the central government. Fourth, the country has been in the throes of at least some kind of war since 1978. This has wreaked havoc on the people in all ways imaginable, devastated the social fabric of Afghan society, and caused an estimated $250 billion in damage to infrastructure (according to the IMF and World Bank). Fifth, NTM-A/CSTC-A has just emerged from CSTC-A. The organization has restructured and reorganized with new leadership in a very short time. The organizational change has been all the more challenging in light of the concurrent, manifest increase in the organization’s mission.

NTM-A/CTSC-A must also be viewed in the larger context as Afghanistan moves forward. Building Afghan capacity for security must accompany efforts towards good governance and job creation. There is a possible opportunity that growing the ANA and ANP will bring added energy to developing good governance and economic growth. As such, below are our most prominent observations framed as key themes for the command as it addresses its expanded and profoundly important charter:

KEY THEMES (These themes are addressed in more detail in the sections that follow.)

Enable Transition. Mindful of the immediate operational requirement to provide security to the Afghan population, NTM-A/CSTC-A’s efforts must nevertheless focus on the eventual transition to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) of responsibility to effectively provide for its own security as a responsible member of the international community.

Seek Local Solutions. A pervasive theme when approaching the challenges of Afghanistan, whether they be economic, political, security, and/or societal in nature, is that the dynamics at the local level are different from place-to-place. No one group -- religious or ethnic-- ought to be considered monolithic in nature. Moreover, local issues need to be addressed locally.

Be Patient. Change will not occur overnight. The main elements for success will be persistence, tenacity, and small incremental change. The Afghans must lead with NTM-A/CSTC-A assistance. Genuine change will only occur if Afghans own the problem and work to fix it across many areas. This leads to an uncomfortable space that coalition members often rush to fill. And herein lays an important tension between the desire to see continued and rapid progress and the need to let Afghans develop and lead a pace they can sustain.

Reassess progress and desired outcomes. While understanding the emphasis on developing measures of performance (MOPs) and measures of effectiveness (MOEs), which are essential, it is important to frequently re-assess them with respect to the desired outcome. The situation and conditions will continually change, and therefore requires periodic re-examination of progress towards desired ends.

Collaboratively develop metrics. Given the complex requirements of the mission and the many actors engaged in accomplishing it, collaboration is essential. To gauge progress usefully, metrics must be developed with the Afghans and other coalition partners.

Counter Corruption. A great risk for Afghanistan, the region, and the world is the perpetuation of corrupt governance that the Afghan people view as illegitimate. This risk may be further exacerbated as we build a strong ANA and ANP that may potentially extend the reach of corrupt governance and, hence, fuel the insurgency. Corruption is an important issue that cuts across efforts to support effective ANSF development and employment.

Develop ANSF holistically. ANA development cannot be assessed without understanding ANP development and vice versa. Moreover, there is some tension between these two institutions. The ANA and ANP must coordinate across recruitment, retention, training, and employment so that rather than competing for resources and missions they complement and support one another.

Balance quality and quantity. Leaders must balance quality and quantity regarding ANA and ANP development. Fundamental questions include: What is the right mix of specialties in the planned growth of the ANA? What specialties or enables will be provided by coalition partners and for how long?

Develop leaders at all levels. The professionalization of the ANA and ANP is crucial to success. Developing good leaders at all levels must be a priority. Leader development will assist with many of the challenges outlined in this report, but is particularly important to developing capacity for the eventual transfer of responsibilities.

Integrate strategic communications across all activities. The center of gravity of this war is the Afghan people. As one GO mentioned, the Afghan people need to perceive the Afghan government and the ANA as the winning team vis a vis any alternative. Information operations are significant aspects of our efforts.

Broaden civilian advisory efforts. Ministerial advisors to Afghan civilian leaders should be coalition civilians of similar experience (e.g., from a comparable coalition department or ministry). Currently, military officers primarily serve as advisors to civilian ministers. Also, there is a process in place to develop the Office of National Security Council (ONSC), which is responsible for developing security policy and strategy, which needs to be more widely understood. The ONSC could be a good forcing mechanism to ensure that ministers coordinate on important issues.

Re-evaluate NTM-A/CSTC-A Organization. Given the multi-faceted mission of the NTM-A, it is imperative that it is organized to accomplish its mission. Good evaluation of organizational proposals must follow the new ANA and ANP sub-commands’ mission analysis. Critical to mission accomplishment is facilitating the integration of its key functions: ANA, ANP, and ministerial development and training. Moreover the organization must allow for flexibility and facilitate communications vertically and across the organization, as well as with the ANA, ANP, ISAF, IJC, MOD, and MOI.

POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

Afghanistan’s political landscape is extremely diverse with informal and formal organizations and leaders. It varies from place-to-place, even within provinces, districts, and municipalities. Some of the key characteristics include the following: power resides in the rural areas; it has never had a central government that was meaningful outside the cities; there has never been a robust middle class; and the population is mainly illiterate (~80%). Currently, there is a lack of trust among different segments of the population; between the population and the governing

elites; and between elites themselves.

With the Soviet invasion, followed by Taliban rule with Pakistani support, the fall of the Taliban, and then the reemergence of the Taliban in the wake of government corruption and anarchy, the population has learned to shift alliances to the perceived “winning side.” Furthermore, years of war and conflict have hardened social divisions across regions, ethnicities, tribes, etc.

Several people we spoke with highlighted the independence and capability of individual Afghans. Afghans exhibit a tremendous capacity and creativity for taking care of themselves. Such an astute ‘survivor mentality’ may well flow from the incredible violence and societal disruption of the past three decades; however, there is also much historical evidence to point to local pride and adaptability of a society planted in an often hostile and unforgiving natural environment at the crossroads of many powerful neighbors.

There have been efforts to connect the central government with the sub-national governmental levels and informal leaders at the community level. The shuras or community councils serve as mechanisms to bridge the formal governing structures with the tribal and informal leadership structures. These councils help with conflict resolution, deciding on developmental projects, and with settling other local matters.

Unfortunately, in many instances self interests among elites trump national interests, thereby greatly slowing progress and contributing to corruption. It is unclear if there is a pervasive Afghan identity across regions and groups, though there has been some progress. The opening of the press, TV stations in all provinces, and slight indications of civil society may serve to facilitate a continued, though uneven, path towards a stable, legitimate, and prosperous state.

While there has been some economic progress in Afghanistan, it still is one of the poorest states in the world. According to a UK government report, the economy is characterized primarily by subsistence agriculture, corruption, and drugs. Economic development support is directed towards agriculture in rural areas, transit lines, and access to global markets. The report makes particular note of Helmand’s potential as a major agricultural center.

A pervasive theme when approaching the challenges of Afghanistan, whether they be economic, political, security, and/or societal in nature, is that the dynamics at the local level are different from place-to-place. No one group -- religious or ethnic-- ought to be considered monolithic in nature. Moreover, local issues need to be addressed locally.

CORRUPTION

Corruption undermines effectiveness and legitimacy of Afghan institutions. How do we understand corruption in the Afghan context? A human terrain team report suggests that there is a spectrum from grand to petty corruption. Grand corruption is defined as taking bribes with greed as the motivation as opposed to feeding a family. It is interesting to note that the development of bureaucracy, including rule of law structures, tend to foster corruption. The low wages of public servants, to include prosecutors, tends to facilitate corruption. The formal rule of law structures

designed to keep corruption in check have embedded disincentives: it is costly, takes a great deal of time, and some judges are corrupt. Unfortunately, the Taliban apparently often offer quick, cost-free and impartial justice.

The basis of law includes both the constitution and Islamic (or Sharia) law. The constitution states that no law should contradict Islamic law. The issue is that the law can be interpreted differently. The keys to rooting out corruption are: make rules as clear as possible; provide ethics training to judges and lawyers as a method of professionalization; and institute proper salary levels. Throughout the government, when possible, discipline individuals. Most of all, efforts should focus on reinforcing or developing good, honest leadership at the top. The key to truly moving forward is good leadership.

USAID is working a project to link traditional justice systems with the government. The local shuras decide most of the civil disputes and perhaps minor crimes. Most crimes are settled by money or land. The goal is restoring tranquility versus attaining justice. Note that there are limited prisons at the very local level. It is unclear how the policing efforts partner with the Minister of Justice to link policing with detention and the courts system.

The CJ5 and JAG superbly led a week-long session with the aim of producing an overarching anti-corruption (AC) strategy. The first two meetings established the framing and scope of the problem. Dr. Kem, the Deputy to the CG of NTM-A/CSTC-A, framed the session by referring to Sarah Chayes’s book, *The Punishment of Virtue* that discusses the promotion of virtues and the

punishment of vice. Dr. Kem charged the group to develop structures and systems that both punishes bad behavior but also reinforces good behavior. The discussion led to the recognition that the group must develop measures of performance and effectiveness; we discussed such MOEs as the people’s confidence in the government and the decline of shadow governments. There was much lively discussion concerning the definition of corruption that should include the

Afghan perspective.

The scope of the project is limited to NTM-A/CSTC-A, meaning focus must be on the ANA, ANP, and ministerial development (MOD and MOI). Subsequently, the group is concerned on three levels: echelons above corps, corps and below, and ministerial. The group then identified current AC plans/strategies that NTM-A/CSTC-A must either nest with or complement. There were a lot of questions concerning the degree of AC planning/plans at the ministerial levels. An

Afghan colonel from the MOD shared that the ministries were holding working groups to establish such plans/policies. The group then identified current known capacities that both reinforce good behavior and punish bad behavior.

As with each effort designed to bolster confidence and legitimacy in the government, it is important to deliver the message of transparency, effectiveness, and rule of law.

Finally, a great risk for Afghanistan, the region, and the world is the perpetuation of

corrupt governance that the Afghan people view as illegitimate. This risk may be further exacerbated as we facilitate the building of a strong ANA and ANP that potentially extend the reach of corrupt governance and, hence, fuels the insurgency. That said, ministerial and GS development must be a focal point for the command, and an area that requires similar emphasis at higher levels

ANA/ANP RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, RETENTION, EMPLOYMENT

COL Jebb’s focus was on ANA development, but it was clear that ANA development could not be assessed without understanding ANP development. There are indications of some tension between these two institutions. First, the ANA received priority attention in terms of resources and focus. The ANP development is not as mature as the ANA development. Second, the ANP has been fighting insurgents, yet they are not well prepared for this type of mission--and they

have suffered dearly as a result. Many people believe that the police are more corrupt than the army. However, it is important to realize that the police have more contact with people, have much more oversight, are transparent, and have had substantially less training than the army. It may be the case that police corruption is easier to detect. The ANA and ANP must coordinate across recruitment, retention, training, and employment so that rather than competing for resources and missions they complement and support one another. For example, many suggested that the ANA’s mission should be ‘clear and hold,’ while the ANP’s mission should be ‘hold, build, and sustain.’ Most importantly, the ANA and ANP should not undermine each other’s recruiting efforts.

The cycles of recruitment, training, retention, and employment are interrelated and must be viewed in an integrated manner. The resources required by NTM-A/CSTC-A are listed in the paper assembled by the assessment/staff team. We only add that if in fact NTM-A/CSTC-A is the main effort, then it is puzzling why resources have not been forthcoming, especially in the form of authorizations for personnel. Moreover, it is important that NTM-A/CSTC-A personnel receive the right training before serving as advisors and trainers themselves. For the discussion below, we view MOPs as a process (task) that is observable and MOEs as an expression of the end state (purpose). Additionally, MOEs and MOPs must be coordinated with

the Afghans especially if they are truly going to own the system.

The center of gravity of this war is the Afghan people. As one GO mentioned, the Afghan people need to perceive the Afghan government and the ANA as the winning team. Information operations are a significant part of coalition efforts and a major interactive dynamic with our adversaries as we compete for the local population. As such, we must be attentive to the ANA’s recruiting message and consider how it compares to the Taliban’s recruiting message. The country is very diverse across many dimensions: geographic, ethnic, tribal, religious, political, economic, and cultural. Subsequently, a cookie-cutter approach is not appropriate; instead, each locale requires depth of understanding to best understand recruiting

incentives and messaging. Recruiting requires actively pursuing an ethnically balanced force. One Afghan Colonel suggested that the overriding factor that attracts recruits is the salary.

MOP: engagement with the media; crafting recruiting messages appropriate for each locale; holding “town hall” meetings; meetings with Afghan formal and informal leaders to determine right message and delivery; meetings between MOD and MOI to coordinate recruiting messages that complement one another.

MOE: recruitment numbers increase; ethnically diverse recruits; provincially balanced recruitment.

One paper suggests that soldiers must not only be trained, they must also be confident. In other words, they need to be able to count on enablers (combat multipliers), such as medical, fire support, intel, etc. They must also have confidence in their leaders. As such, what is the right mix of specialties in the planned growth of the ANA? If it is not feasible for the Afghans to produce an effective mix of specialties, then who should provide those enablers?

MOP: consistent and predictable salaries (equal to or greater than what the Taliban pay with better benefits); education opportunities; a mix of combat power and combat multipliers; units must train together so that soldiers and leaders train together.

MOE: attrition and desertion numbers decrease; reenlistments increase

Training must be linked to how the Army will be employed. COIN training is differs

substantially from conventional warfare training. Moreover, with the importance of information operations (IO), IO ought to be a significant portion for at least leader training. In fact, perhaps all platoon leaders ought to carry cell phones in order to contact media so that the ANA story can over-shadow the Taliban story as events unfold. One of the Corps Commanders stated that he was very happy with the ANA’s progress, commanding for 4 years; sees reconstruction, roads, people providing intel, schools, close coordination with coalition; came to visit minister to ensure money for barracks; training not bad, but provides training for newly assigned personnel (convoy security, night training, MDMP). It is interesting to note

that the Marines have taken on the training initiative and want to train both the police and army next year. It will be important that good coordination occurs with NTM-A/CSTC-A if they move forward.

MOP: numbers of trainees; trained leaders who understand how to conduct IO

MOE: commanders satisfied with level of training of soldiers they receive; ANA successfully clears and holds areas; Afghan population holds the ANA in high regard; Afghan people provide intel

MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT

There is a process in place to develop the Office of National Security Council (ONSC), which is responsible for developing security policy and strategy. The ONSC could be a good forcing mechanism to ensure that ministers coordinate and dialogue on key issues. The interaction among ministers is mixed, and it appears that some ministers rely on their senior advisors to serve as messengers across ministries. It is interesting to note that primarily army officers serve as advisors to the ministers, instead of coalition civilians of similar experience (e.g., from a comparable coalition department or ministry). This arrangement does not

support a western model of proper civ-mil relations. To give one example of a possible fix, civilian officials from the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense should advise Afghan counterparts in the Ministry of Defense. That said, we were struck by the magnificent caliber of senior advisors: smart, selfless, dedicated, culturally savvy, and personally engaging.

Senior advisors maintain situational awareness to understand key issues affecting two principal missions; Ministerial Development and Growth and Acceleration. They develop and implement measures, such as meetings among concerned actors, to resolve or at least mitigate issues. In addition to the normal tasks of comprehending organizational structure, policy, strategy, etc senior advisors invest an inordinate amount of time in understanding interpersonal relationships

within the ANA/ANP/ministries and developing personal relationships with key actors so that they can effectively work issues.

In fact, the ministers/GS rely on the advisors for myriad issues. In one case, for writing an op-ed, the advisor worked hard to ensure that the minister understood the various audiences, the potential fall-out, and other sensitivities. The advisors work hard to gain decisions and help the minister/GS implement existing processes. To ensure that the ANA’s presence is felt positively at the local and unit level, the advisor encourages and facilitates the ministers/GS to travel and meet with units and be seen at the local level.

MOP: Number of meetings between ANA senior advisors and MOD; number of meetings between MOD and local leaders; number of meetings between MOD and senior military leaders

MOE: Healthy civ-mil relations (civilian control of the military at the central level); Afghans see value of ANA.

ORGANIZATION OF NTM-A/CSTC-A

As part of the operational design and planning process, the command should carefully analyze potential organizational arrangements that better support the command’s mission and increased responsibilities.

NTM-A/CSTC-A must be organized to accomplish its mission. The TRAC officers (who are also part of the external assessment team) have done good work in this area already. Key to mission accomplishment is the integration of ANA and ANP development functions. Moreover the organization must allow for flexibility. We suggest three organizational considerations as the command revises its plans: First, perhaps there should be a second Deputy Commander who integrates mission issues. The Deputy would allow the CG to spend most of his time on key engagements. This is different from a Chief of Staff who can coordinate the CG’s internal staff.

Rather, this suggestion envisions an office that integrates mission efforts. Second, that the staff conduct an analysis to determine if there are key staff functions that ought to be embedded within ANP/ANA commands. For example, some staff members suggested that CJ1 personnel should be embedded as separate staffs within the ANA and ANP commands. In this way, the GOs responsible for those missions would have a dedicated staff for key functions, and those staff members will have more stream-lined and focused taskings. However, embedded staff members

are also responsive to CJ1 and therefore, when necessary due to mission surges or leaves, CJ1 can realign resources. We recommend that the staff conduct an analysis to validate which key staff functions ought to be embedded if any. Third, the organization ought to facilitate communication internally and externally. It is striking that good initiatives are happening but are not widely known across the command. Perhaps in the integration cell, whether it occurs with the

Deputy or another office, such efforts can be better communicated outwardly.

CRITICAL UNCERTAINTIES THAT MAY DRIVE SUCCESS OR FAILURE:

The Afghan population’s assessment of their government’s legitimacy.

The ability or willingness of Pakistan to secure its side of the border.

The continued withdrawal of US forces from Iraq.

The political will of the international community/coalition.

Afghan Parliamentary/District elections in 2010.

The ability to develop effective leaders for both the ANA and ANP as both forces expand.

The ability to expand enablers, if not this year, in the near term.

The education of the Afghan people, to include women.

WAY AHEAD FOR FUTURE COLLABORATIVE WORK

The Department of Social Sciences has the political science and economics faculty; the Combating Terrorism Center, the Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis, and the Conflict in Human Security Studies Program. While here, COL Jebb was able to reach-back to the Department of Social Sciences and Department of Law as well as the Human Terrain System run by TRADOC.

The U.S. Army War College has an extensive teaching faculty for courses on national security and strategy, military operations, and strategic leadership. It also has the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI), Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI), and the Center for Strategic Leadership (CSL). Furthermore, experienced USAWC military and civilian graduate students may be able to conduct research and analysis to support command items of interest.

Both institutions have the potential to support faculty deployment by matching the needs of NTM-A/CSTC-A with faculty skill-sets, availability, and interest.

INTERVIEWEES

Minister of Defense Wardak

First Deputy MOD Akram

Dr. Jack Kem, Deputy to the CG

Afghan Corps Cdr

MG Michael Ward, Deputy Commander ANP Development (briefly while on trip)

BG(P) David Hogg: Deputy Commander ANA Development

BG Anne McDonald: ACG Police Dev

BG Ibrahim, Deputy Commander of ANAREC

BG Michael Linnington: IJC (briefly at airport)

BG Paul Wynnyk, ACG ANA Development

Dr. David Kilcullen, Crumpton Group

Dr. Terrence Kelly, RAND

Mr. Christopher Rich, Interagency Provincial Affairs

Mr. Alexander Newton, USAID, Rule of Law

Mr. Amin Shafiee, GMIC

Mr. Fahim Malyar, GMIC

Mr. Mike Watson, ONSC advisor, MPRI

Mr. Sediq Sediqqi, GMIC

Mr. Tim Strabbing, OSD

Mr. Tom Niblock, Dept of State, GMIC

Ms. Cara Negrette, OSD(P) Afghanistan Desk

Ms. Jill Kelley, USAID

Ms. Kathleen, McGinnis, Crumpton Group

Ms. Melanie Anderton, US Embassy, Civ-Mil plans and assessment

Ms. Olga Oliker, RAND

Ms. Roberta Rossi, GMIC

Ms. Sarah Chayes, ISAF Special Assistant, Anti-Corruption TF

CAPT Mark Hagerott, Dir of SAG

COL Aman, Afghan XO for LTG Caldwell

COL Chris Kolenda, ISAF Strategy

COL Don Bigger, CJ5 (UK)

COL E. G. Clayburn, Deputy CJ5

COL Fred Manzo, Senior Advisor to Deputy MOD

COL David Henley, Deputy for ANA Development

COL Jim Campbell, Senior Advisor for G3

COL John King, Senior Advisor for Deputy MOI

COL John McKenzie, ISAF Deputy CJ5, Australia

COL Kevin Palgutt

COL Kim Field, IDLG

COL Lou Jordan, Senior Advisor for Deputy MOI for Counter-Narcotics

COL Mark Edmonds, TT

COL Mike Barbee, Senior Advisor for MoD

COL Neal Rappaport, TT (USAFA)

COL Pam Hoyt, CJ7

COL Rich Gross, ISAF Legal Advisor

COL Robert Hume, ISAF Director Afghan Assessments Group

COL Steve Stebbins, CJ7

COL Terrence O’Sullivan, CJ2

COL Todd Gesling, TT (TRAC, Ft Leavenworth)

COL Tom Umberg, JAG

CDR Gaghan, ANA recruiting

Wing Cdr Andy Trollen, UK Deputy CJ1

LTC Bill Harmon, SAG

LTC Dave Dinger, TRAC

LTC Jon Liba, XO for BG McDonald

LTC Mike Holmes, CJ5, Strategic Communications

LTC Norm Fuss, CJ5

LTC Steve Tilbrook, Deputy CJ5, Australia

LTC Tom Tracy, advisor to GSG1

MAJ Bob Hannah, TRAC

MAJ Jennifer Munro, US Embassy, Civ-Mil plans and assessments

MAJ Jon Klug, XO of SAG

MAJ Sam Sok, CJ7

MAJ Shon McCormick, SAG

CPT Jack Morrow, TF-435

CPT Melissa La Plante, NTM-A/CSTC-A

Capt Staci Reidinger, U.S. Marine, PAO, GMIC

1LT Graf, asst CJ1

CSM Hoopii, Marine at Helmand

MSG Gross, ANA recruiting

SFC Mendelson, ANA recruiting

Various individuals at Camp Leatherneck

SUMMARY OF SELECTED TRIPS AND MEETINGS

Meetings at US Embassy, 9 & 14 Dec 09: We had several useful engagements with personnel at the US Embassy, to include discussions with representatives from Interagency Provincial Affairs, Civil-Military Plans and Assessment, and USAID. There is strong evidence of increasing deployment and engagement of US government civilians in US efforts in Afghanistan (see also the summary of the CJTF-82 VTC). The ‘civilian uplift’ (formerly ‘surge’) continues to increase

the overall number of US government civilians in Afghanistan. Distribution includes extensive coverage, along with other coalition partners, throughout the provinces of Afghanistan (particularly in provincial reconstruction teams) but also in unified action with coalition military units down to district level (often with company size military units).

Visit to MOD, 11 & 15 Dec 09: COL Fred Manzo provided a wonderful opportunity to meet with First Deputy Minister Akram. We had a conversation that lasted over three hours and over the course of an excellent lunch. He addressed the importance of developing security, good governance, and job opportunities simultaneously. It is critical to connect the central government with the provinces, districts, and villages. The key is to have good leaders and to solve local problems locally. He discussed in detail the history of Afghanistan’s woes after 1978, and discussed Pakistan’s significant influence in Afghanistan. Pakistan filled the power vacuum created when the Soviets left; Al Qaeda filled the vacuum when the Taliban fell; Afghanistan

requires step by step pragmatism; ANA primarily operates outside cities; ethnic balance very important, especially among the leadership. His message to cadets…come to Afghanistan and when they leave Afghanistan will feel like a second home; hard to rotate units due to logistics issues. COL Mike Barbee provided a great opportunity to visit MOD and meet Minister Wardak. Again, a gracious host who provided a wonderful lunch. Though the visit was shorter than the previous visit, we talked about family, aspirations, and requirements. He mentioned that the

United States can improve its support by providing better equipment, enablers, and weapons.

Anti-Corruption OPT, 6-9 Dec 09: great session run by the CJ5 and JAG as discussed in a previous section. We attended several portions of the week-long discussion. We provided discussion and input to the development of the CSTC-A plan (draft currently circulating for comment prior to presentation to the CG).

Community Defense Initiative (CDI) Brief, 9 Dec 09: Great brief by Seth Jones and LTC Lechner. COL Jim Campbell was able to quickly coordinate their visit.

CJTF-82 Command Brief to LTG Caldwell, 10 Dec 09: Fascinating update from Regional Command-East (RC-E). MG Scaparotti and his staff provided an excellent overview of operations in their area. Of particular note were the very extensive integration of civilian and military efforts throughout the region. Starting at the top, Ms Dawn Liberi (USAID) as senior civilian noted the substantial cell (30 personnel) at CJTF level. This approach extends down through province level (PRTs) and to many of the districts. Militarily, CJTF-82 has developed combined action programs to partner coalition and Afghan military units throughout the battlespace.

Trip to Police graduation in Helmand, 10 Dec 09: A truly eye-opening experience! COL Jebb had the great opportunity, thanks to BG MacDonald and MG Ward, to visit Camp Leatherneck in Helmand. The Marines are inspiring and it is truly amazing to see how they have helped turn a corner in that province. The purpose of the visit was to attend the first graduation of 52 police trained by the Marines in conjunction with trainers from all over the world. Several VIPs attended to include two provincial governors, MG Ward, BG Borgio (IT Carabinieri), ANA generals, and the police chief. The visiting group was first received by the Marines (BG

Nicholson welcomed us). We saw where the trainees lived, worked, and prayed. We then saw a video of the experience, which included a moving scene of the police taking an oath to serve the people of Afghanistan. We witnessed training demonstrations, many VIP speeches, and the graduates’ receipt of their certificates. It is interesting to note that the Marines have taken on this initiative and want to train both police and army next year.

Trip to Afghan National Army Recruiting Command (ANAREC) 12 Dec 09: A tremendous opportunity! We drove about 30 minutes outside Camp Eggers and observed the difficult conditions in which Afghans live. We were met by BG Ibrahim, the Deputy CG for ANAREC. A very candid discussion ensued after an excellent breakfast was served. BG Ibrahim gave us a tour of the facilities. We observed all the recruits going through their in-processing. The American

advisors and the Afghan leadership have an extraordinarily close bond and work very well together. Afterwards we observed a voluntary community support event at a school in the town outside the base. Marines were providing school supplies, candy and toys to the school children.

Dinner presentation by Dr. David Kilcullen, 13 Dec 09: Dr Kilcullen provided a sobering but pragmatic assessment of the challenges facing NTM-A/CSTC-A in developing effective security forces over the next 18 months (in accord with President Obama’s guidance). He posited that the timetable President Obama’s articulated at West Point could suggest to the Taliban that they can wait the coalition out, and then return to claim control of the country. Conversely, Taliban withdrawal could open a window to establish local security that would thwart an attempted

Taliban return. Key aspects of a plausible way forward rely on a significant overhaul of current ANSF development approaches. In particular, police forces should be significantly pruned to remove corrupt and/or ineffective individuals. The remaining effective police would then be the recipient of more focused advisory support, better training and better equipment.

Trip to GMIC, 13 & 14 Dec 09: A great initiative! Tom Niblock from Dept of State helped stand up the Afghan Government Information Center designed to facilitate an Afghan lead for media relations between the government and the independent press. This Center provides a channel between the Afghan government and the Afghan people. Note that the independent media has dramatically increased while the government communications remained weak. The center attempts to right this imbalance. The Center provides training at provincial and ministerial levels,

though this occurs unevenly across ministries; some are embracing this activity, others are resisting it. The Center, with a young, smart Afghan staff is increasing the communications pipeline to include elders, mullahs, media, spokespeople, ministers, etc to get messages and news to the media. The good news is that the independent media now has reliable information provided by the government as opposed to only getting information from the adversary. The press corps is maturing, press conferences are becoming more routine and information is more accessible. In fact, during the elections, the GMIC received calls from people reporting activities

at the polling station…a very good sign. The key to success is for the Afghans to own this

activity, and for US/IC to back away, even when problems emerge. The Afghans must address the challenges themselves, while the US/IC offer assistance.

General Petraeus visit 16 Dec 09 (NTM-A/CSTC-A Command Brief and RAND interim report):

We gained valuable perspective on the NTM-A/CSTC-A command concerns and priorities while attending the briefing to General Petraeus. Projected ANSF growth, personnel requirements for the command, strategic communications, transition issues, and the relationship among the commands in Afghanistan (among ISAF, IJC, NTM-A/CSTC-A and various Afghan headquarters) were important topics. RAND provided an interim brief to General Petraeus regarding ANA and ANP development based on observations during team member research throughout Afghanistan in recent weeks. RAND briefers were Dr Terrence Kelly and Ms Olga Oliker. The final RAND report should be available in February.

Pre-Trip Preparation. We are grateful to various agencies and individuals that assisted us in preparing for this trip. In particular, the USMA Department of Social Sciences and the West Point Combating Terrorism Center (especially LTC Reid Sawyer, Mr Vahid Brown, Mr. Don Rassler, Mr. Alex Gallo, COL Mike Meese, LTC(P) Ike Wilson, Dr. Thom Sherlock, and MAJ J.C. Mikits) and members of the USAWC Department of National Security and Strategy (especially Dr. Jim Helis and Mr. Sherwood McGinnis). Also, our thanks to BG David D. Phillips, Chief, Military Police Corps Regiment Commandant, US Army Military Police School.

---------END OF REPORT--------

**Confronting the ‘Teachings’ of Osama bin Laden**

By: Dr.Waleed El-Ansary

*Editor’s Note: This manuscript was adapted from transcripts of oral presentations at the*

*2007 World Religions Summit at the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School, Fort Jackson, S.C.*

It’s a great pleasure and an honor to be here with you. I spent much of the summer (of

2007) in Cairo with Shaykh Ali Goma, the Grand Mufti of Egypt, interviewing him about

confronting the necessary intellectual conditions behind violent forms of extremism. His views

are extremely influential, as you know, since the office of the Grand Mufti represents the

second highest office in Sunni Islam, a remarkably large denomination comprising 87% of all

Muslims.

Now, about a year ago, Dr. Douglas Streusand, a professor at the Marine Corps

Command and Staff College, and LTC Harry Tunnell, came out with a paper entitled

*Choosing Words Carefully: Language to Help Fight Islamic Terrorism*.1 In it, they argued that

government officials should not employ terms that bin Laden and al Qaeda members use to

refer to themselves, particularly terms based on jihad. They argue that, since jihad is broadly

defined as “striving or making effort” for the sake of God, describing our enemies as “jihadis

or mujahidin (participants in jihad) not only validates their claim to legitimacy, but also implies

that we consider Islam itself our enemy.”2 Streusand also suggests in another article that the

best term for warfare which does not meet the standards of jihad in relation to the Islamic legal

tradition is hirabah, adding that “another potentially useful word is irhab, the Arabic word for

terrorism,” and that “irhabi is the literal translation of ‘terrorist.’”3

I think Streusand and Tunnell are absolutely right when it comes to their argument on

jihad, i.e., we should not use that term, since it’s going to backfire strategically. But Streusand’s

suggested alternatives of irhab and hirabah are also problematic, because there’s a difference

between the classical Quranic usage of irhab and its modern Arabic usage, which bin Laden and

al Qaeda turn to their advantage. There are also linguistic, legal, and practical problems with the

usage of the term hirabah. And so, I want to explain Shaykh Ali Goma’s argument that the correct

term for “terrorism” in Arabic is irjaf, and why it is linguistically and legally precise as well as

practically effective.

But before explaining all these alternative terms, we have to be clear as to

why using jihad or mujahidin or jihadis is a strategic error. Otherwise, we wouldn’t have to look

at other terms in the first place. So, I want to spend the first part of this presentation simply

going over the meaning of jihad, clarifying why its usage is going to backfire. I know that many

of you are already may be sympathetic to this argument, but I have to go over it to make sure

that we’re all on the same page and set the stage for the rest of the discussion.I also want to

mention at the outset that bin Laden’s infamous 1998 fatwa (edict) calling on Muslims to kill

Americans, both “civilian and military,” quotes seven out of eight verses in the Quran completely

out of context. The only exception is a neutral verse to obey God and His Prophet, and we

certainly don’t need bin Laden to remind us of that. I’m going to briefly discuss how this abuse

occurs later, but I thought I should mention that you can get the details on all the verses in a

great article by David Dakake entitled “The Myth of a Militant Islam” in Islam Fundamentalism

and the Betrayal of Tradition: Essays by Western Muslim Scholars [edited by Joseph

Lumbard].4 I also have an essay in that volume in which I apply game theory to model bin

Laden’s strategic deviation from the Islamic intellectual heritage, and how that can inform our

strategic response.5 It turns out that the economic logic underlying al Qaeda’s strategy in Iraq and

Afghanistan is basically the same as 9/11, but in different theaters of operation, all of which we’ll

return to.6

So, moving to our first issue, why is it that jihad is the wrong term as well as a

strategic error for us to use? To clarify this, it’s necessary to first understand that the

translation of jihad as “holy war” is false. As Streusand correctly points out, jihad simply

means “exertion of effort,” or “struggle,” particularly for the sake of God. It therefore has a

hierarchy of meanings. A famous hadith, or saying, of the Prophet of Islam helps to situate this

hierarchy. Upon returning from the battle of Badr, the first battle of the early Muslim

community in which its very existence was at stake, the Prophet said, “You’ve returned from

the lesser jihad to the greater jihad.” Of course, the Muslim men who had participated in the

battle were vastly outnumbered, and dropped their jaws. They wondered, “How could we do

anything greater than this?” And the Prophet said, “The great jihad is the jihad against your

own carnal soul (nafs).” In Arabic, the latter term refers to anything that inwardly separates us

from God, and is thus the inner battle which all human beings on the path to God must

perform.

The idea of inward warfare obviously exists in all religious traditions. As Dr. Seyyed

Hossein Nasr, the leading Muslim scholar of Islamic studies and comparative religion in the

West, points out, the Japanese samurai provide a supreme example. It’s not accidental that Zen,

the great mystical school of Buddhism in Japan, used the art of archery and swordsmanship, or

two external instruments of war, to symbolize the inner struggle to control oneself, the struggle

against the inner passions to still the mind. Similarly, the swords of knights in the Middle Ages

were shaped like crosses, since knighthood wasn’t just about hopping on horses and chopping off

heads. An internal spiritual discipline was also involved.

Then there is the extension of this inward battle to the moral battle to exert oneself to

do God’s will in one’s daily life. As Christ says, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in

heaven.” It’s obviously a lot easier to say than it is to do, and we have to struggle to do that

in our daily lives.

The next step in the externalization of the meaning of jihad is to do good in society

and establish God’s norms. For example, building houses for the poor is a type of social

jihad, as President Jimmy Carter illustrates when he is participating in Habitat for Humanity.

Of course, it doesn’t solve the problem of housing for the poor by itself, but it sets a very

salutary example for the rest of us. But all of these meanings of jihad have been eclipsed

today by the last and most external meaning of jihad, which is actual physical battle for the

sake of God.

Now, the key question is, under what conditions can this be carried out? There

are three. The first is that the borderland of the Islamic world is being threatened. The second

is Muslims are being slaughtered or killed somewhere within the Islamic world. And the third

is that Islam itself is being threatened within the Islamic world. Let’s go over an example of

each.

In the first case, we have the example of Peter the Great and Catherine invading Central

Asia in the 18th and 19th centuries (the on-going conflict in Chechnya is a kind of legacy and/or

historical continuation of that to some extent). For the second case, we have Bosnia in 1990s,

although it’s interesting that no official jihad was actually declared. Many people wrongly think

that Muslim jurists, who could have declared jihad in this case from an Islamic legal point of

view, are “trigger-happy.” There was, of course, a lot of talk about declaring jihad, as well as

some covert support from Saudi Arabia and Indonesia, but it was a drop in the bucket. And

finally, for the third case, we have the colonial and postcolonial periods.

I would like to give you a more detailed example of that in the extraordinary figure of

Emir Abd al-Qadir al Jaza’iri, the leader of the Algerian Muslims in their resistance to French

Colonial aggression between 1830 and 1847, because he combines both the inner and outer

jihads. Now, the French at one point adopted a scorched earth policy, as many of you may

know from history. They were indiscriminately massacring entire tribes and offering their

soldiers a ten franc reward for every pair of Arab ears. Severed Arab heads were even regarded

as trophies of war. As Reza Shah-Kazemi points out in his exceptional essay, “Recollecting the

Spirit of Jihad” in the aforementioned collection,7 the Emir’s soldiers wanted revenge, prompting

him to issue the following edict manifesting his magnanimity as well as adherence to Islamic

principles. The Emir declared, “Every Arab who has in his possession a Frenchman, is bound to

treat him well and to conduct him either to the Khalifa (the representative of the Emir) or the

Emir himself as soon as possible. In cases where the prisoner complains of ill treatment, the

Arab will have no reward.” And then, when the Emir was asked what the reward was for a live

French soldier, he replied, “Eight douros (the Algerian currency).” And when asked what the

reward was for a severed French head, the reply was, “Twenty-five blows of the baton on the

soles of the feet.” When he was finally defeated and brought to France before being exiled to

Damascus, Kazemi states he “received hundreds of French admirers who had heard of his

bravery and his nobility; the visitors by whom he was most deeply touched, though, were

French officers who came to thank him for the treatment they received at his hands when they

were his prisoners in Algeria.”8

In exile in Damascus, the Emir spent most of his time praying and teaching. But in 1860,

civil war broke out between the Druzes, a kind of offshoot of the Isma‘ili branch of Shi‘ism, and

the Christians in Lebanon. And when the Druzes “were approaching the Christian quarters of the

city, the Emir confronted them, urging them to observe the rules of religion and human justice.”9

When that didn’t work, he invited all the Christians to his home for protection. And when that

couldn’t accommodate everyone as the number of people increased, he took them to the citadel,

declaring “These Christians are under my protection.” It’s estimated that “no less than 15,000

Christians were saved by the Emir, including all the ambassadors and consuls of the European

powers.”10 As Winston Churchill put it, “All the representatives of the Christian powers then

residing in Damascus, without a single exception, had owed their lives to him. Strange and

unparalleled destiny! An Arab had thrown his guardian aegis over the outraged majesty of

Europe. A descendant of the Prophet [the Emir] had sheltered and protected the Spouse of

Christ.” This included the French ambassador, despite the fact that France was still in the process

of colonizing the Emir’s homeland. And so the Emir was, in short, a warrior saint. You might

even say that he was a cross between a George Washington and a St. Francis of Assisi, since he

combined an authentic external jihad with an internal, spiritual jihad. Obviously, we do not want

to apply that status to bin Laden by calling him a mujahid. But that is exactly how Muslims could

interpret it when we do. Of course, we used such terms to encourage fighting against the Soviet

Union in Afghanistan, which was an authentic jihad since a borderland of the Islamic world was

attacked. Why would we want to use the same terms at the present moment in our fight against

al Qaeda? The war against the Soviets in Afghanistan was completely different, and it’s

significant that many Muslim intellectuals believe that the United States played a providential role

in confronting communism historically, which otherwise could have taken over the world.

In any case, I want to conclude this section with just a few words about the relation of

jihad to the fundamental rites of Islam. These include canonical prayer, fasting, paying the alms,

and making the pilgrimage to Mecca, which comprise four of the “Five Pillars of Islam” (the first

pillar is the testimony of faith that, “There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger

of God”). Now, to pray with concentration obviously requires a great deal of effort. So, that is

an internal jihad. The same applies to fasting, which is clearly an internal jihad. And to pay the

zakat, or the tithe, is likewise a jihad (especially for misers). Finally, the hajj is a jihad, for that

external journey is, in a sense, the returning to the center of our own being, to the throne of God

within.

Having said that, how does bin Laden invert Islamic teachings on jihad, taking verses of

the Quran completely out of context in his infamous fatwa? As Dakake points out, it’s first

important to recognize that there are major stylistic differences between the Quran and the

Bible. The Quran, as many of you know, is the *Word made Book* for Muslims, analogous to

Christ as *Word made Flesh* for Christians. Although most people compare the Quran to the

Bible, the two don’t really correspond to each other from a deeper theological point of view.

Similarly, since the Arabic language is the body that contains the message of the Quran, the

Arabic language for Muslims corresponds to the body of Christ for Christians.

If one were to use images to capture these stylistic differences, the Bible you might say

is like a “flowing stream,” beginning with Genesis, ending with Revelation, and having a clear

beginning, middle, and end. Accordingly, “when one reads the text there is a constant

contextualization of the various verses, stories, chapters, and books… there is a historical

context established for each of the major stories and events which enables the reader to situate

what is being said within time and space, and indeed priority.”11

In contrast, since the Quran is Word made Book, a better image illustrating the Quranic

revelation is “that of an individual standing upon a mountain at night as lightning flashes on him

and in a valley below.”12 As we look upon this landscape, we see sudden flashes, but we may not

be able to discern any immediate relationship between the different illuminated areas, or different

parts of the mountain and valley. The relationship that exists is not explicit, which “is something

like the situation that is faced by the reader upon first examining the Quran… (it) does not tell

‘stories’ as the Western reader is accustomed to from the Biblical tradition.”13 Accordingly, two

verses of the Quran that are grouped next to each other may refer to two completely different events in the life of the early community. It is for this reason that the Quranic commentary tradition (tafsir) deals so extensively with what is known in Arabic as asbab al-nuzul, or the occasions for God revealing particular Quranic verses. Without reference to these “occasions” of revelation

most of the verses of the Quran would be susceptible to any and all forms of interpretation.14

And so in bypassing these commentaries, bin Laden cites seven out of eight verses totally

out of their historical and interpretive context in his fatwa (edict) claiming that, “Killing Americans

and their allies, civilian and military, is an obligation.” In fact, Islamic law does not even usually

employ terms like “civilian” and “military,” distinguishing between “combatants” and

“noncombatants” instead.And noncombatants include women, children, monks, etc… So, there are

clear rules regulating what legitimate warfare is, and there’s no transgressing those limits. Bin

Laden therefore clearly violates the Islamic rules of warfare, or jihad in its most external sense,

and espouses jettisoning traditional constraints. He therefore argues for the need to go beyond the

normal legal rulings in the Islamic heritage on the basis of ijtihad, a creative but disciplined effort

in Islamic law to give fresh views on old issues, or derive legal rulings for new situations,

including warfare, from the accepted juridical sources of Islam, i.e. Quran, hadith, consensus,

etc… But he does nothing of the sort in his completely erroneous ijtihad. To get further details on

how he abuses Quranic verses, placing him entirely outside of the Islamic legal tradition, please

consult Dakake’s essay. Now, what would the legal analogy to bin Laden be in the United

States? It would be like somebody who never went to law school, who never studied

Constitutional Law, claiming that all of the Constitutional Law professors in the United States are

wrong when it comes to their interpretation of an article of the U.S. Constitution, while this

person was right. It would be a joke intellectually. The title of this presentation therefore has scare

quotes around “teachings.”

Now, let’s move to Streusand’s suggestions on the right terms to employ for terrorism

and terrorists in Arabic. I want to first argue that he is wrong in suggesting that we use the

terms irhab and ihrabi. The problem with these terms is that there’s a distinction in meaning

between classical and modern Arabic, as I mentioned before. Although Streusand is absolutely

right when he says that modern Arabic employs the term ihrabi to refer to terrorists and irhab to

refer to terrorism, the classical usage of the term in the Quran is completely different. In fact,

there are three main uses of the root rahiba, from which the term irhab derives, in the Quran.

The first refers to the fear of God, in which God tells the children of Israel, “Remember my

favor wherewith I favored you, and fulfill My covenant and I shall fulfill your covenant; and

have awe of Me.” The last word in Arabic is irhabuni (have awe of Me). And, of course,

in awe, or “the fear of God,” is “the beginning of wisdom” in the Abrahamic holding God

traditions. So this has a positive meaning.

Secondly, this root is used not only for the fear of God, but also for those who

fear God, namely, monks. The word for “monk” in Arabic is rahib, derived from the

same root as irhab. And finally, the Quran employs the root word to refer to an

aggressor’s fear of retaliation, acting as a deterrent to initiating an attack. And that’s a

very positive meaning, too. So, if we take into consideration the implications of these

different appearances of the root rahiba in the Quran, the term irhabi has the classical

connotation of “God-fearing, peace-loving, attack-deterring monk”! That is something

we obviously do not want to call bin Laden or his al Qaeda extremists. Bin Laden

therefore embraces the term. In his statements, he exploits this difference between the

classical and modern usages to argue for what he calls “commendable” rather than

“reprehensible” terrorism.

Now this makes no sense in English, but it makes perfect sense given the difference between classical and modern Arabic. Bin Laden therefore says the following in response to a question on the moral status of terrorism: terrorism (irhab) can be commendable and it can be reprehensible. Terrifying aninnocent person and terrorizing him is objectionable and unjust. Also unjustlyterrorizing people is not right, whereas terrorizing oppressors, and criminals, and

thieves and robbers is necessary for the safety of people and for the protection of their property. There is no doubt in this. Every state and every civilization and culture has to resort to terrorism under certain circumstances for the purpose of abolishing tyranny and corruption. Every country in the world has its own security system and its own security forces, its own police and its own army.

They are all designed to terrorize whoever even contemplates to attack that

country or its citizen. The terrorism we practice is of the commendable kind, for

it is directed at the tyrants, and the aggressors, and the enemies of God.15

Now, when you translate that statement into English, the distinction between

commendable and reprehensible terrorism doesn’t seem to make much immediate sense. But if

you use the Arabic terms, substituting the word irhab for terrorism, and you’re aware of the

distinction between classical and modern Arabic, it actually makes sense. Now, that does not by

any means justify extremist attacks, obviously. But the point is that bin Laden exploits these

complications along with perceived grievances against U.S. foreign policy to make a completely

false analogy between Americans on one hand and criminals and robbers on the other,

rationalizing “commendable terrorism.” There is a foreign policy “trigger point” for his “tit-fortat”

strategy in what he claims is a “Crusader-Zionist alliance” in a war against Islam. Michael

Scheuer, the former chief of the CIA’s bin Laden Issue Station, also has written about this to a

large extent.

Now, there are obviously legitimate and illegitimate forms of tit-for-tat. And bin Laden is

pursuing an illegitimate form, since 9/11 violates the rules of jihad, which he rationalizes by

combining elements of Islamic thought with Machiavellian, secular thought, putting together a very

lethal combination. For example, he claims that he can change the costs and benefits of U.S.

foreign policy with a million-to-one cost-benefit ratio of terrorism. For instance, in his 2004

statement, he says that: Al Qaeda spent, according to estimates of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, $500,000 on the [9/11] event while America, in the incident and its aftermath, lost, according to the lowest estimate, more than five hundred billion dollars, meaning

that every dollar of al Qaeda defeated a million dollars by the permission of God, besides

the loss of a huge number of jobs. As for the size of the economic deficit, it has reached

record astronomical numbers estimated to total more than a trillion dollars.

And he suggests that the strategy that al Qaeda is pursuing in Iraq is just a continuation of this strategy in a different theater of operation. He boasts later in the same statement that: All that we have mentioned has made it easy for us to provoke and bait this administration. All that we have to do is to send two mujahidin to the furthest point east to raise a piece of cloth on which is written “al Qaeda,” in order to make the generals race there to cause America to suffer human, economic, and political losses without their achieving for it anything of note other than some benefits for their private companies… This is in addition to our having experience in using guerilla warfare and the war of attrition to fight tyrannical superpowers as we, alongside the mujahidin, bled Russia for ten years until it went bankrupt and was forced to withdraw in defeat. So, we are continuing this policy in bleeding America to the point of bankruptcy.

So it’s the same underlying strategy based on this million-to-one ratio in different

theaters of operation. Now, in game theory terms – and I know all of you have studied game

theory – we could quickly summarize this by saying that bin Laden’s statements here provide

publicly stated answers to the “rules of the game.” In other words, what are the available

moves, and what are the payoffs for different combinations of moves? And his argument for

commendable terrorism is changing available moves for the extremists by denying traditional

constraints on the rules of engagement. He also provides publicly stated answers to the

“anticipation question” on how/what the terrorists think we will do affects their selection. That

is, if United States foreign policy is being influenced by special interests, changing the costs

and benefits of United States foreign policy through terrorism will act as a countervailing

force to these special interests. So, that’s the internal logic of his strategy in a nutshell. We,

therefore, do not want to reinforce his claim to pursue a legitimate form of tit-for-tat through

deterrent attacks by calling bin Laden an irhabi given the term’s classical Quranic meanings.

In short, if you tell him, “You’re an irhabi,” he’ll say, “You’re damn right I’m an irhabi!”

Streusand’s other suggestion for translating terrorism into Arabic, hirabah, also has

linguistic, legal, and practical problems. I want to emphasize once more that this is not just

Waleed El-Ansary’s argument, since it’s based on my discussions with Shaykh Ali Goma, i.e.,

the second highest legal authority in the Sunni Islamic world is making this argument.

Let’s start with the linguistic problems. Now, Streusand’s suggestion for the use of the

term hirabah is based on the work of Dr. Sherman Jackson, a very fine Islamic Studies scholar

who specializes in Islamic Law. He points out that the term is used in the Quran in the “hirabah

verse” for those “who wage war (yuharibuna) against God and His messengers.” Now, hirabah

shares the same root as harb, or “war.” And war, which may be just or unjust, generally

connotes fighting between two legal entities. The term muharib, or one who engages in hirabah,

can therefore also mean “combatant, fighter, or warrior” with neutral connotations. Either way,

hirabah implies a sense of hand-to-hand combat, which is a lot more courageous than the

terrorist attacks of 9/11. The terrorists of 9/11 enjoyed the promise of safety and security when

visiting the United States, and they betrayed that, so it was deceitful. Hirabah does not have that

connotation of “striking behind the back.”

The legal problem with the term hirabah is that it connotes brigandage, or armed highway

robbery, in the classical Islamic legal literature, not attacks within a city like on 9/11, but outside

the city. Moreover, because hirabah is usually associated with robbery, disassociating it from a

money-taking motive altogether in order to include bin Laden is really too much of a stretch

according to Shaykh Ali. Now, Jackson, who is an excellent scholar of Maliki Law, one of the

major schools of Islamic law, argues that later Maliki scholars stretched the meaning of this term

to eliminate the money-taking motive altogether. But it’s really way too much of a stretch for

many scholars, particularly since bin Laden is willing to spend all of his money to maximize

American casualties. And because hirabah can involve theft rather than murder, the legal sanction is highly variable. The Quranic verse specifies a fourfold hierarchy of penalties, i.e. “execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land.” Therefore, legal scholars debate the circumstances under which the various penalties should apply, e.g. “execution or crucifixion” to highway robbery that involves murder, “cutting off of hands and

feet from opposite sides” to highway robbery that does not involve murder, and “exile” to

obstruction of highways involving neither robbery nor murder. A more fitting term for terrorism

with less ambiguity in punishment would therefore be preferable.

I should note that we even have some Christians in the United States who think that

this hirabah verse actually applies to anyone who doesn’t convert to Islam. I was at a

roundtable discussion on “Islam in Europe” last week at the University of South Carolina,

when one of the people in the audience cited this particular verse as meaning that Islam

threatens anyone who doesn’t convert to the religion with being maimed, crucified, and

executed! I suggested that they visit Cairo to see the churches on every corner, which Islamic

law requires Muslims to defend. So we have a lot of confusion on these issues.

Finally, the practical problem with the term hirabah is that it offers such an easy

opportunity for extremists to turn the table on their critics. They’ll simply say, “You think we’re

waging war against God and His prophet? You critics are the ones who are waging war against

God and His prophet.” So, it’s not practically effective either.

So then, what is the solution? What term does Shaykh Ali suggest that we use? Irjaf. It’s

derived from the root rajafa, which means “to quake, tremble, be in violent commotion,

convulse, or shake.” And it’s applied in the Quran in three different ways: to the natural,

supernatural, and social orders, referring to earthquakes, the Day of Judgment, and those who

bring quaking and commotion to society, respectively.

The renowned Quranic commentator al-Qurtubi draws this interesting analogy between

the quaking of the earth and the quaking of the heart. There’s always this correspondence

between the microcosm and the macrocosm in traditional Islamic thought (as there is in

traditional Christian thought), since both the macrocosm and microcosm derive from the

metacosm, or the Divine Order.

Now, in the context of this verse, other Quranic commentators, such as al al-Shawkani,

the towering intellectual figure of 19th century Yemen, says that one of the names of the ocean,

for example, is al-rajjaf, because of the powerful commotion that its waves can create, as we’ve

seen recently with the tsunami. And al-Haqqi, an 18th century commentator, explains that irjaf

may be executed either by action or by word, i.e. by threats or actual use of force. So you have

different forms of terrorism according to the commentators, including intense social divisions

through erroneous interpretations of verses of the Quran to threaten or carry out violence. And so,

Shaykh Ali Goma maintains that the term murjifun, as well as its equivalent rendering irjafiyyun,

serves as a far better translation of “terrorists” as “those who cause the quaking of hearts” than

something like hirabiyyun. From a linguistic perspective, he points out that irjaf connotes

cowardice, deceit, and betrayal associated with terrorism, of “striking from the back.” In other

words, it’s a cheap shot. There is nothing noble about it, and it’s overwhelmingly negative. Ijaf is

clearly distinguished from conventional warfare.

From a legal perspective, irjaf, unlike hirabah, can clearly occur within the city. The

particular Quranic verse employing this social application explicitly refers to al-murjifun fi’l

madina, or “those who cause the quaking of hearts in the city.” That can be any city. It can be

New York, it can be Baghdad. So it is a far more precise term for events like 9/11 and what’s

going on in Baghdad than hirabah, which occurs outside of the city according to the majority of

scholars. Similarly, the punishment specified for irjaf in this verse is much more precise, since

it’s singular and unambiguous, i.e. execution. The hirabah verse has an ambiguous fourfold

hierarchy of penalties depending on whether or not murder accompanies highway robbery. And

from a practical point of view, irjaf effectively eliminates the possibility of extremists turning the

tables on their critics. Who is causing the commotion and quaking of hearts in the cities? It’s

obviously bin Laden and al Qaeda, not those who are opposing them.

Now, what are the historical precedents for the application of this term? Well, there are

many of them. I’ll just quote two. First of all, the Khawarij in 7th century Arabia, the 1st century

of the Islamic era, are the earliest example. This was a sect that basically said that, “Other

Muslims are not good enough,” so they would raid caravans, kill people, and raid and plunder

cities. And so the terms murjifun or irjafiyyun were applied to them in the legal tradition. It was

also applied to Ibn Tumart of the Maghrib, who claimed to be the Mahdi, the figure Muslims

believe will precede the second coming of Christ (Muslims also believe in the second coming of

Christ, and that Christ is the Messiah). With this claim, he slaughtered many people in violent

purges and massacres, and he was called “al-Zalam al-Qattal” or “the Unjust Slaughterer.” So the

term irjafî was also applied to him. The term has also been applied in other similar contexts, so it

has a clear precedent in the Islamic legal tradition. The question that arises here is: What are the

necessary conditions for bin Laden’s inversion of jihad into irjaf? And we have two. First of all,

there are necessary political conditions, without which we lack the conditions for tit-for-tat in the

context of bin Laden’s arguments. And secondly, we have necessary intellectual conditions,

because there are legitimate and illegitimate forms of tit-for-tat, and he inverts the former by

espousing the latter. If bin Laden claims that special interests are manipulating United States

foreign policy in conjunction with the media, then a legitimate tit-for-tat response would be to set

up your own special interests, and do your own media. But you don’t go out killing civilians.

And so, there are necessary intellectual conditions for this inversion of tit-for-tat.

Now, I want to give you just two additional examples of these necessary intellectual

conditions, so that you get a sense of the intellectual crisis in parts of the Muslim world, which

Muslim scholars are trying their best to address. Does everybody remember the attacks in Luxor,

Egypt, about 10 years ago where German tourists were killed? The response of the Egyptian

government was to round up around 16,000 extremists in Southern Egypt. The government threw

them in jail and sent scholars from al-Azhar University, the oldest university in the Islamic world

(like Oxford or Cambridge, except even older) to talk to these guys to find out, “What in the

world are you guys thinking?” So the scholars talked to these people, who explained, “We were

reading the works of Ibn Taymiyyah, and thought that his calls for self-defense applied today.”

Now, Ibn Taymiyyah was a late 13th century, early 14th century jurist and theologian writing

around the time of the Mongol invasion of the Islamic world. And he argued that Muslims can’t rely on the Mamluk rulers of Egypt to deal with the crisis, because they drank alcohol, and were unreliable themselves. So he argued that it was an individual duty for all able-bodied Muslim men to go out and fight. And then the extremists said that, “Mubarak is like the Mongols.” The scholars at Al-Azhar asked, “Well, if Mubarak is the Mongols, who are the Mamluks?” And then 12,000 of

16,000 of these people paused, and said, “That’s a good question.” So you have these people

reading traditional texts without understanding them. Eventually, 12,000 of the 16,000 repented,

were rehabilitated, and ultimately released. However, 4,000 of them couldn’t be reached with

these arguments, so they stayed in jail. Now, I’m not suggesting that al Qaeda is that easy, or that

you could have the same success rate with them. I’m just illustrating the fact that you have a

problem with people reading texts and completely misunderstanding them, even if they’re easier

to understand than the Quran. So you can imagine what’s going on intellectually if people don’t

learn from traditional scholars.

A second, more recent example is the Sharm el Shaykh attack last year. Shaykh Ali Goma

prayer for one of the Egyptian police officers who was killed in that attack. And so led the funeral

he gave a nationally televised sermon during the Friday congregational prayer immediately

preceding the funeral prayer for this slain officer. And in his sermon, he said that those who read

the Quran and do these kinds of actions, claiming that they are justified, or that this is “real

Islam,” etc… will have the Quran as a witness against them on the Day of Judgment, not a witness

for them. He also said in clear-cut and unambiguous terms that they are going to hell.

Later that night, somebody called in on one of the television talk shows that Shaykh Ali

was on, since religious leaders like him are very popular in the Islamic world, and they asked

him, “What if these youth simply didn’t understand Islam properly, but had good intentions? Why

would they go to hell if our actions are judged by our intentions?” Shaykh Ali replied something

to the effect, “Good intentions are not sufficient, since they have to be combined with right action

and right understanding” (these are the three dimensions of the famous hadith of Gabriel that has

been used as a model for discussing the essentials of Islam for over 1000 years). An American

analog would be Timothy McVeigh, who may have claimed to have had good intentions, but

that’s not sufficient. All three elements have to go together. Of course, many extremists will use

the excuse that, “If an innocent Muslim is killed in one of these attacks, God is going to sort it

out, and He’ll accept them as martyrs. So we’re (in some perverse way) doing them a favor by

involving them in this operation, even if they’re unwillingly martyred.” Now, that’s just absurd.

And Shaykh Ali cuts off the whole argument by quoting a hadith, or saying, of the Prophet of

Islam to the effect that the murder of a single Muslim is so bad, that it’s almost better that God

never created anything. And the word Muslim here has multiple meanings, since it can refer to

somebody who follows the Quranic revelation, or in a more universal sense, to anybody who has

submitted their will to God. For example, the Quran refers to Abraham as a primordial Muslim

(musliman hanîfan), as well as to the world of nature as muslim, since it necessarily submits to

God’s Will (albeit passively rather than actively). The Quran similarly states that the murder of a

single human being is like killing the whole of humanity, and that saving a single human life is

like saving the whole of humanity. So Shaykh Ali unequivocally says these guys are going to hell,

and that’s it.

Now I wanted to analyze the discourse around these political and intellectual issues. The

view that I’ve just laid out asserts that there are necessary political and intellectual conditions for

the presence of bin Laden, al Qaeda, and extremism in the Islamic world. That’s the common

view on the Muslim street, so to speak. Contrary to what you might hear from the press, the

overwhelming majority of Muslims object to the highjacking of their religion by these people

(check out the statistics in Gallup Poll’s remarkable new book Who Speaks for Islam? What

Over a Billion Muslims Really Think). Although most of our politicians in the U.S. would agree

that these necessary intellectual conditions exist, many deny that our foreign policy creates the

aforementioned necessary political conditions. A third possibility is people in the west who say,

“Hey, not only are there are no necessary political conditions, but bin Laden has the right

interpretation of Islam. That’s what Islam actually calls for.” So they would deny these necessary

intellectual and political conditions. Then you have the extremists themselves, like bin Laden, who

claim they’ve got it right intellectually, but they’re responding to U.S. foreign policy, i.e. they

deny the necessary intellectual conditions, and assert necessary political conditions. So we have

all four views represented in a two-by-two matrix organized according to whether or not these

necessary political and intellectual conditions apply.

Now, what I’d like to suggest is that we’ll make strategic errors if we’re thinking in terms

of the wrong quadrants in this matrix, and that we need to be thinking in terms of the first

quadrant, i.e. necessary political and intellectual conditions, to win this war against terrorism.

Obviously, foreign policy is not directly in any of our hands. But although nobody in this room

has control over foreign policy, we do have some influence over those necessary intellectual

conditions. And the correct use of language in calling bin Laden and those who support him

murjifun or irjafiyyun could go a long way towards eliminating the necessary intellectual

conditions for future recruitment. I’m not saying that this is going to convert people who have

already crossed the line. But given the centrality of the Quran in Arabic culture, and the fact that

irjaf is the best Quranic term for terrorism, irjaf can initially supplement the term irhab before

ultimately supplanting it. That would not only cut down recruitment a great deal, it would help

dry up the soft support that is so necessary for al Qaeda’s continued operations, making a very

big impact.

Moreover, only a strategic minority needs to first employ the term irjaf for it to be

effective. Rather than being like a “silver bullet,” usage of the term is more analogous to a gas

that expands naturally, suffocating the necessary intellectual conditions behind violent forms of

extremism as it spreads. And so this linguistic analysis can provide a very powerful intellectual

weapon in this kind of war for hearts and minds. And I would like to conclude by suggesting that

we have more chaplains like Chap. (MAJ) Gianni Martin, who also visited Shaykh Ali last

summer, collaborating with leading scholars in the Islamic world to get their input on these

strategically crucial issues.

*Waleed El-Ansary is Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of South Carolina,*

*Columbia. He studied economics at George Washington (BA 1986) and the University of*

*Maryland (MA1998), and the Human Sciences with an emphasis on Islamic Studies at George*

*Washington University (PhD 2006). He is a consultant to the Royal Court of Jordan as well as*

*the Grand Mufti of Egypt and is involved in interfaith dialog. His research focuses on the*

*relationship between religion and economics, and he is the author of “The Economics of*

*Terrorism: How bin Laden is Changing the Rules of the Game” in Islam, Fundamentalism and*

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**Jesus and Muhammad: Allies in the Battle for Legitimacy**

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*Abstract*

Karl Marx famously described religion as the opiate of the masses—this as he promoted his godless theology of communism. For better or worse, religion has since demonstrated more staying power than communism, even if religion continues to be the cause of the world’s most intractable violence. Contrary to many political pundits of the 20th century, religion has not faded away. It remains as potent an ingredient in war and peace today as it has been in the past.

Legitimacy is about what is right, and military legitimacy is about might and right. Concepts or norms of what is right—the standards of legitimacy—are shaped by religion and found in the laws, moral standards and values of different nations and cultures, and they vary considerably. Violent conflicts arising from religious differences plague the world today as they have in the past, but today they are more lethal due to advanced technology and the availability of weapons of mass destruction.

Total war—and that includes holy war—does not concern itself with issues of legitimacy beyond destroying an enemy with overwhelming force. But contemporary military operations other than conventional warfare are a different matter. Issues of political and military legitimacy are critical to mission success whenever political objectives prevail, as in stability operations, counterinsurgency (COIN), and other variations of nation-building.

Where US forces face hostile cultural environments in which religion plays a major role—as in Iraq and Afghanistan—political and military leaders must become knowledgeable of religions that shape concepts of legitimacy in order to minimize religious and cultural conflicts between US forces and the indigenous population. Religion is as important to the human terrain of hearts and minds in stability operations and COIN as geographical features are to conventional combat operations.

Because most US and NATO are Christian or Jewish they are considered infidels in Muslim cultures where their presence in large numbers can turn public support against those they support. To provide an environment in which non-Muslim military forces can positively influence public opinion to achieve strategic political objectives in Muslim cultures, every effort must be made to promote better interfaith relations.

Even if the Christian and Muslim religions tend to be adversarial, the teachings of Jesus and Muhammad are not. While there are major differences in their teachings, there is sufficient common ground to demonstrate that Jesus and Muhammad are allies and not enemies in the battle for legitimacy. Once that is understood by the faithful, the prospects for achieving peace and other mutually beneficial military and political objectives between Christians and Muslims are greatly improved.

This paper surveys issues of military legitimacy prevalent in COIN and stability operations, and how conflicting religions shape the public support so necessary for mission success. Iraq and Afghanistan have been crucibles of religious and cultural conflict that have challenged US military strategies and operations. While much has been learned, much has yet to be done to match military strategies and operations with the specialized military and civilian capabilities needed to achieve mission success in the ambiguous and unforgiving environments of contemporary conflict.

*Introduction*

What and where is the battle for legitimacy, and what do Jesus and Muhammad have to do with it? The battle for legitimacy is any violent contest for political power where success is more dependent upon public support than military power. While there are many such battles raging in the world today, this paper will focus on those in Iraq and Afghanistan. The stage for those battles was set on September 11, 2001, when al Qaeda attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in what it called a holy war, although the Bush administration was careful not to call it that. It became the global war on terror, or GWOT, until the Obama administration disavowed that terminology.

The US responded to the al Qaeda attack with the invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001 and the invasion of Iraq in early 2003. Today the US presence in Iraq is waning while US and NATO involvement in Afghanistan is waxing. While the strategies now employed in Afghanistan are an ambiguous mix of counterinsurgency (COIN) and counterterrorism, one thing is certain: because a Christian nation invaded a Muslim nation and has remained in force, religion has become a defining characteristic in the battle for legitimacy—a battle for hearts and minds in the midst of clashing cultures and conflicting values and virtues.

In the case of Iraq, the battle has not only been between Christians and Muslims, but also between Sunni and Shiite Muslims. But appearances can be deceiving; religious differences have not always been the real cause of violence. Traditional tribal enemies have used sectarian religious loyalties to continue their age-old competition for power, and those religious affiliations were polarized during the regime of Saddam Hussein. The characterization of the competition for power as religious has given the violence an intractable quality that continues to defy the usual means of resolution.

In Afghanistan the internal conflict has been even less about sectarian religious differences than about ethnic and tribal differences. Most Afghans have never embraced the fundamentalist brand of Islam promoted by the Taliban, the regime which aided and abetted al Qaeda in its attack on the US and which was subsequently ousted by the US invasion; but the Taliban, with its rigid discipline and fierce fighting in the name of God, has become a formidable insurgent force in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The legitimacy of US and NATO operations in Afghanistan has been undermined by Afghan perceptions that US and NATO forces are infidels who should be expelled from Muslim soil. It is in this context of religious hatred and violence that Jesus and Muhammad become relevant in the battle for legitimacy. In the contest for the hearts and minds of a religious people, the teachings of Jesus and Muhammad can be determinative.

*The Battle for Legitimacy*

Legitimacy is what gives a government the moral authority to act; and when the US uses its military power to intervene in another nation, as it did in Afghanistan and Iraq, the intervention must be considered legitimate or it will fail to achieve those strategic objectives that require public support.1 Such public support in the area of operations is not required in wartime but is essential in peacetime military operations like COIN and stability operations in which political objectives outweigh military objectives.2 The requirement for legitimacy in COIN was first demonstrated in Vietnam, and painful lessons in legitimacy learned in Vietnam have been reaffirmed in Iraq and Afghanistan, where cultural differences have been exacerbated by religious hatred.

Military legitimacy is about might and right, and the battle for legitimacy in Iraq and Afghanistan has been characterized by conflicting standards of what is right. Those standards originate in religion and culture and evolve into values, moral standards and the law. Religion shapes hearts and minds, and COIN is about winning hearts and minds. Whenever public support in the operational area is needed for mission success, the role of religion becomes critical in achieving legitimacy and mission success.

Public support is both a requirement and a measure of legitimacy and it has two dimensions: public support at home and in the area of operations. Whenever there are significant religious differences between the US public and the public in the area of operations, it is difficult to achieve the public support needed for mission success. 3

In COIN the battle for legitimacy is for political power. Insurgents challenge the legitimacy of an existing government, and the ensuing battle for power is decided by whichever side achieves sufficient legitimacy to govern. That legitimacy depends upon public support, and overwhelming military power can cause collateral damage that undermines public support and legitimacy.4

In Iraq and Afghanistan, COIN objectives may seem more religious than political, but that can be deceiving. The issues in contention may be considered political issues in the West, but in Muslim nations there is no separation between religion and politics; and when contentious issues are religious, the battle for legitimacy becomes more complex and the violence more intractable. In both Iraq and Afghanistan the US is perceived to be a Christian nation intervening in the affairs of Muslim nations, making it difficult for US forces to contribute to the legitimacy of the supported governments.

*Culture, Religion and the Rule of Law*

Culture and religion are the context of legitimacy, shaping the values that produce the standards of legitimacy and public opinion; and secular cultural values and norms shape religion as much as religious values and norms shape those of culture. The end result is that the culture of each nation is largely shaped by its religion—and vice-versa.

The dominant religion in America is Christianity, but it is characterized by its diversity. American religion includes an ever-expanding number of Protestant denominations and sects and independent-minded Catholics. The traditional libertarian values of the Enlightenment as well as those of capitalism have shaped American Christianity into a religion that enshrines the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, as well as the Puritan work ethic.5 The American religion has been so shaped by the forces of its history that its variations often bear little resemblance to their Christian origins and to those faster-growing Christian sects in Latin America and Africa, which are also an amalgam of their unique cultures and traditional Christian doctrine.

Like Christianity, Islam takes many forms, all shaped by its dominant cultures. For example, the Wahhabi sect of Sunni Muslims in Saudi Arabia produced Osama bin Laden and bears little resemblance to more moderate forms of Islam prevalent in the US and other western cultures. In the Middle East and Africa tribal traditions that have no precedent in the Qur’an or hadith of Muhammad have found their way into the sacred code of Islamic law, the Shari’a. This has given divine sanction to barbaric forms of subjugating women—such as female circumcision—in Muslim cultures that traditionally embraced such tribal practices.6

Even with their many variations, most Christian and Muslim cultures share a common difference in how they view the rule of law.7 In Western Christian cultures the Enlightenment produced a secular rule of law as the glue holding democracy and human rights together. Their secular law is man-made and constantly changing, with constitutions providing a stable base for Western democracies. By way of contrast, Muslim theocracies like Iran and Saudi Arabia are governed by rigid Shari’a law, presumably made by God and interpreted and enforced by Muslim clerics. Turkey and Indonesia are hybrids somewhere in between, and perhaps a harbinger of the future. They are Muslim countries with democratic governments that make and enforce secular laws and also recognize Islamic law in certain areas.

*Religion and Foreign Policy*

It has always been difficult for those in one culture to respect the values and norms of conflicting cultures, especially when religion exacerbates those conflicts. Since biblical times, beginning with the ethnic cleansing of Joshua at Jericho, through the Christian Crusades and up to contemporary Islamist terrorism, holy war has been the worst kind of war. The hostility of Muslims to the uninvited presence of US and NATO forces in Iraq and Afghanistan is a reflection of religious and cultural differences, and because US and NATO strategic objectives there depend upon public support, there must be some amelioration of this hostility to achieve legitimacy and mission success.

Accepting the conflicting norms of cultural plurality is not easy for US policy-makers, who are more accustomed to imposing US standards of legitimacy than in respecting cultural diversity.8 This has been described by Seymour Martin Lipset as *American exceptionalism,* and it has been a driving force of US foreign policy for the last century. But according to Andrew J. Bacevich, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the economic crisis have forced an end to American exceptionalism—but that is yet to be seen. 9

American exceptionalism has its roots in American missionary evangelism. The political zeal of America to conform the world into its own image of democracy is derived from the religious zeal of American missionaries to convert the heathens of Africa and Asia to Christianity. Christianity and Islam are competitive religions that seek new converts, and US Christian missionaries have aggressively sought to convert Muslims since the 18th century. While Christian condemnation of Muslims moderated in the 20th century, many evangelical Christians retain negative views of Muslims.10

In a similar fashion, the zeal of Islamic extremists to impose their radical beliefs upon the rest of the world is a form of religious evangelism. The difference between them and Christian evangelicals is that radical Islam uses violence in proselytizing and makes no distinction between religious and political ideals.

Globalization, with its advanced technologies and forced integration of conflicting cultures and religions has made the continuation of militant religious and political evangelism a clear and present danger to world peace. Technology has made weapons of mass destruction available to religious extremists and people of competing religions now live in closer proximity than ever before, so that continued religious polarization and the escalation of religious hatred and violence threaten a real Armageddon.

History has shown that religious wars are easier to start and far more difficult to end than wars fought over secular political and economic issues. It is essential that some means be found to neutralize the religious polarization that could escalate contemporary violence into holy war.

Religion is indeed the opiate of the masses. It is the source of much of the violence in the world today, but because religion continues to be a vital motivating force for many of the world’s people, it must also be part of the solution. Religion will always be mixed with politics—even in the West—and wherever that volatile mix occurs, religious issues should be distinguished from social, political and economic issues to preclude the religious hatred and hostility that so often escalates into violence. Once contentious social, political and economic issues are removed from the realm of religion, then religious reconciliation and the peaceful resolution of those issues become possible.

*Sources of Religious Authority: Holy Books, Rules and Rituals*

Making a distinction between religious and secular issues is the key to diffusing religious polarization and the fear, hatred and violence it produces. When facing what seem to be contentious religious issues, Jews, Christians and Muslims should question whether those issues are more ethnic, social, political or economic than religious. What may initially seem to be a religious conflict is often a conflict between people of different religions over contentious secular issues; and that is not a religious conflict.

There are many fundamental theological differences between the three great religions of the Book: Judaism, Christianity and Islam—even within different sects of the same religion. But none of these theological differences are grounds for violence. The issues that have sparked violence between Jews, Christians and Muslims have not been theological but political—whether it is the occupation of the Holy Land, or political domination in the Balkans, Africa or Asia. The root of such violence is worldly political power, with unscrupulous leaders inciting religious passions to further their ambitions.

Finding peace among those fighting in the name of God requires distinguishing the real issue—whether ethnic, social, economic or political—from false theological issues. Muslims have a theological challenge since their religion makes no distinction between secular and religious issues, and the American Christian religion has conflated religion and politics in such a way that it poses a similar challenge for its believers.

American politicians have often appealed to religious ideals when promoting political objectives, as when referring to military operations as crusades. That is because Americans tend to express their values, loyalty and duty in terms of both God and country. That linkage creates a problem independent of Christian theology. Patriotic virtues and values are important but should be distinguished from those derived from faith. That may be impossible for those whose faith is in their country, but others should be able to make a distinction by going to their religious authorities.

The highest source of religious authority for Jews and Christians is the Bible (the Hebrew Bible is the Old Testament of the Christian Bible). Fundamentalist Jews and Christians believe their holy books are the literal, inerrant and infallible word of God; but most Jews and Christians are not fundamentalists and employ both reason and experience to interpret their bibles as sacred authorities in matters of faith and practice.

For Muslims the Qur’an is their holy book, and most Muslims consider it to be the literal, inerrant and infallible word of God which was dictated to Muhammad and recorded word for word in Arabic. While Christians speak of Jesus as *the word of God made flesh*, Muslims speak of the Qur’an as *the word of God made book*. This makes Muslims more literal fundamentalists than most Christians, but there are many Christian fundamentalists who share the same view of their Bible as Muslims do of their Qur’an.11

*Jesus and Muhammad as Authorities on Matters of Faith*

Most Christians consider the teachings of Jesus their ultimate authority on matters of faith, and those teachings are found in the four gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These accounts should be read critically since they were written long after the death of Jesus by early Christians who were not recording historical events so much as writing the story of Jesus to support their understanding of the Christian faith. The four gospel accounts were chosen from other writings about Jesus and canonized by church fathers in the 4th century. Even with these limitations, a critical reading of the four gospel accounts can provide an understanding of the teachings and example of Jesus.

Muhammad is not considered a divine being as Christians think of Jesus, but as the last and most important prophet who revealed the perfect word of God in the form of the Qur’an. Stories about the life and teachings of Muhammad have been collected in the *hadith*, which supplements the Qur’an as a sacred authority for Muslims. The various accounts of the hadith can be read critically much like the gospel accounts of Jesus.

Even with their different roles, Jesus and Muhammad represent the most authoritative figures of their respective religions, and their teachings and example are followed by the faithful. Even with their many differences, their teachings provide a means of finding consensus and reconciliation among their followers on matters of religion and politics—and even on war.

*Jesus on Religion, Politics and War*

Moses and Muhammad both taught that God’s law governed all of life’s activities, including politics. Jesus avoided politics—a matter of survival for Jews in the Roman Empire—and taught that there were different obligations to God and government (the realm of religion and politics); but Jesus never specified what those obligations were.12 Instead of giving his followers a divine code of laws, as did Moses first and Muhammad later, Jesus gave his followers a universal moral principle to apply to all matters, including politics. That principle was summarized in *the greatest commandment* to love both God and neighbor, and in the story of *the good Samaritan* Jesus made it clear that our neighbors included those of other faiths.13

Jesus was a Jew who considered himself the long-awaited Messiah (the anointed one, or Christ) sent to announce the in-breaking Kingdom of God.14 His ministry was primarily to the Jews, but he shared his message and healing powers with those of other faiths, such as the Samaritans and Gentiles who were despised by the Jews, and he taught that all who did God’s will were his brothers and sisters.15 Jesus never promoted any religion, not even his own, and never advocated the creation of a new religion. The Kingdom of God announced by Jesus was one of forgiveness, love and mercy for all people. His call was not to follow religious rules and rituals but to follow his teachings and example of sacrificial love.16

Jesus spoke of God’s judgment, but not as a judgment based on religious beliefs. Jesus debunked the prevailing Jewish belief that God rewarded those obedient to Jewish Law (the righteous) with worldly blessings and punished the disobedient (sinners) with suffering. When Jesus spoke of judgment, it was based on how people treated *the least of those* among them.17

In 1st century Palestine, the Romans maintained an often brutal form of law and order. There was no real threat of war, unless Jewish zealots initiated a rebellion against Roman authority. Overthrowing an oppressive Roman regime and restoring the power and glory of ancient Israel was what most Jews expected of their Messiah, but Jesus consistently avoided confronting Roman authority. Ironically, Jewish religious leaders ultimately conspired with the Romans to have Jesus crucified on trumped up charges of insurrection because they considered him a blasphemer and threat to their religious authority.18 Less than forty years later, however, Jewish zealots initiated an abortive rebellion that provoked the Romans to destroy Jerusalem and initiate the Diaspora, which scattered surviving Jews throughout the ancient world.

Jesus taught that God’s love fostered nonviolent responses to evil, but he never condemned war or the Roman soldiers who fought it; in fact, he once described a Roman centurion as having more faith than any Jew.19 Jesus acknowledged that wars were inevitable—nation would rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom—but that in the end times the Son of Man would return to end all strife.20 Surprisingly, Muslims agree with Christians that Jesus will return to usher in God’s kingdom.

The lack of any teachings of Jesus on war is rather remarkable given the Jewish tradition of holy war—that is, God-ordained warfare—that was sanctioned by Mosaic law and which includes the notorious ban exercised by Joshua at Jericho.21 The ancient Jews in the audience of Jesus assumed that God was very much involved in warfare, with the outcome being either a reward for obedience or punishment for disobedience of the sacred laws of the Torah.

Given the lack of any teachings by Jesus on warfare, Saint Augustine filled the vacuum. He initiated a Christian rationale on the justice for both going to war and for warfighting (*jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*), a rationale that has evolved over the centuries as the *Just War Tradition*. Its conditions reflect the tension between the teachings of Jesus on love and mercy and the use of lethal force to resolve social and political disputes. And while the just war tradition prohibits unjustified military aggression and causing unnecessary suffering, it authorizes military necessity, discrimination and proportionality in the use of force. All of these principles have been incorporated into the laws of war.22

*Love over Law and Legitimacy*

Any Christian justification for the use of lethal force against others—a just war—must be reconciled with the concept of sacrificial love. That moral imperative of faith requires that Christians risk their lives to protect others from those who would do them harm, and also requires secular laws and policies that prevent the excessive use of force. For ancient Jews and Muslims, the sacred laws of the Torah and Shari’a governed the conduct of war, and for fundamentalists of both faiths they continue to govern warfare.

The different emphasis by Moses, Jesus and Muhammad on love, law and warfare can probably be attributed to their different environments. Jesus and the Jews of his day lived under a powerful but oppressive Roman Empire that provided a functioning legal system and protection from invasion. By way of contrast, Moses and Muhammad faced anarchy if they did not provide laws to govern their people, and to be effective those laws required the sanction of God.

This would explain the major difference between Judaism, Christianity and Islam on the subject of law and legitimacy: Jews and Muslims rely on their sacred law to define what is legitimate while Christians believe that the principle of sacrificial love is a moral imperative that takes precedence over the law. The Christian ideal is a secular legal system that is democratic, dynamic and altruistic, while orthodox Jews and Muslims embrace their ancient sacred laws as immutable standards of legitimacy. Between Jews and Christians, this difference has been expressed as the old covenant of Mosaic Law versus the new covenant of Jesus. The Hebrew prophet Jeremiah predicted its coming and St. Paul confirmed the primacy of love over law for Christians.23

The doctrine of love over law as taught and exemplified by Jesus and practiced through civil disobedience by Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King underscores the moral supremacy of love over law. Christians are called to use non-violent measures to challenge any law that violates the moral imperative to love others, while Jews and Muslims are required to obey their sacred laws as God’s inerrant will. Even with these formidable differences *the greatest commandment,* a combination of two commandments from the Jewish Torah, is a common word that expresses God’s will for Jews, Christian and Muslims alike. It reminds us that God is the ultimate power to which all believers owe their love and obedience, and that they show their love for God by loving their neighbors as themselves, and that their neighbors include those of other faiths.24

*Muhammad on Religion, Politics and War*

American Christians have reconciled their faith with principles of individual liberty and religious freedom which are embodied in the separation of church and state in the First Amendment to the US Constitution; but for Muslims there is no separation between religion and politics; for them all conduct in peace and war is constrained by sacred law (the Shari’a). It should be noted that Islamic law in the Shari’a is remarkably similar to Mosaic law, reflecting the common Semitic heritage of Jews and Muslims.

Like Moses, Muhammad had to provide law and order in a desolate land through a rigid code of laws and the use of force. And like Jesus, Muhammad taught that those of other religions—Jews and Christians—should be treated as friends unless and until they proved themselves to be enemies, and Muhammad instructed his followers that there be no compulsion in religion.25

There were two distinct phases of Muhammad’s ministry, with the first similar to that of Jesus and the second more like that of Moses and Joshua. The first was the period from 610-622 CE in Mecca, where Muhammad and his fledgling Muslim followers were subservient to the ruling Quraysh tribe, so that “…the Prophet was neither judge nor ruler, but guide and teacher”26 much as Jesus had been to the Jews of 1st century Palestine. The second phase of Muhammad’s ministry began with his *hijrah* to Medina and lasted until his death in 632 CE, during which time “…the Prophet took on the power to govern politically over the Muslims and non-Muslims of Medina ...including the defense and maintenance of the new Islamic state, by force of arms if necessary.”27 This latter phase was somewhat analogous to Moses leading the Hebrews out of Egypt to the Promised Land and the subsequent military conquests of Joshua.

Like the ancient Hebrews before them, Muslims believe that God ordains and determines the outcome of war;28 but unlike the ancient Hebrews, Muslims have no equivalent of the *ban* in the Shari’a to justify a campaign of ethnic cleansing.29  *Jihad* is more than holy war, having both internal (personal) and external (warfare) dimensions: *internal jihad* relates to the spiritual battle between good and evil within each person, while *external jihad* relates to actual warfare between the forces of good and evil. And according to Muhammad, the internal jihad was more important than any external jihad.30

Muslims, like Christians, have a Just War theory, and the two are compatible. The primary difference between the two is that Islamic law on just war is considered sacred since it comes directly from the Qur’an and hadith, while Christian concepts of just war are based on theological principles that have evolved since the time of St. Augustine, but which have no direct authority from the teachings of Jesus since he never addressed the subject other than to discourage the use of force.

There are numerous provisions in the Qur’an and the hadith that address both going to war (*jus ad bellum*) and the conduct of war (*jus in bello*), although there have been conflicting interpretations of those provisions to both justify and condemn contemporary violence as Islamic Jihad. When read in context the Qur’an and hadith provide three essential principles of Islamic just war that are compatible with those of the Christian Just War Tradition: *first, non-combatants are not legitimate targets; second, the religion of a person or persons is not a justification for war against them; and third, aggression is prohibited, but the use of force is justified in self-defense, the protection of sovereignty, and in defense of all innocent people*.31

*Separating Religion from Politics and War*

If the substantive law of war for Christians and Muslims is compatible, much else in those competing religions is incompatible; but even with their many differences, Jews, Christians and Muslims share sufficient common ground to avoid hate and violence over theological issues. Even so, throughout history unscrupulous leaders have exploited religious differences to polarize their constituents and arouse hate and violence in support of their causes. So it was in Northern Ireland and the Balkans where violence was controlled only after religious hatred was ameliorated, and the same must occur in the Middle East and Africa if peace is ever to become possible in those volatile regions.

Israel and Palestine are at the epicenter of religious hate and violence. If the Jewish people ever concede that they are not entitled by God to a Holy Land occupied by Palestinians, and if the Palestinians ever concede the right of Israel to exist in the community of nations, then peace is a possibility. The potential for religious violence is even more focused on the temple mount in Jerusalem.32 Until its destruction by the Romans in 70AD the great temple in Jerusalem was considered by Jews to be the sacred home of God and was the center of their worship. There are fundamentalist Jews and Christians today who believe that the temple must be restored on the temple mount to fulfill God’s will. The problem is that a mosque now occupies that holy site.

Which religion controls the temple mount and Jerusalem is more than symbolic; until that issue is resolved, peace in the Middle East will be elusive. If it were left to Jesus and Muhammad, there would be no violent competition for control of the temple mount and Jerusalem. The reign of a universal God of love, mercy and reconciliation would make Jerusalem a shining city on a hill that would be an example of interfaith reconciliation for Jews, Christians and Muslims throughout the world.

The continuing conflict centered on Jerusalem is more political than religious. The boundaries of Israel have become fuzzy through warfare and occupation since its creation by the UN in 1948. Ironically, if left to democratic processes now in effect a majority of Muslims could gain political control of Israel and its occupied territories. A separate Palestinian state should be an acceptable alternative to the status quo since otherwise the procreation power of Muslims in the Holy Land could be as much of a threat to Jewish control of Israel as are Palestinian rockets.

It is ironic that Jews have never sought to convert Muslims or Christians to Judaism, while evangelical Muslims and Christians have always proselytized Jews and each other. So it is that religious competition between Christians and Muslims—with Jews abstaining—has made Israel a crucible for conflict for over a thousand years.

Religion, politics and war seem hopelessly interwoven in the Holy Land; but if Jews, Christians and Muslims could accept Jesus and Muhammad as allies in the battle for legitimacy—with neither at odds with Moses—then the contentious political, social and economic issues that have plagued the Holy Land for millennia could be addressed with some hope of peaceful resolution.

*A common word* of faith for Jews, Christians and Muslims based on love of God and neighbor can move us closer to that ideal. Until religious reconciliation begins religious differences will continue to foster fear, hate and violence in the Middle East, and wherever else Jews, Christians and Muslims find themselves living together.

*A Common Word of Love and Peace from Jesus and Muhammad*

We will always have religious differences—that is inherent in the mystery of God and the cultural differences that have shaped the world’s great religions. But for those who worship the same God, religious differences should never be the cause of hatred and violence. Unfortunately, there will always be those who exploit religious passions to exacerbate contentious issues, as with the mosque controversy in New York City and other divisive “hot-button” issues in political campaigns. During the last century there were hate groups that distorted Christianity to promote hate and violence—whether it was the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) targeting blacks in the rural South or white Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs) targeting Catholics in Northern cities.

There have not been many contentious political issues in the US that have not been wrapped in religious garb, and that includes foreign policy and military operations. Religions are man-made social institutions built on the authority of God and have been used over the ages by political despots and charlatans to further their worldly ambitions. That includes religious leaders since the power of a religion is based on its popularity, and religious leaders have shown a lust for popularity and power that rivals secular politicians. In their unrestrained and sometimes unprincipled zeal to attract converts religious leaders have promoted exclusivist doctrines of salvation and condemned those of other religions—that is a recipe for religious fear, hatred and violence.

If Christians and Muslims better understood the teachings of Jesus and Muhammad they would be less likely to have their religious differences to be exploited by unprincipled opportunists into hate and violence.

Neither Jesus nor Muhammad ever taught that his religion was the exclusive means of salvation, nor did either ever condemn those of other religions; both advocated the supremacy of God over all worldly powers, and that it was God’s will that all people be reconciled into the family of God—not based on the supremacy of one religion over others, but on the basis of spiritual kinship between those of different religions; and both taught the moral imperative of the greatest commandment to love both God and neighbor. Discerning believers should question any religious doctrines that suggest otherwise, especially those that promote exclusivity and condemn those of other religions.

The teachings of Jesus and Muhammad are—or should be—the ultimate authority for Christians and Muslims on their religious beliefs and the basis for finding common ground. Religious reconciliation requires seeking common ground based on a tolerance of religious differences and the recognition that it is an insult for those of one religion to proselytize those of another. Once Jews, Christians and Muslims learn to respect their religious diversity and find a common word of God, then religious reconciliation will enable them to address contentious secular issues without infusing them with religious passions, and that should make the world a more peaceful place.

Most Christians and Muslims recognize that it is God’s will that we reconcile our differences and find peace, and that it is Satan’s will to divide and conquer through fear, hatred and violence. Unfortunately, Satan does a wonderful imitation of God, and history confirms that Satan does some of his best work in synagogues, churches and mosques. Religion has furthered the objectives of Satan as well as those of God—from the Christian Crusades to Islamic terrorism—and in the process given God a bad name.

The teachings of Jesus and Muhammad can redeem God’s good name. While different in many respects, they are ultimately compatible and share the same ultimate objective of peace and reconciliation with both God and humankind. It has not been Jesus and Muhammad but the Christian and Muslim religions that have been competitive to a fault. It is time that Christians and Muslims put their religious priorities in order.

A prestigious group of Muslim authorities and scholars recently initiated an effort to bring Jews, Christians and Muslims together with *a common word* of God.33 They invited Christians and Jews to meet them on the common ground of the greatest commandment taught by Jesus, which is actually two separate commandments found in the Hebrew Bible: the first is to love God and the second is to love our neighbors as ourselves. Taken together, they form the moral imperative to love God by loving our neighbors; and according to Jesus our neighbors include those of other faiths.34

If enough Jews, Christians and Muslims acknowledge the greatest commandment to be a common word of their faith, then the religious violence now plaguing the world can be seen for what it is: the nasty business of Satan, not God. Then there will be real hope for the resolution of those social, economic and political issues that have been made intractable as matters of faith, and for the exposure of those demagogues who use the deception of religion to promote hatred and violence in the name of God.

Militant Islamists are religious demagogues who are agents of Satan, not God. They have used *the power of hate and the patience to wait* to polarize religions in anticipation of a Jihad, and they are aided and abetted by fundamentalist Jews and Christians who condemn those of other religions. To defeat the evil powers that threaten God’s creation, all Jews, Christians and Muslims who seek religious reconciliation and peace must join together and embrace a common word of love for God and neighbor.

*Religion and the Battle for Legitimacy*

The battle for legitimacy in Muslim countries is a battle for the hearts and minds of Muslims. While outside military forces may be involved, the real battle is between moderate Muslim leaders who promote progress and justice and those radical Islamists who oppose them with fear, hate and violence in the name of God. And in places like Iraq and Afghanistan the presence of large numbers of US forces plays into the hands of radical Islamists who recruit followers by asserting that US forces are infidels seeking to overthrow Islam. The battle for legitimacy will not be won by a modern crusade of Western military forces, but by moderate Muslims armed with the power of God’s reconciling love and the liberating forces of pragmatism and progress.35

What is the role of the US in such conflicts? Priority should be given to assisting progressive Muslim leaders in their battle against radical Islamists for the heart and soul of Islam rather than seeking to destroy Islamists with overwhelming force, unless they are like al Qaeda and a threat to the US. To achieve legitimacy and mission success in hostile cultural environments the US must minimize the presence of its combat forces and emphasize the priority of soft power over hard power. Combat operations in Muslim countries should be conducted primarily by Muslim personnel to avoid giving Islamists a propaganda advantage that can undermine US legitimacy and mission success.

In his book, The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism, Andrew Bacevich proclaims the demise of American exceptionalism and the folly of preventive war, and urges the US and its allies to forge a new policy of containment against the threat of militant Islamism. While Bacevich does not address the role of religion in US foreign policy, his book illustrates its pervasive effect. Bacevich cites Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr extensively in support of observations and proposals that debunk the naïve notions of Bush era Neocons.36

Bacevich is wrong, however, to summarily dismiss a COIN capability in favor of quick reaction forces to combat Islamism when it threatens Muslim governments.37 Both capabilities are needed. The problem has not been with the US having a COIN strategy and capability, but with its application. It is all but impossible to achieve the political objectives of COIN with large numbers of US combat forces in a hostile cultural environment, and no amount of US combat power can substitute for a lack of legitimacy. In Afghanistan the US could well repeat the painful lessons learned in Vietnam.

The surge strategy in Iraq was successful because former Sunni insurgents switched sides from al Qaeda to US efforts to support the Iraqi government, not because of overwhelming US combat force. The surge gave the Iraqi government more time to bolster its legitimacy against insurgent forces, but indecisive elections have allowed sectarian differences to once again threaten Iraq’s future. The fragile political environment insures that Iran and Saudi Arabia will have far more influence on the future of Iraq than the US, with its diminishing military presence there.

Looking beyond Iraq, the US should balance its conventional combat capabilities with unconventional or irregular capabilities to protect its vital national security interests overseas. Whether that capability is called counterinsurgency (COIN) or Foreign Internal Defense (FID), the objective is the same: to assist a government defend itself against an insurgent threat. The difference is that COIN generally refers to operations involving large numbers of US forces who regularly engage in direct combat, as in Iraq and Afghanistan, while FID relates to operations involving smaller numbers of US Special Operations Forces (SOF) personnel who advise and assist indigenous forces in more obscure operational environments such as those in Africa.38

The purpose of having a COIN or FID capability is preventive—that is, to avoid the need for larger deployments of conventional military forces to restore to power strategically important governments that have been overthrown by insurgents. Experience to date has shown that large numbers of US military forces in hostile cultural environments undermine rather than enhance the legitimacy of assisted governments that face insurgent threats. This was the case in Vietnam, and applies as well to Iraq and Afghanistan.39

Whenever a large US military presence in a hostile cultural environment becomes a liability rather than an asset in achieving strategic political objectives, then FID, with its smaller military footprint is better able to achieve those objectives than COIN. The Special Forces and Civil Affairs SOF personnel of the United State Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) have the language and cultural training to maintain a low profile and assist indigenous personnel defeat insurgents in hostile cultural environments.

Insurgents seek to undermine the legitimacy of a government, and the primary mission of SOF personnel in FID is to advise and assist indigenous forces defeat that insurgent threat. It is a battle for legitimacy, and SOF personnel are diplomat warriors who lead from behind to achieve the legitimacy so essential to mission success in ambiguous and unforgiving environments,40 especially when religious differences threaten the legitimacy of US forces.

Sometimes, however, neither COIN or FID are adequate operational strategies to defend against terrorism. Whenever a supported government loses its legitimacy in the eyes of the US public or in the eyes of its own public, and terrorists/insurgents are a direct threat to the US and its allies, then counterterrorism strategies other than COIN and FID must be used to achieve US strategic interests. That is because the strategic objective shifts from the political objective of supporting the legitimacy of a government to the military objective of destroying terrorists. That transition is evident in US and NATO operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan where strategies have evolved from pure COIN to a mix of counterterrorism and COIN, as evidenced by increasing US drone attacks against terrorist/insurgent targets in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.41

*Religion as an Operational Priority in Muslim Cultures*

Even if COIN is no longer the primary operational strategy in Afghanistan, the US must be able to conduct COIN, FID and stability operations to have a balanced national defense capability. And the primacy of legitimacy in COIN, FID and stability operations conducted in Muslim cultures dictates that religion—once considered taboo in military operations—becomes both a strategic and operational priority. This was evident in both Iraq and Afghanistan where conflicting cultures and religions necessitated major changes in US operational doctrine and in the roles and missions of US military forces.42

One example of changing roles and missions involves chaplains, who like military lawyers and doctors represent a profession within a profession. Following the Vietnam debacle, the role of military lawyers was expanded from their traditional function of providing military justice to advising commanders on operational law issues.43 Like military lawyers, the role of chaplains is changing; it is being expanded from the traditional function of providing spiritual support for the troops to advising commanders on operational issues related to human terrain and legitimacy.44

This focus on religion in the battle for legitimacy is especially critical to SOF in FID, where the advisory mission requires a more intimate relationship with indigenous forces than does COIN, where the mission of conventional combat forces is more independent. But even in COIN religion is an operational priority so that chaplains must be considered as operational assets as well as providing spiritual support for the troops, and that requires adjustments to old ways of thinking about religion, politics and military operations.

Chaplains in such an operational environment should be vetted to ensure that they are not operational liabilities, and that would exclude those who bring traditional evangelical zeal for their own religious doctrines and dogmas in sensitive operational areas dominated by other religions; in fact, there is little place in the modern military for religious zealots who cannot put *a common word* ahead of their exclusivist beliefs.

The same principle applies to civilians in a shrinking world of cultural plurality and competitive religious beliefs. To minimize religious conflict, Christians and Muslims alike should abandon their traditional missionary impulse to convert those of other faiths to their own. And the same principle applies to nations: they should not seek to shape the rest of the world into their own image. That applies to US policymakers who seek to remake the world into Western-style democracies as well as Muslim advocates of a world-wide caliphate.

That doesn’t mean that US military operations as an extension of its foreign policy should not seek to change the world, only that the changes sought are within its strategic capabilities. For example, the prevention of egregious violations of fundamental human rights should remain a top US strategic priority. It is both a legal and moral imperative, and is within US capabilities if its foreign policy priorities are put in order.45

The most pressing strategic issue relating to the legitimacy of US and NATO military forces in Afghanistan is their presence there in large numbers. Even those Muslims who initially supported the US intervention now see those foreign forces as infidels who should leave at the earliest opportunity. No matter how well intentioned, the continued presence of a large number of foreign combat forces providing security for the local populace in Afghanistan will invariably create more resentment than support for a government already lacking legitimacy—especially when those foreign forces are kicking in doors and conducting air strikes.46

By way of contrast, SOF personnel keep a low profile and blend in with the local population so that they are better suited to achieve the political objectives of COIN/FID in hostile cultural environments. That is evident in operations being quietly conducted by SOF in Africa today.

If the US is to have the capability it needs to conduct COIN or FID in Muslim cultures, then religion must be considered as both a strategic and operational priority. The ideal is that operations be conducted by SOF personnel with the needed language and cultural skills; but whether they are few or many, US forces deployed in Muslim cultures must learn to respect Islam as a religious belief that pervades all aspects of life, including politics and military operations. While there is no separation of religion and government in Islam, the teachings of Muhammad require that Muslims respect both Christians and Jews so long as they are not a threat to them. Christians and Jews must do the same.

*The Broader Context of the Battle for Legitimacy*

The battle for legitimacy extends beyond COIN in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is a worldwide battle for hearts and minds between the forces of modernism and progress and those forces opposed to them, the latter represented by fundamentalist religions that equate God’s truth with the unyielding certainty of their holy books and Satan with the unsettling forces of change and modernism. And in a world where religion defines legitimacy, religion is becoming a more pervasive and powerful force.

Jews, Christians and Muslims are all *people of the book* who worship the same God but who have conflicting ideas about God’s will. For those believers who put their faith in a holy book, as is the case with most Muslims as well as Jewish and Christian fundamentalists, interpretation is critical to how they understand God’s will.

The Hebrew Bible and the Qur’an both contain enough violence in the name of God to make them dangerous, but most Jews and Christians do not consider the Bible the inerrant and infallible word of God and have long abandoned biblical violence as the will of God. Most Muslims, however, still consider the Qur’an the inerrant and infallible word of God so that interpretation is what separates the moderates from the radicals. It appears that Islam is at a crossroads as to what it will be in the future.

There is a precedent for peace. Since the Enlightenment Jews, Christians and even Muslims in the West have learned to live together in relative peace—the horrors of the Nazi regime being a notable exception. That is because most people of faith who have lived in cultures that embrace the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of secular law have reconciled their faith with those secular values and the public institutions that sustain them—and that includes Turkey and Indonesia. There remains religious tension in these progressive cultures, but open conflict is rare. The Balkans are a notable exception, but even they seem to be moving toward the rule of peace over war.

Radical Islam, or Islamism, has defied the forces of moderation and continues to thrive in Muslim cultures that lack a tradition of democracy, human rights and the rule of secular law. Those values cannot be force-fed through military invasions, but must be sought and reconciled with prevailing religious beliefs by a people who freely choose them, as happened in the West. But Islamism has resisted these values and the progress and modernity associated with them with a religious fervor punctuated with violence.

Islamism has come to define Muslim extremists like those of al Qaeda who promote hate and violence in the name of Allah; but Islamism does not have to represent the future of Islam. There have been violent extremist groups in Judaism and Christianity that have claimed to represent God’s will—from the ancient Hebrew warlords to the Zionist Stern gang, and from Christian Crusaders, witch-hunting Puritans of colonial New England up to the KKK in the South. But in both Judaism and Christianity moderation and common sense have prevailed to allow compatibility with progress and modernity and their progeny of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Islamism has infected the US with Islamist terrorists who if not operatives of al Qaeda are self-actuated wannabes like Army Major Nidal Hasan, who killed 13 people at Fort Hood on November 6, 2009.47 The public tendency is to react to such acts of terrorism by considering all of Islam to be the enemy, and that is exactly what the Islamists of al Qaeda want people to think since it fosters religious polarization and legitimizes their claim that Jews and Christians are in a global holy war with Islam.

The battle for legitimacy in Iraq and Afghanistan is uniquely military, and elsewhere in the world counterterrorism activities are conducted primarily by law enforcement and intelligence agencies. But the larger battle for legitimacy is like Jihad: It has an internal dimension of hearts and minds that is more important than the external dimension of violence and war; and the front lines of that battle pit peace-loving moderate Muslims against radical Islamists in a battle for the very soul of Islam.

Violence in Iraq and Afghanistan can be contained as a threat to the West,48 and the threat of Islamists to world peace can also be contained unless Islamists succeed in polarizing Jews and Christians against Muslims worldwide.49 The ultimate outcome of the battle for legitimacy depends upon those moderate Muslims who embrace the values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law convincing other Muslims in Asia and Africa that Islam is compatible with progress and modernity.50

Whether radical Islamists gain traction against the moderates within Islam depends upon the credibility of what Thomas Friedman calls *The Narrative*, which asserts the virtues of a fundamentalist faith over the alleged evils of modernity. Unfortunately, heavy-handed and inept efforts of the US in Iraq and Afghanistan have often aided and abetted the Islamist *Narrative*.51

It all comes down to how Muslims interpret the Qur’an—whether as the inerrant and infallible Word of God with a mandate to destroy all unbelievers, or as a mandate to seek religious reconciliation as taught and exemplified by Jesus and Muhammad.52 Jews and Christians need to understand that strategic dynamic and support moderate Muslims who share with them a common love of God and neighbor. Interfaith reconciliation and cooperation is the key to preventing the kind of religious polarization that can lead to worldwide religious conflict and a true holy war or Jihad.

*Conclusion: Jesus and Muhammad Are Allies, not Enemies, in the Battle for Legitimacy*

Both Jesus and Muhammad taught that God’s will is that all people be reconciled and live together in peace, but the religions formed around these great men have too often ignored that central theme and subverted their teachings to exclusivist religions that promote fear and hate and do more to divide and conquer than reconcile and bring peace.

The three religions of the book—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—have many differences, some of them major, but they share enough common ground to avoid the hate that has so often generated religious violence and war. Jesus and Muhammad are allies in the battle for legitimacy, even though their teachings are quite different. Some of those differences, like the Muslim emphasis on unyielding religious law (shari’a), are problematic for those committed to democracy and human rights. But even with these differences Christians and Muslims share a common word of love for God and neighbor that requires them to respect each other as children of God. For the followers of Jesus and Muhammad there is absolutely no justification to hate or use violence against those of other religions, other than in self-defense.

Islamic terrorism is a threat to world peace that justifies the US pursuit of those radical Islamists who have declared holy war (Jihad) against those of other faiths—and even other Muslims. Those Islamists who promote hate and violence are not true to the teachings of Muhammad, and as they demonstrated on 9/11 they are a clear and present danger to the US and to world peace.

The US strategy to defeat the threat of Islamist terrorism should be twofold: first, to identify, isolate and neutralize those Islamists who promote hate and violence in the name of God; and second, to forge an alliance between moderate Jews, Christians and Muslims against the forces of religious fear, hate and violence. A focus on military legitimacy is essential to achieve the first objective, and an interfaith initiative based on a common word of love for God and neighbor can help achieve the second objective. It is clearly in the interest of national security that interfaith relations be improved to avoid the religious polarization sought by Islamists.

Only Muslims can defuse radical Islam of its simmering hate and violence. If moderate Muslims are not able to capture the heart and soul of Islam so that it becomes compatible with progress and modernity and the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, then Islamists may succeed in polarizing the world along religious lines and instigating a holy war that could destroy God’s creation.

This is a critical stage in the evolution of Islam, comparable in importance to the Protestant Reformation. Those Jews and Christians who seek world peace must understand these dynamics and seek reconciliation rather than competition and conflict with Muslims. Those fundamentalist Christians and Jews who condemn all Muslims are aiding and abetting the efforts of Islamists to polarize religions and set the stage for a worldwide Jihad.

The comic strip philosopher Pogo once famously said: *We have met the enemy, and it is us*. For humankind to overcome its propensity to destroy itself—often in the name of God—Jews and Christians should accept the invitation of those Muslim scholars and clerics who offered them a common word of faith based on love of God and neighbor. It can reconcile the world’s great religions of the book without compromising their many differences, and in so doing enable us to save the world from ourselves.

**END NOTES**

1. Political legitimacy and its derivative, military legitimacy, and their relationship to public support is defined and explained in Barnes, Military Legitimacy: Might and Right in the New Millennium, Frank Cass, 1996, in chapters 2 and 3 (hereinafter cited as *Military Legitimacy*); see also Barnes, *Military Legitimacy in OOTW: Civilians as Mission Priorities*, Special Warfare, Fall 1999, and FM 3-24 and MCWP 3-33.5, Counterinsurgency, December 2006, Headquarters, Department of the Army (hereinafter cited as FM 3-24 or *Counterinsurgency*) at paras 1.3, 1.4 (p 1-1), 1-7 (p 1-2), 1.40 (p 1-8), 1.43 (p 1-9), 1-108 (p 1-120), 1-112-119 (pp 1-21,22), and box at p 7-9. See also FM 3-0 at pp 3-12 thru 3-14, Appendix A, p 4 (A-4).

2. Current military doctrine recognizes legitimacy as the main objective in COIN. General David Petraeus is one of the authors of FM 3-24 (*supra*, note 1) which describes legitimacy as the main objective in COIN (see paras 1-113 through 1-136). COIN is similar to Foreign Internal Defense (FID), and both are categorized as irregular warfare which is defined as “A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations.” (see Glossary, Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report, Department of Defense, January 2009; see also FM 3-0, *Operations*, Headquarters, Department of the Army, February 2008, chapter 2)

On the distinction between COIN and FID, which seems a distinction without a difference, see Hasler, *Defining War*, Special Warfare, Mar/Apr 2007, p 23; also Mulbury, *ARSOF, General Purpose Forces and FID*, Special Operations, Jan/Feb 2008.

3. For the role of culture and religious values in shaping concepts of legitimacy, see *Military Legitimacy* at pp 53-58; generally see FM 3-24 at paras 1-75-83 (pp 1-14,15), 1-84 (p 1-16), 1-124,125 (pp 1-22,23); on Iraq, see Craig Trebilcock, *The Modern Seven Pillars of Iraq*, Army, Feb. 2007, p 25; as to Afghanistan, see Edward Croot, *Digging Deeper*, Special Warfare, Mar-Apr 2007, p 26. On the need for public support for military legitimacy and the role of the media in shaping it, see Barnes, *Military Legitimacy in OOTW: Civilians as Mission Priorities*, Special Warfare, Fall 1999, pp 35-37; also *Military Legitimacy*, pp 58-60; see also note 1, *supra*.

4. On the need to restrain the use of lethal force and apply the principles of discrimination and proportionality to minimize collateral damage, see FM 3-24, paras 1-141-143 (p 1-25), 148-154 (pp 1-126-127) and 7-30-37 (pp 7-6,7).

5. The dynamic relationship between religion and American culture was first noted by Alexis de Tocqueville, who toured America in 1831. The following are among his observations taken from Democracy in America, published by The Co-operative Publication Society in 1900: “Christianity, which has declared that all men are equal in the sight of God, will not refuse to acknowledge that all citizens are equal in the eye of the law. But by a singular concourse of events, religion is entangled in those institutions which democracy assails, and it is not unfrequently [sic] brought to reject the equality it loves, and to curse that cause of liberty as a foe which it might hallow by its alliance.” Referring to “partisans of liberty” such as Thomas Jefferson who were critical of organized religion, de Tocqueville says: “…they must know that liberty cannot be established without morality, nor morality without faith; but they have seen religion in the ranks of their adversaries, and they inquire no further; some of them attack it openly, and the remainder are afraid to defend it.” (p 12) De Tocqueville describes Christianity in America “a democratic and republican religion…an alliance which has never been dissolved.” (p 305) Noting the many diverse Christian sects, de Tocqueville marveled that “…Christian morality is everywhere the same” and that the American clergy, “…are all in favor of civil freedom, but they do not support any particular political system.” (p 308) He goes on to observe that “…while the law permits Americans to do what they please, religion prevents them from conceiving, and forbids them to commit, what is rash or unjust.” (p 310) In American Gospel (Random House, 2006), Jon Meacham says “In Tocqueville’s analysis, religion in America nurtures the moral life, which in turn creates basically virtuous citizens who are able to maintain a republic that is itself basically virtuous” and Meacham then cites de Tocqueville advocating the virtues of separation of church and state. (pp 79, 80) Seymour Lipset cites de Tocqueville extensively on the role of religion in shaping American cultural values and how they shaped America’s role in world affairs in American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword, Norton, 1996, at pp 17-19, 60-63, 80, 154, 276, 277, 280.

6. There have been continuing reports of tribal “honor” killings and the abuse of women in Iraq. Sudarsan Raghavan, *Iraqi Women, Fighting for a Voice*, Washington Post, December 7, 2008. In Afghanistan things are even worse; corruption and the abuse of women are even more pervasive in a tribal culture dependent on heroin production, and both the Taliban and the Karzai government are on the take. This has resulted in many Afghans loosing confidence in the Karzai government. Sarah Chayes, *The Other Front*, Washington Post, December 14, 2008. Even the Secretary General of NATO has acknowledged that the basic problem in Afghanistan is not too much Taliban but too little good governance. He said that we have paid enough in blood and treasure to demand that the Afghan government take more concrete and vigorous action to root out corruption and increase efficiency, even where it means difficult political choices. Jaap de hoop Scheffer, *Afghanistan: We Can Do Better*, The Washington Post, January 18, 2009. There have been reports of the Taliban attacking schools and female students, reminiscent of the Taliban’s ban on educating girls, “one of the group’s signature and most shameful repressions during the years it ran Afghanistan.” Now that al Qaeda has found sanctuary in neighboring Pakistan, there is a real question whether the US should continue COIN operations that support a corrupt and ineffective regime that is not willing or able to enforce human rights in Afghanistan. Joe Klein has characterized COIN in Afghanistan as “an aimless absurdity”, citing rampant corruption, narco-terrorism, and safe havens for al Qaeda and the Taliban in Pakistan. See Klein, *The Aimless War: Why Are We in Afghanistan?*, Time, December 22, 2008.

7. On religion, war and the rule of law, see that topic in Barnes, *The Rule of Law and Civil Affairs in the Battle for Legitimacy*, The Journal for Military Legitimacy and Leadership, February, 2009, at [www.militarylegitimacyreview.com](http://www.militarylegitimacyreview.com). On the rule of law in COIN, see FM 3-24 (*Counterinsurgency*), which states: “Establishing the rule of law is a key goal and end state in COIN… Some key aspects of the rule of law include: 1. A government that derives its powers from the governed… 2. Sustainable security institutions… [and] 3. Fundamental human rights…” (see Appendix D, para D-38; the rule of law is also considered an essential element of legitimacy in para 1-119 and of security in para 1-131) Elsewhere the range of meanings for the rule of law are from an expansive meaning that is synonymous with US strategic political objectives (see note 6, *supra*) to more narrow meanings such as that proposed by Dan Stigall in *The Rule of Law: A Primer and A Proposal*, Military Law Review, Fall 2006, p 92. In keeping with FM 3-24, Vasitios Tasikas has advocated a strategic paradigm emphasizing the importance of the rule of law to mission success in Afghanistan, with military lawyers playing a central role. See Tasikas, *Developing the Rule of Law in Afghanistan: the Need for a New Strategic Paradigm*, The Army Lawyer, July 2007, pp 45 et seq.; see also note 6, *supra*.

8. Mark Amstutz has noted that cultural pluralism is “a fact of global society” and asked: “If moral religious and political values differ from society to society, and if human rights conceptions will necessarily reflect the cultural environment in which they are defined and applied…whose culture is normative?” Amstutz then asserts that “cultural relativism must remain a descriptive fact, not a normative proposition,” and asserts the supremacy of Western norms of democracy, human rights and the rule of law as international ethical standards. See Amstutz, International Ethics: Concepts, Theories and Cases in Global Politics, Third Edition, Roman & Littlfield, 2008, n. 27 at pp 92, 93; see also pp 14,15. In arguing for the ethics of regime change to supercede the law and justify the US invasion of Iraq, Amstutz acknowledges that the unilateral use of force is normally contrary to international law. “But while unilateral force on behalf of world order may be inconsistent with international law, such action may nevertheless be morally justified. Indeed, when legal duties confront moral obligations, the cause of justice demands that its moral claims take precedence over structural or legal responsibilities.” Amstutz, *supra*, p 128. Army military doctrine makes it clear that when legal and moral standards conflict, the law prevails (see FM 3-0, Appendix A, p A-4). Likewise, FM 3-24 emphasizes compliance with the law in all COIN operations (see Appendix D to FM 3-24), and the *2007 Operational Law Handbook* provides the Legal Basis for the Use of Force in chapter 1, refuting any ethical basis for an otherwise unlawful invasion.

9. On the role of culture, religion and war in US foreign policy, see Seymour Lipset, American Exceptionalism, cited at note 5, *supra*, at pp 63-67; also Kevin Phillips, American Theocracy, Viking, 2006, pp 250-262. Andrew J. Bacevich takes exception to American exceptionalism in The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism, Metropolitan Books, New York, 2009; see also notes 36 and 37, *infra*.

10. Thomas S. Kidd traces the evolution of evangelical zealotry in American Christianity as it has related to Islam. From colonial times Islam was seen by Christian zealots as a primitive and evil cult of violence. Only in the mid-20th century did evangelical Christianity acknowledge Islam to be a legitimate religion deserving understanding and respect, and that was not a unanimous view; and 9/11 reignited earlier condemnations of Islam. See Kidd, American Christians and Islam, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2009.

11. Karen Armstrong has traced fundamentalist movements in Christianity and Islam as well as Judaism that were in response to modernism during the 19th and 20th centuries—to wit, discoveries in knowledge and technology that threatened traditional doctrines of orthodox religion. Karen Armstrong, The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism, Ballentine Books, New York, 2001.

12. In response to a question from his detractors on whether Jews should pay taxes to Roman authorities, Jesus told them: *Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s*. (Mark 12:17; see also Matthew 22:21; Luke 20:25)

13. *The greatest commandment* to love God and neighbor is found in the gospels of Mark (Mk 12:28-33), Matthew (Mt 22:34-40) and Luke (Lk 10:25-28). Following Luke’s account, Jesus answers the question, “And who is my neighbor?” with the story of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:29-37). The example of a Samaritan stopping to help a Jew was much like a Muslim stopping to help a Jew today. *The new command* of John’s Gospel complements the greatest commandment. (Jn 13:34,35;see also Jn 14:15, 21; 15:9-14, 17). Paul confirmed the primacy of love over law in his letter to the Romans. (Romans 13:9,10; see also note 23, *infra*)

14. Jesus began his ministry by announcing the coming of God’s kingdom, and then calling people to follow him. (See Mark 1:14-18; Matthew 4:17-20)

15. Ignoring his own mother and brothers who had heard that Jesus was preaching and had come to take him home, thinking him *out of his mind*, Jesus told a crowd: *Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother*. (Mark 3:20, 21; 31-35).

16. The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew’s Gospel is perhaps the best known collection of teachings of Jesus on forgiveness and sacrificial love. See Matthew chapters 5-7.

17. In Luke’s *Beatitudes* Jesus said that the poor were blessed and the rich cursed. (Luke 6:20-26) In the story of *the rich man and Lazarus* (Luke 16:19-31) and the story of *the last judgment* (Matthew 25:31-46), Jesus based God’s judgment on how people treat the least of those among them.

18. Jesus was forcibly brought before the supreme council of Jewish religious leaders (the Sanhedrin) to answer charges of blasphemy, and then turned over to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, based on allegations of insurrection. See Mark 14:53-15:15.

19. See Matthew 8:5-13.

20. See Mark 13:5-27.

21. The notorious *ban* mandated in Deuteronomy 20:16-18 required Hebrew warriors to massacre *anything that breathes* in the confines of the Holy Land, and this terrible edict was exercised by Joshua at Jericho (see Joshua 6:24-26), providing a biblical precedent for ethnic cleansing. Nicholas Kristof noted another biblical atrocity in 1 Samuel 15:3, cited by Robert Wright in The Evolution of God. See Kristof, *The Religious Wars*, New York Times, November 26, 2009.

22. A concise theory of Just War with a listing of the six principles of *jus ad bellum* and the principles of *jus in bello* (discrimination and proportionality) can be found in Mark Amstutz , International Ethics, Rowman & Littlefield, 2008, at pp 113-116; a more comprehensive look at Just War and its application to Iraq is provided by Richard DiMeglio in *The Evolution of the Just War Tradition: Defining Jus Post Bellum*, Military Law Review, Winter 2005, p 116. The importance of the principles of discrimination and proportionality are emphasized in FM 3-24 at pp 7-6 and 7-7. See also *Military Legitimacy* at pp 8, 54, 55, 66-68, 85-90. The Israeli offensive into Gaza generated heated debate on whether Israeli actions were disproportionate or a proportionate response to the asymmetric tactics of Hamas. See Steven Erlanger, *Weighing Crimes and Ethics in Urban Warfare*, The New York Times, January 17, 2009.

23. Jeremiah prophesied a new covenant with the House of Israel in which God would *…put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts*. (Jeremiah 31:33) St. Paul confirmed that Jesus brought the new covenant of love to fulfill the law, so that while the law remained in effect, righteousness was now governed by love as expressed in the greatest commandment. (see Romans 2:17-24; 3:19-28; 7:4-6; 13:10; see also Galatians 5:14).

24. See note 13, *supra*.

25. Qur’an 2:256, as cited and explained by Sheikh Wahbeh al-Zuhili in *Islam and International Law*, International Review of the Red Cross, Vol. 87, June 2005, p 270.

26. Jihad and the Islamic Law of War, The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, Jordan, 2007, 2007, p. 4.

27. *Ibid* at pp 5,6.

28. *Ibid* at p 8, and Qur’an 2:249; 22:38-41.

29. See note 21, *supra*.

30. Waleed El-Ansari describes both internal and external jihad and other semantic issues related to jihad in *Confronting the “Teachings” of Osama bin Laden*, The Army Chaplaincy, Winter-Spring, 2009, pp 19,20 (also in The Journal on Military Legitimacy and Leadership, Spring 2010, [www.milita](http://www.milita)rylegitimacyreview.com). See also Jihad and the Islamic Law of War, cited in note 26, *supra*, at pp 7,8.

31. See Jihad and the Islamic Law of War, cited in note 26, *supra*, at p vi (Overview); see also Sheikh Wahbeh al-Zuhili in *Islam and International Law*, cited in note 25, *supra*, at pp 269, 281.

32. Violence at the temple mount in Jerusalem usually comes during the Jewish and Muslim holy days in the Fall, although there was less violence in 2009 than in ptrevious years. See Howard Schneider, *To two faiths, a holy patch of land; to the world, a powder keg. Even when quiet, site is a flash point*, Washington Post, November 17, 2009.

33. The distinguished group of 38 Islamic authorities and scholars is seeking to find common ground with Christians and Jews by inviting dialogue on the greatest commandments found in the Hebrew and Christian Bibles which call for love of God and love of neighbor. Their open letter to Christians and Jews (September 2007) can be found at [www.acommonword.com](http://www.acommonword.com). On the greatest commandment, see note 13, *supra*.

34. See the story of the good Samaritan cited in note 13, *supra*.

35. Sheik Ali Gomaa is the Grand Mufti of Egypt is the spiritual leader of Egypt’s Muslims and their most authoritative interpreter of Islam. During a visit to the US in October 2009 Sheik Gomaa told Michael Gerson: “The Egyptian people have chosen [the Koran] to be their general framework for governance…[and] the Koran and the tradition are what we depend on. They were true 1400 years ago, they are true today and will be true tomorrow.” But Gerson noted that in the view of Sheik Gomaa Islam is “pragmatic in the way that it applies those principles to current reality,” and that “Gomaa focuses on the intent of sharia to foster dignity and other core values” as well as “a commitment to the public interest.” Gerson concluded that Sheik Gomaa was a traditional Islamic scholar whose “goal is not to liberalize Islam but to rescue [Islamic] orthodoxy from extremism.” Michael Gerson, *The Grand Mufti’s Mission*, The Washington Post, October 23, 2009.

36. Andrew Bacevich traces American exceptionalism from the end of World War II to the present, citing the “profligacy” of the American people with their “penchant for consumption and self-indulgence” as well as their lust for world dominance as leading to the excesses of the Bush administration. Bacevich saw the turning point in 1979 when during a major recession President Carter called for austerity and energy independence, while then candidate Ronald Regan called for a resurgence of American greatness and hegemony. Of the worst excesses of the Bush administration, Bacevich notes the folly of preventive war and advocates a new policy of containment for Islamic terrorism. Throughout his work, Bacevich cites the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr as “the most clear-eyed of American prophets” who advocated realism and humility as the primary virtues of a foreign policy shaped by Christian sensibilities, but that since 9/11 has been characterized by hubris and sanctimony. Andrew J. Bacevich, The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism, Metropolitan Books, New York, 2008, 2009. See also notes 9 and 10, *supra*.

37. Bacevich denigrates COIN and stability operations as small wars that are thinly disguised instruments of imperialism, citing US leadership failures in Somalia, the Balkans and Iraq. see Bacevich, The Limits of Power, *ibid* at pp 133-152.

38. See note 2, *supra*, and note 40, *infra*.

39. On how many US/NATO forces should remain in Iraq and Afghanistan, see *Lessons Learned in Legitimacy* and *Looking Ahead: Iraq and Afghanistan* in Barnes, *The Rule of Law and Civil Affairs in the Battle for Legitimacy*, The Journal for Military Legitimacy and Leadership, February, 2009, at [www.militarylegitimacyreview.com](http://www.militarylegitimacyreview.com).

40. On the role of SOF in COIN/FID, see *Military Legitimacy* at pp 36-48; see also FM 3-24 at para 2-18 (p 2-5) and *Military Legitimacy and OOTW*. See Mark Grdovic, *The Advisory Challenge*, Special Warfare, Jan/Feb 2008; John Mulbury describes the capabilities of the Army’s SOF and argues that its foreign internal defense (FID) mission is uniquely different from the COIN mission now being performed by conventional or general purpose forces, but it seems a distinction without a real difference. See Mulbury, *ARSOF General Purpose Forces and FID*, Special Warfare, Jan/Feb 2008, p 17. Generally on the role of SOF and Civil Affairs in COIN, see Barnes, *The Rule of Law and Civil Affairs in the Battle for Legitimacy*, The Journal for Military Legitimacy and Leadership, February, 2009, at [www.militarylegitimacyreview.com](http://www.militarylegitimacyreview.com).

41. Current US strategy in Afghanistan is tenuous at best. It has remained nominally counterinsurgency (COIN), but military operations and activities reflect more emphasis on kinetic operations (counterterrorism), with increasing drone attacks against Taliban targets in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. See Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, *CIA Steps Up Drone Attacks in Pakistan to Thwart Taliban*, New York Times, September 27, 2010; and Greg Miller, *CIA Backed By Drones in Pakistan*, Washington Post, October 3, 2010. Revelations in Bob Woodward’s Obama’s Wars (2010) reveal a contentious national security strategic process during 2009-2010 that was more political compromise between opposing factions than a firm commitment to pursue COIN strategy in Afghanistan. See editorial, *Bob Woodward’s Book Portrays Great Divide Over Afghanistan*, Washington Post, September 29, 2010. Fareed Zakaria believes that “…Obama has chosen a sensible middle course in Afghanistan.” See Zakaria, *Even ‘Winning’ in Afghanistan Would Include Some Failures*, Washington Post, October 4, 2010. Meanwhile, high-level talks between the Karzai government and the Taliban are underway with the blessings of the US and NATO, with plans to begin withdrawing forces from Afghanistan beginning in July 2011. See Karen DeYoung, Peter Finn and Craig Whitlock, *Taliban in High-Level Talks with Karzai Government*, Washington Post, October 6, 2010.

42. On the strategic role of religion and culture as it relates to US operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and how English colonial precedents and foreign policy concepts such as manifest destiny and American exceptionalism have shaped US policies there, see *Back to the Future: God, Gold and Manifest Destiny* in Barnes, *The Rule of Law and Civil Affairs in the Battle for Legitimacy*, The Journal for Military Legitimacy and Leadership, February, 2009, at [www.militarylegitimacyreview.com](http://www.militarylegitimacyreview.com).

43. See Barnes, *Operational Law, Special Operations and Reserve Support*, The Army Lawyer, HQ, Department of the Army, December 1984, p 1.

44. See Timothy K. Bedsole, *Religion: The Missing Dimension in Mission Planning*, Special Warfare, November-December 2006, p 8. Raymond Bingham provides the strategic framework for religion being an operational priority in *Bridging the Religious Divide*, Parameters, Autumn 2006, p 6.

45. On the protection of human rights as a strategic objective of US military operations and its relationship to political and military legitimacy, see *Morality and Legitimacy: Doing the Right Thing for the Right Reasons*, in Barnes, *The Rule of Law and Civil Affairs in the Battle for Legitimacy*, The Journal for Military Legitimacy and Leadership, February, 2009, at [www.militarylegitimacyreview.com](http://www.militarylegitimacyreview.com).

46. See note 39, *supra*.

47. Extremist religion—specifically Islamism—was clearly a motivating factor in Major Hasan’s attack at Ft. Hood, Texas, but it is also clear that he was a psychotic psychiatrist reacting to an imminent deployment to Afghanistan. The tragedy highlighted the failure of the Army to recognize warning signs and flag Major Hasan as a potential Islamist terrorist. Hasan was only one of a number of *self-actualized* Islamist terrorists in the US over the past year. *In Plain Sight?*, Washington Post editorial, November 15, 2009; see also, Scott Shane and James Dao, *Investigators Study Tangle of Clues on Ft. Hood Suspect*, New York Times, November 15, 2009; also, Robert Wright, *Who Created Major Hasan?*, *New York Times*, New York Times, November 22, 2009.

48. Citing US Cold War strategy against the Soviets, Andrew Bacevich has suggested containment as an alternative US strategy to COIN and counterterrorism, which require large numbers of US forces in hotbeds of Islamism such as Iraq and Afghanistan. See Bacevich, The Limits of Power (see notes 36 and 37, *supra*), at pp 176-178.

49. The sociologist Alan Wolfe has postulated that Western culture, especially that of the US, has moderated Islam for Muslims assimilated to the culture so that Islam has become compatible with the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. See Alan Wolfe, *And the Winner Is…*, The Atlantic, March 2008, p 56. The more tolerant attitude of Christian and Muslim believers in the US can be attributed to libertarian values that have moderated more radical forms of Islam. See Alan Cooperman, *Survey: US Muslims Assimilated, Opposed to Extremism*, Washington Post, May 23, 2007.

50. For a general overview of how Western cultural values have shaped its religions, see *Religion and Cultural Values as Sources of Legitimacy* and *Back to the Future: God, Gold and Manifest Destiny* in Barnes, *The Rule of Law and Civil Affairs in the Battle for Legitimacy*, cited in note 39, *supra*.

51. See Thomas Friedman, *America vs. The Narrative*, New York Times, November 29, 2009.

52. In a March 18, 2010 interview on National Public Radio, Philip Jenkins, a professor at Penn State and author of *Jesus Wars* (HarperOne, 2010), and *Dark Passages* (not yet published), Andrew Bostom, Editor of *The Legacy of Jihad*, and Waleed El-Ansary, a professor at the University of South Carolina, were questioned by Barbara Bradley Hagerty. She asked the three authorities: *Is the Bible More Violent than the Quran*? Professor Jenkins argued that holy war in the Hebrew Bible was more dangerous than that in the Quran since it justified genocide in the name of God, while warfare in the Quran was limited to self defense. This position was disputed by Andrew Bostom, who argued that war in the Hebrew Bible was limited to ancient times, while war advocated in the Quran was of a continuing nature. Professor Ansary supported Jenkins claim that the Quran does not authorize aggressive holy war—only war in self-defense.

See [www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124494788sc=emaf](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124494788sc=emaf)

Bostom represented the popular view that Islam itself is a threat to the West (see, e.g. [www.Islamrising.com](http://www.Islamrising.com)), while Jenkins and Ansary argued that Islam is compatible with the values of the Just War Tradition.

# The Legitimacy of African Mandated Peacekeeping in Somalia

By: Terry M. Mays

## Overview

In March 2005, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) officially agreed to assume responsibility for fielding a peacekeeping mission in Somalia on behalf of the African Union (AU) and in support of the peace process in the country.1 In March 2006, Kenya’s Foreign Minister declared that despite its best efforts, IGAD had failed in its attempts to deploy a peacekeeping mission to Somalia. In this admission of defeat by an African international organization, the Minister cited three specific reasons for the failure to field the peacekeeping operation: a fragmented political approach; the lack of funding; and the existence of a UN arms embargo on Somalia.2 Two of the three are directly related to questions of international legitimacy behind the fielding of peacekeeping missions and the third issue (funding) is a practical problem faced by most operations. Members of IGAD continued to seek solutions to these problems throughout 2006 until the AU assumed direct responsibility for the peacekeeping mission and fielded the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in January 2007.3 The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the issues of legitimacy as well as practical problems cited by IGAD and determine if AMISOM’s successful deployment can be at least partially attributed to correcting them between March 2006 and March 2007. In other words, did the AU solve or at least address the legitimacy and practical problems facing the deployment of peacekeepers in support of the Somali peace process?

What is a peacekeeping operation? Peacekeeping has many similar but slightly different definitions due to the various missions assigned to military forces in support of a peace process. Peacekeeping is a category under the general heading of peace operations. The United States Department of Defense defines peace operations as:

*A broad term that encompasses multiagency and multinational crisis response and limited contingency operations involving all instruments of national power with military missions to contain conflict, redress the peace, and shape the environment to support reconciliation and rebuilding and facilitate the transition to legitimate governance. Peace operations include peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peacemaking, peace building, and conflict prevention efforts*.4

Rather than try to place military operations into one of five types peace operations, three

categories of missions (peace enforcement, preventive deployment, and peacekeeping) are easier

with which to work. The first category is peace enforcement. These missions are organized under

Chapter VII of the United Nations (UN) charter or a similar provision of another international

organization’s charter. Organizations mandate Chapter VII type peace enforcement missions

specifically to utilize military force to settle a conflict and restore peace or at least provide the

conditions conducive for peace negotiations. These operations range from the UN military deployments in the Korean War and Gulf War to smaller missions in Haiti, Somalia, and the former Yugoslavia. The second category is preventive deployment. These are rare military interventions mandated by an international organization to deploy before the outbreak of hostilities in order to preserve the peace. The UN, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and European Union (EU) launched their operations in Macedonia as preventive deployment missions in order to check any conflict spillover into the country from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The third and most common category is peacekeeping. These military operations are normally mandated under Chapter VI of the UN charter or similar document of other international organizations. Chapter VI peacekeeping missions are deemed to be neutral military deployments in support of the political peace process and should refrain from becoming involved in any renewal of the conflict. In recent years, international organizations mandated many of their peacekeeping operations under what many term “Chapter VI ½” operations. While a Chapter VI ½ does not exist in the UN charter, the term implies an operation mandated as a peacekeeping mission under Chapter VI but having the authority to employ force for the protection of others, its equipment, or even to restore the status quo following an outbreak of violence while it is deployed.

Peacekeeping operations, like all military interventions, face questions related to legitimacy. If a peacekeeping mission is not viewed as being legitimate by the global community, it reverts in their eyes to a military intervention under a different name. To be legitimate within the international community, a peacekeeping operation must deploy and operate under an internationally recognized mandate and have the nominal consent of the belligerents. The mandates of most peacekeeping missions are generated by an international organization and are thus seen as being legitimate tools of that particular body in support of a peace process. Although rare, some peacekeeping missions such as the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai between Egypt and Israel derive their mandates from international peace agreements. MFO is a legitimate peacekeeping mission under the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel and recognized as such by the international community.

Lacking the nominal consent of the belligerents is a different type of legitimacy issue. A peacekeeping mission can be seen as legitimate within the international arena but not by one or more of the belligerents. In this case, the global community can recognize the operation as a legitimate military-based tool within the peace process but the belligerents view it as an illegitimate foreign military intervention. Belligerent opposition and hostility toward a Chapter VI peacekeeping mission could force the operation into a Chapter VI ½ status as it turns from a purely neutral operation to one attempting to re-establish the status quo within the peace process.

BACKGROUND TO IGASOM (November 2004 – March 2006)

As early as 2002, members of the AU and IGAD discussed the option to field an African mandated peacekeeping mission in Somalia. This mission would support the peace process and restore order in the country. Somalia suffered the lack of a true national government since 1991 when civil war dismantled the government and left the country split between warring factions.

UN attempts to reconcile the various factions failed, and the introduction of international

peacekeepers to support humanitarian operations resulted in a withdrawal of the units following

bloody confrontations with belligerents. Western states were not eager to return to Somalia. If a

peacekeeping mission was required to support a new national government, it would have to be one mandated and fielded by African countries.

Planning for a peacekeeping mission in Somalia became more serious in 2004 with the establishment of the Transitional National Government (TNG) and later the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia on Kenyan soil. Planning for a movement of the TFG from Kenya to Somalia included the formation of an African regional peacekeeping mission to support the government. In fact, if the TFG was to succeed, it would require an independent military force to provide a sense of security for Somali citizens as the warlords stood down and, hopefully, disarmed.

The AU approached IGAD to assemble the operation. Under AU peacekeeping

arrangements, sub-regional international organizations assume the lead for fielding AU

peacekeeping missions within their areas of responsibility. IGAD holds this role for northeastern

Africa. In February 2005, a meeting of the AU’s Peace and Security Council officially mandated

a peacekeeping operation for Somalia and requested IGAD to plan and deploy it in support of the

TFG.5 In March 2005, IGAD officially agreed to accept the tasking and field a peacekeeping mission, the IGAD Peace Support Mission in Somalia (IGASOM).6 IGAD worked on plans for IGASOM for twelve months before frustrated members admitted a failure to deploy the peacekeeping operation, citing the three factors the organization could not solve.

## Factors in IGASOM’S Failure to Deploy

I. Factors External to Africa

1. Fragmented Approach

A fragmented approach behind the deployment of a peacekeeping operation is related to legitimacy. Although the international community in this case was not necessarily questioning the actual legitimacy behind the deployment, there was disagreement as to which organization would assume responsibility for the mission. When discussing why IGAD failed to field IGASOM, the Kenyan minister listed the fragmented approach by key players as the first explanation. In particular, he noted that Somalia’s neighbors, Great Britain, and the UN were hampering the deployment of IGAD peacekeepers. Multiple organizations were involved in the planning process. The UN agreed to back the African-mandated peacekeepers in Somalia as proposed by the AU which in turn asked IGAD to actually provide the manpower and deploy the mission.

The AU and IGAD disagreed with the UN on an important issue related to the fielding of peacekeepers: the lifting of the UN arms embargo on Somalia. The AU and IGAD pleaded for the lifting of the embargo as a condition for providing peacekeepers and fulfilling the operation’s mandate. The UN refused to comply. This issue will be discussed later in this paper as a third specific reason given by IGAD for its failure.

Second, despite the decentralization of the fielding from the UN down to the IGAD level,

the three international organizations involved in the operation (UN, AU, and IGAD) disagreed on

which should assume the lead in the negotiations with the Somali factions. The confusion

intensified as discussions on the movement of the TFG to Somali soil evolved. Each

organization dispatched representatives to Somalia who reviewed the conditions for dispatching

peacekeepers. In the end, the three organizations settled on the UN providing the “chief

negotiator”. “We have agreed to use the offices of the UN special representative to Somalia as

the focal point to convene the talks on a common position to the deployment of troops in

Somalia.”7

Even the members of the UN Security Council were divided on the issue of deploying regional peacekeepers to Somalia. The United States opposed the IGAD peacekeepers. A State Department spokesman remarked, “While we (the US) appreciate IGAD’s intentions of stabilizing Somalia, we do not understand the rationale behind the IGAD deployment plan and do not support the deployment of troops from frontline states in Somalia…It is our strong view that the successful establishment of a functional central government in Somalia can only be achieved through a continued process of dialogue and negotiation, not force of arms.”8 Only three of the seven IGAD states did not border Somalia and were not referred to as frontline states. These included Sudan, Uganda, and Eritrea. (In 2007, Eritrea officially suspended its membership in IGAD over Ethiopia’s military intervention in Somalia. The Ethiopian military intervention targeted the Islamic Courts Union and Eritrea is a supporter of various groups that had allied under that banner.) American opposition to the deployment of IGAD peacekeepers intensified in March 2005 to include a subtle threat to veto any UN Security Council mandate supporting the deployment. At the same time, the United States declared that it would not contribute to funding the operation.

2. Funding

While not necessarily an issue of legitimacy, funding is definitely a practical problem facing the mandating and fielding of peacekeeping missions. Deploying and maintaining a peacekeeping force in the field is an expensive undertaking and IGASOM was certainly not an exception. Funding for this peacekeeping mission was a central issue; and without funding, the peacekeeping operation would never get off the ground. The AU, like the Organization of African Union (OAU) before it, consistently experiences funding shortfalls. Large scale projects, including peacekeeping, are beyond their limited capability. For example, the AU Peace and Security Council budget for 2005 was $158 million while the AU’s cost for its peacekeeping mission in Sudan during the same period was $222 million.9 IGAD estimated the operations in Somalia would cost approximately $413 million annually. The AU, and again the OAU before it, has been forced to rely on outside funding for its peacekeeping operations. While African states are fast to pledge money for the AU’s programs, few are willing to actually come forward with the cash. Even annual dues become an issue.

IGAD members requested the IGAD Chairman, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, to secure funding and technical support for the mission from countries in the region, AU members, and states outside the continent. At the same time, IGAD members directed the organization to establish a special fund in cooperation with the AU for the mission.10 Within two weeks, Uganda officially offered soldiers to IGAD for inclusion in the peacekeeping operation. However, Ugandan officials made it very clear that the state could not afford to pay for the deployment. The Minister of State, Defence (Minister of Defense), Ms. Ruth Nankabirwa, announced that her country required “hundreds of millions of shillings” to cover the costs of the deployment and looked to the AU and other countries for the funds.11

IGAD planned to deploy its peacekeepers by April 2005. The organization requested

states providing troops to fund their own deployments and then await reimbursement from

IGAD. Uganda immediately cancelled the deployment of their peacekeepers after the

announcement.12 In May 2005, when the force had not materialized, IGAD announced that a lack of fundsand insecurity within Somalia was preventing the organization from fielding a peacekeeping mission. Despite establishing a fund in February and requesting assistance, Kenya’s permanent secretary for regional cooperation, Peter Nkuraiya, declared, “We are still waiting for funding from the African Union…Money has been the biggest obstacle that has caused delay in the

deployment of troops.”13 In June, Djibouti Foreign Minister, Muhammad Ali Yusuf, addressing a

gathering of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), spoke about

Somalia and asked the attendees to support the funding of IGASOM.14

IGAD requested the AU provide an initial $10.3 million to fund the costs of airlifting the

first two battalions of peacekeepers to Somalia. By the first week of June, even this money had

not materialized. The Chief of the IGAD Secretariat’s Conflict Prevention, Management and

Resolution office, Peter Marwa, commented, “We have not received any funds yet, none of the

donors has responded.” Marwa added that IGASOM cannot move without the funding and

would require even more for sustainment in Somalia.15 IGAD turned to the European Union and

dispatched officials to Scandinavian countries, Italy, and the Arab League for assistance.16 This situation continued through the remainder of 2005 and into 2006. Some states and organizations made pledges but never delivered; others refused to even offer financial pledges. By March 2006, IGAD admitted it had failed in its attempt to field IGASOM and cited the lack of funding as a major cause.

3. Failure to Lift the UN Arms Embargo

Disagreement between international organizations over the actual mission of a peacekeeping operation can be seen as a question of legitimacy. One or more of the international organizations may not necessarily view the mission as being illegitimate but question certain aspects of its mandated mission, which can undermine its legitimacy. IGAD cited the failure of the UN to lift its arms embargo as the third specific reason behind the organization’s failure to deploy peacekeepers into Somalia by March 2006. UN Security Council Resolution 733 (1992) states:

[The Security Council] Decides, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, that all states shall, for the purposes of establishing peace and stability in Somalia, immediately implement a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Somaliauntil the Council decides otherwise;17

The 24th Ordinary Session of the IGAD Council of Ministers (17-18 March 2005) not only endorsed the organization’s assumption of the peacekeeping mission bound for Somalia but also called upon the UN Security Council to lift the 1992 arms embargo on the country. The ministers recognized that the UN arms embargo on Somalia posed a problem for the deployment of the peacekeeping operation. In public, the organization stated the arms embargo would prevent the peacekeepers from arriving with weapons and being re-supplied with ammunition.

The embargo also prevented the training and arming of a new military force that would back the TFG. The 1992 embargo essentially prevented the importation of weapons and ammunition for a new military force until lifted by the Security Council. Without its own fighting force, the TFG would have to rely on the IGAD peacekeepers to defend it during any breakdown in the peace process. Many countries offering peacekeepers were not prepared to actively defend the new Somali government. In response, IGAD noted in its 18 March 2005 communiqué of the meeting that it would seek a waiver of the UN arms embargo.18  IGAD recognized that the arms embargo must remain in place to prevent the open arming of Somali factions. At the same time, the TFG needed its own military force to ensure it remained in power and this required a partial lifting of the UN embargo.

The AU summit of June 2005 endorsed the IGAD call for lifting the arms embargo. The

AU ministers declared that the existence of the arms embargo was an obstacle to the fielding of

the IGAD peacekeepers. Sudanese and Ugandan representatives at the meeting stressed they

were prepared to deploy their peacekeepers as soon as the international community supported the

mission – which included lifting the UN arms embargo.19 The UN Secretary General responded

that lifting the embargo “poses a challenge for the international community and the UN in

particular.” He added that increased enforcement rather than a partial lifting would better serve

the security situation in Somalia.20

Debate on the arms embargo increased over the next two weeks. At the AU Head of States Summit meeting in Libya, Somali Prime Minister Ali Muhammad Gedi, called for the AU to urge the UN to lift the arms embargo. Speaking before the body, he declared, “If the arms embargo is not lifted, the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia would not get the international peacekeepers…”21 The UN Security Council convened on 14 July to address this issue. Prior to the meeting, Somali President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed announced, “…we urge prompt modification of the arms embargo provisions to allow our national security forces and IGASOM peacekeeping forces to sufficiently stabilize conditions in Somalia as we return to govern…”22 The Security Council acknowledged the requests of the AU in May 2005. In July 2005, the Security Council discussed lifting the embargo in order to field the IGAD peacekeepers. However, the world body, utilizing carefully crafted language, opted to retain the embargo. The official press release of the 14 July session included:

The Security Council takes note of the PSC’s [AU Peace and Security

Council] request to the Security Council for the authorization of an

exemption on the arms embargo imposed against Somalia by resolution

733 (1992) of 23 January 1992, contained in the AU’s PSC Communiqués

of 12 May and 3 July 2005…The Security Council stands ready to

consider this matter on the basis of information on the mission plan

mentioned in paragraph 6 in due course… The fact that the deployment of

any foreign military force in Somalia will require an exemption from the

Security Council arms embargo on Somalia poses a challenge for the

international community, at large, and the United Nations, in particular. In

its resolution 1587 (2005), the Security Council mandated the Monitoring

Group to continue monitoring the proper implementation of the arms

embargo. The enforcement of the arms embargo, with improved monitoring

capacity and the establishment of enforcement measures,

would considerably enhance security in Somalia.23

Somalia’s president renewed his plea while addressing the UN General Assembly in September 2005. He informed the General Assembly:

The [arms] embargo directly undermines the [Somali] Government’s

inherent right and genuine effort of forming its national security force that

would protect the public and keep the peace by enforcing law and order

throughout Somalia…In addition it discourages willing friendly countries

from offering their help in Somalia, especially in the areas of security and

the rule of law.24

The Somali President urged the UN to end the arms embargo, and in its place, utilize “punitive and targeted sanctions” against outsiders who violate the sanctioned peace process in Somalia.25 Two weeks later a UN monitoring group announced an increase in violations of the arms embargo on Somalia – a clear indication that the arms embargo simply was not working despite the UN’s insistence that it remain in force.26

On 29 November 2005, at the 26th session of the IGAD Council of Ministers held in

Jawhar, the attendees called again upon the UN to lift the arms embargo in order to permit the

deployment of IGASOM. IGAD ministers and senior officials also asserted the TFG’s right to

arm itself despite the arms embargo. The body released a statement declaring, “Somalia has a

legitimate government and…the solemn right to establish, train, and equip its law enforcement

authority while seeking regional and international cooperation towards achieving the goal of

lifting the UN arms embargo.”27 However, the UN Security Council announced that the embargo

should be tightened in accordance with the Monitoring Group’s report. Various groups and think

tanks including the TransAfrica Forum argued that the UN should not lift the arms embargo as

requested by IGAD. One academic noted that lifting the arms embargo on behalf of the TFG

would permit Somali President Abdullah Ahmed to monopolize the government with his

supporters rather than provide the type of security outlined by IGAD.28 The TFG of Somalia and

IGAD continued to call upon the UN to lift the arms embargo while some of the Somali warlords

acknowledged that they opposed the lifting of the ban since it would lead to the legal arming of

the militia supporting the Somali government.29

IGAD and the IGASOM contingent contributing states continued the campaign to lift the

UN arms embargo. At the conclusion of the Sanna Forum Summit on 29 December 2005, the

attendees (Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen) appealed to the UN to grant a waiver of the

arms embargo in order to deploy peacekeepers.30 The Executive Council of the AU, meeting 1621

January 2006 in Sudan, adopted a resolution that asked “… the United Nations Security

Council to provide an exemption on the arms embargo on Somalia with a view to facilitating the

deployment …” of the IGASOM and the follow-on AU peace support mission.31 In January, the

President, Speaker, and Prime Minister of Somalia met together for the first time since their

political split in May 2005. During their session, both the President and Prime Minister

requested assistance in securing a waiver to the UN arms embargo.32 An AU summit resolution of

25 January 2006 backed the call of Somalia and IGAD for an arms embargo waiver. In March

2006, the UN Security Council welcomed the AU resolution but only offered to “consider” an

exemption to the arms embargo on Somalia.33 Five days after the remarks of the Security Council

President, IGAD again called upon the UN to waive the arms embargo stating, “We urge the UN Security Council, particularly the five member states, to lift the UN arms embargo on Somalia.”34 The arms embargo remained in place and IGAD admitted its failure to field IGASOM.

### II. Factors Internal to Africa

Although IGAD listed three reasons behind its failure to deploy peacekeepers into Somalia by March 2006, it should be noted that this was an oversimplification of the issue. IGAD discussed more problems facing IGASOM that required solutions external to the African continent, and there were three additional issues requiring solutions internal to the African continent that were not openly discussed in the March 2006 meeting.

1. Consent of Belligerents

A key distinction between “peacekeeping” and “peace enforcement” operations centers on the consent of the belligerents. Their acceptance of the mandate and fielding of multinational forces in support of the peace process means a greater chance of success for the operation, and opposition by any of the belligerents endangers the successful completion of the mandate as well as the lives of the peacekeepers. The most successful United Nations peacekeeping operations, including the United Nations Emergency Force II and the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group, owed a tremendous debt to the cooperation of the belligerents. Other operations have faced problems due to belligerents not viewing the peacekeeping mission as a legitimate component of the peace process.

IGASOM was intended to be a peacekeeping operation with the multinational force serving as a neutral body in support of the peace process. However, from the beginning, many of the major belligerents opposed the deployment of IGASOM which was not mandated to use force except in defense. Tracing the opposition to IGASOM between 2005 and 2006 could easily be a research project of its own. Therefore, this paper will simply highlight some of the major opposition – including factions within the TFG itself. The rejection took two forms: those who disagreed with the inclusion of neighboring states in the operation, and those who refused to accept any peacekeepers.

IGASOM faced Somali opposition immediately upon receiving its mandate. Many

factions, including those participating in the TFG, stated they would not accept any regional

peacekeeping operations on Somali soil that contained soldiers from the neighboring states. In

particular, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Ethiopia have actively supported opposing factions in the

Somali civil war. A joint statement of TFG factions declared, “We endorse the deployment of

troops from the international community without the involvement of contingents from Somalia’s

immediate neighbors….” This automatically proved to be a challenge for IGAD, since the

organization consists primarily of states that border [neighbor] Somalia. Somali warlords

attending a conference in Nairobi criticized the TFG for agreeing to the deployment of a

peacekeeping mission without consulting them.35

Within days the Somali parliament officially rejected the idea of peacekeepers from

Somalia’s neighboring states. The debate was so heated that the session ended in a fist fight

between parliamentarians. The vote also divided the Somali Prime Minister and Speaker with

the former declaring it unconstitutional and the latter declaring the rejection of peacekeepers being within the mandate of parliament.36

Complete opposition to the deployment of any peacekeepers to Somalia included the Defense Minister of the TFG, Muhammad Qanyre Afrah. The Defense Minister declared, “We won’t accept even one foreign peacekeeper because we see that they would not do anything for us as Somalis.”37 The Umbrella Organization of Islamic Clerics, a federation of Islamic groups, also announced its rejection of peacekeepers for the country.38 Declared opposition to IGASOM continued throughout the rest of 2005 and into 2006.

2. Achievable Mandate

The mandate is one of the key elements of legitimacy and success for a peacekeeping operation. A mandate provides the authorization and legitimacy for the introduction of the peacekeepers and outlines its mission. Mandates often list very generic and broad mission goals for the peacekeepers in order to meet the demands of all of the countries approving them. Sometimes they provide goals that are simply not achievable due to the stage of the peace process and/or numbers of peacekeepers on the ground. Considerable work and negotiation is required to translate a mandated mission into one that succeeds on the ground.

The AU’s Peace and Security Resolution of February 2005 served as the official mandate for the peacekeeping attempt that became known as IGASOM after IGAD accepted the task to assemble and deploy it. The AU resolution listed three missions for IGASOM that were reiterated by IGAD during its March 2005 summit:

a. Security support to the TFG

b. Guarantee sustenance of IGAD peace process

c. Assist with reestablishment of peace and security including training of police and army39

There were three problems with implementing the mandate: First, despite the vocal support of IGAD for the AU mandate, the member states that were contemplating fielding contingents were against providing military protection to the TFG in Somalia. With many belligerents in the civil war opposing the introduction of peacekeepers, there was a real possibility of armed conflict and taking casualties. Second, the belligerents had not yet agreed to the mandate so it would have been difficult to guarantee the sustenance of the IGAD peace process. Third, IGAD could not train a TFG police and army unless the UN lifted the arms embargo and permitted the arming of these new groups. The latter point brings us full circle – without a TFG police force and army, IGASOM would be responsible for providing internal security.

3. Political Will of Contingent Providers

IGAD member states were willing to demonstrate public support for IGASOM and even pledge contingents. However, when it came to actually fielding the contingents, states danced to their own tunes. Without guaranteed funding up front, without a mandate that acknowledged the deployed contingents would have to actively defend the TFG, and with open opposition of different belligerents to the participation of neighboring countries, IGAD member states were not ready to take the next step and deploy their contingents.

The failure of a single state to deploy a peacekeeping contingent under IGASOM is a testament to the lack of political will. States tend to be willing to contribute contingents to peacekeeping missions only when they are viewed as being legitimate by the global community and belligerents, and when they do not face other practical issues affecting deployment.

BACKGROUND TO AMISOM (March 2006 – March 2007)

The development of and mandate to deploy the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) must be understood in the context of the continued failure to deploy IGASOM after the March 2006 IGAD meeting. IGAD did not abandon IGASOM after March 2006 but continued to seek ways to solve its problems and deploy contingents to Somalia. However, the deterioration of the Somali peace process, increased Western backing for a peacekeeping mission, and the inability of IGAD to solve IGASOM’s problems, all combined to give birth to AMISOM.

March 2006 witnessed an escalation in the Somali civil war. Western states, in particular the United States, were concerned about the growing strength of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), an alliance of Islamic-based factions, which reportedly harbored terrorists including those who bombed the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. The United States declared that the ICU maintained ties with the Al-Qaeda terrorist network and in February 2006 funded a second alliance of Somali factions known as the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (ARPCT).40 Street fighting increased in March 2006 as the ICU initiated a more aggressive offensive against its rivals. By early June 2006, the ARPCT were on the retreat and the ICU demonstrated that it held the upper hand in Mogadishu and other areas outside the capital. This collapse of the political situation in Somalia meant little opportunity existed for the deployment of a peacekeeping mission in support of the peace process.

By July 2006, Ethiopia grew increasing concerned with the movement of ICU military forces along its border and opted, with United States backing, to actively intervene in the Somali civil war in support of the factions opposed to the ICU. Addis Ababa began discussions with the TFG to deploy troops into Somalia in order to protect the fledgling Somali national government and counter the rapidly growing presence of the ICU. Renewed calls for the deployment of IGASOM emerged in September as a means to protect and assist the TFG until it could muster enough strength to assume a greater role in the country and counter the ICU. The AU renewed its backing for IGASOM in the same month.41 Despite the symbolic political support, the factors behind IGASOM’s failure to deploy by March 2006 still existed six months later.

Following the AU meeting, the ICU moved its troops southward to seize the southern port of

Kismayo and seal the border with Kenya due to concerns that IGAD peacekeepers (or “foreign

troops” in the words of the ICU) might cross the border from Kenya.42 Ethiopian skirmishes with the ICU intensified during September and October 2006 as the turmoil and Somalia continued. Despite the AU’s renewed call in September for a deployment of IGASOM to support the TFG, the problems cited by IGAD in March 2006 remained unsolved.

The situation changed in December 2006 when Ethiopian troops crossed the border in a large scale invasion of Somalia to counter the ICU. The UN then provided an explicit authorization

for IGASOM and partially lifted the arms embargo as Western states offered greater support for

the mission. The December authorization for IGASOM also declared that states bordering

Somalia should not participate in the mission.43 This statement in the resolution was a move to

help maintain the neutrality of IGASOM and primarily an attempt to keep Ethiopian soldiers from officially deploying with IGASOM as an IGAD member since that state was already battling the ICU. Eritrea, another IGAD member and strong ICU supporter in men and equipment, already opposed IGASOM so there was little concern over an interest in Asmara joining the operation. At the same time, the resolution officially prevented Kenya and Djibouti from participating in IGASOM leaving only Sudan and Uganda as IGAD members eligible for participation in the peacekeeping mission.

AMISOM’s actual birth can be traced to January 2007 when the AU’s Peace and Security Council voted to assume the mandate and responsibility from IGAD for a peacekeeping mission in Africa.44 Transferring the mandate from IGAD to the AU was in recognition of the need for greater African military involvement in the operation.

In Security Council Resolution 1725 (2006) the UN [did presented its] authorized non-IGAD African states to contribute forces to IGASOM in recognition of the few IGAD members available for deploying contingents. In recognition of this authorization, the AU assumed responsibility for a peacekeeping mission in Somalia on 19 January 2007 and officially mandated the operation. The AU by this action officially opened the peacekeeping operation to all AU members and not just those of IGAD. Members of IGAD officially backed the transfer of responsibility to the AU on 28 January. However, this left one possible legal technicality. The UN authorization of December 2006 specifically named IGAD and IGASOM in reference to a peacekeeping mission in Somalia. To eliminate any possible question of international authorization, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1744 (2007) on 20 February 2007. In the same resolution, the UN provided a specific partial exemption to the 1992 arms embargo for AMISOM.45 A small advance element of Ugandan peacekeepers arrived in Somalia on 1 March 2007 and was quickly followed by a battalion sized unit under the banner of AMISOM.46 Why was the AU able to successfully deploy the first contingent for AMISOM in March 2007 after assuming responsibility for the operation only two months earlier?

I. Problems External to Africa

1. Fragmented Approach

As of March 2006, IGASOM was a proposed peacekeeping operation blessed by the UN and the AU, which would have been carried out by IGAD with little Western backing. Even African states tended to pay lip service to backing the mission with [specifically] funding and military contingents. The United States originally backed a coalition of warlords in Somalia.

Following the 2006 defeat of the warlords by the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), the United States

altered its position toward IGASOM. With greater Western backing, the UN Security Council

met the requests of IGAD including the easing of the arms embargo. Following a December

2006 renewal of the UN’s blessing for IGASOM, the AU met the next month and assumed the

lead role for peacekeeping in Somalia. An AU resolution announced the establishment of the

African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to replace IGASOM and provided a new mandate

and mission for the peacekeeping operation.47

During the same month, IGAD met and released a statement noting and supporting the conversion of IGASOM to AMISOM under the AU (The AU and IGAD documents will be examined in more detail later within this paper). During February 2007, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1744 (2007) officially supporting AMISOM rather than IGASOM and repeating its easing of the arms embargo on Somalia.48 By March 2007, AMISOM deployed its initial contingent of AU peacekeepers with Western backing. While the changes in approach did not guarantee success, they were essential in assuring international support and responsibility.

2. Funding

Once the West became more interested in supporting an African peacekeeping mission for Africa, they announced pledges of funding and logistical support. During the first week of January 2007, the United States pledged $16 million while the European Union offered $19.5 million for the peacekeeping force.49 Additional countries, including the Peoples’ Republic of China, pledged smaller amounts over the next few weeks. Although, the AU received numerous pledges of cash, the organization declared it was still short of funds to fully cover AMISOM. However, when the initial Ugandan contingent deployed, it received support from the United States. Although the funding solution was not perfect, support did materialize after the West began backing AMISOM.

3. Lifting of the UN Arms Embargo

IGAD did not give up immediately on IGASOM after admitting failure to field the operation. Two months after the March announcement, Kenya, serving as the Chair for the organization, announced that it would appeal to the UN for lifting the arms embargo on Somalia. In June, Louis Michel, the European Union Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Affairs, announced that the organization would consider an easing of the UN arms embargo in order to support the fielding of African peacekeepers in Somalia. If the TFG presented a stabilization plan for the country, it could allow “some exemptions, targeted exemptions on the arms embargo in order to make it possible for the national army to develop itself and also develop the police force.”50 On the same day, a reporter asked State Department spokesman Sean McCormack if the United States had changed its opinion on the embargo given the IGAD request and softening of the EU position. McCormack replied that the American position had not changed.51 Six days later, the UN announced that it might open new discussions reference the arms embargo on Somalia.

The Africa Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee met on 11 July to

examine United States policy towards Somalia. During the meeting, Dr. Andre Le Sage, the

Academic Chair for Terrorism and Counterterrorism at the National Defense University,

remarked that lifting the UN arms embargo, as well as deploying the IGAD peacekeepers, were

divisive issues within the TFG “and will likely do far more harm than good.”52 However, two

days later on 13 July, the United Nations Security Council presented its most positive statement

to date on the easing of the arms embargo on Somalia. The resulting announcement declared,

“The Security Council states its willingness, if it judges that a PSM (peace support mission)

would contribute to peace and stability in Somalia, to consider the above request (“an exemption

to the arms embargo”) for a PSM, on the basis of a detailed mission plan from IGAD or the

AU.”53 The next day, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack fielded another question on

[reference] United States policy on the UN arms embargo. This time he replied, “It’s a topic for

discussion right now among members of the international community. I’m sure it’ll be a topic of

discussion among the Somalia Contact Group.”54

On 18 July 2006, the Somalia Contact Group (formed in June 2006 and consisting of the United States, United Kingdom, Norway, Italy, Sweden, and Tanzania as well as representatives from the EU, Arab League, UN, and IGAD) met in Brussels and discussed the arms embargo.

The resulting official statement called upon the UN “to consider with a sense of urgency

modifying the arms embargo to allow for training, capacity building, and development of a

broad-based, representative security sector building on successful dialogue between Somali

partners.”55 Yet despite the endorsement and [, as well as] continued requests from the TFG,

Kenya, and Uganda, the debate continued into September. On 25 September, John Bolton, the

United States Ambassador to the UN, addressed the arms embargo in prepared remarks released

by his office. Bolton, having just discussed the issue with the Kenyan Foreign Minister,

declared, “We’ve listened to the foreign minister’s briefing, which was quite informative, and it

(lifting the arms embargo) is something we would consider. But we’re still considering it.”56

Debate continued through the fall with Kenya and Uganda renewing the call for lifting

the arms embargo. On 1 December 2006, Ambassador Bolton informed the media that the

United States submitted a draft resolution to the United Nations Security Council calling for the

fielding of the African peacekeeping mission and “a partial lifting of the arms embargo for the

purpose of assisting the force and associated training.”57 The Arab League and groups associated

with Somalia’s Islamic Courts Union remained opposed to lifting the arms embargo. The

Security Council adopted Resolution 1725 (2006) five days later reiterating its support for a

peacekeeping mission as well as the easing of the arms embargo, stating the latter could include

exceptions for the “supplies of weapons and military equipment and technical training and

assistance intended for the support of or use by” the peacekeeping mission planned by IGAD and

the AU.58

### II. Problems Internal to Africa

The three deployment problems not discussed by IGAD in March 2006 were not solved by March 2007. Despite the existence of the problems, Uganda dispatched a contingent, followed later by Burundi. These were internal African issues and are common problems faced by any peacekeeping operation, whether mandated by a regional, continental, or global international organization.

1. Consent of Belligerents

The groups associated with the ICU continued to oppose IGASOM and later AMISOM.

The peacekeepers have not been welcomed as neutral troops supporting the general peace

process. Supporters of the TFG view AMISOM as a necessary arm of the peace process while

those opposed to the TFG see AMISOM as carrying out a mission that runs counter to their

political objectives. Despite forming under an AU mandate with UN authorization, the ICU and

other groups still declared AMISOM to be a body of foreign soldiers intervening in Somalia. In

late February, the Popular Resistance Movement in the Land of the Two Migrations (PRMLTM)

faction equated AMISOM with Ethiopian troops and warned in a statement posted on the ICU

website that Uganda would be collecting the corpses of its soldiers in Somalia as a result.59 The

first 400 Ugandan peacekeepers were “welcomed” at Mogadishu airport on 6 March 2007 with

eight mortar rounds.60 Two days later, AMISOM suffered its first casualties as insurgents

wounded two Ugandan peacekeepers.61 By 14 March, the UN noted there had been three attacks

on AMISOM peacekeepers and called upon all factions to respect their neutral mission.62 The

first death of an AMISOM peacekeeper occurred on 1 April 2007 when a detachment of

Ugandan soldiers guarding the presidential palace came under mortar fire; in addition to one

killed, five others were wounded.63

2. Achievable Mandate

The January 2007 conversion of IGAD’s IGASOM to the AU’s AMISOM required an

official change in mandate. The AU Peace and Security Council released a resolution on 19

January 2007 assuming responsibility for the peacekeeping mission bound for Somalia, renaming

the operation as AMISOM, and declaring a new mandate.64 IGAD members attending the AU

summit gathered on the side as an extraordinary meeting of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of

State and Government. They released a statement on 28 January 2007 backing the shift of the

peacekeeping responsibility and mandate to the AU.65

The new AU mandate established the following mission for AMISOM:

a. to support dialogue and reconciliation in Somalia, working with all

stakeholders,

b. to provide, as appropriate, protection to the TFIs and their key

infrastructure, to enable them to carry out their functions,

c. to assist in the implementation of the National Security and Stabilization

Plan of Somalia, particularly the effective reestablishment and training of

all inclusive Somali security forces, bearing in mind the programs already

being implemented by some of Somalia’s bilateral and multilateral

partners,

d. to provide, within capabilities and as appropriate, technical and other

support to the disarmament and stabilization efforts,

e. to monitor, in areas of deployment of its forces, the security situation,

f. to facilitate, as may be required and within capabilities, humanitarian

operations, including the repatriation and reintegration of refugees and the

resettlement of IDPs, and

g. to protect its personnel, installations and equipment, including the right

of self-defense;66

Without doubt, the AMISOM mandate was more carefully developed and written than

that of IGASOM. The broad guidelines of IGASOM gave way to the more precise instructions

of AMISOM. At the same time, AMISOM’s mandate provided caveats including “as

appropriate”, “within capabilities”, and “as may be required”. However, it is difficult to imagine

that a fully fielded AMISOM (7,650 soldiers) could carry out the mandate in a country the size of Somalia. Certainly, AMISOM, as currently deployed, is not capable of this task.

The first requirement to fulfill the AU mandate is that Somali factions accept the peace process and AMISOM as a neutral body in a peace support role. As discussed earlier, AMISOM deployed without the benefit of acceptance by all of the Somali factions. It is difficult to support the reconciliation process when factions are not ready for reconciliation. It is impossible to assist in the disarmament of factions when they consider AMISOM a hostile force and refuse to cooperate.

Second, AMISOM must have greater resources including thousands (if not tens of thousands) of more peacekeepers and access to all of the equipment and supplies required to complete the tasks outlined in the AU Communiqué. Somalia is a large country and the few peacekeepers authorized by the AU are too few to complete all of the mandated tasks. This problem is compounded by the reluctance of states other than Uganda and Burundi to contribute peacekeepers to the operation.

Third, the states providing contingents to AMISOM must have the political will to allow their peacekeepers to carry out the tasks. AMISOM peacekeepers relied on Ethiopian soldiers to provide the bulk of the security functions required to keep the TFG safe in its compounds and counter attacks from Somali factions opposed to the peace process and the TFG. A more active AMISOM will probably produce greater casualties. African states have something in common with Western countries – they cannot sustain unlimited casualties in an operation termed as “peacekeeping”.

It should also be noted that the AU mandated AMISOM as a peacekeeping operation. The peacekeepers have the right of self-defense and to protect their equipment, installations, and other assigned personnel. AMISOM is not a peace enforcement mission mandated to force factions to the peace table. It is not even clear from the AU mandate whether AMISOM has the legal right to protect civilians from attack. AMISOM is dependent upon the acceptance of the Somali factions in order to conduct its mission and remain free from attack.

3. Political Will of Contingent Providers

Most AU members lack the political will for participation in AMISOM. While they provide political support for unity within the AU, many do not fulfill pledges to provide contingents of peacekeepers for the operation. The lack of a successful peace process and the hostility of factions to AMISOM and its mission signal the probability of casualties; the lack of adequate funding means a state willing to assist the AU might end up footing the bill when government funds are already short. International organizations (IO), including the UN, AU, and IGAD, do not demand compulsory military participation of members in peacekeeping or peace enforcement operations. While proportional funding of a mandated operation is often theoretically mandatory within an IO, deploying soldiers is voluntary. It takes political will, whether from a realist or idealist political perspective, for a state to send its military personnel into a potentially hostile situation based on a request of an IO.

Several African states have publicly pledged peacekeepers for AMISOM yet only

Uganda and Burundi have actually deployed their soldiers in support of the AU. Upon

mandating AMISOM, the AU requested peacekeepers from its members and received pledges

from Ghana, Malawi, and Nigeria as well as Uganda and Burundi. South Africa, Rwanda,

and Tanzania were reported as considering the appeal.67 Almost immediately, pledging states

began to back out of their commitments when asked for specific details of deployment dates.

As one East African reporter noted, “Many African nations are said to be nervous about

committing troops to one of the world’s most dangerous countries…where warlords and their

gunmen have ruled unchecked for 16 years.”68

The President of Malawi declared at the end of January 2007 that his government and parliament had not fully discussed the issue although the Defense Minister had pledged a contingent.69 By 5 February, Tanzania announced it was willing to train Somali military personnel at a location in Tanzania but not in Somalia. A reporter for the Shabelle media network explained this decision as “a smart decision to assist in the peacekeeping operation without actually sending troops into Somalia.”70 Ghana and Nigeria have regularly stated throughout 2007 and 2008 that they were sending contingents but have not followed through with the pledges. Even Uganda, which provided the first AMISOM contingent, required the political intervention of the United States before it deployed troops. Despite having pledged peacekeepers for IGASOM and then AMISOM, Uganda announced it was withdrawing its offer after the UN’s authorization for the deployment of IGASOM on 6 December 2006. American Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met with Ugandan Foreign Minister Sam Kutesa to persuade the state to fulfill its pledge.71 The lack of political will, along with other issues, resulted in an under-manned AMISOM.

## THE TWO LEVELS OF AFRICAN-MANDATED PEACEKEEPING

What happened to solve IGAD’s problems after March 2006 and help prompt the deployment of AMISOM in March 2007? “Solving” might be an overstatement but one can certainly see all three issues being addressed after March 2006. Stated simply, the West became interested in fielding an African peacekeeping mission. Successful fielding of large African-mandated peacekeeping missions depends upon Western funding, political and logistical support. The three problems highlighted by IGAD in March 2006 required solutions outside the African continent.

IGASOM’s lack of Western support, in particular from the United States, resulted in the fragmented approach to peacekeeping in Somalia cited by IGAD. In addition, Western states would not fund a peacekeeping operation they did not support leaving IGAD without the resources to reimburse its members for military contributions. Without guaranteed funding, many states are reluctant to deploy military forces in a costly peacekeeping operation. Lifting the 1992 arms embargo also required Western support within the Security Council.

The requirement for Western backing can also be seen in the deployment of AMISOM.

The successful military campaign of the ICU in 2006 prompted the United States and other

Western states to shift their emphasis to the deployment of an African peacekeeping mission as a

means of safeguarding the TFG. The United States and other countries and international

organizations pledged monetary and logistical support. At the same time, this increased interest

in a peacekeeping force was reflected in the UN as Security Council members dropped their

opposition to the arms embargo on Somalia. In the same resolution easing the arms embargo, the

Security Council renewed its authorization for an African peacekeeping mission in support of the

TFG and the Somali peace process. Thus, Western concern with the ICU presence in Somalia,

along with a lack of other alternatives other than the Ethiopian military, resulted in a shifting of

priorities that reduced the problems associated with a fragmented approach, funding, and the UN arms embargo identified by IGAD in 2006. When AMISOM deployed its initial contingent in March 2007, it can be stated that all three problems identified by IGAD in 2006 had been addressed, if not solved, by the West.

Turning to the other three problems faced by IGASOM in 2006, one can see little improvement by March 2007 when AMISOM deployed. IGASOM experienced problems associated with consent of the various belligerents for its deployment. Achieving IGASOM’s mandate would have been questionable and IGAD’s members exhibited little political will to deploy military forces in a peacekeeping operation where belligerents had not accepted the peace process and funding was based on empty pledges.

In contrast to the three problems external to Africa, consent of the belligerents, the lack of an achievable mandate, and the lack of political will exhibited by countries pledged to provide troops were issues that needed to be solved within the African continent. AMISOM deployed without these issues having been solved or at least adequately addressed. As of March 2007, many of the belligerents opposed the deployment of peacekeepers so that the newly re-written mandate was not achievable with the current resources and under the current political situation, and the vast majority of African states continued to exhibit a lack of political will to become involved in the peacekeeping mission. As of the initial fielding of AMISOM in March 2007, opposition to the peacekeepers still existed within groups supporting the ICU; the achievability of the mandate is still questionable; and the lack of political will among most contingent pledgers still hampered AMISOM from growing to its mandated size.

AMISOM faces a dim future if the AU is not able to solve the issues associated with the need for belligerent consent, approving the mandate, and sufficient state political will. Addressing the issues related to the fragmented approach, funding, and the UN arms embargo permitted AMISOM to deploy following the failure of IGASOM; but if the AU and AMISOM are to have any chance of success in Somalia they must overcome the issues relating to belligerent consent, the mandate, and political will.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Despite the best intentions of many to field a peacekeeping operation to assist the political process to stabilize Somalia, no mission materialized by March 2006. A review of the situation indicates issues related to legitimacy and other problems behind the failure, including a fragmented approach, lack of funding, disagreement over the UN arms embargo, consent of all belligerents, the lack of an achievable mandate, and the lack of political will of the contingent providers. The OAU and AU have deployed several small military observer missions during the past two decades. However, to deploy a large peacekeeping operation each organization has required extensive Western support – not only funding, logistics, and transportation but also political support. The necessity for Western support was clearly demonstrated with the OAU operation in Chad in 1981-1982 and continues today with the AMISOM in Somalia. American, French, and British peacekeeping training programs for African armies are necessary to produce military units capable of carrying out peacekeeping duties. Without Western political backing, funding, logistical support, and transportation assets, the deployment of African peacekeeping operations will remain hampered despite military training programs.

At the same time, it is important to note that Western political backing, funding, and logistical support do not ensure a successful deployment of African peacekeeping missions. Even with Western support, African peacekeeping operations face internal issues including the will of belligerents to accept the peacekeepers as part of the general peace process; the difficulty of agreement on an achievable mandate proposed by the mandating international organization; and the demonstration by African countries of the political will to deploy their troops as contingents of the peacekeeping operation.

*Dr. Terry M. Mays is an Associate Professor of Political Science at The Citadel in Charleston, SC, where his research specialty is African mandated peacekeeping operations. Mays is the author of Africa’s First Peacekeeping Operation: The OAU in Chad, 1981-1982, The Historical Dictionary of Multinational Peacekeeping, and The 1999 United Nations and 2000 Organization of African Unity Formal Inquiries: A Retrospective Examination of Peacekeeping and the Rwandan Crisis of 1994 as well the forthcoming Nigerian Peacekeeping Policy: The Application of Peacekeeping as Foreign Policy Tool, 1960-1990 and Irish Peacekeeping Policy: The Development of Ireland’s Triple Lock Mechanism for Peacekeeping. He holds the Certificate-in-Training in United Nations Peace Support Operations. Mays is also a retired US Army/US Army Reserve Lieutenant Colonel.*

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**Resigned to Failure or Committed to a Just Cause of Justice?  
The Matthew Hoh Resignation, Our Current Politico-Military Strategy in Afghanistan, and Lessons Learned from the Panama Intervention of Twenty Years Ago©**

By  
Kevin H. Govern\*

*I fail to see the value or the worth in continued US casualties or expenditures of resources in support of the Afghan government in what is, truly, a 35-year old civil war.*

Matthew P. Hoh, Senior Civilian Representative, Department of State, September 10, 2009

*And as Commander-in-Chief, I have determined that it is in our vital national interest to send an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan. After 18 months, our troops will begin to come home. These are the resources that we need to seize the initiative, while building the Afghan capacity that can allow for a responsible transition of our forces out of Afghanistan.*

President Barack H. Obama to U.S. Corps of Cadets, December 1, 20091

*Introduction*

As Americans contemplate President Obama’s recent December 1, 2009 West Point speech on the nature of our commitment in post-9/11 Afghanistan, the scope of our interests, and the strategy to bring that war to a successful conclusion,2 we should also look back on the comments of a 36-year old career foreign service officer who lived the “ground truth” of (d)evolving events in Afghanistan.3

This paper will compare and contrast the Commander in Chief’s perspective with that of the Senior Civilian Representative of Zabul Province, Afghanistan, and will also consider the 2001 through present-day intervention in Afghanistan in light of the 20th anniversary of the United States’ first post-Cold War intervention, the Republic of Panama – Operation Just Cause.

*The Matthew Hoh Resignation – and The Obama Response?*

The Washington Post described Hoh as “[a] former Marine Corps captain with combat experience in [Iraq](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/countries/iraq.html?nav=el), [who] had also served in uniform at the Pentagon, and as a civilian in Iraq and at the State Department.”4 From July through September of 2009, Hoh was the senior U.S. civilian in Zabul province, “a Taliban hotbed,”5 only to become the first U.S. official to resign in protest over the Afghan war because he believed it “simply fueled the insurgency.”6 Reportage further elaborated on how the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, Karl W. Eikenberry, brought Hoh to Kabul to offer him a job on his senior embassy staff, then Richard C. Holbrooke, the administration's special representative for Afghanistan and [Pakistan](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/countries/pakistan.html?nav=el), offered Hoh a planning position on his staff; Hoh rejected both offers.7

What if State Department and other White House officials had listened to Hoh’s critique? We have no proof his objections factored into the latest Afghanistan strategy, but an interesting point-counterpoint comparison can be made of Hoh’s resignation points and those of President Obama’s West Point strategy speech In his September 10, 2009 resignation, Hoh led with the notion that “To put simply: [he failed] to see the value or the worth in continued US casualties or expenditures of resources in support of the Afghan government in what is, truly, a 35-year old civil war.”8

By comparison, the Commander in Chief’s assessment was that:

*Under the banner of this domestic unity and international legitimacy – and only after the Taliban refused to turn over Osama bin Laden -- we sent our troops into Afghanistan. Within a matter of months, al Qaeda was scattered and many of its operatives were killed. The Taliban was driven from power and pushed back on its heels. A place that had known decades of fear now had reason to hope. At a conference convened by the U.N., a provisional government was established under President Hamid Karzai. And an International Security Assistance Force was established to help bring a lasting peace to a war-torn country*.9

President Obama acknowledged the declining state of security and order in Afghanistan, though, further stating that:

*Over the last several years, the Taliban has maintained common cause with al Qaeda, as they both seek an overthrow of the Afghan government. Gradually, the Taliban has begun to control additional swaths of territory in Afghanistan, while engaging in increasingly brazen and devastating attacks of terrorism against the Pakistani people.*10

President Obama’s strategy, though, is not focused on “cutting losses,” but rather increasing them in Afghanistan to combat the rising treats to coalitional and Afghan security:

*Now, throughout this period, our troop levels in Afghanistan remained a fraction of what they were in Iraq. When I took office, we had just over 32,000 Americans serving in Afghanistan, compared to 160,000 in Iraq at the peak of the war. Commanders in Afghanistan repeatedly asked for support to deal with the reemergence of the Taliban, but these reinforcements did not arrive. And that's why, shortly after taking office, I approved a longstanding request for more troops. After consultations with our allies, I then announced a strategy recognizing the fundamental connection between our war effort in Afghanistan and the extremist safe havens in Pakistan. I set a goal that was narrowly defined as disrupting, dismantling, and defeating al Qaeda and its extremist allies, and pledged to better coordinate our military and civilian efforts.*11

Hoh complained that rather than supporting legitimately elected governmental officials in Afghanistan, that:

*The United States military presence in Afghanistan greatly contributes to the legitimacy and strategic message of the Pashtun insurgency. In a like manner our backing of the Afghan government in its current form continues to distance the government from the people. The Afghan government's failings, particularly when weighed against the sacrifice of American lives and dollars, appear legion and metastatic:*

*·Glaring corruption and unabashed graft;*

*· A President whose confidants and chief advisors comprise drug lords and war crimes villains, who mock our own rule of law and counternarcotics efforts;*

*· A system of provincial and district leaders constituted of local power brokers, opportunists and strongmen allied to the United States solely for, and limited by, the value of our USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development]*12 *and CERP [Commander’s Emergency Response Program]*13 *contracts and for whose own political and economic interests stand nothing to gain from any positive or genuine attempts at reconciliation; and*

*· The recent election process dominated by fraud and discredited by low voter turnout, which has created an enormous victory for our enemy who now claims a popular boycott and will call into question worldwide our government's military, economic and diplomatic support for an invalid and illegitimate Afghan government.*14

President Obama’s minimal acknowledgement of these problems included these non-specific observations alluding to governmental corruption, incompetence, and the ineffectiveness in combating narco-trafficking, if not complicity with the traffickers, included these comments:

*[W]hile we've achieved hard-earned milestones in Iraq, the situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated. After escaping across the border into Pakistan in 2001 and 2002, al Qaeda's leadership established a safe haven there. Although a legitimate government was elected by the Afghan people, it's been hampered by corruption, the drug trade, an under-developed economy, and insufficient security forces.*15

And

*The days of providing a blank check are over. President Karzai's inauguration speech sent the right message about moving in a new direction. And going forward, we will be clear about what we expect from those who receive our assistance. We'll support Afghan ministries, governors, and local leaders that combat corruption and deliver for the people. We expect those who are ineffective or corrupt to be held accountable. And we will also focus our assistance in areas -- such as agriculture -- that can make an immediate impact in the lives of the Afghan people.*16

Hoh’s list of grievances continues with an allusion to history repeating itself of supporting corrupt leaders in South Vietnam and in Afghanistan:

*Our support for this kind of government, coupled with a misunderstanding of the insurgency's true nature, reminds me horribly of our involvement with South Vietnam; an unpopular and corrupt government we backed at the expense of our Nation's own internal peace, against an insurgency whose nationalism we arrogantly and ignorantly mistook as a rival to our own Cold War ideology.*17

Mindful of the comparisons that could – and should – be made to our involvement in Cold War interventions and present-day Afghanistan, President Obama took pains to distinguish present-day realities and objectives in Afghanistan from the Vietnam of 35-plus years ago:

*The people of Afghanistan have endured violence for decades. They've been confronted with occupation -- by the Soviet Union, and then by foreign al Qaeda fighters who used Afghan land for their own purposes. So tonight, I want the Afghan people to understand -- America seeks an end to this era of war and suffering. We have no interest in occupying your country. We will support efforts by the Afghan government to open the door to those Taliban who abandon violence and respect the human rights of their fellow citizens. And we will seek a partnership with Afghanistan grounded in mutual respect -- to isolate those who destroy; to strengthen those who build; to hasten the day when our troops will leave; and to forge a lasting friendship in which America is your partner, and never your patron.*18

*And*

*[T]here are those who suggest that Afghanistan is another Vietnam. They argue that it cannot be stabilized, and we're better off cutting our losses and rapidly withdrawing. I believe this argument depends on a false reading of history. Unlike Vietnam, we are joined by a broad coalition of 43 nations that recognizes the legitimacy of our action. Unlike Vietnam, we are not facing a broad-based popular insurgency. And most importantly, unlike Vietnam, the American people were viciously attacked from Afghanistan, and remain a target for those same extremists who are plotting along its border. To abandon this area now -- and to rely only on efforts against al Qaeda from a distance -- would significantly hamper our ability to keep the pressure on al Qaeda, and create an unacceptable risk of additional attacks on our homeland and our allies.*19

Hoh believed that our strategy was either a subterfuge for some other objective or grossly incompetent in conducting operations in the wrong theater:

*I find specious the reasons we ask for bloodshed and sacrifice from our young men and women in Afghanistan. If honest, our stated strategy of securing Afghanistan to prevent al-Qaeda resurgence or regrouping would require us to additionally invade and occupy western Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, etc. Our presence in Afghanistan has only increased destabilization and insurgency in Pakistan where we rightly fear a toppled or weakened Pakistani government may lose control of its nuclear weapons. However, again, to follow the logic of our stated goals we should garrison Pakistan, not Afghanistan.*20

President Obama’s strategy speech recognizes a strategic partnership with – rather than strategic targeting strategy against – Pakistan, and acknowledges we must counter the threats that Hoh aptly identifies in Somalia, Sudan, Yemen and elsewhere:

*[W]e will act with the full recognition that our success in Afghanistan is inextricably linked to our partnership with Pakistan.*

*We're in Afghanistan to prevent a cancer from once again spreading through that country. But this same cancer has also taken root in the border region of Pakistan. That's why we need a strategy that works on both sides of the border.*

*In the past, there have been those in Pakistan who've argued that the struggle against extremism is not their fight, and that Pakistan is better off doing little or seeking accommodation with those who use violence. But in recent years, as innocents have been killed from Karachi to Islamabad, it has become clear that it is the Pakistani people who are the most endangered by extremism. Public opinion has turned. The Pakistani army has waged an offensive in Swat and South Waziristan. And there is no doubt that the United States and Pakistan share a common enemy.*

*In the past, we too often defined our relationship with Pakistan narrowly. Those days are over. Moving forward, we are committed to a partnership with Pakistan that is built on a foundation of mutual interest, mutual respect, and mutual trust. We will strengthen Pakistan's capacity to target those groups that threaten our countries, and have made it clear that we cannot tolerate a safe haven for terrorists whose location is known and whose intentions are clear. America is also providing substantial resources to support Pakistan's democracy and development. We are the largest international supporter for those Pakistanis displaced by the fighting. And going forward, the Pakistan people must know America will remain a strong supporter of Pakistan's security and prosperity long after the guns have fallen silent, so that the great potential of its people can be unleashed.*21

*And*

*We'll have to be nimble and precise in our use of military power. Where al Qaeda and its allies attempt to establish a foothold -- whether in Somalia or Yemen or elsewhere -- they must be confronted by growing pressure and strong partnerships.*22

Hoh expresses admiration for the U.S. military capability, but bemoans its current mission quagmire, saying that:

*Eight years into war, no nation has ever known a more dedicated, well trained, experienced and disciplined military as the US Armed Forces. I do not believe any military force has ever been tasked with such a complex, opaque and Sisyphean mission as the US military has received in Afghanistan. The tactical proficiency and performance of our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines is unmatched and unquestioned … [This] is a war for which our leaders, uniformed, civilian and elected, have inadequately prepared and resourced our men and women. Our forces, devoted and faithful, have been committed to conflict in an indefinite and unplanned manner that has become a cavalier, politically expedient and Pollyannaish*23 *misadventure. Similarly, the United States has a dedicated and talented cadre of civilians, both US government employees and contractors, who believe in and sacrifice for their mission, but they have been ineffectually trained and led with guidance and intent shaped more by the political climate in Washington, DC than in Afghan cities, villages, mountains and valleys.*

President Obama recognizes the need to reevaluate the troops-to-mission mix for operations in Afghanistan, and perhaps even more importantly, a fresh look at the way ahead in plans and on the ground there:

*When I took office, we had just over 32,000 Americans serving in Afghanistan, compared to 160,000 in Iraq at the peak of the war. Commanders in Afghanistan repeatedly asked for support to deal with the reemergence of the Taliban, but these reinforcements did not arrive. And that's why, shortly after taking office, I approved a longstanding request for more troops. After consultations with our allies, I then announced a strategy recognizing the fundamental connection between our war effort in Afghanistan and the extremist safe havens in Pakistan. I set a goal that was narrowly defined as disrupting, dismantling, and defeating al Qaeda and its extremist allies, and pledged to better coordinate our military and civilian efforts.*24

And:

*As your Commander-in-Chief, I owe you a mission that is clearly defined, and worthy of your service. And that's why, after the Afghan voting was completed, I insisted on a thorough review of our strategy. Now, let me be clear: There has never been an option before me that called for troop deployments before 2010, so there has been no delay or denial of resources necessary for the conduct of the war during this review period. Instead, the review has allowed me to ask the hard questions, and to explore all the different options, along with my national security team, our military and civilian leadership in Afghanistan, and our key partners. And given the stakes involved, I owed the American people -- and our troops -- no less.*25

Hoh states the obvious – but overwhelming reality of the cost of overall operations when he quips that:

*"We are spending ourselves into oblivion" a very talented and intelligent commander, one of America's best, briefs every visitor, staff delegation and senior officer. We are mortgaging our Nation's economy on a war, which, even with increased commitment, will remain a draw for years to come. Success and victory, whatever they may be, will be realized not in years, after billions more spent, but in decades and generations. The United States does not enjoy a national treasury for such success and victory.*26

President Obama’s accounting in words of the expense in lives and dollars is surprisingly similar to Hoh’s assessment, yet different in tone:

*We have been at war now for eight years, at enormous cost in lives and resources. Years of debate over Iraq and terrorism have left our unity on national security issues in tatters, and created a highly polarized and partisan backdrop for this effort. And having just experienced the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, the American people are understandably focused on rebuilding our economy and putting people to work here at home.*27

President Obama focused specifically on the greatest cost to our most prized national treasure – our casualties and the impact on their families, when he said:

*Most of all, I know that this decision asks even more of you -- a military that, along with your families, has already borne the heaviest of all burdens. As President, I have signed a letter of condolence to the family of each American who gives their life in these wars. I have read the letters from the parents and spouses of those who deployed. I visited our courageous wounded warriors at Walter Reed. I've traveled to Dover to meet the flag-draped caskets of 18 Americans returning home to their final resting place. I see firsthand the terrible wages of war. If I did not think that the security of the United States and the safety of the American people were at stake in Afghanistan, I would gladly order every single one of our troops home tomorrow.*28

As for a “cut our losses” and cut our troop level strategy, President Obama countered by saying that:

*[T]here are those who acknowledge that we can't leave Afghanistan in its current state, but suggest that we go forward with the troops that we already have. But this would simply maintain a status quo in which we muddle through, and permit a slow deterioration of conditions there. It would ultimately prove more costly and prolong our stay in Afghanistan, because we would never be able to generate the conditions needed to train Afghan security forces and give them the space to take over.*29

Announcing his intentions for closure and transition to Afghan authorities, President Obama counters unnamed critics when he said that:

*Finally, there are those who oppose identifying a time frame for our transition to Afghan responsibility. Indeed, some call for a more dramatic and open-ended escalation of our war effort -- one that would commit us to a nation-building project of up to a decade. I reject this course because it sets goals that are beyond what can be achieved at a reasonable cost, and what we need to achieve to secure our interests. Furthermore, the absence of a time frame for transition would deny us any sense of urgency in working with the Afghan government. It must be clear that Afghans will have to take responsibility for their security, and that America has no interest in fighting an endless war in Afghanistan.*30

Quoting the words of President Eisenhower’s famous Military-Industrial Complex farewell speech, that "[e]ach proposal must be weighed in the light of a broader consideration: the need to maintain balance in and among national programs,"31 President Obama reflected that:

*Over the past several years, we have lost that balance. We've failed to appreciate the connection between our national security and our economy. In the wake of an economic crisis, too many of our neighbors and friends are out of work and struggle to pay the bills. Too many Americans are worried about the future facing our children. Meanwhile, competition within the global economy has grown more fierce. So we can't simply afford to ignore the price of these wars.*

*All told, by the time I took office the cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan approached a trillion dollars. Going forward, I am committed to addressing these costs openly and honestly. Our new approach in Afghanistan is likely to cost us roughly $30 billion for the military this year, and I'll work closely with Congress to address these costs as we work to bring down our deficit.*

Hoh concluded his resignation letter with a succinct and cynical note:

*Thousands of our men and women have returned home with physical and mental wounds some that will never heal or will only worsen with time. The dead return only in bodily form to be received by families who must be reassured their dead have sacrificed for a purpose worthy of futures lost, loved vanished, and promised dreams unkept. I have lost confidence such assurances can anymore be made. As such, I submit my resignation.*

President Obama, instead, called for Americans to come together for a common cause, recalling the origins of the current conflicts, and for renewed hope for the future:

*It's easy to forget that when this war began, we were united – bound together by the fresh memory of a horrific attack, and by the determination to defend our homeland and the values we hold dear. I refuse to accept the notion that we cannot summon that unity again … I believe with every fiber of my being that we -- as Americans -- can still come together behind a common purpose. For our values are not simply words written into parchment -- they are a creed that calls us together, and that has carried us through the darkest of storms as one nation, as one people.*

*America -- we are passing through a time of great trial. And the message that we send in the midst of these storms must be clear: that our cause is just, our resolve unwavering. We will go forward with the confidence that right makes might, and with the commitment to forge an America that is safer, a world that is more secure, and a future that represents not the deepest of fears but the highest of hopes.*32

*Past in Panama as Prologue in Afghanistan or Afghan Apples to Panamanian Oranges?*33

*These are the three core elements of our strategy [in Afghanistan]: a military effort to create the conditions for a transition; a civilian surge that reinforces positive action; and an effective partnership with Pakistan.*

President Barack H. Obama to U.S. Corps of Cadets, December 1, 200934

This final section of this paper will explore how the Obama Administration’s Afghanistan strategy has embraced – at least in principle – the requisite strategic principles that made Operation Just Cause and the follow-on civil military operations in Panama successful. Our intervention in Panama some twenty years ago was not only because of impressive application of military force, but because effective civil-military operations and public-private resourcing shaped government and society in a way to best serve the Panamanian people and promote national, regional and international security.35

There are obvious differences between the Panama of 20 years ago and Afghanistan of today. Panama was and is a tropical nation of 3 million inhabitants on a landmass smaller than South Carolina.36 Afghanistan is a nation of 31 million across a varied terrain the size of Texas.37 Neither nation shares a border with each other, or with the U.S., or even a common language, ethnic composition, or historical heritage.

The bases for intervention in both nations are dramatically different too. President George H.W. Bush ordered the December 20, 1989 intervention in Panama to protect U.S. lives and property, to fulfill U.S. treaty responsibilities to operate and defend the Canal, to assist the Panamanian people in restoring democracy, and to bring General Noriega to justice. The legal, judicial, and penal systems during the Noriega regime were badly corrupted, and more often than not, political control rather than justice prevailed.38

In Afghanistan, the autocratic Taliban government refused to expel al Qaeda and its leader bin Laden or end their support for international terrorism. The U.S. and its coalition partners commenced military operations on October 7, 2001 to target terrorist facilities and various Taliban military and political assets within Afghanistan, and to aid a democratically elected government secure Afghanistan's borders, maintain internal order, and establish conditions of peace and prosperity for the Afghan people. In Panama, as in Afghanistan, military forces accomplished their primary objectives relatively quickly. Winning – and sustaining - the peace has proved to be a larger challenge in both nations.39

What made the Panama intervention ultimately successful – and what will make operations in Afghanistan successful – is worth noting here. For Panama, the Commander in Chief gave clear guidance on objectives to be accomplished. Although not revealed in full through the media, our military and civilian leaders responsible for operations in Afghanistan now have the clear guidance they require. Next, those involved in Panama operations were allowed to prepare and execute a plan in detail to accomplish those objectives. This is also occurring with our ongoing operations in Afghanistan. Forces in Panama were allowed sufficient time and resources to accomplish their objectives, and to execute their mission without substantial changes to their plans. Congress, as the voice of the American People, needs to allow this to take place in Afghanistan.40

In Panama, as has been the case in Afghanistan, military-civilian interagency operations have been critical to establishing and maintaining a law of rules and a rule of laws, and fostering economic growth, political transparency, cooperative diplomacy, and effective security. In post-Just Cause Panama, the democratically elected coalition government weakened with time and Noriega’s cronies briefly assumed power. In time, the Panamanian people, with the aid of U.S. and international agencies, restored representative democracy with effective branches of government. In Panama, anti-corruption efforts grew with the synergy of leaders from government, civil society, labor organizations, and the clergy. As Panama grew more capable to provide for its own national security, battling illegal domestic and international narcotics and arms trade, U.S. and regional security benefited as a result.

So, too, in Afghanistan, political, tribal, industrial and clerical leaders must work in concert with U.S. and international agencies to challenge the apparent resurgence of the Taliban in tribal areas. They must also meet concerns about central government corruption with concerted efforts towards political integrity and honesty. Mutual benefits in Central Asia and in the U.S. will accrue from Afghanistan’s counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics efforts.41

*Conclusion – History Repeating Itself – Or Writing The Present to Avoid Repetition in the Future?*

The American philosopher George Santayana (1863-1952) cautioned in "Life of Reason I" that "[t]hose who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."42 Our looking back at Matthew Hoh’s “ground truth” observations and rationale for resignation, President Obama’s refocused strategy in Afghanistan, and consideration of Just Cause – and other successful operations – can and should give us perspective on what we can and should accomplish with and on behalf of other nations in the quest for peace, stability, and security.

Kevin Govern is a veteran of Operation Just Cause in Panama and other deployments. He is now an Assistant Professor of Law at Ave Maria School of Law, and Homeland Security Adjunct Instructor for the California University of Pennsylvania. He teaches in his areas of expertise on national security law, military law and contracts law. Contact him at (239) 687-5390 or [khgovern@avemarialaw.edu](mailto:khgovern@avemarialaw.edu)

# 1. Obama’s Address on the War in Afghanistan, December 2, 2009, New York Times Online, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/02/world/asia/02prexy.text.html>

2. *Id.*

3. Letter, Matthew Hoh, Senior Civilian Representative of Zabul Province, Afghanistan, to Ambassador Nancy J. Powell, September 10, 2009, available online at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/hp/ssi/wpc/ResignationLetter.pdf?sid=ST>

# 4. DeYoung, Karen, U.S. official resigns over Afghan war, Washington Post, October 27, 2009, available online at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/26/AR2009102603394.html>

5. *Id.*

6. *Id.*

7. *Id.*

8. Letter, *supra* note 3, at 1.

9. Obama’s Address, supra note 1.

10. *Id.*

11. *Id.*

12. US Agency for International Development website, available at <http://www.usaid.gov/>. It describes itself at its website as “an independent agency that provides economic, development and humanitarian assistance around the world in support of the foreign policy goals of the United States.”

13. *See, e.g.,* Martins, Mark S., The Commander’s Emergency Response Program, Joint Forces Quarterly, Issue 37, 2005, at 46 et. seq., available at <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq_pubs/0937.pdf>. In the article, Martins says, “CERP originated as a stabilizing tool that commanders could use to benefit the Iraqi people. Initial resources came from millions of dollars of ill-gotten Ba’athist Party cash discovered by U.S. forces. This loot, along with the other regime assets, funded a variety of emergency projects.” CERP has grown in sourcing for operations and beyond Iraq to include US appropriated projects in Afghanistan as well.

14. Letter*, supra* note 3, at 2.

15. Obama’s Address, supra note 1.

16. *Id.*

17. Letter, *supra* note 3, at 2.

18. Obama’s Address, supra note 1.

19. *Id.*

20. Letter*, supra* note 3, at 3.

21. Obama’s Address, supra note 1.

22. *Id.*

23. Pollyannaish, adjective, defined as “[b]elittling and often insulting term for being absurdly optimistic and good-hearted, believing in a good world where everything works out for the best all tht (sic) time. Often in combination with being God-fearing and perceiving oneself standing on a higher moral ground than others. See, e.g., Pollyannaish, UrbanDictionary.com, available at

<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Pollyannaish>

24. Obama’s Address, *supra* note 1.

25. *Id.*

26. Letter, *supra* note 3, at 3.

27. Obama’s Address, *supra* note 1.

28. *Id.*

29. *Id.*

30*. Id.*

## 31. Military-Industrial Complex Speech, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1961, Public Papers of the Presidents, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1960, p. 1035- 1040, available online at <http://www.h-net.org/~hst306/documents/indust.html>

32. Obama’s Address, *supra* note 1.

33. Adapted from Govern, Kevin H., *Lessons from* Panama *apply to* Afghanistan,© Naples Daily News (December 17, 2009), available online at <http://www.naplesnews.com/news/2009/dec/17/lessons-panama-apply-afghanistan/>. The comments and observations made in that article are solely those of the author, unless otherwise stated or cited below.

# 34. *Id.*

35. *Id.*

36. Panama, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Fact Book, available online at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pm.html>

37. Afghanistan, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Fact Book, available online at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

38. Govern, *supra* note 33.

39. *Id.*

40. *Id.*

41. *Id.*

42. Santayana’s Law of Repetitive Consequences, in Santayana, George, 1 The Life of Reason (1905-06), *quoted in* Bartlett, John, Familiar Quotations 703 (15th Ed. 1980).

The Future of History: Context for American Foreign Policy

Mitchell M. Zais, Ph.D.

President, Newberry College

Before we can understand the current national security environment, it’s necessary to put the events we are experiencing in the international arena into an historical context. For only by knowing where we have been and understanding the trends that are shaping our future, can we navigate the perilous course through the uncharted waters ahead.

*The Evolution of the State* (Bobbitt, pp. 75-347)

Philip Bobbitt in his book *The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace, and the Course of History* (2002), shows how the "State,” as commonly understood, is a European invention. Since the Renaissance, the State has taken on a number of different forms. Each has varied in its form, how it gained legitimacy, and what bonded citizens to the state. In most cases, the evolution between forms of states was gradual, but not always. Wars and revolutions can change social systems quickly and dramatically. Sometimes, people are aware their society is changing rapidly. Other times, the process is so gradual as to not be clearly discernable.

During the 1500s Europe saw the rise of the *Princely States* or the City States. In this era, the state conferred legitimacy on the ruling dynasty. Citizens fought for Rome, for Florence, for Genoa, or for the Principality of Nuremberg. (pp. 79-94)

The Princely States were in large measure replaced by the *Kingly States* which were the prevalent form of organizing society between roughly 1550 and 1660. This was the age of the absolute monarchs. The dynasty or king conferred legitimacy on the state. As King Louis XIV observed, “*L’etat c’est moi*” (I am the state.). Members of the various kingdoms of Europe fought for their respective monarchs. (pp. 95-118)

Whereas the kingly state was organized around a person, *Territorial States* were defined by borders. Territorial states were ascendant between approximately1650 and 1789. The state derived its legitimacy through its ability to manage the country efficiently. This was the era of aristocratic leadership. The monarch was no longer the embodiment of sovereignty; he became the minister of sovereignty. Citizens owed allegiance to and fought for their country: Britain, France, Spain, or Prussia. (pp. 118-143)

The American and the French Revolutions lead to the establishment of the *State-Nation* which flourished between 1776 and around 1865. The state-nation derived its legitimacy from its ability to forge the identity of an ethnic-cultural group. This was the age of nationalism and of imperialism, an era of mass conscription and the mobilization of huge armies. Napoleon forged the first true state-nation. The conscripts of state-nations were led in war by professional officers: for the British Empire, the French Empire, or the Spanish Empire. In America it was the age of growth and westward expansion. (pp. 146-204)

Whereas the state-nation asked that the people serve the state and gained its legitimacy by forging a national consensus, its successor, the *Nation-State,* gains legitimacy by putting the state in service to its people and thus maintaining their welfare. The nation-state was the prevalent form of organizing societies from the close of the American Civil War and the unification of Germany in 1870 until the collapse of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of Yugoslavia. The era of the nation-state was marked by the explosive growth in universal education, social welfare, and governments at all levels that provided a broad array of services to their citizens. (pp. 205-209). This is what Americans know and understand. It’s what they take for granted as the natural order of things and as the paradigm for organizing national security affairs.

*A New Phase of History*

But this paradigm is shifting. We’re entering a new phase of history where the nature and purpose of the state is changing. This transition is impelled by three worldwide trends:

1. Nation-states are losing control of many aspects that have historically defined them.

2. Nation states are increasingly becoming economically integrated and interdependent.

3. Nation-states are experiencing increasing political disintegration and fragmentation.

Let’s look at the first of these. Nation-states are losing control of many aspects that have historically defined them. Nation-states have, in part, been defined by a common language, a shared culture, definitive boundaries, and the ability to influence the flow of information to their citizens. Let’s examine each of these

*First, nation-states are losing control of the languages which define them*. Here are some examples. English is becoming an international language. The French are fighting a rear-guard action to protect the "purity" of their language. But "*Franglaise*," a hybrid of French and English, remains the patois of the street and home. Throughout Europe and America growing percentages of residents speak a language at home other than the local language. The number of American families in which English is a second language has never been higher. In many metropolitan areas of the United States, public schools are a virtual United Nations of languages. For example, T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia has students with over 60 different native first languages. Similar trends in the mixing of languages is occurring in growing segments of Europe.

*Second, nation-states are losing control of the cultures which define them*. For example, America has more foreign-born citizens than any time in its history. Multiculturalism is a powerful trend throughout the country. More and more Americans hyphenate their identities: African-American, Hispanic-American, Cuban-American, Islamic-Americans, Korean-American, etc. France has an exploding population of Islamic and Black immigrants from its former colonies in North and sub-Saharan Africa. Germany is awash with immigrants from the Balkan wars and with "guest workers" from Turkey and other Islamic nations. The most common name for a newborn in Brussels, Amsterdam, and London is Mohammed. Other European countries are experiencing similar, dramatic immigration from the third world. Worldwide, local cultures are under assault from American movies, television, and music. American cigarettes, fast food, jeans, soft drinks, and many other aspects of our culture have permeated virtually every civilized nation around the globe, and many that aren't so civilized.

*Third, nation-states are losing control of their borders*. The United States has already lost control of its borders as have the nations of the European Union. Illegal aliens, drugs, and goods flow virtually unimpeded across these borders. Open markets and migratory populations in search of a better life have contributed to the growing irrelevance of international boundaries. Black markets based on illegally imported and exported goods flourish worldwide. Bordersare becoming increasingly meaningless. And the growing ease, speed, inexpensiveness, and prevalence of international travel are accelerating this change.

*Fourth, nation-states are losing the ability to control the flow of information to their citizens*. With the explosion of the Internet, the growth in satellite television, the proliferation of cell phones, and the ability to transmit information digitally around the world instantaneously, nation-states are losing the ability to control what their citizens know and think. Pitiful North Korea, pathetic Burma, a crumbling Cuba, and a communist China, are caught in the throes of modernization. All are losing the struggle to control the information which reaches their citizens. And as governments lose the ability to control information, they also lose the ability to control their citizens.

These four trends, growing linguistic fragmentation, expanding multiculturalism, increasingly irrelevant borders, and the ongoing loss of the ability to control access to information are examples of how nation-states are losing control of those things that have historically defined them.

The second trend leading to a new phase of history is that nation states worldwide are marked by increasing economic integration.

*In the process,* *nation-states are losing control of their own economies*. As markets become more integrated, as free-trade expands, and as transportation becomes cheaper, nation-states are becoming more and more interdependent. Disruptions in the global oil supply send shockwaves around the world. Changes in the stock market in Japan have a significant effect on markets in Europe, which in turn affect markets in the United States. Currency fluctuations in one country affect the economies of other countries. The European Common Market continues to expand and the growth of international trade agreements and free markets is accelerating. Trans-national corporations and banks are the norm.

An expanding global economy diminishes the ability of individual nation-states to manage their own economies. All of these changes reflect a growing international interdependence and economic integration.

But while nation-states are *externally* becoming more and more interdependent and integrated, a seemingly contradictory trend is occurring *internally.*

That trend is that nation-states worldwide are marked by increasing political fragmentation*.*  For example:

*Eastern Europe and Eurasia are devolving into smaller political units.* Never in modern

history have we seen such a radical transformation in the boundaries of nations. Maps of Europe and Eurasia drawn only twenty years ago are hopelessly out of date. This era of rapid change follows a period of almost 75 years when international boundaries were viewed as inviolate. The Soviet Union has fragmented into some 15 independent countries. Yugoslavia is now five or six different nations, depending on how you count them. The former Czechoslovakia has split in two. Bucking the trend, the two Germanys have united into one country, but the merger has been more difficult than either imagined.

*Sub-Sahara Africa is fragmenting along tribal lines*. Wars and insurgencies in sub-Saharan Africa are not so much about politics as they are about tribalism. The vast majority of the international boundaries in sub-Saharan Africa were drawn by white men in Europe without regard for the language, the culture, and the tribes of the native peoples. These obsolete boundaries are a legacy of colonialism. In vast expanses of the continent, primary allegiance is to the family and the tribe, not some distant national government. Wars in Rwanda, Angola, the Congo, and Liberia are examples that have been well covered in the press.

*The horn of Africa is also wracked by tribal violence*. Wars in Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea are all tribal. We can expect to see more fragmentation in this region and the establishment of new nations with new boundaries along the tribal lines.

*The Middle East is beset with tribalism.* As one Egyptian diplomat observed, “Egypt is the only nation-state in the Middle East. The rest are tribes with flags.” (Glass, p.3). Of course the great unanswered question in Iraq is whether or not the spirit of nationalism and national identity will be strong enough to overcome the centripetal forces of tribalism amongst the Shiite “marsh Arabs” of the South, the culturally distinct Kurds in the north, and the Sunnis who oppressed and murdered the other two tribes by the hundreds of thousands.

Finally, *China will experience difficulties holding its nation intact*. In the same way that the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia occurred as a consequence of increasing political freedoms, so too, as Communist China liberalizes it will experience similar problems. While most of China has a common written language, spoken dialects are barely intelligible from region to region. Agrarian and rural Chinese in the West have little in common with the industrialized and urban Chinese in the East. As the central government loosens control over the flow of information, the movement of peoples, and the details of daily commerce, they will experience increasing demands for local autonomy and independence. Recent unrest in Tibet is a harbinger of things to come. Political fragmentation in China will be a source of internal conflict for many decades.

In summary, we are at a watershed in history. The nation-state and its defining characteristics are evolving out of the control of central governments around the world. The Long War, which began in 1914, and ended 75 years later in 1989 with the collapse of the Soviet Union, was fought, and scores of millions died, to answer the fundamental question, "What sort of nation-state -- communist, fascist, or capitalistic democracy -- would lay claim to the legitimacy previously enjoyed by the Imperial state-nation of the 19th century?" (Bobbitt, p.19) While America’s enemies changed during the Long War, the issue remained the same. In the West, the legitimacy of fascism and communism were repudiated. In major sectors of the Islamic World, however, capitalistic-democracy is viewed with revulsion. And communists in China, Vietnam, North Korea, and Cuba struggle to maintain control of their people.

Only if we understand our past and appreciate current international trends, can we answer the questions, "What does the future look like?" and "Whither American foreign policy?”

First, let’s address the question, “What does the future look like?”

# *The Face of the Future*

There are two complementary, although slightly different, models for the future that best describe the situation now facing the United States. The first was drawn by Robert Kaplan (2000) in an astonishing work, *The Coming Anarchy*.

## The Coming Anarchy

Kaplan describes a number of trends which will contribute to the coming world-wide anarchy:

1. a steady degradation of security, law, and order,

2. continuing deterioration of infrastructures,

3. exploding populations with attendant environmental ruin.

*First, worldwide, there has been a steady degradation of security, law, and order*. Prison populations in the United States and around the world are exploding. Cities that were once international tourist destinations now have large zones where law-abiding citizens dare not go. Examples include parts of New York City, Washington D.C., Miami, Rio de Janeiro, Panama City and Colon in Panama, parts of greater Los Angeles, and many cities in Africa and the Middle East. The central government of Columbia controls only about two thirds of that huge nation; the rest is run by narco-guerrillas. Similar situations exist in major parts of Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela, and the Philippines. Vast stretches of sub-Sahara Africa are without any legal or justice systems whatsoever, and one’s only protection from human predators is allegiance to a tribal warlord. Similarly, large parts of Central Asia and the Caucuses, including Chechnya, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the five “Stans” – Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan -- are wracked with instability, insurrection, and the breakdown of society. In Somalia, Sudan and many parts of the surrounding nations in the Horn of Africa, as well as in parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan, the rule of the gun and the warlord has replaced the rule of law.

Even in the United States we are less and less secure in our public spaces. Airports today are emblematic of this trend. Recently, at the Super Bowl every one of the 70,000 fans was subjected to a pat-down search; there were 90 metal detectors deployed outside the stadium; there were about 30 bomb-sniffing dogs; and there were radiation detectors and high-tech monitors for biological and chemical agents. It was not so many years ago that virtually any tourist could enter the Pentagon, the White House, or the U.S. Capitol.

As an Army captain, I used to drive my convertible through the front gates of the White House and park next to the building. Today, the streets around the White House are closed to traffic. But we are not only concerned about terrorism in America’s highly visible and symbolic sites. High schools and middle schools across the country now have metal detectors at the doors and monitors in the halls. A student with a pocket knife, once the ever-present tool of every country boy, is severely punished. If you’re older than 50, you'll remember when college campuses did not require their own private police forces, secure doors on every dorm and classroom building, and centrally monitored surveillance cameras to protect their students from each other and from off-campus criminals.

Another consequence of the breakdown of law and order in America has been a steady flight of the middle class from our inner cities. Gated communities, which appeared only relatively recently in the United States, are another indication that the affluent are trying to protect themselves from perceived increasing lawlessness and the underclasses. The incredible, world-wide growth of the private security industry is another example of the steady degradation of security, law, and order.

*The second trend contributing to the coming anarchy is the deterioration of* *infrastructures that provide basic services in many parts of the world*. In a great number of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa roads, sewage treatment systems, drinking water systems, and power grids deteriorate with each passing year. In those countries wracked with tribal conflict, the situation is worse. In the United States, the meteoric growth in the bottled water industry is testimony to the growing distrust of the ability of our own governments to maintain the purity of drinking sources. The bill to repair old and crumbling bridges and roads across the United States grows yearly. Large, regional power failures are seen with increasing frequency. Worldwide, cities are becoming overwhelmed with burgeoning populations and infrastructures that simply can’t keep up. In large parts of the former Soviet Union the decaying infrastructure reflects decades of neglect and exacts an enormous human toil. Examples abound, from Mexico City to Rio de Janeiro, from St. Petersburg to Johannesburg.

*The third trend leading to the coming anarchy is the unprecedented ways that growing populations are stressing the environment.* For example, the rate of extinction of plants and animals is estimated to be between 10,000 and 100,000 species per year, along with severe degradation of their supporting ecosystems (Noss). The Sahara Desert is advancing southward, overtaking huge portions of once verdant lands. The Amazon Forest, the oxygen producer of the world, is being destroyed at the rate of over 20,000 square kilometers per year (Glanz, et.al., 1997). Oceans are being depleted of edible fish. In Africa, scores of large mammals are threatened with extinction, including gorillas, rhinos, and elephants. The environmental degradation of the former Soviet Union and parts of the Third World, including radioactivity and chemical contamination, is a serious concern. And ozone depletion and polar warming are now well proven.

The unfolding of events in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina is powerful testimony to the accuracy of Kaplan’s predictive analysis. We saw an unprecedented *breakdown of security, law, and order*. While the proximate cause of the flooding was a hurricane, it was the well predicted *deterioration of the infrastructure* of levees that produced the catastrophe we all watched. The enormous problems of raw sewage, chemical contamination, and oil leaks and spills all reflect the ways that *growing populations are stressing the environment.*

In summary, Kaplan posits a future where:

“West Africa is becoming *the* symbol of worldwide demographic, environmental, and societal stress, in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real ‘strategic’ danger. Disease, overpopulation, unprovoked crime, scarcity of resources, refugee migrations, increasing erosion of nation-states and international borders, and the empowerment of private armies, security firms, and international drug cartels are now most tellingly demonstrated through a West African prism” (p.7).

Kaplan has outlined one pessimistic view of the future. Samuel Huntington, in his enormously influential *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (1996) has described another.

### *The Clash of Civilizations*

According to Huntington, the world is divided along cultural lines. The *Western World* is comprised of North America, Europe, Israel, Australia and New Zealand. The *Orthodox* civilization is comprised of Eastern Europe, Russia, Bulgaria, Greece and Romania. The *Sinic or Chinese* culture encompasses China, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The *Buddhist* world includes Mongolia, Tibet, Laos, Cambodia, Burma, and Thailand. *Latin America* extends from Mexico to the southern tip of South America. The *Hindu* culture of India is a culture unto itself. Tao and Shintoism define the *Japanese* culture. The tribalism of sub-Saharan *Africa* is a distinctive culture. And then finally, there's the *Islamic World*. It extends from the southern Philippines and Indonesia, through Malaysia, into Bangladesh, and throughout the Middle East from Pakistan, through the Horn of Africa, and across north Africa to Morocco.

Huntington asserts that as national identities wane, and with the increasing irrelevance of national borders, peoples will coalesce along cultural lines. And at those places where different cultures meet, conflicts will occur.

The Muslim culture in particular has had difficulty coexisting peacefully everywhere it has come into contact with other cultures. In the southern *Philippines*, separatist Moslems wage an insurgency against the Roman Catholic central government. In neighboring *East Timor*, the Christian majority was slaughtered in large numbers in 1999 when, under United Nations auspices, they voted for independence. In *Nigeria*,attacks by radical Moslems have resulted in the murder of thousands of Christians. The history of *India* is replete with conflict between Moslems and Hindus. The Muslim Arabs of the *Middle East* despise the Western Jews of Israel and blame their own poverty and backwardness on Jewish plots. *North African* Muslims continue to murder and enslave Black Christians, and animists to their south, especially in the Sudan. The Moslems of *Bosnia and Kosovo* have been in conflict with the Orthodox Serbs of the region for centuries. In *Chechnya*, Muslims battle the Orthodox Russians for independence. Only secular *Turkey* seems to have learned to live in relative harmony with its neighbors, including the Orthodox Greeks to their west and the Jews of Israel to their south.

As one member if the White House National Security Council staff noted,

Take a map of the world. Draw a bright red star everywhere there is a shooting conflict of some kind. The picture that emerges is the outline of the Islamic arc: Nigeria, Algeria, the Sudan, Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, the FATA, Kashmir, Indonesia, the Philippines - and throw in the Balkans, Turkey and the PKK, and East Timor's breakaway from Indonesia. There are a few exceptions, … -- but not many. Islam is the only world religion that seeks to marry the power of the state with the power of God. [Europe experienced this same phenomenon] 500 years ago when the church attempted to use religion for political ends, a catastrophe that, in an attempt to stop the madness, produced the Treaty of Westphalia and the European state system. (Hooker, 2008)

Neither Kaplan's coming anarchy nor Huntington's clash of civilizations is a blueprint for the future. Both, however, are useful models for understanding the forces and trends that shape our current experiences in the international arena. Understanding these forces and trends, coupled with the evolution of the nation-state into a new way of organizing societies, can help us develop new approaches to U.S. foreign policy and provide guideposts to mark the way ahead into a perilous future.

*Dr. Mitchell (Mick) M. Zais is president of Newberry College. A graduate of the US Military*

*Academy at West Point, Dr. Zais retired from the Army as a brigadier general. He was an*

*assistant professor at West Point, commanded two rifle companies, an infantry battalion, a light*

*infantry brigade, and served as Deputy Commanding General, Fort Riley, Kansas. He also*

*served Chief of War Plans for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff and was Commanding General*

*of U.S. and Allied forces in Kuwait and was the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army Reserve*

*Command. His military awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, the*

*Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, the Air Medal, and the*

*Ranger, Airborne, and Combat Infantryman's Badges. Articles written by Dr. Zais have been*

*published in the Armed Forces Journal International, Military Review, and Parameters.*

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**Contested Morality in US Foreign Policy**

Janice Love

This essay addresses the debate among US Christian leaders over the morality of the United States’ March 2003 invasion of Iraq in the context of two larger scholarly foreign policy discussions. The first involves the nature and understanding of American power in the world. The second involves contending perspectives on where the current US government’s war against terrorism fits into the long-term path of American foreign policy. This assessment should contribute substantially to understanding contentious arguments over the legitimacy, or lack thereof, of the US government’s actions in Iraq, and the war on terrorism more generally.

Our ultimate conclusion is that, in international relations theory terms, the Iraq conflict represents the United States government’s apparent choice for hard over soft power. When governments choose to use hard power as the primary means of exercising influence, they strive to harness a sufficient stock of soft power, too, so that their actions will more be more widely perceived as legitimate. Religion is an important dimension of soft power, and governments often seek the blessings of religious leaders to help legitimize the use of hard power.

In the case of this war, however, there is a split within the US Christian community. The vast majority of church leaders representing historic, mainline Protestant and Catholic traditions, claim that the United States government’s choice to go to war and its prosecution of the war fail to meet the criteria of a just war contained in the just war doctrine. These US leaders have overwhelming support from their denominational affiliates abroad, including the late Pope John Paul II. In contrast, Christian leaders from the Southern Baptist Church and prominent US televangelists set aside the multidimensional and more complex historic just war doctrine in favor of applying one particular criterion adapted from the just war theory. They argue that the United States government, a legitimate political authority blessed by God to exercise Christian leadership in world affairs, chose a just course of action in prosecuting the Iraq war. These leaders’ endorsement of the war added soft power to the government’s exercise of hard power.

1. *The Hard Versus Soft Power Debate in International Relations Theory*

Since World War II, the concept of power has been at the center of the study of international relations. In general, most scholars would agree that power is the ability of political actors to achieve their goals. Packed into this assertion is a distinction between two aspects of power: *capabilities*, the resources an actor directly controls; and *influence*, the actor’s ability to change the values or behavior of another political player. More conservative analysts, the *Realists*, usually presume that capability causes influence, and consequently consider that little meaningful differentiation can be made between the two. More liberal scholars, the *Pluralists*, argue that interactions among political players can affect the conversion of capabilities into influence. Therefore, the distinction potentially makes a big difference.[[1]](#endnote-1)

Building on Pluralist assumptions, Joseph Nye[[2]](#endnote-2) revises and re-labels these distinctions to analyze US foreign policy. In his terms, capability becomes a sophisticated notion of *hard power*, while a multidimensional concept of *soft power* builds on and embellishes the idea of influence. As for definitions, hard power on the whole rests “on inducements (carrots) or threats (sticks).” This is a more material base.[[3]](#endnote-3) The United States has a large arsenal of both carrots and sticks. In contrast to this notion, soft power “co-opts people rather than coerces them,” and thereby gets them to do what you want.[[4]](#endnote-4) Therefore, the basis for soft power rests more in ideas than on material incentives, either of positive or negative kinds.

Building on Machiavelli’s view of power as a mixture of coercion and consent, Gramsci wrote extensively about the moral, political and cultural values of a dominant group becoming so widely dispersed that less powerful or even subordinate groups incorporate them as unquestioned common sense.[[5]](#endnote-5) In distinguishing soft power from the older notion of influence, Nye argues that soft power is only one form of influence, and that it is “more than persuasion…It is the ability to entice and attract. And attraction often leads to acquiescence or imitation.” Soft power inspires “the dreams and desires of others…”[[6]](#endnote-6)

Typical instruments of soft power include popular culture embodied, for example, in telecommunications such as film or television, as well as education and cultural exchange. As with hard power, governments do not control all these instruments, but in contrast to governments’ considerable command of a large amount and wide array of instruments of hard power, non-state actors often have greater access to soft power. Furthermore, in the second half of the twentieth century, nongovernmental organizations and transnational social movements have become remarkably adept at using soft power to their advantage. Again, following Nye, in an information age, countries increasing their soft power are likely to be those with a culture closer to prevailing global norms; access to multiple channels of communication in which they can frame the issues; and credibility based on their domestic and international performance.[[7]](#endnote-7) As with capability and influence, the close relationships between hard and soft power can be significant, and they often reinforce each other. Both can be central to achieving an actor’s goals. “But,” warns Nye, “soft power is not simply the reflection of hard power.”[[8]](#endnote-8)

Nye uses the concepts of hard and soft power to analyze the larger frameworks of foreign policy choices facing the United States government and society. His terms will be used in this paper more narrowly to examine contentious claims about the morality of the Iraq War. This examination, however, needs to be set in the wider context of two contemporary and contending views of the history of US foreign policy.

*II. Contending Perspectives on US Foreign Policy: Benevolent Domination Versus Imperialism*

Since the end of the Cold War, analysts have sought to define the next challenge to America’s physical security and basic social, political, and economic values in grand, overarching perspectives. Samuel Huntington’s (1996) famous assertion of a “clash of civilizations” provided one possibility of “the West against the Rest,” whereas Robert Kaplan suggested that the crucial test would be massive chaos, i.e., an anarchic world with disintegrating nation-states, warring ethnic groups, overpopulation, and struggles over increasingly scarce resources.[[9]](#endnote-9)

9-11 jolted everyone, and for those searching for a way to characterize security problems in a post-Cold War world, a new clarity emerged. In the wake of the 9-11 attack, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman popularized a particular version of the history of large-scale challenges to the United States and its allies in the 20th and 21st centuries. Fascism arose in the first half of the 20th century and was defeated by nations that embraced freedom and democracy. Then communism reared up menacingly in the second half of the century, only to implode at century’s end due to its inability to compete effectively with national systems of democracy and capitalism backed by large, credible military arsenals. The event of 9-11, Friedman argues, demonstrated that terrorism, under-girded by religious extremism, constitutes the new mega-threat to freedom and democracy in the new era.[[10]](#endnote-10)

From this point of view, even if not all analysts would agree with Friedman’s particular telling of the big trends of history, the United States had an *obligation* to invade Iraq. This duty arose not primarily from the need to protect the physical security of our homeland but rather in the long term to exercise “the revolutionary side of U.S. power,” to instill a model of freedom and democracy in a region that has little experience of such. This makes the Iraq war, in Friedman’s language, a war of choice, not necessity; a war “to unleash a process of reform in the Arab-Muslim region that will help it embrace modernity and make it less angry and more at ease with the world…” Our job, he says, “is to build a regime in Iraq that won’t produce any more battered human skulls.”[[11]](#endnote-11) This grand mission, a war without end carried out by a “benign US hegemon,” may not be finished in his lifetime, he reports, or even that of his children. It is a “war for what America stands for.”[[12]](#endnote-12)

This grand perspective finds no fault in characterizing the United States as imperial or hegemonic in its post Cold War domination of world affairs. American domination is a good thing for infusing other nations and cultures with the values of democracy and religious liberty. The second grand perspective, however, orients its understanding of US foreign policy in the 20th and 21st centuries as part of a larger project of imperial aspirations that began in the 19th century.[[13]](#endnote-13)

Inspired in part by the British and other European empires, U.S. political leaders actively began pursuing a substantial American presence in Asia and Latin America in the late 19th century. This vision has been well documented by prominent historians and students of foreign policy.[[14]](#endnote-14) One of the early emblematic and specific policy manifestations was “supple and highly innovative.” For example, the United States demanded an open door policy with China in 1899. The US would honor China’s territorial integrity if allowed the same privileges granted to European powers and Japan, i.e. a foothold from which to access Chinese markets. American policy makers’ expectations were that US companies and others would “reap more than their fair share of the benefits. An ostensibly level playing field actually tilted in favor of American enterprise. In short, the policy of the open door was ‘a classic strategy of non-colonial imperial expansion.’”[[15]](#endnote-15) And it applied remarkably well to other regions of the world, too.[[16]](#endnote-16)

From this perspective, World War I became a “crusade to graft American values onto the entire world and to thwart all others – such as Lenin – who fancied themselves engaged in an analogous undertaking,” with any notion of isolationism being only a “legend.”[[17]](#endnote-17) Meanwhile, also in the early decades of the century, US military incursions repeatedly propped up authoritarian dictators in Latin America and the Caribbean.

After World War II the United States continued to pursue open doors, leading the Western world and the global economy by default, a state of affairs that many labeled “Pax Americana.” By the 1970s, West European and Japanese economic prowess, built on the foundation of their American-assisted post-war recovery, gave rise to the need for U.S. leadership in a coordinated, more multilateral approach to global affairs that exercised open door policies through international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Paris Club. Moreover, the United States’ military guarantee of West European and Japanese security against the possible threat of Soviet aggression provided all these big economic and political players strong incentives to work together under US leadership. Yet, a number of US-backed coups d’etat in support of “third world” dictators as well as the Vietnam War demonstrated a readiness to use military force to preserve global influence, especially in competition with another large imperial presence in the world, the USSR.

By 1991, the dissolution of the USSR and the disintegration of its military might brought an end to the Cold War. Russia as well as most of its former satellites became open for American commercial influence, too. And as indicated by Nye, the United States began to enjoy a very rare position in world history. No other nation comes close currently to exercising this country’s military, economic, political, and cultural power.

Many American policy makers and citizens hold fast to the belief that the US is a reluctant imperial power and that the nation’s hegemonic reign is benign. Analysts who view the US imperial impulse as stretching back more than a century would disagree, however, as do many people in various parts of the world subjected to the blunt instruments of US military or economic might. In this context, from this perspective, the March 2003 invasion of Iraq appears to be one more imperial attempt at opening doors to further US economic, military, political, and cultural interests, rather than the grand experiment of a benevolent hegemon undertaking democratic nation building. The imperial perspective on American foreign policy notes that among the scores of US overt and covert military invasions or interventions, only two resulted in the implementation of democratic capitalism: Germany and Japan. The outcome in Iraq, if anything other than chaos, they claim, is more likely to resemble Cuba in 1898 or 1906, Nicaragua beginning in 1909, Haiti beginning in 1914, Guatemala or Iran in 1954, the Congo in 1960, Vietnam in the early1960s, Chile in 1973, or other such instances where the consequences of US military involvement undercut or crushed the possibility of budding democratic impulses.

*III. US Christian Leaders and their Foreign Policy Perspectives*

Although not entirely divorced from hard power, religion, moral philosophy and ideology feature soft power– as does law. These potent societal sources of influence often provide important foundations for national or wider cultures, and thus can implicitly or explicitly enhance or undermine a government’s exercise of power. Governments often recognize the significance of such sources of soft power by seeking assistance and public blessings from religious leaders or others with moral or ideological legitimacy.

The missionary expansion of Christianity that anticipated and accompanied imperial conquest by European powers and the United States has its own history about which much is written. Christian missions often played the paradoxical role of providing soft power for sanctioning the expansion of empires while at the same time humanizing them. A famous African adage, for example, states: “When the missionaries came, Whites had the bible and we had the land. Now we have the bible and the Whites have the land.”

When the colonies of Africa, Asia, and Latin America sought their independence, most Protestant missions also pursued freedom from ecclesial colonialism, that is, separated their governance from their parent churches in the West. Thus Anglicans, Methodist, Presbyterians, Baptists, Lutherans, etc. in these various continents became churches in their own right, no longer controlled, for example, by the English Anglicans, the German Lutherans, or the United States Methodists, Presbyterians, or Baptists. These newly independent leaders often spoke with different interests in and understandings of world affairs. Among Catholics, Vatican II, convened by Pope John XXIII, called on the faithful worldwide to use their convictions to address the problems of the world. Furthermore, the rise of liberation theologies out of Latin America, Asia, and Africa in the 1960s and 1970s challenged both Protestant and Catholic Christians in rich countries to examine their previous support for or complicity in systems of colonial and neo-colonial domination, the racism embedded explicitly or implicitly in their doctrines, and their use of resources in a world of extreme poverty. Theologians from the so-called third world also began to offer new insights in the interpretation of sacred scripture, the articulation of doctrine, and practices of the faith. Moreover, these changes across the world unfolded at the same time that the civil rights movement challenged racially divided Christian churches at home.[[18]](#endnote-18)

The two broad and contending historical perspectives on the history of US foreign policy, together with shifts globally within Christendom and in secular world affairs, had a profound influence on US church leaders. In the first half of the 20th century, most readily (but not uncritically) understood the United States to be a benevolent hegemon. Many believed that American military, economic, and political international engagement made the world safer for democracy and human well-being. In the second half of the century, however, the challenges articulated by theologians from the so-called third world, combined with deep domestic unrest over the Vietnam War and other military interventions, brought new insights and understandings for church leaders. They now had to function in worldwide Christian arenas where many church leaders from other parts of the globe criticized the United States as an oppressive imperial power. Whether or not American church leaders agreed with this perspective, they could not ignore it.

Vietnam provided the watershed to shift many US church leaders’ perspective. Most began to take official stands against the Vietnam War reluctantly and fairly late. For example, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a 1966 statement concluding that the United States’ prosecution of the war was reasonable. By 1968, their enthusiasm had officially waned, but only by 1971 did they explicitly call for an immediate halt to US military engagement in Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, Vietnam was a major turning point in their understanding of the US and world affairs. Thereafter most leaders of the Catholic and mainline Protestant churches have called fairly consistently for restraint in the use of American military force to address international problems, giving strong preference to conciliation and negotiation.[[19]](#endnote-19) Yet, with often carefully considered nuance, many continued to embrace non-military US foreign policies that promoted causes such as human rights, debt relief and economic development. If judged by their public pronouncements below, most can be characterized as multilateralists rather than unilateralists. Nevertheless, their relative reticence in recent decades to deploy their soft power to bless the use of force is noteworthy.

By contrast, the “New Christian Right” (NCR), which arose in force in the 1970s, on the whole endorses the use of military might to achieve US foreign policy goals. The NCR consists of organizations headed by televangelists like Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, Bob Jones II, and Franklin Graham who find unity in their commitment to change laws and government structures in light of their understanding of the biblical ideal. For much of the 20th century, these conservative evangelical and fundamentalist Protestants on the whole shunned political engagement. Rapid social changes during the 1960s, mainline religious opposition to the Vietnam War, and the perceived threat of secular humanism transformed them into activists. As Charles Kimball notes “(t)he literature and rhetoric of groups in the New Religious Right reveal nostalgia for an ideal time that has been lost – usually connected somehow with the founders of the country – and warnings about the danger awaiting this nation if it continues to turn its back on God.”[[20]](#endnote-20)

These leaders’ largest political mobilizations began in the 1980s and continued through the early 1990s. They articulated a clear theological position: God ordained the United States to be a Christian nation, a city on the hill, a light to the nations. Often labeled Dominion or Reconstruction Theology,[[21]](#endnote-21) this understanding of the faith asserts “that Christianity must reassert the dominion of God over all things, including secular politics and society.”[[22]](#endnote-22) Followers seek “to remove the political and institutional barriers to God’s law in order to impose the rule of God’s law.”[[23]](#endnote-23) As Karen Armstrong describes it “God gave Adam and later Noah the task of subduing the world. Christians have inherited this mandate and they have the responsibility of imposing Jesus’ rule on earth before the Second Coming of Christ.”[[24]](#endnote-24)

This theology obviously embraces the perspective that the United States domination in world affairs as well as the government’s foreign policy decisions are benevolent, but followers push further. America has an obligation to, and blessings from God to spread US influence and that of the Christian faith worldwide. For example, this perspective most steadfastly condemned any attempts at rapprochement with the USSR during the Cold War. Leaders of this persuasion have been invited to the White House regularly under the Nixon, Reagan, and second Bush administrations. Interestingly, the primary spiritual adviser to President George H.W. Bush was Archbishop Edmond Browning, the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church. During the 1991 Gulf War, in keeping with similar expressions by other mainline religious leaders, Archbishop Browning regularly, both in private and in public, challenged the president’s decision to mobilize the military because he and others believed that all other options had not yet been exhausted (one of the criteria for a just war).

In sum, as mainline Catholic and Protestant church leaders in the late 20th century became more critical of US foreign policy, particularly as exercised through military means, they became less welcome to provide counsel to the executive branch. Moreover they became increasingly reluctant to lend their considerable stock of soft power to the military campaigns and foreign policy decisions that lacked moral legitimacy from their perspective. Therefore, since the 1970s, presidents and their administrations, with some exceptions, have relied more on the religious right not only for counsel but also for blessing their decisions to go to war or to intervene militarily in other nations. Thus, in recent decades, the US government’s hard power has been increasingly augmented with religiously legitimizing soft power from the religious right.

These overall trends of contending perspectives on US foreign policy as well as in church leaders’ reactions to them provide the backdrop against which to understand divergent Christian positions on the morality of the Iraq war. Prior to discussing the specifics of this debate, however, we review the spectrum of traditional Christian ethical positions on war.

*IV. Christian Perspectives on War*

Three traditions, with some noteworthy variations, dominate Christian ethical perspectives on war. These are the *pacifist*, *crusade*, and *just war* traditions. The oldest is the pacifist.

Most scholars agree that in the whole Christ’s teaching and example reinforce a message that violence and war are wrong. For the first three to four centuries, the early church adhered to pacifism, which meant opposition to all killing, military service, and warfare. In addition to being true to Jesus’ own witness, a range of reasons explains this stance. They included generally the nonpolitical orientation of church life within the Roman Empire and an expectation of a near-term apocalypse. This perspective declined with the Constantinian establishment of Christianity in the fourth century, but it survived nonetheless to be embraced by number of prominent Christian leaders including Francis of Assisi, Erasmus of Rotterdam (15 and 16th centuries), and in the 20th century, Martin Luther King, Jr. The historic peace churches, including the Mennonites, the Church of the Brethren, and the Society of Friends (Quakers) continue to adhere to pacifism.

Early in the 4th century, Constantine adopted Christianity and linked it to the state. Drawing on Plato and Cicero, Augustine (4th and 5th centuries) outlined the beginnings of the just war theory, which evolved across the medieval and modern periods, and is explored more fully in a parallel essay. A distinction is usually made between the just resort to war (*jus ad bellum*) and just conduct in war (*jus in bello*). The six most common principles of jus ad bellum are: (1) just cause (in response to an aggressive attack or serious threat of evil), (2) just intent (not to devastate another nation totally or seek self-aggrandizement, but to restore peace with justice), (3) limited objectives (with the values preserved through force being proportionate to those sacrificed through force), (4) last resort (exhausting all possibilities of peaceful settlement prior to pursuing war), (5) legitimate authority (a properly constituted government), and (6) reasonable hope of success. The two main principles of *jus in bello* are: (1) discrimination (respecting and protecting the lives of noncombatants, and committing no atrocities, reprisals, looting, or wanton violence) and (2) proportionality (inflicting damage that is strictly proportionate to the ends sought, i.e., the war’s harm must not exceed the war’s good).[[25]](#endnote-25)

In the 1960s and 1970s, liberation theology attempted to transform this tradition into one that would support *just* revolutions. This variation essentially challenged the criterion of legitimate authority. Since so many brutal and authoritarian governments in so many places had no popular legitimacy, any use of force against regime opponents could not be judged to appropriately within the standard. In contrast, however, if insurgents had broad and deep support, they could be considered a legitimate authority allowed to consider exercising the use of military force.

Nonetheless, just war teachings, including most variations on this tradition, and pacifism seek to prevent war. They presume that peace is better than war. If war cannot be avoided, however, a just war ethic seeks to restrict and reduce its horrors. Although begun by the Greeks and refined by Christian theologians, principles similar to those from the just war doctrine can be found in many religions. They now have also become partially embodied in secular international humanitarian law.

A third tradition within Christianity is that of the crusade where Christians wield the sword as a matter of faith. The violent savagery of the early crusades beginning in 1095 has modern echoes among religious extremists today, but virtually all churches and prominent religious leaders reject this option.[[26]](#endnote-26)

The Roman Catholic Church formalized and continues to adhere to the just war tradition. In its 36 member churches, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCCUSA) gathers under one ecumenical umbrella most mainline Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox member denominations in the country. Although differences exist among them, most members of the NCCCUSA also adhere to some variation of just war teachings, as do most Christians around the world. Thus, most churches adhere to the belief that under very limited, rigorously and prayerfully considered conditions, Christians might use violence. A few NCCCUSA members, however, like their counterparts in other countries, come from the historic peace church tradition that continues to uphold pacifism as a faithful witness.

As noted earlier, when commenting on or giving advice to the US government in its exercise of foreign policy, these mainline denominations, the Roman Catholic Church, and the NCCUSA have, on the whole, called for restraint in the use of military force, especially since the Vietnam era. Church leaders regularly draw attention to the intimate connection between means and ends, a principal tenet of both just war teachings and of pacifism. Achieving just and peaceful ends becomes increasingly difficult to accomplish through the use of violent means. Furthermore, church leaders often lift up the need for systems of common security that safeguard the well being of all people everywhere. They assert that the safety and success of the United States can only be achieved and sustained through relationships of reciprocity that secure justice and freedom for all peoples and nations.

*V. Churches’ Responses to The 2003 invasion of Iraq*

In the months leading up to the March 2003 US invasion of Iraq, most of the NCCCUSA member churches called on the US government to continue to seek alternatives to war. They repeatedly expressed the judgment that US decision-makers had not yet exhausted all policy options short of declaring war. The NCCCUSA itself issued statements and drew together leaders of other faith traditions to give a united witness for peace both from within the mainline Christian community and across religions. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops carefully compared the government’s rationale for the Iraq war to the criteria enunciated by the just war doctrine. They concluded that this war did not meet these standards and called on world leaders to step back from the brink to “work for a peace that is just and enduring.”[[27]](#endnote-27) All churches called for prayers for American leaders, world leaders, and all the people standing in harm’s way. The World Council of Churches, a fellowship of about 340 Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox churches from more than100 countries, made similar statements, as did the Pope John Paul II on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church worldwide. Rarely have Christian churches the world over been so united in their call for the pursuit of a more peaceful and just alternative to a particular war.[[28]](#endnote-28)

Yet, some prominent Christian leaders in the United States disagreed. Officials of the Southern Baptist Convention, for example, like the prominent televangelists (Pat Robertson, Jerry Fallwell and Bob Jones II), argued that a legitimate political authority was pursuing a just cause, using war as a last resort. This particular adaptation of just war theory emphasizes the criterion of legitimate authority. It trumps all the others due its grounding in Paul’s admonition in Romans 13:1. “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God.” According to NCR leaders’ application of just war principles and their proclivity to understand God to be blessing American hegemony in world affairs, the war against Iraq became an unpleasant but necessary duty of a Christian nation.[[29]](#endnote-29)

Others, like Jean Bethke Elshtain, argued in favor of the war against Iraq on similar but somewhat different grounds. Elshtain and a number of other Christians have for more than a decade expressed the need to forge a 21st century standard for humanitarian intervention. When should governments violate the sovereignty of a particular nation and intervene militarily to save lives in places plagued by massive injustice, gross violations of human rights, or campaigns of ethnic cleansing? Many people of good will the world over believe that situations like Bosnia, Kosovo and Rwanda demonstrated the need to intervene with military force when helpless populations face dire peril. Arguing that America, as the world’s sole superpower bears an awesome but necessary burden in a violent world, Elshtain supported the United States government’s invasion to remove the oppressive regime of Saddam Hussein. The implicit comparison was to how the US military under the Clinton administration had bombed Serbia when its government threatened ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Furthermore, she attacked mainline Christian leaders for opposing the Iraq war by accusing them of wearing ideological blinders inherited from their earlier, youthful resistance to the Vietnam War. Her analysis seemed to rule out any possibility of a genuine conviction that this particular war fell far short of the classical criteria of a just war.[[30]](#endnote-30)

The World Council of Churches (WCC) also took up the question of ethical standards for humanitarian intervention. Like Elshtain, this global ecumenical organization expressed the need for guidance on when and how the community of nations should intervene to respond to ominous circumstances within particular countries. Although still in the process of studying the issue, the WCC has repeatedly emphasized the need to uphold the principles of international law. In order to be legitimate and legal, and thereby undergirded with soft power, any intervention for the protection of peace, security and human rights must be decided and implemented multilaterally, not by individual governments working unilaterally. From the WCC’s point of view, the world’s common security is best upheld, and the full implementation of human rights everywhere is best secured, through use of mutually agreed, longstanding multilateral processes of pursuing peace with justice for all nations, not just one or a few. If one or more governments, like the United States, find multilateral institutions like the United Nations to be less than perfect instruments for pursuing security and human rights, work to reform them rather than to sideline or undermine them, the WCC urges.[[31]](#endnote-31)

To address these kinds of complex issues and the question of how to create peace and justice in the long term, in 1999, the NCCCUSA adopted a policy statement, “Pillars of Peace for the 21st Century.” Rather than repeat the criteria for resorting to violence, this statement approaches the dilemma more positively and proactively by examining comprehensively the conditions that make for security and attainment of human rights. The document provides an important framework within which to ponder America’s role in the world.[[32]](#endnote-32) The statement reads, in part:

*Peace rooted in justice requires increased political collaboration and accountability within the United Nations system, among regional bodies, governments, local authorities, peoples’ organizations, and global economic structures to seek the common good and equality for all…*

*Peace rooted in justice requires the participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups, seeking to promote justice and peace, in those mechanisms capable of redressing the causes and consequences of injustice and oppression.*

*Peace rooted in justice requires the nurturing of a culture of peace in homes, communities, religious institutions, nations and across the world; the use of non-violent means of resolving conflict; appropriate systems of common security; and the end of the unrestrained production, sale and use of weapons worldwide.*

*Peace rooted in justice requires respect for the inherent dignity of all persons and the recognition, protection and implementation of the principles of the International Bill of Human Rights, so that communities and individuals may claim and enjoy their universal, indivisible and inalienable rights….*

Others also have sought to provide an alternative to just war theory and pacifism. One group of theologians and conflict resolution specialists came up with a list of ten key guidelines for pursuing peace with justice:

*1. Support nonviolent direct action. 2. Take independent initiatives to reduce threat. 3. Use cooperative conflict resolution. 4. Acknowledge responsibility for conflict and injustice and seek repentance and forgiveness. 5. Advance democracy, human rights, and religious liberty. 6. Foster just and sustainable economic development. 7. Work with emerging cooperative forces in the international system. 8. Strengthen the United Nations and international efforts for cooperation and human rights. 9. Reduce offensive weapons and weapon trade. 10. Encourage grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations.[[33]](#endnote-33)*

Attempts at moving away from debates over just and unjust wars in favor of charting ethical principles in order to undercut violence are still a work in progress. They do not yet pervade Christian doctrines and teachings. It remains to be seen whether they will come to be convincing standards or guidance among church leaders and the Christian community. Only then might they have any impact on larger policy discussions, whenever purveyors of soft power lobby those with access to large arsenals of hard power. At present, however, there is more agreement on the validity if not detailed application of just war theory approaches, even while the active search continues for a broader Christian framework more oriented toward conflict resolution or avoidance than the use of force as such in our globally interrelated community.

*VI. Conclusion*

The United States invasion of Iraq constitutes one of its more controversial foreign policy decisions in recent history. Many allied governments objected, as did their populations. Many adversaries also objected, as did their populations. International organizations such as the United Nations were bypassed when they sought to slow the rush to war. In the face of such substantial opposition, the United States government risked much of its stockpile of soft power at the same time that it was mobilizing one of the strongest applications of hard power the world has witnessed in recent decades.

If judged by Nye’s indicators of how to increase soft power, the Iraq war may squander the United States government’s credibility and undercut future attempts to communicate its support for prevailing global norms of liberalism, pluralism and autonomy through a benevolent hegemony. Many across the world who already believed the United States to be a self-serving and sometimes ruthless imperial power will see the war as confirming their point of view that America had little soft power to spare.

By contrast, the virtually unprecedented display of unity against the war among mainline US Protestant churches, the US Catholic church, national and world ecumenical institutions, and the Vatican more closely fits Nye’s indicators of how to build a political actor’s reserve of soft power. However, the deep disputes between the NCR and its televangelists on the one hand, with the mainline Christian leaders on the other, display a continuing divide over how America’s Christians view the United States’ role in the world. This spawns in turn significant differences over when and how to support or undercut a government’s exercise of hard power with religious institutions’ soft power. The questions stand on the border of religion and politics, religious doctrine and international relations theory.

*Dr. Janice Love is Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics, Candler School of*

*Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. She previously served as Chief Executive,*

*Women’s Division, United Methodist Church (Deputy General Secretary, General Board of*

*Global Ministries, Women’s Division), and as Associate Professor, Department of Religious*

*Studies at the University of South Carolina. Dean Love is the author of numerous publications*

*on international affairs and theology, among them Southern Africa in World Politics: Local*

*Aspirations and Global Entanglements, Boulder, CO: Westview, 2005; and The U.S. Anti-*

*Apartheid Movement: Local Activism in Global Politics, New York: Praeger, l985.*

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1. **NOTES**

   1. *See*, more generally, John Baylis, and Steve Smith, *The globalization of world politics: An introduction to International Relations* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 378; Charles W. Kegley, Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, *World Politics: Trend and transformation* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St Martin’s, 2001), 457-62. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. 2. Joseph Nye, *The paradox of American power: Why the world’s only superpower can’t go it alone* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 35-36. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. 3. “In military power, we are the only country with both nuclear weapons and conventional forces with global reach. Our military expenditures are greater than those of the next eight countries combined, and we lead in the information-based ‘revolution in military affairs.’ Economically, we have a 27 percent share of world product which…was equal to that of the next three countries combined (Japan, Germany, France). We are the home of fifty-nine of the hundred largest companies in the world by market value (compared to thirty-one for Europe and seven for Japan.) Of the *Financial Times’* listing of the 500 largest global companies, 219 were American, 158 European, and 77 Japanese. In direct foreign investment, we invested and received nearly twice as much as the next ranking country (Britain) and accounted for half of the top ten investment banks. American e-commerce was three times that of Europe, and we are the home of the seven of the top ten software vendors. Forty two of the top seventy-five brands were American, as well as nine of the top ten business schools.” (ibid., 8). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. 4. Ibid., 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. 5. Far from being a Marxist, Nye nonetheless asserts that “*Soft power* rests on the ability to set the political agenda in a way that shapes the preferences of others…The ability to establish preferences tends to be associated with intangible power resources such as an attractive culture, ideology, and institutions…Soft power arises in large part from our values…expressed in our culture, in the policies we follow inside our country, and in the way we handle ourselves internationally. Like love, (soft power) is hard to measure and to handle, and does not touch everyone, but that does not diminish its importance”(ibid., 9). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. 6. Ibid*.*, 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. 7. Ibid*.*, 69. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. 8. For instance, “(t)he Vatican did not lose its soft power when it lost the Papal States in Italy in the nineteenth century. Conversely, the Soviet Union lost much of its soft power after it invaded Hungary and Czechoslovakia…” (ibid., 10). [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. 9. Robert Kaplan, *The coming anarchy: Shattering the dreams of the post Cold War* (New York, NY: Random House, 2000); ­­\_\_\_. *The ends of the Earth: A journey to the frontiers of anarchy* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996);

   \_\_\_. *Balkan ghosts: A journey through history* (New York, NY: St Martin’s Press, 1993). [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. 10. Thomas Friedman, “The Middle East: An Update on Changing Events,” The Solomon-Tenenbaum Lecture in Jewish Studies (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 2003). [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. 11. Friedman, “The Meaning Of a Skull,” *New York Times* (April 27, 2003) and “The War Over The War,” *New York Times* (August 3, 2003). [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. 12. Friedman, “Come the Revolution.” *New York Times* (April 2, 2003). [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. 13. Andrew J. Bacevich, *American empire: The realities and consequences of U.S. diplomacy,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Michael Ignatieff, “Why Are We in Iraq?” *New York Times Magazine* (September 7, 2003); Johnson Chalmers, *Blowback: The costs and consequences of American empire,* (New York, NY: Henry Holt, 2000); Arundhati Roy, “*Confronting Empire*,” *speech*, Porto Alegre, Brazil (January 28, 2003). [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. 14. For an excellent account of the argument, *see* for example Bacevich, *American empire: The realities and consequences of U.S. diplomacy,* p. 26 ss. Beginnig in the 19th century (…) “the weltanschauung guiding American politics was a simple one: ‘problems are solved by growth or further expansion’… ‘a charming but ruthless faith in infinite progress fueled by endless growth’ became central to the American way of life. But the closing of the frontier by the 1890s and the onset of severe economic crisis in the same decade obliged Americans to look farther afield. But the United States pursued expansion abroad in a way that reflected particular American interests and values. After a brief, unsatisfactory experiment with old-fashioned empire in the wake of the Spanish-American War, American leaders abandoned efforts to assemble an array of distant possessions as the preferred means of sustaining economic growth. Given the costs of pacification, administration, and defense, colonies offered a poor return on the dollar. In addition, the nation’s own revolutionary heritage and its traditional anti-imperial sympathies were at odds with the notion of U.S. soldiers subduing alien populations. The challenge confronting American leaders was to formulate policies that provided the benefits of empire without its burdens. In that regard, what mattered was not ownership or even administrative control but commercial access.” [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. 15. Bacevich, *American empire: The realities and consequences of U.S. diplomacy,* 26. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. 16. “America’s own commitment to openness testifies to its own benign intentions – and therefore justified American exertions on behalf of an open world… ‘Most imperialists believed that an American empire would be humanitarian, and most humanitarians believed that doing good would be good for business.’ The dogma of openness became a component of American ideology, the principle upon which the world should be organized, the basis for a broad national consensus on foreign policy, and a rationale for mustering and employing American power. In essence…the open-door policy legitimated ‘the endless expansion of the American frontier in the name of self-determination, progress, and peace.’” (ibid*.*, 26). [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. 17. Ibid*.*, 27 [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. 18. Kenneth D. Wald, Religion *and Politics in the United States.* 5th edition (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1997). [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. 19. Ibid*.*, 272-277. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. 20. Charles Kimball, *When religion becomes evil: Five warning sign,* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 2002). [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. 21. Some scholars claim Reconstruction Theology to be an extreme form of Dominion Theology. This distinction does not make a substantial difference for the analysis here. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. 22. Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the mind of God: The global rise of religious violence, 3rd*. edition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003). [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. 23. Ibid*.*, 118. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. 24. Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God.* (New York, NY: Ballentine, 2000), 361. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. 25. Mark R. Amstutz, *International ethics: Concepts, theories, and cases in global politics* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999); Terry Nardin, and David R. Mapel, eds. *Traditions of International Ethics* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992). [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. 26. Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the mind of God.* [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. 27. See the National Conference of Catholic Bishops’ web site for the full text ([usccb.org/bishops/iraq.htm)](http://www.usccb.org/bishops/iraq.htm)). See also the NCCCUSA web site for a series of statements made by its governing bodies and interfaith gatherings, as well as program initiatives that promote peace with justice and liturgical resources (ncccusa.org). See also the web site of your own denomination to discover how it currently and historically has approached the issues of peace and justice. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. 28. For more information, consult the web sites for the World Council of Churches (wcc-coe.org) and the Roman Catholic Church (vatican.va/phome\_en.htm); see also, Jim Wallis, “Dangerous Religion: George W. Bush’s theology of empire.” *Sojourners Magazine* (September-October, 2003). [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. 29. See Art Toalston and Dwayne Hastings, “Land: Military action again Iraq meets ethical standards for war,” September 9, 2002 (bpnews.net); and Jason Hall, “Fighting a Just War in Iraq,” April 2003 (sbclife.net) [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. 30. *See* different works by Jean Bethke Elshtain, “Thinking about War and Justice,” The Religion and Culture Web Forum (May 2003). [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. 31. WCC Central Committee, “The Responsibility to Protect: Ethical and theological Reflections” (2003). [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. 32. See the NCCCUSA web site for the complete text (ncccusa.org) [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. 33. Quoted in Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil*, 184. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)