Terrorism and Political Violence
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ftpv20

A Counterterrorism Strategy for the Obama Administration

Bruce Hoffman [a]
[a] School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University , Washington, D.C., USA
Published online: 19 Mar 2010.

To cite this article: Bruce Hoffman (2009) A Counterterrorism Strategy for the Obama Administration, Terrorism and Political Violence, 21:3, 359-377, DOI: 10.1080/09546550902950316

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09546550902950316

Terrorism and Political Violence, 21:359–377, 2009

ISSN: 0954-6553 print/1556-1836 online
DOI: 10.1080/09546550902950316

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

A Counterterrorism Strategy for the Obama Administration

BRUCE HOFFMAN

School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., USA

This article assesses the scope and nature of the current terrorist threat to the United States and suggests a strategy to counter it. Al-Qaeda continues to pose the most serious terrorist threat to the U.S. today. If the September 11, 2001 attacks have taught us anything, it is that al-Qaeda is most dangerous when it has a sanctuary or safe haven from which to plan and plot attacks. Al-Qaeda has acquired such a sanctuary in Pakistan's Federal Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and its North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and surrounding environs. Accordingly, the highest priority for the new American presidential administration must be to refocus our—and our allies'—attention on Afghanistan and Pakistan, where al-Qaeda began to collapse after 2001, but has now re-grouped. This will entail understanding that al-Qaeda and its local militant jihadi allies cannot be defeated by military means alone. Success will require a dual strategy of systematically destroying and weakening enemy capabilities—that is, continuing to kill and capture al-Qaeda commanders and operatives—along with breaking the cycle of terrorist recruitment among radicalized "bunches of guys" as well as more effectively countering al-Qaeda's effective information operations. The U.S. thus requires a strategy that harnesses the overwhelming kinetic force of the American military as part of a comprehensive vision to transform other, non-kinetic instruments of national power in order to deal more effectively with irregular and unconventional threats. This article first discusses the scope and details of the terrorist threat today and then proposes a counterterrorism strategy for the new presidential administration. It focuses first on creating a micro approach to address the deteriorating situation in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. It then considers the requirements of a broader macro strategy to counter terrorism and insurgency.

Keywords Afghanistan, counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, global war on terrorism, inter-agency coordination, Obama presidential administration counterterrorism options, Pakistan, strategy, terrorism

Al-Qaeda had much to celebrate in 2008. Although still a shadow of its former pre-9/11 self, the movement has re-grouped and re-organized in the lawless region along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. It thus once again has a sanctuary in which it can train and operate (primarily in Pakistan's Federal Administered Tribal Areas and its North-West Frontier Province and surrounding environs) and moreover once more is marshalling its forces to continue the struggle against the United States, which Osama bin Laden formally declared thirteen years ago.

Address correspondence to Bruce Hoffman, Georgetown University Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service Security Studies Program, Mortara Building, 3600 N Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20007, USA. E-mail: brh6@georgetown.edu

Equally momentously, 2008 marked the twentieth anniversary of al-Qaeda's founding.[1] The movement thus joins a select group of terrorist organizations that have survived at least two decades or more. Such groups are often the most consequential and pose the greatest terrorist threats. They are learning organizations that have adapted and adjusted to even the most formidable governmental countermeasures to continue their struggle. They are like the archetypal shark in the water that not only must move forward to survive, but *can* move forward and therefore is able to survive. The renowned terrorism scholar, David Rapoport, estimated that the life expectancy of at least 90 percent of Cold War-era terrorist organizations was less than a year, and that nearly half of those that lasted that long had ceased to exist within a decade.[2] His work has recently been updated by Audrey Kurth Cronin, who reports that thus far in the 21st Century the average lifespan of terrorist groups is between five and ten years.[3] Clearly, terrorist groups today show a degree of resiliency and capacity for survival that has increased their average life span some five to ten times that of their Cold War counterparts.[4]

In al-Qaeda's case, who could have foreseen in 1988 where the movement would be today? It has survived the onslaught directed against it as part of the global war on terrorism led by the United States, the world's remaining superpower. It has rebounded from the setback and loss of Afghanistan in 2001 meted out by an unprecedented international coalition that was mobilized against terrorism as a result of the 9/11 attacks. Al-Qaeda today is among the globe's most universally recognized and best known "brands." Its founder and leader is a source of inspiration, emulation, and empowerment. Finally, al-Qaeda and bin Laden can credibly, however ignominiously, claim to have changed the course of history. It is precisely this sense of both catharsis and historical inevitably that fuels and sustains al-Qaeda today.

The U.S., by contrast, seems in a less enviable position given the course of the war on terrorism. Eight years into this monumental struggle, the U.S. is at a crossroads. The sustained successes of the war's early phases (e.g., between October 2001 and March 2003) now appear to be challenged by al-Qaeda's resuscitation in South Asia; the rising power of affiliated and associated groups, like al-Qaeda in the Maghreb; and, most importantly by the movement's ability to continue to appeal to its hardcore, political base and thus ensure a flow of recruits into its ranks, money into its coffers, and support among its core base for its aims and objectives. The war on terrorism has frequently been termed a "war of ideas." Yet, while the U.S. has been tactically successful in killing or capturing key al-Qaeda leaders, their key lieutenants, and many of their foot-soldiers, we have been less successful in strategically countering al-Qaeda's ideological appeal, its ability to radicalize sympathizers, and its continued capacity to energize supporters and attract recruits and money and thereby sustain its struggle.

Moreover, as with much else in the Bush Administration's "war on terror," long-term progress was sacrificed for short-term expediency. This is not a matter of debate but rather was the conclusion of the declassified key judgments of the seminal April 2006 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) entitled, "Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States," which warned that the U.S. invasion and continued, perceived occupation of Iraq has radicalized the Muslim world and potentially generated untold new terrorist recruits,[5] along with the equally important declassified key judgments of the July 2007 NIE, entitled, "The Terrorist Threat to the US Homeland," which described an al-Qaeda which had successfully re-grouped and re-organized along the lawless frontier between Pakistan and

Afghanistan and was again capable of attacking the U.S.[6] The fundamental conclusions of that 2007 NIE have since been validated by public statements made in 2008 by its principal author, Ted Gistaro (then National Intelligence Officer for Transnational Threats),[7] and the then-Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, General Michael V. Hayden.[8] Thus, the failure to put in place an effective long-term counterterrorist strategy takes its place in the queue of other short-term "fixes" that have had the effect of delivering immediate results while arguably undermining the prospects of long-term security. Foremost among these[9] has been the prolonged confinement of detainees at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba without charge or the accordance of prisoner-of-war status. This measure, undertaken early in the "war on terror," has been repeatedly and often vehemently criticized both by Americans themselves and also by some of America's closest allies. In addition, it has generated considerable opprobrium throughout the Muslim world and has become a rallying cry for terrorist recruitment and incitement of further anti-U.S. violence. Accordingly, the Guantánamo detention policy, however well intentioned, has arguably proven counterproductive: undermining, rather than enhancing, U.S. national security, prestige and stature.[10]

This perception of a fundamental asymmetry between America's war on terrorism and the damage inflicted on al-Qaeda was highlighted by a BBC poll taken just before the 2008 U.S. presidential election. Nearly a third of Americans polled (29 percent), for instance, believe either that al-Qaeda is in fact stronger today than it was on September 11, 2001 or that the war on terrorism has had no effect on it.[11] Similarly, an average of only 22 percent of persons surveyed in 22 out of 23 countries believe that al-Qaeda has been weakened, while three in ten believe that the U.S.-led war on terrorism has either had no effect on al-Qaeda (29 percent), and almost a third (30 percent) believe that al-Qaeda today is stronger.[12]

Questions about al-Qaeda's longevity, admittedly, have recently been raised by the repudiations of the movement that some leading Islamic ideologues and theologians have issued.[13] Tangible manifestations of the corrosive effect that these denunciations have had on Muslim public opinion have also been observed in additional developments such as the Sunni tribes "awakening" in al-Anbar and other provinces in Iraq; protests against suicide bombings by Algerians and other North African Muslims; and, a succession of public opinion polls across the Muslim world, all allegedly pointing to a significant decline in al-Qaeda's standing among Muslims worldwide.[14]

But, while the latest polling results among mainstream Muslim opinion and the defections of many leading jihadi ideologues is a major blow to al-Qaeda, neither by any means constitutes a knockout punch.[15] Further, as welcome as the declines in popular opinion may be, there still remains a solid, hardcore base of support for al-Qaeda from which the movement can continue to draw upon for recruits and support. Appealing to this hardcore of like-minded radicals and extremists—which have traditionally been al-Qaeda's political base—is arguably the movement's most important priority today. It is only when this core erodes that the beginning of the end of al-Qaeda can more confidently be proclaimed. Indeed, al-Qaeda's efforts to preserve this base may be behind the dramatic upsurge in the release of al-Qaeda video- and audiotapes over the past three years.

It should also be noted that other terrorist organizations have soldiered on—often for decades—despite declining popular support and disavowals from leading ideologues. The Red Army Faction (RAF or "Baader-Meinhof Gang") in West Germany

is such an example. Throughout its final decade of existence the RAF enjoyed miniscule popular support and was widely condemned and disparaged by the West German intelligentsia. It never numbered more then two dozen or so terrorists—that is, the actual trigger-pullers and bombers. Yet, the RAF was able to continue to impose a reign of terror on West Germany completely divorced from the reality of their small size, limited public support, and popular disparagement. When the RAF finally collapsed it was because of the loss of their sanctuary in East Germany.

Indeed, al-Qaeda's sanctuary in Pakistan accounts for the movement's vitality today and the growing threat that it presents to the stability and security of both that country and Afghanistan, and indeed to the U.S. and the West. Every day that the U.S. allows the unsatisfactory situation along both borders to continue is another day that al-Qaeda and its allies have to regroup, reorganize, and marshal their strength. The al-Qaeda of 2008, it should again be noted, is in fact a mere shadow of its pre-9/11 self. It does not have the freedom of movement, massive personnel numbers, robust network of training camps and operational bases, functioning international infrastructure, and considerable largesse that it possessed eight years ago when it was located in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. Its key operatives and senior commanders are relentlessly hunted and, between July 2008 and June 2009 at least ten have been sighted, fixed, and killed in Pakistan by U.S. Predator drones.[16] But, despite the comparatively far more modest amenities and confining nature of Pakistan's FATA and surrounding provinces, al-Qaeda has nonetheless been able to reconstitute its global terrorist reach. Al-Qaeda has also shown itself to have a deep bench of well-trained, experienced, and battle-hardened veterans from which to continually draw and continue to replenish its ranks despite the inroads made by the U.S. Predator strikes. Accordingly, the threat that even a weakened, diminished al-Qaeda still poses cannot be discounted. It is exactly when we are lulled into complacency and our defenses are down, that al-Qaeda will strike.

The First Strategic Priority of a New Administration Must Be a Micro Approach that Addresses the Deteriorating Situation in Both Afghanistan and Pakistan[17]

The central front in the war on terrorism today is not Iraq, but the lawless border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan. America's continued preoccupation with Iraq has already exacted a heavy price in terms of mounting instability and growing jihadi strength in both South Asian countries. Equally significant is the fact that virtually every major terrorist attack or plot of the past five years has emanated from al-Qaeda's reconstituted sanctuary in Pakistan's FATA or NWFP. At least seven major incidents—including the July 2005 London transport suicide bombings and the 2006 plot to blow up American and Canadian airplanes while in-flight from London—can be directly linked back to al-Qaeda and to the movement's training camps and command and control centers in Pakistan.[18] British intelligence officials believe that the number is closer to 30—and that figure includes only those attacks planned for the UK specifically.[19] As conducive as this area has already proven in facilitating the planning and plotting of new international terrorist operations, in the absence of a new U.S. strategy and approach to the region it is likely to become an even more amenable terrorist operational environment, especially as Pakistan's new and uncertain civilian leadership embarks on its stated intention to conclude a series of mutual non-aggression pacts with the jihadi forces arrayed along the

border. Although these agreements are intended to end the upward spiral of suicide attacks that have convulsed Pakistan during the past two years, they do not apply to the escalating insurgency across the border in Afghanistan being prosecuted by these same groups. Thus, the Pakistani jihadis are having their cake and eating it too: a policy of non-interference by Pakistan's security forces alongside a free hand to continue to strike with impunity both in Afghanistan and doubtless even further afield (i.e., internationally).

As a result, a concatenation of at least some fourteen different terrorist and insurgent groups based in Pakistan routinely cross the border to carry out attacks in Afghanistan.[20] Insurgent activity is thus at record levels, with nearly a 50 percent increase over 2007 attacks.[21] "The foreign influence" behind this dramatic upsurge in insurgent operations, the U.S. military believes, is "huge."[22] Arabs, Turks, Chinese, Uzbeks, and Chechens comprise an international jihadi contingent based in Pakistan that is actively fomenting, assisting, and participating in the attacks. Al-Qaeda's role in particular is seen as pivotal. It acts primarily as a "force multiplier": providing training and advice and otherwise strengthening existing capacity among indigenous insurgent groups. The standard basic insurgent training package of riflery and field craft, for instance, is augmented by al-Qaeda instruction in advanced ambush techniques and the use and emplacement of increasingly sophisticated improvised explosive devices. Al-Qaeda additionally provides overall strategic guidance and assists in the coordination of operations between the Taliban and other insurgents. It imparts useful non-combat skills as well: teaching local jihadis how to plan and execute psychological and information operations, develop and cultivate new sources of funding, and generally improve and strengthen operational expertise and organizational resiliency. U.S. commanders specifically cited al-Qaeda's sanctuary in FATA as the reason for the escalation of insurgent attacks in Afghanistan. "The insurgency here," one observed, "is fed by arms, expertise and guidance from al-Qaeda" personnel based in Pakistan's Bajaur Agency in FATA and Malakand area of the NWFP.[23]

"The trends across the board are not going in the right direction," Admiral Mike Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has lamented. "I would anticipate next year would be a tougher year."[24] U.S. military commanders in Afghanistan believe that al-Qaeda and its Pakistani and Afghan counterparts have three core objectives for the region:

- Defeat the United States military in Afghanistan and destroy the forces of democracy both in Afghanistan and Pakistan;
- Defend the FATA from Pakistani governmental interference and external intervention; and,
- De-stabilize and negate all governmental authority in "Pashtunistan"—the Pashtun tribal belt spanning Pakistan and Afghanistan.[25]

Although al-Qaeda and its local jihadi partners have yet to achieve the first objective, they can derive great satisfaction from having made considerable progress with respect to the other two. It is now a matter of urgency for the U.S. to prevent al-Qaeda and its allies from attaining all three. A new policy, a fresh approach, and better and more sustained focus on and engagement with these two countries thus has been acknowledged by the new American presidential administration. It is not only Afghanistan's and Pakistan's futures that are at stake, but America's security and indeed the ultimate success of the war on terrorism.

The problem is that until now the U.S. has no effective political or military strategy for either country and appears to treat them separately and not synergistically. Given that the security challenges in both countries are ineluctably symbiotic, any serious effort to stabilize and secure Afghanistan must begin with a clear and consistent policy designed to achieve the same in Pakistan. As Seth G. Jones and I wrote in *The National Interest* last year, "Defending Afghanistan will not eradicate a terrorist network based in Pakistan, but failing to defend Afghanistan will almost certainly give that terrorist movement new momentum and greater freedom of action. In concrete terms, succeeding in both Afghanistan and Pakistan will require embracing . . . the holy trinity of counterinsurgency: security, governance and development."[26]

Accordingly, the first step on either side of the border is to clear territory held by militant groups. This is the "secure and serve the population" dictum that is the essential foundation of any effective counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign and indeed has been the guiding principle of General David H. Petraeus's successful strategy in Iraq.[27] In Afghanistan at present there are simply too few American and coalition military forces, and especially too few American civilian experts, as well as inadequate Afghan security forces, to achieve this. Some 80,000 coalition military forces, for instance, are stationed in Afghanistan compared with nearly twice that number in Iraq. American troop strength is even more disproportionate. U.S. military force levels in Iraq, for example, are now at 120,000 personnel; while just over 47,000 American troops are deployed to Afghanistan. Hence, while the U.S. military, other coalition forces, and the Afghan army can *clear* and *build*, they generally cannot *hold* territory—the third and most-critical leg of the core counterinsurgency triumvirate. This is another cardinal principle of General Petraeus's command guidance. "Hold areas that have been secured," his instructions state. "Once we clear an area, we must retain it."[28]

The result of not having the capacity to achieve this in Afghanistan was poignantly explained to me by a U.S. Army intelligence officer when I was in Afghanistan last year. "It takes us six months to build a school, it takes them [the insurgents] six minutes to burn it down."[29] The effect of such setbacks, moreover, goes far beyond brick and mortar. The negative impact on popular support for the Afghan government and support for the American presence is incalculable. Afghans are thus encouraged to cooperate with American, coalition, and Afghan forces that deploy to a new area, rendering the communities that have just benefited from this development vulnerable to insurgent attack.

"Live among the people. You can't commute to this fight," is another of General Petraeus's pivotal emphases.[30] A successful counterinsurgency, embodying the same principles that worked in Iraq, cannot be prosecuted in Afghanistan without sufficient troop strength. Thus, a surge of U.S. forces to Afghanistan is not an option, but a necessity. Personnel will have to be shifted as expeditiously and prudently as possible as part of a gradual, but steadily accelerating draw-down of American troops stationed in Iraq. In addition, more effective use of American combat forces already in Afghanistan needs to be effected. Troops currently assigned nation-building tasks, for instance, could be reallocated to providing more consistent and pervasive security—if the civilian expertise within places like the U.S. Agency for International Development or the Departments of State, Justice, Commerce, or Agriculture could be harnessed for Afghanistan. The inability of civilian agencies thus far to fully adapt to a counterinsurgency mission means that the U.S. military

has to shoulder the main responsibilities for governance and economic-development activities.

The issue is thus not only one of an Iraq-style surge of more brigades, but also about the capacity and ability of non-Department of Defense U.S. government agencies to engage in a COIN mission. Our NATO allies will also have to be persuaded of this priority. Given that public opinion in every NATO country with on-the-ground military commitments in Afghanistan with the exception of Britain favors withdrawal,[31] this is admittedly a tall order. But our NATO allies must be made to understand that the existential threats facing Afghanistan and especially Pakistan by al-Qaeda and their regional jihadi allies also directly impact the security of Europe and the U.S.—as the al-Qaeda plots previously detailed show. The provision of additional American and coalition military forces would also enhance and accelerate the training of Afghan security forces. Current plans to double the size of the Afghan Army in the next two years to 134,000 personnel is an important—although belated—step forward. But this will cost between $2 billion and $2.5 billion a year, an amount at least three times Afghanistan's total revenue for 2008[32]—thus necessitating still larger aid from the U.S. and its NATO partners. Indeed, the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan is a direct reflection of the hitherto anemic funding of the counterinsurgency there, largely because of our preoccupation with Iraq. "We're like the Pacific theater in World War II," a senior U.S. Army civil-affairs commander complained when I visited Afghanistan last year. "We will get more resources after we defeat Berlin," is how he described current U.S. priorities. He pointed to the fact that the civil-affairs-planning cell in Iraq had a staff of eighty—compared with nine in Afghanistan[33]—despite the fact that Afghanistan is larger both in terms of population (31 million versus 27 million) and geography (647,500 square kilometers compared with 432,162).

But this "top-down" approach to building security must also be accompanied by "bottom-up" approaches on both sides of the border.[34] Because power in the Pashtun belt of tribal areas spanning both Afghanistan and Pakistan has historically been decentralized, any successful strategy must adopt a bottom-up approach that involves working with local tribes, sub-tribes, and clans. Those groups that have either been victimized or marginalized by the Taliban and foreign fighters need to be the focus of such efforts, which entail the provision of arms, training, and logistical support. Because traditional tribal governance structures have sufficient legitimacy at the grassroots level, this bottom-up approach is critical—not least since many groups may be especially amenable to such overtures given the revenge they might seek for the usurpation of their power that "Talibanization"—the accretion of Taliban power and control—has created.

Across the border, the situation in this respect is complicated by the Pakistani military's reluctance both to fight its own countrymen and embrace core COIN principles. Even more problematically, Pakistan's military is understandably wary that it should not be seen, in the words of one of its generals, to be "fighting an American war."[35] Further, the perception among senior Pakistani military officers is that they are already doing all they can—and more—to support the U.S. in the war on terrorism. "When we keep hearing we are not doing enough," a corps commander told me when I visited Pakistan last August, "we think, what more can we do?"[36] But what stands out from these protestations is not how much the Pakistan military is or is not doing but rather the absence of a clear strategy along with a conspicuously poor understanding of COIN doctrine and operations. There is a Vietnam-era quality

of déjà vu to the Pakistani military's focus and emphasis on insurgent body counts as key metrics of success but which largely neglects the most critical center of gravity in any counterinsurgency—the security, support, and allegiance of the local populace. Although the problem of refugee flows and internally displaced persons that anti-militant operations inevitably cause is recognized, government efforts to alleviate this suffering and ensure the population's support appear singularly inadequate and unfocused, if not non-existent. The number of people fleeing Bajaur state as a result of Pakistani military operations in August 2008 was well in excess of a staggering 200,000 persons. The extent that the problem was acknowledged in any meaningful way was in the following observation of one Pakistani commander. "The fight is going quite successfully, the latest operations in Bajaur have gone very good. The militants have suffered significantly. In fact, the thing is that the locals suffer a lot for all this and are migrating. The population becomes mad at the militants."[37] No evidence, however, was offered that the refugees were in fact blaming the elusive militants for their misfortune and not the visible soldiers whom they would inevitably have seen as directly responsible for their upheaval.

Indeed, there is no counterinsurgency strategy in Pakistan. Apart from military sweeps akin to Vietnam's patently ineffective "search and destroy" approach, the Pakistani military seems aloof to the exigency of a fully integrated and coordinated COIN strategy. "Sixty-one years of doctrine argue against the Pakistani Army ever becoming capable of counterinsurgency," one diplomat noted during a discussion I had in Islamabad.[38] The famed "oil spot" strategy,[39] pioneered more than a century ago by the colonial French army in North Africa, and its more recent, successful application in Iraq, was completely absent from any discussions with Pakistani commanders about military operations in the FATA and NWFP. "If there's a vacuum," another diplomat told me, "it will be filled and there has been a vacuum for a long time [in the FATA and NWFP] that the Pakistan government has not filled."[40]

Accordingly, government authority in both the NWFP and FATA is receding alarmingly—while that of the Pakistani Taliban in particular (the Tehrek-e-Taliban, or Movement of the Taliban, led by Baitullah Mehsud) is expanding perilously. "The Taliban is totally in control" in the FATA, one knowledgeable observer explained, "and have basically wiped out the old tribal system" of traditional governance. Some 200 maliks (tribal leaders), for example, have been killed over the past two years—and replaced with more compliant individuals who are now "advised" by Taliban liaison officers who in fact exercise final say over tribal matters. "Creeping Taliban influence and deepening access to more areas," is how another diplomat assessed the situation in Pakistan. The same, unfortunately, can be said of Afghanistan.[41]

Providing consistent, expanding security is thus the first critical step in COIN. The second and third steps, as noted above, are governance and development. This is encapsulated in General Petraeus's operational guidance for Iraq to "Foster... legitimacy"; "Build relationships"; and, "Look for Sustainable Solutions."[42] Achieving this in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, however, is equally fraught in both places. In Afghanistan, at least, we are in control and both we and the Afghan government know what is needed and how to achieve it. The problem there is inadequate numbers of personnel to implement a holistic COIN strategy.[43]

In Pakistan, the challenge is more complex and, as also noted above, will require a change in government and military mindset. The essence of the U.S. relationship with Pakistan in fact is that of a patron with to date apparently precious little leverage or influence. Generous amounts of U.S. aid—to the tune of some $10 billion

between 2001 and 2008—have of course flowed to Pakistan. But, according to two authoritative reports by the U.S. General Accounting Office, a legacy of neglect and inadequate oversight has largely vitiated the intended impact of much of that assistance.[44] At the risk of stating the obvious, more and better oversight and accountability is needed over the disbursement of this aid linked to clearly defined and agreed upon metrics of effectiveness. Because Pakistan is politically and strategically isolated in the region[45] and arguably has no credible foreign power to turn to for support but the U.S., exercising this leverage and influence should not be beyond the realm of possibility. The Obama administration must therefore seek to increase and enhance its influence through more concerted engagement and increased training along with the oversight argued above. "This is not an American war, but our war," one senior Pakistani general told me. "It is a war for our grandchildren."[46] Like this flag officer, the Pakistani military establishment must be made to understand the need to adopt a genuinely holistic COIN strategy in order to counter the powerful centrifugal forces that are plunging their country into disarray and undermining its fragile democratic institutions.

Accordingly, a second crucial step in forging such a COIN strategy is addressing governance challenges in both Pakistan's tribal areas and Afghanistan as well. Government institutions in both places are weak, social and economic conditions are among the lowest in the world, and reinvigorated political reform and economic development efforts are therefore critical. In Pakistan, the government is eager to obtain funding for development, but has been less willing to politically liberalize the tribal areas. Although the 1973 constitution declares that all citizens are equal before the law, because of its historical legacy of de-centralized tribal rule the FATA was deliberately excluded. The inhabitants of that region, accordingly, do not enjoy the political and legal rights that citizens of Pakistan are accorded. During the past decade, the right to vote was extended to the tribal areas and elections were held in 1997 and 2002. However, despite persistent demands by some political parties and civil-society organizations in the region, they have not been allowed to extend their activities in the tribal areas. Further reforms are thus required and the Pakistani government needs both to be persuaded of this and encouraged and supported by the U.S.

The third step involves promoting economic development. Though an essential prerequisite, security improvements by themselves are not sufficient to ensure the sustained progress. Indeed, security efforts will almost certainly prove inchoate without the provision of tangible economic benefits to local, disaffected communities. The tribal areas on both sides of the border have long been the least served by their respective countries' governments in terms of health, roads, schools, electricity, water, and other public services. This inequality has bred frustration, animosity, and worse, and needs to be addressed through improved security, systemic political reform, and then concerted, well-resourced economic development in support of a coordinated COIN strategy.

One absolutely vital aspect of an effective COIN strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan that has not yet been discussed is information operations (IO). Among the core principles of General Petraeus's guidance for Iraq are to "Fight the information war relentlessly." As General Petraeus explains,

> Realize that we are in a struggle for legitimacy that will be won or lost in the perception of the Iraqi people. Every action taken by the enemy and

> our forces has implications in the public arena. Develop and sustain a narrative that works and continually drive the themes home through all forms of media.

Equally critical is to "Be first with the truth." General Petraeus explains that this entails "Get[ting] accurate information of significant activities to the chain of command, to Iraqi leaders, and to the press as soon as is possible. Beat the insurgents, extremists, and criminals to the headlines, and pre-empt rumors."[47]

Unfortunately, in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, to the extent to which General Petraeus's guidance has been followed, it has been by the Taliban movements in both countries and not by U.S., coalition, or host-country governments. The Taliban's accelerating accretion of power and influence on both sides of the border in fact is fueled not only by outright violence and intimidation but also by sophisticated information operations—that is, the packaging, production, and dissemination of propaganda. "The [Pakistani] Taliban's IO is really good," a diplomat I met with in Islamabad marveled.[48] I heard identical encomiums across the border in Afghanistan only a few months before. "The Taliban's IO campaign is as strong as ever," one U.S. Army intelligence officer told me last year; while another lamented that the Afghan Taliban "is a hell of a lot better at IO than we are."[49]

Once dismissed as techno-phobic Luddites, the Taliban movements on either side of the border are displaying a newfound flair for 21st century communications. The Afghan Taliban, for instance, has created several Web sites and regularly uses al-Qaeda's production company, al-Sahab ("The Clouds") Media, to make videos. These communications are vastly superior in quality and clarity of message to the Taliban's previous efforts. Its use of the Internet has also dramatically increased: both to spread propaganda and recruit potential fighters. And the Afghan Taliban now publishes newspapers, such as *Zamir*, and magazines, such as *Tora Bora* and *Sirak*.[50]

Meanwhile, the Taliban in Pakistan similarly disproves the Western conception of an austere religious movement consumed with violence and stuck in the Middle Ages. The reality in fact is something closer to the slick, nimble, rapid response PR machines associated with modern politics everywhere. From ages-old techniques, such as encouraging the spread of news of the systematic killings of the tribal maliks by word-of-mouth, to distinctly modern means of mass produced, widely distributed DVDs depicting the maliks' public execution by beheading, the Taliban covers all its media bases and ensures a submissive and compliant populace in the areas it controls.[51] In this respect, the Taliban has learned well from the guidance and instruction that al-Qaeda's practiced propagandists and those of its Kashmiri jihadi allies routinely provide. For instance, any American Predator (unmanned aerial vehicle) strike these days no matter the target or the result is immediately jumped on by Taliban publicists and decried in press releases and news conferences as an unprovoked, cowardly attack on civilians in which countless babies and children have died. Thus, the Taliban view is quickly and effectively propagated before the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) public affairs office can even react, much less issue a press release or hold a news conference. Yet another example of the Taliban's newly acquired IO prowess is its efforts to completely undermine an American-funded "hearts and minds" initiative to eradicate polio in the FATA through vaccination. Tribesmen are told that the campaign is actually a malevolent plot to sterilize the territory's male population.[52]

"It's fighting the IO [information operations] piece that's most important," a U.S. Army colonel at a forward operating base (FOB) in Khowst Province, Afghanistan told me last year. "The use of the nonlethal stuff is what changes communities. Bullets don't work to change [this] fight; IO does. Through effects, through governance."[53] Yet, American, coalition, and host-nation efforts in this respect lag far behind those of their enemies in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The next section explains the emphasis on non-kinetic alongside kinetic operations in COIN as part of a global counterinsurgency strategy (GCOIN) to replace the existing conceptualization of the global war on terrorism (GWOT).

A Macro Global Strategy to Counter Terrorism and Insurgency[54]

Although the phrase the "Long War" has now unfortunately fallen out of fashion, its fundamental premise is unassailable: the U.S. is likely to still be fighting the war on terrorism, countering insurgency, and involved in nation-building efforts in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and elsewhere for at least the next decade or more.[55] Indeed, this was precisely the thrust of Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates's landmark address at the National Defense University last September.[56] To a significant degree, our ability to carry out such missions effectively will depend on the ability of American strategy to adjust and adapt to the range of challenges we see in the nature and character of our adversaries—both kinetic and non-kinetic. At the foundation of such a dynamic and adaptive strategy must be the ineluctable axiom that successfully countering terrorism as well as insurgency is not exclusively a military endeavor but also involves fundamental parallel political, social, economic, and ideological activities. The predominantly tactical "kill or capture" approach and metric that has largely guided our counterterrorist and counterinsurgent efforts to date is too narrow and does not sufficiently address the complexities of these unique operational environments. The adversaries and the threats we face today in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and elsewhere are much more elusive and complicated to be vanquished by mere decapitation. What is required today and will be in the future to ensure continued success, therefore, is a more integrated approach to a complex problem that is at once operationally durable, evolutionary, and elusive in character. In sum, we will need to adjust and adapt our strategy, resources, and tactics to formidable opponents that, as we have seen, are variegated, dispersed, mobile, and themselves highly adaptive.

That the above description conforms as much to the current insurgencies in Afghanistan and Pakistan as to that of al-Qaeda and the radical jihadi threat, speaks volumes about the challenge this operational environment poses to U.S. national security. An effective response will thus ineluctably be predicated upon a strategy that effectively combines the tactical elements of systematically destroying and weakening enemy capabilities (the "kill or capture" approach) alongside the equally critical, broader strategic imperative of breaking the cycle of terrorist and insurgent recruitment and replenishment that have respectively sustained al-Qaeda and fueled the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan and upheaval in Pakistan.[57]

Accordingly, rather than viewing the fundamental organizing principle of American national defense strategy in this unconventional realm as a global war on terrorism (GWOT) as it has been to date, it may be more useful to re-conceptualize it in terms of a global counterinsurgency (GCOIN). Such an approach would *a priori* knit together the equally critical political, economic, diplomatic, and developmental sides inherent to the successful prosecution of counterinsurgency to the existing dominant

military side of the equation. This ineluctable principle of countering insurgency was first defined by Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer in Malaya more than 50 years ago. "The shooting side of the business is only 25% of the trouble and the other 75% lies in getting the people of this country behind us," Templer famously wrote in November 1952, responding to a communist directive from the previous year that focused on the increased "cajolery" of the population.[58]

Greater attention to this integration of American capabilities would provide incontrovertible recognition of the importance of endowing a GCOIN with an overriding and comprehensive, multi-dimensional policy. Ideally, this policy would embrace several elements, including a:

- clear strategy;
- defined structure for implementing it; and, a
- vision of inter-government agency cooperation, and the unified effort to guide it.

Success will thus ultimately depend on how effectively the U.S. can build bridges within our own governmental structure and untangle lines of authority, de-conflict overlapping responsibilities, and improve the ability to prioritize and synchronize interagency operations in a timely and efficient manner. Organizations will therefore have to do—or be compelled to do—what they have been reluctant to do in the past: reach across bureaucratic territorial divides and share resources in order to defeat terrorists, insurgencies, and other emerging threats.[59] Clarifying these expectations and processes is a critical step in efficiently addressing contemporary threats to U.S. security as is creating incentives to more effectively blend diplomacy, justice, development, finance, intelligence, law enforcement, and military capabilities and coherently generating and applying the variety of resources needed to defeat terrorist and insurgent threats.

Even the best strategy will prove inadequate if military and civilian agency leaders are not prepared to engage successfully within ambiguous environments and re-orient their organizational culture to deal with irregular threats.[60] A successful GCOIN transcends the need for better tactical intelligence or new organizations. It is fundamentally about transforming the attitudes and mindsets of leaders so that they have the capacity to take decisive, yet thoughtful action against terrorists and insurgents in uncertain or unclear situations, based on a common vision, policy, and strategy. In addition to traditional "hard" military skills of "kill or capture" and destruction and attrition, "soft" skills such as negotiations, psychology, social and cultural anthropology, foreign area studies, complexity theory, and systems management will become increasingly important in the ambiguous and dynamic environment in which irregular adversaries circulate.

Arguably, by combating irregular adversaries in a more collaborative and integrative manner with key relevant civilian agencies, those charged with countering terrorism and insurgency can better share critical information, track the various moving parts in terrorist/insurgency networks, and develop a comprehensive picture of this enemy—including their supporters, nodes of support, organizational and operational systems, processes, and plans. With this information in hand, the U.S. would then be better prepared to systematically disrupt or defeat all of the critical nodes that support the entire terrorist/insurgent network, thus rendering them ineffective.[61] Achieving this desideratum, however, will necessitate the coordination, de-conflicting, and synchronization of the variety of programs upon which the execution of American counterterrorist and counterinsurgency planning are dependent.

Such a new approach would also have particular benefit with respect to the gathering and exploitation of "actionable intelligence." By updating and streamlining interagency counterterrorism and counterinsurgency systems and procedures both strategically as well as operationally between the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and the intelligence community, actionable intelligence could likely be acquired, analyzed, and disseminated faster and operations mounted more quickly. A more focused and strengthened interagency process would also facilitate the coordination of key themes and messages, along with the development and execution of more effective, long-term "hearts and minds" programs. Facilitating this would doubtless go well beyond DoD's purview, necessarily involving the National Security Council, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and National Counterterrorism Center, and would likely entail the development of an "operational arm" within the White House under the authority of the President to de-conflict, synchronize, and task the various agencies of the government involved in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations.

An equally critical dimension of this process will be aligning the training of host-nation counterparts with U.S. counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations: building synergy; avoiding duplication of effort; ensuring that training leads to operational effectiveness; and ensuring that the U.S. interagency team and approach is in complete harmony. In other words, aligning these training programs with operations to build indigenous capabilities in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency will be absolutely fundamental to the success of such a strategy. This will entail the recognition that there cannot be a "one size fits all" approach to countering the diversity of threats confronting regions and countries worldwide. Instead, customized solutions will need to be tailored to individual regional and local security challenges in close consultation with, and support of, host-nations. Success will be dependent on early recognition of, and responses to, emerging security challenges devised and implemented by host-nations with American assistance.

Enhanced, improved, and better coordinated information operations will be a critical element of this approach.[62] These also will entail the building of host-nation capabilities to a greater and more sustained extent than currently exists. To date, U.S. information operations—though improving—remain uncoordinated. They do not communicate a clear and consistent message; which, in part, is a reflection of the redundancy and duplicative efforts by separate strategic communications and public affairs offices in the State Department and DoD, and even more the tangled lines of authority and duplication among separate offices of the National Security Council, which permeate current U.S. government strategic communications efforts. While an energetic and effective Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy at the State Department can reach across agencies to try to impose some order over the range of our strategic communications activities, greater and clearer authority is required, located in the White House, to oversee, direct, coordinate, and more holistically champion activities in this critical realm.

The success of this strategy, however, will be dependent not only on bureaucratic re-organization and clarification of lines of authority, but on the ability of our information operations to effectively counter al-Qaeda's continued ideological appeal—and thus specifically address the three key elements of *their* strategy:

- the resonance of their message;
- their ability to attract recruits and replenish their ranks; and,
- their capacity for continual regeneration and renewal.

To do so, we first need to fulfill the most famous dictum of warfare: knowing and understanding one's enemy. "If you know the enemy and know yourself," Sun Tzu famously advised centuries ago, "you need not fear the results of a hundred battles." The war on terrorism has now lasted longer than America's involvement in World War II, yet we still cannot claim with any real acuity to have satisfied Sun Tzu's timeless admonition.

Indeed, what remains missing more than seven years since this struggle began is a thorough, systematic understanding of our enemy: encompassing motivation as well as mindset, decision-making processes as well as command and control relationships; and ideological constructs as well as organizational dynamics. Without knowing our enemy we cannot successfully penetrate their cells; we cannot knowledgeably sow discord and dissension in their ranks and thus weaken them from within; and, we cannot fulfill the most basic requirements of an effective counterterrorist strategy—pre-empting and preventing terrorist operations and deterring their attacks.

Forty years ago the United States understood the importance of building this foundation in order to effectively counter an enigmatic, unseen enemy motivated by a powerful ideology who also used terrorism and insurgency to advance his cause and rally popular support. Although America of course encountered many frustrations during the Vietnam conflict, a lack of understanding of our adversary was not among them. Indeed, as early as 1965, the Pentagon had begun a program to analyze Vietcong morale and motivation based on detailed interviews conducted among thousands of guerrilla detainees. These voluminously detailed studies provided a road-map of the ideological and psychological mindset of that enemy, clearly illuminating the critical need to win what was then often termed the "other war"—the ideological struggle for the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people.[63] Even if the fundamental changes required in U.S. military strategy to overcome the Vietcong's appeal went ignored, tremendous effort and resources were devoted to understanding the enemy. Indeed, until we recognize the importance of this vital prerequisite, America will remain perennially on the defensive: inherently reactive rather than proactive—deprived of the capacity to recognize, much less anticipate, important changes in our enemy's modus operandi, recruitment, and targeting.

In sum, the current threat environment posed by terrorism and insurgency makes a new strategy, approach, and new organizational and institutional behaviors necessary. The non-traditional challenges to U.S. national security and foreign policy imperatives posed by elusive and deadly irregular adversaries emphasizes the need to anchor changes that will more effectively close the gap between detecting irregular adversarial activity and rapidly defeating it. The effectiveness of U.S. strategy will be based on our capacity to think like a networked enemy, in anticipation of how they may act in a variety of situations, aided by different resources. This goal requires that the American national security structure in turn organize itself for maximum efficiency, information sharing, and the ability to function quickly and effectively under new operational definitions. With this understanding in mind, we need to craft an approach that specifically takes into account the following key factors to effectively wage a GCOIN:

1. Separating the enemy from the populace that provides support and sustenance. This, in turn, entails three basic missions:
   a. Denial of enemy sanctuary
   b. Elimination of enemy freedom of movement
   c. Denial of enemy resources and support;

2. Identification and neutralization of the enemy;
3. Creation of a secure environment—progressing from local to regional to global;
4. Ongoing and effective neutralization of enemy propaganda and information operations through the planning and execution of a comprehensive and integrated information operations and holistic civil affairs campaign in harmony with the first four tasks;
5. Interagency efforts to build effective and responsible civil governance mechanisms that eliminate the fundamental causes of terrorism and insurgency.

The key to success will thus be in harnessing the overwhelming kinetic force of the U.S. military as part of a comprehensive vision to transform capabilities in order to deal with irregular and unconventional threats. A successful strategy will therefore also be one that thinks and plans ahead with a view towards addressing the threats likely to be posed by terrorist and insurgent generations beyond the current one.

Notes

1. The establishment of al-Qaeda was first discussed by bin Laden with a colleague on August 11, 1988. A three-day meeting was held in his house a week later (on August 18, 1988) that resulted in the creation of an advisory council, a list of requirements, and the wording of an oath of allegiance for members of the new organization. See Peter Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of al-Qaeda's Leader* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 78–81.

2. David Rapoport, "Terrorism," in Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogan, eds., *Routledge Encyclopedia of Government and Politics*, vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 1992), 1067.

3. Audrey Kurth Cronin, *Ending Terrorism: Lessons for Defeating al-Qaeda* (London: IISS, Adelphi Paper 394, April 2008), 24.

4. What this development suggests is, first, that the vast majority of the terrorism universe needn't concern us. These are weak, inflexible organizations: bereft of an effective leadership, lacking imagination and vision—incapable of changing and thereby sustaining themselves. The most pressing policy research question so far as terrorism is concerned, accordingly, is not so much how terrorism ends (see Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How Al-Qaida Ends," *International Security* 31, no. 1 (Summer 2006), 7–48), but rather acquiring a better understanding of how terrorism continues and how some terrorist groups are able to overcome or obviate even the most consequential governmental countermeasures directed against them. Indeed, it is precisely the elite group of "survivors"—terrorist groups that have overcome Herculean obstacles, that have surmounted daunting challenges, and that continue despite all odds to persevere (and that al-Qaeda has now joined)—who should concern us greatly. Such groups are capable of planning and executing operations, identifying and building a long-term strategy. They are equally adept at gathering intelligence and conducting surveillance without detection. They are implacable with a steely determination that is difficult to diminish, much less defeat. They have also historically been the most vexatious to the governments they threaten. They have not only shown themselves to be learning organizations, but have demonstrated an organizational persistence that has often proven enormously difficult to stifle. Second, without exception, the terrorist groups who arguably have been the most problematic for American foreign policy in recent years are all ones who have lasted two decades or more: the FARC in Colombia (founded in 1966); Hezbollah (founded in 1982); and, Hamas (founded in 1987). Thus, the terrorist groups that have lasted longest and consistently prove the most difficult to suppress are often the same groups that pose the greatest challenges for U.S. national security. This suggests that al-Qaeda will not quickly nor readily disappear, and because of this resiliency it will require a different strategy to counter it effectively than perhaps other, less entrenched terrorist groups would.

5. U.S. National Intelligence Council, "Declassified Key Judgments of the National Intelligence Estimate 'Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States,'" April 2006 accessed at http://www.dni.gov/press_releases/Declassified_NIE_Key_Judgments.pdf.

6. U.S. National Intelligence Council, "The Terrorist Threat to the US Homeland," July 2007, accessed at http://www.dni.gov/press_releases/20070717_release.pdf

7. See Remarks by Mr. Ted Gistaro, National Intelligence Officer for Transnational Threats, "Assessing the Fight Against Al-Qa'ida," *The Washington Institute's Special Policy Forum,* The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, D.C., 12 August 2008, accessed at http://www.dni.gov/speeches/20080812_speech.pdf

8. Director's Remarks at the Atlantic Council, Washington, D.C., Remarks by Central Intelligence Agency Director Michael Hayden, "Current State of al-Qaeda," 13 November 2008, accessed at http://www.acus.org/http%3A/%252Fwww.acus.org/event_blog/cia-director-event-transcript.

9. In addition to the disdain for rule of law that Guantánamo has come to symbolize, other "war on terror" initiatives that have traded short-term gain for genuine long-term progress include the neglect of Afghanistan and Pakistan because of the Bush Administration's preoccupation with Iraq. See David E. Sanger, *The Inheritance: The World Obama Confronts And the Challenges To American Power* (New York: Harmony Books, 2009), 115–124, 130, 132, 133–139. See also Helene Cooper, "Obama's War: Fearing Another Quagmire," *New York Times Week in Review*, 25 January 2009.

10. See Jon Cohen and Jennifer Agiesta, "Public Supports Closing Guantanamo," *Washington Post*, 22 January 2009; Peter Finn, "Plan to Eliminate Prison Faces Hurdles," *Washington Post*, 22 January 2009; Karen J. Greenberg, "When Gitmo Was (Relatively) Good," *Washington Post*, 25 January 2009; Mark Mazetti and William Glaberson, "Obama To Close Foreign Prisons and Guantánamo," *New York Times*, 22 January 2009.

11. Thirty-four percent of Americans, however, said that al-Qaeda had been weakened.

12. It should be noted that on average 61 percent of those in countries surveyed said that their feelings about al-Qaeda are negative, 8 percent were positive and 18 percent say they are mixed. World Public Opinion.Org, "US 'War on Terror' Has Not Weakened al-Qaeda, Says Global Poll," (Washington, DC: World Public Opinion Global Public Opinion on International Affairs, 10 October 2008), accessed at http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/home_page/547.php?nid=&id=&pnt=547&lb=

13. See the analyses in Peter Bergen and Paul Cruickshank, "The Unraveling: Al-Qaeda's revolt against bin Laden," *The New Republic*, 11 June 2008, 16–21; and, Lawrence Wright, "The Rebellion Within: An Al-Qaeda mastermind questions terrorism," *The New Yorker*, 2 June 2008, 37–53.

14. Bergen and Cruickshank, "The Unraveling," 21.

15. The polling results, however, are more ambiguous than has often been argued. According to the Gallup Organization, in Pakistan there was a significant decrease from 18 percent to 7 percent, and in Kuwait from 36 percent to 20 percent among persons who thought the 9/11 attacks justifiable. In Morocco, however, there was a slight increase, from 8 percent to 10 percent, and a doubling in Indonesia, from 4 percent to 8 percent. In Lebanon the results remained constant at 20 percent. See Richard Burkholder, "Support for Al-Qa'ida: Proxy Measures from Gallup Polling 2001–2008 Moral Admissibility of 9/11, and Other Attacks that Target Civilians," *The Gallup Organization*, 2008. Further, none of the key Islamic ideologues or theologians who have repudiated al-Qaeda ever actually belonged to the movement or were central to its ideology. Remarks by Dr. Thomas Heghammer, JFK School of Government, Harvard University at DoS-DoD Strategic Communications Conference, Department of State, 22 September 2008.

16. Joby Warwick, "Jan. 1 Attack By CIA Killed Two Leaders Of Al-Qaeda," *Washington Post*, 9 January 2009.

17. This section incorporates some material that originally appeared in Bruce Hoffman and Seth G. Jones, "Cell Phones in the Hindu Kush," *The National Interest*, no. 96, July/August 2008, 42–51.

18. Those linked directly to al-Qaeda are what British authorities refer to as Operations "Crevice" (April 2004) and "Rhyme" (2004), the 7 July 2005 London suicide bombings, the 21 July 2005 London bombing attempts, and the 2006 London airlines plot. At least two more plots are linked directly to other jihadi groups in Pakistan: efforts by German jihadis to link up with Uzbek militants in September 2007 and intended attacks in Spain and other European countries that were disrupted in January 2008 by Spanish authorities in Barcelona.

19. In her landmark public address in November 2006, the then-Director General of the British Security Service (MI-5), Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller put the number in the UK alone as high as 30. "We are aware of numerous plots to kill people and to damage our economy," she explained. "What do I mean by numerous? Five? 10? No, nearer 30 that we currently know of. These plots often have linked back to al-Qaeda in Pakistan and through those links al-Qaeda gives guidance and training to its largely British foot soldiers here on an extensive and growing scale." Quoted in *BBC News*, "MI5 tracking '30 UK terror plots,"' 10 November 2006, accessed at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6134516.stm

20. They include the Afghan Taliban as well as the Pakistani Taliban, al-Qaeda as well as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, other radical Afghan religious zealots such as the Hezb-i-Islami Gulbuddin (HiG) as well as their Pakistani jihadi counterparts in Lashkar-e-Toiba, among others.

21. See the respective assessments of General Dan K. McNeil, who stepped down as commander of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) quoted in Ann Scott Tyson, "A Sober Assessment of Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, 15 June 2008, and of Major General Jeffrey Schloesser in *Associated Press*, "Attacks Up, U.S. General Says," *International Herald Tribune* (Paris), 25 June 2008.

22. Interviews conducted by the author with U.S. military officers at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, March 2008.

23. Ibid.

24. Quoted in Eric Schmitt, "Joint Chiefs Chairman is Gloomy on Afghanistan," *New York Times*, 10 October 2008. See also, Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Study Is Said to Warn of Crisis in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, 9 October 2008; and, Karen DeYoung, "U.S. Urgently Reviews Policy on Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, 9 October 2008.

25. Interviews conducted by the author at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, March 2008.

26. Bruce Hoffman and Seth G. Jones, "Cell Phones in the Hindu Kush," *The National Interest*, no. 96, July/August 2008, 50.

27. General David H. Petraeus, "Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance," Headquarters, Multi-National Force – Iraq, Baghdad, Iraq, 15 July 2008 iteration, p. 1.

28. Ibid.

29. Quoted in Hoffman and Jones, "Cell Phones in the Hindu Kush," 46.

30. Petraeus, "Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance."

31. "The World Vote: Barack Obama is almost universally favored over John McCain outside the United States. Should that matter to Americans?," *Washington Post*, 13 October 2008.

32. DeYoung, "U.S. Urgently Reviews Policy on Afghanistan."

33. Quoted in Hoffman and Jones, "Cell Phones in the Hindu Kush," 45.

34. This discussion borrows extensively from the policy prescriptions in Hoffman and Jones, "Cell Phones in the Hindu Kush," 50–51.

35. Interviews conducted by the author in the North-West Frontier Province, Pakistan in August 2008.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Interviews conducted by the author in Islamabad, Pakistan in August 2008.

39. See, for example, Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., "How to Win in Iraq," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 5 (September-October, 2005) accessed at http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20050901faessay84508/andrew-f-krepinevich-jr/how-to-win-in-iraq.html.

40. Interviews conducted in Washington, D.C. and Islamabad, Pakistan, August 2008.

41. Ibid.

42. Petraeus, "Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance."

43. Corruption, record levels of opium cultivation, and poor governance are of course salient ancillary problems as well. However, improvements in those critical domains arguably cannot be achieved without a stabilization of the declining security situation in the country and the checking of Taliban expansion and control over both territory and populace.

44. See Government Accountability Office, Report to Congressional Requesters: Combating Terrorism—The United States Lacks Comprehensive Plan to Destroy the Terrorist Threat and Close the Safe Haven in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas

(Washington, D.C., Government Accountability Office, April 2008, GAO-08-622), passim, accessed at: http://hcfa.house.gov/110/GAO041708.pdf; and, Government Accountability, Report to Congressional Requesters: Increased Oversight and Accountability Needed over Pakistan Reimbursement Claims for Coalition Support Funds (Washington, D.C., Government Accountability Office, April 2008, GAO-08–806), passim, accessed at http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08806.pdf

45. Arguably it is this isolation that breeds the Pakistan military's often paranoiac behavior vis-à-vis its clandestine support of jihadi organizations that potentially threaten Pakistan's stability and democratic institutions as much as they do India.

46. Interview conducted by the author in the North-West Frontier Province, Pakistan in August 2008.

47. Petraeus, "Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance."

48. Interview conducted by the author in Islamabad, Pakistan in August 2008.

49. Quoted in Hoffman and Jones, "Cell Phones in the Hindu Kush," 48.

50. Hoffman and Jones, "Cell Phones in the Hindu Kush," 48.

51. Interviews conducted by the author in Islamabad and Peshawar, Pakistan in August 2008.

52. Ibid.

53. Quoted in Hoffman and Jones, "Cell Phones in the Hindu Kush," 44.

54. This section incorporates and builds upon some previous work done in collaboration between the author and Colonel Fred T. Krawchuk, U.S. Army, Special Forces.

55. Richard Holbrooke makes this point in his overview of international challenges facing the next president. "The situation in Afghanistan is far from hopeless," he writes. "But as the war enters its eighth year, Americans should be told the truth: it will last a long time—longer than the United States' longest war to date, the 14-year conflict (1961–75) in Vietnam." Richard Holbrooke, "The Next President," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 5 (September/October 2008), 21.

56. "What is dubbed the war on terror is, in grim reality, a prolonged, world-wide irregular campaign.... [T]he requirement for the U.S. military to maintain security, provide aid and comfort, begin reconstruction, and stand up local government and public services will not go away." U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), Speech: National Defense University (Washington, D.C.), As Delivered by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, Washington, D.C., Monday, September 29, 2008 accessed at http://www.defenselink.mil/utility/printitem.aspx?print=http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1279.

57. Secretary Gates made exactly this point as well in his September 2008 speech. "In the long-term effort against terrorist networks and other extremists, we know that direct military force will continue to have a role. But we also understand that over the long term, we cannot kill or capture our way to victory. Where possible, kinetic operations should be subordinate to measures to promote better governance, economic programs to spur development, and efforts to address the grievances among the discontented from which the terrorists recruit." See Ibid.

58. Quoted in John Cloake, *Templer: Tiger of Malaya—The Life of Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer* (London: Harrap, 1985), 262.

59. Again, Secretary Gates argued in the above cited speech that, "The kinds of capabilities needed to deal with these scenarios cannot be considered exotic distractions or temporary diversions. We do not have the luxury of opting out because they do not conform to preferred notions of the American way of war." Ibid.

60. "Support for conventional modernization programs is deeply embedded in our budget, in our bureaucracy, in the defense industry, and in Congress," Secretary Gates stated during his National Defense University speech. "My fundamental concern is that there is not commensurate institutional support—including in the Pentagon—for the capabilities needed to win the wars we are in, and of the kinds of missions we are most likely to undertake in the future." Ibid.

61. Battle against small, independent, and mobile formations change too rapidly to allow rigid, centralized command and control. The U.S. military will have to continue to adjust and fight accordingly. Fast and fluid bottom-up planning and execution, supported by top-down guidance, resources, and support is an appropriate approach to counterinsurgency.

Intelligence, logistics, and communications must integrate horizontally and vertically with operations to support this innovative approach to fighting insurgents.

62. Secretary Gates was explicit on this point as well. "Retired Marine Colonel T. X. Hammes has noted that where past insurgencies consisted of military campaigns supported by information operations, they now often consist of strategic communications campaigns supported by military operations. In Iraq and Afghanistan, extremists have made deft use of the Internet and propaganda to misinform and intimidate local populations." Ibid.

63. The RAND Corporation actively contributed to these analyses in a series of detailed reports, based on voluminous interviews of captured Vietcong. See, for example: Leon Gouré, Anthony Russo, and D. Scott, *Some Findings of the Viet Cong Motivation and Morale Study: June-December 1965* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, RM-4911–12-ISA/ARPA, February 1966); Leon Gouré, J. M. Carrier, and D. Scott, *Some Findings of the Viet Cong Motivation and Morale Study: January-June 1966* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, RM-5137-ISA/ARPA, February 1966); J. M. and Charles Thomson, *Viet Cong Motivation and Morale: The Special Case of Chieu Hoi* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, RM-4830–2-ISA/ARPA, May 1966); J. C. Connell, *Viet Cong Motivation and Morale: A Preliminary Report* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, RM-4507/2-ISA, July 1968).