Afghan National Security Forces lead patrol with coalition mentors in Ghowrmach district

U.S. Navy (Brian P. Seymour)

Irregular Warfare Lessons Learned

Reforming the Afghan National Police

By LEWIS G. IRWIN

Irregular warfare is defined as a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. . . . [T]hese campaigns will fail if waged by military means alone.[1]

The Afghan barber cutting my hair at an American installation in Kabul had a good life by Afghan standards. So when I asked what he thought of the post-Taliban era, I had every reason to expect a favorable review. But as he pondered his response, I could tell that he was choosing his words carefully. Finally, he answered, "I don't approve of what the Taliban did to the people, but it is now very difficult to move around the country . . . and there is a lot of corruption in the government." The first part of his response was ironic, as it was the Taliban's insurgent activities that had created the need for the heightened transportation security that made travel slow. But the second part of his response was telling. For him, it would be the success or failure of our nontraditional, nonmilitary stability and reconstruction operations that would ultimately shape his decision whether to support the popularly elected government of Afghanistan.

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My interest in his response was as much professional as personal, since my mission in Afghanistan was to lead the team charged with designing and implementing a nation-wide reform of the Afghan National Police (ANP). While most Afghan governing institutions had long been viewed with suspicion by the people, the Afghan police were especially distrusted as a result of their lengthy history of corruption, cronyism, and incompetence. Furthermore, these same police officers served as the real face of the Afghan government for average citizens, as they were the representatives of the government most likely to interact with the local people on a routine basis.[2] So in keeping with the basic tenets of our counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine and the irregular warfare (IW) joint operating concept, we would have to fix the Afghan police—and the government agencies administering them—as a critical step toward convincing the people to support the popularly elected government instead of the Taliban alternative. This article describes the scope and challenges of these major stability operations missions, while highlighting relevant elements of our new COIN doctrine—central to the IW concept—as they relate to operationalization, or using the COIN doctrine as the basis for specific action plans.

A few comments are appropriate at the outset. While some of what follows may sound like criticism, the exact opposite is true. In my experience, our leaders and troops are working extremely hard to realize success in these missions. As an institution, however, we have not gotten our planning and operating mechanisms right just yet. At the same time, it is likely that our military will be called upon to carry out many more of these missions, given the nature of IW operations and the "long wars" currently under way. One only has to look at the structure of U.S. Africa Command to see more evidence of our military's likely future role in the application of soft power instruments of American influence. Furthermore, it is likely that our political leaders will continue to expect the military to take a leading role among the other U.S. Government agencies participating in these missions, given our comparative advantages in organizational structure, resources, and sustainability. Accordingly, this article outlines some potential pitfalls and challenges facing the leaders who will plan and execute these stability missions in the years to come.

The Mission

Arriving in Kabul in August of 2007, I had no idea that I would be handed the mission of a lifetime: in a few short weeks, I was assigned to the Force Integration and Training section of the Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC–A). Our mission was to oversee the design, fielding, and development of the Afghan National Army and ANP, as well as the Afghan government agencies administering those security forces. My arrival coincided with the conclusion of a multilateral conference aimed at considering plans to reform the ANP, as the Afghan government and the international community had come to recognize both the criticality of the police force to the COIN effort as well as the ANP's glaring lack of success to date. The major product of the conference was a set of PowerPoint slides that generally described a district-by-district approach to police reform, dubbed "Focused District Development" (FDD).[3] As is often the case, the Afghans and their international community partners—except for the Americans—had hedged their bets by expressing tentative support for the police reform concept in principle while simultaneously avoiding any firm commitments of assistance or resources.

Typical of any stability or reconstruction mission, reforming the ANP would be a multilayered, complex undertaking. In Afghanistan, the police forces consist of seven different public safety and security organizations, with basic missions and organization outlined in the Afghan government's Strategic Capabilities Plan.[4] National civil order police, border patrolmen, district police, the counternarcotics force, the counterterrorism force, criminal investigators, and even the Afghan fire departments all fall under the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) umbrella. But while each of these agencies has its own distinct set of issues and challenges, the leadership decided to reform the traditional district-level police first, given their direct interactions with the people. At the same time, reforming the police would require further developing the MOI's administrative capabilities, as well as other elements of the civil justice system and Afghan society, in order to enable the Afghans to manage their own security. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) identified these elements as vital steps toward the ultimate goal of creating a stable, secure, and self-sustaining Afghanistan.[5]

Put into a broader context, this undertaking would be a daunting one. The local Afghan police are organized into almost 400 police districts outside of Kabul, as well as dozens of police precincts in the capital itself. Numbering

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about 82,000 altogether, the police are often called upon to fight as frontline first responders in the counterinsurgency in addition to carrying out their basic law enforcement and criminal investigative responsibilities. This reform process would be made even more difficult by the fractious nature of internal Afghan politics, as well as the remnants of Soviet organizational culture that persist in

Afghan National Army and Police assume responsibility for Bak district after training by U.S. Army Military Police

U.S. Army (Casey Ware)

Afghan National Police on patrol return fire on fleeing Taliban members

U.S. Marine Corps (Jason T. Guiliano)

Afghan government agencies.[6] Added to this challenging mix was the fact that corruption is an entrenched feature of Afghan culture, where "one-fisted" corruption—or theft perpetrated to feed one's family or tribe—is viewed as just another routine feature of life. Any effort at professionalizing the police would have to take place within a context of abject poverty, widespread illiteracy, a thriving and well-connected drug trade, porous borders, and an almost total absence of the basic elements of rule of law, ranging from criminal investigators to lawyers, prosecutors, judges, and jails. Without doubt, we had our work cut out for us, and this problem would not be solved in a matter of months, but rather years.

The Operational Environment

Armed then with about 60 PowerPoint slides and a rough idea of how this nationwide reform ought to look, our team set to the tasks of fleshing out a specific structure for the FDD program and pitching the concept to the numerous players who would have to be brought on board for the initiative to achieve legitimacy and success. Ultimately, this effort would involve interacting with the highest levels of NATO, U.S., international community, and Afghan leadership, but the nature of the operations would also require involving key leaders all the way out to the point of the

spear in crafting and executing the plan—and getting the warfighters' "buy-in" as a precondition for participation. Unlike conventional military operations, which derive their unity of command through a hierarchical chain, stability and reconstruction operations by their nature require negotiation, compromise, and the inclusion of a wide variety of actors in the decisionmaking process, each bringing to the table different resources, concerns, and areas of authority. Our COIN doctrine speaks to this challenge in its section on "unity of effort."[7] Without question, achieving consensus around a plan of action is often the most difficult aspect of successful stability operations.

In the ANP case, the relevant U.S. agencies and actors included the U.S. Ambassador and Embassy; U.S. Central Command and its subordinate CSTC–A; the U.S. national command element and subordinate brigade combat teams; the Department of State's Justice Sector Support Program, U.S. Agency for International Development, and Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs; and numerous others. The long list of relevant international entities and nongovernmental organizations included the European Union Police, United Nations Assistance Mission–Afghanistan, International Police Coordinating Board, NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and an extensive array of embassies, international organizations, and other actors with widely varying interests, resources, and agendas. Representative of the convoluted decisionmaking structures in these types of operations, CSTC–A answers directly to U.S. Central Command but must consult with the Ambassador and Embassy while working in parallel with the U.S. warfighters, themselves at least nominally subordinate to the NATO ISAF commander. It was not unusual to find our allies' military commands disagreeing with their own embassies regarding the shape and direction of their countries' policies and preferences.

Similarly, it was commonly understood within NATO, the European Union Police, and other multinational organizations that the constituent members were far more concerned about the reactions of their home governments to their decisions and actions than they were to the reactions of the appointed leaders of the organizations in Afghanistan. Likewise, CSTC–A has to deal with its own internal array of interests, as a

combined (allied), joint, interagency, and multicomponent headquarters organization, one ultimately working through the interagency process while sharing key decisions with the sovereign Afghan government. CSTC–A also depends heavily on contracted civilian police mentors for the Afghan police training effort, though ironically those contractors are employed by the State Department and ultimately accountable to that agency rather than the military. Conversely, CSTC–A controls the massive funds associated with the development of the Afghan forces, and as such can wield disproportionate influence over that aspect of the process.

Nevertheless, both our international partners and the Afghan leaders would not hesitate to let us know when they disagreed with us, or when their interests did not coincide with ours. For example, a senior representative from an allied embassy stated bluntly to me on one occasion, "If you Americans succeed, then we are with you. If you fail, you are on your own . . . and we think you will fail." At another juncture, the U.S.

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Ambassador directed me not to consult with one very senior Afghan official because he felt that U.S. interests were a mismatch with that official's political goals. Privately, some leaders believed that there were governments operating with us in Afghanistan that wanted to see the Afghans succeed while the United States failed. But in any event, the decision-making authority and jurisdictional centers of gravity routinely shifted along with changes in key leaders, allied government agendas, Afghan preferences, and various elements of U.S. policy. Leaders cannot underestimate the challenges associated with this tough operational environment or the amount of effort it takes to build and maintain consensus around any major new initiative.

Key Lessons Learned

What follows are 10 key lessons I learned from the experience of designing and setting in motion one of these major stability opera-

tions, offered as food for thought for the rising leaders who will carry out similar missions, as well as those charged with refining our emerging IW doctrine.

Fragmented Decisionmaking Authority and Incoherence of Vision. One of the key challenges of the operations in Afghanistan and in other IW environments is the fragmented nature of decisionmaking, with numerous actors bringing their own agendas, interests, resources, and areas of authority to the table on most decisions of consequence. This situation can be frustrating for U.S. leaders, as they see the United States providing the preponderance of the resources earmarked for Afghan development but then having to accommodate various international players who insist on having input into key decisions on the commitment of those funds. The Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), an international panel charged with setting Afghan police salaries, is a good example of this convoluted organizational structure. LOTFA is an international body, with United Nations and allied representation, although the United States provides the great majority of the funds used to pay Afghan police. Thus, the United States often has to negotiate with LOTFA before spending its own money. Similarly convoluted interagency decisionmaking occurs between CSTC–A and the State Department.

With all of these players active in the decisionmaking process, the different governments and nongovernmental organizations involved often advocate competing visions for Afghanistan's future, and too often they pursue these visions regardless of decisions or agreements to the contrary. With no one player having enough leverage or authority to direct otherwise, this fragmentation leads to incoherence in the collective international redevelopment effort in Afghanistan, resulting in a great deal of wasted effort and generally ineffective results. Not surprisingly, the Afghans often play one international actor off against the other until they find the answer that they want. The internal U.S. organizational structure, with its interagency, combined, and joint flavor, adds to this challenge, as each of the key agencies operating in Afghanistan experiences frequent turnover and shifting internal visions, providing the Afghans additional opportunities to exploit seams. In one telling example, a high-ranking NATO ISAF leader felt that he could not pledge the support of his subordinate Pro-

vincial Reconstruction Teams to the police reform effort, as he believed that they would continue to pursue their own governments' visions of Afghan redevelopment, regardless of what vision was put forth by the ISAF leadership.

While a certain amount of this fragmentation and incoherence of vision is unavoidable, there are steps mission leaders can take to mitigate challenges. Keeping in mind that "unity of intent" is the goal, constant communication and negotiation are both critical to success. Typical mechanisms for bringing about this communication are standing work groups, joint planning groups, civil-military operations centers, joint interagency coordinating groups, and other ad hoc steering groups.[8] Wherever possible, it is important to get leaders with real decisionmaking authority, both host nation and coalition, to participate routinely in these groups. By definition, the decentralized and fluid nature of stability operations requires leaders at all levels and in all interested organizations to understand the broader goals and specific objectives at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of the effort. Leaders cannot underestimate the amount of effort it will take to get everyone on the same page.

Force Structure Mismatches with Mission Requirements. Stability and reconstruction operations usually require a variety of skills and resources that do not routinely reside within the U.S. military. Furthermore,

number of police mentor teams falls far short of the number needed to provide district-level coverage throughout the country, resulting in some districts only being visited sporadically or not at all.[9] At the same time, the civilian police mentors hired by the State Department to provide civilian law enforcement expertise to the developing Afghan police forces do not have the flexibility to deploy into the areas where they are needed the most, for reasons of force protection and nonpermissive threat conditions. Nor do they typically bring a Soldier's mindset to the tasks at hand. As a result, there is a real mismatch between the force structure needed to carry out the Afghan police development mission and the resources available on the ground.

In terms of potential corrective courses of action, John Nagl has suggested the creation of a "combat advisory corps," consisting of professional Soldiers organized and trained to meet these specific needs as their primary mission.[10] At the very least, however, there are three corrective courses of action that leaders can take to mitigate the effects of force structure/mission mismatches. First, we should choose our best leaders to interact with the indigenous leaders, essentially placing the "A team" in those positions of responsibility. Second, we can collocate our mentors, supporting staff operations, and the developing indigenous leaders and their staffs. Too often, U.S. staffs work so hard to meet current mission requirements that they

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by definition these missions, with their emphasis on mentoring and coaching, place a premium on senior-level leaders with the talent, experience, temperament, and credibility to interact effectively with indigenous leaders. Put another way, these operations require augmentation with subject matter experts from various fields relevant to the tasks at hand, as well as enough senior leaders to build the developing agencies and organizations. Unfortunately, our force structure—in Afghanistan at least—falls well short of this standard, in terms of both the required skill sets on the ground and the adequacy of the mentor coverage. For example, the basic

lose sight of the longer term objective of the effort—training the host nation forces and agencies to sustain themselves and their own operations. Collocating the two parts of the team would force that development to occur. Finally, strip all nonessential staff personnel from the supporting staff functions and place them into positions where they can make the most significant and direct contribution to the mentoring effort.

Weak Interagency Coordinating Mechanisms and Execution. The prevailing model of interagency coordination in Afghanistan could be described as the "bubble up" method. Periodic direct coordination among the

highest level leaders occasionally generated broad policy compromises, but those meetings did not provide the specific terms needed to implement the agreements reached. Instead, routine interagency coordination took place in lower level work groups that identified and attempted to resolve problems at the lowest level possible. Theoretically, then, problems that could not be resolved at the lower level would bubble up to successive levels until they reached a level at which the participants had the authority to make a decision.

While this system offers advantages in terms of managing senior-level work load, it also brings with it some major disadvantages. For example, this model assumes that the lower level participants in the process remain engaged, informed, and responsive, and it assumes away the stovepiping of information typical within most agencies, as well as the frequent turnover and absences of agency representatives from the working groups that occur for all manner of reasons. Given that these optimistic assumptions never held up over time, the bubble-up system tended to exacerbate the fragmented and incoherent nature of policymaking and implementation, too often thwarting the unity of effort that we aim to achieve. Likewise, this decentralized, bottom-up process too often delayed collective action because key decisionmakers were not engaged until late in the process. Viewed comprehensively, the interagency process was weak and largely ad hoc in nature.

There are several ways that mission leaders can improve this process, however. The first potential corrective for systemic interagency problems involves seeking senior-leader command emphasis, not only from the military side of the interagency process, but also from the senior and midlevel leaders of the other participating agencies. It is also critical to identify key leaders of real ability, with resources of organizational political capital and sharing like-minded visions for the desired endstate, in each of the participating agencies. Another related and complementary approach is to develop ad hoc, agile information-sharing and decisionmaking structures, consisting of participants with the ability to establish priorities, make resource decisions, and pull together the systems, products, consensus, and resources needed to move the mission forward.

Allied Relationships. While we like to think that we are all members of the same team, the basic reality of U.S. relationships

Afghan National Police officer stands guard at checkpoint while Soldiers provide overwatch

U.S. Army (Michael L. Casteel)

with our coalition and international community partners is that each player brings different interests, visions, and resources to the table. Furthermore, the NATO and European Union agencies operating within Afghanistan are not unitary actors, as the various leaders of those organizations ultimately answer to their home governments before yielding on policy questions. As a result, it can be difficult to gain approval for significant new initiatives, or to steer an existing program in a different direction.

Moreover, it is important to understand that while all aim to achieve "progress in Afghanistan," each country and each participating organization has different interests that they are protecting and different definitions of that end. Our effort may require overcoming outright opposition or resentment, or major constraints on resources. Along these lines, one allied ambassador, for domestic political reasons, was quite open about his country's inability to deliver on its major commitments to the police reform effort. Another international coordinating body was wholly incapable of performing the basic functions for which it was created, but it was nevertheless important to include that agency in every deliberation to maintain the legitimacy of the process in the eyes of the international community. Therefore, as is the case with the interagency process, in dealing with these various players, it is critical to share as much information as possible, while negotiating openly and in good faith with the talented and like-minded leaders identified in each

organization. In a real sense, we are creating and bringing together an ad hoc version of what Hugh Heclo called an "issue network," consisting of all of the players with an interest in a desired outcome.[11]

Challenges of Host Nation's Politics, Leadership, and Society. As military officers, we are by nature action-oriented people; that is, give us a mission and get out of the way. By definition, however, stability operations take place within a political context, subject to the influences and vagaries of host-nation politics and economics. In the case of the Afghan police reforms, the impact of Afghan politics, leadership, and operating context added another—and ultimate—layer to the process of securing approval for the direction and shape of the nationwide reform. That is, it was necessary not only to negotiate the shape of the program with the international community, but also to seek guidance and approval from the Afghan leaders at the outset of the enterprise, as well as final approval once a rough consensus was achieved among the international community players. Likewise, the fact that this country is one with no connectivity, no electricity, limited public infrastructure, no legitimate economy, and a government with only limited influence across the country makes the simplest activities, including paying the police or providing uniforms and training, extremely difficult.[12] It is critical to identify the right indigenous "go-to" leaders and to develop their staffs to set the conditions for success. In the case of Afghan police reform, Deputy Minister for Security

Mohammad Munir Mangal was that critical leader in the MOI, though we spent a great deal of time with other key Afghan leaders as well in order to navigate through competing Afghan interests and factions. It was also necessary to train the midlevel Afghan staff officers needed to support the operations within MOI, as those staff capabilities did not yet exist within the Afghan government.

Lack of Doctrine and Accountability. As members of an action-oriented organization, another of our tendencies as military officers is to want simply to "get something done." Partly as a result of this tendency, the police force's basic doctrine lagged well behind the actual fielding of personnel, equipment, and facilities, with many adverse consequences. The Army uses the DOTMLPF (doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and

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facilities) model of force development captured in Field Manual 100–11, *Force Integration*, as the guide for creating and modifying U.S. force structure.[13] There is good reason that the *D*—doctrine—comes first in that acronym. However, in Afghanistan it has been necessary to get as much force structure into the field as fast as possible due to the ongoing insurgency. As a result, there are major gaps in the base doctrine covering police force structure, roles, and missions. Likewise, the CSTC–A leaders who validate the force structure decisions and the training, equipping, and fielding priorities largely do so on the basis of their perception of the current situation, rather than basing those decisions on some coherent, commonly understood vision of the force's endstate.

Not surprisingly, then, the development of the Afghan army is well ahead of the development of the Afghan police, as we are much more comfortable building an army than a police force, most often applying our own doctrinal template in building their army. The challenges of this process are exacerbated by a lack of accountability mechanisms, forcing

functions, deadlines, or other benchmarks and metrics for measuring progress holistically. The solution for this challenge involves establishing both the basic doctrine for the forces as well as creating and implementing any necessary accountability mechanisms and performance measures. Both of these efforts are under way now in Afghanistan. Section 6–64 of the COIN doctrine makes mention of this challenge, but it is notably thin in terms of proposing particular standards or evaluation techniques.[14] As such, the mission leader will have to consult with the various players to define the standards and implement the corresponding assessment mechanisms.

Preparing Junior Leaders for Challenging Missions. As a young company commander in the 1st Armored Division in the early 1990s, my professional challenges were fairly straightforward, and the Army had prepared me well for them. Like other young leaders, I fit comfortably into a structured and hierarchical environment that reinforced success while self-correcting any problems that emerged. Conversely, modern operations provide few if any similar opportunities for our junior leaders, in spite of the fact that it is they who have the most profound impact upon the success or failure of these decentralized operations. Our junior officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) are the key executive agents, but they typically lack the basic frame of reference and experience needed for interacting with the local power-brokers, indigenous trainees, local citizens, international players, and others who will determine the success or failure of the broader effort.

Furthermore, awareness of other cultures is not a strong suit in the U.S. military's own organizational culture. So instead of tapping into the intelligence resources available to us through indigenous partners, too often we draw our own conclusions about the "good guys and bad guys," in some cases equating speaking English with being a "good guy." We also tend to impose Western models where they do not necessarily fit, setting up the new host nation organizations for failure and arousing resistance from our partners. A strength of the COIN manual is that it defines this problem while taking the first steps forward in changing the military's basic mindset.[15] In the case of the Afghan police reforms, we sought to overcome this institutional bias through intensive NATO-Afghan combined reform team training, conducted in

both Dari and English and involving mission planning with the U.S., allied, international community, and Afghan leaders who would actually carry out the reform tasks within the districts. This training and mission preparation covered a full spectrum of topics and tasks relevant to the reformers, from police operations to administration to Afghan culture to local intelligence, and was taught by subject matter experts from throughout the international community and the Afghan government. It is vitally important to listen to the indigenous leaders and local citizens on the ground in the reforming areas, and there is no substitute for the leader's own consistent interaction with the personnel actually executing the mission.

Decentralized Execution. IW missions require leaders who can move easily between the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of planning and execution. So while my interactions with senior U.S., Afghan, and international leaders were vital steps, the truth was that these leaders' agreements and directives would not go far without buy-in and vigorous execution by a wide variety of subordinate leaders spread throughout the operational theater. Furthermore, the ultimate success or failure of these operations would depend upon the mission preparation, comprehension of intent, and commitment to the mission by the captains, lieutenants, NCOs, and Soldiers carrying out reform and training missions. Since

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we were using four different regional training facilities spread across Afghanistan for police overhaul, this decentralization meant working hard to ensure that all of the players had a common operating picture of the standards, procedures, and expectations of the FDD program.

Decentralized execution of these missions also means that we cannot expect cookie-cutter results, as variability in local circumstances, resources, and leadership will lead to a variety of outcomes. Accordingly, it is critical to achieve clear lines of

communication; common training and reform standards clearly articulated in a mission order; and centralized mission preparation and training. It is important to share lessons learned and tactics, techniques, and procedures as the process unfolds. This goal involves setting up a robust communications network, securing vertical and lateral coordinating authority across commands, and conducting recurring and widely distributed after-action reviews. Lastly, it is important to create and maintain knowledge centers—secure and nonsecure share points—where the most current implementation documents, such as inspection checklists, points of contact, and operations orders, are available as appropriate. In these IW environments, published documents tend to be out of date by the time they are approved and published. In the case of the ANP, the *Afghanistan National Police Smartbook* was published just prior to my arrival in theater, but it was far out of date by the end of my assignment 6 months later.[16]

Challenges of Training Indigenous Forces. Training host-nation forces is hard work, particularly when the people are illiterate and poor while the society has a history of government incompetence and corruption. Leaders need to guard against focusing exclusively on the training of the individual police officers, or the lower level units of the particular security forces. Additionally, it is important to build a force appropriate to that society's culture and circumstances, rather than trying to impose an inappropriate Western model or process. In Afghanistan, the German government had the original responsibility for developing the police forces, and it attempted to create a highly professional Western-style police force comparable to ones found in Europe. The approach fell short for a variety of reasons, but chief among them was the mismatch between the

> *the ultimate success or failure of these operations would depend upon the captains, lieutenants, NCOs, and Soldiers carrying out reform and training missions*

German model and Afghan circumstances, as well as the low rate of production of trained personnel. Upon taking responsibility for police development, the United States initially replaced this focus on *quality* with an emphasis on *quantity*. That approach, while fielding individual police at a far higher rate, did nothing to address the ineffectiveness of the police leadership at the district level, or in the administration of the police forces at the national or provincial levels. Instead, leaders must take a *holistic approach*—or systems perspective on the operational environment approach—if there is to be any chance of overcoming the wholesale political, organizational, and societal challenges of creating a functioning and professional institution. The scope of the problem includes economics, cultural norms, family issues, pay, basic means of identification, illiteracy, and a range of other major challenges.

Impact of the Nonpermissive Security Environment. As our COIN doctrine states, insurgents understand that the essential objective is to undermine the people's confidence in existing governing institutions. They use terror as a means to this end, and these nonpermissive security environments have a profound impact upon a leader's ability to reach out to the people and indigenous leaders who are partners in the enterprise. Given our usual force protection posture, it is common for U.S. forces to rush from one secured site to another, thus limiting their interaction with the average citizens and reducing the sense of actually living with their Afghan partners. The enemy understands the costs and other effects of their asymmetric threats, and they aim to create a "bunker mentality" within the security forces that further separates the people from their government and their protectors. Mission leaders must seek every opportunity to overcome this institutional bias, enhancing the interaction among the people, the indigenous government, its security forces, and our own troops. Ideally, we will find a way to work side by side with our counterparts so that eventually we can "leave quietly," having helped them to develop procedures, infrastructure, and relationships needed to enable their government and their security forces to function effectively. In the complex world of IW operations, that seamless transition represents the ultimate success.

U.S. Army (Johnny R. Aragon)

Afghan National Army soldiers and Border Police confiscate weapons and ammunition found during search

Implications

Much like Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, our COIN doctrine and the broader IW joint operating concept offer key guiding principles that help to inform the stability mission leader about the challenges of the IW operating environment and the planning and preparation needed for success in these critical endeavors. In some instances, the doctrine offers particular techniques that can be used to craft specific action plans, providing our leaders with a means to operationalize those key guiding principles to accomplish their mission. But in many more cases, the doctrine and operating concept merely redefine the nature of the problem at hand, as our leaders are challenged to figure out for themselves how to go about solving complex problems for which they may have little relevant training, experience, or background. Without question, the COIN doctrine and IW joint operating concept make important contributions to our joint force through their respective calls to leaders to rethink the basic approach to stability missions. However, we still have much work to do in preparing our leaders to provide the innovative, creative, and nuanced thinking that is required for mission success—thinking that goes far beyond the traditional mission preparation that has dominated our institutional training and leader development in the past. Accordingly, the next step forward for our joint force is to redevelop the institutional training base, and to identify and disseminate the tactics, techniques, and procedures needed to achieve success, thus enabling our leaders to appreciate the magnitude of the challenge and to succeed in these soft power missions. Put another way, now is the time to work smarter, rather than harder, and to equip our force with the skills and tools needed to enable success in these complex, challenging, and vital tasks—while developing the specific, dedicated subject matter expertise within the force that will enable us to fall in effectively with the various theaters in which we will likely operate.

As a joint force we have made great strides in the last several years in this "change of mission," and it is likely that our military will be called upon to conduct many more stability missions in the future, applying American soft power using the military's organizational capabilities as the coordinating delivery mechanism. So there is no question about the importance and relevance of these missions, but it is also clear that we have not quite gotten the model right just yet. The counterinsurgency manual and irregular warfare joint operating concept are fine first steps, and they outline the basic core principles that are central to mission success. But these documents are no substitute for innovative, enlightened, and informed leadership—leadership that must fully understand the cultural, political, and economic parameters of the particular IW environments in which they will serve. We simply cannot afford to continue to take an ad hoc approach to missions that will be increasingly central to U.S. national security interests in the 21st century. **JFQ**

Marines provide marksmanship training to Afghan National Police recruits

DOD (Gene Allen Ainsworth III)

NOTES

[1] Department of Defense, *Irregular Warfare (IW) Joint Operating Concept, Version 1.0* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, September 11, 2007), 1.

[2] See Andrew Wilder, *Cops or Robbers? The Struggle to Reform the Afghan National Police*, Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit Issues Paper Series (Kabul, Afghanistan: Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit, July 2007).

[3] Police Mentor Synchronization Conference briefing slides, an unpublished and unclassified PowerPoint presentation from the Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC–A), July 8, 2007; and Focused District Development Workshop, also an unpublished and unclassified presentation from the same command, August 27–28, 2007.

[4] Zarar Hamad, *Strategic Capabilities Plan* (Kabul, Afghanistan: Afghan Ministry of the Interior, August 13, 2007), 6–13.

[5] NATO Public Diplomacy Division, *Progress in Afghanistan: Bucharest Summit 2–4 April 2008* (Brussels: NATO Headquarters, April 2008), 10.

[6] Wilder.

[7] *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), sections I–121 and I–122.

[8] Ibid. See section 2 for a discussion of these groups.

[9] Candace Rondeaux, "A Ragtag Pursuit of the Taliban: U.S. Effort to Train Afghans as Counterinsurgency Force Is Far from Finished," *The Washington Post*, August 6, 2008, A1. Rondeaux quotes CSTC–A commander MG Robert Cone as saying that the police mentoring effort falls short by 2,300 mentors.

[10] John A. Nagl, *Institutionalizing Adaptation: It's Time for a Permanent Army Advisor Corps* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, June 2007).

[11] Hugh Heclo, "Issue Networks and the Executive Establishment," in *The New American Political System*, ed. Anthony King (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1978), 87–124.

[12] These challenges are outlined in International Crisis Group, *Reforming Afghanistan's Police* (Brussels: International Crisis Group, August 30, 2007).

[13] Field Manual (FM) 100–11, *Force Integration* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, January 1998).

[14] *U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, 220.

[15] FM 100–11.

[16] Task Force Phoenix–Police Advisory Cell, *Afghanistan National Police Smartbook* (Kabul, Afghanistan: Task Force Phoenix Headquarters, June 30, 2007).