



# Measuring Progress Toward Social Well- Being in Afghanistan

Beth Baumgarten

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# Measuring Social Well-Being in Afghanistan

- General Flynn’s “Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan”:
  - The IC needs to change “from a focus on the enemy to a focus on the people of Afghanistan”
  - “The most salient problems are attitudinal, cultural, and human”
  - Quotes General McChrystal that policymakers “are not getting the right information to make decisions..”
  - Policymakers “need to understand the subnational situation down to the district level”



# Measuring Social Well-Being in Afghanistan: “Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife”

- **Purpose:** To examine methods of measuring social welfare progress in conflict environments
- **Issue:** Current methods of measuring progress in Afghanistan are plagued with information shortfalls and result in subjective narratives
- **Objectives:**
  - Identify gaps in current analytic methods and sources
  - Identify potential new ways of measuring and analyzing social welfare status



# Background

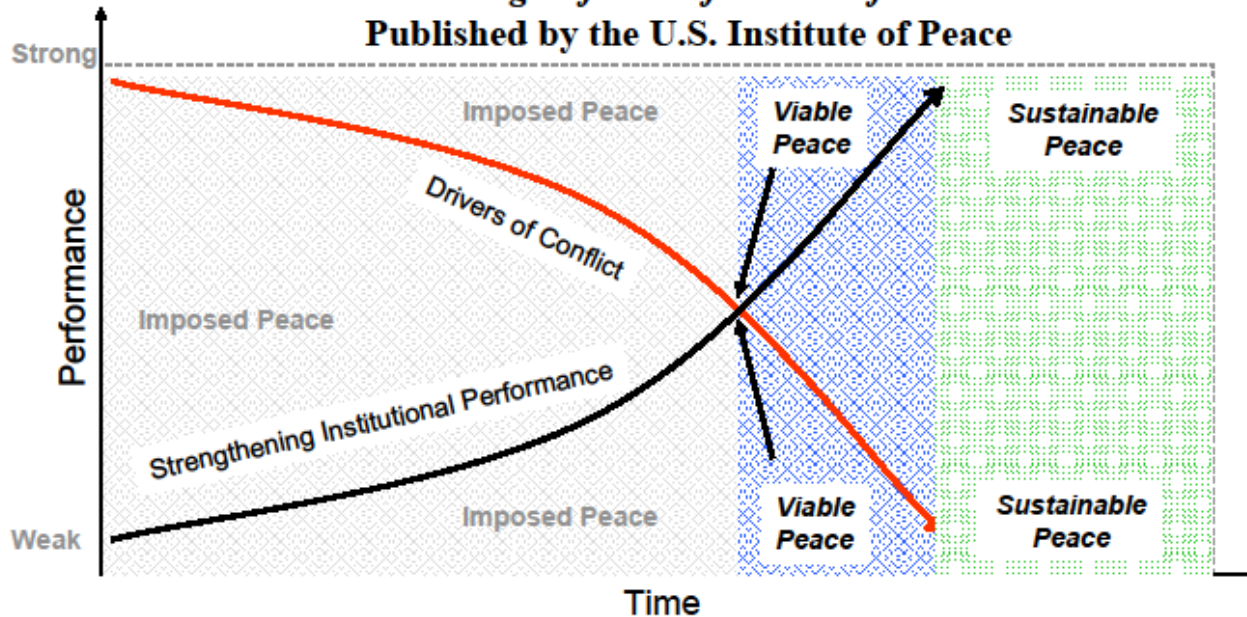
- Since 2001 US policy toward weak/failing states has become a national security priority
  - President Bush statement in 2002 warned of threats to national security from weak states as great as those from strong states
  - PDD44 directs anticipating and avoiding state failure (2005)
- Nation-building has become cornerstone of US national security strategy in Afghanistan
  - US/NATO/ISAF military are leading the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan
  - \$32B invested in governance, prosperity, security, and counternarcotics in Afghanistan (2001-2008)



# Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE)

## "Theory of Change"

From *The Quest for Viable Peace: International Intervention and Strategies for Conflict Transformation*  
Published by the U.S. Institute of Peace



Developed independently at the USAID and the Fund for Peace  
Adopted by the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization and the U.S. Joint Forces Command



# Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE)

- Stages of Conflict:
  - 0 = Imposed Stability
  - 1 = Assisted Stability
    - Afghanistan – approaching Stage 1
    - Objectives at Stage 1: International assistance provides access to basic necessities (food, water, shelter) and delivery of social services (health care, education, sanitation) in an increasingly equitable manner
  - 2 = Self-Sustaining Peace



# Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE)

- Five Mission Areas:
  - Safe and Secure Environment
  - Rule of Law
  - Stable Democracy
  - Sustainable Economy
  - ***Social Well-Being***





# Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE)

## Social Well-Being Mission Area:

- Access to basic needs (food, water, shelter)
  - Sample objective: ***Perception of heads of households that emergency food needs can be met through support from extended family, kinship networks, or village support systems. (S/PD)***
- Provision of basic social services (health care, education, sanitation)
  - Sample objective: ***Percentage of households with access to water. (SA)***





# Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE)

- Methodologies/data sources:
  - Content analysis (readily available pubs, but difficult to choose and labor intensive)
  - Expert opinion (useful, sound opinions, but may be biased)
  - Statistical analysis (appear more objective, but can be manipulated)
  - Survey/polling data (useful for societal views, but must be carefully designed)



# Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE)

## Social Well-Being Mission Area:

- Problems with data availability & reliability
- Access to basic needs (food, water, shelter)
  - Examples: food security:
    - Number of deaths due to malnourishment (Statistical Analysis) – recent data reviewed from UN Agencies
    - Strength of official relief for meeting emergency food needs (Expert Opinion) – published results from UN Agencies
  - Access to water and sanitation
    - Percentage of households with access to water (Statistical Analysis) – also used survey data



# Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE)

## Social Well-Being Mission Area:

### Some gaps & ambiguities

- Provision of basic social services (health care, education, sanitation)
  - Examples: Accessibility of health care:
    - Perception that health care is accessible (Survey/Polling data) – surveys from 2002, 2006, and 2007 – some ambiguity
    - Ratio of practicing doctors, nurses, and healthcare workers to population (Statistical Analysis) – no data available



# Summary of Findings

- There are large gaps in available data
- Results varied significantly for measuring similar issues across regions and urban/rural areas
- Aggregate national data obscured progress at the local level
- Analysis commonly results in narrative discussions, is inconclusive, and extremely subjective
- ***What is missing?***



# Potential Solutions?

- Organize quality controlled data geospatially with details tagged to locations
- Depict characterized populations in relation to available social services
- Allows analysis at various scales and various interrelated aspects of the society
- Spatially enabling data representing human activity provides a platform for inferential analysis



# Human Geography

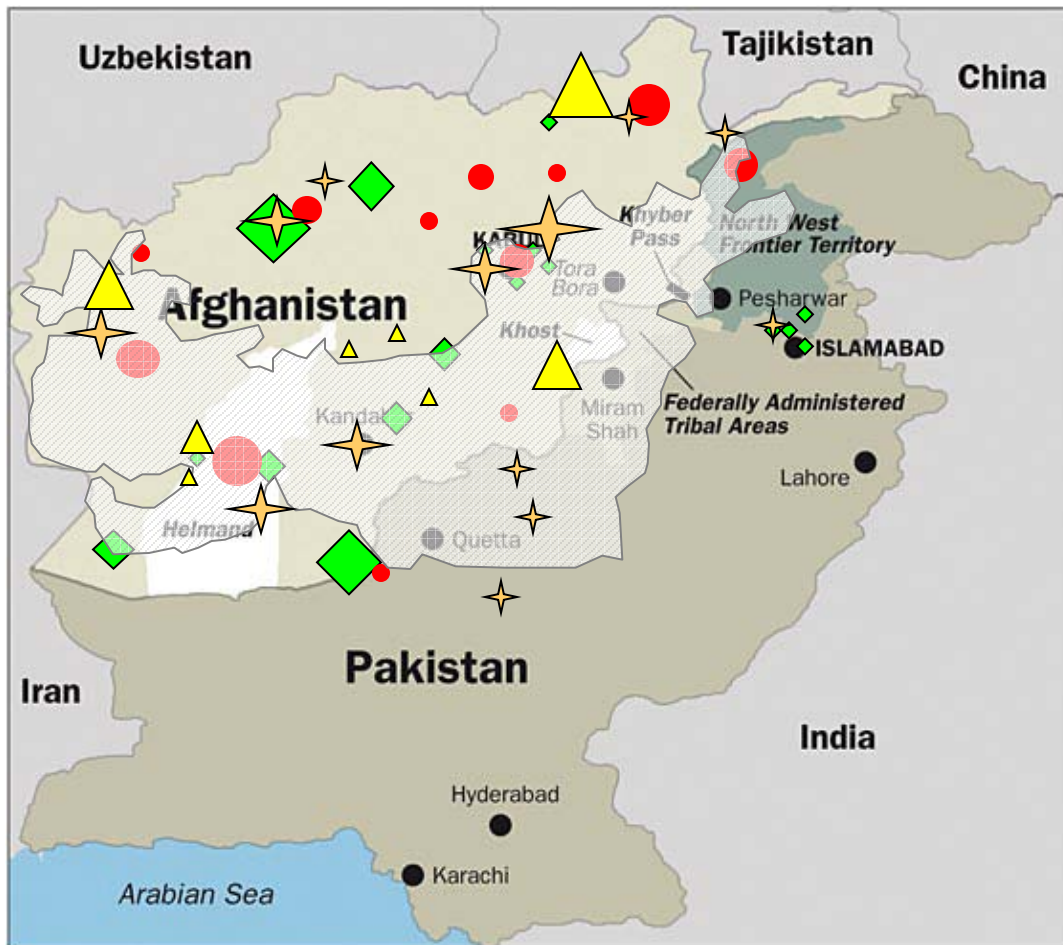


SOURCE: U.S. Department of State, 2007.

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# Spatially Enabling Human Geography (Hypothetical)



- ◆ Price of exotic fruit
- Progress of NGO projects
- ★ Compliance rate on government taxes
- ▲ Percentage of local people with secure title to their house
- ▨ Pashtun area





# Way Ahead

- In order to provide new insights:
  - Need to develop more consistent approach to collecting information
  - Need to organize appropriately attributed data spatially
  - Need to conduct analyses in a spatial/temporal context



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