Analysis for the Future of Afghanistan:

The Human Terrain of Counterinsurgency Operations: Analysis of the Socio-Cultural Environment

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Outline

- Roles and Background

- The Afghan Counterinsurgency Centre

  – Objectives of the ACC

  – Counterinsurgency Principles

  – 'Understanding the Human Terrain'

- Socio-cultural analysis

  – Developing Cultural Competency

  – 'Reach-back' Support to Operations

  – Analysis from an Afghan Perspective

  – Alternative, Novel, and Best Use of Available Data

- Analysis for the future of Afghanistan?

- Questions

Roles and Background

- Social / Cultural Research Psychologist

- Applied social science research with Dstl since 2004

- Operational Analyst on Herrick 10 (June – Oct 09)

- Currently seconded to Afghan Counterinsurgency Centre (ACC).

UK-Based Afghan Counterinsurgency (COIN) Centre

As a world class centre of Counterinsurgency/Stabilisation Operations (S0) excellence, Analyse, Develop, Educate, Advocate COIN/SO theory, doctrine and best practice in order to optimise the Field Army for performance on operations.

Afghan COIN Centre Objectives

- **ANALYSE**
  - Systematically collect and analyse COIN/SO thinking, developments and best practice, both within the Army and Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental and Multinational partners

- **DEVELOP**
  - Develop optimal COIN/SO theory, doctrine and best practise

- **EDUCATE**
  - Improve knowledge and understanding of COIN/SO in the Land environment by assessing, influencing and supporting the construction and delivery of education and training

- **ADVOCATE**
  - Promote COIN/SO thinking, doctrine and best practice by presenting, publishing and networking to demonstrate the Army's commitment to the development of COIN/SO

Areas of Work

- Understanding of the human terrain
- Securing the population (physically and psychologically)
- Partnering Afghan forces
- Escalation of force
- Engagement with females
- Religious engagement
- Reintegration of the Taliban
- Police development
- Counter-corruption
- And more…

COIN Principles

Primacy of Political Purpose

Unity of Effort

Understand the Human Terrain

Secure the Population

Neutralize the Insurgent

Gain and Maintain Popular Support

Operate in accordance With the Law

Integrate Intelligence

Prepare for the Long Term

Learn and Adapt

Understanding of the Human Terrain

- *You must understand your Operational Environment… Intimate knowledge of the Human Terrain is paramount…Know the society's leadership systems; learn the governance structures…Understand the familial, clan and tribal cultures…the relationships and tensions among the separate groups…this gives us understanding from the point of view of the population, insurgent and counterinsurgent*

[COMISAF]

The Human Terrain (HT)

- Political, economic, and social organisations

- Interactions between individuals and groups, and interactions with their environment

- Beliefs, values, norms in behaviour

= The population and their environment

Implementing Military Understanding of the Human Terrain

- UK Tactical Doctrine (due April 10) on:

  - Why understanding is important to the military

    - Critical to successful COIN operations

  - Developing understanding

    - Training
    - Human Terrain Analysis

  - Using an understanding of the human terrain

    - Planning and decision making
    - Guide behaviour
    - Measuring impact and moderating effect

        Changing military mindset

Why Understand the Human Terrain?

- Understand why the population behaves the way they do and better anticipate responses

- Understanding how to develop strategies that receive the support of the local population

- Understand why our behaviour is having an impact (intended and unintended) on the behaviours and perceptions of the local population

- To distinguish and isolate insurgents from the population

- To communicate more effectively with the population and promote shared understanding of intent

= Harness messages and activities to conduct 'better' counterinsurgency

= Enable access to the population, understanding of cultural centres of gravity

= Create a stable and secure environment that can function under the governance of Afghanistan; *'The Future of Afghanistan'*

Developing understanding of the HT

- Counterinsurgency training and revision to cultural briefs

    – Human Terrain critical to all.

- Cultural Competency Training

    – CULADs, Cultural Specialists, Influence Officers, Commanders

- Human Terrain Analysis

    – Requirement - Collection - Fusion - Assessment - Product and Dissemination

    – Developing tools and techniques

    – 'Operationalising' culture/ human terrain.

Using an Understanding of the Human Terrain

- Planning and Decision-Making
  - Pre-planning and information gathering
  - Integration into operational planning
  - Direct advice to commanders
- Guide Behaviour
  - Situational Awareness
  - Advice to unit engagements
  - Partnering Host Nation Forces
  - Use of kinetic and non-kinetic force
- Measure and Moderate Effect

Measuring Impact and Moderating Effect

- Campaign continuity and corporate knowledge

- Confidence in effect
  - Sustaining good COIN practice at Brigade and individual level

- Monitor progress and adapt approach
  - Informed metrics of effect and performance (MoE, MoPs)
  - Implementing successful strategies to achieve objectives

- Inform force development
  - Training, education, best practice

Requirement for Socio-Cultural Expertise

- HT mindset critical but not sufficient to achieve effect:
    - What information to attend to?

    - How to interpret information?

    - How to integrate information with other forms of information/ intelligence?

    - Who needs what information?

    - How does it/ does it support COIN?

    - How do we know what we don't know?

= Requirement for socio-cultural analysis / expertise to provide guidance

Dstl Socio-Cultural Support

- Wide range of work, some examples:
  - Support to Cultural Capability Training
  - Reach-back support to operations
  - Development of influence tools and techniques
  - Social Network Analysis tool development
  - ARIA – Suite of tools for supporting representation of actors in training and exercises
  - Understanding 'How Social Change Occurs'
  - The 'Afghan Perspective'
  - Alternative and novel data sources for analysis

Developing Military Cultural Competency

- Developing capacity for military to conduct socio-cultural analysis

  - Social science research methodologies

  - Principles of influence, engagement, and understanding human dynamics

  - Knowledge of Afghan culture

- Development of human terrain tool-kit

  - Assessment tools e.g. Belief Mapping, individual profiling

- Cultural Competency for Partnering Afghan Security Forces

Socio-Cultural Support to Operations

- Provision of applied socio-cultural research support to current operations 'Reach-back'
    - Short-term research outputs (< 3 weeks) in response to theatre RFIs
    - Exploitable
    - Interpreting question and translating social science theory into operational reality
- In-theatre socio-cultural analysis
    - Developing Operational Analysis expertise
- Developing MoD Socio-cultural expertise and mentality
    - Acceptable level of analysis
    - Confidence in providing advice
    - Broad range of disciplines - psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science…

Analysis from an Afghan Perspective

- Focus groups with Afghan National Security Forces

- Examining 'Afghan Ways of Working'

- Afghan social science research and theories of behaviour

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Analysis from an Afghan Perspective

- What does the future look like and how can we get there?

- How can we engage and influence the local population?

- What are the preferred social structures and cultural values that support long-term security and stabilisation?

- What are we doing wrong?

- How/ does this differ from current assumptions?

- Is change required at the tactical/ operational level?

- Does/ will this impact on achieving strategic objectives?

Alternative, Novel, and Best Use of Available Data-Sets

- Rationale
  - 'Focus on the Population'
  - Flynn 'Fixing Intel'
  - Amount of data not the issue

- Data e.g.
  - Patrol reports
  - Key Leader Engagement
  - 'Atmospherics' reporting
  - Video footage
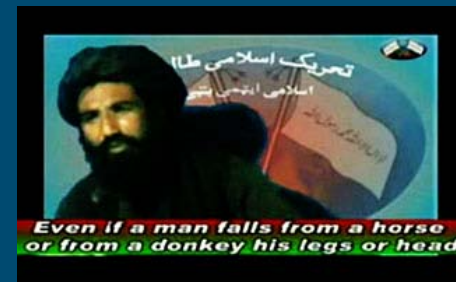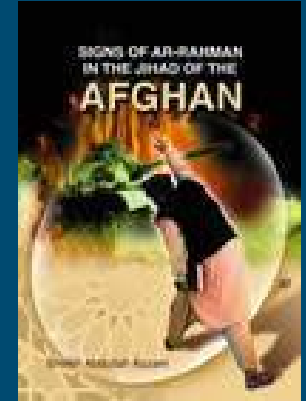 - Insurgent produced material

'Focus on the Population' Data-Sets

- Analysis

  - What data is available to increase understanding of the population/ HT?

  - How is / is data currently being used?

  - Thematic/content analysis of data sources from social science perspective.

- Output

  - Utility of data sets

  - Options and guidance for exploiting content of data sets operationally to achieve:

    - Long term objectives
    - Short-term goals

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Insurgent Produced Data-Sets

- Open source, insurgent produced material
- Understanding the insurgents as part of the HT
  - How do they influence the population (implicitly and explicitly)?
  - How do they harness aspects of the HT to achieve effect?
  - What are their views on reintegration?
  - How is insurgent doctrine evolving in response to ISAF activities and doctrine?
  - How is /is the future of Afghanistan influenced by global reach of the insurgency?

Analysis for the Future of Afghanistan?

- Analysis for the future of Afghanistan dependent upon:
  - Developing military capability and willingness to conduct counterinsurgency operations
    - 'Understanding the Human Terrain'
    - Ability to measure and moderate impact for long-term effect
  - Provision of immediate and longer term socio-cultural analysis to support the military in conducting successful counterinsurgency
    - Guidance on collection, analysis and exploitation of socio-cultural data
    - Making good use of existing data
  - Understanding what the future of Afghanistan would look like from an Afghan perspective, and how that can best be achieved

QUESTIONS?

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