

**Counterinsurgency in theory and practice:
Two models and the reality of Canada in Afghanistan**

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Introduction

Today, it is commonly accepted that ISAF's mission is a form of counterinsurgency, whether or not that term is used. Certainly, the emphasis of forces engaged there is on population protection, not attrition or punitive action; creation and defense of infrastructure, and not its strategic destruction; undermining and coopting the fringe elements of the insurgency, and not forcibly defeating them; and isolating and rendering illegitimate the foreign and domestic extremists who form the core of the violence there, so that they become irrelevant, rather than seeking simply to inflict high casualties.

Counterinsurgency is frequently presented in scholarly and popular literature as something new, and in one sense it is; the name is of recent vintage, and the creation of doctrines and a theoretical structure with which to understand and combat an insurgency is an ongoing endeavour, in civilian and military institutions. Insurgency itself, though, in the form of a loosely organized resistance rooted in geography, tribal affiliation and identity, is arguably among the oldest forms of armed conflict, predating national armies and in fact nations themselves.

Clausewitz' classic treatment of warfare was written in a period when nationalism was in the ascendant. Despite this, his understanding that war cannot be understood in isolation from politics, economics and culture yields a number of insights into how insurgents can win or be defeated. In particular his recognition that a popular uprising, in sparsely populated and challenging terrain, can inflict disproportionate damage on an invading force, leads to a number of conclusions, chiefly at the end of Book Six of *On War*, that are still useful today.

Clausewitz' work was shaped by the qualitative analysis of a vast body of military history, including his own experience. Almost two centuries later, the US Army's Small Wars Operations Research Division (SWORD) created a quantitative tool for evaluating the factors crucial to a successful counterinsurgency. Such a tool could, in theory, make it possible to predict the outcome of an insurgency, as well as bring a scientific rigour and precision to counterinsurgency efforts. The SWORD model, like all attempts to simulate and predict human endeavours, isn't perfect, but it is a statistically robust tool for analyzing counterinsurgencies past and present.

The purpose of this paper is, first, to summarize the major issues identified by Clausewitz in *On War*, and by Fishel and Manwaring's SWORD model, as crucial to defeating an insurgency. ISAF, and particularly Canada's participation in ISAF, will then be examined in light of these factors. This examination will show that, while succeeding in many respects according to both Clausewitz, one of history's greatest theorists of warfare, and the most useful probabilistic model of counterinsurgency yet devised, efforts to pacify and stabilize Afghanistan have nonetheless failed thus far to achieve some of the key elements of successfully thwarting an insurgency.

Clausewitz and COIN

From the perspective of classical theorists of war, conflicts and coercion can be divided into two broad categories, deterrence and compellence. Of necessity, analysts in the latter half of the 20th century were concerned with deterrence, a trend amplified by a growing preference in the developed world for diplomacy and negotiation as the preferred means of resolving disputes. Deterrence, best understood as an attempt to maintain the status quo, characterized even the first Iraq war. Both insurgency and counterinsurgency, however, are concerned with effecting change, whether by taking explicit control of a region, or by changing the way it is governed and administered.¹ Approaching Clausewitz from the perspective of compellence rather than deterrence reveals that his classic work has lessons to offer us about counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Clausewitz' best known idea, that warfare is an extension of politics, is commonplace today, but was a transformative insight when he first expressed it. While the relationship between diplomacy and combat, politics and warfare, is more intuitively obvious when considering deterrence, it is just as important when applied to compellence. This is implicit in his own introduction, where he defines war as “an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.”² Destroying an enemy army, eliminating the infrastructure that makes resistance possible, decapitation of an enemy's leadership – none of these are ends, per Clausewitz, but rather means for compelling our enemy to do our will. If Clausewitz recognized the role of savagery in warfare, he also emphasized that force was “in no way incompatible with the simultaneous use of

¹ Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, Yale University Press, 1966, pages 71 – 79.

² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, indexed edition, translated and edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton University Press, 1984, page 75.

the intellect.”³ Equally, this view makes plain that when such violent means aren’t required, they ought not to be used.

The “key to the country,” which Clausewitz presents in Book 6, Chapter 23, is a concept which, when reframed, is crucial to counterinsurgency. Clausewitz takes to task his predecessors who looked for crude geographical definitions as to what constitutes the key to a country, when in fact the useful definition, he argues, is something without which “one cannot risk an advance into enemy territory.”⁴ He suggests that the most obvious key is the enemy’s army, and further that when a specific region is a key to the country, it is because of its central importance to communications or supply lines, and not simply the fact that it is held. This shift in perception, from defining the key to the country in physical, tangible terms to viewing it as an intangible factor in operations, turns a concept that Clausewitz rightly considered obsolete in the early 19th century into something central even today. Taking one further step along the course laid out by Clausewitz, and define the key to the country as the tacit support of the majority of the population, then applying his theory of war to ISAF, and Canada, in Afghanistan reveals that this support is the *sine qua non*, without which further advances are dangerous, or even futile.

A second concept is the “theory of victory.” While Clausewitz speaks of “disarming the enemy” and even the “destruction of an enemy’s forces,” implicit throughout *On War* is that this is not necessarily a literal instruction, nor is it sufficient for compellence. He defines disarming the enemy as a theoretical ideal, while acknowledging that it is not always possible or necessary. “Many treaties have been concluded,” he points out, “before one of the antagonists could be

³ Ibid.

⁴ Clausewitz, page

called powerless, even before the balance of power had been seriously altered.”⁵ Further, he recognizes insurgency even while calling it by a different name, when he says that “we may occupy a country completely, but hostilities can be renewed again in the interior,” even after a peace treaty has been signed.⁶ Reading *On War* through the lens of counterinsurgency, then, makes it clear that defining victory in terms of enemy forces killed, weapons and infrastructure destroyed, territory conquered or formal surrenders accepted is at best fruitless and at worst counterproductive.

While these first two commandments of COIN – identify the key to the country, and develop a theory of victory that suits the theatre – are clearly stated in *On War*, the third aspect of Clausewitz relevant for our purposes is derived by inverting his Book 6, Chapter 26, “The People in Arms.” Essentially a manual for insurgents, this chapter describes the conditions in which an uprising can succeed. The reader could be forgiven for thinking Clausewitz is describing Afghanistan: he specifies that an uprising can be effective only in the interior of a country, and not along its frontiers; that it cannot be a conflict decided by a single decisive victory; that the theatre of operations must be large and challenging; and that the character of the native population be suited to it, with poor men, in his words, “generally more vigorous and more warlike” than their wealthy counterparts.⁷

In such circumstances, he advises the population in arms to take advantage of their dispersion throughout terrain they know well, and, while remaining nebulous, to “nibble at the shell and

⁵ Clausewitz page 91.

⁶ Clausewitz page 90.

⁷ Clausewitz page 480.

around the edges” of the invader.⁸ Doing so will force the counterinsurgents to devote resources to defending convoys, securing lines of transport and communication, fortifying themselves wherever they establish a presence, and defending against interference from adjoining powers, paving the way for an attack on the invader that “will be enough to shake him.”⁹

It must be said that many of Clausewitz’ ideas on defeating a people in arms rely upon force as a tool of deterrence, and not simply on compellence. Even more jarring to our understanding of COIN today is his dictum on kindness in war; he argues that attempts to minimize bloodshed in order to lessen suffering in war are fallacious and in reality make conflict and its attendant savagery more protracted, a view that can easily – if mistakenly – seem to support a mentality of “killing the village to save the village.”¹⁰ His emphasis on the punitive aspects of compellence, though, do not vitiate these three lessons for counterinsurgents: to identify the key to the country, to develop and implement a theory of victory, and to avoid falling into the traps that he recommends uprisings exploit. For the purposes of this paper, those traps are identified as a) personnel and resource intensive fortification throughout the country, b) failure to isolate external support for the uprising, and c) being drawn into repeated small conflicts at the “shell” and pursuing insurgents into territory they control. All of these traps can be made less risky by increasing the capacity of local authorities as rapidly as can responsibly be done.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Clausewitz page 483.

¹⁰ Michael T. Plehn, *The Sharpest Sword: Compellence, Clausewitz, and Counterinsurgency*, Air University Press, 2005, page 21.

The Sword Model of COIN

Throughout the 1980s, the Small Wars Operations Research Division (SWORD) of the US Southern Command undertook the study not only of counterinsurgencies but also of models used to analyze them and, if properly developed, help to predict outcomes, as well as illuminating pathways for changing outcomes. Using 43 insurgencies that occurred after the Second World War, and involved the US or another western power, they selected 72 variables related to the circumstances and progress of the initial insurgency and the ensuing counterinsurgency. Experts external to the project provided input in the form of assigning values to each of the variables, as well as in assessing each counterinsurgency as ultimately a success or failure. Notably, the methodology for this determination is fundamentally in line with Clausewitz, even though the chief investigators disagree with much of his thinking; Algeria, for example, which represented a decisive military victory for France coupled with a political failure, and the withdrawal of France from the country, was coded as a failure, since according to our understanding of the political nature of warfare, a conflict that ends in military success but doesn't achieve the political goals for which it was begun cannot be counted as a victory.¹¹

The SWORD model, created around 72 variables, correctly "predicted" the outcome for 38 of the 43 case studies used, or 88%. Of the five incorrectly judged insurgencies, two were predicted as having a odds of victory of 48-52, and a third as having odds of 40-60 in favour of winning; all were in reality wins for the COIN. This is, in the social sciences, a robust tool, and represents a

¹¹ Max G. Manwaring and John T. Fishel, "Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency: Toward a New Analytical Approach," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, volume 3, issue 3, (Winter 1991) page 272.

significant step forward when evaluated against five prior indicator based models of insurgencies.¹²

The two exceptions are also instructive. In Cyprus, the SWORD model assigned a 31% chance of victory to the British, who ended up realizing their goal: a ceasefire, and the establishment of a republic. In Aden, the model gave odds of 88-12 for a British victory, and yet the end result was a British withdrawal. In each case, a choice by the intervening power weighed so heavily upon the outcome that it dwarfed other factors. During the Cyprus conflict, Britain's strategic interest in maintaining a permanent presence in the eastern Mediterranean yielded a particularly steadfast approach that apparently outweighed the factors indicating impending defeat. Conversely, when Britain announced that it would withdraw from Aden by a certain date regardless of progress realized, local support fell dramatically.

It isn't surprising, then, that resolve on the part of the intervening power, both real and perceived, is an important indicator of eventual success. This resolve must extend not only to direct or indirect military assistance, but also political, social and economic support. The more this support fluctuates, or even appears to, such as when dramatic changes in policy of the intervening power are mooted in media and political circles, the lower the odds of ultimate success for the host government and intervening power.

Unity of effort is another indicator that correlates strongly with victory for counterinsurgents. This means, in Afghanistan, not simply that unity within a single army is necessary, but also coordination among the military and civilian elements from each participating nation, as well as

¹² Manwaring and Fishel, page 283.

national and international NGOs. Parceling responsibility for a province to an ISAF member is a useful administrative approach that mitigates the difficulty of this task, but does not by any means nullify it. Unity of effort also requires harmony between the Afghan host government and people, and the intervening powers and their allies.

At the heart of guerrilla warfare is the idea that a small kernel of troops, well trained and highly committed to insurgency, and not necessarily native to the area, can galvanize exponentially larger groups of local forces.¹³ Still larger proportions of the local population will never directly participate in the insurgency, but will provide indirect support, even as rudimentary as keeping silent, to an uprising.¹⁴ In the absence of pressing social, economic, ethnic or religious grievances, the kernel will have little success in mobilizing the people, but equally, without leadership, a population with a grievance will prove easily managed by the host government and counterinsurgents.¹⁵

Severing external support for the insurgents, while identifying and isolating the leaders, who are often not local to the area, is the third major predictor of success or failure against which to measure Afghanistan, using the SWORD framework. In the militarily successful pacification of Algeria, the use of census information and intelligence in segregating fomenters of rebellion, whether by keeping them in custody or returning them to their homes, was a key element of the French effort.¹⁶ The parallels with Algeria are especially useful to the study of Afghanistan,

¹³ David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*, Oxford University Press, 2009, pages 39 – 62.

¹⁴ Manwaring and Fishel, page 289.

¹⁵ John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, University of Chicago Press, 2002, Chapter 2 *passim*.

¹⁶ David Galula, *Pacification in Algeria 1956 – 1958*, RAND Corporation, 2006, Part Three *passim*.

since in Algeria the insurgents were Muslims who also organized along ethnic lines, stirred up by ideologues, with the support of states on their borders, in a sere land with strategic importance. The intervening power in Algeria was a secular Western state, with a competent and well-trained professional army, that was ultimately crippled by internal dissent, post-colonialism and moral relativism, and lack of support for the war at home. More broadly, at issue for France in Algeria were not simply Algerian sovereignty and the French empire, but a wider question of identity involving the very nature and scope of France, and how its power and resources should be deployed both at home and abroad. It is not necessary to belabour the ways in which this situation is congruent with western involvement in Afghanistan in general, and the role of the US in that part of the world more specifically.

Fundamental to the SWORD model is the realization that COIN is at heart a struggle for legitimacy. Establishing the legitimacy of the host government involves many factors. It requires that the embryonic government be given as much authority over domestic matters as it responsibly can be, and that it not be perceived as a puppet of the intervening powers. It means creating or bolstering the capacity of local government to provide the necessities of life, from clean water and electricity at the most basic level to schools, fair and effective police and courts, medical care and local democratic governance as pacification and stabilization progress.

Nurturing an economy that can sustain civil society is necessary if long-term independence is a serious goal. Legitimacy further requires not only that the host government have meaningful abilities and powers, but also that it use them fairly, and not for settling personal grudges or persecuting political opponents.¹⁷

¹⁷ Manwaring and Fishel, page 287.

Crucial factors in COIN

A synopsis of the insights of Clausewitz and the SWORD model reveals them to be, if not contradictory, at least not entirely compatible. Synthesizing them shows us that amongst the most important factors in determining the success or failure of an insurgency are the following:

- Identifying the “key to the country”, without possession of which further progress is impossible
- Formulating a theory of victory appropriate to the situation
- Denying insurgents the opportunities to nibble at the periphery, which in practice means transferring the functions of the state to the host government as soon as possible
- Resolve on the part of the intervening powers
- Unity of effort among all parties opposing the insurgency
- Isolating the core insurgents
- Creating and maintaining the legitimacy of the host government while destroying the legitimacy of the insurgents

Evaluating ISAF, and Canada, to date against these factors will show how effectively they have performed, what could or should be done differently, and what, according to the preminent theorist of war as well as a recent theoretical model, the outcome might be.

Canada (and ISAF) in Afghanistan

While Clausewitz’ term is never used explicitly, Canada’s approach, as demonstrated by the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in particular, implicitly recognizes the Afghan

population as the “key to the country.”¹⁸ There are two major aspects to winning the people. The first is human security, which is usually interpreted as requiring armed force to repel or defeat attacks. True human security, though, requires more than just the absence of violence, but also reliable access to the necessities of life. Conversely, the second half of gaining the support of the Afghan population is based on development. Merely creating infrastructure is counterproductive if it will be destroyed at the first opportunity, and so a degree of military security is essential to development.

Complementing this is the fact that protecting the population draws a sharp distinction between insurgents and ISAF troops. Attacks on the troops of the Intervening Powers (IP) take a toll on Afghan civilians and resources as well.¹⁹ When the Canadian forces in Kandahar put themselves on the line to protect Afghans and their homes, they establish themselves as more than just another imperial occupier.²⁰

The theory of victory shared by Canada and our ISAF partners is that our end goal is to withdraw from Afghanistan, and to leave behind a reasonably secure, stable and sovereign state. To this end, ISAF and Canada are working towards security by developing the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) and the Afghanistan National Police (ANP), and neutralizing the insurgency, recognizing that good government can only be built on peace and order.²¹ In the name of stability, myriad governments and NGOs are developing infrastructure, the institutions that

¹⁸ Where not otherwise noted, information about Canada’s actions in Afghanistan is drawn from the material at www.afghanistan.gc.ca.

¹⁹ Sean M. Maloney, “From Kabul to Konduz: Lessons for Canadian Reconstruction of Afghanistan,” *Policy Options*, May 2005, page 58.

²⁰ Rory Kilburn, “Afghanistan Update,” *Canadian Military Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 2009, page 108.

²¹ Joshua D. Kertzer, “ISAF in Afghanistan, or learning to love counterinsurgency,” *Policy Options*, September 2008, page 16.

support civil society, including a civil service, and several economic initiatives. Expanding the capacity of rural governance requires a leapfrogging into modernity, and this is the goal of PRTs as well as NGOs throughout the country.²²

Because Afghanistan has never, in the modern age, been sovereign, establishing sovereignty means not only disrupting the flow of weapons, narcotics and people across its borders, but also solidifying the grasp of the central government over remote parts of the country. Further to this end, while there are no easy answers, sovereignty requires reconciling the tribal structure of power with a more liberal approach to government.

Canada's "whole of government" approach is entirely oriented to this theory of victory, and while Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) initially took a more muscular, force-oriented path, reconstruction and stabilization are the accepted wisdom amongst all stakeholders involved in Afghanistan today.

Denying insurgents the opportunity to strike either Afghans or IP armies involves many dimensions. The first element is minimizing exposure to threats. Paradoxically, the Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) and heavily armed convoys that characterized the US forces in Iraq served to exacerbate insurgent violence and its effects. It is notable that these features of occupation are largely absent from Afghanistan, and certainly from Canada's efforts there. As local and national Afghan authorities assume more security and civil functions, opportunities to attack IP troops and aid workers will diminish. In the meantime, though, "pin-prick" raids too

²² Conliffe page 100.

often draw Canadian forces from their stabilization work to pursue insurgents, which leaves the population and infrastructure vulnerable to attack.²³

While the resolve of the militaries and other organizations at work in Afghanistan is firm, the near-constant discussion about the legitimacy, goals and means of ISAF in participating countries does much to create the perception that most of the countries involved are not, in meaningful terms, resolute. The timetables for withdrawal that have been set, formally or informally, in Canada, Germany, the UK and the US among others, have done precisely what scuppered the British effort in Aden: they have sent a clear signal to insurgents that if they sustain themselves long enough, they can win. Conversely, the message this sends to Afghan citizens who might help ISAF is a chilling one, essentially telling them “we cannot protect you forever.” Caveats, while politically necessary and sensible in some circumstances, nonetheless contribute to the sense that the IPs are not truly committed to achieving their “theory of victory.”

Lack of resources also signal tepid commitment. Classical COIN theory indicates that 20 counterinsurgents are needed for every 1000 locals, and current staff levels are less than one twelfth of this; they are also less than half of the forces used by the Russians during their unsuccessful occupation. The Manley report recognized in particular that Canada lacks a “presence” in Afghanistan, a proxy for the perception of resolve, if not for resolve itself.²⁴

Unity of effort has been a problem for Canada, and for ISAF. Within the Canadian jurisdiction, lack of communication and cohesion between military and civilian government staff, as well as

²³ Conliffe page 100.

²⁴ Kertzer page 18.

with NGOs, has been nearly constant, and has the effect of dissipating the energy of the Canadian effort taken as a whole.²⁵ NGOs more broadly have been problematic, since they perceive themselves as non-combatants and neutral, while ignoring the reality that, to Afghan civilians they are allies, and to insurgents they are the enemy. They thus refuse protection from Afghan Militia Forces or contractors, and are reluctant to harmonize their work with that of the IP forces, who could offer them protection.²⁶ One extreme view of NGOs, from a Canadian officer who served in Afghanistan, is that “the majority of the international consultants are in Afghanistan to make money.” They have no interest in building capacity, because to do so is to put themselves out of a job.²⁷ This can scarcely be true of all NGOs there, most of which are non-profits, and do not lack for other crises around the world where their services are needed. If this dynamic is present to any degree, though, it further undermines the collective effort towards getting Afghanistan up on its feet and able to remain that way.

Even successful and useful projects are not always aligned with the reality of life in Afghanistan. The creation of massive hydro dams was undertaken with the goal of setting up a reliable power grid accessible to most of the country. In fact, dams are extremely expensive projects that require consistent maintenance, and they are easy to attack, sometimes with catastrophic results. A series of small generators distributed throughout the country, by contrast, would cost less per watt as well as in absolute terms, would make the grid more resilient, and would be fairly easy to maintain and upgrade. Dams are solutions that work in developed, western countries that need

²⁵ Based on background discussion with DFAIT staff and personnel returned from Afghanistan.

²⁶ Maloney page 60.

²⁷ Kilburn 107.

extensive, clean power. They are not nearly as appropriate in underdeveloped countries that lack even the level of electrical infrastructure necessary for subsistence.²⁸

The COIN model of isolating insurgents has internal and external components. The model refined in Algeria requires investing extensively in censuses of people and of resources, and developing formal and informal intelligence networks, both to sift good information from bad and to protect Afghan informants from repercussions. Information on how extensively or successfully this has been done is, for obvious reasons, hard to find, although identifying and segregating foreign insurgents was a high-profile – and controversial - component of OEF. Separating Afghan insurgents from the broader population is a bigger challenge, and one that is only partially met by the development of a functioning Afghan police and judiciary.

Isolating the insurgency from support beyond Afghanistan's borders is the external component. Pakistan has thus far failed to secure its border with Afghanistan.²⁹ The movement of Pashtun refugees from Pakistan back to their homes has sparked fears that Al Qaeda infiltrators were moving back into the country. Whether or not this concern is valid, the situation illustrates that neither the Afghan government nor ISAF have a meaningful level of control over who moves into or out of the country.³⁰

Establishing the legitimacy of the developing Afghan government is an ongoing challenge. First of all are the challenges created by corruption and impotence on the part of the nascent Afghan government and bureaucracy. The perceived justification of the IPs and their actions also

²⁸ Conliffe page 101.

²⁹ Kertzer page 17.

³⁰ Maloney page 62.

influence legitimacy; the tremendous increase in the use of air power against insurgents in the past two years creates the perception that the IP and HG are indifferent to civilian casualties, regardless of whether air strikes are, from a military perspective, necessary.³¹

Further complicating the legitimacy of the current government is the relationship between the Karzai administration, ISAF, and the former Afghan Militia Forces, whose leaders are often described as warlords. It's undeniable that these men do not meet any western definition of responsible government. Equally undeniable is that, after the Taliban were toppled, they provided in many regions the only source of order and stability. These warlords also sit atop the convoluted structure of tribal loyalties that make up much of Afghanistan's culture outside major cities. If ISAF's goal is to leave a liberal democracy in its wake, then tribal leaders must become more accountable, but if the goal is to leave something with a chance of surviving, these leaders and the tribal system cannot be completely marginalized.³²

Conclusion

Clausewitz' theoretical framework, adaptable to so many forms of warfare, yields two crucial tools in conceptualizing COIN, even though he never uses the term. First, counterinsurgents must define the key to the country, without confining themselves to geography or conventional forces. Second, they must define victory and the means by which to attain it. His guidance for fighting a resistance against an occupation also highlights the importance of denying insurgents any opportunity to attack either troops or civilians. The SWORD model concludes, from empirical research, that the resolve of the IP, unity of effort amongst all parties, and the isolation

³¹ Kertzer pages 18 – 20.

³² Maloney page 59.

of insurgents from tangible and intangible support are all essential. The single most important task, though, is establishing and maintaining the legitimacy of the host government. This means creating the infrastructure of civil society and gradually entrusting it to local and central authorities, orienting the host government in the direction of equitable rule, even if it would not meet western standards of liberal democracy, and avoiding any actions that would reflect poorly on the host government and its relationship with the intervening powers.

Evaluating Canada and ISAF according to these criteria yields a number of conclusions. The basic premises - that the native population is the key to the country, and that victory will come about when competent and stable government can manage basic infrastructure – seem to be sound, and widely shared by our allies. On the other indicators, there is much work to be done. Insurgent attacks on ISAF troops and Afghan civilians are still frequent, if diminishing, and the many organizations working to rebuild and secure the country are not yet working in harmony. While the resolve of those actively involved in Afghanistan is by all accounts high, the perception of this resolve among the Afghan population – the group whose assessment matters most – is much wobblier. Identifying core insurgents, isolating them from the rest of the country, and preventing them from accessing support, external or internal, tangible or intangible, must also become a higher priority if efforts in Afghanistan are to benefit from the lessons of other COINS.

On arguably the most important indicator for long term success, the creation of an autonomous, viable and legitimate self-government, it is clear that all players involved are in agreement. If the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan and their partners are not yet finished the work of COIN,

they are clearly on the path illuminated by Clausewitz' 200 year old counsel as well as by the most successful model of COIN fighting to date.

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