



NGIC 119820

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(U) Afghanistan: Mechanisms of Insurgent Local Control and Local Governance

(U) Purpose

(U) This assessment provides a theoretical baseline for understanding and assessing insurgent local control^a and local governance.^b First, it addresses how and why insurgents generate compliance^c and establish initial control among a local populace. Second, it analyzes how and why insurgents institutionalize control and mobilize popular support.^d Third, it provides a series of observable indicators that are useful for assessing the type and scope of local control and local governance exerted by insurgents within a specific locality.

(U) This assessment is the first in a two-part series. The second part will be a multicase study analysis in which the observable indicators developed herein will be used to qualitatively assess the type and scope of insurgent local control and local governance in specific locales within southern Afghanistan. Specifically, the second part will attempt to provide more detailed analysis of the "who, how, and why," with an emphasis on

determining the individuals involved in local control and local governance, the organizational mechanisms responsible for tying insurgents' local political organization into mid- and senior-level echelons of the Taliban's shadow-governance structure, and the intent of insurgents in creating and maintaining such structure.

(U) Key Points

[Top of Page](#)

- (U) Many students of insurgency and counterinsurgency attest to the importance of popular support to each side's quest to achieve its objectives. Key aspects of popular support, including type (passive or active) and scope (limited or significant), are inarguably important in analyzing an insurgency. However, focusing solely or immediately on these aspects risks glossing over insurgent efforts to set conditions necessary to mobilize such support in the first place. Most notably, these conditions include the generation of compliance and the establishment and institutionalization of control.
- (U) Insurgents seek to cultivate the ability to monitor and sanction elements of the population in order to generate compliance and establish control. In addition to sanctioning oppositional figures and activities, insurgents aim to shape future behavior by establishing approved and disapproved activities and the expected outcome associated with each. (High Confidence) ^a
- (U) Upon generating compliance and establishing control, insurgents seek to institutionalize control (govern) and mobilize popular support to the extent necessary to achieve broader objectives. To do so, insurgents develop and strengthen mechanisms intended to propagate key messages, regulate social interaction, extract resources, and provide selective and collective benefits among a local population. (High Confidence)
- (U) One can identify certain observable indicators at various points within the processes of generating compliance, establishing and institutionalizing control, and mobilizing popular support. When analyzed collectively and systematically, these indicators provide a useful framework for assessing the type and scope of insurgent local control and local governance in locales within Afghanistan.

(U) Source Summary Statement

(U) This assessment draws on a general understanding of irregular warfare as well as a large body of open-source material, particularly academic and military studies, some of which are not directly cited. The authors of the academic and military studies used in this assessment are recognized authorities in their respective fields and have access to primary and secondary research. The studies themselves include comparative cross-case and descriptive within-case analyses of insurgency, counterinsurgency, irregular and guerrilla warfare, and ethnic and civil war as well as discussion of collective action and social-movement theory pertinent to the current conflict in Afghanistan.

UNCLASSIFIED

(U) Overview

(U) The figure below depicts processes by which insurgents establish and institutionalize control over local populations.

[Top of Page](#)

[DISPLAY IMAGE](#)

(U) Mechanisms of Insurgent Local Control (click to enlarge)

(U) Generating Compliance and Establishing Control

(U) Generating compliance and establishing control normally requires three phases: identify sympathizers, transform sympathizers into collaborators, and monitor and sanction the local population. These are discussed below.

[Top of Page](#)

(U) Identify Sympathizers^h

(U) Insurgents must first identify individuals within the local population who are likely to sympathize with the insurgents and/or their cause. During their initial efforts to penetrate an area, insurgents will frequently seek to leverage informal relationships that are based on familial (blood or marriage), geographical (neighbor), tribal, religious (village mullah), or other ideological ties that tend toward trust, familiarity, and solidarity of purpose.¹

(U) In many instances, particularly those in which an insurgency spreads beyond areas inhabited by its primary constituency, the types of relationships described above may not exist. In such cases, insurgents may attempt to identify fractures or competition between local groups in order to approach and co-opt elements within them, frequently those that are weaker or less influential.¹ While these groups may be less likely to sympathize with the insurgent cause, they may be willing to provide certain types of support (e.g., local information) in exchange for resources or future power-sharing agreements that would increase their chances of gaining a decisive advantage vis-à-vis more powerful competitors.

(U) Transform Sympathizers Into Collaborators^l

(U) After identifying sympathizers, insurgents must transform them into collaborators.^k In other words, insurgents must recruit sympathizers who are willing to translate *attitude* into *action*. In order to do so, particularly during the early stages of insurgency^l when money and other resources tend to be scarce, insurgents may emphasize certain intangible incentives to convince sympathizers to collaborate.²

(U) One example involves framing the insurgent cause or certain objectives within the context of shared cultural,^m religious,ⁿ nationalistic,^o or other ideological beliefs that tend to resonate with broad elements of the local population. Another involves emphasizing the promise of future benefits, including power-sharing arrangements.^{3,4}

(U) Monitor and Sanction the Local Population

(U) Lastly, insurgents seek to leverage these collaborators as sources of accurate and timely information. Insurgents need to monitor the local population and identify who supports the insurgents and their objectives, who opposes them, and who remains indifferent. As the insurgents' knowledge of local oppositional figures and activities develops, they can begin to institute a targeting process intended to select specific victims, sanction them by using coercive^p tactics, and signal the consequences for similar behavior to the rest of the population.^{5,6,7,8,9}

(U) Select

(U) Initially, insurgents may focus coercive tactics against less popular individuals in an area, such as corrupt police, tax collectors, government informants, or criminals. Selecting these types of individuals early on decreases the likelihood that the broader population will report on insurgent activities, not because of affinity for the insurgents, but rather because of antipathy toward the victims. This strategy provides insurgents with the time and freedom of maneuver necessary to build the capacity to monitor and sanction the population within a specific area. Ironically, once their capabilities reach a certain level, insurgents may select more popular individuals in order to demonstrate that not even the most well-liked opposition figures are safe from insurgent sanctions. [10](#) [11](#)

(U) Sanction

(U) Initially, insurgents may issue general threats against certain oppositional activities, such as working for the government, in order to position themselves as arbiters of violence against participants in such activities in the future. As they obtain better information regarding known or suspected local opposition, insurgents sanction such opposition using a process of coercion that is often escalatory in nature.

(U) For example, insurgents may first issue night letters identifying specific individuals or groups, the activities for which they are being threatened, a timeline by which they must cease such activity, and the retribution that will occur if they fail to comply. If the identified individuals fail to comply, insurgents may execute an escalating scale of retributive acts against them, including private or public beatings of victims and/or their families, destruction or confiscation of property, kidnappings, and assassinations.

(U) Signal

(U) Insurgents intend to leverage their ability to monitor and sanction the local population to achieve both short-term and long-term effects. In the short-term, insurgents are able to intimidate, marginalize, or eliminate local opposition figures, such as government informants. By removing these individuals from the local environment, insurgents reduce connections between the government and the local population and create additional space in which to entrench and gradually expand their own political organization. The long-term effects are even more important. Specifically, insurgents intend to signal two key messages to the local population: credibility of the threat and predictability of the outcome.

- **(U) Credibility of the Threat.** In the process of monitoring and sanctioning the population today, insurgents seek to demonstrate the credibility of the threat that they will pose tomorrow. The most important facets of demonstrating such credibility are accuracy and capacity. First, insurgents want to exhibit the correctness and completeness of their information regarding local residents and their activities. Second, they want to demonstrate their ability to threaten or punish those residents taking part in oppositional behavior. The intent is to signal to the population that insurgents can monitor and sanction anyone choosing in the future to take part in oppositional activities. [12](#) [13](#) [14](#) [15](#)

- (U) **Predictability of the Outcome.** In the process of monitoring and sanctioning the population, insurgents also seek to introduce an element of predictability within the local environment. For example, insurgents might use the escalatory process outlined previously to depict the assassination of a government informant as the result of his failure to comply with warnings to cease a specific behavior. The intent here is twofold:
 - (U) First, it is to signal to the population that insurgents will sanction anyone choosing to take part in oppositional activities in the future.
 - (U) Second, it is to imply that insurgents will not (or are less likely to) sanction anyone choosing to avoid oppositional activities in the future. [16](#) [17](#) [18](#) [19](#)

(U) By reinforcing the credibility of the threat and the predictability of the outcome, insurgents aim to shape future behavior by outlining approved and disapproved behaviors and the expected outcome associated with each. Increasingly cooperative behavior does not necessarily mean the local population prefers the insurgents or their cause. Rather, it may simply reflect a desire to limit or altogether avoid punishment at the hands of the most dominant, credible, and predictable local actor. The question is not simply whether locals *approve* (preferences, attitudes) of the insurgents—it is whether they *adhere* (behaviors, actions) to their instructions. [20](#) [21](#) [22](#) [23](#) [24](#) [25](#)

(U) Three questions help gauge insurgent progress:

- (U) First, do local nationals perceive insurgents as having the ability to monitor individuals and their activities with some level of accuracy?
- (U) Second, do local nationals perceive insurgents as having the capacity to sanction, with reasonable precision, those individuals conducting, or suspected of conducting, oppositional activities?
- (U) Third, do local nationals understand the reason(s) why insurgents sanction specific oppositional figures, and are they (locals) able to draw lessons learned as to how to avoid or reduce the probability of similar reprisals in the future?

(U) If the answer to these three questions is yes, then, absent a sustained, countervailing effort by a competing authority, insurgents are on their way toward generating compliance and establishing local control.

(U)
**Institutionalizing
 Control and
 Mobilizing
 Popular Support**

Top of Page

(U) Over time, more of the local population, in an effort to minimize damage and maximize chances of survival, tend to side with the group that makes the most credible and predictable threats. As remaining insurgent opponents are either removed or cowed into silence, the use of violence in order to maintain compliance may decrease (though the capacity to do so remains).

(U) Instead, the threat of violence becomes increasingly sufficient to the task because people recognize the costs (sanctions) associated with oppositional activities and the benefits available (survival) to those avoiding them. This pattern of cooperative behavior (locals do not denounce, insurgents do not coercively sanction) gradually becomes self-reinforcing. As a result, insurgents can shift resources toward further development of mechanisms intended to institutionalize control and mobilize popular

support to the extent necessary to achieve broader objectives. Specifically, insurgents seek to develop and strengthen processes to do the following:⁹

- (U) Propagate key messages.
- (U) Regulate social interaction.
- (U) Extract resources.
- (U) Provide selective and collective benefits.

(U) Propagate Key Messages

(U) Insurgents have at least two primary messages they seek to propagate among a local population: the legitimacy of their cause and the accessibility and solidarity of their organization.

(U) Legitimacy

(U) As previously noted, insurgents seek to frame their cause within the context of shared beliefs that resonate with elements of the local population. When initially trying to generate compliance and establish control, these efforts tend to be more covert and occur along person-to-person relationships based upon trust and familiarity. Over time, as their local control over an area increases and opposition diminishes, insurgents may seek to leverage certain institutions or individuals, such as the mosque and the mullah,⁴ to provide more overt and routinized legitimization of their cause among a broader segment of the local population.

(U) In much of Afghanistan, the mosque is a central village institution through which public communication, information dissemination, decisionmaking, socialization, and daily administration occur. Therefore, the mosque provides an excellent location where insurgents can discuss key issues with elements of the local population, such as what their objectives are, why they are legitimate, why the current government is illegitimate, and why they joined the insurgent movement. The mullah is often a central village authority figure who, through daily involvement in these tasks, develops strong and influential ties to village inhabitants. As part of Afghanistan's religious civil society, he is a member a supracommunal network within the region, a factor that places him in a unique position from which to mobilize elements of the local population.^{26 27 28 29}

(U) By leveraging both the mullah and the mosque, insurgents gain access to instruments capable of conferring additional legitimacy to their cause and socializing the population to the moral authority of their actions. The intent is to transform compliant villagers into sympathetic ones by framing their cause in such a way as to appear both legitimate and representative of local grievances and interests.

(U) Accessibility and Solidarity

(U) Additionally, insurgents want to communicate the accessibility and solidarity of their organization. Regarding accessibility, insurgents seek to demonstrate to locals that their movement provides an outlet capable of translating grievance into action. Regarding solidarity with the population, insurgents seek to portray themselves as eating, sleeping, living, and sharing in the same perils and hardships faced daily by local Afghans. Regarding solidarity with each other, insurgents seek to portray themselves as unified in their pursuit of the same ultimate cause or objective, regardless of what individual motivations led them to

such pursuit in the first place. [30](#) [31](#) [32](#)

(U) Insurgents seek to propagate messages of causal legitimacy and movement accessibility and solidarity as part of an effort to gradually transform compliance into sympathy, and sympathy into collaboration. Again, the intent is to build local popular support to the extent necessary for the achievement of broader objectives.

(U) Regulate Social Interaction

(U) First, insurgents will attempt to regulate social contact among locals using a variety of methods. These include, but are not limited to, issuing curfews, maintaining checkpoints and roadblocks, administering certain practices such as cell phone usage, and providing warnings to locals to avoid areas because of upcoming insurgent operations. Practically, this allows the insurgents to maintain and further solidify their ability to monitor the population and its activities. Perceptually, it reinforces the notion of a constant insurgent presence and thus acts as a means of continuing deterrence for anyone considering oppositional activities. [33](#) [34](#)

(U) Second, insurgents will attempt to regulate social conflict among locals as well as between themselves and locals. In the case of conflict among locals, insurgents may attempt to embed themselves within the local dispute-resolution process, either directly or indirectly through carefully selected proxies. In the case of conflict between insurgents and locals, insurgent leaders may choose to adjudicate locals' claims of insurgent misconduct and, in select cases, sanction specific insurgents who fail to adhere to established norms of interacting with the local population. [35](#) [36](#) [37](#)

(U) Practically, this provides insurgent leaders with greater visibility of intra- and inter-communal fissures, some of which might be exploitable to their advantage. Additionally, it provides them an opportunity to monitor local insurgents and ensure they are not undermining long-term organizational objectives (such as generating popular support) for short-term personalized gains (such as extortion from the local population). Perceptually, regulating social conflict allows the insurgents to portray themselves as arbiters of justice, whose use of *sharia* law as a baseline for adjudication adds another layer of credibility and predictability to the local environment. Additionally, by giving insurgent leaders a mechanism with which to supervise their own, it provides an opportunity to strengthen perceptions of movement solidarity and coherency by ensuring individual actions remain aligned with organizational objectives as much as possible.

(U) Extract Resources

(U) Sustained insurgent-related violence within a locality often presupposes the existence of mechanisms capable of extracting the resources necessary to make such violence possible in the first place. In addition to local information, insurgents may seek to develop mechanisms capable of extracting other key resources, including food and water, shelter, cache and manufacturing sites, labor, taxes, and recruits. The latter two are particularly important. [38](#) [39](#) [40](#) [41](#) [42](#)

(U) Insurgents may attempt to raise funds by taxing a variety of local activities, including crop cultivation, production, or transport to market; local transit; government- or nongovernment organization (NGO)-provided goods intended for the

public; or religious tithes. In addition to providing insurgents with a key source of funding, a more formalized system of taxation reinforces control.

(U) Insurgents seek to recruit administrators, lookouts, tax collectors, informants, logisticians, local "evangelists," fighters, and other personnel necessary to expand its local political and military apparatus. Such expansion is not limitless; rather, as noted previously, insurgents only seek to expand their apparatus to the extent necessary to achieve key objectives within the area, such as the establishment of sanctuary necessary to sustain more frequent and geographically expansive kinetic operations. In doing so, insurgent vanguard teams initially involved in identifying sympathizers and collaborators and monitoring and sanctioning the population can move on to new areas in an effort to replicate the process and further the geographic scope of insurgent control.

(U) Provide Selective and Collective Benefits

(U) The same mechanisms that enable insurgents to monitor and sanction opposition can also be used to identify and reward supporters with selective benefits. These can be both material and nonmaterial. Materially, insurgent supporters may enjoy favorable land distribution, cheaper land prices, lower taxes, higher payments for crops, debt forgiveness, or various types of agricultural or business assistance, including seeds, fertilizer, or favorable credit terms. Those choosing to join insurgent ranks as fighters might receive signing bonuses or salaries greater than what they could otherwise earn on the local economy. Others, such as opportunistic businesspeople choosing to support the insurgents (smugglers), may receive significant monetary benefit from activities (weapons or narcotics shipments) made possible in part by the perpetuation of a conflict environment. Nonmaterially, insurgent supporters may enjoy social recognition or status, freedom from conscription, promotion or advancement opportunities, protection against rival actors (including government forces and opposing tribes), or promises of future power-sharing agreements and other benefits upon the insurgents' victory. [43](#) [44](#) [45](#) [46](#) [47](#) [48](#)

(U) Collective benefits are public and typically available to the entirety of the local population. The most important are survival and security. Others include predictability, credibility, defense of traditional norms and customs, alliance with the conflict's victor, and justice. [s 49](#) [50](#)

(U) In certain cases, insurgents can turn collective benefits into selective benefits. For example, insurgents might only provide security to those who support them within a certain village, leaving the remaining population more vulnerable to government reprisals. Insurgents or covert insurgent supporters may even orchestrate such reprisals themselves by purposefully misinforming government agents as to "who's who" in the village. In doing so, insurgents essentially leverage their opponent to unknowingly sanction those elements of the population left unprotected because of their refusal to support the insurgents. Such occurrences render nonsupportive elements of the population increasingly likely to side with the insurgents in order to obtain greater security and avoid (or lessen the chances of) future reprisals at the hands of misinformed government forces. [51](#) [52](#)

(U) Indicators of Local Control and

(U) The following section contains observable indicators that while by no means exhaustive, are nonetheless useful in assessing the type and scope of local control and local governance exerted by insurgents within a specific locality. Additionally, they aim to

**Local
Governance**

assist in the identification of key personalities involved with less overt, yet nonetheless important, aspects of the insurgents' local political and military apparatus.

[Top of Page](#)

(U) Monitoring and Sanctioning the Local Population

(U) Are night letters disseminated within the locality?

- (U) If so, where are the night letters posted? At the mosque? At suspected opponents' residences?
- (U) Does anyone in the village regularly read night letters to the population?
- (U) Is the content general (threats against the population in its entirety or against general activities) or specific (threats against specific groups or individuals)?

(U) Is anyone attempting to obtain census data, phone records, drivers' licenses, or other forms of identification? Have such forms of identification been found in the possession of insurgents or insurgent supporters?

(U) Is there verbal intimidation, beating, kidnapping, or assassination of opponents (or suspected opponents) and/or their families?

(U) Is anyone forcing opponents (or suspected opponents) and their families to flee the locality?

(U) Does anyone make threatening phone calls to opponents (or suspected opponents)?

(U) Is there evidence of counterinsurgent informants moving themselves or their families from the locality to better protected areas (i.e., urban centers)?

(U) Is there evidence of counterinsurgent informants decreasing or altogether ceasing their provision of information?

(U) Is there evidence of decreasing quality or quantity of information coming from counterinsurgent informants?

(U) Is there evidence of decreasing willingness by local nationals to work with ISAF, GIRoA, or NGO entities (i.e., teachers, construction workers, etc.)?

(U) Propagating Key Messages

(U) Is there evidence of local mullahs or other influential powerbrokers communicating pro-insurgent messages during *shuras* or Friday sermons?

(U) Is there evidence of mullahs or other influential powerbrokers reading pro-insurgent night letters to the local population?

(U) Is there evidence of insurgents using local mosques as lodging or meeting places?

(U) Is there evidence of local mullahs holding funeral ceremonies for insurgents? Are the ceremonies held at local mosques?

(U) Is there evidence of insurgents or insurgent supporters communicating pro-insurgent messages or edicts regularly (through radio broadcasts) or at specific locations (the local bazaar)?

(U) Regulating Social Interaction

- (U) Is there evidence of insurgent-run checkpoints or roadblocks?
- (U) Is there evidence of insurgents restricting the movement of local nationals to certain areas or limiting movement to certain times of the day/night?
- (U) Is there evidence of insurgents enacting and enforcing curfews?
- (U) Is there evidence of insurgents approving or otherwise administering cell-phone usage?
- (U) Is there evidence of insurgents taking part in apprehending and punishing criminals?
- (U) Is there evidence of insurgents or insurgent supporters regulating the types of businesses allowed to operate in local bazaars?
- (U) Is there evidence of insurgents or insurgent supporters monitoring mosque attendance and imposing fines or other punishment for nonattendance?
- (U) Is there evidence of insurgents taking part (directly or indirectly) in dispute resolution? If so, what type(s) of dispute (land, water, cattle, etc.) are they involved in resolving?
- (U) Is there evidence of insurgent leadership trying and/or sentencing local insurgent fighters accused of inappropriate interactions with the local population?
- (U) Are there specific insurgents or insurgent supporters to whom locals take their grievances?
- (U) Is there evidence of insurgent-run prisons in the area?

(U) Extracting Resources

- (U) Is there evidence of insurgents levying taxes on elements of the local population?
 - (U) On what type(s) of goods are taxes levied (opium, phone usage, local national movement, humanitarian aid distributions)?
 - (U) Which insurgents or insurgent supporters collect taxes?
- (U) Is there evidence of insurgents extracting other resources (food, water, shelter, information) from the local population?
 - (U) From which elements of the local population are resources extracted?
 - (U) Which insurgents or insurgent supporters extract resources?
- (U) Are resources extracted in return for conflict resolution?
- (U) Is there evidence of insurgents recruiting fighters or other types of personnel from the local population? Which insurgents or insurgent supporters recruit?
- (U) Is there evidence of locals selling goods to insurgents at or below market price levels?
- (U) Are families persuaded or coerced into providing sons to support the insurgency?
- (U) Is there evidence of locals renting compounds to insurgents at or below market price levels?

(U) Providing Selective and Collective Benefits

(U) Is there evidence of insurgents paying local recruits wages equal to or greater than that which could be earned on the local economy?

(U) Is there evidence of insurgents providing local supporters with favorable land distribution, cheaper land prices, lower taxes, higher payments for crops, debt forgiveness, or agricultural and business assistance such as seeds, fertilizer, or favorable terms of credit?

(U) Is there evidence of insurgents providing locally recruited fighters with promotions or other advancement opportunities within the insurgent organization?

(U) Is there evidence of insurgents providing local supporters with protection against rival actors?

(U) Is there evidence of insurgents providing promises of future power-sharing opportunities to local supporters?

(U) Is there evidence of payments to the family members of locally recruited insurgents or insurgent supporters who have been killed or captured?

(U) Is there evidence of insurgents or insurgent supporters assisting other locals in obtaining employment with NGOs or Afghan government agencies?

(U)
Conclusions

[Top of Page](#)

(U) Development of the capacity to monitor and sanction a local population remains a critical step in generating compliance and establishing initial control. In addition to enabling the removal of those involved in oppositional activities today, such capability allows insurgents to influence locals' actions tomorrow by signaling the credibility and predictability of the threat posed by insurgents to those choosing to take part in such activities in the future.

(U) Upon generating compliance and establishing initial control, insurgents often take steps to institutionalize control (i.e., govern) by developing and strengthening mechanisms intended to propagate key messages, regulate social interaction, extract resources, and provide selective and collective benefits among a local population. In doing so, insurgents enable the routinized interaction with the population necessary to position themselves as the de facto political power today while conditioning popular expectations as to who will remain in power tomorrow. If uncontested, the result is a growing ability on the part of the insurgents to project an image of authority greater than that of the Afghan government.

(U) Throughout the processes of generating compliance, establishing and institutionalizing control, and mobilizing popular support, one can identify specific indicators which, when analyzed collectively and systematically, provide a practical outline for assessing the type and scope of insurgent local control and local governance in specific locales within Afghanistan.

(U)
Intelligence Gaps

[Top of Page](#)

(U) Intelligence gaps pertinent to this assessment are included in the third section, "Indicators of Local Control and Local Governance."

Footnotes

- a. (U) This assessment defines *control* as the ability to "monitor" (obtain accurate information on) and "sanction" (selectively employ persuasive or coercive force against) elements of a local population. | [back](#)
- b. (U) This assessment defines governance as "institutionalized control" over a local population by a supra-local group. | [back](#)
- c. (U) This assessment defines *compliance* as "nondenunciation" and "noninvolvement". More specifically, a *compliant* population avoids informing on or fighting against a specific actor. | [back](#)
- d. (U) This assessment defines *popular support* as that which includes "passive support" (sympathies, attitudes, and preferences), "active support" (actions and behaviors), or both. It should be noted that in an insurgency, the complexity of the conflict environment results in frequent shifts in individual attitudes and preferences, which can be quite malleable. Therefore, when attempting to assess levels of support, one should focus more on locals' actions and behaviors, which are inherently more "observable" and thus less prone (but by no means immune) to measurement error. | [back](#)
- e. (U) RC = regional command. | [back](#)
- f. (U) CF = Coalition forces. | [back](#)
- g. (U) Confidence in Assessments. Our assessments and estimates are supported by information that varies in scope, quality, and sourcing. Consequently, we ascribe high, moderate, or low levels of confidence to our assessments as follows: High confidence generally indicates that our judgments are based on high-quality information, and/or that the nature of the issue makes it possible to render a solid judgment. A "high confidence" judgment is not a fact or a certainty, however, and such judgments still risk being inaccurate. Moderate confidence generally indicates that our judgments are based on information that is credibly sourced and plausible but not of sufficient quality or corroborated sufficiently to warrant a higher level of confidence. Low confidence generally indicates that our judgments are based on information that is of questionable credibility and/or plausibility, that may be too fragmented or poorly corroborated to support solid analytic inferences, or that relies on sources that present significant concerns or problems. | [back](#)
- h. (U) This assessment defines *sympathizer* as one whose attitudes or preferences tend to align with a particular group and/or its objectives. It also equates to one who demonstrates *passive support* for a particular group and/or its objectives. | [back](#)
- i. (U) The Taliban excelled (and arguably continues to excel) at propagating an identity based on a "purist, village-based Islam" that enabled them to enter areas and spark defection among the followers and weaker competitors of local powerbrokers. For more detailed accounts of this phenomenon, see *Organizations at War: In Afghanistan and Beyond*, by Abdulkader Sinno; *The Taliban and the Crisis in Afghanistan*, by Robert Crews and Amin Tarzi (eds.); and *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan 2002-2007*, by Antonio Giustozzi. | [back](#)
- j. (U) This assessment defines *collaborator* as one whose actions or behaviors tend to support a particular group and/or its objectives. It also equates to one who demonstrates *active support* for a particular group and/or its objectives. | [back](#)
- k. (U) Initially, insurgents do not require a large number of collaborators. Rather, they simply need a few capable and trustworthy individuals willing to provide the local information necessary to monitor elements of the population. This phenomenon often represents one of the insurgents' first steps toward developing a clandestine political organization within a locality. | [back](#)
- l. (U) At this stage of the insurgency, in many parts of Afghanistan, resources are readily available to insurgents. While this does not preclude the employment of intangible incentives, one must keep in mind that the insurgents have the capacity to offer tangible incentives as well. | [back](#)
- m. (U) For example, *namus*, or "guarding the chastity of women." | [back](#)
- n. (U) For example, *farz*, or "religious obligation." | [back](#)
- o. (U) For example, defense against foreign occupation. | [back](#)
- p. (U) A coercive tactic can be either damage threatening or damage inflicting. | [back](#)
- q. (U) These processes are adopted in part from Joel Migdal's conceptualization of four key capabilities of the state. | [back](#)

- r. (U) This is but one example of institutions and individuals that insurgents might leverage in the propagation of their message. Others might include the *jirga* or other local powerbrokers. | [back](#)
- s. (U) Specifically, access to mechanisms of dispute resolution based on a specific standard, such as *sharia* law, in many cases may be more transparent and commonly accepted than the laws put forth by the local Afghan government. | [back](#)

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NGIC-1584-7051-10

Date of Publication: 2009-11-25

Information Cutoff Date: 2009-11-15