



*"Intellectual Center of the Army"*

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# **COIN LESSONS LEARNED**

Presented to:

**Human Terrain System (HTS) COIN Training**

(17 February 2010)

**US Army/USMC COIN Center (<http://coin.army.mil>)**

***LTC Storm Savage (Chief Counterinsurgency Integration)***



# Agenda

- **Recent Lessons Learned Afghanistan**
- **Paradoxes of COIN**
- **Observations Brief**



Pashtun Culture is a culture of permanent insurgency because of Pashtunwali ("The Way of the Pashtun")

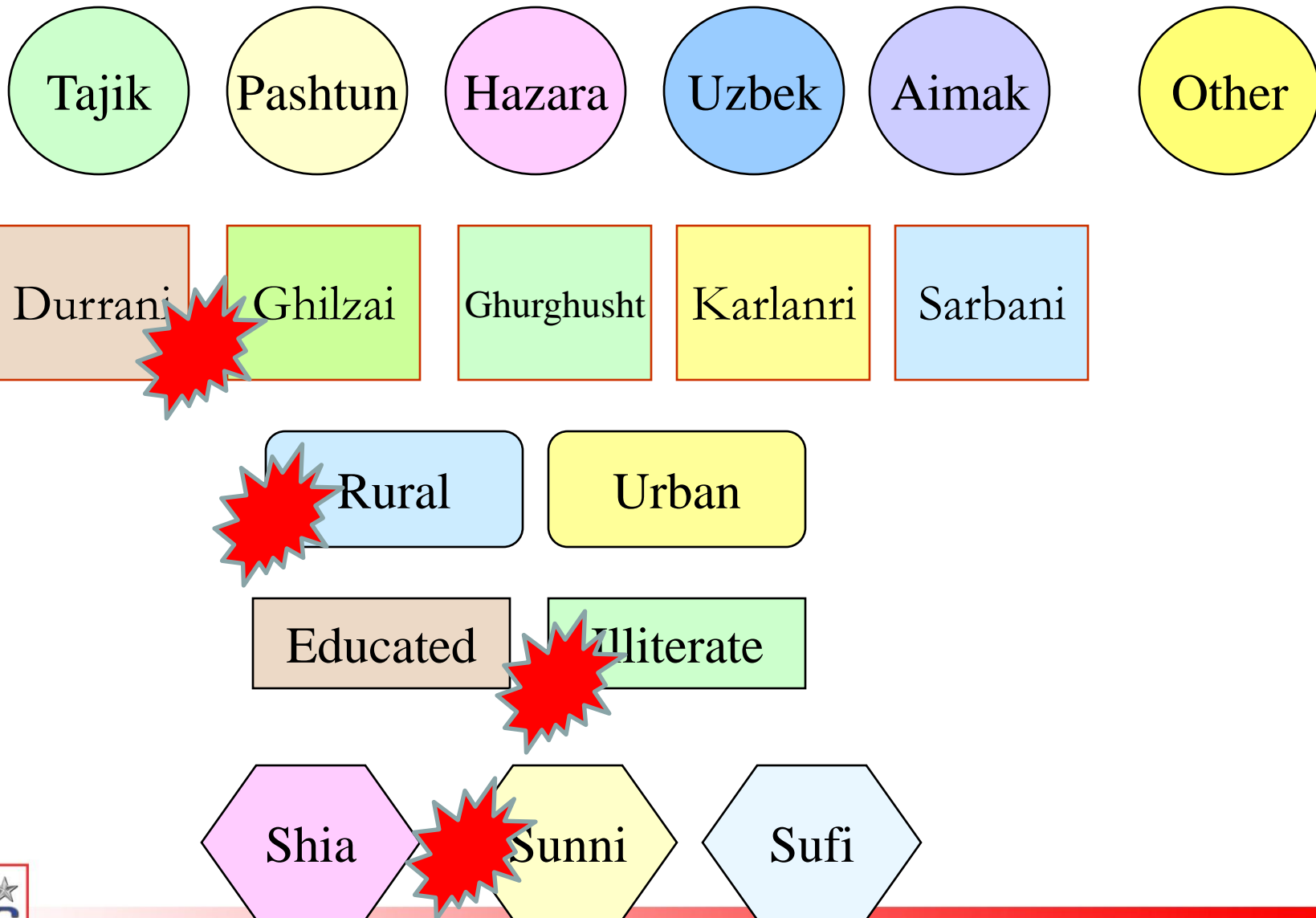
- Equality
- Nang
- Badal
- Nanawatey
- Malmastia



"Kill one enemy, make ten"



# Historical Lessons Learned



# Some Culture Questions

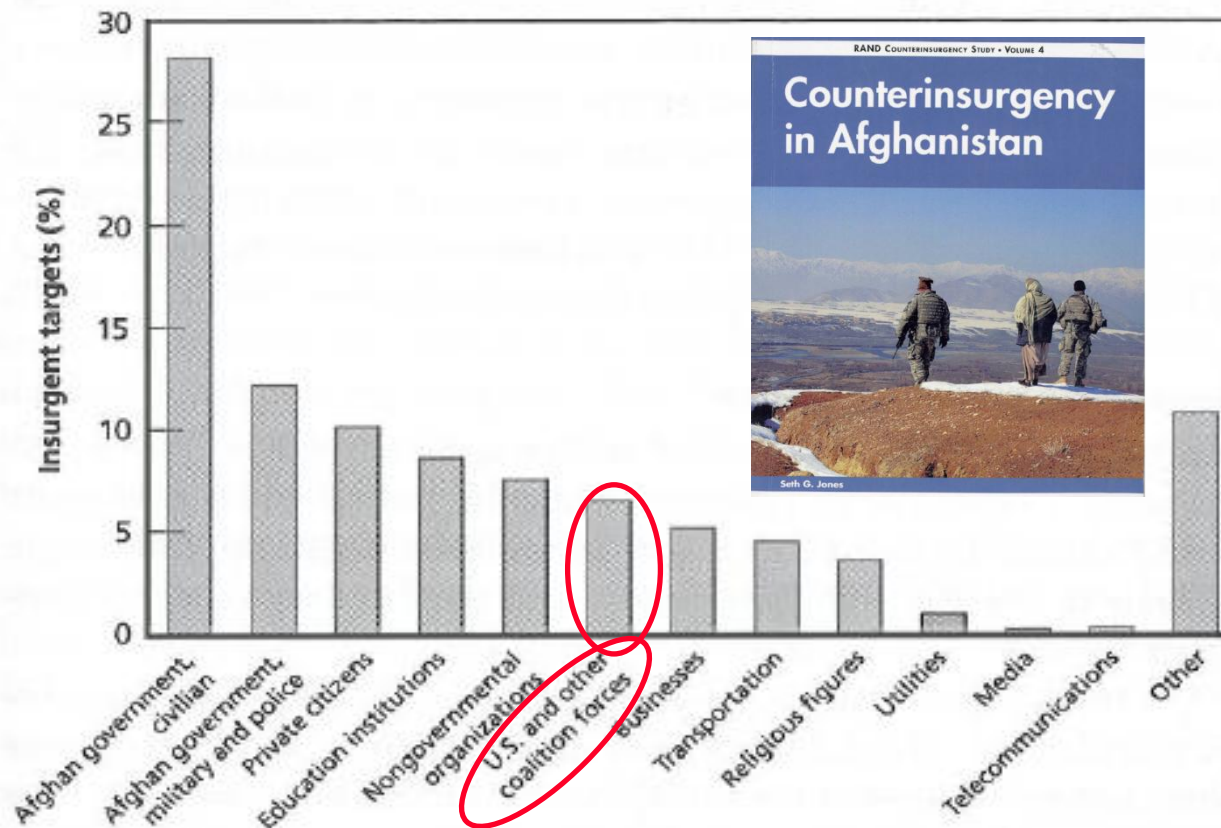
1. What is customary during greeting and departing (shake hands, kiss, and bowing)?
2. What defines a community or neighborhood? For example: economic, ethnic, tribal, religious, or political traits? Where are the neighborhood boundaries?
3. What is the role of religious leaders within the society?
4. What civil and human rights do the populace hold most sacred?
5. How respected is military service in the culture? How are veterans treated?
6. Do the people identify themselves with organizations or affiliations (tribes, religions, ethnicity, provinces/regions, classes, occupations, and common language)?
7. What are their favorite holidays, and how do they celebrate them? What types of food do they eat during holidays and special occasions?
8. Who or what do people fear?





# Lessons Learned: Afghanistan

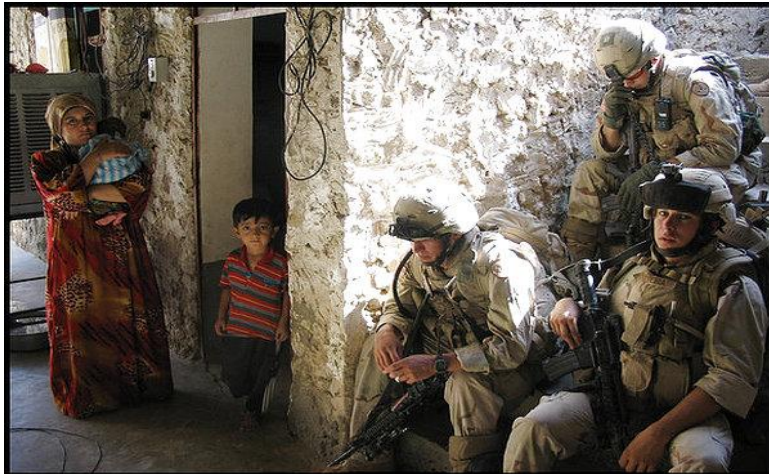
Figure 4.3  
Insurgent Targets, 2002–2006



RAND MG595-4.3

# Lessons Learned: Afghanistan

- Coalition Forces must be arrayed to protect the Afghan population!
- Operations must be WITH AFGHAN FORCES (Police and Army)!
- Coalition forces must live amongst the people to gain their confidence and have success!



*"They have the watches, but we have the time"*  
Taliban saying

# Lessons Learned: Afghanistan

- **Leader Development:** Empower subordinates with support of intelligence, logistics, guidance, & authority to execute operations.
- General purpose troops now fulfilling traditional Special Forces role.
  - Junior leaders need freedom of action like Special Forces Troops
- All units need to be trained in Counterinsurgency before going into theater, to include contractors.





# Lessons Learned: Afghan Advising

- Operations conducted with ANSF/ANA/ANP are more successful.

## AFGHAN POLICE IN THE LEAD; AFGHAN MILITARY SUPPORTING!

- Don't change how they fight – make how they fight better/more effective.
- If you do not fight next to them they will never respect you. If you fight next to them and prove yourself, they will do anything for you.
- Accept the chaos; don't try to bring order to it. *Learn to thrive in the chaos!*



# Lessons Learned: Afghanistan

- Secure areas established and expanded (think ink spot).

Conventional military forces *reoriented* for COIN.



Isolate the insurgents from the population (population control).







# Amnesty and Rehabilitation for Insurgents



# Lessons Learned: Afghanistan

- Medical clinics very effective.
  - *Brings good intelligence from locals*
  - *Women needed for clinics*
- Human intelligence brought the most effective intelligence information.





# Lessons Learned: Afghanistan

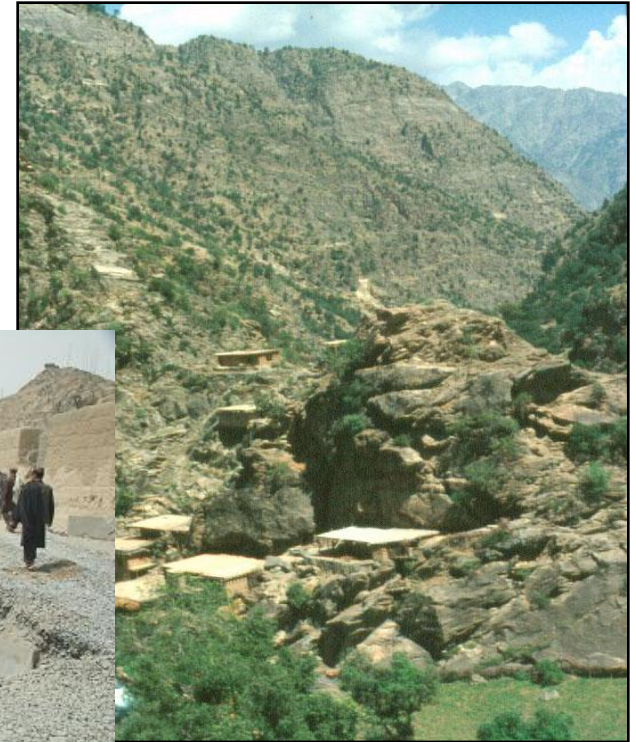
- **Politics & security is local**  
Empower local leaders.
- **However;** Constant tension between local Shiras/Militias and National GIRA/ANSF becomes a double edged sword.
- Trying to impose Government on/in a place that does not want that form of government becomes even more difficult.



*Local security provided by local security forces supported by local population to achieve “Sustainable Security.”* GEN Petraeus

# Lessons Learned: Afghanistan

- Insurgency focused in mountainous/rural areas
  - BUT reconstruction has been centered on urban centers
- Over 50% of reconstruction spending has occurred in Kabul
- Few Reconstruction Teams in rural areas  
(19% of population is urban, 81% rural)





# Lessons Learned: (Remember)

- We are road-centric; like pages from Russian playbook:
  - Heavy road bound vehicles
  - Clear by fires
  - Clinging to our Bases

**THIS IS WRONG!**



# Lessons Learned: Afghanistan

- **On Border:** War of isolated outposts against a mobile enemy employing guerrilla tactics.
  - Troops needed for interdiction
  - Insurgent sanctuaries denied
  - The need for a Civil registry (People Identification and Car License Plates)





# “Paradoxes of COIN”

- The more you protect your force, the less secure you are
- The more force you use, the less effective you are
- Sometimes doing nothing is the best reaction
- Them doing something poorly,  
is usually better than us doing it well (**LEARNING**)
- If a tactic works this week, it may not work next week;  
if it works in this province, it may not work in the next
- Tactical success guarantees nothing



# How we help the Afghan people win

Seek out the underprivileged,  
disenfranchised,  
disaffected.



If you want to know what is not working, talk to the poor.



# *Afghanistan*

- COIN is not about a kinder-gentler soldier it is about understanding the environment in order gain the appropriate influence using the appropriate tools to gain support of the people.





# Observations Brief

## LTC Storm Savage

### 2009

*“Tell me, I forget.*

*Show me, I learn.*

*Involve me, I understand.”*

*Confucius*





# **Observations (2009)**

- **The Afghans have learned to survive for 30 years of war (That is why they play both sides.)**
- **Only about 2% have the ability to harm you – don't let that determine the way you treat the other 98%.**
- **The 12 or 16 years you spent in school learning how to read and write, they spent learning how to read people. By the time you actually know what is going on, they already understand you (That is why your commitment and genuine concern is so important.)**
- **If you fake it you become a joke!**



# Observations (2009)

- Smile and wave like you're running for office.
- Remember that most of them can understand some English.
- Realize that the difference between the cities and rural tribal areas is about 200 years.
- Take off your sunglasses and talk to them...take the time to ask them how things are going.
- Never, ever, promise anything.



# Observations (2009)

- You will only know what Afghans want you to know.
- The Afghans are genuinely interested in you.
- Afghans will eventually bring up religion. Don't be afraid to answer their questions.
- They will work with you because of the money you bring.
- They will respect you for the man you are.
- ***YOU ARE WHO YOU HOLD HANDS WITH,***

***ALWAYS BE HONEST!***



# Questions ?







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