

PASHTUNWALI AND THE AMERICAN MILITARY

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By

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ABSTRACT

Pashtunwali (literally: the way of the Pashtun) describes the idealized behavior of Pashtun tribesmen in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This thesis defines *Pashtunwali*, examines its relevance to modern day Afghanistan and Pakistan, and then explores its impact on the U.S. military.

It recommends that the U.S. military maintain cultural learning organizations with permanently assigned officers and civilian experts, while leveraging the expertise of academic regional specialists. It outlines the requirements for a tribal engagement strategy in Afghanistan. Finally, it advocates training soldiers and Marines on tactical *Pashtunwali*.

The following are significant conclusions: first, the U.S. military is not incorporating the experiences of the British Indian Army in frontier warfare. Second, modern Pashtun behavior deviates from the *Pashtunwali* model advanced by Akbar S. Ahmed in *Resistance and Control in Pakistan*. Third, the U.S. Army's Human Terrain System (HTS) and the U.S. Marine Corps' Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Knowledge (CAOCL) provide detailed and useful cultural knowledge to the military. Finally, many authors rely on *Pashtunwali* when thinking about Afghan tribal engagement.

"No book is produced individually, as you know."
O'Brien to Winston Smith, 1984, Part III, Chapter 21.

For answering many questions:

Akbar S. Ahmed
Thomas Barfield
Matthew Collins
Christine Fair
Joshua Foust
Feroz Khan
Nabi Misdaq
Robert Nichols
Barnett Rubin

For honest and detailed advice:

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Many thanks,

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Chapter 1 – Introduction, Hypotheses, Methodology, and Contribution

Introduction

Pashtunwali, *Nang*, *Badal*, *Melamastia*, *Nanawati*, *Tarboorwali*, *Tor*, *Jirga*, *Malik*, *Mullah*, and *Khan* – are these terms still relevant today?¹ Can the U.S. military successfully understand a foreign culture, remote from American experiences? Is *Pashtunwali* an orientalist² construct, or does it offer a tribal path to victory in Afghanistan?

These words explain various aspects of *Pashtunwali* – the way of the Pashtun. *Pashtunwali* describes the behavior of Pashtuns who live in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It can variously mean the “law, customs, manners, or mindset” of the people.³ U.S. military efforts to understand *Pashtunwali* impact two important areas of national security policy: first, the effectiveness of U.S. military cultural learning, and, second, U.S. tribal policies in Afghanistan.

Cultural learning and the U.S. military

Field Manual 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* states that “counterinsurgents can use cultural forms to shift perceptions, gain support, or reduce support for insurgents.”⁴ This presumes that counterinsurgents (i.e. the U.S. military) should understand the culture of the local population. By exploring how the military understands *Pashtunwali*, this paper may gain insights into the overall

¹ For definitions of Pashto words, please see the Appendix 1: Glossary.

² Orientalism refers to western attempts to understand the east. Patrick Porter addresses this problem in Military Orientalism: Eastern War Through Western Eyes.

³ Robert Nichols, Settling the Frontier (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), 26.

⁴ U.S. Army, Field Manual 3-24: Counterinsurgency (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 92.

effectiveness of military cultural learning. Effective institutions and personnel policies can enhance the cultural awareness of U.S. forces. This is important. FM 3-24 advises “commanders [to] give the belief systems of the insurgents and other groups in the AO [area of operations] careful attention.”⁵

Importance of *Pashtunwali* for U.S. military efforts in Afghanistan

FM 3-24 states that “the protection, welfare, and support of the people are vital to success.”⁶ In Afghanistan, the United States must gain the protection, welfare, and support of the Pashtun people. This requires a specific understanding of the culture of the tribesmen in Eastern and Southern Afghanistan. A correct appreciation of *Pashtunwali* may improve prospects for military success. A false understanding may undermine counterinsurgency efforts. *Pashtunwali* may offer a blueprint for military control by outside forces. According to Akbar S. Ahmed,⁷ both the Mughal Empire and the British Empire employed *Pashtunwali* to control the Pashtun tribes.⁸ The United States has now spent nine years fighting in Afghanistan. In *Afghanistan’s Local War*, Seth Jones and Arturo Munoz describe a deteriorating Afghan security situation.⁹ To

⁵ Ibid, 92.

⁶ Ibid, 51.

⁷ Akbar S. Ahmed is an anthropologist who has both studied the Pashtun tribes and served as a Pakistani Political Agent, charged with administering them.

⁸ Akbar S. Ahmed, Interview by author. Washington D.C. October 5, 2010. Akbar S. Ahmed argues that *Pashtunwali* as a form of political control predates the British Raj, and instead originates within the Mughal Empire.

⁹ Seth Jones and Arturo Munoz, *Afghanistan’s Local War: Building Local Defense Forces*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2010), 9-13.

reverse these trends, *Pashtunwali* may prove useful for U.S. and NATO counterinsurgents.

Hypotheses

The thesis' primary research question is: "how is *Pashtunwali* influencing current U.S. military thinking?" By answering this, I aimed to develop relevant policy recommendations for military cultural awareness and tribal strategies for the Afghan war. To explore the question, I tested four hypotheses:

1) In Afghanistan and Pakistan, modern Pashtun behavior deviates from idealized *Pashtunwali*.

2) Idealized *Pashtunwali* influences thinking about Pashtuns within U.S. military cultural learning organizations.

3) Idealized *Pashtunwali* influences advocates of an Afghan "tribal" strategy.

4) The American military utilizes British colonial military thinking when considering *Pashtunwali*.

The first hypothesis considers the explanatory power of *Pashtunwali*. The second hypothesis examines how effectively the U.S. military understands the cultural concept of *Pashtunwali*. The third hypothesis explores the policy implications of military knowledge about *Pashtunwali*. The fourth hypothesis seeks links between colonial British military and current American military approaches to *Pashtunwali*.

Scope, methodology, and research strengths / weaknesses

This section covers the paper's scope and methodology. It also addresses the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology.

Scope: The research on tribal behavior focused exclusively on the Pashtuns and *Pashtunwali*. However, other tribal groups possess similar codes, including *Baluchiyat* of the Baloch people in Western Pakistan.¹⁰ To understand *Pashtunwali*, my research focused on all historical periods. When assessing the American military, I focused on documents published after the September 2001 terrorist attacks. When considering the British colonial experience, I researched material from the First Afghan War (1839) to partition (1947). Geographically, I examined how *Pashtunwali* applied to Pashtuns living within Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as the broader Pashtun diaspora.

Methodology: I conducted my research in two phases. The first phase explored *Pashtunwali* itself. The second phase examined the American military's interpretation of *Pashtunwali*.

a) First Phase – This phase consisted of a literature review of *Pashtunwali* and modern Pashtun behavior. During this phase, research utilized books and expert interviews. I examined anthropological texts describing Pashtun behavior, and searched for any references to *Pashtunwali*. Key texts included books by Frederik Barth, Ahmed Rashid, James Spain, Akbar S. Ahmed, Charles Lindholm, Robert Nichols, and Barnett Rubin. Interviews with experts

¹⁰ Ahmed, Interview.

on Afghanistan supplemented the literature review. This approach encountered three problems: first, research focused extensively on the Swat valley of Pakistan¹¹ and the Waziristan¹² tribal area of Pakistan. Robert Nichols¹³ and the U.S. Army Human Terrain System¹⁴ addressed this deficiency through a broader examination of the Pashtun people. The second problem arose when examining British colonial writings. I originally aimed to link British colonial writings with modern American security thinking (the fourth hypothesis). I found several sources that discussed *Pashtunwali*.¹⁵ However, my research indicates only one small linkage.¹⁶ The third problem involved defining *Pashtunwali*. To solve this problem, I used Akbar S. Ahmed's idealized *Pashtunwali*. This first phase sufficiently tested the first hypothesis. It also laid the foundation for an informed investigation of the American military's understanding and use of *Pashtunwali*.

b) Second Phase – This tested the second, third, and fourth hypotheses.

The research focused on internet articles, websites, published monographs, and military documents. Select interviews supplemented this process. When

¹¹ Extensively studied post 1947 by Frederik Barth, James Spain, Charles Lindholm. In an interview, Barnett Rubin speculates that this occurred due to Swat's not lying within FATA, where permission for academic research may not have been forthcoming from the Pakistani state. See Barth's Political Leadership Among Swat Pathans, Spain's The Way of the Pathan, and Lindholm's Generosity and Jealousy: The Swat Pukhtun of Northern Pakistan.

¹² Extensively studied post 1947 by Akbar S. Ahmed. See Resistance and Control in Pakistan and Pukhtun Economy and Society.

¹³ Noted Pashtun Historian, see The Pashtun Diaspora and Settling the Frontier.

¹⁴ See Chapter 4 for an extensive discussion of the U.S. Army Human Terrain System (HTS). HTS functions as a military anthropological research organization.

¹⁵ P.D. Bonarjee, H.W. Bellew, Charles MacGregor, and Alexander Burnes.

¹⁶ See Chapter 6 – The British Colonial Legacy.

beginning this process, I planned to examine three subjects: a) theses published by military educational institutions, b) the U.S. Army Human Terrain System, c) and relevant websites. This would provide three separate but complementary blocks of literature concerning the U.S. military understanding of *Pashtunwali*. During research, I learned that the U.S. military was (and is) arguing the merits of a *Pashtun* tribal engagement policy. I therefore decided to explore how *Pashtunwali* influences this debate. I researched cultural learning within the military by examining the Army's Human Terrain System, the Marine Corps' Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning, and the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity. I utilized three techniques. First, I browsed websites focusing on Afghanistan or the U.S. military.¹⁷ Second, I searched the U.S. Army's Army Knowledge Online (AKO). AKO is an unclassified source, but cannot be accessed by the general public. Third, I looked within the Defense Technical Intelligence Center, Army Combined Arms Center, and Army War College databases. I first attempted to examine all documents within a site, an impractical approach. Electronic searches proved more efficient, utilizing key words including *pashtun*, *pashtunwali*, *tribe*, *jirga*, and *human*

¹⁷ These include: The Afghan Analyst: An Online Resource for Researching Afghanistan. <http://afghanistan-analyst.org/analyst.aspx>; Program for Culture and Conflict Studies, Naval Post-Graduate School. <http://www.nps.edu/programs/ccs/Research.html>; Registan.net: All Central Asia, All the Time. <http://www.registan.net/>; Small Wars Journal. <http://smallwarsjournal.com/>; and Ghosts of Alexander: Conflict and Society in Central Asia. <http://easterncampaign.wordpress.com/>.

terrain system. To conclude the second phase, I visited the Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning.¹⁸

Strengths and Weaknesses: This methodology utilized a wide variety of sources, both military and civilian. It examined established texts, interviewed experts, and considered recent on-line writing. This approach combined established authority with current military thinking about *Pashtunwali*. A different strength of this paper is that the results partially deviated from my initial assumptions. First, I assumed that modern U.S. authors would utilize the results of British colonial military experiences. I only found one example. Second, I assumed that the U.S. military would not possess a detailed understanding of modern Afghan cultural dynamics. Instead, the Human Terrain System is providing detailed information that conforms to the scholarly literature. Third, I was not aware of the tribal debate within the U.S. military. This allowed me to approach the debate as an informed, but not partisan, observer.

There are three potential weaknesses within the paper. First, results may have been over-determined through bias selection. By looking within specific websites, I limited the possible research results. To combat this problem, I consciously sought on-line information from websites aimed at different audiences. For example, military personnel write in *Small Wars Journal*, while

¹⁸ Chapter 4 describes CAOCL in more detail. CAOCL aims to provide Marine leaders and warfighters with expert cultural knowledge.

Christian Bleuer's *Ghosts of Alexander* offers an academic approach. The second danger is using inductive logic to answer questions about the American military's cultural competence. I exclusively examine *Pashtunwali*, yet make assertions about the overall effectiveness of military cultural learning organizations. However, I remain confident in my broader conclusions. Attempts to understand tribes in Iraq and Yemen have suffered from similar cultural learning obstacles.¹⁹ The third possible weakness is that important classified information is shaping military thinking. I cannot control for this weakness.

Contribution and unanswered questions

This paper constitutes the first systematic examination of *Pashtunwali's* influence on U.S. military thinking. It examines how *Pashtunwali* influences the tribal engagement debate, and it assesses the accuracy of military cultural learning organizations in explaining *Pashtunwali*. It also shows that American authors are not relying on colonialist British sources. This paper addresses two important policy questions. First, should the U.S. military conduct tribal (or local)²⁰ engagement within Afghanistan? Second, how effective are military cultural learning organizations? Both Joshua Foust and Christian Bleuer have

¹⁹ Matthew Collins, Interview by author, Quantico VA, Thursday October 21, 2010 and Joshua Foust, Interview by author, Lorton VA, November 12, 2010.

²⁰ For this paper, I will use the term tribal engagement to also include local engagement as well. Different authors argue over this distinction.

posted short articles on the U.S. military's cultural awareness in Afghanistan.²¹

This paper builds on that research. It presents a unique assessment of *Pashtunwali's* influence on military thinking. However, it does not contribute to any existing anthropological research on *Pashtunwali* or the history of the Pashtun people.

This paper raises several unanswered questions. It does not examine *Pashtunwali's* influence on deployed U.S. soldiers and Marines. It also does not consider how the Pakistani Army views *Pashtunwali*. Answering these questions requires extensive interviews with military personnel in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Finally, this paper does not account for Pashtun concerns. A successful U.S. tribal engagement strategy requires the support of local Pashtuns. Pashtun people will ultimately judge the effectiveness of American military cultural learning organizations. Pashtun concerns merit scrutiny. Conducting such research may be difficult; I suspect it will prove rewarding.

Thesis outline

Chapter 2 briefly explains Pashtun history and geography. It considers the problems in defining *Pashtunwali*, and offers an idealized version. Absent such explanations, arguments in Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 would lose their cogency.

²¹ Christian Bleuer, "U.S. Army Tribal Engagement in Afghanistan," [Ghosts of Alexander: Conflict and Society in Central Asia](http://easterncampaign.wordpress.com/2009/03/11/us-army-tribal-engagement-in-afghanistan/), March 11, 2009. <http://easterncampaign.wordpress.com/2009/03/11/us-army-tribal-engagement-in-afghanistan/> and Joshua Foust, "Gameplanning a Solution in Medias Res," [Registan.net: All Central Asia, All the Time](http://www.registan.net/index.php/2010/03/26/gameplanning-a-solution-in-medias-res/), March 26, 2010. <http://www.registan.net/index.php/2010/03/26/gameplanning-a-solution-in-medias-res/>

Chapter 3 establishes how Pashtun behavior often deviates from idealized *Pashtunwali*. It examines the relationship between wealth and *Pashtunwali*. It then considers the effects of settlement, war, and globalization. It next compares the concepts of solidarity group and tribe. Finally, it considers *Pashtunwali* as a historical phenomenon. Chapter 4 examines how *Pashtunwali* affects military cultural learning by examining the U.S. Army Human Terrain System, the Marine Corps Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning, and the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA). Chapter 5 considers *Pashtunwali* and the debate on tribal engagement. It shows how advocates for Afghan tribal engagement base their arguments on *Pashtunwali*, Iraqi experiences, the tribal system, personal experience, and ineffectiveness of the Kabul government. It then considers past and current efforts at local engagement. Chapter 6 explores the British colonial military's impact on the debate. Chapter 7 presents the policy implications. It analyzes the prospect of re-tribalizing, America's unpleasant choice, military cultural competence, the limits of cultural understanding, military structural problems, and the search for the magic cultural bullet. Chapter 8 offers policy recommendations for the military's cultural learning organizations. It establishes the requirements for a serious tribal engagement policy, and recommends training deploying soldiers and Marines on tactical *Pashtunwali*. Appendix A contains a glossary of Pashto terms relevant to *Pashtunwali*.

Chapter 2 – Pashtunwali: Background and Theory

Introduction and significant conclusions

This chapter outlines *Pashtunwali* as a theory and briefly describes Pashtun history and geography. The first significant conclusion is that *Pashtunwali* has multiple meanings which prevent a universal definition. The second significant conclusion is that Akbar S. Ahmed's *Resistance and Control in Pakistan* provides the best theoretical description of *Pashtunwali*. The final significant conclusion is that Britain and Pakistan attempted to implement both *Pashtunwali* and a tribal system in the frontier areas.

Pashtun history and geography

In Afghanistan, 9 million Pashtuns constitute 42% of the population, while Pakistan contains an additional 25.6 million Pashtuns.²² As a group, they divide into numerous confederations, tribes, sub-tribes, clans, and families, with each Pashtun knowing his tribal status, derived from patrilineal bloodline. Afghan Pashtuns seized power in 1747 under Ahmad Shah Durrani.²³ The Durrani acquisition of power reinforced two broad Pashtun groupings – Western and Eastern Pashtuns.²⁴ During the “Great Game” between Russia and Britain, Afghanistan served as a barrier between both states.²⁵ In the 20th century, the

²² Ken Guest ‘RAM’ Seeger, and Lucy Morgan Edwards. “The Tribal Path: A Better Alternative.” *Small Wars Journal*, 2010. p. 5 <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/379-quest.pdf>

²³ Shahid Afsar, Chris Samples, Thomas Wood, “The Taliban: An Organizational Analysis,” *Military Review* (May-June 2008): 61.

²⁴ Barnett Rubin, Interview by Author, Washington D.C., October 14, 2010.

²⁵ Rubin, Interview.

Western Afghan Pashtuns experienced a slow process of state formation.²⁶

This culminated in the April 1978 Saur Revolution in Afghanistan, introducing revolutionary socialism. Attempts to rapidly change social structures ultimately resulted in rebellion, war, and the fragmentation of existing Pashtun society.²⁷

Eastern Pashtuns retained greater political independence from the Kabul government.²⁸ In 1893, the British Empire established the Durand line along the Hindu Kush Mountains, dividing the Eastern Pashtun heartland.²⁹ In 1901, the British implemented a security system providing depth against Russian threats to the Indian sub-continent.³⁰ This system established the tribal areas and implemented the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR). Today, the Pashtun tribal areas³¹ remain a minimally governed space between Afghanistan and Pakistan.³² The FCR, which remains in force, theoretically permits control of Pashtun tribesmen by a distant, disinterested government.³³ The FCR also turned *Pashtunwali* from an oral code into a written law.³⁴ This represented a

²⁶ Jones and Munoz, Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan, 41-43.

²⁷ See Barnett Rubin's The Fragmentation of Afghanistan. This is the book's thesis.

²⁸ Rubin, Interview.

²⁹ Ahmed Rashid, Descent into Chaos (New York, NY: Viking Books, 2008), 266 -267.

³⁰ Rubin, Interview.

³¹ Following independence in 1947, the Pakistani state re-designated the tribal areas as FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas).

³² Rubin, Interview. Also functioned as a "moat" for British India and later an insecure Pakistani state. Ahmed Rashid maintains same view in Descent into Chaos, pp 266-267.

³³ Rubin, Interview. Akbar S. Ahmed in Resistance and Control explains that process in detail.

³⁴ Rubin, Interview.

state effort to govern through *Pashtunwali*. However, it is no longer working.³⁵

This map illustrates the Pashtun homeland.³⁶



³⁵ The Frontier areas of Pakistan are experiencing significant conflict. Please see Hassan Abbas' *Pakistan's Troubled Frontier*.

³⁶ Map Source: Lisa Curtis and James Phillips, "Revitalizing U.S. Efforts in Afghanistan." *Heritage Foundation* (October 15, 2007).
<http://www.heritage.org/static/reportimages/0F3F7F2CDF5E88D351EF61EB45193E1B.jpg>

Problems in defining *Pashtunwali*

Defining *Pashtunwali* proves difficult. As an oral cultural tradition, its meaning has changed over time and varies by location.³⁷ *Pashtunwali* functions as social code, as law, and as an ideal of personal behavior.³⁸ It is both prescriptive and descriptive: it explains how “to do *Pashtunwali*,”³⁹ and how society functions. Without a universal definition, any research encounters variance in *Pashtunwali*’s meaning, applicability, and significance. I utilized three approaches to solve this problem. First, I sought the “Ur-*Pashtunwali*,” the oldest and most pure definition possible. This approach failed. The earliest western source mentioning *Pashtunwali* is Mountstuart Elphinstone’s *Account of the Kingdom of Cabul, and its Dependencies in Persia and India*.⁴⁰ The earliest source I read dates from 1847 – Alexander Burnes’ *Cabool: A Personal Narrative of a Journey To, and Residence In That City*. However, this text does not describe *Pashtunwali* in detail. The second approach built a matrix from different sources, principally a Human Terrain System report.⁴¹ This yielded a composite picture of common definitions and descriptions, but failed to link individual behaviors with collective outcomes. The third approach selected the most complete description of *Pashtunwali* available in the literature, explaining both individual and collective tribal behavior. Akbar S. Ahmed’s *Resistance and*

³⁷ Rubin, Interview.

³⁸ U.S. Army. Human Terrain Systems – Research Reachback Center. Cultural Knowledge Report. “Pashtunwali 101” (May 8, 2007), 3-4.

³⁹ Ahmed, Interview.

⁴⁰ Robert Nichols, personal email, September 27, 2010, and Barnett Rubin, interview.

⁴¹ U.S. Army, “Pashtunwali 101.”

Control in Pakistan provides an idealized definition of *Pashtunwali*. For the remainder of the paper, this defines *Pashtunwali*, unless otherwise noted.

Idealized Pashtunwali – Resistance and Control in Pakistan

Akbar S. Ahmed's *Resistance and Control in Pakistan* explicitly outlines an ideal of Pashtun behavior.⁴² Five major individual qualities guide *Pashtunwali* – courage, revenge, hospitality, generosity to defeated enemies, and obedience to the dictates of tribal consensus-based decisions. The interpretation of this code occurs through issues stemming from rivalry against blood relatives and the defense of female honor.⁴³ The tribe is an acephalous (leaderless), segmentary lineage system (shared descent from a common founder) – this permits an egalitarian power structure.⁴⁴ The tribe itself can only unite to combat external threats; otherwise, it dissipates its energies in internal struggles. *Pashtunwali* exists in tension between three competing actors: the religious leadership, the tribal leadership, and the central state.⁴⁵

Chapter 3 – Pashtunwali: Reality

Introduction and significant conclusions

The evidence supports the first hypothesis: in Afghanistan and Pakistan modern Pashtun behavior deviates from idealized *Pashtunwali*. This is true for

⁴² Akbar S. Ahmed, *Resistance and Control in Pakistan* Rev. ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 24.

⁴³ Ahmed, *Resistance and Control in Pakistan*, 24.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁵ Ahmed, Interview.

both individuals and group behavior. The first significant conclusion is that idealized *Pashtunwali* requires conditions of equality and poverty. Such conditions have changed due to settlement, war, and globalization. These changes dictate the second conclusion: *Pashtunwali* possesses weak explanatory power for Pashtun behavior. The third significant conclusion is that solidarity groups⁴⁶ have more descriptive accuracy than tribes. The final conclusion is that *Pashtunwali's* breakdown is a historical phenomenon.

Idealized *Pashtunwali* requires equality and poverty

Idealized *Pashtunwali* requires conditions of relative deprivation. *Pashtunwali* is associated with “highly contingent, materially difficult lives.”⁴⁷ It can only exist in the absence of wealth; money breaks down the system.⁴⁸ *Pashtunwali* also requires equality among all the tribal participants.⁴⁹ The creation of the tribal areas in 1901 attempted to artificially preserve these conditions. The British and subsequent Pakistani policy of tribal subsidies left Pashtun tribesmen impoverished.⁵⁰ Functioning Pashtun tribal systems depend on poverty and equality. Wealth and inequality may indicate a weak or non-existent tribal system.

⁴⁶ Within the context of Afghanistan, solidarity groups are called Qawms. See Section titled Solidarity group and Pashtun tribes within Afghanistan.

⁴⁷ Robert Nichols, *Settling the Frontier* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15.

⁴⁸ Thomas Barfield, Interview by author, Lorton VA, October 18, 2010.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Edward Hunter, *The Past Present: A Year in Afghanistan* (London UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1959), 344.

Settlement patterns introduced wealth and social hierarchies

Terrain differences determine settlement patterns, and consequently affect Pashtun political and social structures. In well-watered valleys, a feudal society, with inherited class differences emerges, while in mountainous areas, an egalitarian society based on individual honor prevails.⁵¹ From this geographical difference, major social consequences emerge. Feudalized Pashtuns, also referred to as settled Pashtuns, are more subject to state control and taxation, and develop classes of powerful hereditary landlords.⁵² The process of “de-tribalization” began in the 1750’s in Afghanistan near Kandahar.⁵³

Among Eastern Pashtuns, the British began transforming the Peshawar valley in the 1850s, through revenue, law, and new social hierarchies.⁵⁴ Post-independence, the Pakistani state made efforts to encourage Pashtun migration to settled areas.⁵⁵ This process of settlement enabled the state to both create and co-opt the ruling elite in Swat.⁵⁶ Settlement patterns also changed the nature of Pashtun conflict. The current violence in Swat partly stems from land disputes and social justice issues.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Ahmed Resistance and Control, 7. and Rubin, Interview.

⁵² Ahmed, Resistance and Control, 7.

⁵³ Rubin, Interview.

⁵⁴ Nichols, Settling the Frontier, 258.

⁵⁵ Ahmed, Resistance and Control, 34.

⁵⁶ Charles Lindholm. “The Segmentary Linkage System: Its Applicability to Pakistan’s Political Structure.” pp. 41-67. (Pakistan Western Borderlands: The Transformation of a Political Order. Ed. Ainslie T. Embree. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1977), 46-50.

⁵⁷ Ahmed, Interview.

Conflict weakened existing tribal structures and leaders

The post-1979 struggle in Afghanistan disrupted Pashtun tribal structures. The influx of weapons and money undermined the authority of traditional local political leaders.⁵⁸ The conflict caused rapid changes in Afghan tribal society, leading to the break down of *Pashtunwali*.⁵⁹ Since 2001, conflicts in Pakistan have also undermined traditional tribal governance.⁶⁰ In Pakistan, the Taliban have attacked tribal structures by systematically killing leaders.⁶¹

Although a largely Pashtun movement, the Taliban exist outside traditional tribal structures; nevertheless, they incorporate concepts of *Pashtunwali* in their social conservatism and punishments.⁶² However, they depart from idealized *Pashtunwali* in being a completely de-tribalized group with little experience of traditional society.⁶³ The Taliban arose from the social wreckage of the Soviet War, amidst the religious schools and refugee camps of the Afghan-Pakistan borderlands.⁶⁴

Migration and trade changed Pashtun society

Globalization has also weakened traditional Pashtun social structures. Idealized *Pashtunwali* requires poverty and equality. Individual Pashtuns have

⁵⁸ Rubin, Interview.

⁵⁹ Ahmed, Interview.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Cathell, John H. MAJ, USA. "Human Geography in the Afghanistan-Pakistan Region: Undermining the Taliban Using Traditional Pashtun Social Structures." (Masters Thesis, Naval War College, Newport, RI.), 15.

⁶² Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000.) page 112.

⁶³ Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, (New York, NY: Viking Press, 2008.) page 401.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

worked hard to escape those conditions. First, they have migrated for work. Second, Pashtuns have engaged in trade, both legal and illegal. Both migration and trade create wealth that undermines the traditional tribal system.

Pashtuns have long sought work outside of tribal areas, either within Pakistan and Afghanistan or overseas (particularly in the oil wealthy Persian Gulf). After independence in 1947, young tribal Pashtuns began moving to Peshawar and Kabul for jobs, falsifying their residency status if required.⁶⁵ Prior to the Soviet invasion, Afghan Pashtuns had established a pattern of first seeking work in Pakistan, and then moving to the Gulf.⁶⁶ By 1981, 590,000 Pakistanis from the Northwest Frontier Province, mostly Pashtun, were working abroad.⁶⁷ Pashtun emigration from traditional areas permanently altered the demography of non-Pashtun areas of Pakistan. By the 1970s, 1.5 million Pakistani Pashtuns had permanently migrated to Karachi,⁶⁸ as of 2004, the city also included 500,000 Afghan Pashtuns.⁶⁹ Today, Karachi has the largest urban Pashtun population in the world. The experiences of living abroad changed Pashtuns. In the 1970s, Pashtuns subordinated egalitarian social structures to conform to the employee / owner model found in the Gulf.⁷⁰ Finally, and most importantly, overseas remittances changed the economy

⁶⁵ Sana Haroon. Frontier of Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007), 195.

⁶⁶ Robert Nichols, A History of Pashtun Migration: 1775-2006, 152.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 143.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 141.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 151.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 231.

within Pashtun areas – funding mosques and new businesses in Peshawar, as well as financing local electoral politics.⁷¹

Modern Pashtuns engage in trade across Pakistan and Afghanistan, often of an illegal nature. The Quetta truck mafia⁷² funded Taliban military offensives in 1996, with the explicit aim of stopping warlords and ensuring open roads.⁷³

Under Taliban rule, the transport mafia moved electronic goods from Dubai into Afghanistan, and then smuggled heroin out on Ariana, the national airline controlled by the Taliban.⁷⁴ In order to secure business, the drug mafia paid religious taxes to the Taliban.⁷⁵

Solidarity groups and Pashtun tribes within Afghanistan

A solidarity group is not a standardized social unit. It closely approximates the concept of a peer group.⁷⁶ Individuals can belong to multiple groups at the same time. Groups can be based on kinship, geographic proximity, tribe, ethnicity, or occupation.⁷⁷ For example, a man may be a cousin, living in Kandahar, a Popalzai Pashtun, and a barber. These multiple solidarity groups define individual social obligations.⁷⁸ Micro-segmentation by solidarity group

⁷¹ Ibid, 148-149.

⁷² Within a South Asian context, mafia refers to a cartel that exclusively controls a commodity, employing extra-legal means to guarantee business. Common examples are land and transport mafias.

⁷³ Ahmed Rashid, Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia, 191.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 192.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 191.

⁷⁶ Foust, Interview.

⁷⁷ Banett Rubin, The Fragmentation of Afghanistan 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 25.

⁷⁸ Gilles Dorransoro, Revolution Unending: Afghanistan: 1979 to the Present Trans. John King (London, UK: Hurst and Company, 2000), 10-11.

helps explain the fragmented affiliations of Mujahedeen commanders in the anti-Soviet war.⁷⁹ Although, most Pashtuns claim a tribal membership (itself a solidarity group), other solidarity groups often prove more important.⁸⁰ In contrast, idealized tribal structures do not reflect how Pashtuns actually live.⁸¹ Finally, solidarity groups can change, depending on local circumstances, individual needs, and personal desires.⁸²

Tribes are an “essentialist”⁸³ model of behavior. Personal identities and behaviors must conform to the tribal norms. This overlooks human agency in explaining behavior. While solidarity groups also assign identities, they are less deterministic in explaining individual conduct.⁸⁴ Solidarity groups are descriptive of behavior; the tribal model is both descriptive and prescriptive.

***Pashtunwali's* decline as a historical phenomenon**

A consistent finding is a perceived decline in *Pashtunwali* over time. This corresponds to increases in settlement, wealth, and social mobility, and the effects of recent conflicts. In the 18th century, the Pashtun poet Adbur Rahman lamented the decline of *Pashtunwali* in villages around Peshawar.⁸⁵ In the 1920's, a leader of the Mehsud tribe asked the British to stay out of tribal affairs:

⁷⁹ Rubin, The Fragmentation of Afghanistan, 202.

⁸⁰ U.S. Army, Human Terrain System – Afghanistan Research Reachback Center White Paper Report “My Cousin’s Enemy is My Friend: A Study of Pashtun “Tribes” in Afghanistan.” (Fort Leavenworth, KS: TRADOC G-2, 2009), 8-9.

⁸¹ Ibid, 29.

⁸² Ibid, 9.

⁸³ “Essentialist” models of human behavior assume that permanent unchanging attributes exist within human groups, i.e. tribal identity predicts and determines individual behavior.

⁸⁴ Foust, Interview.

⁸⁵ Robert Nichols, Settling the Frontier, 56.

“don’t bring corruption to us. Let us live by the code, and be men like our fathers before us.”⁸⁶ Thomas M. Barfield, an Afghan expert at Boston University, explains that *Pashtunwali* has been breaking down for 300 years.⁸⁷ Akbar S. Ahmed laments the accelerated breakdown of *Pashtunwali* in the past thirty years.⁸⁸ Brigadier Feroz Khan, a retired Pakistani officer teaching at the Naval Postgraduate School, mentions the current loss of honor and respect for elders. He states that tribesmen no longer adhere to traditional collective decision making processes.⁸⁹

Alternative explanations

The first alternative explanation concerns the power of tribes. Akbar S. Ahmed states that the romantic theories advanced by British political agents in Waziristan possess empirical validity.⁹⁰ These theories state that tribal *Pashtunwali* determines individual behavior. Furthermore, the political agent identifies strongly with the tribe and its values, causing him to behave with heroism.⁹¹ This theory may account for British political agent and Pashtun tribal behavior in the 1930’s. However, modern counter-arguments would stress patterns of settlement, conflict, and migration/trade as breaking down this tribal model of idealized *Pashtunwali*.

⁸⁶ Ahmed, Interview.

⁸⁷ Barfield, Interview.

⁸⁸ Ahmed, Interview.

⁸⁹ Feroz Khan, Interview by author, Rosslyn VA, October 20, 2010.

⁹⁰ Akbar S. Ahmed, Resistance and Control, 133.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 134.

The second alternative explanation posits that *Pashtunwali* can exist outside conditions of poverty and equality. If true, it would render my arguments in this chapter moot. However, I have found no evidence that suggests this.

The third alternative explanation is that solidarity group explanations are a passing anthropological academic fad; at first popular, and then criticized by the next generation of academics.⁹² Again, I have found no evidence to support this.

Chapter 4 – *Pashtunwali* and Military Cultural Learning

Introduction and significant conclusions

The evidence both refutes and supports the second hypothesis: idealized *Pashtunwali* influences thinking about Pashtuns within the American military's cultural learning organizations. The U.S. Army's Human Terrain System (HTS), the U.S. Marine Corps' Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning (CAOCL), and the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA) have each examined *Pashtunwali*. HTS contradicts and CAOCL supports idealized *Pashtunwali*. MCIA products do not contain enough information to make a determination. Each organization uses a different approach with different aims: HTS places military anthropologists within deployed Brigades. It seeks detailed information. CAOCL trains deploying Marines and leaders. It provides combat

⁹² Frederik Barth, for example, advanced "transactional" ideas to explain Swat Pashtun political behavior. This idea was subsequently criticized by Akbar S. Ahmed.

leaders with useful, but generic, cultural information. MCI A produces cultural products for use by junior personnel.

U.S. Army Human Terrain System

HTS functions as a military anthropological organization. Deployed combat brigades contain a Human Terrain Team (HTT). A team consists of a team leader, two social scientists, three research managers, and three analysts.⁹³ An HTT develops detailed knowledge of social networks within a brigade's area of operations.⁹⁴ It functions as a human intelligence collection platform, with a population focus.⁹⁵ Examples of HTS products include an analysis of the Afghan land mafia and a history of the Ministry of Tribal and Border Affairs.⁹⁶ HTS produced the reports within 22 and 14 days of being tasked. These reports provide detailed, useful, social information to deployed combat units.

HTS has produced two documents exclusively concerned with *Pashtunwali*: "*Pashtunwali 101*" and "*My Cousin's Enemy is My Friend: A Study of Pashtun Tribes in Afghanistan*." These reports refute idealized *Pashtunwali* and discount the tribe's importance. Instead, HTS emphasizes the importance of solidarity groups.⁹⁷ This belief accords with the overwhelming academic

⁹³ U.S. Army. Human Terrain System. Homepage.

<http://humanterrainsystem.army.mil/htsComponentsDeployed.aspx>

⁹⁴ Foust, Interview.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ U.S. Army, Human Terrain System, Cultural Knowledge Reports: "History of the Ministry of Tribal and Border Affairs," 26 September 2008 and Origins, Impact, and "Workings of Afghan Land Mafias," 20 August 2010.

⁹⁷ U.S. Army, "My Cousin's Enemy is My Friend. A Study of Pashtun Tribes in Afghanistan," 9.

consensus on tribes and *Pashtunwali*.⁹⁸ HTS conclusions differ from soldiers returning from Afghanistan, who believe that tribes are important in understanding Pashtun cultural behavior.⁹⁹ Currently, deployed units have tasked HTS with producing dozens of tribal area maps.¹⁰⁰ Deployed officers' perceptions conflict with HTS' research on *Pashtunwali* and Pashtun tribes.

Two problems exist with the HTS concept. First, the personnel requirements exceed the pool of available experts. There are only a few academics in the United States who possess the detailed knowledge sought by deployed HTTs.¹⁰¹ The Army should utilize these academics in advising senior officers at the strategic level, not in providing tactical information to junior officers.¹⁰² Many academics currently working with HTS received anthropological training elsewhere in the world; their "expert" understanding equals the soldiers they are advising.¹⁰³ Newly implemented policies partially address this – all civilians on deployed HTTs are now official Federal employees, not contractors.¹⁰⁴

The second problem stems from ferocious opposition to HTS by the anthropological community. On October 31, 2007, the executive board of the American Anthropological Association released a statement condemning

⁹⁸ Ibid, 3.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 3.

¹⁰⁰ Foust, Interview.

¹⁰¹ Barfield, Interview.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Foust, Interview.

HTS.¹⁰⁵ Opposition to HTS may be widespread in the anthropological community. According to Maximilian Forte of Zero Anthropology,¹⁰⁶ only six anthropologists with PhDs have ever joined HTS.¹⁰⁷

I assess HTS very highly. Despite organizational problems and academic opposition, HTS has provided accurate and detailed information in a timely manner. This data conforms to the existing academic literature on *Pashtunwali* and the Pashtun tribes. HTS provides deployed combat units with granular local knowledge. A positive summer 2007 assessment of a deployed HTT echoes my beliefs.¹⁰⁸

Marine Corps Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning

In 2005, General James Mattis, U.S. Marine Corps, directed the establishment of the Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning (CAOCL) underneath the Marine Corps Combat Development Command.¹⁰⁹ Since 2006, it has trained deploying Marines on *Pashtunwali* and Pashtun tribes. In contrast to HTS, CAOCL supports idealized *Pashtunwali*.

¹⁰⁵ American Anthropological Association, "Executive Board Statement on the Human Terrain System Project" October 31, 2007. <http://www.aaanet.org/about/Policies/statements/Human-Terrain-System-Statement.cfm>

¹⁰⁶ Zero Anthropology is a website highly critical of HTS. It states that "in its most basic sense is a project of decolonization, growing out of a discipline with a long history and a deep epistemological connection to colonialism."

¹⁰⁷ Maximilian Forte, "Time Line and FAQ for the Human Terrain System and Responses by the Network of Concerned Anthropologists and the American Anthropological Association," *Zero Anthropology*, May 28, 2010. <http://zeroanthropology.net/2010/05/28/time-line-and-faq-for-the-human-terrain-system-and-responses-by-the-network-of-concerned-anthropologists-and-the-american-anthropological-association/>

¹⁰⁸ U.S. Army, Human Terrain System – Assessment Team, Human Terrain Team Preliminary Assessment, July-August 2007.

¹⁰⁹ Collins, Interview.

CAOCL's audience also differs from HTS. CAOCL aims to educate combat leaders about their immediate cultural environment. Written products include *Operational Pashtunwali: How to Work With the Local Culture* and *Afghanistan: Operational Culture for Deploying Personnel*.¹¹⁰ Both products can easily fit inside the pants pockets of a combat Marine. They provide non-specific information about *Pashtunwali* and Pashtun culture. The data conforms to idealized *Pashtunwali*. *Operational Pashtunwali* is a highly prized pamphlet – CAOCL cannot meet the current demand from deployed Marines.¹¹¹

CAOCL detachments in Camps Lejeune, Pendleton, 29 Palms, and Okinawa brief every deploying Marine unit on the cultural environment of Afghanistan.¹¹² CAOCL also conducts training for key Marine leaders. This training employs innovative methods, such as requiring U.S. military officers to role-play different positions within an Afghan village – a tribal leader, a Taliban commander, a religious cleric, or a government official.¹¹³

I assess CAOCL favorably, despite its use of idealized *Pashtunwali*. The reasons are discussed in *The limits of cultural knowledge (Chapter 7 – Policy Implications)*.

¹¹⁰ U.S. Marine Corps, Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning. "Operational Pashtunwali: How to Work With the Local Culture" and Afghanistan: Operational Culture for Deploying Personnel."

¹¹¹ Collins, Interview

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Nabi Misdaq, Interview by author, Quantico, VA, October 21, 2010.

Marine Corps Intelligence Activity

The Department of Defense tasked the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA) with providing cultural intelligence to the U.S. military.¹¹⁴ MCIA products discuss *Pashtunwali*, but not in detail. It is unclear whether MCIA subscribes to idealized *Pashtunwali*. MCIA products target the most junior soldiers and Marines – the information is simple and addresses basic facts.¹¹⁵ The *Micro-Mission Guide: Afghanistan* focuses on individual tasks including searching personnel, communication, dining with Afghans, giving gifts, and conducting meetings.¹¹⁶

Alternative explanations

I cannot assess the effectiveness of HTS, CAOCL, or MCIA in influencing the cultural behavior of deployed military units. I can only examine their written products, comparing them with existing academic explanations of Pashtun behavior. I found a positive assessment report of an HTT; however, the military may hide or destroy negative reports, especially for a politically charged program like HTS. CAOCL stated that their training and products were in great demand.¹¹⁷ I do not doubt them, but cannot confirm their claim. HTS has

¹¹⁴ Collins, Interview.

¹¹⁵ Marine Corps Intelligence Activity. "Afghanistan Culture Card." April 2010. "Northwest Frontier Province and Federally Administered Tribal Areas: Pakistan Regional Culture Smart Card." August 2008."

¹¹⁶ Marine Corps Intelligence Activity. *Micro-Mission Guide: Afghanistan*. October 2008.

¹¹⁷ Collins, Interview and Misdaq, Interview.

remained under intense and negative scrutiny by academic anthropologists.¹¹⁸

I am not sympathetic to the anti-HTS criticism by some anthropologists.

Chapter 5 – Pashtunwali and the Debate on Tribal Engagement

Introduction and significant conclusions

The research partially supports the hypothesis that idealized *Pashtunwali* influences advocates of an Afghan “tribal” strategy. Besides invoking idealized *Pashtunwali*, advocates also cite the previous Iraqi tribal engagement, the existence of Pashtun tribes, and concerns about the central Kabul government. Opponents of a “tribal” strategy utilize arguments developed in Chapter 3 – *Pashtunwali: Reality*.

Senior officers support tribal engagement. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) commander’s guidance directs the reinvigoration of tribal and community structures.¹¹⁹ General Petraeus envisions “local security by local security forces supported by the local population.”¹²⁰

There are five significant conclusions. First, the U.S. military aims to replicate its tribal operations in Al-Anbar, Iraq. Second, arguments based on idealized *Pashtunwali* and autonomous tribes contradict the existing academic literature. Third, arguments stemming from personal experience are locally

¹¹⁸ See the website Zero Anthropology, <http://zeroanthropology.net/>

¹¹⁹ Stern, LTC, USA. “COIN Lessons Learned.” Powerpoint Presentation. (The Counterinsurgency Leader’s Workshop – U.S. Army / U.S. Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Center. 28 October 2009,) slide 46.

¹²⁰ Ibid, slide 6.

true. They, however, are not generally true for all of Afghanistan. Fourth, the Kabul government's ineffectiveness provides a more persuasive reason for tribal engagement. Fifth, Afghan tribal engagement is neither widespread, nor well-established. Assessing its effectiveness is not possible.

Explaining the situation using idealized *Pashtunwali*

When considering the current tribal situation, some authors use idealized *Pashtunwali*. Thomas Johnson and Chris Mason use the same formulation as Akbar S. Ahmed in assessing religious leadership's impact on tribal behavior.¹²¹ Under current conditions, religious power far exceeds tribal power, causing an imbalance in *Pashtunwali*.¹²² This leads to military power in the hands of clerics, pejoratively described as the "Mad Mullah"¹²³ problem.¹²⁴ Bernie McMahon recommends employing *Pashtunwali* to select political leaders.¹²⁵ William S. MacCallister recognizes that competition between rivals follows the principles of *Pashtunwali*.¹²⁶ Finally, tribal engagement requires understanding honor, a vital aspect of *Pashtunwali*.¹²⁷ I assess the religious arguments as weak. The Taliban, while religiously motivated, represent a new phenomenon,

¹²¹ Ahmed, Interview.

¹²² Johnson, Thomas H. and Mason, Chris M. "Afghanistan and the Vietnam Template." *Military Review*, (Nov-Dec 2009: 2-14), 10.

¹²³ This British colonial term describes how a charismatic religious leader inspires Pashtun tribesmen to revolt, causing unrest along the Frontier. Examples include the Fakir of Ipi in 1939 and the 1897 Malakand campaign.

¹²⁴ Cathell, 11.

¹²⁵ McMahon, Bernie, CDR USN. "Pakistan's FATA – A Wicked Problem." (Strategy Research Report, U.S. Army War College Class of 2009, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA), 17.

¹²⁶ William S. MacCallister, "Some Considerations for Planning and Executing a Military-Political Engagement in Afghanistan." (*Small Wars Journal*. 2010.), 6.

¹²⁷ Cathell, 19-20.

completely alien to *Pashtunwali*. The conclusions from Chapter 3 do not support this argument for tribal engagement.

Origins of the tribal debate – Al Anbar, Iraq

The U.S. military interest in tribes began in Iraq, not in Afghanistan. Starting in 2006, the U.S. military utilized a tribal strategy in Al-Anbar Iraq.¹²⁸ Current plans for local Afghan forces are modeled on the U.S. program in Iraq.¹²⁹ Problems exist with this approach. Dan Green¹³⁰ recognizes a fundamental difference between Iraqi tribes, which had already co-existed with a modern state, and Afghan tribes, which have not.¹³¹ I assess that Green is correct. I also agree that the interest in tribes stems from U.S. efforts in Iraq.

Arguments based on tribal existence

Idealized *Pashtunwali* states that Pashtun tribes exist and are capable of collective action. Multiple authors second this view. Ken Guest, “RAM” Seeger, Lucy Morgan Edwards, Chris Mason, and Thomas Johnson claim that the tribal system still works, citing the uprising of the Mangals against the Taliban, or the Shinwaris siding with the Kabul government.¹³² John Cathell aims to employ tribes and tribal leaders to fight the Taliban.¹³³ Tribes might possess *Pashtunwali* based tribal collective decision processes. These can be utilized

¹²⁸ Collins, Interview.

¹²⁹ Yochi Dreazen, “Going Native: U.S. funded local militias helped to turn the tide in Iraq. American commanders hope they can do likewise in Afghanistan.” National Journal (November 11, 2010). Emailed from Mr. Josh Foust on Friday, November 12, 2010.

¹³⁰ Dan Green has worked as a political advisor and tribal engagement officer in Afghanistan.

¹³¹ Dan Green, “Going Tribal: Enlisting Afghanistan’s Tribes.” (Small Wars Journal), 2.

¹³² Ken Guest et al. “The Tribal Path: A Better Alternative.” (Small Wars Journal, 2010), 5.

¹³³ Cathell, 19-20.

at the province-wide level¹³⁴ and can enhance the effectiveness of tribal security forces.¹³⁵ Both Bernie McMahon and John Cathell support assistance and development projects for tribes.¹³⁶ Finally, Dr. Nabi Misdaq, a Pashtun CAOCL consultant, argues that tribal system is strong in Eastern Afghanistan, along the Hindu Kush.¹³⁷

Advocates must account for current Pashtun tribal weaknesses. Johnson and Mason contend that, although weakened, it is not dead. The system remains inherently resistant to change, and is culturally resilient.¹³⁸ It can overcome the weaknesses imposed by the Communist regime, Taliban rule, and current systematic efforts to kill tribal leaders by Al-Qaeda and the Taliban.¹³⁹ In contrast, Joshua Foust, a former researcher for the Human Terrain System, disagrees with the idea of a tribe. He focuses on the difficulty of defining a Pashtun tribe. Studying Afghan solidarity groups is more useful.¹⁴⁰ In assessing these arguments, the academic evidence from anthropologists and from HTS does not support the idea of strong Pashtun tribes, capable of collective action.

¹³⁴ Dan Green, 2.

¹³⁵ Ken Guest et al., 5.

¹³⁶ McMahon, 20. and Cathell, 19.

¹³⁷ Misdaq, Interview.

¹³⁸ Thomas H. Johnson, and Chris M. Mason, "Afghanistan and the Vietnam Template.," 11.

¹³⁹ Ken Guest, et al., 6.

¹⁴⁰ Joshua Foust, "Gameplanning a Solution *In Medias Res.*"

Arguments based on personal experience

Strong arguments for tribal engagement often stem from personal experiences. This is common among Special Forces soldiers who live amidst, and identify with, the local Pashtun people.

Jim Gant served as a Special Forces officer in Eastern Afghanistan in 2003. His monograph, *One Tribe at a Time*, powerfully argues that engaging Pashtun tribes is the most effective method in combating Taliban.¹⁴¹ This provides local legitimate governance - the one chance at victory.¹⁴² Other Special Forces officers have reached similar conclusions, also based on personal experiences: “tribal engagement is arguably the most important aspect of the COIN effort in Afghanistan.”¹⁴³ I assess this argument as valid. Either the Special Forces officers are lying, or they successfully conducted tribal engagement. I am not sure whether they engaged with a tribe, or a solidarity group. I disagree with replicating this model throughout Afghanistan.

Experientialism constitutes a form of selection bias in shaping military thinking.¹⁴⁴ It arises from attempts to universalize personal experiences gained by working with Pashtun tribes or peoples. Officers may develop broader operational strategies which seek to reproduce their previously successful, but narrowly applicable, tactical experiences. In rural Eastern Afghanistan,

¹⁴¹ Jim Gant, One “One Tribe at a Time: The Way Forward.” ([Small Wars Journal](http://smallwarsjournal.com/events/tew/docs/gantew.pdf) <http://smallwarsjournal.com/events/tew/docs/gantew.pdf>), 1.

¹⁴² Thomas H. Johnson, and Chris M. Mason, “Afghanistan and the Vietnam Template,” 7.

¹⁴³ Darin J. Blatt, et al. “Tribal Engagement in Afghanistan.” [Special Warfare](http://www.soc.mil/swcs/swmag/09Jan.pdf) (Vol 22: Issue 1, January-February 2009), 18-26. <http://www.soc.mil/swcs/swmag/09Jan.pdf>

¹⁴⁴ Foust, “Gameplanning a Solution *In Medias Res*.”

idealized *Pashtunwali* may still exist, where tribes perhaps constitute the primary solidarity groups. Experience gained in this environment is not necessarily transferable to the rest of Afghanistan.

Arguments based on the Kabul government's ineffectiveness

These arguments contrast the central state government with more effective local control. Advocates for local control often employ idealized *Pashtunwali*. These arguments address a real problem: the inability (or undesirability) of the central government in establishing security, legal services, or governance. This creates an unresolved dilemma for American security planners – strengthening a potentially corrupt state with poor leadership, or strengthening local forces, potentially accelerating Afghan fragmentation.

Security: *Pashtunwali* offers hope to advocates of de-centralized security. Seth Jones and Arturo Munoz utilize idealized *Pashtunwali*. In *Afghanistan's Local War: Building Local Defense Forces*, they devote 12 of 97 pages to *Pashtunwali's* importance for developing local security forces.¹⁴⁵ This includes their recommendation to establish local self defense forces, formed through a collective decision making processes, but capable only of defending the local community.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Seth Jones and Arturo Munoz. "Afghanistan's Local War: Building Local Defense Forces," 21-32.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 28-32.

Legal system: John Cathell contends that *Pashtunwali* is a functioning legal system.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, Johnson and Mason claim that Pashtun tribal areas are alternately governed, with group consensus decisions resolving 95% of disputes.¹⁴⁸ This contrasts with the corrupt and ineffective official state justice system.¹⁴⁹

Governance: Thomas Johnson and Chris Mason believe that expanding the reach of the Afghan government is the wrong solution to current security problems.¹⁵⁰ Likewise, Akbar S. Ahmed thinks that increased contact with the Pakistani state will bring greater corruption and misrule to the Pashtun tribes.¹⁵¹ Experts are concerned over the consequences and feasibility of strong, centralized Afghan state.¹⁵² Expanding the reach of weak and corrupt government may cause further instability in local areas.

Unresolved dilemma: Engaging Pashtun tribes may provide political stability. It could give a voice to Pashtun tribes at multiple levels, possibly preventing further center-periphery tensions.¹⁵³ A possible solution lies in creating tribal militias, but tying them to the state.¹⁵⁴ This might limit tensions between the center (Kabul) and the periphery (local leaders).¹⁵⁵ Local empowerment must

¹⁴⁷ Cathell, 9-10.

¹⁴⁸ Johnson and Mason "Afghanistan and the Vietnam Template," 9-10.

¹⁴⁹ Seth Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2010), 81.

¹⁵⁰ Johnson and Mason. "Afghanistan and the Vietnam Template," 10.

¹⁵¹ Ahmed, Interview.

¹⁵² Foust, Interview. Barfield, Interview.

¹⁵³ Gant, 1.

¹⁵⁴ Green, 3.

¹⁵⁵ Stern, slide 6.

also consider other sources of power in Afghanistan.¹⁵⁶ For example, warlords might seek to undermine newly empowered tribes.¹⁵⁷

I agree with concerns stemming from the central government's incompetence. However, I am not sure that the U.S. military can successfully empower local forces, and I believe that the central government will undermine these efforts. This argument, unlike ones utilizing tribes or *Pashtunwali*, possesses broad explanatory power and highlights an unpleasant strategic choice: supporting local forces (possible warlords) that undermine central authority, or backing a corrupt government that alienates many locals.

Past and current efforts at local empowerment

Between 2006 and 2008, the Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP) existed as a local defense force. According to Mathieu Lefevre, it was not a successful program.¹⁵⁸ Current efforts focus on building an Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3) in Wardak province, under U.S. Special Forces supervision.¹⁵⁹ Possible problems with the program include Taliban infiltration, and a former Taliban commander serving as the unit leader.¹⁶⁰ I cannot accurately assess past or current local security force efforts. They are either too few in number or too recent to make any determinations.

¹⁵⁶ Small Wars Journal, "Considerations for Tribal Engagement: A Summary of the Tribal Engagement Workshop, 2010, 2.

¹⁵⁷ Dan Green, 8.

¹⁵⁸ Mathieu Lefevre, "Days of the Living Dead," ([Afghanistan Analysts Network](http://aan-afghanistan.com/index.asp?id=700), September 3, 2010). <http://aan-afghanistan.com/index.asp?id=700>

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

Alternative explanations

There are two important alternative explanations for the tribal engagement debate. First, the U.S. military might be seeking a “magic” bullet that can reverse recent Taliban successes. If the American military could somehow “reprogram” tribes, they could be activated to fight and defeat the Taliban. This explanation merits inclusion in the policy implications.

The second explanation is that the U.S. military seeks any program that permits a phased withdrawal, with dignity, over the next five years. This is possible, but unlikely. I believe that interest in Afghan tribal engagement stems from the success in Iraq. By replicating this strategy, it may offer similar results.

Chapter 6 – The British Colonial Legacy

Introduction and significant conclusions

The evidence strongly refutes the hypothesis that the American military incorporates utilizes British colonial thinking when considering *Pashtunwali*. Joshua Foust directly states that the “U.S. military does not have a collective understanding of what happened in FATA under British rule.”¹⁶¹ This conclusion strongly contradicts my initial assumptions.

Limited evidence found

William S. MacCallister’s advice on frontier political-military engagement would seem familiar to a Waziristan Political Agent in 1930. His tenets include

¹⁶¹ Foust, Interview.

managing local conditions without attempting to solve local problems, employing local allies to gain success, and most reflective of British policy, simultaneously imposing identity and grievance to control the local population.¹⁶² His four strategies similarly reflect the past: picking sides in conflicts, buying sides in conflicts, exploiting local conflicts through prolongation, or a hybrid approach.¹⁶³ However, MacCallister never directly cites the British colonial experience. He only describes comparable methods.

Matt Matthews specifically examined British frontier warfare from 1849-1947. He offers the following tactical lessons for modern U.S. forces: maintaining high ground¹⁶⁴ and employing armored vehicles against Pashtun tribesmen.¹⁶⁵ He cautions against training tribesmen, as the British trained Mehsuds and Wazirs, only to later fight them.¹⁶⁶ He recommends developing specialized training and manuals for Afghanistan.¹⁶⁷

Andrew M. Roe wrote *Waging War in Waziristan: The British Struggle in the Land of Bin Laden, 1849-1947*. This book is primarily a history of British military

¹⁶² William S. MacCallister, "Some Considerations for Planning and Executing a Military-Political Engagement in Afghanistan." (*Small Wars Journal*. 2010), 3.

<http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/427-mccallister.pdf>

¹⁶³ Ibid, 4.

¹⁶⁴ Matthews, Matt M. "An Ever Present Danger: A Concise History of British Military Operations in the North-West Frontier, 1849-1947." (Occasional Paper 33, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, June 2010), 66-67.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 67-68.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 65-66.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 69.

operations; nevertheless, it recommends adopting a hybrid British colonial model, involving local control coupled to cash payments for good behavior.¹⁶⁸

Johnson and Mason,¹⁶⁹ Matthew and Roe all reference General Andrew Skeen's book *Passing It On: Short Talks on Tribal Fighting in the Northwest Frontier of India*.¹⁷⁰ This was the only evidence I found of a British colonial military text with multiple citations. I assess that the U.S. military is not utilizing British colonial military thinking when considering the current situation in either Pakistan or Afghanistan.

Chapter 7 – Policy Implications

Re-tribalizing unlikely among Pashtuns

Idealized *Pashtunwali* assumes that tribes are functional, existing institutions. Within Afghanistan and Pakistan, Pashtun de-tribalization has been an ongoing historical process. The overwhelmingly scholarly consensus rejects the tribal model, instead emphasizing solidarity groups. Chapter 3 established that settlement, war, and globalization have permanently altered the Pashtun social environment. Furthermore, idealized *Pashtunwali* can only exist in conditions of deprivation – reestablishing poverty is not normally U.S. policy.

¹⁶⁸ Andrew M. Roe, *Waging War in Waziristan*, (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 229-240.

¹⁶⁹ Thomas H. Johnson and Chris Mason. "No Sign Until the Burst of Fire," *International Security* (VOL 32, No.4: Spring 2008: 41-77), 41.

¹⁷⁰ I could not find this book. However, in 2009 I read Maj. David Kemis-Betty's copy.

Barnett Rubin appropriately titles his work *“The Fragmentation of Afghanistan.”* This implies the dissolution of traditional structures into a myriad of smaller groups. Older social structures, including honor-bound tribes and feudal land-owners, have lost power to new structures including the Taliban, patronage networks, political parties, narcotics cartels, and other business associations. According to Rubin, re-assembling the old order compares to “making an aquarium out of fish soup.”¹⁷¹ The U.S. military cannot recreate the past, even with *Pashtunwali*. It must squarely face the present. That requires making an unpleasant choice.

Making an unpleasant choice – local or national?

The U.S. must either strengthen the center or the periphery – it cannot do both simultaneously. Seth Jones illustrates this dilemma. In 2008, he wrote that “the weakness of Afghanistan’s central government and the role of regional warlords and tribal militias posed a significant challenge to the counterinsurgency campaign.”¹⁷² By 2010, he writes a monograph which advocates “leveraging local communities...to establish security and help mobilize rural Afghans against the Taliban and other insurgents.”¹⁷³ Having spent a decade building a “strong” state, the U.S. is now turning to local defense forces. This creates other problems. HTS believes that 80% of local

¹⁷¹ Rubin, Interview.

¹⁷² Jones, Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan, 79.

¹⁷³ Jones, Afghanistan’s Local War: Building Local Defense Forces, ix.

conflicts within Afghanistan occur within groups, rather than between groups.¹⁷⁴

They often stem from cousins competing over limited resources, especially land. Local defense forces *might* combat the Taliban. They might also participate in conflicts of little importance to the United States.

The alternative option is building a strong state. Unfortunately, well-intentioned development efforts will likely accelerate the further fragmentation of the Afghan state. For example, in 2010, the U.S. military paid Afghan contractors \$14 billion dollars, in a country with a reported GDP of \$13 billion dollars.¹⁷⁵ This money is super-charging a state system that has failed three times in the past century.¹⁷⁶

American military cultural competence

The American military has developed institutions that can provide cultural knowledge. This includes detailed knowledge of social networks (HTS), operational cultural awareness (CAOCL), and products for junior soldiers (MCIA). Yet, in 2009, the senior intelligence officer in Afghanistan stated that the “vast intelligence apparatus is unable to answer fundamental questions about the environment in which U.S. and allied forces operate and the people they seek to persuade.”¹⁷⁷ What explains this disconnect?

¹⁷⁴ U.S. Army, “Pashtun Tribes,” 17.

¹⁷⁵ Rubin, Interview.

¹⁷⁶ Barfield, Interview.

¹⁷⁷ Flynn, Michael T. MG, USA and Pottinger, Matt. Capt, USMC. “Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan.” Voices from the Field, Center for a New American Security, January 2010.

First, the U.S. military's internal incentive structure rewards killing enemy combatants, but does not appreciate local situational awareness.¹⁷⁸ The commander who heroically fights will earn promotions and peer respect. The leader who understands and defuses local tensions may not. Killing the enemy should remain the *raison d'être* for the combat units of the Army and Marine Corps. The tension between warfighter and cultural expertise will persist until the military creates hybrid units, designed to achieve explicitly political aims with minimum force under local conditions. Until then, battlefield intelligence will focus on the enemy, and providing enemy analyses to friendly combat units.

Second, the military has not systematically sought expert help in understanding local cultures. Thomas Barfield, President of the American Institute for Afghan Studies, was first contacted by the military in August 2009.¹⁷⁹ Robert Nichols, a leading Pashtun historian, has only received e-mail or telephone queries from military officers.¹⁸⁰ This violates a decade old Executive Order directing the military to contact cultural experts.¹⁸¹ The limited number of true regional experts only compounds this problem. Higher level commands must aggressively seek this expert knowledge. At lower levels, a dedicated cadre of military officers, soldiers, and Defense Department civilians

http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/AfghanIntel_Flynn_Jan2010_code507_voices.pdf

¹⁷⁸ Johnson and Mason "Afghanistan and the Vietnam Template," 8.

¹⁷⁹ Barfield, Interview.

¹⁸⁰ Robert Nichols, E-mail.

¹⁸¹ Foust, Interview.

should conduct human terrain analysis.¹⁸² This requires establishing a permanent career field focused on human cultural intelligence. These efforts will improve both HTS and CAOCL.

The limits of cultural understanding

Academics rightfully accuse tribal engagement advocates of misusing concepts such as tribe and *Pashtunwali*.¹⁸³ This was noted by Joshua Foust at the conclusion of the Tribal Engagement Workshop.¹⁸⁴ Military officers routinely confuse local and tribal, and do not define the concept of a tribe. These concerns, while valid for anthropologists, are less relevant to military officers who seek an effective, yet simple, understanding of local dynamics.

CAOCL issues *Operational Pashtunwali* cards which are not anthropologically accurate. Yet, the cards are effective and appreciated by deployed Marines. Special Forces officers have conducted hazardous “tribal” engagement missions. They may assume they are working with tribes, but perhaps don’t truly understand the actual local solidarity groups. Yet, the officers report success. An effective understanding is not always derived from anthropologically correct principles.

Deployed military personnel must rapidly learn how to operate within the local culture. *Pashtunwali* provides an easy, rapidly understood, introduction to

¹⁸² Barfield, Interview.

¹⁸³ Christian Bleuer, “Petraeus and McChrystal Drink Major Gant’s Snake Oil. Ghosts of Alexander. January 18, 2010. <http://easterncampaign.wordpress.com/2010/01/18/petraeus-and-mcchrystal-drink-major-gants-snake-oil/>

¹⁸⁴ Foust, “Gameplanning a Solution *In Medias Res*.”

Pashtun culture. It is not the cultural objective, but the cultural point of departure for soldiers. During a deployment, soldiers should develop a more intuitive and granular knowledge of the local environment. Ideally, this would include the multiple solidarity groups within the area of operations. My research did not find any other model of Afghan behavior that is simple, easily understood, and that accounts for both individual and collective behavior.

Structural problems in the military that prevent tribal engagement

Within the U.S. military structural problems exist that will likely prevent effective, widespread, tribal engagement. First, only the U.S. Army Special Forces consistently live, fight, and work among local forces.¹⁸⁵ This is a core requirement of the branch. Special Forces cannot deploy enough teams to conduct effective tribal engagement. Until other branches or services convert to this paradigm, only Special Forces can conduct sustained tribal engagement.

Second, this conversion is unlikely. The military bureaucracy is unable to change rapidly to meet new requirements.¹⁸⁶ CAOCL did not come into existence until five years after the invasion of Afghanistan, while HTS required six years. Similarly, the military did not seek out Thomas Barfield's expertise for eight years. Finally, the conventional Army is unwilling to risk fully integrating military forces into Pashtun tribes.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Author's personal knowledge of U.S. Army Special Forces.

¹⁸⁶ Foust, "Gameplanning a Solution *In Medias Res*."

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

Third, military personnel policies prevent effective tribal engagement. Most units conduct yearlong deployments to Afghanistan. Unfortunately, building Afghan relations requires extended personal contact in a society with very long time horizons.¹⁸⁸ Jim Gant emphasizes that successful tribal engagement requires building “real” relationships.¹⁸⁹ Yet, each year, Afghans must interact with a “brand new” and inexperienced American partner. Thomas Barfield compares the American approach unfavorably to the British political agent system. Political agents served a career among Pashtun tribes. They gained long term experience while establishing long term relationships.¹⁹⁰ Feroz Khan notes that political agents lived among the tribes, and established reputations stemming from their martial and diplomatic qualities.¹⁹¹

Seeking the magic cultural bullet

This policy implication stems from the alternative explanation offered in Chapter 5 – *Pashtunwali* and the Debate on Tribal Engagement. The U.S. military partially views *Pashtunwali* as a “magic bullet” to fix complicated problems.¹⁹² This can result in unrealistic thinking. Dan Green recommends utilizing *Cheega* call to action councils to disseminate information operations

¹⁸⁸ Marc Tyrell, “Tribal Engagement Workshop: The Time Dimension.” April 16, 2010. <http://marctyrell.com/2010/04/16/tribal-engagement-workshop-the-time-dimension/>

¹⁸⁹ Jim Gant and William S. MacCallister. “Tribal Engagement: The Jirga and the Shura.” (Small Wars Journal. 2010), 5.

¹⁹⁰ Barfield, Interview.

¹⁹¹ Feroz Khan, Interview.

¹⁹² Barfield, Interview.

themes to tribal men.¹⁹³ *Cheega* is rarely mentioned within the literature. It is likely a minor aspect of *Pashtunwali* and not universally applicable. Surface familiarity with *Pashtunwali* produces generalizations and stereotyping. Claiming that “*Pashtunwali* is a culture of permanent insurgency”¹⁹⁴ sends a confusing message. Similarly, “They will respect you for the man you are. They will work with you because of the money”¹⁹⁵ plays into traditional and simplistic concepts of how and why Pashtuns behave.

Pashtunwali is not a magic bullet. It does not offer a blueprint to control tribes, conduct local engagement, or develop a war winning strategy. The U.S. military must understand the difference between two possible uses of *Pashtunwali*: first, as a tool for developing a baseline understanding of Pashtun culture, and second, as a principle for formulating an Afghan tribal engagement policy. The former offers promise, while the latter ignores the cumulative effects of war, de-tribalization, and development.

Chapter 8 – Policy Recommendations

Military cultural learning organizations

Cultural learning organizations must exist prior to conflict. Bureaucratic inertia prevents their rapid creation following the outbreak of war. Eventually, the United States will withdraw from Afghanistan and Iraq. Budget planners

¹⁹³ Green, 5.

¹⁹⁴ Stern, slide 3.

¹⁹⁵ Stern, slide 25.

may eliminate both HTS and CAOCL. This is less likely if both organizations consist of specially trained, permanently assigned military officers. Permanency will also establish institutional procedures, norms, and policies. HTS and CAOCL provide important cultural knowledge that will enhance U.S. military knowledge of local populations. This will likely matter in future conflicts.

Creating a corps of rapidly deployable human terrain analysts is necessary. For HTS, U.S. Army officers can join following Career Field Designation at the 7th year of commissioned service.¹⁹⁶ This would ensure a more mature and experienced officer population. For CAOCL, the U.S. Marine Corps should adopt the same policies that currently exist for Marine Corps Foreign Area Officers: rotating assignments between CAOCL and basic branch.¹⁹⁷ By permanently assigning the civilian analysts, the U.S. military would avoid the need to repetitively train and familiarize civilian personnel with military customs. Enlisted military personnel should be drawn from military intelligence career fields – both human terrain awareness and tactical intelligence use similar methods and procedures in preparing information.

Military officers permanently assigned to HTS or CAOCL cannot acquire the same cultural expertise as an area expert. They can, however, identify those experts and seek their advice. Regularly scheduled conferences may facilitate trust and improve military access to regional cultural expertise. Both CAOCL

¹⁹⁶ Author's personal knowledge of CFD procedures for commissioned U.S. Army officers.

¹⁹⁷ Author's personal knowledge of U.S.M.C. FAO training and assignment procedures.

and HTS should leverage digital technology to send detailed reports to commanders and staffs at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. At the strategic level, they should seek advice from civilian area experts.

Requirements for a serious tribal engagement policy

A serious tribal engagement strategy will require both specialized personnel requirements and a hybrid political organization. It must balance between state and local actors. It requires a long term U.S. commitment to Afghanistan. This policy aims to employ minimum force to achieve political ends, backed by detailed and focused intelligence from HTS.

Tribal, or local engagement, merits a separate personnel organization, imitating the British political agent model. It should recruit from both military and civilian sources, and from both Afghan and American personnel. To ensure a long-term commitment, tours should be no less than five years, after completing extensive Pashto language and cultural training. Married officers may permanently station their families in Kabul. A lengthy assignment focused on a local area would establish the long-term relationships required for success.

Most importantly, this program must represent the combined authority of the government in Kabul and the U.S. military. The deployed officer should fully control the incentives and punishments offered by the U.S. military and the Afghan government to the local people. Absent this unity, tribal engagement may not work, as local and national purposes remain at cross-purposes. The alternatives to this hybrid model will either empower the central government or

local forces. Establishing and maintaining the balance between center and periphery remains the historical political challenge of Afghanistan. A successful tribal strategy should not threaten this balance.

Tactical *Pashtunwali* for the U.S. military

Pashtunwali, despite its flaws, offers deploying soldiers a blueprint for understanding Pashtun people. Tactical *Pashtunwali* aims to provide local awareness to 19 year old riflemen. It does not, and cannot, substitute for the detailed cultural information required by planners and commanders. Instead, it provides a simple model of *Pashtun* behavior. The actual accuracy of the model is not important. Instead, the model serves four key functions for U.S. soldiers and Marines: forming a base of knowledge, building confidence, moderating American behavior, and earning local Pashtun trust.

Tactical *Pashtunwali* gives soldiers a general idea of the customs, courtesies, and behaviors of Pashtuns. From this base, a more effective understanding can develop on the actual behavior of the local people. It serves as the gateway to more complex knowledge. With this admittedly inexact model, soldiers may gain the confidence to interact with local populations. Confidence also encourages soldiers to take risks in interacting with the population. Without risk taking or confidence gained from tactical *Pashtunwali*, American soldiers may use security measures that provoke or alienate the local populations. By understanding *Pashtunwali*, American soldiers may display empathy for the local population. This may reduce fears and anxiety about the

“other” – the Pashtun people. Finally, if Pashtuns sense that American soldiers are genuinely trying to understand the local people through the lens of *Pashtunwali*, mutual trust may result.

Tactical *Pashtunwali* should be disseminated to junior soldiers assigned to combat units. The military should continue producing and widely distributing laminated culture cards with simple language phrases. Hands-on learning is also effective. The military should develop a standardized block of training that includes role-playing the different actors within Pashtun society (tribal leader, religious leader, land-owner, insurgent, etc.). Both deploying units and the formalized military schools can incorporate this training into their preparations and curricula.

Tactical *Pashtunwali* is not a substitute for rigorous thinking about the local population. Only by understanding the local dynamics through alternate lenses, including solidarity groups, can military planners formulate effective policies that account for local social conditions. Accurate and detailed information from HTS should drive planning and engagement with the Pashtun people. This includes any tribal engagement policies.

Appendix A – Pashtunwali glossary with explanations

This glossary contains terms frequently associated with *Pashtunwali* and often employed in arguments over tribal engagement. For clarity, this paper deliberately did not use them. They will prove necessary should readers seek additional information.

Terms referencing individual attributes:

<i>Badal</i>	Revenge. This often assumes inflated importance in popular western understandings
<i>Melamastia</i>	Hospitality. Always required, even for enemies.
<i>Nanawati</i>	Seeking forgiveness for wrongs.
<i>Ghayrat</i>	Personal honor.
<i>Namus</i>	Defense of female honor.
<i>Aql</i>	Reason, in opposition to <i>Tura</i> . Rational problem solving.
<i>Tura</i>	Sword, in opposition to <i>Aql</i> . Force based problem solving.

Terms referencing collective attributes:

<i>Arbakai</i>	Warriors who maintain tribal or local order during peace. Advocates of tribal engagement aim to raise <i>arbakai</i> .
<i>Lashkar</i>	Tribal militia formed during war.
<i>Jirga</i>	Consensus group decision making process. <i>Loya Jirga</i> is at the national level. <i>Jirgas</i> can be convened at different levels.
<i>Qawm</i>	Solidarity group. Best understood as peer group or kinship network. Useful in understanding social relationships. Arabic.

Actors within Pashtunwali:

<i>Khan</i>	Landowner, usually refers to settled Pashtuns.
<i>Malik</i>	Tribal headman, usually refers to non-settled Pashtuns.
<i>Mullah</i>	Religious leader, status varies.

Group dynamics and collective terms:

<i>Nang</i>	Honor. Maintaining personal honor is often considered the basic principle of <i>Pashtunwali</i> . Also implies non-settled or tribal Pashtuns.
<i>Qalang</i>	Taxes. Also implies settled or non-tribal Pashtuns; contrast to <i>Nang</i> Pashtuns.
<i>Taboorwali</i>	Cousin hatred. Resource competition over immediate resources forces kin to fight, leading to on-going intra-family conflicts.
<i>Tor</i>	Literally, the color black. Refers to disputes over female honor. Like <i>Tarboorwali</i> , a source of conflict.

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