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TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN?
An evaluation and comparison of the Clear, Hold, Build and the Ink Spot counter-insurgency approaches.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

The Clear, Hold, Build (CHB) concept has become a popular counterinsurgency (COIN) approach since its extensive application by American forces in Iraq beginning in 2005. The US Army *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (FM) 3-24 describes CHB as an effective COIN approach, involving offensive, defensive and stability operations through three progressive phases. CHB has been used by military commanders, including Australian and Canadian, to describe operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Canadian Army has recently published its own *Counter-Insurgency Operations* manual that does not mention CHB. Instead, Canadian doctrine provides the Ink Spot concept as an effective COIN approach. This COIN concept is a derivation of the traditional *tache d'huile* or Oil Spot concept, and the Canadian description is heavily influenced by recent experience in Afghanistan. Some analysts have argued that CHB is simply another name for the Oil Spot approach. However, by examining the doctrinal descriptions and various applications of these two popular COIN approaches, it becomes apparent that although they share some similarities, there are some fundamental differences in the two approaches. CHB tends to be viewed as an enemy-centric COIN approach while the Ink Spot concept is considered more of a population-centric approach since it involves more indigenous government consultation and representation.

This paper examines CHB and the Ink Spot, and indicates that they are two different COIN concepts. This paper also suggests that CHB has become insufficient and has evolved into an approach more similar to the Ink Spot. Finally, this paper offers that Canadian Army doctrine is incomplete without CHB or a variation of this popular COIN approach, and its current description of the Ink Spot should be revised.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

"There are two ways to do counterinsurgency. You can come in and cordon off a city, and level it, à la Falluja. Or you can come in, get to know the city, the culture, establish relationships with people, and then you can go in and eliminate individuals instead of whole city blocks."[1]
– Major Jack McLaughlin, US Army, 3rd Armoured Cavalry Regiment, Tal Afar, Iraq, 2005.

This quote from an experienced United States (US) Army officer generally

summarizes two common approaches to current counterinsurgency (COIN) operations in

Iraq and Afghanistan. One is focused on the insurgents and involves a very direct and

offensive application of military power while the other is focused on the population and

requires a more cooperative and methodical approach. The US Army *Counterinsurgency*

Field Manual (FM) 3-24 was written amidst ongoing campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan

and proved to be a catalyst for redefining the American approach to COIN. FM 3-24

emphasizes that there is no single COIN approach suitable for all types of insurgencies.

Rather it indicates that there may be several approaches to fighting a COIN campaign, the

details of which will depend upon the type of insurgency, the grievances among the

actors involved, as well as many other variables, such as the environment and available

resources.[2] History has demonstrated that every insurgency is unique, and requires a

different approach or strategy. Indeed, it is impossible to "completely superimpose a

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[1] George Packer, "Letter from Iraq: The Lesson of Tal Afar," *The New Yorker*, Vol. 82 (10 April 2006): 54.

[2] Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 174.

strategy that worked in one counterinsurgency environment with its own unique

parameters on another counterinsurgency environment."[3]

FM 3-24 was a product of the US military's "collective understanding of

insurgency and ongoing experience in Iraq."[4] The manual was published to address a

lack of a comprehensive doctrine, and serves as a "foundation document for tactical and

unit-specific doctrine on COIN and stability operations."[5] Its publication generated

discussion and unified thought within the US Army, and was a key factor in the change

of US strategy in Iraq in 2007. The Canadian military has recently attempted to address a

similar doctrine deficit with the development of its own COIN manual published in

December 2008.[6] The importance of such doctrinal publications has become more

prevalent as a result of recent coalition operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the search

for a sustainable solution to these modern insurgencies. Doctrine publications are

important for militaries because they provide a baseline for the conduct of operations and

serve as a collective understanding of the operational art. However, doctrine should

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[3] Paul Melshen, "Mapping Out a Counterinsurgency Campaign Plan: Critical Considerations in Counterinsurgency Campaigning," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 108, no. 4 (December 2007): 667.

[4] Frank G. Hoffman, "Neo-Classical Counterinsurgency?" *Parameters* 37, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 71.

[5] James S. Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," in *Dimensions of Counter-insurgency: Applying Experience to Practice*, ed. Tim Benbow and Rod Thornton, 121-136 (New York: Routledge, 2008), 126.

[6] Department of National Defence, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 13 December 2008).

neither be designed to be prescriptive, nor serve as dogma. Rather, doctrine should provide a "bridge from theory to practice, based on an understanding of experience."[7]

The "Clear, Hold, Build" (CHB) concept has become a popular COIN approach among allied nations. FM 3-24 offers CHB as one of several possible COIN approaches for US forces, while the Australian Army has gone so far as to declare CHB as its "single approach to COIN."[8] The concept itself is generally influenced by a combination of traditional COIN theorists and practitioners, including David Galula and his eight-step COIN strategy, which sees military forces defeating an insurgent threat, separating the population from the insurgents, and re-establishing some form of governance and stability in order to defeat the insurgency.[9] CHB begins with security forces controlling key areas and then gradually increasing the level of security and influence in order to expand the area of control. The sequence of this approach is to "clear, hold and build one village, area, or city – and then reinforce success by expanding to other areas."[10] This COIN method has been applied by American forces in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) [11], and by American and Canadian forces in Afghanistan under both

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[7] Alexander Alderson, "US COIN Doctrine and Practice: An Ally's Perspective," *Parameters* 37, no. 4 (Winter 2007-08): 36.

[8] Australian Army Headquarters, *Land Warfare Doctrine 3-0-1: Counterinsurgency Developing Doctrine* (Australian Army HQ: Canberra, 19 September 2008), 3-6.

[9] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 55-56.

[10] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 174.

[11] Matthew M. McCreary, "Military Awakening: Clear, Hold, Build and the Development of Awakening Councils and Iraqi Police," *Infantry*, Vol. 97, no. 4 (July/August 2008): 31.

Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and under NATO as part of the International

Security Assistance Force (ISAF).[12]

The recently published Canadian *Counter-Insurgency Operations* manual does

not specifically mention CHB as a suitable operational concept for the Canadian Forces.

Instead it professes a comprehensive approach, utilizing all aspects of the Canadian

Government and non-government organizations through the application of the "Ink Spot"

concept.[13] The Ink Spot concept was first developed in the early 20th century by French

General Hubert Lyautey, and was originally referred to as the *tache d'huile*, (oil spot)

technique. While similar to CHB, the Ink Spot approach involves continual interaction

and cooperation with the HN government representatives at local as well as national

levels, and sees military forces concentrating on the provision of social services, rather

than the aggressive use of offensive combat power to defeat an insurgency.[14] Despite the

omission of CHB in current Canadian military doctrine, it is frequently used by analysts

and the Canadian military to describe Canadian operations in Afghanistan, at both the

tactical and operational levels. [15] Some analysts have offered that CHB is simply another

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[12] Seth G. Jones, "Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan," *RAND Counterinsurgency Study*, Vol. 4 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), 93-95.

[13] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations…*, 5-22.

[14] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations…*, 3-10.

[15] Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, *Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan*, (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services, 2008), 13. This information has also been gained from the author's personal experience as a sub-unit commander in Afghanistan in 2006 as part of Task Force Orion under OEF, as well as time spent at the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command (CEFCOM) Headquarters as a member of Regional Operations 2 (Afghanistan).

name for the Ink Spot approach.[16] Although there are some similarities between the two concepts, there are some fundamental differences which significantly alter a military's involvement in these COIN approaches. CHB stresses offensive and defensive military actions to defeat insurgents, while supporting non-military activities to gain the support of the population. The Ink Spot concept begins with a less aggressive and more cooperative approach with host nation (HN) government agencies in order to produce tangible improvements to the local population's well-being.[17] Consequently, CHB tends to be viewed as a more aggressive COIN approach.

It can be argued that the Canadian military has been applying the CHB approach in Afghanistan, within the framework of the Ink Spot theory through the development of the Afghan Development Zone (ADZ) in Kandahar.[18] Although Canadian military COIN doctrine provides support for the Ink Spot concept, it does not provide guidance on the concept of CHB. One of the central themes of FM 3-24 is that military forces need to learn and adapt from their operational experiences, and combine this experience with their doctrinal foundations. In order to be effective, doctrine "should be written for and meet the needs of the practitioner".[19] If CHB continues to be a popular COIN approach among our allies, and continues to be applied by the Canadian military in Afghanistan, then it should be reflected in Canadian military doctrine. Furthermore, in order for any

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[16] Seth G. Jones, "Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan,"…, 94.

[17] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations…*, 3-10.

[18] Lee Windsor, David Charters and Brent Wilson, *Kandahar Tour: The Turning Point in Canada's Afghan Mission* (Mississauga, ON: Wiley and Sons, 2008), 90.

[19] Alexander Alderson, "US COIN Doctrine and Practice: An Ally's Perspective,"…, 36.

COIN campaign to be successful, there must be a common understanding of the insurgency, there must be unity of effort among the interagency COIN organizations, and sufficient resources must exist to allow for effective and tangible gains to be made. The COIN strategy must be clearly understood by those involved, and must be directly related to the chosen lines of operations, such as security, governance and development. If this is not the case, and sufficient resources do not exist to support these COIN strategies, success will be rare.

The intent of this dissertation is to analyze the two COIN approaches of CHB and the Ink Spot, understand how they are interrelated, and how they have been applied in contemporary COIN campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. This analysis will begin with a brief examination of the strategic level COIN campaign design, including the development of lines of operation and how they are reflected within a COIN approach at the operational level. Chapter Two will provide a detailed analysis of the CHB concept, its strengths and weaknesses, and briefly examine how it has been applied in Iraq and Afghanistan. Chapter Three will examine the origins of the Ink Spot theory, how it has been applied in various campaigns, its strengths and weaknesses, and what separates this theory from the CHB approach. Several essential prerequisites will be offered following this analysis, along with some recommended modifications to the CHB approach. From this analysis, it will be possible to determine if the CHB concept should be adopted as part of Canada's military doctrine, and therefore included in its *Counterinsurgency Operations* manual.

CHAPTER ONE - COIN LINES OF OPERATIONS AND CAMPAIGN DESIGN

> *"A COIN campaign is conducted through a specific philosophy and set of specific principles that guide the application of combat power. It is distinctly different from the conduct of an insurgency itself, and the lines of operation within the COIN campaign must counter the lines of operation of the insurgents. Within the guiding principles, each COIN campaign must be a custom approach to the insurgency at hand."*[20]
> - DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations.*

INTRODUCTION

Campaign design involves the integration of national strategic goals with operational objectives, linked together through "thematic lines of operations" to achieve an overall end state.[21] Commanders use these lines of operations to "visualize, describe, and direct operations".[22] Given the complex nature of most insurgencies and the requirement to harness military and non-military elements within a comprehensive COIN campaign, these thematic lines of operations can assist with establishing unity of effort among the various COIN elements. By describing an operation along common lines, efforts by joint, interagency, multinational and Host Nation (HN) forces can be directed in a unified manner towards common goals or strategic objectives. These lines of operation are framed within a generally accepted common COIN philosophy, and should be derived from national policies and strategic direction. This contemporary COIN philosophy considers an insurgency as primarily a political problem, requiring substantial

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[20] Department of National Defence, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 13 December 2008), 1-3.

[21] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations*…, 1-15.

[22] Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 154.

non-military elements of power to create an enduring solution, hence a comprehensive approach. According to this philosophy, a successful COIN campaign requires the support of the populace, and the legitimacy of the campaign must be maintained throughout. Failure to do so will undermine the efforts to establish the trust and loyalty of the populace, both domestically and within the HN.[23]

Both FM 3-24 and the Canadian *Counter-Insurgency Operations* manual stress the requirement for a comprehensive approach to COIN operations. This approach involves a cooperative effort between military and non-military elements of power, working together with unity of effort, and ideally unity of purpose, to meet the strategic objectives of a COIN campaign. Although the primacy of political activities is offered as an ideal scenario, there is a common understanding that military efforts may dominate at various stages of a campaign, depending upon the various insurgent dynamics and the overall threat. Indeed, some lines of operation may be led by the military while other lines will involve the military in a supporting role with activities conducted mainly by other agencies.[24] US Army General David Petraeus recently underscored this idea when he remarked that although military action alone is not sufficient in a COIN campaign, it "is absolutely necessary, for security provides the essential foundation for the achievement of progress in all other so-called lines of operation – recognizing, of course, that progress in other areas made possible by security improvements typically contributes

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[23] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations…*, 3-1 – 3-2.

[24] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations…*, 1-15.

to further progress in the security arena".[25] FM 3-24 suggests that a COIN campaign is "a mix of offensive, defensive, and stability operations conducted along multiple lines of operations."[26] The manual also stresses that COIN operations are not the sole responsibility of military forces as they require "synchronized application of military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions."[27]

The intent of this chapter is to examine various approaches to the development of lines of operations for contemporary COIN campaigns and gain an understanding of the relationship between these lines and COIN approaches such as Clear, Hold, Build (CHB) and the Ink Spot.

THE AMERICAN APPROACH

FM 3-24 provides a representation of a COIN strategy along five key lines of operations with Information Operations (IO) as an overall backdrop (Figure 1.1). These lines of operation are closely related and represent a "conceptual category along which the HN government and the COIN force commander intend to attack the insurgent strategy and establish HN government legitimacy."[28] There is no exhaustive list of lines

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[25] David H. Petraeus, "The Future of the Alliance and the Mission in Afghanistan," remarks for Panel Discussion, *45th Munich Security Conference* (8 February 2009); available from http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2009/02/the-future-of-the-alliance-and/; Internet; accessed 18 February 2009.

[26] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, xlv.

[27] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24...*, 151.

[28] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 154.

of operations that applies to all COIN campaigns. Rather commanders must determine

which lines of operation are relevant to their specific environment and the specific nature

of the particular insurgency. General Petraeus has recently emphasized this point by

remarking that "commanders on the ground will, as always, operationalize the so-called

big ideas in ways that are appropriate for their specific situations on the ground."[29]
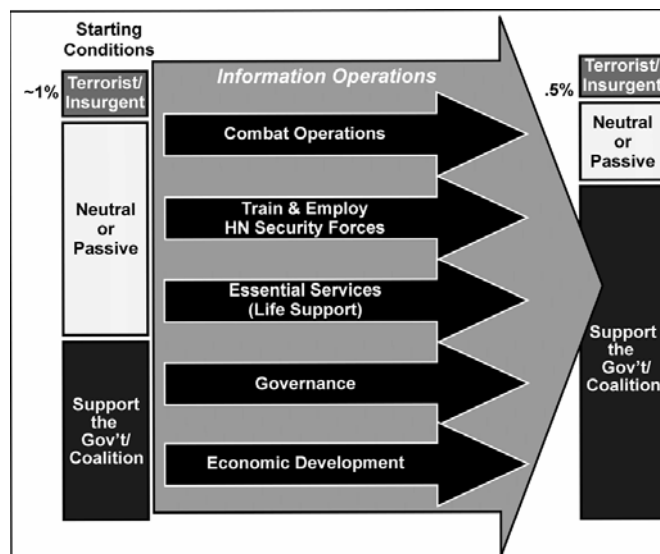
Figure 1.1 - Example of Lines of Operations for a Counterinsurgency[30]

The suggested lines of operations represented in FM 3-24 (Figure 1.1) were

derived from the writings of former COIN practitioners like David Galula, and heavily

influenced by recent US military experience in Iraq. In 2004, the US Army 1st Cavalry

Division under the command of Major General Chiarelli, developed a campaign plan

using these five lines of operations to counter the insurgent threat in Baghdad. Chiarelli

understood that in order to achieve success, his unit had to "simultaneously work along

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[29] David H. Petraeus, "The Future of the Alliance and the Mission in Afghanistan"….

[30] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*…, 155.

all five equally balanced, interconnected lines of operations."[31] Combat operations and

the training and employment of HN security forces were primarily the military's

responsibility, and were aimed at "targeting, defeating, and denying influence to the

insurgent base throughout the area of responsibility through lethal use of force."[32] The

remaining lines of operation were equally as important and saw military forces playing a

supporting role to HN government and non-military agencies. These activities were

aimed at attacking the insurgent support network and the "shadow-government attempts

of the insurgent."[33]

The Draft US Army Field Manual 3-24.2, *Tactics in Counterinsurgency,* suggests

that seven lines of operation, or lines of effort, can be applied to a COIN campaign

(Figure 1.2).[34] The main difference between this conceptualization and FM 3-24 is that

IO is considered to be a separate and distinct line of effort, rather than a backdrop to all

lines of operations. Additionally, Combat Operations are further divided into Civil

Security and Civil Control lines of effort.

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[31] Peter W. Chiarelli and Patrick R. Michealis, "Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full-Spectrum Operations," *Military Review*, Vol 85, no. 4 (July/August 2005): 7; http://www.smallwars.quantico.usmc.mil/search/articles/chiarelli.pdf; Internet; accessed 01 February 2009.

[32] Peter W. Chiarelli and Patrick R. Michealis, "Winning the Peace"…, 7.

[33] Peter W. Chiarelli and Patrick R. Michealis, "Winning the Peace"…, 12.

[34] Department of the Army. *Tactics in Counterinsurgency Field Manual 3-24.2. Draft.* (November 2008), 3-8.
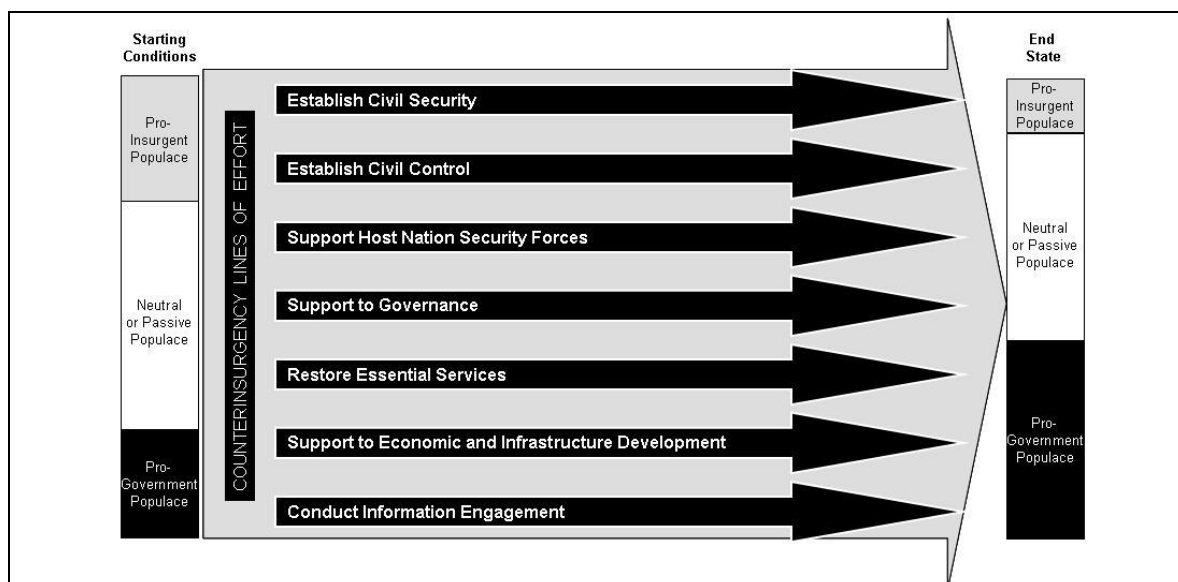
Figure 1.2 - Example of Lines of Effort for a Counterinsurgency Campaign (FM 3-24.2)[35]

In October 2007, the US State Department published an *Interim Guide* to COIN

as an effort to reinforce the necessity for a comprehensive, interagency approach.[36] This

initial guidance was revised in January 2009 with the publication of the *US Government*

Counterinsurgency Guide.[37] These US Government documents provide a broad

framework for non-military government departments and non-government agencies

involved in a COIN campaign. The documents are not meant to serve as US State

Department direction for a specific theatre of operations, but rather as a general collective

foundation for interagency cooperation. The *US Government Counterinsurgency Guide*

acknowledges the importance of FM 3-24, and provides additional guidance on the roles

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[35] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24.2…*, 3-8.

[36] US Department of State, *Counterinsurgency For U.S. Government Policy Makers: A Work in Progress*. October 2007; available on-line from http://www.usgcoin.org/library/usgdocuments/interimcounterinsurgencyguide(Oct2007).pdf; Internet; accessed 21 January 2009.

[37] US Department of State, *U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide*. January 2009; available on-line at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf; Internet; accessed 23 February 2009.

and responsibilities of government and non-government agencies in a complementary manner to the military. While the *Interim Guide* focused COIN efforts along three equally important key pillars of security, political and economic efforts (Figure 1.3), the revised *Counterinsurgency Guide* considers political strategy to be the most important element with security and economic activities playing an important but supporting role.[38]
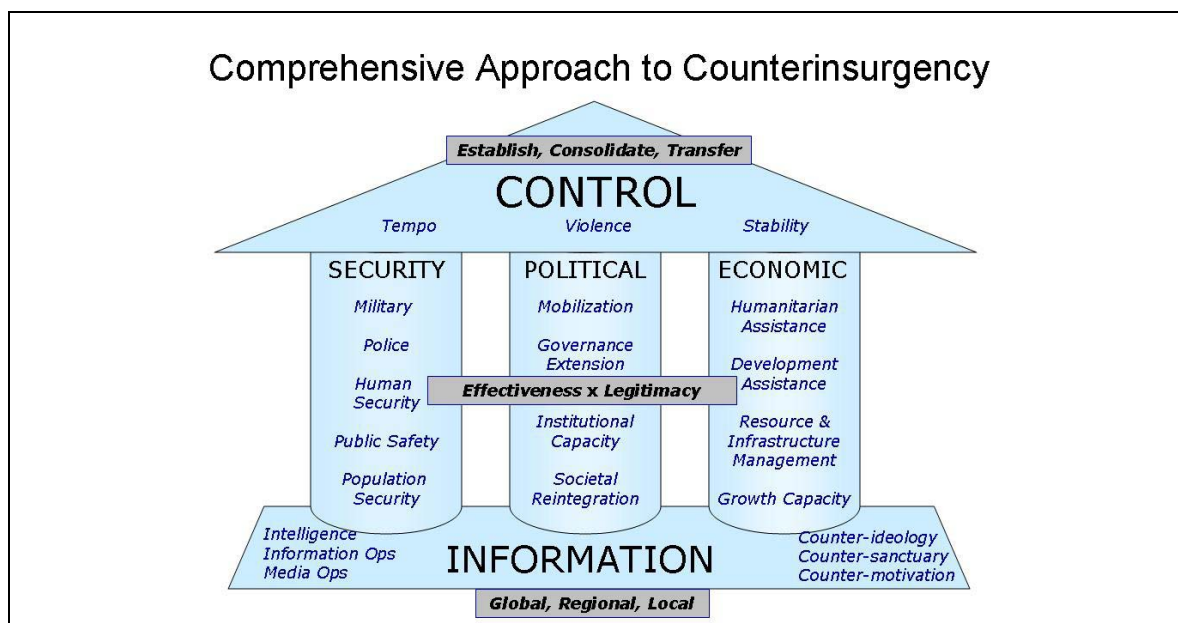
Figure 1.3 – US State Department Key Functions of a Comprehensive COIN Framework. [39]

The *US Government Counterinsurgency Guide* provides the strategic framework for the lines of operations presented in FM 3-24 (Figure 1.1) and FM 3-24.2 (Figure 1.2). These documents promote a *comprehensive approach*, and collectively work towards establishing unity of thought, purpose and effort among US government agencies.

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[38] US Department of State, *U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide…*, 17.

[39] US Department of State, *Counterinsurgency For U.S. Government Policy Makers…*, 15.

THE CANADIAN APPROACH

Like FM 3-24, the Canadian COIN manual explains the importance of lines of

operation to link objectives and centres of gravity within an overall campaign plan. The

manual describes COIN campaign planning along four lines of operations: Governance,

Security, Political Process and Reconstruction (Figure 1.4).[40]

Canadian COIN Lines of Operations

Starting Conditions → GOVERNANCE / POLITICAL PROCESS / SECURITY / DEVELOPMENT → End State
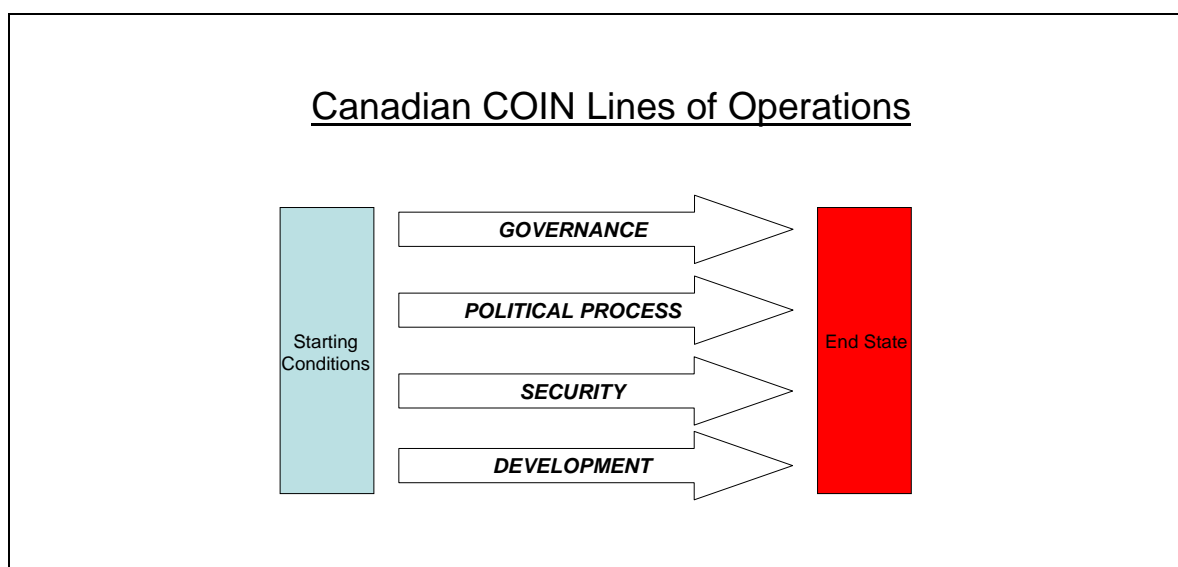
Figure 1.4 – Proposed Canadian COIN Lines of Operations.[41]

Governance is aimed at establishing a degree of self-governance, while the

political process line of operation is specifically aimed at developing and sustaining a

legitimate and functional electoral process. The security line of operation is focused on

establishing an overall secure environment through the development of effective HN

security forces as well as civil order. Reconstruction is aimed at establishing sustainable

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[40] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations*…, 5-16 – 5-18.

[41] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations...*, 5-18. The diagram was constructed by the author based on the information provided at the reference.

infrastructure through the restoration of essential services and sustainable growth. The

manual suggests that police and military agencies are focused on security, government

agencies may be focused on governance and political structures while international and

non-governmental aid organizations are largely concerned with development.[42]   Similar

to US military COIN doctrine, the Canadian COIN manual indicates that lines of

operations may vary since they will be shaped by the type of insurgency, the overall

strategic goals, and "will depend upon the thematic groupings of the operational

objectives".[43]

The foundations of Canada's approach to its COIN campaign in Afghanistan are

derived largely from the *Afghanistan Compact* three "interdependent areas or pillars of

activity" of security, governance and development.[44] Canada's "Whole of Government"

approach reflects these three key themes. Originally considered a "3-D" approach,

organized along Defence, Diplomacy and Development, this comprehensive approach

sees Canadian military, government and non-government national resources working

together to achieve the strategic objectives. [45]   The key themes of Security, Governance

and Development have been maintained as the focus of Canada's approach in

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[42] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations...*, 1-15.

[43] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations...*, 5-17.

[44] Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "The Afghanistan Compact," *Building on Success: The London Conference on Afghanistan, 31 January – 1 February 2006*; available from http://www.ands.gov.af/admin/ands/ands_docs/upload/UploadFolder/The%20Afghnistan%20Compact%20-%20Final%20English.pdf; Internet; accessed 26 January 2009, 2.

[45] Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Canada's Approach in Afghanistan," available from http://www.afghanistan.gc.ca/canada-afghanistan/approach-approche/index.aspx?menu_id=1&menu=L; Internet; accessed 21 January 2009.

Afghanistan. Indeed, the 2008 Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan concentrated its analysis along these three themes and strongly recommended that more coordination was required by the Government of Canada to ensure sufficient effort and resources was placed on all three aspects of the campaign, not just security.[46]   These key campaign themes have been maintained at the strategic, operational and tactical levels and continue to reflect the current Canadian lines of operations (Figure 1.5).[47]   These lines of operation closely resemble the suggested lines represented in the Canadian COIN manual (Figure 1.4).
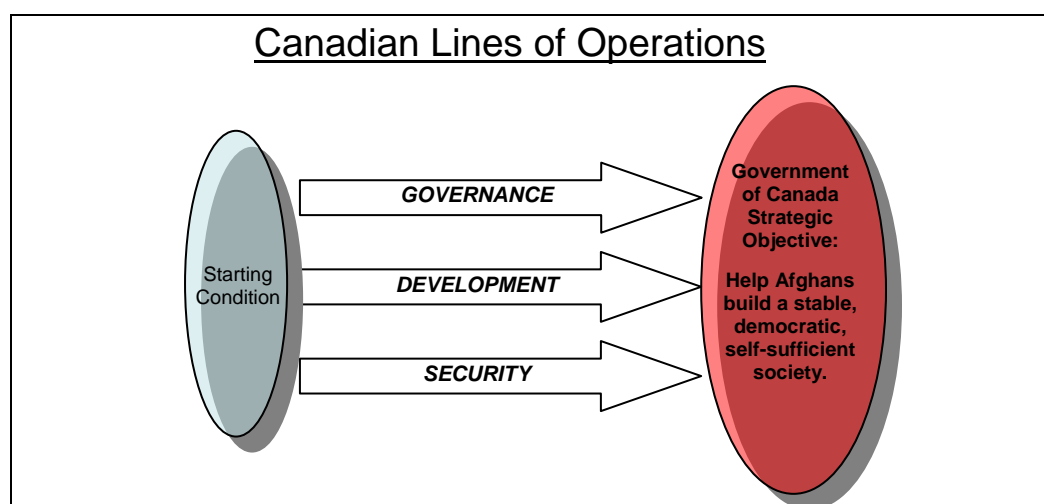
Figure 1.5 - Canadian Lines of Operations currently applied in Afghanistan.[48]

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[46] Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, *Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan*, (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services, 2008), 33-34.

[47] Department of National Defence, "Our Mission in Afghanistan," *CEFCOM Web Page*; available from http://www.comfec-cefcom.forces.gc.ca/pa-ap/ops/fs-fr/afg-eng.asp; Internet; accessed 26 January 2009.

[48] This illustration was created by the author, and is based upon the information gained from sources indicated in the previous paragraph.

AN AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE

The Australian Army offers an alternative representation of lines of operation in a COIN campaign. Similar to American and Canadian military doctrine, the Australian Army promotes a comprehensive approach to COIN but has developed the term "Adaptive Campaigning" to describe the Army's concept for contemporary operations. Adaptive Campaigning is defined as "actions taken by the Joint Land Force as part of the military contribution to a Whole of Government approach to resolving conflicts" and comprises five "interdependent and mutually reinforcing lines of operation".[49] These lines of operation are: Joint Land Combat, Population Protection, Information Actions, Population Support, and Indigenous Capacity Building. Of note is that three of these five lines are focused on the population, a key element of a COIN campaign. Finally, these lines are not represented in a linear fashion but rather as a series of intertwined activities (Figure 1.6), which better illustrates the interdependent relationship among them.

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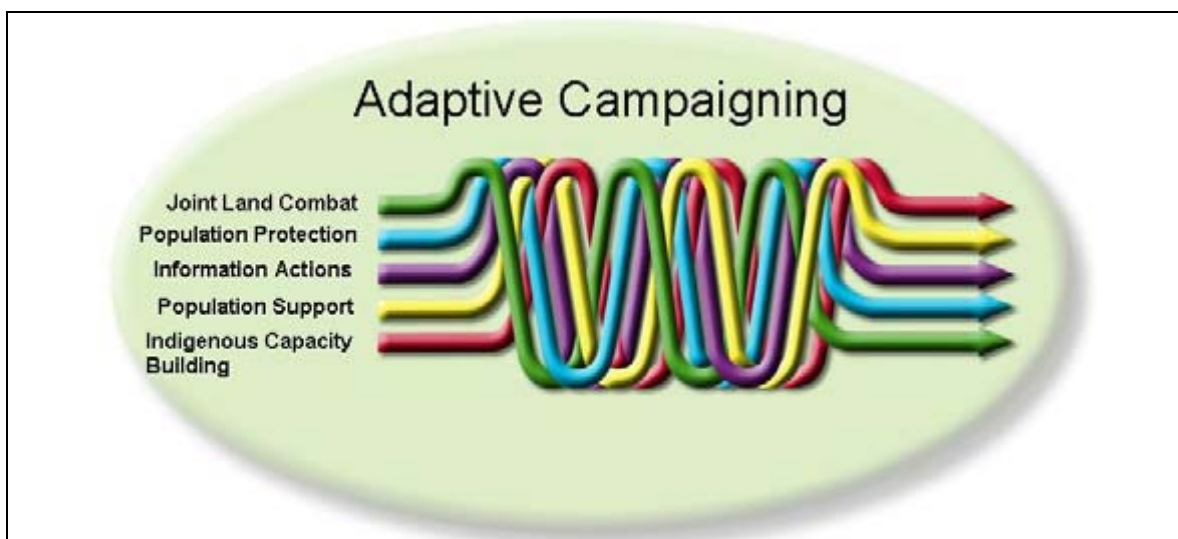
[49] Australian Army Headquarters, *Adaptive Campaigning 2009:Realising an Adaptive Army*, version 2.04 (Australian Army HQ: Canberra, 28 January 2009), 13.

Figure 1.6 – Australian Army representation of Lines of Operation within Adaptive Campaign concept.[50]

COIN CAMPAIGN PLAN EVALUATION PROCESS

The importance of briefly discussing lines of operations is to understand how they are derived and how they may be reflected in the various COIN approaches such as CHB. Regardless of the COIN approach adopted, commanders must ensure that their lines of operations do not contradict or ignore national objectives and guidance. Campaign design is an iterative process. Given the fluid and complex dynamic of an insurgency, the COIN campaign plan must be constantly evaluated and revised in order to suit the environment and the insurgent grievances, goals and methods. Indeed, it is imperative that COIN elements "Learn and Adapt" and conduct a "continuous cycle of design-learn-redesign to achieve the end state."[51]

Within this constant cycle of evaluation and modification, it is imperative that the overall COIN strategy continues to reflect the strategic goals and the overall philosophy of a primarily political problem that requires the support of the populace, while maintaining legitimacy. A conceptual design for re-evaluation is illustrated in the following diagram (Figure 1.7).

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[50] Australian Army Headquarters, *Adaptive Campaigning 2009:Realising an Adaptive Army…*, 23.

[51] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 150.

COIN Strategy Evaluation

Tactical Application

Operational Concept Design

Define the Insurgency

Articulate Strategic Goals

COIN philosophy embedded

Develop Lines of Operation, Centre of Gravity and Operational Objectives

Develop Campaign Plan

Clear, Hold, Build

Ink Spot

Something Else

Lines of operation and objectives must be relevant to the grievances within the insurgency

COIN strategies must coincide with Operational objectives. Ideally, lines of operation are nested within these tactical applications

Figure 1.7 – COIN Strategy Evaluation Concept.[52]

Having made the decision to become involved in a COIN campaign, a nation must articulate its strategic goals or objectives, which are connected to a contemporary COIN philosophy. From this, operational objectives, lines of operations and the centre of gravity of the campaign can be developed. The result of this analysis is the overall theatre specific COIN campaign plan. From the campaign plan, operational commanders then develop or *operationalize* this construct into COIN approaches such as CHB or the Ink Spot. These approaches must be constantly evaluated and modified to ensure that they continue to meet the operational and strategic goals, which in turn must be re-examined to ensure that they continue to address the grievances or roots of the insurgency. This requires a constant cycle of evaluation and modification since a COIN

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[52] This illustration of a conceptual design was developed by the author for the purposes of illustrating the process of constant evaluation of a COIN campaign.

environment is extremely fluid and dynamic. With this concept in mind, the CHB and Ink

Spot approaches will be examined in more detail.

CHAPTER TWO - CLEAR, HOLD, BUILD

INTRODUCTION

The Clear, Hold, Build (CHB) concept has become a popular counterinsurgency (COIN) approach since its extensive application by American forces in Iraq beginning in 2005. The origins of this COIN approach can be found in a concept developed by a group of US Army War College planners, in which they conceptualized stability operations in a post-war Iraq environment into three phases: security, stability and handover.[53] Colonel H.R. McMaster while commanding the US Army 3rd Armoured Cavalry Regiment further refined this concept during operations in Tal Afar in Iraq in 2006.[54] What became known as the Clear, Hold, Build approach now features prominently in the United States US Army *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (FM) 3-24. Since its development, it has been used extensively by military commanders to describe their approach to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.[55] Although, not expressly included in the current Canadian COIN manual, this concept has also been used by Canadian military commanders to describe strategy, campaign objectives and tactics in Afghanistan. Politicians, such as former US Secretary of State, Condoleeza Rice had referred to CHB to describe the overall operational level American COIN strategy in

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[53] James S. Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," in *Dimensions of Counter-insurgency: Applying Experience to Practice*, ed. Tim Benbow and Rod Thornton, 121-136 (New York: Routledge, 2008), 127. The specific research paper mentioned is Conrad C. Crane and W. Andrew Terrill, "Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario," (Carlisle Barracks, PA, US Army Strategic Studies Institute, February 2003), 43-44.

[54] Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009), 50.

[55] Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 182.

Iraq.[56] Likewise, Canadian government officials have referred to this concept when

describing Canadian actions in Afghanistan.[57]

The CHB approach begins with efforts to control key areas, followed by a variety

of activities designed to improve security and allow non-military functions such as

governance and development to gradually become re-established in the community,

which in turn contributes to the overall level of security. This concept, like the Ink Spot

approach, begins with focusing on particular areas and then expanding to additional key

locations. Similar to other COIN approaches, in order to be effective, CHB requires "the

synchronized application of military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological,

and civic actions", executed collectively in an integrated manner.[58]

CHB has been used interchangeably to describe tactical and operational level

COIN activities. Consequently, there is some confusion and misunderstanding

concerning this COIN approach and whether or not it should be considered a COIN

strategy or merely a tactical element of the overall strategy. The intent of this chapter is

to examine the CHB concept, determine its strengths and weaknesses, and gain an

appreciation for how it has been applied in Iraq and Afghanistan. From this analysis, it

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[56] George Packer, "Letter from Iraq: The Lesson of Tal Afar," *The New Yorker*,Vol. 82 (10 April, 2006): 49.

[57] Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, *Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan*, (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services, 2008), 13.

[58] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 151.

will be possible to identify the necessary prerequisites for this approach to be effective,

and determine if CHB should be considered a suitable Canadian COIN concept.

US ARMY DOCTRINAL DEFINITION

FM 3-24 defines CHB as a methodical and progressive process involving three

distinct stages. This approach is "executed in a specific, high-priority area experiencing

overt insurgent operations" with the following objectives:

1. Create a secure physical and psychological environment.
2. Establish firm government control of the populace and area.
3. Gain the populace's support.[59]

The overall goal of CHB is "to develop a long-term, effective HN government framework

and presence that secures the people and facilitates meeting their basic needs".[60] The

primary tasks COIN forces should aim to accomplish are to:

1. Provide continuous security for the local populace;
2. Eliminate insurgent presence;
3. Reinforce political primacy;
4. Enforce the rule of law; and
5. Rebuild local HN institutions.[61]

The Draft US Army Field Manual 3-24.2 *Tactics in Counterinsurgency* describes

CHB as a progressive, full-spectrum operation that combines offensive, defensive and

stability operations. This manual considers CHB as distinct phases rather than stages. In

each of the three phases, the emphasis or main effort is different, but all actions are aimed

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[59] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 174.

[60] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 174.

at improving security and the perception of security. As illustrated in Figure 2.1, during

the Clear phase, offensive operations dominate. During the Hold phase, defensive

operations are emphasized, and during the Build phase the primacy of effort involves

stability operations.
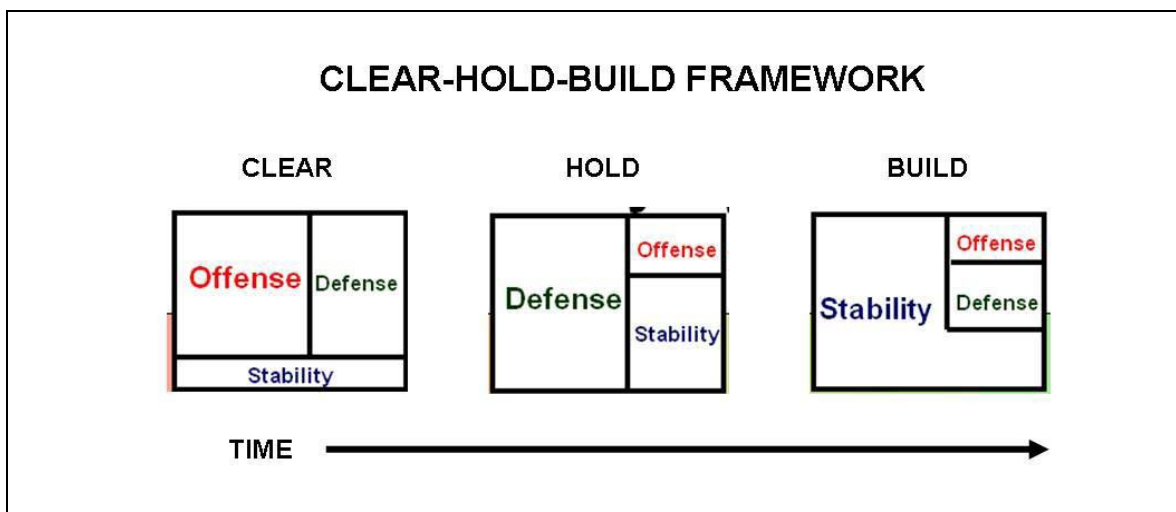
Figure 2.1 – Clear, Hold, Build Framework (*FM 3-24.2*)[62]

Offensive operations are defined as "combat operations conducted to defeat and

destroy enemy forces and seize terrain, resources and population centers. They impose

the commander's will on the enemy".[63] Offensive operations are considered decisive

operations, and are aimed at destroying guerrilla forces or leaders in order to establish a

secure environment. Defensive operations are considered to be "combat operations

conducted to defeat an enemy attack, gain time, economize forces, and develop

conditions favorable for offensive or stability operations".[64] Defensive operations are

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[61] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 174-175.

[62] Department of the Army. *Tactics in Counterinsurgency Field Manual 3-24.2. Draft.* (November 2008), 3-16.

[63] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24.2…*, 3-6.

aimed at securing the population, protecting COIN forces, securing key locations and personnel, as well as retaining any gains achieved during offensive operations while maintaining physical dominance over key terrain in the battle space. Stability operations are considered multi-agency and multinational and are defined as "various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential government services, emergency infrastructure, reconstruction, and humanitarian relief".[65] Stability operations are said to form the nucleus of the COIN lines of effort because they consist of five primary tasks: establish civil security, establish civil control, support to governance, restore essential services, and support to economic and infrastructure development.[66]

US Army doctrine supports and reinforces David Galula's concept that an insurgency is "20 per cent military action and 80 per cent political", hence the importance of a comprehensive approach.[67] It therefore seems somewhat contradictory to place such emphasis on military operations for two-thirds of the CHB approach. Although it is understood that stability operations are executed throughout, when the concept is described in terms of offensive, defensive and stability operations, military driven activities tend to become the focus. Given that FM 3-24 and FM 3-24.2 are military

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[64] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24.2…*, 3-6.

[65] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24.2…*, 3-7.

[66] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24.2…*, 3-7.

[67] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 63.

doctrine manuals, this focus on military activities is understandable. However, both manuals stress the importance of a comprehensive approach to COIN. Therefore it would seem logical to stress the importance of non-military actions within the CHB approach.

A DIFFERENT VIEW – CLEAR, HOLD, BUILD AND DISTINCT ZONES

Coalition nations and some military analysts have interpreted the CHB concept in different ways. Indeed in Afghanistan where COIN terminology "has become a *lingua franca* shared by Afghan and international practitioners" this concept has more recently morphed into "shape, clear, hold, build."[68] As an example of various interpretations of CHB, Seth Jones has suggested that this approach applied in Afghanistan is simply another name for the Ink Spot application, referring to it as the "clear, hold, and expand" concept.[69] His interpretation sees three distinct and ever-increasing zones that involve varying degrees of military actions. In the first zone efforts are concentrated to target and eliminate insurgents with security forces living among the population over a long duration. The second zone is considered the transit and support zone for the insurgents. Security forces operate in this zone only to disrupt and interdict insurgent operations, and rely upon significant intelligence in order to reduce any negative effects on the neutral population. The outer zone consists of remote locations and sparsely populated locations

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[68] Catherine Dale, "War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress," *CRS Report for Congress*, 23 January 2009 (Congressional Research Service, 2009); available from http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40156.pdf; Internet; accessed 23 February 2009.

[69] Seth G. Jones, "Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan," *RAND Counterinsurgency Study*, Vol. 4 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), 94.

where security forces occasionally operate in order to "show the flag".[70] Unfortunately,

little information is provided on the distinct roles and activities of the HN government

and non-government agencies within this interpretation. Unlike the US Army definition

of CHB which sees activities in all three stages occurring in the same general location,

this particular interpretation views the stages geographically divided into separate zones.

CANADIAN INTERPRETATIONS

Canadian military units recently operating in Afghanistan have interpreted the

CHB approach in a similar manner to Seth Jones as a method to illustrate the general

division of responsibilities within the Canadian Task Force (TF) (Figure 2.2).
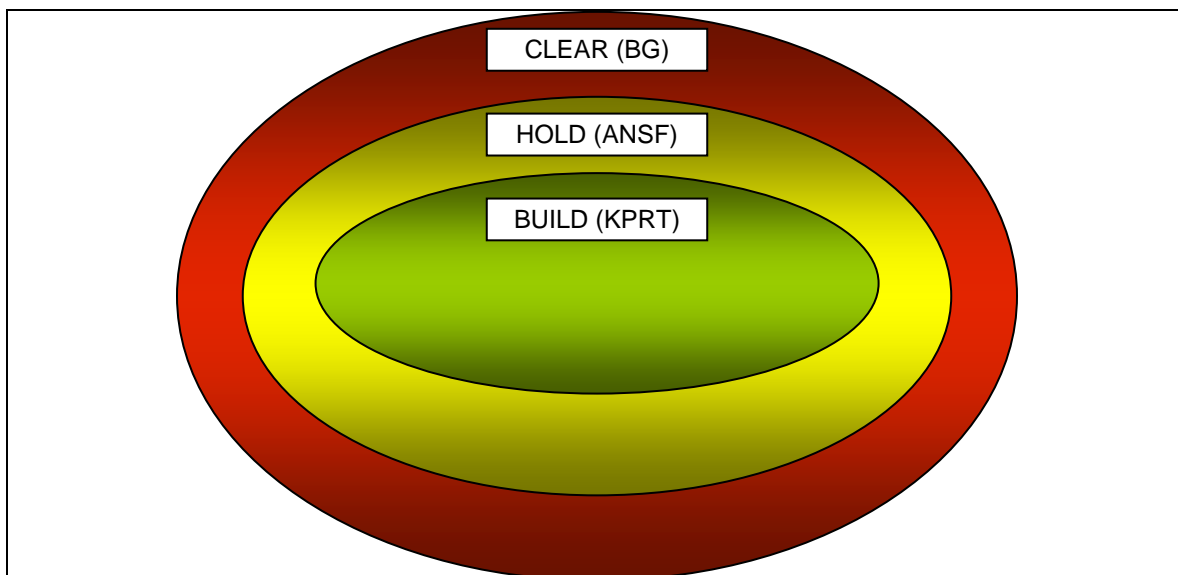
Figure 2.2 - Representation of Clear, Hold, Build separate zones. [71]

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[70] Seth G. Jones, Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan,"…, 94-95.

[71] The author obtained this illustration from the 2PPCLI BG in Afghanistan in 2008. Additional comments on this concept are a result of personal experience in Afghanistan as an Infantry Company Commander in 2006 and as a member of the J3 Regional Operations 2 (Afghanistan) team at Canadian Expeditionary Force Command (CEFCOM) Headquarters from 2006-2008.

As Figure 2.2 illustrates, the three separate zones correspond with each of the three stages of this COIN approach but are overlaid upon one another. By this representation however, it would appear that only Build activities are conducted in the centre or inner zone, and are the sole responsibility of the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team (KPRT). Likewise, only Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) are Holding, and the Battle Group (BG) is the only organization concerned with Clearing. This is not necessarily an accurate assessment of the roles and responsibilities of these TF elements and is perhaps too restrictive since elements of the BG for example, may conduct activities in all three stages. Therefore, this type of illustration can be misleading when used to represent the CHB concept.

Another Canadian interpretation of CHB involves describing activities in line with the current Canadian lines of operations: Security, Governance and Development (or Reconstruction), rather than offensive, defensive and stability activities (Figure 2.3). This interpretation also considers this approach to be a linear relationship in which the emphasis or main effort of COIN forces shifts over time. As Figure 2.3 illustrates, there is a transition between each stage where this priority of effort changes. It should be noted that in this interpretation, as well as the US Army doctrine representation (Figure 2.1), it is implied that COIN activities can regress from Build, back to Hold or indeed Clear. In Figure 2.3, the main effort of each phase is represented in bold. Also, reconstruction activities are conducted during Clear and Hold but shift towards long-term development during the Build stage. This will be further explained later in this chapter.
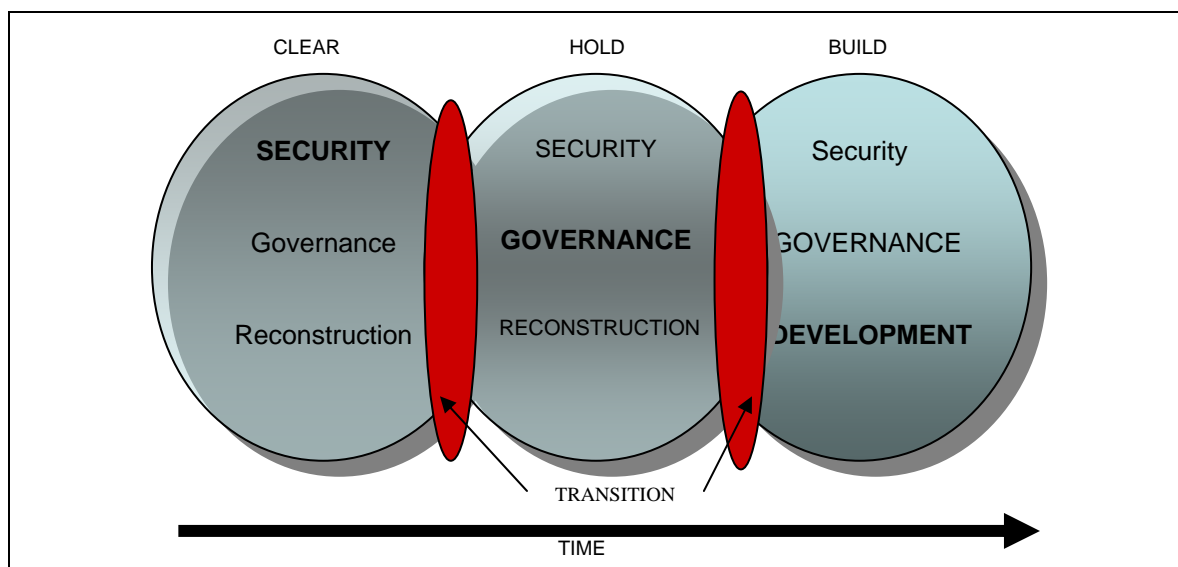
Figure 2.3 - Clear, Hold, Build along Canadian lines of operations.[72]

US Army doctrine indicates that the aim of CHB is to "develop a long-term, effective Host Nation government framework and presence in the area, which secures the people and facilitates meeting their basic needs, and provides legitimate governance".[73] Given this overall aim, and the illustration of CHB along offensive, defensive and stabilization activities (Figure 2.1), it is somewhat difficult to clearly understand how this aim is accomplished within a comprehensive approach that includes non-military elements when the concept is explained in this manner. A detailed examination of the three stages of CHB is necessary therefore, to gain a better appreciation of this COIN approach.

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[72] This representation of the Clear, Hold, Build model was developed by LCol C. Magee, Director of Curriculum, Canadian Forces College, Toronto, ON, January 2009 and used during the Joint Command and Staff Course COIN elective at CFC.

[73] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24.2…*, 3-16.

CLEAR

The US Army View

US Army doctrine defines "clear" as "a tactical mission task that requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area."[74] The focus during this stage is generally a military one, involving primarily offensive operations. The purpose of clearing operations is to "disrupt insurgent forces and force a reaction by major insurgent elements in the area".[75] US Army doctrine acknowledges that initial offensive operations are not the complete solution. Initially eliminating insurgents from an area may temporarily improve security but it may not remove the entrenched insurgent support network or infrastructure. FM 3-24 suggests that police elements should be brought into the cleared area during this stage and assist military forces to root out and eliminate the insurgent infrastructure, with the intent of minimizing the potential impact on the local population. These police actions will however, likely rely on military forces for support.

Both FM 3-24 and FM 3-24.2 indicate that although the preponderance of activities are offensive in nature, in order to establish a suitable degree of security, or a perception of security, and address the insurgent threat, defensive and stability operations are also required during the Clear stage. Insurgent forces must be prevented from

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[74] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 175-176.

[75] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 176.

regrouping or re-entering the "cleared area". This can only be accomplished if sufficient

security forces remain in the area and continue to conduct operations. Specifically,

defensive and stability operations during this stage are conducted to maintain gains and

set the conditions for future activities, which may include:

1. Isolating the area to cut off external support and to kill or capture
    escaping insurgents.
2. Conducting periodic patrols to identify, disrupt, eliminate, or expel
    insurgents.
3. Employing security forces and government representatives throughout
    the area to secure the populace and facilitate follow-on stages of
    development.[76]

FM 3-24 indicates that actions conducted during the Clear stage are framed within

an overall IO strategy and require "unity of effort by civilian authorities, intelligence

agencies, and security forces".[77] Apart from indicating that activities will be organized

by offensive, defensive and stability type operations, FM 3-24 provides limited

recommendations as to how the various non-military agencies could be involved.

Understanding that this may not be the role of a military doctrine manual, FM 3-24.2

does provide slightly more amplification. It describes additional complimentary actions

that could be conducted, in line with the recommended lines of effort of the campaign

(Figure 1.2). However, these activities (Table 2.1) can be conducted by military forces as

well as non-military agencies during this stage.

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[76] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 176.

[77] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 175.

Table 2.1 – Complementary Actions During the Clear Phase (*FM 3-24.2*) [78]

Line of Effort (LOE)	Complimentary Actions
Establish civil security	Conduct targeting of insurgent leaders and guerrilla bands, cordon and searches of insurgent controlled areas, and raids on safehouses.
Establish civil control	Train and support police forces or paramilitary forces to implement curfews to interdict insurgent movement.
Support HN security forces	Train and utilize HN security forces to increase combat power during clearing operations.
Support to governance	Identify key government and local leaders that can support the re-establishment of local government that can administer the area.
Restore essential services	Identify essential services that need immediate attention.
Support to economic and infrastructure development	Identify potential "quick win" projects to stimulate the local economy and create additional support for the government.
Conduct of information engagement	The message to the populace focuses on gaining and maintaining their overt support for the counterinsurgency effort, as well as informing them that active support for the insurgency would prolong combat operations, creating a risk to themselves and their neighbours.

The Canadian View

Like the US Army, the Canadian military defines clear as "a tactical task to remove all enemy forces from a specific location, area, or zone."[79] However, when the Clear stage is considered along the Canadian lines of operations of Security, Governance and Development (Figure 2.3), there is a slightly different interpretation of the overall COIN strategy. Security operations vice offensive operations are considered the main effort. The focus is primarily on the physical security of a specific area and the population within that area. This is achieved by saturating and dominating the terrain with security forces, both coalition and HN security forces, including police. The intent is to begin "the physical and moral isolation of the insurgents from the sources of physical resources and the population."[80] Depending upon the specific location chosen

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[78] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24.2…*, 3-17 to 3-18.

[79] Department of National Defence, B-GL-331-003/FP-001 *Military Symbols for Land Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, March 2000), 36.

on which to conduct this COIN strategy, there may not be a requirement to conduct

extensive offensive operations against insurgents. Critical infrastructure may exist in an

area that will provide long term benefit to the population, thereby rendering security tasks

as primarily defensive in nature. It may prove more beneficial to describe military

activities as efforts to secure the area during the Clear stage, rather than offensive

operations, particularly within a comprehensive approach, in order to avoid the

perception that military focused operations are the dominating factor. Clearly, extensive

military operations will be required to establish an effective level of security, however

these military operations may involve police activities and should still be considered

secondary to political actions and objectives. Perhaps "clear" is simply the wrong word

to use.

Recent Operational Applications

In 2005, the US Army 3rd Armoured Cavalry Regiment (ACR), commanded by

Colonel H.R. McMaster, conducted extensive clearing operations in the Iraqi city of Tal

Afar after it had become an insurgent strong point. American and Iraqi security forces

worked together to first isolate the city, and then systematically clear insurgents from

within.[81] Significant numbers of American and Iraqi security forces were allocated to

this operation, which allowed them to establish a secure environment and maintain a

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[80] Department of National Defence, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 13 December 2008), 3-9.

[81] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 182-183.

large enduring presence in the area. However, during this phase, there was limited

reconstruction, and there was a lack of official local governance. Shortly after major

offensive operations were conducted, efforts shifted towards establishing local

governance but it was primarily US military personnel who were driving this initiative.

In fact, "the operation succeeded despite an absence of guidance from senior civilian and

military leaders in Washington."[82] As well, 3 ACR did not clear any areas that they were

not prepared to retain. In the end, success was generally determined by a decrease in the

overall violence in Tal Afar.

Another more recent example involved United States Marine Corps (USMC) units

in Helmand province in Afghanistan. The 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment applied the

CHB approach in Garmsir district in southern Helmand province throughout the spring

and summer of 2008. After conducting extensive offensive operations against insurgent

forces, the unit soon realized that if they withdrew out of the area, insurgent forces would

simply return. As a result, the Marines "shifted from high-end combat to stabilization

operations, saturating the area with foot patrols and vehicle patrols."[83] Despite initially

clearing insurgents from the area, the Marines continued to fight them, while trying to

improve the overall security situation. Civilians began returning to the area and the

Marines began "an emergency reconstruction effort" that saw company commanders

issuing cash to local civilians to pay for repairs to the local infrastructure damaged during

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[82] George Packer, "Letter from Iraq: The Lesson of Tal Afar,"…, 49-50.

[83] Nathan Hodge, "Corps Values," *Jane's Defence Weekly* 45, no. 38 (17 September 2008): 26.

the previous fighting.[84] USMC civil affairs specialists worked with the local governor

and village leaders to re-establish the local bazaar and re-energize local economic

development. At the time, there were insufficient non-military representatives in the area

to assist the Marines with reconstruction, or stability operations. However, that did not

prevent the Marines from improving the security situation. There was direct access to

funding to start low level reconstruction projects. Military personnel were capable of

working along side HN government representatives to achieve short-term results, all the

while, still dealing with insurgents in the area. This serves as an example where

offensive, defensive and stability activities were executed simultaneously during the

Clear phase with the explicit intent of improving security, and conducted principally by

military forces. Security was the main focus, however governance and reconstruction

efforts were conducted in order to improve the security situation and shape the

environment for future operations more closely associated with the Hold and Build

stages.

Canadian Forces operating in Kandahar province since 2006 have often used the

CHB concept to describe their operations. Following a significant build up of insurgent

forces within Zhari and Panjwayi districts in 2006, Canadian military units conducted a

series of offensive operations to clear the insurgents from these key districts outside of

Kandahar city.[85] Operation Medusa, conducted in September 2006 became the

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[84] Nathan Hodge, "Corps Values,"…, 26.

[85] Ian Hope, *Dancing With the Dushman: Command Imperatives for the Counter-Insurgency Fight in Afghanistan* (Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2008), 83-142.

culmination of these clearing operations. Up to that point, insufficient security forces existed within the Canadian area of operations to allow them to hold onto all the areas that had been cleared in the province.[86] Clearing operations were conducted exclusively by military forces, with some additional support from the KPRT which saw military personnel providing some humanitarian and material assistance to local citizens. At the time, local governance was limited to village and district leaders, with very little support from the provincial Governor. Canadian non-military agencies were not involved within this "clearing" operation, apart from limited support through the KPRT. Also, until this time, Canadian forces operations in Kandahar province had involved very few HN security forces.[87] In retrospect, Canadian military operations in 2006 could be considered mainly disruptive actions aimed at buying time to allow coalition and HN security forces to build up. Although CHB was under development and not officially adopted by Canadian forces in Afghanistan, attempts were made to apply the principles behind this concept.

Recommendations

Security is considered a precondition for governance and reconstruction. The challenge is establishing a common interpretation of security among the COIN elements. Since many of the functions of governance and reconstruction rest with civilian agencies,

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[86] Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, *Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan* …, 13.

[87] Ian Hope, *Dancing With the Dushman*…, 117.

this situation can prove difficult if the military is left waiting for civilian efforts to materialize because non-military partners deem security insufficient. During the Clear stage, governance activities will be dependant upon the existing local government structure. Often military forces will be forced to deal with the existing system of governance and the local representatives within it, regardless if the system is legitimate or endorsed by the HN government. This could include village and tribal elders who have been appointed or selected by the local population or warlords who are exercising power in the area. HN government resources and personnel should be engaged prior to, and during the Clear stage in order to begin the restoration or legitimate governance in the area. This may prove extremely difficult, in which case military forces will be required to conduct extensive activities in order to begin the process of improving governance.

Concurrent to this type of activity, there will also be utility in beginning reconstruction activities. The focus should be on reconstruction vice development and should begin with very small, short-term but highly visible projects, in order to rapidly demonstrate some level of positive change in the area and gain an element of tacit support amongst an influential segment of the affected population. Reconstruction activities should ideally be seen to be delivered by the HN government and not by the coalition security forces.[88] Additional security tasks will likely develop from these low level reconstruction activities, creating more strain on military security forces. Ideally, these reconstruction activities are conducted by non-military agencies, however if these

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[88] These ideas were developed from personal experience as an infantry company commander in Afghanistan in 2006, as a member of J3 Regional Ops 2 (Afghanistan) team at CEFCOM from 2006-2008,

organizations are not satisfied with the level of security in the area, military forces may be required to conduct these activities. Therefore, military forces should have the capacity to do so, and be prepared to conduct reconstruction efforts during the Clear stage in order to avoid a loss of momentum in the campaign. To be effective, this requires the necessary authority and resources, particularly access to money. It also requires an essential element of trust between the military and the non-military agencies within the "Whole of Government" or comprehensive COIN team.

HOLD

The US Army View

The second stage of this COIN strategy sees a shift in the priority of effort to defensive operations with stability and offensive operations playing a supporting role. This stage requires a significant and enduring security presence to ensure that a reasonable degree of security is maintained and insurgent forces do not regenerate or return to the area and negatively affect any gains made during the Clear phase. The essential task in this stage is to protect the population from the insurgency and its effects. Ideally during this stage, sufficient HN forces exist and are capable of conducting the majority of the security operations. The success of this stage is dependant upon "effectively and continuously securing the populace" and "effectively reestablishing a HN government presence at the local level".[89]   FM 3-24 emphasizes the necessity for

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and during conversations with LCol C. Magee, Director of Curriculum at Canadian Forces College, Toronto, Canada, January 2009.

[89] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 177.

security forces to live among and operate within the local population and not be

sequestered in fortified locations, venturing out only to conduct offensive, kinetic

operations. General David Petraeus recently reinforced the notion that a persistent

security presence is required, and that security forces "can't commute to work".[90] Key

infrastructure that could be further developed and bring additional stability and economic

prosperity should also be secured during this stage. Operations during the Hold phase are

designed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Continuously secure the people and separate them from the insurgents.
2. Establish a firm government presence and control over the area and populace.
3. Recruit, organize, equip, and train local security forces.
4. Establish a government political apparatus to replace the insurgent apparatus.
5. Develop a dependable network of sources by authorized intelligence agents.[91]

During this stage, security forces concentrate on disrupting, identifying and

ultimately eliminating any remaining insurgents within the assigned area, including the

leadership and its supporting infrastructure. Additional COIN organizations work

towards gaining popular support for the HN government and eliminating any remaining

popular support for the insurgency within the assigned area.[92] FM 3-24.2 provides

further guidance on various possible activities that could be conducted during the Hold

stage (Table 2.2), in line with the common COIN lines of effort (Figure 1.2). However,

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[90] David H. Petraeus, "The Future of the Alliance and the Mission in Afghanistan," remarks for Panel Discussion, *45th Munich Security Conference* (8 February 2009); available from http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2009/02/the-future-of-the-alliance-and/; Internet; accessed 18 February 2009.

[91] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 178.

[92] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24.2…*, 3-18.

none of these activities are unique to non-military agencies. Indeed, most of these

activities can be conducted by military forces if insufficient non-military resources exist.

Table 2.2 – Complementary Actions During the Hold Phase (*FM 3-24.2*) [93]

Line of Effort (LOE)	Complimentary Actions
Establish civil security	Continuously secure the people and separate them from the insurgents. Establish a firm government presence and control over the area and populace by recruiting, organizing, arming, and training local paramilitary forces and integrate them into operations.
Establish civil control	Train and support the police to combat crime and enforce curfews to curtail insurgent movement.
Support HN security forces	Conduct combined patrols, checkpoints, cordon and searches, and raids with HN security forces.
Support to governance	Establish or re-establish a government political apparatus to replace the insurgent apparatus.
Restore essential services	Establish contracts, empower or finance local governments to initiate small projects involving local repairs.
Support to economic and infrastructure development	Conduct local improvements designed to convince the populace to support the HN government, participate in securing their area, and contribute to the reconstruction effort.
Conduct of information engagement	Information engagements should affirm that security forces supporting the HN government are in the area for the long term and are protecting the population form insurgent intimidation, coercion, and reprisals.

Neither US Army COIN manual provides any further clarification as to the

division of responsibilities between the various COIN organizations involved during this

phase. The theme is expressed as a military operation involving HN security forces

without much of a role for government or non-government organizations at this point.

Although it is understood that offensive, defensive and stability operations are conducted

concurrently, with the emphasis on defensive operations, once again the perception is that

activities are driven and executed primarily by military forces. Recent experience in Iraq

and Afghanistan indicates that this is a reality, as non-military agencies either lack

sufficient capacity to become significantly involved or are simply not prepared to become

engaged until there is an adequate degree of security in the local community. This was

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[93] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24.2*…, 3-18 to 3-19.

certainly the case with the Marines in Afghanistan where the USAID representative "was ready to initiate projects as soon as the security situation so allowed."[94] This is not a criticism of any of the individuals involved, but rather an example of the realistic challenges that exist within the comprehensive COIN approach. The danger however, is a lack of tangible improvements in a community that has recently been "cleared" of insurgents and filled by security forces, may negatively impact the loyalty and allegiance of the local population.

The Canadian View

When the Canadian view offered in this paper is contrasted with the American perspective, there is a significant yet subtle divergence in approach. In the Canadian context, the Hold phase is considered along the Security, Governance and Development lines of operations (Figure 2.3). Efforts towards establishing effective and legitimate governance are considered the main focus, rather than simply defensive operations. Security remains an essential element for success during the Hold stage. Ideally however, there is a shift towards greater dependency upon HN security forces, particularly police forces. The overall security environment should be expanded to provide greater freedom of action by governance and reconstruction agencies. Security remains a pre-condition for governance and reconstruction, however these efforts now contribute to a greater or deeper sense of security among the population, once local

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[94] Catherine Dale, "War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress," *CRS Report for Congress*, 23 January 2009. Congressional Research Service, 2009; Available from http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40156.pdf; Internet; accessed 23 February 2009, 27.

government becomes more assertive and effective, and reconstruction projects begin to provide tangible and credible results within the community.[95]

Recent Operational Applications

There are mixed reviews as to how successful this COIN strategy has been applied in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the case of the 3rd ACR efforts in Tal Afar, thousands of American military personnel maintained a permanent presence in the city, along with substantial Iraqi security forces. After months of sustained efforts, the overall security situation had improved as they "slowly established trust among community leaders and local residents".[96] In addition to supporting local governance, the 3rd ACR worked with Iraqi officials to recruit and train local police forces, and establish a number of security measures throughout the city and the surrounding area, which continued to enhance the overall security situation, greatly reduced the violence, and continued to isolate insurgents from the population.[97]

Similarly in Afghanistan where the USMC 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment was operating in Helmand province, the recently cleared areas within Garmsir district remained saturated with large numbers of American and HN security forces. Operations transitioned from offensive to defensive with Marines and Afghan National Army (ANA)

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[95] These ideas were developed from personal experience and during conversations with LCol C. Magee, Director of Curriculum at Canadian Forces College, Toronto, Canada, January 2009.

[96] George Packer, "Letter from Iraq: The Lesson of Tal Afar,"…, 49.

[97] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*…, 183.

joint patrols in the area. These patrols allowed the Marines to conduct a local census of the area and gain an understanding of many key social aspects within the community such as tribal affiliations, warlords, power brokers, economic and criminal activities, and local governance.[98] These defensive operations contributed to the overall security situation, however there were limited stability operations because sufficient non-military governance and development agencies were not involved at this time. Therefore, it was the military and HN security forces that were conducting the majority of the activities yet again within this COIN approach.

Following Operation Medusa, the Canadian Task Force in Afghanistan focused its efforts in Zhari district in order to hold the terrain and prevent insurgents from returning. There were limited HN security forces to assist the Canadian BG at this time. The TF became focused on a small group of villages in the area of Pashmul. This had been the focus of most of the insurgent activity during the months prior to Operation Medusa. It was also an important area because it linked Highway One with the Panjwayi district centre. The intent was to build a road through the Pashmul area and link the district centre with the highway, thereby enabling better economic opportunities because local farmers could gain better access to the markets in both districts. Route Summit became the name for the paved road through Pashmul and was the focus of the Canadian military efforts from October 2006 until it was completed in 2007. It was Canadian military personnel who provided the necessary security and the technical oversight to allow this construction project to happen. While construction occurred, Canadian military units

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[98] Nathan Hodge, "Corps Values,"…, 26.

conducted offensive and defensive operations throughout the area in order to maintain some degree of security and disrupt insurgent activities in the area.[99] Unfortunately however, improvements in the local governance capacity have been slow. Although gains have been made by establishing District and Provincial Development Councils, the provincial and district levels of government capacity remain limited, mainly because of a lack of skilled individuals and a dangerous security environment.[100]

The varied intensity of constant offensive combat operations in Zhari and Panjwayi districts since early 2006 has made it difficult to truly determine if Canadian forces are in the Hold stage or indeed still clearing. It is a subjective assessment because the criteria for success for each of the stages have not been clearly defined, and there has been a tendency to apply this construct geographically by district. This is a result of interpreting CHB along distinct phases rather than concurrent activities of varying intensity. Therefore, should CHB be considered a phased approach or simply an expression of simultaneous action in a given location? Is CHB simply an expression of General Krulak's "Three Block War" concept where military forces are conducting humanitarian actions in one area, stability or peacekeeping type operations in another,

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[99] Lee Windsor, David Charters and Brent Wilson, *Kandahar Tour: The Turning Point in Canada's Afghan Mission* (Mississauga, ON: Wiley and Sons, 2008), 55-56.

[100] Jane Armstrong, "District Leaders Fight to Survive in Violent South," *Globe and Mail*, 15 January 2009; available from http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20090115.wafghanchiefs15/BNStory/Afghanistan; Internet; accessed 20 January 2009.

and high-intensity combat in another?[101] The conceptualization of a phased approach or simultaneous action is what separates the interpretations.

Recommendations

The essential element during the Hold phase is a persistent presence of sufficient security forces. Without this critical element, insurgents can return to the area and attempt to regain control, regardless of how effective the clearing phase was. Also, until the overall security situation is deemed satisfactory by non-military agencies, military forces will be faced with the situation where governance and reconstruction activities become their initial responsibility rather than leave a vacuum of activity in these critical domains. There is a requirement to clearly demonstrate progress to the local community in order to establish their trust and gain their loyalty. This can be achieved by re-establishing some essential services in the community and conducting some low level reconstruction projects, such as "seed distribution for farmers, digging of wells, trash clean up projects, and road improvements" which will "help to reconcile the local populace and boost confidence".[102] Military forces need to have the capacity, authority and resources to do this, otherwise momentum will be lost and this will erode the local population's trust and loyalty.

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[101] Charles C. Krulak, "The Three Block War: Fighting in Urban Areas," *Vital Speeches of the Day* 64, no. 5 (15 December 1997), 139. For a view of the Canadian application of Krulak's Three Block War theory, see Walter Dorn and Michael Varey, "Fatally Flawed: The Rise and Demise of the 'three-block war' concept in Canada," *International Journal* (Autumn 2008): 967-978.

[102] Matthew M. McCreary, "Military Awakening: Clear, Hold, Build and the Development of Awakening Councils and Iraqi Police," *Infantry*, Vol. 97, no. 4 (July/August 2008): 33.

During the Hold stage, HN government resources should be surged into the recently cleared area, and concerted efforts should be conducted to establish a credible, legitimate and effective level of governance. This may require removing corrupt officials or anyone undermining the legitimate HN government efforts. The local government can then become more involved in reconstruction efforts. These reconstruction efforts should move beyond simply meeting the immediate needs of the population, and look to setting the conditions for longer term development. The HN government should be seen to be delivering these reconstruction programs with COIN agencies in a supporting role. This in turn will permit reconstruction efforts to reinforce governance in the area, which will further contribute to a more secure environment.

BUILD

The US Army View

FM 3-24 indicates the focus of the Build stage is stability operations and that the most important activities are conducted by non-military agencies. During this stage, HN government representatives re-establish political offices and normal administrative procedures while national and international development agencies rebuild infrastructure and key facilities. As well, local leaders are further developed and given greater responsibility and authority. The intent is to return the area to a degree of normality while maintaining adequate security forces in the area in order to prevent any regression of security. During this stage, offensive and defensive operations become secondary to

the stability operations, designed to develop and improve essential services and governance.[103]

The primary objectives of the Build stage are to remove the root causes that led to the insurgency, improve the lives of the inhabitants, and strengthen the HN ability to provide effective governance.[104] HN security forces should be primarily responsible for security at this point. Adequate security is still required to ensure the population feels they are protected from the insurgents and any reprisals. This may still require a significant amount of forces to remain in the area, and operate with and among the local population. There may still be a requirement for offensive operations to destroy or disrupt any remaining threats in the area. These operations must be carefully planned and managed so that any gains achieved during the Clear and Hold stages are not jeopardized, particularly in gaining the local population's trust. With the focus primarily on stability operations, other actions (Table 2.3) may still be conducted in support of the Build stage.

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[103] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 182.

[104] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24.2…*, 3-19.

Table 2.3 – Complementary Actions During the Build Phase (*FM 3-24.2*) [105]

Line of Effort (LOE)	Complimentary Actions
Establish civil security	Conduct targeted raids on insurgent leaders and the underground, led by HN security forces. Provide a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) to HN security forces.
Establish civil control	Continue to patrol the area and control the population while improving HN police training and equipment. Police forces may continue to expand their role.
Support HN security forces	Increase the number of patrols by HN security forces, while coalition forces reduce their roles.
Support to governance	Continue to support and enhance the local government.
Restore essential services	Continue projects to restore essential services such as building roads, digging wells, building schools and reestablishing emergency services.
Support to economic and infrastructure development	Continue to stimulate the local economy through projects such as market repairs.
Conduct of information engagement	Information engagements should affirm that security forces supporting the HN government are in the area for the long term and are eliminating insurgent leaders, organizations and infrastructure and improving essential services.

The Canadian View

When examining the Build stage using the conceptual Canadian model (Figure 2.3), reconstruction efforts shift towards long-term development and become the main effort. Like the US Army view, military security forces should be playing a minor role. HN police forces should be well-established and effective enough to maintain an adequate level of security throughout the area. Although security remains a prerequisite for governance and development, these activities are now contributing to the overall security situation, rendering them interdependent. Governance is taking on a more substantial role during the Build stage. Indeed the development projects should be driven almost exclusively from the HN government and only facilitated by the international community at this point. The Build stage indicates that the HN government has developed an

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[105] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24.2…*, 3-19 to 3-20.

effective and substantial capacity to provide its own security and assume a greater leadership role in terms of its economic development.[106] When this stage of the COIN campaign is reached, it could be considered as an indication that significant progress has been attained and there is less dependency upon the international community to provide substantial security forces.

Recent Operational Applications

Using the 3rd ACR experience in Tal Afar in Iraq in 2005, the Build stage could be considered when non-military agencies such as the US Department of State and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) finally played a substantial role. Until that time, it was largely a military-driven operation. In Tal Afar, these non-military agencies began in earnest "efforts to reestablish municipal and economic systems" as well as essential services like water, electricity, sewage and trash collection.[107] One of the key indicators for US forces in Tal Afar that their efforts had been successful was seeing many Iraqi families return to the city at this stage in the campaign. Living conditions had improved, violence had been reduced and there were tangible differences for the Iraqi citizens of Tal Afar. As well, local governance was playing a more involved role.

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[106] These ideas were developed from personal experience and during conversations with LCol C. Magee, Director of Curriculum at Canadian Forces College, Toronto, Canada, January 2009.

[107] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 184.

For the Marines in Afghanistan, in Garmsir district, it is debatable whether or not they were able to move into the Build stage of their COIN approach. The 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment was moved out of Garmsir in the late summer of 2008 and was replaced by British and Afghan security forces. American commanders wondered if there would be sufficient military forces in the region "to preserve some of the gains made" by the Marines during their time in Helmand province.[108] Regardless, it is unlikely that the Marines could have fulfilled the tasks within the Build stage in Garmsir because there was insufficient local governance and non-military development resources at that time. The Marines would most likely consider themselves still holding the area until such time as adequate development activities were initiated and an effective level of local governance was attained. Given the lead role of a HN government during the Build stage and the current lack of capacity within the Afghan government, it could be argued that any military force in Afghanistan will be challenged to reach the Build stage of this COIN approach until such time as the HN government matures and develops more capability to operate at the provincial level.

Given the current challenges in Kandahar province, it can be argued that Canadian Forces are not within the Build stage. Insufficient HN security forces still present a considerable challenge for coalition forces in southern Afghanistan. In fact, the US is currently planning to surge an additional 30,000 troops into Afghanistan, many of whom will be allocated to provinces such as Kandahar because the security situation is not considered stable enough to transition to an environment that would allow extensive

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[108] Nathan Hodge, "Corps Values,"…, 28.

reconstruction and development.[109] Security forces will continue to hold key terrain and will likely look to gradually expand their influence with addition security forces. Until that time, it is doubtful that COIN forces will be able to consider themselves truly in the Build stage.

Recommendations

Without clear measures of effectiveness for each stage of the CHB approach, it is difficult to determine when exactly COIN forces are in the Build stage. As the US Army definition suggests however, the Build stage primarily involves stability operations, which are largely conducted by non-military organizations. The military may still be involved in offensive and defensive combat operations in the area, but they should be playing a minor or subordinate role to the HN security forces, particularly the police. One of the common misconceptions about the Build stage however, involves the construction of military fortifications. Contrary to some practitioners, "Build" does not mean build combat outposts for coalition troops. The focus of any construction activities during this stage of this COIN strategy should be on building essential services in the local community and building lasting institutions for the HN population and government. Build activities during this stage should be focused on long-term, sustainable development.

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[109] Olivia Ward, "Great Expectations for U.S. Afghan Reinforcements," *Toronto Star*, 31 January 2006; Available from; http://www.thestar.com/SpecialSections/article/580159; Internet; accessed 31 January, 2009.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE CLEAR, HOLD, BUILD CONCEPT

Simplicity

One of the greatest strengths of CHB is its simplicity. It has been widely used to describe COIN approaches in Iraq and Afghanistan at the tactical and operational levels because it provides a simple generalization of what COIN forces are trying to accomplish. Security forces clear out the enemy insurgents and then hold the ground, which will allow reconstruction efforts and the development of stable governance and social services. It is considered a progressive approach that will involve a transition between the three stages, all of which will depend upon an effective level of security. When the American military doctrinal interpretation of CHB is used, military functions dominate the Clear and Hold phases, through the execution of offensive and defensive operations, and stability operations are conducted in support of the overall aim to separate the insurgents from the population, and establish an acceptable degree of security within a specified area. The transition between the phases and the evolving responsibilities for military forces is evident through this interpretation of CHB. Therefore, in a general sense, the CHB approach is fairly easy to comprehend when proposed in such a manner.

Although it is a simplistic description of a COIN strategy, there are subjective and differing views as to how each phase can be applied when described within the comprehensive approach to COIN operations. Military personnel may understand the process in terms of offensive, defensive and stability operations, however other members

of the comprehensive approach, such as government and non-military agencies may not view it along the same lines. When the five or seven American lines of operations of a COIN campaign are considered, they are not easily incorporated into the CHB approach without some further analysis and thought. The Canadian lines of operations, Security, Governance and Development are perhaps more easily applied and better understood by the non-military members of the COIN team.

Use of the term "Clear"

One of the challenges with CHB is the use of the term "clear". As previously mentioned, this has a very unique and specific definition for military personnel. In a COIN environment, it is likely impossible to effectively clear all insurgents out of an area. Indeed, most security forces involved in COIN operations seem to conduct constant offensive operations against insurgents throughout the CHB approach. This can result in a subjective and contradictory interpretation of which stage COIN forces are in if they are still heavily involved in "clearing" insurgents from an area where governance and reconstruction activities are initiated because commanders believe that they are now "holding" the terrain.

As previously mentioned, the purpose of offensive operations during the Clear phase is to disrupt insurgents and their supporting network within a specific area. Unfortunately, by using the word "clear" to describe this phase, there is a tendency to focus on offensive military operations aimed at removing all insurgents in an area. Also

it presents challenges in terms of measuring success. For example, is the Clear phase accomplished only when all insurgents are "cleared" from the area? Is it accomplished if insurgents are still present? Is it even possible to truly clear insurgents from an area in a COIN campaign when there is a non-linear or contiguous battle space? Do COIN forces really need to "clear" insurgents if governance and a political solution is the true aim? Perhaps "secure" is a better word to use.

Transitional Relationship

The CHB concept is commonly considered to be a COIN approach that involves a gradual transition through the three stages over an indeterminate amount of time. The recently published US State Department *Counterinsurgency Guide* indicates that this COIN approach is "very useful, but is probably interpreted as more of a set sequence than is necessary or advantageous."[110] The transition between stages is considered to be conditions based, yet defining these conditions and accurately measuring the effectiveness of actions during the stages has proven to be a difficult process as each COIN situation offers different challenges.

By describing CHB as a linear transition between stages, there is a tendency to look for specific criteria to indicate which stage security forces are in at any given time. Due to the nature of the COIN environment, this may not be an easy task. As previously

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[110] United States. Department of State. *U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide*. January 2009. Available on-line at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf; Internet; accessed 23 February 2009, 23.

mentioned, every COIN operation will involve different circumstances and a different set of challenges. As the examples have demonstrated, often there is simultaneous offensive, defensive and stability operations at any given time in a COIN environment, the intensity of which may shift on a daily basis, depending upon the insurgent capabilities and goals. Therefore, the interpretation of where COIN forces sit within this linear representation of the COIN approach is quite subjective without clear and useful criteria to measure against. Therefore, should CHB really be considered a phased approach?

Perhaps it is better to consider CHB as a continuous operation where the weight of effort between military and non-military elements changes throughout the operation, depending upon the severity of the insurgent threat, the overall progress, and the availability of sufficient resources. Figure 2.4 provides an alternative illustration of CHB that is not fixed to three specific stages or phases. This is a less prescriptive approach where success would be dependant upon any number of factors. Progress in the overall effort can shift throughout, in which case, the weight of effort between the three components would also shift accordingly. Whether it is solely the military conducting all three activities, or a joint effort becomes somewhat irrelevant. The intent of this alternative illustration of CHB is to clearly demonstrate that all three activities need to occur simultaneously throughout and that CHB are general activities rather than discrete stages or phases.

Clear, Hold, Build – A Continuous Operation

Military

Effort

Non-Military

Clear (Security)

Hold (Governance)

Build (Development)

Operational Progress
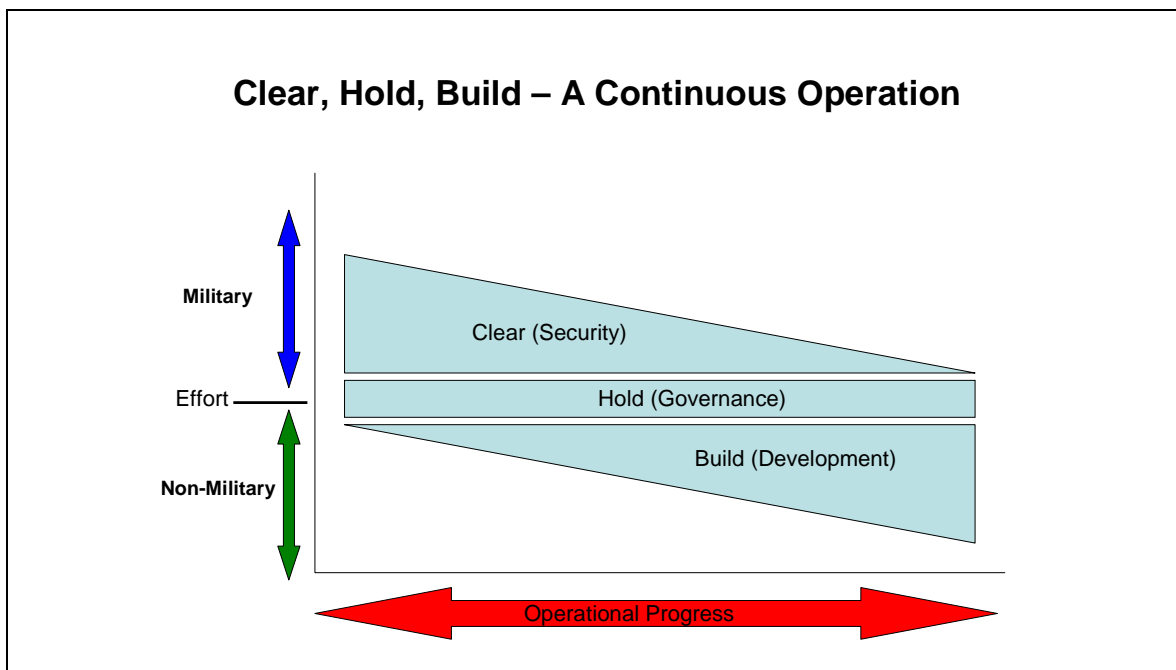
Figure 2.4 – Clear, Hold, Build concept as a continuous operation.[111]

Ideally, military efforts should be concentrated on security functions, however recent experiences have demonstrated that the security situation may not always allow this. As soon as areas are "cleared" of insurgents, they must be held. This effort will likely remain constant throughout. However, equally important is the requirement for rapid and tangible reconstruction efforts, which may be the responsibility of military forces early in the operation, hence the shifting degree of military and non-military effort throughout. As the security situation improves, non-military agencies provide more effort, while military units concentrate more on the security functions. By considering the strategy in this manner, there is no longer a question of necessary criteria to transition between stages. Measures of effectiveness become less important to some degree with this model.

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[111] This model was developed by the author while attending the Canadian Forces College as a student on the Joint Command and Staff Program 35, September 2008 – June 2009.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The US Army definition of CHB provides general guidance along lines of offensive, defensive and stability operations. Its focus is primarily on military actions in support of governance and reconstruction agencies or stakeholders. This is not surprising, nor inappropriate given the focus military doctrine manuals. However, there is a tendency to perceive CHB as an enemy-centric, military focused approach with HN security forces, government departments and non-government organizations playing supporting roles. US Military doctrine and State Department COIN guidance however indicates that this is not the case. The US State Department suggests that non-military means should be the priority in a COIN campaign, and that security, although necessary, will not defeat an insurgency alone. It also indicates that the US Government will oversee all US activities in a COIN campaign, and recommends that "civilian and military measures should be applied simultaneously to achieve success."[112]

The Canadian interpretation of CHB offered here provides another viewpoint. It is more easily configured along the Canadian lines of operations of Security, Governance and Development, and emphasizes a comprehensive, "Whole of Government" approach. Despite its popular appeal, unfortunately the CHB approach is not included in the current

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[112] US Department of State, *Counterinsurgency For U.S. Government Policy Makers: A Work in Progress*. October 2007; available on-line from http://www.usgcoin.org/library/usgdocuments/interimcounterinsurgencyguide(Oct2007).pdf; Internet; accessed 21 January 2009, 13.

Canadian Military *Counter-Insurgency Operations* manual. Instead, the emphasis is on

the Ink Spot method which will be explored in detail in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER THREE – THE INK SPOT APPROACH

INTRODUCTION

The origins of the Ink Spot strategy can be traced back to French General Hubert Lyautey who first coined the term *tache d'huile* (oil spot) to describe French military efforts to gradually counter the insurgent threat in Indochina in the late nineteenth century.[113] General Lyautey was influenced by Colonel Gallieni, one of his subordinate commanders, who believed insurgents were largely motivated by general economic conditions at the time and not necessarily as a result of any particular political grievance. He believed that the insurgency could be "fought by prosperity."[114] Lyautey and Gallieni understood that military actions were still required to quell the insurgents, however these actions alone would prove futile unless "combined with a simultaneous work of organization – roads, telegraphs, markets, crops – so that with pacification there flowed forward, like a pool of oil, a great belt of civilization."[115] Lyautey believed that successive, concentrated military actions would gradually gain momentum and spread like an oil spot across the French colony. This COIN approach had limited success however as the Viet Minh continued to fight against French forces, eventually defeating them in 1954. Indeed there was a perception as early as 1945 that French efforts had failed, as US President Roosevelt remarked that the French had left Indochina worse off

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[113] Robert B. Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*, Vol 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 224.

[114] Andre Maurois, *Marshall Lyautey* (London: John Lane, Bodley Head, 1931), quoted in Robert B. Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*, Vol 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 221.

[115] Andre Maurois, *Marshall Lyautey …*, 221.

than when they had originally become involved. [116] The main reason for a lack of success may not have been the *tache d'huile* approach, but rather a misunderstanding of the insurgent grievances since French attempts to maintain Indochina as a French colony clashed with the nationalist goals of the Viet Minh and the majority of the Vietnamese population.

After the French experience in Indochina, the Oil Spot concept was applied to insurgencies in various conflicts, including Algeria and Malaya. Analysts and practitioners have used the Oil Spot concept interchangeably with Clear, Hold, Build (CHB) to describe current COIN actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Draft US Army Field Manual 3-24.2 suggests that CHB is simply the modern term for the Oil Spot theory.[117] Canadian COIN doctrine presents the Oil Spot concept as an effective COIN strategy, referring to it as the "Ink Spot", but makes no mention of CHB.[118] The intent of this chapter is to gain a better understanding of the Oil Spot concept. It will begin with a brief analysis of past applications of the Oil Spot theory, including Iraq and Afghanistan, followed by an examination of the current Canadian military doctrinal explanation of this COIN approach. Following this analysis, it will be apparent that although there are some similarities, there are some fundamental differences between the Oil Spot and the CHB approaches.

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[116] John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 117-118.

[117] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24-2…*, 3-16.

[118] Department of National Defence, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, December 2008), 5-22.

EARLY APPLICATIONS OF THE OIL SPOT STRATEGY

French *Tache D'Huile* in Algeria – 1904-1906

Following his experience in Indochina, General Lyautey became involved in Algeria in the early 1900s with French actions to maintain colonial rule of the country. He rejected previous methods of simply attacking insurgents and instead developed a strategy to apply his *tache d'huile* concept. Lyautey continued to allocate forces to disrupt enemy incursions into Algeria, however he also developed a political line of operation with the intent of influencing certain tribes by offering them protection, and providing social services such as medical clinics and markets. Lyautey understood the value of employing the military "not as an instrument of repression but as a positive social force."[119] Lyautey was able to achieve a strong degree of unity of effort as he was both the head of the French military in Algeria as well as the leading French civil servant in the region. Under his direction, it was largely the military that was providing the improvements to social services. This worked to his advantage but also proved counterproductive since "it represented one man's idea rather than a national idea."[120] Moreover, this was a purely French solution to the Algerian insurgency. It did not involve the same interaction with the indigenous government as would be expected in the contemporary COIN environment. Although the *tache d'huile* concept was applied with some success in Algeria, it did not provide an enduring solution to the conflict and the

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[119] Robert B. Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*, Vol 1..., 225.

[120] Robert B. Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*, Vol 1..., 227.

regional grievances at the time. Algerian grievances were left unresolved and French forces remained in Algeria well after World War II (WWII).

The British "White Zones" in Malaya 1952-1954

The British actions in Malaya between 1948 and 1960 have often been referred to as an example of a successful COIN campaign. The term "winning the hearts and minds" of the indigenous population was first developed during this campaign by Sir Gerald Templer, the British High Commissioner in Malaya from 1952 to 1954.[121] The success of this campaign may not rest squarely with the application of the Oil Spot theory but rather indigenous participation within a strategy that integrated military, political and social elements towards a common purpose. Nevertheless, it is worth briefly examining this campaign to understand past applications of the Oil Spot concept.

The initial British COIN strategy in Malaya involved an aggressive, military centred approach that was aimed primarily at defeating the Communist insurgents. It involved large scale operations designed to locate, trap and then destroy insurgent forces. Due to a high number of civilian casualties, this initial approach proved to be less than successful as the army appeared "more at war with the Malayan population, especially the Chinese community, than acting as its guardian and protector."[122] The insurgents

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[121] Richard Stubbs, "From Search and Destroy to Hearts and Minds: The Evolution of British Strategy in Malaya 1948-60," in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, ed. Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian, 113-130 (New York: Osprey, 2008), 113.

[122] Richard Stubbs, "From Search and Destroy to Hearts and Minds" …, 115.

were able to sustain their operations by forcing their will upon the local population. The British adopted a massive population relocation program in order to attempt to separate the population from the insurgents. By 1954 some 570,000 people had been relocated to purpose built communities as part of the resettlement programs, however this strategy became counterproductive. The local inhabitants were separated from their wealth and livelihoods, which turned people towards the Communist insurgents, and many of these resettlement centres ended up as "squalid slums with atrocious living conditions."[123]

In 1952, Lieutenant General Sir Gerald Templar arrived in Malaya to serve as High Commissioner and immediately set about to adjust the British COIN strategy. His first priority was to win the loyalty of the majority of the population by demonstrating that there was a viable alternative to the Communist option. He wanted the Malayan people to determine their own future rather than a colonial power or communist regime. His second priority was to consolidate all "administrative, political, economic, cultural, spiritual, and military factors" towards the same goal of defeating the insurgency, thereby achieving unity of effort and purpose.[124] This involved further development of joint committees at district, state, and federal levels, consisting of military, police and civil representatives.[125] Templar also began a program to improve conditions within the resettlement centres by providing food, medicine, clothes, clean water, and basic medical care, as well as the potential for sustained development. As the situation improved,

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[123] Richard Stubbs, "From Search and Destroy to Hearts and Minds" …, 119.

[124] Richard Stubbs, "From Search and Destroy to Hearts and Minds" …, 121.

[125] Thomas R. Mockaitis, *Iraq and the Challenge of Counterinsurgency* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008), 24.

Templar introduced the idea of "white areas" which became a designation for an area that had adequate security and where population restrictions such as curfews and other emergency regulations could be lifted. Gradually these areas were increased, like an oil spot to the point where in 1954 the "white areas" contained over 1.3 million people. These areas were gradually expanded as the insurgency subsided and "more and more people accepted the authority of the government."[126] Despite some 13 million Malayan citizens living within the "white areas" when Templar left the country in 1954, this was not necessarily the defining element of the Malayan campaign. Indeed, British COIN efforts continued in Malaya long after 1954.

Under Templar's leadership, there was a shift in the British COIN strategy from an aggressive, enemy focused view to a more population-centric approach, executed through a comprehensive framework involving military and non-military elements of British and Malayan power. It has been argued that Templar's greatest accomplishment was "his ability to coordinate all the efforts – social, political, economic, police, and military – to move Malaya forward to a position in which it would be ready for independence".[127] What is interesting to note in this case however, is the fact that Templar was able to achieve unity of effort and purpose by virtue of his appointment by the British Government. As High Commissioner, he was given exceptional civil and military powers to defeat the insurgency, and given "complete operational command over

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[126] Richard Stubbs, "From Search and Destroy to Hearts and Minds" …, 124.

[127] John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife*…, 100.

all Armed Forces assigned to operations in the Federation".[128] This was perhaps the most important aspect of the British COIN strategy in Malaya and the one that offered the best opportunity for success.

CONTEMPORARY APPLICATIONS OF THE INK SPOT STRATEGY

The American "Urban Oilspot" in Iraq – 2003-2007

Prior to the "surge" of additional American forces into Iraq in 2007 and the appointment of General David Petraeus as Commander Multi-National Force – Iraq (MNF-I), there had been a great deal of criticism over the American COIN strategy in Iraq. The civil war that had erupted in Iraq, and the growing numbers of American casualties demonstrated a requirement for a renewed strategy. The Iraq Study Group recommended placing more emphasis on expanding and training the Iraqi security forces in addition to more assistance to the Iraqi government functions.[129] Additionally, Andrew Krepinevich, a prominent American defence expert, argued that US forces were mainly preoccupied with hunting down and killing insurgents, and that the US and Iraqi forces should adopt an *oil-spot strategy* in Iraq if they wanted to be successful. He argued that rather than an enemy-centred approach, US and Iraqi forces "should concentrate on providing security and opportunity to the Iraqi people, thereby denying

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[128] John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife*…, 88.

[129] Carter Malkasian, "Counterinsurgency in Iraq: May 2003 – January 2007," in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, ed. Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian, 241-259 (New York: Osprey, 2008), 257-258.

insurgents the popular support they need."[130] Krepinevich acknowledged that US forces

were spread thin across Iraq. He believed that US and Iraqi security forces needed to

focus their efforts on key areas and then eventually expand their security footprint, in line

with the Oil Spot concept. He warned however that this strategy would require "a

protracted commitment of U.S. resources, a willingness to risk more casualties in the

short term, and an enduring U.S. presence in Iraq".[131] At this time, the US military was

conducting its own internal review of its COIN doctrine under the leadership of General

Petraeus. The result of this institutional review was the publication of FM 3-24, which

offers CHB as a viable COIN strategy.[132]

Krepinevich recommended that the American and Iraqi governments should begin

applying the Oil Spot strategy by enhancing the security in a "Green Zone", the areas

within Iraq in which there was a suitable degree of security, usually associated with large

security forces and where local inhabitants could lead a relatively normal and secure life.

The rest of the country was considered the "Red Zone" and involved areas where there

were large concentrations of insurgents and a lack of adequate security.   Krepinevich

believed that reconstruction efforts should be focused in the Green Zones in an effort to

reward loyalty to the government and capitalize on the large security footprint. He

recommended that American forces should actively reinforce existing Iraqi security

forces by embedding American soldiers within the units and then concentrating security

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[130] Andrew F. Krepinevich, "How To Win In Iraq," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 5 (September/October 2005): 88-89.

[131] Andrew F. Krepinevich, "How To Win In Iraq,"…, 89.

[132] Carter Malkasian, "Counterinsurgency in Iraq"…, 253.

forces for large scale offensive operations in the Red Zone.[133] These large scale

offensives were essentially in line with the CHB concept. Krepinevich saw military

forces conducting offensive sweep operations into specific areas to clear insurgents, and

then be followed up by police forces to maintain a level of security alongside military

forces. Eventually reconstruction activities would be conducted in order to extend the

legitimacy of the Iraqi government. Krepinevich stressed however, that "the targets for

oil-spot offensives would have to be carefully chosen" in order to avoid overextending

security forces unnecessarily or extending the Green Zone into areas that would not prove

useful.[134] Krepinevich's concept could represent a possible connection between the Oil

Spot theory and the CHB concept. The Oil Spot approach could be considered the

overall operational strategy, while CHB could be viewed as a tactical application, or

supporting element of this strategy, where efforts are focused on a specific location or

sub-district to expand the Oil Spot. Krepinevich acknowledged that this protracted,

disciplined and methodical approach could prove to be frustrating for the US military

which prefers to take the fight to the enemy through traditional offensive operations.

In 2006 American and Iraqi forces conducted Operation Together Forward to

regain control of Adhamiyah, a district of Baghdad. This operation was developed in line

with the Oil Spot theory and from the lessons of the 3rd ACR in Tal Afar. It called for

military units to establish order, restore essential services, set up advisory councils, and

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[133] Andrew F. Krepinevich, "How To Win In Iraq,"…, 94-95.

[134] Andrew F. Krepinevich, "How To Win In Iraq,"…, 96.

eventually hand over control to Iraqi security forces.[135] Some 15,000 American troops

cleared neighbourhoods, block by block in an area of only a few squares miles. Initially,

the operation was considered a success because insurgents had been defeated and

Adhamiyah was considered "one of the safest areas" in Baghdad.[136] Unfortunately

however, sectarian violence continued unabated outside the district, in the so called Red

Zone. By October, American military commanders were admitting that the operation was

unsuccessful because violence had erupted again and there was insufficient numbers of

Iraqi security forces to maintain an enduring security presence.[137]

The American military learned from this experience, and applied these lessons

during Operation Fard al Qanum, General Petraeus's new security plan for Baghdad. The

surge of additional troops in 2007 provided the opportunity to maintain adequate levels of

security throughout Baghdad and gradually improve the security situation. Over 50 small

outposts manned by Iraqi police, Iraqi Army, and US troops were established throughout

Baghdad. General Petraeus shifted the American COIN strategy from an enemy-centric

to a population-centric approach with his top priority being the protection of the Iraqi

population.[138] The requirement for adequate numbers of security forces and an enduring

security presence was well understood within this new COIN approach in Iraq. Only

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[135] Thomas R. Mockaitis, *Iraq and the Challenge of Counterinsurgency*…, 138.

[136] Oliver Poole, "Ink Spot Strategy Latest Attempt to Quell Baghdad," *The Telegraph*; available from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1529158/Ink-spot-strategy-latest-attempt-to-quell-Baghdad.html; Internet; accessed 7 January 2009.

[137] Carter Malkasian, "Counterinsurgency in Iraq"…, 256.

[138] Carter Malkasian, "Counterinsurgency in Iraq"…, 258.

after adequate numbers of security forces were in place could any expansion of the Green

Zone be considered. Therefore, it was not necessarily the specific COIN strategy that

prevailed but rather a shift to a population-centric approach along with sufficient numbers

of security forces to saturate and dominate the areas where reconstruction and governance

activities could take place.

This COIN approach in Iraq has been further developed by analysts and

practitioners of COIN operations. In 2007 David Kilcullen offered the "Urban Oilspot"

concept which included three distinct zones within a specific urban area (Figure 3.1).
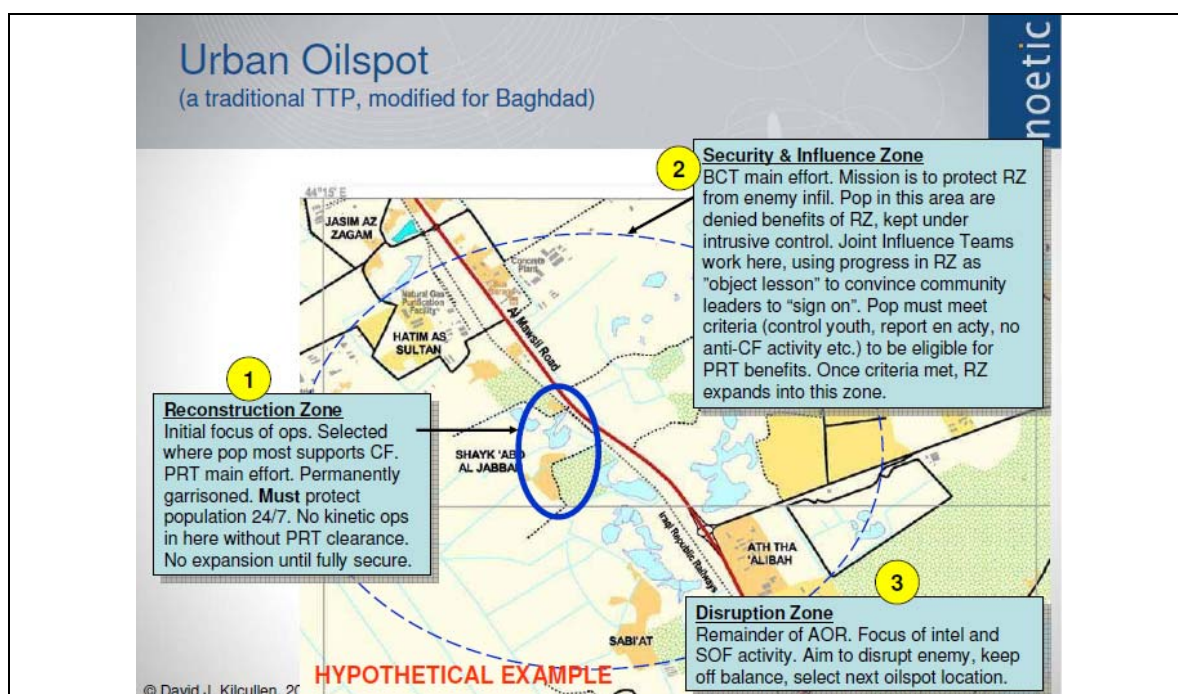

Figure 3.1 – Urban Oilspot concept.[139]

[139] David J. Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq: Theory and Practice, 2007*, available at http://www.smallwars.quantico.usmc.mil/documents/Counterinsurgency_in_Iraq_Theory_and_Practice_2007.pdf; Internet, accessed 1 March 2009.

This concept was a result of the introduction of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Iraq and the requirement to synchronize efforts between the various COIN elements. Similar to Seth Jones' concept of separate zones in a COIN environment, Kilcullen suggests that there is a Reconstruction Zone, a Security and Influence Zone and a Disruption Zone. Following offensive combat operations to clear insurgents, the Reconstruction Zone begins as the initial focus, and becomes the PRT main effort. This zone includes a permanent security element garrisoned in location and is chosen because of its support for the coalition forces and the prospect for enduring progress. The Security and Influence Zone becomes the military's main effort. In this Zone, there are strict population controls and benefits from the PRT are only provided when certain criteria are met by the local population and community leaders. Once these criteria are met, the Reconstruction Zone can be expanded into this area. Finally, the Disruption Zone is considered the remainder of the Area of Operational Responsibility (AOR). Security forces operate here but only in a limited capacity in order to disrupt the enemy and determine the next suitable location for the expansion of this Urban Oilspot.[140]

ISAF and the Afghan Development Zones

In Afghanistan, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has adopted a COIN approach based upon the Ink Spot strategy with the Afghan Development Zone (ADZ) concept. This concept germinated from the Afghan National Development

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[140] David J. Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq: Theory and Practice, 2007*, available at http://www.smallwars.quantico.usmc.mil/documents/Counterinsurgency_in_Iraq_Theory_and_Practice_2007.pdf; Internet, accessed 01 March 2009.

Strategy (ANDS), and was launched by President Hamid Karzai in 2006. The idea behind

the ADZ concept was to "identify strategically important geographic zones (initially in

the south and east) where improvements in security and governance will create conditions

conducive to more effective, noticeable development." [141]   The belief was that the

normalcy and prosperity within these ADZs would eventually become contagious and

spread to neighbouring communities, particularly the rural areas.[142] The precise

geographical boundaries of these ADZs are somewhat arbitrary but are generally centred

on major population centres such as Kandahar and Lashkar Gah, and major roadways.

The intent is to eventually link these various economic hubs together and expand the Oil

Spot. To support this cooperative approach within the ADZs, the Policy Action Group

(PAG) was established, which serves as a mechanism for Afghan government

representatives to become more actively involved in the ANDS at the provincial level. In

the spring of 2007, General David Richards, former Commander of ISAF remarked that

the ADZs were proving to be very successful since governance, reconstruction and

development activities were "properly synchronized in areas secured by ISAF and

ANSF".[143]

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[141] Peter Dahl Thruelsen, "NATO In Afghanistan: What Lessons Are We Learning, and Are We Willing to Adjust," *Danish Institute for International Studies Report 2007: 14*, available from http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Reports%202007/DIIS_2007-14_UK_F_WEB.pdf; Internet; accessed 03 March 2009: 11.

[142] Lee Windsor, David Charters and Brent Wilson, *Kandahar Tour: The Turning Point in Canada's Afghan Mission* (Mississauga, ON: Wiley and Sons, 2008), 90.

[143] David Richards, "Reviewing Riga," *NATO Review 2007*; available from http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2007/issue1/english/art1.html; Internet; accessed 02 March 09.

This concept has not been without its setbacks and challenges however. In

Helmand province, British forces conducted operations to improve security in Lashkar

Gah and Gereskh with the intent of supporting follow-on development activities.

However, these development activities failed to transpire on a sufficient scale to

influence the local population. Only small scale development projects were conducted,

primarily through the efforts of military personnel assigned to the ISAF PRT in Helmand

province. Inadequate support of non-government organizations (NGO) for these

development activities was mainly due to the perception of "an insufficient level of

security for them to carry out their work."[144] Similar circumstances existed for Canadian

ISAF elements operating in Kandahar province in 2006 following Op Medusa. A large

amount of support was planned for reconstruction efforts following major offensive

combat operations in Zhari district. However, much of this assistance was the result of

arrangements made in the Canadian PRT with USAID, which planned to provide US$8

million. An additional US$18 million was allocated for Rural Rehabilitation and

Development. However, by January 2007, very little of this money had materialized

within the local community. A lack of coordination between the military and the

civilians in charge of reconstruction projects, and "the lack of security for aid workers

were blamed for the failure to deliver."[145] It should be noted that although the current

relationship between the military and civilian representatives is not without its

challenges, the situation has improved somewhat since 2006 with the introduction of

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[144] Peter Dahl Thruelsen, "NATO In Afghanistan"..., 12.

[145] Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 197.

more civilian government and non-government representatives within the Canadian Task Force in Afghanistan.[146]

General Richards remarked in 2007 that unity of effort between the international community and the Afghan government was improving in terms of security, however there was still a lack of cohesion and focus when it came to governance and reconstruction. This lack of concerted effort has been a common criticism of the ADZ concept within the Afghanistan campaign. General Richards also indicated that it was proving difficult to "maintain security where we have gained it" because of a lack of sufficient numbers of coalition and indigenous security forces.[147] Finally, he recommended that the international community and coalition partners needed to find a way to bring more reconstruction and development activities to areas where security forces were operating to expand the ADZs. One of his suggestions was to replicate the US Commander's Emergency Relief Programme (CERP) with various NATO nations in order to provide the necessary capacity demanded by the security forces engaged in the communities.[148] This could be considered a short-term solution that will put additional funds into the hands of military commanders on the ground. However, one of the common criticisms has been that the ADZ concept relies on the non-military actors to

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[146] The Government of Canada Report on Afghanistan, June 2008 indicates that the number of Canadian civilians in Kandahar has grown from 27 to 71, while the number of Canadian civilians at the Canadian Embassy in Kabul has grown from 24 to 32 (page 8). See Government of Canada, "Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan, June 2008: Setting the Course to 2011", available from http://www.afghanistan.gc.ca/canada-afghanistan/documents/q108/index.aspx; Internet, accessed 08 April 2009.

[147] David Richards, "Reviewing Riga,"….

[148] David Richards, "Reviewing Riga,"….

implement large scale development projects, "yet these actors are not present in the more unstable parts of Afghanistan where the current ADZs are located."[149] It is apparent that tangible differences are required immediately following ISAF operations to expand the ADZ. If non-military aid agencies are unwilling to provide the necessary funding and resources, then military units require the capacity to conduct reconstruction activities themselves. History may be the judge as to whether or not this strategy will be successful as the campaign in Afghanistan continues to evolve.

THE INK SPOT – THE CANADIAN DOCTRINAL EXPLANATION

The recently published Canadian military *Counter-Insurgency Operations* manual offers the *tache d'huile* approach as an "effective, practical and methodical manner of achieving success" in a COIN campaign.[150] Rather than referring to this approach as the Oil Spot concept, Canadian Army doctrine has coined the term "Ink Spot" instead. This Canadian COIN approach is heavily influenced by Canadian experience in Afghanistan. This Ink Spot approach sees insurgents gradually dislocated from their physical and moral support bases, through the expansion of physical and psychological influences. Similar to allied COIN approaches, fundamental to this concept is the application of a comprehensive approach to "address the security and social issues inherent to the insurgency", and build legitimacy for the campaign.[151] Canadian COIN doctrine

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[149] Peter Dahl Thruelsen, "NATO In Afghanistan"..., 12.

[150] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations* …, 5-22.

[151] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations* …, 5-22.

emphasizes the point that political engagement will lead efforts, followed by simultaneous military, social, and economic engagement, while information operations play an important role to influence perceptions of the local population and win their support.

A key component of the Canadian Ink Spot approach is the involvement of indigenous forces. Canadian doctrine stresses that at every stage in the campaign, "local forces and agencies must be seen to be in the lead and at the forefront to the greatest extent possible" in order to enhance their legitimacy and undermine insurgent claims that the COIN force is an army of occupation.[152] The manual also emphasizes the requirement to consult with local authorities at all levels to determine the expansion of the Ink Spot. Like FM 3-24, the Canadian COIN manual indicates that military forces will conduct *full-spectrum operations* during the campaign, which will require simultaneous offensive, defensive and stability operations. The manual also suggests that military forces may be required initially to conduct humanitarian efforts "to relieve suffering, provide aid and essential services, address grievances and generally gain support for the campaign" if non-military agencies are not available.[153] Military actions will involve the use of *Fires* or physical activities to separate the insurgents from the population, as well as *Influence Activities* designed to shape understanding and perceptions among the population, in order to gain and maintain support for the campaign. These *influence activities* will involve psychological warfare units, public

[152] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations* …, 5-22.

[153] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations* …, 5-22.

affairs and Civilian-Military Cooperation teams (CIMIC). Although the Canadian COIN

manual promotes a comprehensive approach to COIN operations, much of the description

of the Ink Spot approach centres on military activities.

The Canadian Ink Spot approach is described as a series of eight sequential steps,

which involve continual interaction with indigenous government representatives and the

local community throughout the process (Figure 3.2).
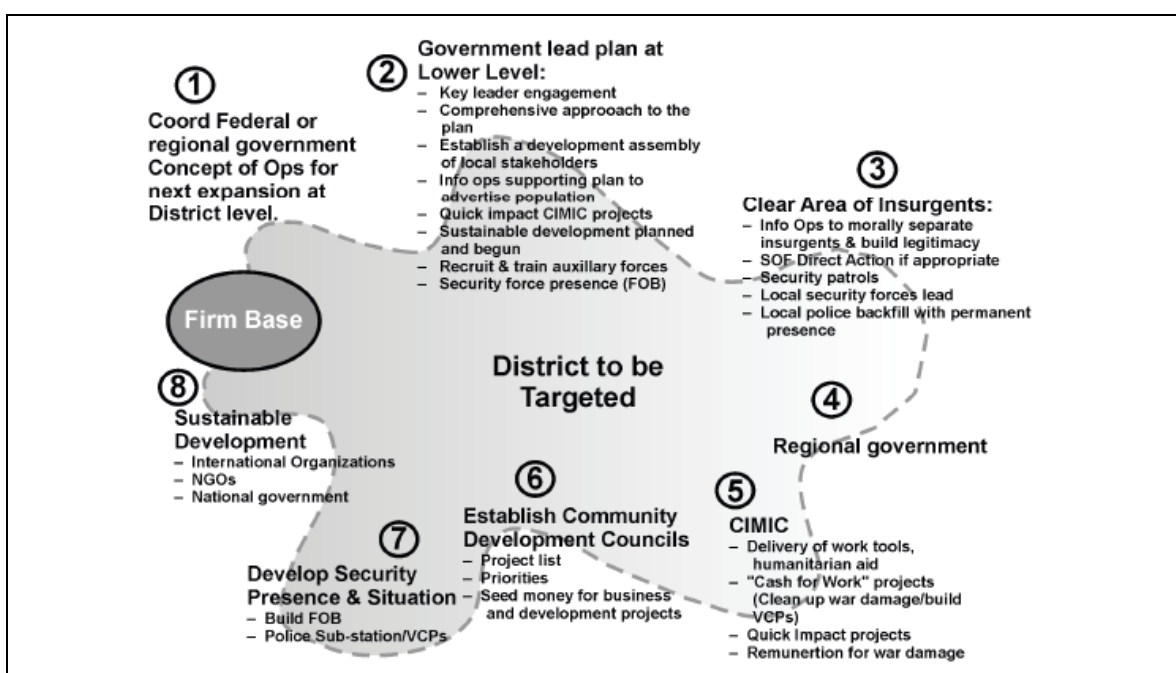

Figure 3.2 – Example of the Application of the Ink Spot on a District.[154]

Step One: Securing a Firm Base and Initial Government Planning

This first step involves activities to establish a base of operations, preferably

within the country where COIN forces will operate, and the initial coordination with the

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[154] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations …*, 5-29.

HN government representatives. This process will depend on many factors including the

nature of the insurgency and the capacity of the HN government. Ideally, a plan is

developed between COIN forces and the HN government, and there is concurrence on

which areas COIN forces should focus to improve security and extend the influence of

the HN government. The Canadian COIN manual suggests that such a plan should

involve "comprehensive operations to physically dislocate and pre-empt the insurgents

and to psychologically dislocate and disrupt them."[155] The important element of this first

step is the immediate engagement with the HN government representatives. This COIN

approach must involve HN representatives in order to foster legitimacy and ensure that

the population does not perceive the plan to be a foreign intervention.

Step Two: Engagement of the Lower Levels of Government

The second step involves continued interaction with local government

representatives at the provincial and district levels in order to further develop the overall

plan and ensure that it meets the unique circumstances that may exist at these levels.

This process involves both military and non-military organizations, thereby representing

a comprehensive approach in order to achieve short and long-term goals. Although the

preponderance of activities may involve security operations, governance and

development activities can begin concurrently, depending upon the environment, access

to resources and the level of the insurgency. Local committees can be established to

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[155] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations* …, 5-23.

assist with local governance issues while small "quick-impact" CIMIC projects can be initiated in order to gain momentum and produce rapid and tangible results within the community. Security forces, particularly the police should be surged into the area in order to establish and maintain an improved degree of security. The Canadian COIN manual cautions against establishing numerous forward operating bases (FOBs). COIN forces should "live and work amongst the population" and should not be reliant upon large or numerous static fortifications if possible.[156] There is a concern that prolonged use of FOBs will work against the COIN forces because it may generate a garrison mentality, and it physically and psychologically separates the COIN forces from the population.

Step Three: Clear Area of Insurgent Presence and Influences

Similar to FM 3-24, the Canadian COIN manual uses the term "clear" to describe security force operations to physically and morally separate the insurgents from the population. However, unlike CHB, this is not the first action for COIN forces. Canadian doctrine indicates that a "combination of offensive and defensive operations will be used to directly pursue and engage insurgents" and that these operations should be led by indigenous forces wherever possible.[157] It is understood that offensive military action is a necessary aspect of COIN operations, despite the desire for a preponderance of political actions to deal with grievances of the insurgents and the population. In addition to

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[156] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations* …, 5-25.

[157] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations* …, 5-25.

offensive operations however, Canadian doctrine underlines the importance of the police as a key element for establishing and maintaining security, and the requirement to establish a legitimate and persistent police presence.

Step Four: Government Lead in the Return of Displaced Persons

The fourth step in the Canadian Ink Spot approach sees the HN government taking a leading role in dealing with returning refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). This step may be dependant upon the unique situation within a given COIN campaign. Regardless, it will be an extremely difficult issue for COIN agencies and the HN government to deal with. The HN government must lead this effort with non-military agency assistance. The idea behind including this as a step in the Ink Spot approach is the belief that the return of refugees and IDPs "will not only be a sign of returning normalcy and security but will breed additional security through their presence and support of the campaign."[158] This may be partly wishful thinking however as refugees and IDPs can often be a source for insurgents and cause friction within the local community if they are seen as an additional drain on scarce and valuable resources, particularly in a tribal society. Therefore, the validity of this step deserves additional scrutiny by COIN practitioners, particularly those elements working with the HN government.

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[158] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations* …, 5-26.

Step Five: CIMIC Activities by the Military

The Canadian COIN manual indicates that CIMIC activities should be planned in advance of moving into a new area, and should start as soon as possible. These activities could be executed before non-military agencies arrive in the area but should be planned in concert with long-term development projects. These CIMIC activities will involve quick-impact projects such as "repairs to wells and the conduct of local medical clinics, remuneration for collateral damages, low-level employment schemes such as war damage repairs and checkpoint construction and delivery of basic tools for work and agriculture."[159] One of the key aspects of this step in the Ink Spot approach is that funds and resources, and the authority to use them should be allocated to the military unit and sub-unit levels in order to produce rapid results and build confidence with the local population.

Step Six: Establish Low-Level Community Based Development Councils

The establishment of community-based development councils is considered an important step to integrate local leaders into development plans for their community. These councils will include military and non-military representation but should consist primarily of local government representatives, and some form of national government representation. The intent of forming such committees is to create indigenous-led

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[159] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations* …, 5-26.

organizations which can identify and vocalize priorities and specific projects within a specific area. The challenge will be to ensure that sufficient support exists to conduct such projects and that the process "is not exploited by local leaders with their own agendas to gain support for themselves."[160] This is particularly important in an insurgency where the national government may not be well represented or received at the provincial or district level because of tribal dynamics or a lack of confidence.

Step Seven: Develop Security Presence and Set Conditions for Sustainable Security

The intent of this seventh step is to establish and maintain a permanent and enduring security presence. Effort is focused primarily on police forces rather than military forces. The COIN manual indicates that security forces should be increasingly integrated into the local populace in order to avoid development of a "fortress disposition and mentality."[161] However, it also indicates that police expansion may require the creation of additional police posts and sub-stations throughout the area. These posts may be located with military forces, depending upon the security situation. The challenge with this step is the transition between military and police forces. The COIN manual suggests that auxiliary police forces should be raised, consisting of local inhabitants because they will have a vested interest in the security of their communities. This concept has been applied in Iraq to varying degrees of success, and has been attempted in Kandahar province with some limited progress. The Canadian COIN manual cautions

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[160] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations* …, 5-27.

[161] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations* …, 5-27.

that this initiative should be in line with the overall security sector reform process in

order to avoid local solutions that may not include national HN government support.

Step Eight: Set the Conditions for Sustainable Development

The final step in the Ink Spot approach involves primarily non-military agencies.

The COIN manual suggests that after "security has been established, other agencies

within the comprehensive approach should begin to create sustainable development."[162]

This statement could be misleading as development activities should be conducted

concurrently with security and governance efforts, and any early reconstruction activities

should be part of a larger plan to provide sustainable development. Therefore, this step

should perhaps not be considered last, and initiated after security has been established.

Indigenous authorities should play a key role in any sustainable development strategy in

order to ensure that projects will meet the expectations of the local population. Finally,

any long-term development plans must have the support and commitment of those

involved, particularly within the international community and various aid agencies. If

development plans and projects are not carried out, there will be a negative impact on the

overall legitimacy of the COIN campaign, and the local population will lack confidence

in the HN government and institutions.

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[162] DND, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations* …, 5-27.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE INK SPOT APPROACH

Integration of HN Elements

The key aspect of the Ink Spot approach is the continual involvement of HN government representatives and authorities. The sequential eight-step method proposed in the Canadian COIN manual begins with consultation with the HN national government and continues throughout with interaction at all levels of government, including village leader representation. This is perhaps the defining feature between the Ink Spot and CHB. Senior Canadian officers with recent experience in Afghanistan have reinforced the essential requirement for a comprehensive approach with the HN government. Major General Marquis Hainse remarked that the Afghanistan Government and the people of Afghanistan are key elements of the COIN campaign, and should play a lead role. "They need to lead" and the coalition forces "must facilitate their leadership."[163] The Ink Spot approach tends to support and reinforce this concept more directly than CHB.

The direct and continued involvement of HN representatives features as an important factor for success when the British experience in Malaya is contrasted with the French experience in Indochina and Algeria. When the HN government and the indigenous population are excluded from efforts to deal with the insurgent threat, the

COIN approach would appear to be far less effective. Seth Jones has indicated that early coalition efforts in Afghanistan were most effective "when they leveraged the Afghan government and indigenous forces" because there was cooperation, which helped to build capacity within HN institutions such as the ANA.[164] This essential element has been reinforced recently by General David McKiernan, former Commander ISAF, in his *Tactical Directive* issued in December 2008, in which he stressed the importance of operating in cooperation with Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) "to the maximum extent possible" and that "ISAF independent operations must be the exception."[165] The integration of HN representatives would prevent COIN forces from conducting operations that do not have the support of the HN government or the local population. This would also assist COIN forces with choosing the right locations to begin and expand the Ink Spot.

Population-centric Approach

Unlike CHB which begins with actions to defeat insurgents, the Ink Spot approach begins with a focus on the indigenous population. It could be argued that the Ink Spot approach is more population-centric while CHB tends to focus on the insurgent threat before transitioning towards a population-centric COIN approach. Consequently,

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[163] Chris Thatcher, "Today's Lessons For Tomorrow's Wars," *Vanguard*, http://www.vanguardcanada.com/TodaysLessonsTomorrowsWarsHainse; Internet; accessed 13 March 2009.

[164] Seth G. Jones, "Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan," *RAND Counterinsurgency Study*, Vol. 4 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), 109.

the Ink Spot approach tends to support many of the fundamental tenets of COIN such as the primacy of political actions over military actions. The British experience in Malaya and American actions in Iraq following the surge in 2007 demonstrate the effectiveness of a change in posture of the COIN forces from an enemy-centric strategy to a COIN approach than focuses more on the population, and the actions required to address the grievances of the insurgency. COIN analysts and practitioners like David Kilcullen have echoed the importance of focusing on the population rather than the insurgents since the more COIN forces "focus on the enemy, the harder it is to actually get anything done with the population".[166] It is understood that military forces provide an essential component of an effective COIN strategy, and that defeating insurgents will continue to be a necessity, however "the overarching counterinsurgency strategy is to work with the population."[167]

Definition of the Ink Spot and Measures of Success

One of the difficult challenges with the Ink Spot approach is defining the extent of the Ink Spot and assessing the progress within this area. Determining the physical dimensions of the Ink Spot often becomes an exercise in subjectivity and interpretation, and can be adversely affected by a single action which portrays a general lack of security

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[165] David D. McKiernan, "Tactical Directive," ISAF HQ, Kabul, Afghanistan (30 December 2008), http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/official_texts/Tactical%20Directive_090114.pdf; Internet ; accessed 12 March 2008.

[166] Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble…*, 6.

[167] Gary H. Rice, "Hallmarks of Successful COIN Strategies," *Vanguard*, http://www.vanguardcanada.com/SuccessfulCOINStrategiesRice; Internet; accessed 13 March 2009.

or HN government control such as the Sarapoza Prison break in Kandahar city in 2008.

This single event perpetuated a sense that Kandahar city, the centre of the Kandahar

ADZ, was not adequately protected by either coalition security forces or the ANSF. This

in turn had an adverse effect on reconstruction and development activities as insurgents

had "successfully driven down the perception of people's personal security…and

intimidated the population."[168]

The challenge of accurately determining the extent of the Ink Spot is not a new

phenomenon for COIN practitioners. In 1953, Bernard Fall, a French doctoral student

went to Vietnam to assess French efforts to defeat the insurgency. He found that French

claims about the amount of territory they controlled were exaggerated, "or at least lacked

real meaning".[169] Fall visited a number of areas and realized that one of the most

effective methods to determine government control was through tax records. Areas in

which taxes were not paid indicated a lack of actual government control. This method of

using tax payments as a measure of performance within the ADZs in Afghanistan could

be applied in the future, however effective Afghan Government tax policies do not yet

exist.[170] Consequently, the extent of the ADZ in Afghanistan will likely remain a

subjective exercise until there is some reliable form of assessment. In the interim, it is

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[168] Murray Brewster, "Real and Perceived Taliban Keeping Kandahar on Edge," *The Canadian Press*, http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/War_Terror/2009/02/09/8324026-cp.html; Internet, accessed 09 February 2009.

[169] Adam Roberts, "Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan," *Survival* 51, no. 1 (February – March 2009): 42.

[170] Adam Roberts, "Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan,"…, 42.

largely based on the perception of security provided by COIN forces as well as the frequency of insurgent attacks.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Oil Spot or *tache d'huile* COIN concept was developed in the late nineteenth century and has been applied in various forms since. Its application by ISAF in Afghanistan through the ADZ concept serves as the modern example of this COIN approach. American and Australian COIN doctrine emphasizes the application of CHB as an effective COIN approach while Canadian COIN doctrine exclusively refers to the Ink Spot as a viable concept. It is apparent that the Canadian position has been heavily influenced by recent Canadian military experience in Afghanistan. However, by focusing on the Ink Spot concept and ignoring CHB as an effective COIN approach, employed extensively by several of our key allies, there is a perception that these are two very different concepts.

By examining the origins of the Oil Spot concept and its application in past COIN campaigns, a better understanding of this COIN approach and its correlation with CHB has been gained. Both concepts share essential elements however, the most important difference involves the initial actions of the two COIN approaches. CHB begins with significant military offensive operations to clear insurgents from an area. It is an enemy focused approach, which appears to contradict some of the key tenets of an effective COIN strategy. The Ink Spot approach, as indicated in the Canadian COIN Manual is a

more population-centric approach, and begins with a cooperative effort between COIN forces and the indigenous government authorities. Clearing of insurgents is conducted later in the process, and only if necessary.

The description of the Ink Spot approach in the Canadian COIN manual suggests that it is an eight-step, sequential approach, rather than a series of concurrent and equally important activities. This approach is heavily influenced by the situation in Afghanistan, rather than presented as a general approach to an unspecified insurgency. It is perhaps misleading and confusing as a result. Finally, the Ink Spot concept could be viewed as an overall strategy for a COIN campaign while CHB could be considered a supporting element within this overall strategy. This may allow a better understanding of the two COIN concepts and avoid the perception that one method is more aggressively focused or effective than the other.

CONCLUSION

> *"Do not implement a military strategy if the means to implement is not made available from the start."* [171]
> - Peter Dahl Thruelsen, Danish Institute for International Studies, 2007.

Although Peter Thruelsen's cautionary statement was made regarding NATO's involvement in Afghanistan, it could be equally applicable for any military campaign. The surge of American forces in Iraq in 2007, and the continual quest for additional troops and resources for NATO's Afghanistan campaign serve as examples where resources have not been made available from the start. Following the examination of CHB and the Ink Spot approaches discussed in this paper, it is apparent that the success of these efforts depends upon several critical prerequisites.

HN Government and Population Support

The British experience in Malaya, the American efforts in Iraq, and the ISAF approach in Afghanistan demonstrate that indigenous government and population support is a critical element of an effective COIN strategy. The Ink Spot approach reflects this understanding well as COIN forces continually involve HN government support, and seek the consent of the population in order to assure the legitimacy of their COIN efforts. The indigenous population and government representatives will often have a better understanding of the insurgent threat and consequently provide some useful options to

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[171] Peter Dahl Thruelsen, "NATO In Afghanistan: What Lessons Are We Learning, and Are We Willing to Adjust," *Danish Institute for International Studies Report 2007: 14*, available from http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Reports%202007/DIIS_2007-14_UK_F_WEB.pdf; Internet; accessed 03 March 2009: 12.

defeat the insurgents. The decision to expand or further develop the Ink Spot must involve the HN government and population. In Afghanistan for example, the ADZ concept was designed to focus on strategically important locations across the country, which meant the main population centres, key transportation routes, and HN government installations such as district centres. However, because of the cultural and tribal dynamic that exists in Afghanistan, focusing on economic centres may not produce the desired effects to defeat or quell the insurgency. Having indigenous representatives involved in the development of the Ink Spot is an important element.

In terms of the CHB concept, HN security forces form an essential element of the overall enduring security presence. There is a requirement to ensure that the HN government is involved in this COIN approach, and is willing to provide the necessary security forces. From this, it is also necessary to have HN government agreement on the selection of the location where COIN forces will conduct CHB operations. This idea has been reinforced by General Petraeus through his guidance to American forces operating in Iraq where he stated that COIN forces must develop "the plan for holding an area before starting to clear it."[172] It is essential that the local populace understands that the COIN forces intend to improve their overall security, and remain in the area. This can best be achieved through the integration of HN security forces with coalition forces and the involvement of local government leaders. HN support is essential for this concept to be effective and therefore must include HN government support, otherwise COIN forces

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[172] David H. Petraeus, "Multi-National Force Iraq Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance," *Military Review* 88, no. 5 (September – October 2008): 2.

risk the possibility of operating in isolation or expending precious resources unnecessarily.

Adequate Security Forces and An Enduring Presence

Setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan clearly demonstrate that a persistent presence of sufficient security forces is absolutely essential. Without sufficient security forces to remain in place after extensive offensive operations, it is unlikely that the area will remain secure. An area with questionable security may prevent non-military agencies from entering the area to assist with governance and reconstruction efforts. This has been one of the most common criticisms of the current campaign in Afghanistan. Indeed, in 2008, ISAF commanders stressed that "insufficient international and Afghan forces were available to shape, clear, hold and build effectively throughout Afghanistan."[173] Consequently, there have been continual requests for additional security forces, and efforts to develop ANSF capabilities. FM 3-24 indicates that the ideal troop density ratio of security forces in a COIN campaign is 20 per 1,000 citizens, however this ratio will be dependant upon the situation.[174] With a population of 32.7 million people in Afghanistan, this ratio would require approx 654,000 personnel dedicated to security.[175] Even with plans to grow the ANA to 134,000 by 2011, and the surge of 21,000 additional

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[173] Catherine Dale, "War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress," *CRS Report for Congress*, 23 January 2009. Congressional Research Service, 2009. Available from http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40156.pdf; Internet; accessed 23 February 2009.

[174] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24…*, 22-23.

[175] This calculation is based on population estimates obtained from http://www.reuters.com/article/newsMaps/idUSL1031950720080610; Internet, accessed 19 April 2009.

American troops into Afghanistan, this troop density ratio will not be attained. The challenge then becomes allocating security forces in sufficient numbers to dominate key areas to achieve effective results.

The current situation in Kandahar province involves Canadian COIN efforts concentrated on Kandahar city and the areas immediately around the city while other coalition forces concentrate on other districts in the province.[176] The intent is to establish and maintain adequate security forces in key areas, which has proven difficult in the past with insufficient ANSF and coalition forces. However, "it is not just a matter of putting more boots on the ground; it is what the troops do when they get there that matters."[177] Security forces must remain in an area, establish an effective degree of enduring security, and prevent insurgents from regaining influence in the area. Together, coalition forces and indigenous security forces must protect the population. As previously discussed however, military actions alone will not be sufficient. Conversely, a COIN strategy focused only on the delivery of humanitarian assistance and reconstruction projects will not produce the necessary results either. The COIN approach must be "fundamentally about political manoeuvre; demonstrating longevity to the population so that they feel confident to work with their government."[178] Establishing and maintaining an enduring

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[176] Graeme Smith, "Canada to Focus on Protecting Kandahar City," *The Globe and Mail*, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20090220.wafghan20/BNStory/Afghanistan/home ; Internet, accessed 20 February 2009.

[177] Gary H. Rice, "Hallmarks of Successful COIN Strategies," *Vanguard*, http://www.vanguardcanada.com/SuccessfulCOINStrategiesRice; Internet; accessed 13 March 2009.

[178] Gary H. Rice, "Hallmarks of Successful COIN Strategies,"….

security presence with adequate forces is an essential element to both the Ink Spot and

CHB approaches.

Sufficient Money and Resources

Experience in Iraq and Afghanistan has proven that COIN operations are

expensive. Success has been gained when military forces have access to sufficient funds

and resources. Commanders on the ground must be able to access money in order to

achieve immediate and necessary gains. Non-military agencies may be reluctant to enter

an area soon after major combat operations. However, COIN forces cannot wait for these

organizations to materialize on the battlefield before reconstruction activities can

commence. Therefore, military unit and sub-unit commanders require the necessary

authority and trust to be able to disperse funds and start contracts with local citizens in

order to demonstrate positive changes in the environment and actively defeat or

contradict insurgent propaganda. There must be a concerted effort within the

comprehensive "Whole of Government" team to focus the necessary resources to the

organizations involved, even if that means it is only the military. If this is not done, there

is a risk that momentum will be lost. This idea has been emphasized by General Petraeus

recently when he stressed the requirement to empower subordinates. He indicates that it

is important to enable decentralized action by pushing "assets and authorities down to

those who most need them and can actually use them."[179] As General Richards alluded

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[179] David H. Petraeus, "Multi-National Force Iraq Commander's Counterinsurgency
Guidance,"…, 4.

to following the NATO Riga Summit in 2007, PRTs "should have sufficient capacity and resources to deliver projects within high-risk environments."[180] Without this capacity, progress within the ADZs will prove difficult if reconstruction and development agencies continue to demonstrate reluctance to operate in areas where security is less than ideal.

In Afghanistan, the development of PRTs was meant to serve as a conduit for funding to support the necessary reconstruction and development projects. However, this concept has not proven to be as effective as originally envisioned because of individual national ownership of the various PRTs by coalition forces, and the unique funding and resource challenges that have come with this construct. PRT operations are largely determined by individual contributing national agendas, and are limited by the funding available. It has been recommended that all PRTs in Afghanistan should fall within the ISAF command structure to ensure better allocation of funds throughout the PRTs and assist with developing a unified approach to the development of the ADZs. The concern is that "non-delivered expectations may become counterproductive in winning the 'hearts and minds' of the local population" if there is not a unified approach within the PRTs.[181]

The Canadian initiative to restore the Dhala Dam in Kandahar province serves as an example of significant financial commitment and resource allocation in support of the ADZ concept. The Arghandab Valley Irrigation Rehabilitation Project at a cost of

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[180] David Richards, "Reviewing Riga," *NATO Review 2007*; available from http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2007/issue1/english/art1.html; Internet; accessed 02 March 09.

[181] Peter Dahl Thruelsen, "NATO In Afghanistan"..., 42.

CDN$50 million is designed to restore the Dam and rebuild the irrigation system downstream in order to provide better irrigation to farmland in Zhari, Panjwayi and Arghandab districts, as well as Kandahar city. Although the project is not designed to provide electricity to the population, it will assist the Government of Afghanistan with improving the quality of life for many citizens in Kandahar.[182] This is an extremely important reconstruction project that relies on Canadian funding and commitment until 2011. Projects like this will help to further expand the ADZs. It also serves as an example where HN government support is essential to ensure that the project meets the needs of the population and is not simply a project that benefits the donor nation and contributes very little towards defeating the insurgency.

Unity of Effort and Commitment

Unity of effort and commitment had a positive effect on the British COIN approach in Malaya. Sir Gerald Templer served as both the senior civil servant and exercised operational command over all security forces in Malaya. This allowed for greater unity of effort within the British government. Templer was also able to develop unity of effort with Malayan government representatives through the establishment of joint committees. The idea of developing a national comprehensive approach in a COIN campaign is prevalent in coalition COIN doctrine today. However, establishing unity of effort within a coalition construct has proven to be challenging in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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[182] Chris Thatcher, "Rehabilitating a Dam: Project Aims to Deliver More Water, Agriculture to Arid Region," *Vanguard*, http://www.vanguardcanada.com/DahlaDamRehabilitationThatcher; Internet, accessed 13 March 2009.

An integrated approach with other government departments is key. COIN forces require "an overall strategy that takes all the components of the conflict – economic, institutional, cultural, security, governance – and then brings people together with unity of purpose and unity of thought to be able to deliver on common goals."[183] Without unity of effort, any expansion of the Ink Spot will be difficult and may prove futile. There should not be independent views on where the Ink Spot should be expanded. There must be consensus and ideally, it should be driven largely by the indigenous government, the population and the cultural dynamic rather than individual national agendas, which would prove counterproductive.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

US President Barack Obama's recent announcement of the revised American strategy for Afghanistan serves as a demonstration of a re-evaluation of COIN efforts to ensure the strategy meets the strategic goals of those involved. President Obama's decision to provide additional resources also reinforces the understanding that an effective COIN strategy must be adequately resourced and supported. President Obama declared that 21,000 additional US military personnel will be deployed as part of this renewed effort, bringing the US military commitment in Afghanistan to more than 60,000 troops. The US government also plans to provide US$1.5 billion a year for the next five years in economic assistance to the region, and increase the number of American civilian

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[183] Chris Thatcher, "Today's Lessons For Tomorrow's Wars," *Vanguard*, http://www.vanguardcanada.com/TodaysLessonsTomorrowsWarsHainse; Internet; accessed 13 March 2009.

officials to assist with governance and development initiatives.[184] The US

Administration clearly acknowledges that the Afghanistan COIN campaign has not been

well supported since it began in 2002 and that a concerted, integrated, comprehensive

plan is required to achieve success. This renewed American strategy reinforces the intent

to operate along key interrelated and interdependent lines of operation of governance,

security and development to achieve the overall goal "to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al

Qaida in Pakistan and Afghanistan and to prevent their return to either country in the

future."[185] The interesting point to note with this renewed strategy is that it is now

considered an Afghanistan-Pakistan COIN strategy, no longer exclusively focused on

Afghanistan. With this strategic direction in place, the necessary COIN approach to deal

with the nuances of the insurgency can be adjusted and applied.

US Army commanders in Afghanistan have "unreservedly embraced" the US

COIN doctrine developed by General Petraeus and are applying many valuable lessons

learned from Iraq.[186] Although some observers have suggested that the US intends to

simply apply the same COIN strategy in Afghanistan that was applied in Iraq, following

the surge in 2007, there are some key differences between the two insurgencies, such as

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[184] Karen DeYoung, "Obama Announces Plans for More Funding for Afghan War," *The Washington Post*, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/26/AR2009032602135.html; Internet, accessed 27 March 2009.

[185] Barack Obama, (CQ Transcripts Wire), "Obama Announces New Afghanistan, Pakistan Strategies," *The Washington Post*, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/27/AR2009032700891.html?sid=ST2009032700916; Internet, accessed 27 March 2009.

[186] Jackson Diehl, "Critical Mass in Afghanistan," *The Washington Post*, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/22/AR2009032201526.html; Internet, accessed 23 March 2009.

the tribal dynamic, the insurgent safe havens in Pakistan, and the regional narcotics industry, which will necessitate a modification of the American COIN approach. Former Commander ISAF, General McKiernan, intended to pursue a population focused COIN strategy with the protection of the population as his "operational imperative".[187] He intended to apply a *Shape, Clear, Hold and Build* framework for the ISAF COIN approach. By describing his approach in this manner, there is an acknowledgement that CHB is not sufficient by itself, and that there are preliminary actions required prior to any clearing activities. This change reflects an approach more in line with the Ink Spot concept that involves essential collaborative activities between HN representatives and COIN forces before commencing clearing operations.

FINAL REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHB, or a variation of this strategy features prominently among coalition forces. Despite Canadian military commanders often referring to CHB to describe operations in Afghanistan, this COIN approach does not appear in Canadian military doctrine. Instead, Canadian doctrine offers the Ink Spot as an effective COIN approach, describing it as an eight-step, sequential and integrated approach. Although the Ink Spot concept has its merits, and the example of how it was applied at the district level in Afghanistan cited in the Canadian manual is useful, CHB should also be included in the Canadian doctrine in order to offer a clearer understanding of this COIN concept.

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[187] David D. McKiernan, "Commander International Security Assistance Force - Counterinsurgency Guidance," ISAF HQ, Kabul, Afghanistan (25 March 2009), 1.

CHB has been considered a modern version of the Oil Spot concept. However after some examination of the two concepts, it is apparent that there are some fundamental differences between the two approaches. CHB can be perceived as a more aggressive, enemy-centric COIN approach that involves significant military activities. The Oil Spot concept begins with integrating HN government representatives to develop a plan to secure and protect the population and extend the influence of the HN government in a graduated manner. The Oil Spot approach can be considered a more population-centric COIN concept that emphasizes the continual interaction and integration of HN representatives, and subordinates military actions to political activities. The application of these COIN concepts will depend on the type of insurgency and how these approaches are expressed and understood by the practitioners.

The manner in which CHB is described in FM 3-24, and how it has been applied in Iraq and Afghanistan suggest that it could be considered a method of expanding the Oil Spot, and therefore a discrete element of this COIN approach. As Commander ISAF, General McKiernan recently stated, "Population-centric operations to influence the people should be the main effort with enemy-centric targeting operations in support."[188] ISAF has applied the Oil Spot approach in Afghanistan through the ADZ concept. Neither CHB nor the Ink Spot provides a panacea for the insurgency in Afghanistan, but the common theory behind these approaches is sound. As more experience with the CHB approach is gained by coalition forces in Afghanistan, there are growing

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[188] Andrew Gray, "NATO Commander Sees Afghans Support as Priority," *Reuters*, http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE53800520090409; Internet, accessed 19 April 2009.

recommendations for a modification to this concept. Two USMC officers with recent

experience with ISAF have acknowledged the requirement for important activities prior

to COIN forces conducting CHB. This appreciation of the situation mirrors more closely

the Oil Spot approach. Instead of beginning with offensive military operations to clear

the insurgent threat from a particular area, Colonel Julian Alford and Captain Scott

Cuomo have recommended that CHB should be described as *Understand, Shape, Secure,*

Hold, and Build.   Instead of discrete phases, these five elements are considered to be

essential tasks with simultaneous or overlapping application. The USMC officers have

intentionally changed the *Clear* stage to *Secure* because it is considered "a more

appropriate mindset for COIN in Afghanistan" and "implies a less confrontational

approach."[189]

Given the widespread use of CHB and the desire to modify it to suit the

conditions in Afghanistan, this particular COIN concept should be included in Canadian

doctrine. Ideally, the recent proposal for the *Understand, Shape, Secure, Hold, and Build*

approach should be offered as a viable COIN method. This description must also include

the necessary prerequisites and stress the actions of non-military agencies within the

Canadian comprehensive approach. Figure 4.1 is a modification of the proposed CHB

diagram offered in Chapter Two (Figure 2.4) and was developed by the author to

illustrate the *Understand, Shape, Secure, Hold, and Build* concept. It demonstrates the

requirement to *Shape* the environment prior to conducting the simultaneous tasks of

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[189] Julian D. Alford and Scott A. Cuomo, "Operational Design for ISAF in Afghanistan: A Primer," *Joint Force Quarterly* 53 (2nd quarter 2009), 94, http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq_pages/editions/i53/18.pdf; Internet, accessed 30 March 2009.

Secure, Hold and Build. This *shaping* effort should continue throughout, while COIN

forces undergo a continuous effort to *Understand* the COIN dynamic and the overall

environment. Again, military and non-military efforts will vary throughout the

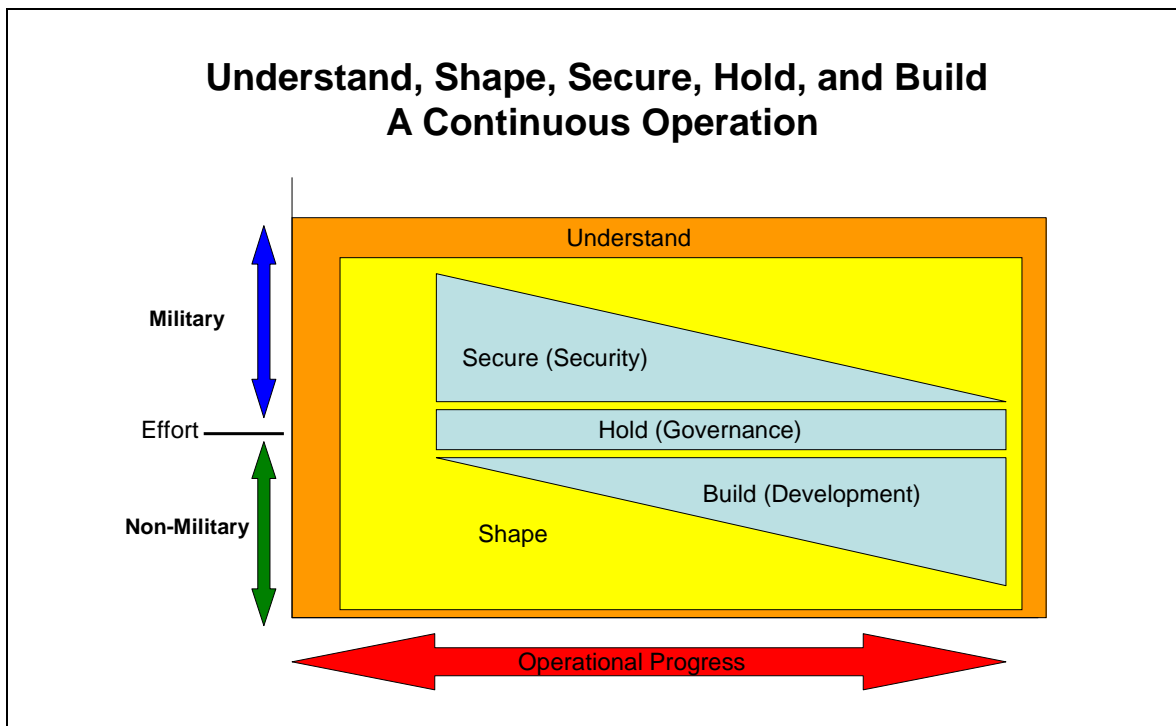campaign, depending upon the degree of operational progress.

Figure 4.1 Understand, Shape, Secure, Hold, and Build Conceptual Illustration.[190]

Doctrine should not be prescriptive or applicable to one specific theatre of

operation but rather general enough to serve as a guide to assist commanders with

developing their operations. As the opening quote to this conclusion indicated, a COIN

approach must be adequately supported and resourced in order to be effective. Military

actions alone will not resolve the grievances within an insurgency and Canada will

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[190] This diagram was developed by the author, based on the concept developed by Julian D. Alford and Scott A. Cuomo, "Operational Design for ISAF in Afghanistan: A Primer," *Joint Force Quarterly* 53 (2nd quarter 2009), 94, http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq_pages/editions/i53/18.pdf; Internet, accessed 30 March 2009.

continue to conduct COIN operations in a comprehensive manner. However, in order for this comprehensive approach to successfully support the applicable COIN concept, sufficient resources must be provided and adequate procedures in place to allow the military to conduct initial governance and reconstruction activities, particularly when the security situation is perceived as poor. Security, governance and development activities must occur simultaneously throughout the COIN effort, especially in the initial *Secure* stage, otherwise momentum may be lost and it will prove more difficult to gain the trust of the population and ultimately defeat the insurgency.

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