



CASE STUDY NO. 2  
COMPLEX OPERATIONS CASE STUDIES SERIES

## Dynamic Tension: Security, Stability, and the Opium Trade

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## COMPLEX OPERATIONS CASE STUDIES SERIES

Complex operations encompass stability, security, transition and reconstruction, and counterinsurgency operations and operations consisting of irregular warfare (United States Public Law No 417, 2008). Stability operations frameworks engage many disciplines to achieve their goals, including establishment of safe and secure environments, the rule of law, social well-being, stable governance, and sustainable economy. A comprehensive approach to complex operations involves many elements—governmental and nongovernmental, public and private—of the international community or a “whole of community” effort, as well as engagement by many different components of government agencies, or a “whole of government” approach. Taking note of these requirements, a number of studies called for incentives to grow the field of capable scholars and practitioners, and the development of resources for educators, students and practitioners. A 2008 United States Institute of Peace study titled “Sharing the Space” specifically noted the need for case studies and lessons. Gabriel Marcella and Stephen Fought argued for a case-based approach to teaching complex operations in the pages of *Joint Forces Quarterly*, noting “Case studies force students *into* the problem; they put a face on history and bring life to theory.” We developed this series of complex operations teaching case studies to address this need. In this process, we aim to promote research and to strengthen relationships among civilian and military researchers and practitioners.

The [Center for Complex Operations](#) (CCO) emphasizes the importance of a whole of government approach to complex operations and provides a forum for a community of practice and plays a number of roles in the production and distribution of learning about complex operations, including supporting the compilations of lessons and practices.

Dr. Karen Guttieri at the [Naval Postgraduate School](#) provided the research direction and overall leadership for this project.

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## **Dynamic Tension: Security, Stability, and the Opium Trade**

Peter Curry

Poppies were the first thing that British Army Captain Leo Docherty noticed when he arrived in Afghanistan's turbulent Helmand Province in April 2006. "They were growing right outside the gate of our forward operating base," he told me. Within two weeks of his deployment to the remote town of Sangin, he realized that "poppy is the economic mainstay, and everyone is involved right up to the higher echelons of the local government."

Poppy, of course, is the plant from which opium and heroin are derived.

Docherty was quick to realize that the military push into northern Helmand Province was going to run into serious trouble. The rumor was "that we were there to eradicate the poppies," he said. "The Taliban are not stupid, and so they said, 'These guys are here to destroy your livelihood, so let's take up arms against them.' And it's been a downward spiral since then."<sup>1</sup>

### **NO REST FOR THE WEARY**

Colonel Dan Thompson, U.S. Army infantry, remembered reading Captain Docherty's (Captain, U.K. [United Kingdom] Army) account soon after Thompson's Fourth Brigade Combat Team (4BCT) was told it would be deploying to Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup> He also remembered reading a British general's scathing review of the U.S. military's counterinsurgency strategy. Thompson thought it ironic that a British captain was taking to task his own army for the same thing. It was Thompson's experience that while he agreed with some of the general's remarks, he did not think the British fully understood their situation in Iraq, or apparently in Afghanistan either.<sup>3</sup> But unlike Captain Docherty, who resigned in protest, Colonel Thompson believed that mistakes were an opportunity to improve and that if the American troops stayed the course long enough, they would get it right.

That was long ago in a much different place. As a battalion commander in Iraq, Thompson had learned some hard-won lessons. He saw how things can turn around as long as you stick with it and learn from your mistakes. He

was also hopeful because the army saw fit to give him some well-deserved rest at the War College and a promotion. Now, in early 2009, a plane loaded with some of the Fourth Brigade and its equipment touched down in the Hindu Kush, along with the brigade's more realistic commander. The "new" Dan Thompson was a little older, a little wiser, and a little more confident about his abilities. As part of the increasing U.S. presence in Afghanistan, his unit had been ordered to the southern part of Regional Command-East, a rugged area on the edge of the opium heartland.

Although opium production is largely outside the 4BCT area, its impact is significant to the local economy and creates instability. The drug trade supplies the insurgency with weapons and supports most of the underground economy. Recent international and Afghan efforts had shut down production in many provinces, but the drug trade still was having a significant impact.<sup>4</sup>

## YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

While in Kabul, shortly before taking over the mission, Thompson met a civilian during his in-country orientation who was working as a contractor for the United Nations (UN) Assistance Mission-Afghanistan (UNAMA). He was an affable Canadian who had extensive experience in Afghanistan and parts of Africa and was willing to tell Thompson anything he wanted to know.

The contractor started, "I'm going to tell you about the average Afghan farmer. I'm telling you about him, because the chances are the farmer will never tell you anything in your short time here, unless he absolutely trusts you.

"The first thing to know is that the average farmer doesn't grow poppy—and if he does it probably is not his only crop. He may grow it for his own financial benefit, but more likely he grows it to repay debt. Either way, the reason he grows anything for profit is based on his local and family needs and crop prices that year. His decision to grow opium or not is based on market forces. Period.

"The average farmer is not all that ideological in a political sense. He's a businessman and a provider for his family. In this society, saving face and honor are critical. Providing for your family is central. If we take away his ability to provide, to earn a living, he may or may not find another line of work. But if we strip him of his honor, either knowingly or unknowingly, you have cultivated something much different.

"Regardless, farming is highly localized, therefore the reasons for growing anything are a complex mix of forces. For instance, there is little production historically in your area, but we have seen other areas, similar to yours, begin poppy production in the last few years. Since your area borders the higher poppy-producing provinces, you may see evidence of transportation, smuggling, or maybe even refinement instead of large poppy fields.

“In most parts of Afghanistan, there is a great disparity of relative wealth—even in agribusiness. The more money one has, the more land one has, then the more you control not just economically, but politically as well. If you are a poor farmer, chances are that many of your male family members left for economic opportunities elsewhere, while the farmer remains to protect the family and farms the land. A poor farmer is most likely to be in a sharecropping arrangement with a larger farmer. The larger farmers and ‘bankers’ extend credit to poor farmers in exchange for a production quota as driven by the creditor. A poor farmer can grow whatever else he wants, but he must make those quotas. Usually those quotas are driven by the most profitable crop at the time. But remember, the average farmer isn’t the linchpin of the drug trade; the larger, wealthier farmers are.

“This same disparity, incidentally, exists for nonfarm labor. A poor family will earn a wage doing low-end, manual labor. A more wealthy family is usually more connected, is more likely to secure higher-paying employment, and is more likely to receive patronage from some government officials. That’s why any project that can employ a large number of people, even if it is less efficient, is preferable to the local population.

“And that, my friend, is the crux of your problem. If you try to eliminate poppy through eradication or interdiction because it fuels the insurgency (your problem), you may be pouring petrol on the burning embers, at least for the short term. You may take away a man’s livelihood and his manhood at the same time. Although he’s still not likely to join up with the insurgency, you have quite possibly created one more hurdle in the ‘hearts and minds’ part of your campaign.

“If the economic situation gets bad enough, that farmer may even sign up for the insurgency on a limited basis, to be used as fodder by the insurgency. It is one way to restore his honor in a martial society and bring a few dollars home to his kin. He may get paid ‘by the ambush’ so to speak. I understand that you cannot make such a distinction in the middle of a fire-fight, but economics and the amount of enemy activity usually have a relationship.

“If you go after the rich farmers and businessmen—let’s not call them ‘warlords’ for now, and you upset their apple cart too much, you will probably cause cascading economic consequences for the local population. The rich guy will somehow survive, probably with a well-timed visit to the local government official who will tell you to back off. Meanwhile, the poor guy at the bottom of the economic pile is hanging on by a thread. Any disruption to his tenuous hold on life could be catastrophic for his family. Even if the guy at the end of the line is not a poppy grower, he may still feel it.

“So the farmer does what he has to, says whatever he has to, in order to survive. There are few courts in the country, fewer that are competent, so he has no way of clearly redressing injustices. He doesn’t have many choices; he’s poor, illiterate, and often at the mercy of others. That’s why he’s extremely guarded and fiercely independent when he has to be. He looks out for himself and his family. So he plots a course of action that will reap the

most return based on the least amount of risk to his family. If he feels that opium can bring in more money with less risk, then he's going to do it. If the risk increases, then the farmer and large producer may change their behavior. How growers change their behavior is the 'million-dollar question.'

"I'm not saying that going after poppy producers should not be done, but what I am saying is that the approach should be a comprehensive one with both incentives and disincentives for producers, a plan for interdiction of the opium trade, probably some sort of eradication, a system of justice in place, and a market for alternative crops. Your group is only part of that plan.

"I know that saying what needs to be done and developing a plan of what needs to be done are two very different tasks.

"So you have quite a dilemma. You have to maintain stability, and when I say 'stability', I'm not just talking about the absence of violence. In Afghanistan, real stability is local and relative to all kinds of social forces. You have to work with people that don't trust you, don't like you, or just want you to go away. You have to work with many groups who have different agendas than you do. They are not the enemy, but some days you may feel like they are working against you. If it's any consolation, those other groups sometimes feel the same way about you. One thing is certain, you will not be able to accomplish your mission without the locals, the government, and the non-governmental and international organizations. We should all be in this together as much as we can be. I hope this helps you a little more. Thanks for the coffee."

#### WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE RING ROAD<sup>5</sup>

Thompson distrusted the reports, since they tended to reflect a more rosy assessment than what was visible on the ground. Sure, the Afghan government probably had made progress, but the causes for the opium reduction were varied. Production had gone down in 2007, but the massive drought may have done more damage to the poppy crop than any change in policy.

But pretty poppy flowers and bulbs were someone else's issue. The Fourth Brigade was part of the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)-U.S.-led, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The 4BCT was told to establish a presence in their area, and then accomplish several tasks:

OPORD (Operations Order) 1-09.<sup>6</sup>

Establish security and stability in your area of operations (AO) . . .

Key tasks:

1. Kill, capture elements of Al Qaeda in your area of operations. . . .
2. Reduce Taliban-Al Qaeda influence among the population. . . .
3. Gain and maintain control by establishing local security for the population. . . .

4. Extend the reach of the Afghan government. . . .
5. Continue to support and train the Afghan National Army in the area. . . .
6. Strengthen and support the local police forces. . . .

Thompson knew from experience that accomplishing these tasks was not going to be easy or simple. His initial studies of the region seemed to echo Captain Docherty's comments: "You can't get there from here without a good plan for addressing the issue of illegal opium production." Thompson also knew that he could not achieve *his* assigned tasks without the help of many people outside of his sphere of control. He knew that he was probably going to have to help others in order to help himself.

The good news was that he was still in the first weeks of a deployment that was scheduled to last thirteen months—if all went well. Colonel Thompson's brigade was still making unit adjustments on the best places to set up in the middle of largely enemy territory. His troops knew, as he did, that as your unit organizes and establishes local security, your job is to constantly improve your understanding of your environment.

*Question: What do we know about Colonel Thompson, his unit, and his mission? What can be inferred at this point?*

### **EXPERIENCE: A DECISION SHORTCUT OR JUST SHORTSIGHTEDNESS?**

Colonel Thompson was not completely out of place. With a tour in Kosovo and two previous tours in Iraq under his belt, as well as his initial impressions on the ground in Afghanistan, Thompson felt he was beginning to make some sense of the place. He knew that the quicker he could understand his surroundings, the better he could give guidance to his leaders.

Thompson began the process that had been inculcated into him since he had joined the military, namely knowing to start with the end in mind: Visualize what the environment *might* look like—or what one might expect it to look like—in thirteen months, if he accomplished his mission well. Thompson understood that the outcome would not match his initial vision.

Colonel Thompson had internalized several "rules," or assumptions, about small wars over his twenty-four-year army career. He knew his rules would be tested. His pride wanted to cling to these lessons, but his training and professionalism made Thompson a realist. He knew he would have to be willing to chuck every single rule out the window if it did not fit.

With the absence of knowledge, he had to start somewhere, so he wrote down some notes. Thompson chuckled to himself. He had written what he called his seven rules of thumb—perhaps his repeated readings (or "beat-

ings,” as his officers would say) of T.E. Lawrence’s 1926 book, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, had rubbed off.<sup>7</sup> Regardless, these rules served as a decent point of departure. He reviewed his notes:

**Rule One.** Do no harm. You have learned the hard way that some of your actions, while intending to do good, may actually make providing stability and countering an insurgency harder to accomplish. All your actions may have strategic consequences.

**Rule Two.** What you currently see is only a snapshot. This area is not Iraq or Kosovo or anywhere else—even another part of Afghanistan. Be careful not to make assumptions based on past history. There are too many factors, such as geography, social structures, the local economy, and the political situation, that are different here. While having a background in similar situations, avoid putting an Iraqi solution on Afghan problems.

**Rule Three.** Expect corruption and a weak government. Most people are not evil, although enough are. Remember that people do what they have to do in order to survive. Stable governments at the local level may have a noticeable degree of corruption. You’re not going to change that anytime soon, and while thirteen months is a long time for you, it is a blip in the local history. Lesson: Set realistic expectations.

**Rule Four.** Coercion will work—for a while. It is, however, just one technique in your toolkit. While the manuals tell you that coercion is counterproductive, you have found that it is the imprecise application of coercion that is the problem. Failure to employ this tool accurately but sparingly is the problem.

**Rule Five.** Violence and peace coexist in these situations. Just because violence increases does not mean that peace decreases. For instance, clearing a village may temporarily increase the violence level, but if you stay to protect the villagers, lasting peace has a chance to flourish.

**Rule Six.** Pay attention to what you hear, but understand that everyone has an agenda. Think less about good guys versus bad guys, and focus on those people whose agendas will advance, and counter, your own.

**Rule Seven.** What works today may not work tomorrow. Always question your assumptions, always question people’s motives, and always analyze your own actions. Make a decision, create an action, and then see the reaction.

*Question: What do you think about these seven rules? Are they useful or counterproductive? Why? Do they point to a way forward for Colonel Thompson in accomplishing the task assigned him?*

Colonel Thompson knew that he would have to get away from the base camp that was being built and quickly gain an understanding of his AO by driving around, meeting people, and establishing relationships with key players in the area—all the while avoiding getting killed by an ambush or IED (improvised explosive device, or roadside bomb). To make sure he was as prepared as possible, he checked the notes about Afghanistan that he had taken during briefings and meetings prior to his deployment, and he reviewed what he knew about opium production in particular.

Thompson pulled out his green, government-issued notebook from his ACU<sup>8</sup> (army combat uniform) cargo pocket; released the rubber band that served as a keeper; and leafed through the smudged, worn pages. Under the heading “Facts about Afghanistan and opium production,” Thompson reviewed his notes.<sup>9</sup>

- The 4BCT will operate in two provinces covering over 23,000 square kilometers divided into twenty-six districts. Each district has its own form of government that consults, to varying degrees, with the provincial government. Currently, both provincial governors are supportive of the central government.
- The total population for both provinces is over 1,400,000 people divided into several clans and tribes. The main language is Pashtu, but Dari and Baloch are spoken in the higher elevations and the more remote areas. The illiteracy rate is around 60 percent for males and 87 percent for females. Median age is 17.6 years. Life expectancy is 44.6 years.
- There is extensive U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) presence in the region with several ongoing projects. There is little known about some of the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), as many have a policy, either explicit or implicit, to not be seen as working directly with the U.S. military. A few NGOs work in direct and indirect opposition to U.S. military efforts.
- Only 23 percent of the population has access to safe drinking water.
- The annual per capita income is \$250 U.S.D. The average income for an unskilled worker is less than one dollar a day.<sup>10</sup>
- Afghanistan is the world’s largest opium producer. The bulk of heroin in Europe originates from Afghan opium.<sup>11</sup> The opium trade is believed to make up at least half of the Afghan economy.

## AMONG THE PEOPLE

Thompson ordered his driver to make a left upon leaving the last checkpoint of the austere forward operating base. The base’s access road was a clear

demarcation between everything that made him comfortable and this foreign land. He immediately felt that same old feeling of being the outsider looking in. His four-vehicle convoy, which included his personal security team, or “the entourage,” as Thompson referred to it, created quite a stir in the local villages. Given the security precautions for brigade commanders, there was little he could do at this early stage to blend in. As people began staring at this strange sight, all of Thompson’s senses became instantly alive, and sometimes overwhelmed. People were sizing him up. Taking stock. Weighing their agendas and wondering what the American objectives were.

“Be alert but not skittish,” Thompson told himself. “Be aware, begin to understand things as they are, and forget how things have been. Remember to watch your backs, watch your buddies’ back, pay attention to the little things, and never forget what your mission is.”

The mission was to continue what other units had started well before the 4BCT arrived. Now that there were more troops, the 4BCT was ordered to protect the population and extend the reach of government. Thompson understood that in this area at least, his allies had a different view of his mission and his purpose. He had already talked to the NATO forces operating in other parts of the province. He knew that they were well-meaning, professional, and forthright; however, they were operating with several caveats. Caveats, he knew, were a fancy term for restrictions from their governments. From where he sat, he felt that these caveats put the entire multinational mission at a great disadvantage. Most restrictions were short-sighted attempts at reducing casualties, like limiting the distance, scope, and types of missions. It was a bit like grounding airplanes for a year; the safety record goes up, but the airlines lose market share. Few of the caveats made sense to Thompson, and he wondered why some of the NATO troops even bothered to deploy. In any case, most of the NATO members did not deploy enough of these troops for the task at hand, which is why his brigade was there covering an area the size of West Virginia. It was what it was, and, whatever the restrictions, he had to make it work.

Thompson knew that the differences in approach would be a problem, but he vowed to be part of the solution and to work with everyone in the region if he could. He put his doubts aside and refocused on the immediate task—understanding the environment. One of the best ways to achieve stability in the province was to help reduce dependence on opium production. Surely reducing opium production and trafficking would reduce the flow of money and weapons that fueled the insurgency. Insurgents were Thompson’s military problem, but the insurgency existed because the people lacked viable governance, basic education, a viable judicial system, and a working economy. The government was struggling with providing an alternative to the insurgent’s narrative. If this alternative could not be accepted by the locals, it didn’t matter how many insurgents the 4BCT killed or captured. The 4BCT could only set the conditions; drugs were “not in his lane.” How can you make an impact when you have little control over the solution?

The first step was to convince those who still needed convincing that it was in their best interest to reduce opium production. Everyone seemed to understand that opium was the nexus of much of the instability, but in many quarters there was little political will to fix the problem. Everyone seemed to be waiting for someone else to take action first, unwilling to be the “bad guy.” The other problem was that many who could change the opium situation were also part of the problem.<sup>12,13</sup>

Thompson had his own challenges. Unknown groups had probed his forward operating base and several of his outposts. So far, the intelligence could not pinpoint the group or groups, much less their motivations. The enemy could be Al Qaeda, Taliban, drug lords, or any number of groups operating in the area. Thompson knew that Taliban had operated near the base and that the drug lords did not like anyone getting in their business. The American presence could be bad for business.

Not all drug lords were Taliban, but from Thompson’s viewpoint, he would deal with anyone trying to hurt his troops, and deal with them swiftly and convincingly. The 4BCT had already lost one soldier to a mortar attack a few nights ago, and eight soldiers had already been medevac’d.<sup>14</sup> The most likely aim of these probes was to provoke a disproportionate, overly aggressive response from the brigade. So far, his new Kandak<sup>15</sup> (Afghan National Army) partner in the southern provinces had started operations against “antigovernment forces” but had trouble pursuing the enemy due to limited logistical support. The 4BCT could help there. The military solution was relatively easy. What Thompson did not know was whether the provincial governor could be trusted. Since the Taliban still controlled much of the province, the governor had given Thompson a cool reception the other day.

What was clear to Colonel Thompson was that not everyone in the local government was on board with fixing the opium problem. The rumor mill around the province suggested that the relatives of the governor did not want to solve the problem, which in a perverse way was logical, given that they were the largest producers of opium in the area. Another challenge was that people wanted stability but were growing tired of the presence of foreign troops. Foreigners were perceived as disingenuous and heavy handed; they had promised a lot but delivered little and had killed too many innocent people in order to get to the Taliban. Thompson knew that locals were always suspicious of outsiders. An outsider in Afghanistan was not just a foreigner; but so, too, was also almost anyone not from the immediate area or clan. The Taliban capitalized on that predisposition with good effect. Taliban rumors were wildly exaggerated, but the rumors kept the 4BCT guys on the political defensive, constantly on the road, and in the villages drinking a lot of chai (tea) with the village elders and local officials and explaining to them the other side of the story, all the while knowing that the Afghan president was saying many of the same things.<sup>16</sup>

The Taliban-inspired rumors of excessive force being used by the international military forces were confirmed by various international and non-governmental organizations that worked in the area. Thompson had talked

to several representatives in the last week in an effort to understand their views of the problem. Some, primarily U.S. organizations, were open and helpful. Most NGOs operated independently, were wary of an increased military presence in the area, and constantly sought a balance between their neutrality and their cooperation with international military forces. Thompson always tried to respect these groups' charters while working with them to create a more secure area.

Colonel Thompson had heard that in the past there had been friction with a few NGOs and U.S. and NATO military forces in general. Former commanders had told stories that these kinds of NGOs simply resisted or ignored U.S. forces until their support was needed. These NGOs were problematic from the military point of view. Playing "both ends against the middle," these groups resisted cooperating with U.S. forces until they were in trouble. If U.S. forces failed to respond in a fashion to their liking, they would criticize the international military effort in Afghanistan for being unresponsive. In spite of increased Taliban activity, these groups continued to operate with few security precautions. NGOs and international governmental organizations (IGOs) were, as Thompson's predecessor related, "a bag of mixed nuts." Colonel Thompson knew that his predecessor had a rough time, mainly due to being overtasked and undermanned. He decided to take such comments critically and in context. He would try to improve relationships with all entities that were willing to work with him and his unit. He adopted a wait-and-see attitude about these few particular NGOs.

The policies were as varied as the organizations. Despite the myriad organizations present in the region, Thompson had to focus on the pivotal actors that would have a significant impact in his area of operations. First, he had to know all of the stakeholders that operated in his area, regardless of whether they communicated with military forces or not. Next, he had to understand which stakeholders were critical for his unit's success. Finally, he had to know which of them could undermine his mission and then develop a plan to deal with all of them in some capacity.

Colonel Thompson, a dedicated military man, firmly believed that in the absence of guidance, it was best to do something—anything. Action, rightly or wrongly, would make things clearer from his perspective. At this point, he decided not to react in an overly aggressive manner to the armed pressure from enemy elements in his region. He pushed patrols out into the villages, not to find and kill the enemy (although if the opportunity presented itself, he would take it) but to pressure the enemy, to be "in his backyard." This action had another effect. He felt he could better secure the locals by forcing the enemy to go to ground, to either hide or withdraw for a while. Colonel Thompson hoped he would gain some breathing space, to buy time so his unit could establish relationships with the local people and enter the fight on his own terms. Those tasks, however, were for his subordinate units; his task was to find out more about the area by establishing communications with stakeholders and to build an understanding of the networks, both formal and informal, that were at work in the area.<sup>17</sup> By taking action on the ground

and getting out among the people the 4BCT was there to protect, Thompson felt he could have success. But there was just one nagging issue—opium. No matter how well his troops performed, the drug problem was always the eight-hundred-pound gorilla in the room.

## ENDNOTES

1. Misha Glenny, "The Lost War," *Washington Post*, August 19, 2007, p. B01.
2. Colonel Thompson is a composite character. For some good links to articles and interviews with BCT commanders in Afghanistan, see <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2580>.
3. Brigadier Nigel Alwyn-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," *Military Review*, Ft. Leavenworth, KS (November-December 2005), <http://usacac.army.mil/CAC/milreview/download/English/NovDec05/aylwin.pdf>.
4. United Nations (UN) Office on Drugs and Crimes, "Opium Survey 2008, Executive Summary" (Kabul, Afghanistan, August 2008), p. vii.
5. The Ring Road is the major road in Afghanistan that links most of the larger cities together. It resembles a ring, or loop. A massive construction effort is underway to make the road usable throughout the country, but in some places it is still a "road" in name only.
6. OPORD is military jargon for Operations Order, which gives commanders the essential information from a higher headquarters. OPORDs vary in length, depending on detail. This OPORD is only to introduce a few concepts and is by no means representative of an actual OPORD in format or completeness.
7. T.E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1926) has been required reading for many U.S. military officers over decades but found renewed popularity during the first few years of Operation Iraqi Freedom.
8. The Digital Pattern uniform in service since 2004.
9. See <http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/province.9.aspx>, <http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/Province.27.aspx>.
10. UN Office on Drugs and Crime, "The Opium Economy in Afghanistan: An International Problem" (Vienna, Austria: 2003).
11. CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] Factbook, March 19, 2009, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>.
12. UN Office on Drugs and Crime, "The Opium Economy in Afghanistan."
13. A deep understanding of the opium trade and its influence on governance is beyond the scope of this case study. The author highly recommends the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank's report, *Afghanistan's Drug Industry: Structure, Functioning, Dynamics, and Implications for Counter-Narcotics Policy*, edited by Doris Buddenberg and William A. Byrd (2007).
14. Medevac: medical evacuation, usually by helicopter. Medevac is for the most seriously wounded troops with injuries that exceed the local medical unit's capabilities.
15. Afghan National Army battalion, about three hundred to four hundred-lightly equipped infantry troops. Many Kandaks operate at less than full strength due to a lack of equipment and personnel accountability.
16. Kim Barker, "Afghan Leader Hamid Karzai defends his rule in exclusive Tribune Interview," *Chicago Tribune*, December 19, 2008.
17. Networks, in this sense, are all types of human interaction, not just insurgent networks. There are networks of international assistance groups, security forces, and criminal networks, to name a few.

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