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American National Security Strategy as it Pertains to the Afghanistan War

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College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Walden University
2018

Abstract

American National Security Strategy as it Pertains to the Afghanistan War

by

Robert Hayworth

MPA, Troy University, 1998

BA, Troy University, 1997

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

February 2018

Abstract

Following 16 years of war in Afghanistan the number of U.S. military, Coalition forces and Afghan civilian fatalities has exceeded the number of Americans lost on 9/11 and has cost the United States nearly $841 billion dollars. The results are that Afghanistan remains in turmoil and that terrorist attacks, the reason for the invasion, continues. The question is should United States assess a different approach that would result in less blood and treasure being spent to address the need to mitigate terrorist threats. Guided by the analysis of conventional- centric and asymmetric-centric approaches to a counterterrorism strategy, this qualitative study focused on evaluating the effects of U.S. national strategy for the Afghanistan war between 2001 and 2016. A narrative inquiry was employed that used extensive in-depth interviews with five implementers and five recipients of the American strategy based in Afghanistan. The participants were recruited from the U.S. Special Forces community that implemented American strategy in Afghanistan, and from Afghans that experienced the American strategy firsthand. Data were analyzed by employing an inductive coding method. The literature review revealed an intention to use large military forces to conduct a conventional-centric counterterrorism strategy, but the narrative inquiry revealed a negative effect of the conventional-centric counterterrorism strategy. Though more research in this area is needed the implications from the findings for positive social change that an asymmetric-centric strategy could offer as a possible effective solution for countering terrorism. These recommendations may help national strategy developers develop a structure to develop future counterterrorism strategies.

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Dedication

This work as well as many things in my life is due to my wife, Kim, whose support and continued belief in me is the reason for my success. My motivation to complete this project stems from my fellow brothers, the 241 Marines and sailors that made the ultimate sacrifice on one October day in 1983.

I want to give special thanks to the people that teach me every day the meaning of being a Marine and serving my country: Donald Ciefili, Tom Gersbeck, and Larry Lewis. I would also like to mention my deep appreciation to my committee chair, Dr. David Kilmnick, whose patience and guidance allowed me to focus and improve my aspiration to reach this scholarly level, and to my committee members, Dr. Tamara Mouras and Dr. Kathleen Marie Schulin, whose expertise and guidance is the reason I aspire to complete my studies.

Acknowledgments

As a young man, my first introduction to the new type of war that the nation is to face came to me early on a Sunday morning in October of 1983, when a truck loaded with homemade explosives drove through the south parking area of the Beirut International Airport. It broke through a three-foot block wall to pick up speed and slammed into the lobby of the 24th Marine Amphibious Unit's Battalion Landing Team's headquarters building. Seconds later, the driver detonated a bomb that killed 241 of my fellow Marines and sailors, in what was arguably the beginning of the "War on Terror" (Hammes, 2005).

Thirty years later, I still work in the counterterrorism profession and recognize the need for a strategic concept, not just in defeating terrorism as a threat, but also in defeating the adversaries that employ asymmetric warfare. In this, I dedicate this work to our professionals, the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines as well as the government and contracted civilians that have taken on the challenge to not only defeat the terrorists, but also bring peace to our world.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The fall of the Berlin Wall ushered in the end of the Cold War and set up the United States of America as the unipolar power in the world. As a result, most countries were fast adopting a liberal democracy as their governing means (CITE). It would seem that developing and maintaining a sustainable national strategy would be much simpler and easier to achieve following the threat that a nuclear war with the Soviet Union presented. Yet, for the last 16 years (beginning with the attacks on September 11, 2001 that were quickly followed by the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Arab Spring, and the Syrian Civil War) suggest that a unipolar strategy based on Cold War experiences cannot address the complexities of a world where non-state actors influence events, create crisis, and dominate the public's attention (Preble, Ashford & Evans, 2016).

Though strategists and policy makers generally embrace the status quo of implementing a "military first" strategy, there is evidence from results of current engagements that a new strategy which would address the complexities of the 21st century social and political challenges is needed. Relative to the rest of the world, Americans enjoy a considerable degree of security that rarely requires the military to directly intercede (Hammes, 2005). The Cold War grand strategy of employing a liberal hegemony of large numbers of forward-deployed troops proved successful in countering known threats and allowing American to progress through a relative secure environment (Preble, 2016). There remains the temptation to continue to rely on conventional military

might to solve 21st century threats that seems to have entrenched itself with strategy makers (Preble, 2016).

The purpose of a national security strategy is to look beyond the dynamic challenges in order to provide a framework for the nation's security efforts to include countering terrorism (Metz & Johnson, 2001). This purpose is derived, and explained, in the strategic direction contained in the following documents: the National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy, the Quadrennial Defense Review Report, and the Strategy for Counterterrorism (Thomas, 2011). The intention of a national security strategy is to serve as a foundation that provides guidance for success in existing and future conflicts against adversaries that challenge or threaten the nation (Metz & Johnson, 2001).

Strategy, like leadership, is one of the most frequently discussed, studied, and written about concepts in the modern world – especially as it pertains to armed conflict. An examination of strategy is presented in the book, *Strategy: A History*, in which the author states that the term *strategy*, as the layman understands it, did not come into use until the 18th century when published philosophers frequently referred to it under the influence of enlightenment rationalism through the application of reason (Lawrence, 2013). Baron Antoine Henri de Jomini, a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars, cemented a legacy in strategy development through the influential work, *Art of War*, which is regarded as one of the greatest military textbooks of the 19th century (Freidman, 2013). Through this publication, Jomini championed the concept that the objective of a winning strategy is to move resources in order to conduct a decisive battle with an armed

opponent (Freidman, 2013). Jomini's teachings have been incorporated at the U.S. Military and Naval Academies as well as having influenced the works of many 20th century strategists (Banks, 2011). As a result of their pervasive influence, Jomini's precepts have dominated the thinking of generations of American military leaders, statesmen, and (to some extent) strategic scholars (Banks, 2011). The interpretation of Jomini's works can be found in the mass mobilization of manpower and industrial war materials as a cornerstone of the American strategy (Freidman, 2013). This method of mobilizing national resources to force a decisive battle (or, more aptly, an overwhelming application of force to destroy an enemy) established the American strategy for both World Wars whose battles are studied and cited as a source of martial wisdom today in U.S. academic and military education centers (Banks, 2011).

Problem Statement

In order to understand the challenges of strategists, it is necessary to know that strategic challenges are manifestations of variables and trends that pose direct security challenges to vital interests of the United States. While these challenges individually present both a threat and opportunity, it is the combination of challenges that offer the greatest test for U.S. strategy (Abrahms, 2012). Although global in nature, current challenges to the security of the United States converge dangerously, and immediately, in the Middle East/South Asia region (Abrahms, 2012). The strategic environment in these locations is characterized by a dynamic set of political, economic, military, and social/cultural variables that form the basis for global influence. These variables are laid out in an increasingly connected and contested information domain (Abrahms, 2012).

The resultant trends determine complex and somewhat unpredictable forces on the global stage that requires a viable and measurably successful national security strategy that enables the nation to respond to threats that these variables present to the nation (Abrahms, 2012).

The prevailing threat that influenced American national strategy policy from the end of World War II through the 20th century was the "Soviet menace" of expanding their influence through both conventional and nuclear war (Kunstler, 2011). This threat prompted a U.S. defense strategy based on bipolar superpowers that allowed for a continuity, resulting in the long-term planning and executing of that strategy (Kunstler, 2011). In other terms, the Soviet threat allowed for a strategy based on the symmetry of countering an adversary's strength through direct matching of capabilities; consequently, a strategy was created based on developing tactics, manufacturing materials, and increasing the personnel requirements for the military that was dictated by their direct association with the Soviets' similar capability (Freidman, 2013). This strategy of symmetry created an arms race during which submarines were created to counter submarines, tank battalions to counter tank battalions, and nuclear weapons to counter nuclear weapons (Metz & Johnson, 2010).

Considering the threat that the Soviets directly presented to national security, the focus for strategists was the development of a military plan based on the symmetry of resources. Fostering interest in an alternative strategy that would addresses an asymmetric enemy with the goal to mitigate strength through the asymmetric approach was not approached in halls of the Pentagon during the Cold War (Schiff, 2012). The end

of the Cold War found military strategists lacking. They failed to create a viable strategy for addressing an adversary's asymmetric strategy of turning strength into a weakness as employed in the Vietnam, Lebanon, and Somalia conflict areas. The core of this gap resulted in a misaligned assumption. U.S. military strategists made decisions concerning lesser threats according to the then dominant belief that if America could handle the Soviets, it could easily counter any of the lesser actors (Orehek & Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis, 2014). What has been proven, instead, is that an asymmetrical war is not a lesser version of the Cold War and the strategy that was successful for defeating the Soviet threat may not be successful against an asymmetric foe (Metz & Johnson, 2010, pp. 6–7).

Purpose of the Study

During an interview with Lieutenant General H.R. McMasters (Linnemann,, 2016, pp 17-25) on numerous perceptions and mistakes about the strategy of the War on Terror engagements. His most important observation was this: "There are two ways to fight the United States: Asymmetrically and stupid, 'Asymmetrically' means, you are going to try to avoid our strengths" Linnemann,, 2016 p 17). The challenge of a national strategy that addresses the threat of asymmetric war is the requirement that such a strategy must be able to innovate to meet the changing environment, adopt new policies and procedures for meeting strategic goals, and adopt asymmetric warfare as a base for strategic policies (Linnemann,, 2016, p 20). Such a strategy for the new millennium must be informed by an understanding of the asymmetric threat and the employment of culture, determination, and a "long-struggle" methodology of warfare, rather than maintaining the existing approach of a short, high-tempo conventional (or symmetric) method of warfare

that relies on a singular, tactical capability designed for a specific niche (Dunlap, 1998). In short, in order to prevail in a complex world, the United States must employ a strategy that is more capable of operating in the negative space of asymmetrical war. Students of Clausewitz understand that a strategist must know the nature of war and, to be successful, must adapt to the battle at hand (Boot, 2013).

Some scholarly circles have acknowledged that the beginning of the encounter with asymmetrical war began for the United States in 1983, when a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated inside the headquarters building for the U.S. Marine Corps operations in Beirut, Lebanon (Hammes, 2005). This building represented the American political power and involvement in peacekeeping activities in the Middle East, as well as serving as a symbol of American influence in the region (Hammes, 2005). Though the attack caused the death of 241 Marines and sailors, its impact was larger than this; it resulted in a decidedly diminished influence of American policy in the region, and in terror becoming a primary political tool for enemies of the United States (Banks, 2011). The attack was regarded as a terrorist event and was briefly covered on Western media outlets. Yet, among the target populations of the Middle East, the attack was communicated as a demonstration that American power was ineffectual and the non-state actor, in this case, Hezbollah, was strong (Gunning, 2007). The greater consequence was the perception that a global power had been neutralized. This perception, in turn, sent the message to lesser non-state factions and organizations that orthodox-based power designed on the symmetry of forces is not sustainable in a world that can employ asymmetric methods to wage war (Boot, 2013, p. 123). Because of the

withdrawal of American power in that instance, the Beirut attack is considered by academics and intelligence analysts as the singular incident that challenged the once successful national security strategy of using direct military and political might to coerce a society into conforming. This strategy, it became clear, was now obsolete because of the introduction of a new conflict that required innovative methodologies and strategies (Toft, 2012). The relevance of asymmetrical warfare has been demonstrated. It is an effective method to employ many tactics, including terrorism, to overwhelm an adversary that relies on being superiorly funded, equipped, and trained and that is supported by a significant technologically-advanced and economically-driven society (DiPaolo, 2005).

Researchers who study the causes and effects of terrorism have paid a great deal of interest to the social and political structures that create terrorism as well as the processes and technologies by which the academic circles that focuses on strategy. This focus, as it applies to the development of strategy, combines academic findings and opinions with a host of other actors (mostly bureaucrats and analysts) to normalize a central theme in the policies and strategies as a single valid strategy in understanding the global impact of terrorism and developing action to respond to it (Stampnitzky, 2013). Post-9/11/2001, the current counterterrorism industry can be considered to stem from efforts to redefine or establish terrorism as a sole entity based on previous studies of conflict (Stampnitzky, 2013). Therefore, current national strategy originates a cause of both national urgency following the 9/11 attacks and a created industry based on a small community of academics and professionals redefining a method and tactic as the threat

instead of the creators of the asymmetric conflict the nation finds itself in (Petraeus, 2013).

There is a clear need for the United States to develop new and innovative strategies for dealing with asymmetric warfare versus symmetric warfare. It is problematic that strategists in the U.S. still cling to approaches to warfare that stem from previous conflicts. The root of this problem began at the end of World War II, when the United States held political, martial, and economic supremacy compared to the rest of the world. During that time, the United States also developed unparalleled diplomatic, economic, and martial influence, all of which challenged the strategies and actions of the former Soviet Union (Lind, 1994). The successful strategy that allowed for matching and defeating the Soviet Union was also the weak link in the system: third generation warfare, which is based on the symmetry of forces that are committed to a major war in which the objective is to defeat and destroy the opposing nation-state (Hammes, 2005). This example of third generation warfare is dependent upon a nation's military excelling in building a doctrine that establishes budgetary, planning, and training programs in skill-sets aimed at defeating a symmetric enemy (Kilcullen, 2011). For the non-state adversary (such as the terrorist, insurgent, or extremist), the model for defying a stronger nation-state seems to be impossible to implement; yet the insurgent, terrorist, or extremist fashioned the version of a fourth method of struggle (Hammes, 2005). This method is focused on the principle that, in an asymmetrical war, all environmental elements are part of the conflict (Metz & Johnson, 2010).

Research Question

"Strategy," as defined by respected American strategist, Clausewitz (Gatzke, 1942), includes the view that each individual engagement in a war is part of a progression in order to attain the larger goal of the campaign or war. With this in mind, the strategist applying the Clausewitzian paradigm believes that the general principles for strategy are (a) to conquer and destroy the adversary's armed power; (b) take possession of the adversary's resources and sources of economic and political strength; and (c) gain public opinion (Gatzke, 1942). When developing national strategy, there are aspects of asymmetric warfare that the strategist must consider; these aspects are currently separate from traditional warfare strategies. The kind of traditional warfare that Clausewitz frames as an aspect of strategy is either enemy-centric or terrain-centric warfare, consisting of an enemy engagement wherein each side bears similar costs (Gatzke, 1942, p 254). The Clausewitzian view of strategy unintentionally relegates asymmetric warfare to a secondary status.

Furthermore, the term "strategy" is often misused; there is a tendency for persons in the field to manipulate the term to mean a general plan or course of action. The reality of strategy is that it is comprised, not only of plans, but also of the authority of the national leadership, including the leaders of the state, military, private sector, and other critical institutions to form an all-inclusive approach that uses national power to control situations in order to attain national objectives (Yarger, 2015). This characterization of strategy provides a richer, more comprehensive meaning: that strategy is, at its root, about control and is fundamentally concerned with the efficient application of different

types of power in order to achieve national objectives. If we acknowledge the threat that terrorism and asymmetric adversaries pose to the nation, then the requirement for a national strategy that addresses the objectives in defeating that type of adversary should afford greater success.

In this project, the researcher focused on discovering and expounding on the information that addressed this central question: How does the American strategic perception of an asymmetric adversary in Afghanistan affect the conflict outcome and are the Afghan public perceptions of the outcomes of the strategy a positive or negative influence in supporting a strong, stabilized democratic country that is free from terrorist influence? This question is far-reaching, which allowed for a very broad investigation of this topic. To mitigate the possibility of vagaries, the researcher used the following comprehensive questions to support and narrow the research inquiry:

1. How is the effectiveness of conventional military actions in Afghanistan measured as an asymmetric conflict?
2. What were the perceptions of the Afghan people and Americans implementing the strategy to combat the terrorist (asymmetric) adversary and the resulting stability created by the strategy from 2001–2016?
3. What were the perceptions of the Afghan people on the presence of the large footprint of the international coalition's forces from 2001–2016 and did it support or detract from the strategy of removing the threat of terrorism and stabilizing the country?

To answer this question, the research methodology used involved such elements as research "intention, investigation, location, target populace, as well as the establishment of sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, pilot testing of the instruments, data collection process, and data analysis procedures" (Creswell, 2013, p.??). Through data collection and the application of a validation process, the primary researcher was able to put these elements into perspective. The following section of the project is of importance to the creditability of the research as it indicates that the research was conducted in agreement with the required standards.

Theoretical Foundation

As it relates to political or social violence in terrorist activities, many scholars have attempted to apply conflict theory (symmetrical strategies in warfare) in order to understand conflict. Though originally developed in economic theory, the assumptions of conflict theory have also been applied by social scientists investigating the reasons behind and outcomes of conflict (Vahabi, 2009). During the Cold War, for example, deterrence was a practical strategy developed through the application of conflict theory in that it assumes that each state involved in a nuclear conflict ultimately wanted survival over ideological victory (Vahabi, 2009). This required the combatants, not only to coexist, but also to develop a mutual dependence upon each other's continued existence diplomatically, through information sharing, militarily, and economically (Vahabi, 2009).

The examination of social conflict, as found in the study of terrorism, suggests that there exists a struggle conducted by a sub sect of a culture or nation that fights for a common cause such as liberation, succession from the majority, or implementation of a

religious or political ideology (Stringham, 2007). The understanding that, unlike a market conflict – which is resolved within the boundaries of the rule of law – or a national conflict – which is conducted under the guidance of international law and established customs for national survival – the dynamic challenge of social or asymmetric conflict should be examined through the lens of asymmetric conflict theory in order to explain the use of violence (Stringham, 2007). As an extension of conflict theory, the argument posed by Arreguin-Toft (2012) is that asymmetric conflict is rooted in conflict theory, but requires a deeper inquiry into its causes and effects.

Arreguin-Toft (2012) asserts that, according to asymmetrical conflict theory, when the strong engage the weak in asymmetric, armed conflict, a long-term strategy that establishes an achievable goal becomes more important to achieving victory than employing mere power. The use of the conflict in Afghanistan as the litmus test for investigating the contemporary security strategies and counterterrorism policies to determine if engaging in orthodox military approaches is, thus, a feasible approach to countering the impact of terror. In this study, organizations that employ terror as means for social and political change were examined. The literature demonstrates that, over the last 16 years, there have been some short-term accomplishments using the "heavy hand" and "high funding" approach of the third generation conventional military. However, these successes usually came at the early stages of the conflict and were replaced by the long-term strategy of the asymmetrical adversary (Banks, 2011).

The literature also establishes the premise that applying the asymmetrical conflict theory (Toft, 2012) will help to explain that, as a struggle develops over a protracted

period of time, early victories will be thwarted by the adversary who adapts asymmetric methods, as demonstrated in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, the specific adversary is a collection of extremist, insurgent, and terrorist organizations that have endured American-led coalition countermeasures, learned from them the American-led activities, and responded with a more effective means of achieving chaos, creating terror, and encouraging lawlessness (Bolechow, 2005). By enduring, waiting, and studying the conventional adversary, a terrorist can mitigate counterterrorism strategies through rapidly counteracting the static antiterrorism strategy. This was demonstrated in Afghanistan with the rise of antidemocratic organizations that moved temporarily from direct action against coalition forces to asymmetric actions, such as the controlling of the media message for Al Qaeda and Taliban forces (Caldwell, 2011). Such a response from an asymmetric adversary results in the absurd strategy of using manpower, technology, and funding for minuscule outcomes at an increasing cost of treasure and blood compared with the earlier accomplishments of the initial phases of the conflict (Caldwell, 2011). This indicates the necessity for a close examination of the employment of the current national strategies as an effectual process to neutralize an asymmetric adversary (Hammes, 2005). There is a gap in the literature concerning this matter because researchers have failed to expound upon how a dominant diplomatic, intellectual, military, and economic power (such as the United States) might use a conventional military strategy to defeat an asymmetrical adversary such as the Taliban and Al Qaeda (Armborst, 2010).

Nature of the Study

The intent of this study is to employ a qualitative research method, centered on a narrative analysis approach that incorporates open-ended inquiries by using a semi-structured cross-examination of the subjects as they detail their experiences and conceptions of the issue. The narrative approach intertwines a sequence of events, taken from individual experiences, and allows for a cohesive chronicle of the impact of American strategy – both on the Afghan nationals affected by it and the American personnel required to implement it. The narrative approach requires in-depth examination of the participant's experiences, along with supporting documents that lead to the discovery of trends and themes that illustrate the individual's life influences and the strategy that created it (Creswell, 2013).

The current analysis required scrutiny of the information presented by the participants, centered on their perspectives and experiences of the American security strategy as it pertains to Afghanistan and the Central Asian States. The primary researcher conducted this examination using a descriptive research survey design. This research design was appropriate in that it allowed the researcher to exploit the qualitative data provided by the participants. This design also made it possible for qualitative data to be thoroughly examined through identification, analysis, and interpretation of various conditions that are relevant to the policy guidelines (see Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

The study was restricted to no more than ten participants total: five participants were chosen at random from the Special Forces retired community and five Afghan

national participants that lived under the American counterterrorism strategy were interviewed. A consistent approach was employed; participants were administered the questions in a uniform manner, while still allowing each subject to reply in as much detail as they desired. This design was appropriate in that it allowed for comparison of the current situation and the expected situation. The findings will be presented in the form of a table. For this analysis, various instruments were used that supported an accurate survey, such as NVivo as the means to capture and organize the data. Other survey resources, including interviews and checklists, were used. Patton (2012) opines, "the use of a various number of research instruments is always encouraged so as to ensure that the data collected is accurate and holistic" (p.??). Opinions from subject matter experts were pursued from the appropriate sources to ascertain the suitability of the research instruments.

Definitions of Terms

Asymmetric warfare. The struggle in which two belligerents contrast in the size and ability of their economic, military, and social capabilities, yet the weaker side attempts to exploit the stronger foe's weaknesses. The conflict relies upon the weaker adversary employing strategies and tactics of unconventional or irregular warfare. In this, the weaker adversary employs a strategy that offset deficiencies in quantity or quality by neutralizing or making a weakness out the stronger foes reliance on conventional power. Such strategies move beyond just being militarized and use all elements of society where, in contrast, symmetric war is based on two adversaries that employ similar conventional power and resources that rely on tactics that are at their core

similar, differing only in specifics and implementation (Toft, 2012). Furthermore, a broad and irregular spectrum of military, paramilitary, and information operations conducted by states, organizations, or individuals as well as surrogate forces under their control, specifically affecting vulnerabilities within an adversarial government or armed force (Department of Defense, 2010).

Antiterrorism. Actions that are taken with the goal of decreasing the vulnerability of people and property to terrorist actions, including the response to affected areas and containment of areas by the military and civilian forces (Department of Defense, 2010).

Center of gravity. The foundation of political, social, and military power that handles moral standing, tangible strength in a conventional conflict, freedom of action to respond to social threat, and provides the will to act (JP 1-02 & JP 5-0, Aug 2011).

Effects-based operations. The method used by military or operational planners for attaining chosen strategic goals, outcome, or effect on the enemy (JFCOM Glossary at www.jfcom .mil/about/glossary.htm).

Irregular warfare. A form of asymmetric warfare that describes an armed conflict between governing state authorities and non-state actors for legitimate governance as well as social influence over the targeted population(s). Employers of irregular warfare use indirect or asymmetric approaches in challenging the stronger more capable conventional state forces through a full range of military and other capabilities. The goal of the irregular warrior is to erode an adversary's power, influence, and willpower to continue (DOD 3000.07, Irregular Warfare, Dec 2008).

Insurgency. A methodical and systematic operation, the goal of which is to overthrow a constituted government through the use of asymmetric tactics that employ certain elements, such as subversion and indirect armed conflict (Department of Defense, 2010).

Jihad. An Arabic word originally meaning: to struggle, endeavor, or apply oneself in support of Allah. The term has become associated with violent extremists who employ the perception of jihad as a call to arms to justify their actions (Department of Defense, 2010).

Measures of effectiveness. The metric established by operational leaders to judge the success or effectiveness of a particular strategy, operational implementation, or tempo and assess the area or country's system behavior for positive changes as well as indicators in the capabilities of adversaries and the operational environment in which forces are deployed within. The purpose of the gauging the measures of effectiveness is to create a form of measuring the attainment of the strategic goal (JP 1-02 and JP 3-0, Joint Operations, 11 Aug 2011).

National strategy. The guiding stratagem or blueprint for improving and using the social, moral, economic, diplomatic, and informational resources of a nation that form a synergy with the tangible assets of military might to secure national objectives (JP 1-02).

National Defense Strategy. The National Defense Strategy is a proposal submitted by the Secretary of Defense for the employment of the Armed Forces of the

United States, as well as agencies and organizations, to achieve national security strategy objectives (DOD Joint Publication 1-02, June 2014).

Strategy. A plan, policy or approach to solving a problem in the case of a nation by using the mechanisms that make up the nation's power. The strategy involves using the nation's resources in a synchronized fashion that is integrated with governmental agencies' critical infrastructure and key partners to achieve national and multinational objectives (DOD Joint Publication1-02, June 2014 and DOD Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations, 11 Aug 2011).

Terrorism. The illegitimate use of violence or the threat of the illegitimate use of violence that's purpose is to sow fear as well as to coerce a legitimate government or established society to accept particular political goals. Terrorism is often inspired by or used in the name of religious, political, or other ideological dogmas that are the center of an illegitimate organization's moral foundation. Such organizations are, though inspired by religious or other ideologies, committed to the pursuit of goals that are usually political objectives (DOD Joint Publication 3-26, 2014). The premeditated actions based on politically motivated actions that create violence intend to be enacted against civilian or noncombatant targets by an organization that is considered to be a subnational group or illegal agent as quantified by the United States Federal Code 22 USC §2656f as well as defined within the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (Department of Justice, 2014). Terrorism may also be defined as the illegitimate use of violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce the legitimate government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives (Department of

Homeland Security, 2013). This definition is used by the FBI and indicates that the mission of the FBI Counterterrorism organization is to identify a terrorist incident as it pertains to the criminal laws of the United States, which would result in the suspected terrorist being subject to arrest and prosecution (Department of Justice, 2013).

Terrorist. An individual that engages in an act or acts of terrorism. (Department of Defense, 2014). Also, a subgroup, by definition, is an extremist who uses terrorism for the purpose of targeting of noncombatant or innocent people to produce fear in order to terrorize regimes or societies in the quest of political, religious, or ideological goals. Extremists use terrorism to impede and undermine political progress, economic prosperity, the security and stability of the international state system, and the future of civil society (Department of Defense, 2014).

Terrorist organization. More than one terrorist who works in unison towards a common goal, usually under an organizational framework, with an establish hierarchy and position requirements. The assembly of terrorists into a group makes this organization a united relationship that uses its organization for the purpose of perpetrating acts of terrorism (Department of Defense, 2014).

Assumptions

A key assumption held in this inquiry was that narratives from the participants would be provided honestly and candidly. Based upon rigorous critique by a preliminary test of the questions and the instrument used to measure the responses, it was assumed that the data gained was identified with a high confidence rate. Further, it was assumed that participants in the inquiry would complete the interview process and have the

information measured through the approved instrument based on the criteria established for the investigation.

Scope and Delimitations

The intent of this study was to employ a qualitative research method, centered upon a narrative methodology, that incorporated open-ended inquiries by using a semi-structured cross-examination of the subjects as they detailed their experiences and conceptions of the issue based in their experiences (see Creswell, 2013). In this analysis, the information provided by the participants was scrutinized for their perspectives of and experiences with the American national security strategy. This analysis provides a view of each individual's story as the foundation for the larger influences created by counterterrorism national strategy as it pertains to Afghanistan. It was restricted to no more than 10 participants, with one group of the participants selected from the Special Operations retired community. These individuals have experience conducting operations to implement American strategy in Afghanistan. The second group of participants consisted of Afghan citizens with experience with American security policies and counterterrorism operations. A consistent approach with the participants in this study was used through the administration of questions in an undeviating method, which allowed each participant to reply in as much detail as they desired to reflect their perceptions based on life experiences with the strategy.

This study was based on the acceptance that any security strategy ought to recognize the impact of a modern asymmetric war and must correspondingly assimilate the doctrines of traditional strategists with the evolving methods of asymmetrical warfare.

It is impractical to apply a direct study of the United States' mastery of the nature of all versions of modern war, but what can be examined is the impact of a strategist in better understanding the limitations of its conventional approach to strategic contemplation (Boot, 2016). State and non-state adversaries that have abundant weapons, technology, or a resilient economy do not employ asymmetric conflict, but the victor of the conflict is the adversary that survives, adapts, and maintains their willpower by controlling the tempo and maintaining a resolve to win (Thorton, 2007). With this in mind, the examination of data in this study was limited to American national security policies as they pertain to the conflict in Afghanistan. Moreover, the study was restricted to the impact of the strategy on the local level of implementers and receivers of both the American and the asymmetric adversary activities as the strategy and counterstrategy activities took place. The results of this study add to the literature by focusing on the examination of security strategy, as opposed to an asymmetric adversary, by investigating the topic through the lens of a narrative experience. This examination also delineates the study by focusing it on the experiences of the individuals that lived through the effects of the strategy against the literature.

Limitations

One of the advantages of narrative-based research is that participants are allowed to weave a sequence of events that provide a storyline for their experiences, a timeline, and the size of the interview pool of participants is small – usually one to two individuals (Creswell, 2013). As such, misinterpretation or bias in the findings might be in question. The characteristics and size of the target population of this study bring a level of restraint

to the possibility of bias. The participants were drawn from professional communities in which objectivity is highly prized and expected. Therefore, it was assumed that they would be objective in replying to queries about strategy in developing security and counterterrorism strategies as it relates to asymmetrical warfare.

The participants shared their mutual experience of security strategies and counterterrorism operations with a focus concentrated on operations within Afghanistan. Through the demands of their profession, the participants exhibit superb expertise in the field of security strategies and counterterrorism policies, yet restraint was exercised in determining a conclusion from the data or agreeing to the findings of the data that was validation for a particular policy interpretation. One potential weakness of the study might be the participants' unwillingness to indicate any possible likelihood of failed behavior, especially if they perceived that their behavior was a direct reflection of the strategic policies they were implementing or received on a tactical level in Afghanistan. Through the confidentiality of the program and anonymity of the research design, this concern was mitigated.

Due to the potential effort, access, and time constraints that were faced in the course of this study, the participant pool was limited solely to professionals with knowledge of security strategy implementation and experience in counterterrorism operations with a focus on operational experience within Afghanistan. Applying the narrative methodology of qualitative research, the research had a small sample size to draw from; as such, the broad-spectrum of the data might be in question (Creswell, 2013). The very characteristics of the participant population convey a degree of

limitation. The convictions of the participants' viewpoints based on political ideology were also avoided so as to avoid bias in endorsing or judging a specific course of action as opposed to another. It was ensured that the views or perceptions stated by a participant would not be used to construe, support, or reflect the senior leadership in leading the implementation of strategy and counterterrorism policy.

Significance

The intent of this study was to employ a qualitative research method, centered on a narrative analysis approach that incorporated open-ended inquiries by using a semi-structured cross-examination of subjects as they detailed their experiences and conception of the issue at hand. The narrative approach intertwines a sequence of events that is usually taken from a number of individuals in order to form a cohesive chronicle of impact of American strategy (Creswell, 2013). The narrative approach requires in-depth interviews, supported by the examination of supporting documents that leads to the discovery of trends and themes that illustrate the individual's life influences and the strategy that created them (Creswell, 2013).

In this analysis, the information presented by the participants was scrutinized, with a focus on their perspectives and experiences of the American security strategy as it pertained to Afghanistan and the Central Asian States. This examination was accomplished using a descriptive research survey design. This research design was appropriate because it allowed exploitation of the qualitative data provided by the participants. This design also make it possible for the research to exploit qualitative data through identification, analysis, and interpretation of various conditions that are relevant

to the policy guidelines (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Restricted to retired Special Forces soldiers that conducted operations to implement national strategy in Afghanistan as well as participants from the Afghan community that endured the actions, this methodological strategy provided a unique way to examine the means that the United States military uses to recognize the type of war it is engaged in. The uniform manner in which the interviews were conducted provided a measured control over the data, yet allowed each contributor to reply in as much detail as they desired. The primary researcher used various instruments in the analysis, such as NVivo, that supported an accurate survey as the means to capture and organize the data. Survey resources used included interviews and checklist (see Patton, 2012).

Summary

The impact of the current asymmetric warfare environment consists of multiple actors and organizations across the globe supporting each other only through their mutual goals (Robinson et al., 2014). The issue with asymmetric conflict is that, even though it is not as obvious as a massive conventional military attack, it does impact the nation's interest. This impact is compounded by the challenges to national strategy response to economic globalization that creates interdependence between nation states, as well as population groups that in turn create social competition between these same entities (Kunstler, 2011). The rapid growth of interdependence between previously isolated entities is compounded by the infusion of asymmetric activities conducted by non-nation state actors (such as transnational terrorists, insurgents, and international criminal organizations) who serve to complicate matters of strategy and policy (Robinson, 2014).

The overlap of these groups becomes problematic, as globalization normally generates a shift in the previously established balance of power. The era of globalization is notable because of the incredible scope and pace of the changes occurring both outside of and within existing power structures (Thomas, 2011). As it relates to the asymmetric adversary, the shift in the balance of power, along with the need to stabilize the areas that threaten globalization, requires intervention to provide stability that results in successful U.S. military and political operations (Choi, 2015). These operations, based on the Cold War strategy of proxy war, rely on the support and contribution of the host government in the country that requires stabilization (Choi, 2015).

The intensity of these operations depends on their objectives, goals, and the types of organization – some of which receive either direct support from the target population or apathy from the population in supporting the national government goals (Amir & Singer, 2008). Due to the global nature of asymmetric threats in creating multiple on-going conflicts, this study focuses on the most prevalent example of U.S. National Security Strategy in addressing the threat of terrorism from Afghanistan. Thus, this study addresses, in particular, the strategy of the U.S. military during the Afghanistan conflict as an example of the development and execution of a national security strategy (see Breen & Geltzer, 2011). Additionally, organizations using terror tactics employed around the world were examined to demonstrate the global nature of asymmetric warfare and serve as the basis for explanation. Understanding the type of conflict, as it explains the prevalent threats, will allow strategy developers and conflict analysts to adapt their

approach in addressing the core of the conflict instead of a piecemeal response to the tactics of an adversary (Mack, 1975).

When the United States declared the "War on Terrorism," it led to military engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as numerous smaller engagements around the globe. Preble's (2016) question, "Has the United States botched the timeless warning of past experiences to know your enemy and design a strategy that destroys him?" (p.??) requires examination. This inquiry into military strategy may provide an explanation as to what the United States has achieved in Afghanistan and, more singularly, whether the United States has successfully targeted terrorist organizations in Afghanistan. This gap in the research led the researcher to examine terrorism research that included the broader impact of being part of an asymmetric conflict in which the adversary for the nation state, chiefly the United States, cannot compete on a symmetric level and, thus, engages the communities from which terrorists often emerge as well as the populaces that convey the impact of counterterrorism strategies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

There are many opinions on war and the development of strategy to conduct war (Gray, 2006). One argument posed by a number of professionals and scholars anticipates a global revolution in military affairs brought on by the application of advanced technologies and an innovative doctrine that predominantly advances the areas of information management, remote surveillance, and precision airstrike capabilities based on advanced sensors to the operator networks. This would result in a speed of execution for military operations that is beyond all but the most advanced societies' capabilities (Chew, 2014). At the other end of the argument, there are those that propose that the dominant social trends, particularly ethnic conflict, population and resource imbalances, as well as the urbanization of population centers, combined with a general appreciation of Western military superiority, propel warfare toward terrorist organizations, criminals, and revolutionary insurgencies that employ brutal local conflicts (Gentile, 2013). Regrettably, a large number of professionals and scholars are advocates for a single view of warfare by transforming strategy as if one of these futures automatically excludes the other, yet the literature demonstrates that nothing could be further from the truth (U.S. Senate, 2014).

Literature Search Strategy

Investigating a subject that is as broad reaching as terrorism as well as the use of asymmetric conflict in terrorism requires the evaluation of numerous peer-reviewed and professionally sustained informational sources. These sources are required to be

grounded by information provided from or referenced for official diplomatic instructions, national security policies, accounts of military campaigns, and activities that document government agencies responsible for countering terrorism such as the Department of Homeland Security and the Justice Department. The Walden University Library and Research Center provided the primary researcher with the material used in this project through access to scholarly databases. What follows is a review of those key texts.

The Library of Congress maintains a register and valuation of numerous databases that are pertinent to the research of government policies, operations, and results as they relate to terrorism (The Library of Congress, 2017). The core of these available databases is the "Social Science Research on Terrorism," which provides detailed accounts of operations related to terrorist response – including cost, time, and measurable results. A key feature of the Library of Congress is the portal access to numerous Internet-based databases that are relevant in research based on the social science view of terrorism, specifically for those searching for actual data (e.g., names of terrorist organizations, incidents of terrorist activity, and those with search capabilities). The databases accessed during the course of this study were maintained primarily by U.S. government agencies, government-sponsored research centers, and international organizations.

The Department of Justice operates the National Institute for Justice (NIJ), which maintains a database on terrorist incidents and indictments in the American Terrorism Study (National Institute for Justice, 2017). Working closely with the FBI, the NIJ has collected information on incidents and indictments from terrorism investigations. The

dataset includes material on 500 terrorists and over 60 terrorist groups indicted in more than 6,700 federal criminal counts. NIJ has supported the data collection and analysis portion of the research, a portion of which has compared international jihad groups with domestic right-wing groups and showed attempts by domestic terrorists to forge alliances with international jihadist groups.

The Rand Corporation is a major think tank for the United States and maintains a database titled the "Rand Database Worldwide Terrorism Incidents" (RDWTI), which is a compilation of data from global sources on international and domestic terrorist events ranging from 1968 through 2009 (The Rand Corporation, 2017). Contributions from public and private organizations sponsor the maintenance of the RDWTI and its predecessors, the RAND Terrorism Chronology and the RAND-MIPT Terrorism Incident Database. The RDWTI is a fully searchable and interactive database, with the intention of providing quality and comprehensive data for researcher on a scholarly level.

The National Archives is a publically administered repository of all records of the United States (National Archives, 2017). To accomplish the monumental task of keeping track of these records, the National Archive maintains the Archives Library Information Center, organized to provide access to information on American historical government, archival administration, and information management documents. There is many diverse datasets employed by the library information center, but the two key areas used in this investigation were: the Central Intelligence Agency Records Search Tool (CREST) and the Digital National Security Archive. The CREST database contains unclassified documents from the CIA Directorate of Operations reports on the role of intelligence in

the post-WWII period to 2010 and is an excellent source of informaiton concerning the activities of the United States military in Afghanistan post-9/11. The Digital National Security Archive contains 38 collections consisting of over 94,000 declassified government documents that incorporate global events and U.S. policy decisions.

Theoretical Foundation

Of all the contemporary justifications for waging war, it is arguably certain that asymmetric is amongst the broadest, if not the most encompassing. Some scholars state that asymmetrical conflict theory can be categorized through the examination of various existing and potential concepts of asymmetric conflict (Chase, 2011). Employing asymmetrical conflict theory, scholars characterize four different subthemes through which asymmetry may be deduced as it applies to strategy: "power distribution, organizational capability of the adversary, approach to conflict, and cultural norms of the environment that the conflict is waged within" (p.123). This recent approach in defining conflict can result in a misunderstanding through the misapplication of the terms asymmetry strategy and/or asymmetric conflict, which distorts the adversary and leads us to make major strategic blunders (Angstrom, 2011). This is demonstrated in the strategy of concentrating on threats rather than adversarial strategies. By employing the asymmetric conflict theory over conflict theory, this study allows the strategy for Afghanistan to be understood through the strategic nature, goals, and overall concepts of American strategy in Afghanistan as judged by the operations the strategy dictates (see Peceny & Bosin, 2011).

In describing asymmetric war, researchers of current forms of conflict theorize that significant change in the character of war has occurred in which America, the champion of symmetric war, has not addressed (Chew, 2014). Many of these studies have identified and analyzed the characteristics of modern interventions as the template for asymmetric war (Chace, 2011). Proponents of asymmetric warfare have suggested that there are significant differences between modern (asymmetric) war and conventional wars of the past (Chace, 2011). The challenge for strategists in approaching a modern asymmetric conflict is that war, as cognitively acknowledged to most people that are noncombatants, is a battle in which soldiers and machines meet to decide who wins, much like a football game. The expectation is that, with war, there is a substantial event – such as one battle or campaign – that decides the issues through a dispute in international affairs (Chace, 2011). September 11th, 2001 could be considered the day that conventional war as a mainstay of strategy ended with the need for strategy in its Clausewitzian tradition to recede (Chace, 2011). Asymmetric warfare theorists identify this type of warfare with particular styles of conducting war – in contrast to the conventional style of post-Cold War United States strategies that focus on maneuver warfare. Asymmetric warfare, to the contrary, employs all available systems ranging from political, economic, social, to finally, a military solution in order to convince the enemy's political decision makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit (Hammes, 2005). In essence, warfare, particularly that seen in Afghanistan, has evolved into a form of global insurgency against conventional powers (Hammes, 2005).

The one linking factor that is examined between symmetric, or conventional, war and an asymmetric one is that strategy is essential for success. The core of conflict, whether it is symmetric or asymmetric, is the persistent threat or use of violence to achieve desired ends (CITE). With this in mind, strategy has no permanent form and must always manifest itself to meet the challenges in order to achieve the objective. This perspective is best summed up by Dolman: "strategy, in its simplest form, is *a plan for attaining continuing advantage* (Chace, 2011, p.??). Dolman discerns that a strategist's duty is frequently supported by an advantage that allows for the strategy to be successful. Yet, with an asymmetric adversary, this advantage can easily become a disadvantage (Angstrom, 2011). The strategist must observe that an advantage may take the form of material, political will, or a superior understanding of how to convert resources to achieve its ends. Understanding asymmetrical war and all the influences it has on the multidisciplinary aspects of modern conflict is a challenge for strategists that must manifest itself in a similarly wide range.

The uninformed use of strategy may employ an absolute means for achieving an objective. However, in the 21st century, the achievement of Dolman's continuing advantage needs to be reexamined as a strategy that reminds us that warfare, and a successful strategy, is generational. The current generation exploits asymmetric war for the purposes of successfully reaching their political goals (Angstrom, 2011). In asymmetric warfare, the strategic environment is characterized by a rich set of global political, economic, military, and social/cultural variables that form the basis for global influence, played out in an increasingly connected and contested information domain

(Carter, 2014). The resultant meta-trends exert extremely powerful, complex, and somewhat unpredictable forces on the global environment (Carter, 2014). The leading factor in the global environment is the U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS), which outlines the focus of the power and direction of the military strategies of the United States and illuminates what challenges and threats the nation faces (Sanger & Baker, 2010). Table 1 identifies the focus of the national strategy since 1994 and demonstrates the changing factors and focus of the strategy. Though terrorism is identified and interest in the security of U.S. citizens is made clear, the identification of asymmetric threats is not currently acknowledged, nor is the world prepared for them (Robinson, 2014).

Table 1

Two Decades of National Security Strategies

1994 -NSS	1997 -NSS	1999/2000 -NSS
• Enlarging the community of democracies • Enhance our security • Promote prosperity at home • Promote democracy	• Protect nation's essential and enduring requirements • Safeguard the lives and safety of Americans • Maintain the sovereignty of America, with the nation's values, institutions and territory intact • Provide for the prosperity of the nation and its people	• Defend vital interests of the nation • Ensure the survival, safety and vitality of nation • Support the national interests through humanitarian and other interests.

2002 - NSS	2006 - NSS	2010 NSS
• Defend the nation • Preserve the peace by building on common interests to promote global security • Extend the benefits of freedom across the globe	• Champion the goals of human dignity • Strengthen the global alliances to defeat global terrorism • Work with the nations allies to resolve conflicts • Avert our adversaries from threatening America or its allies, with WMD • Incite a new age of global economic growth • Expand the development of allied nations by opening societies and constructing the infrastructure of democracy • Modernize America's national security establishments • Take on the prospects as well as confront the challenges that globalization of the economy, cultures, and information create.	• Strengthen Nation's Defense • Secure the Homeland and Combat the Threat of Terrorism • Construct the Capacity to Prevent Conflict • Avert the Increase and Employment of Weapons of Mass Destruction • Assure Access to Shared Spaces • Confront Climate Change •Protect the areas of Cyber-security, Space Security, Air and Maritime Security • Increase the focus on Global Health Security

Conceptual Framework

Within the last fourteen years, the United States has shifted to employing a strategy of population-centric counterinsurgency strategies such as were used in Afghanistan and Iraq – with inadequate results. Though the countries of Afghanistan and Iraq are different in culture and infrastructure, both U.S. military campaigns against them sought to secure the population and build local support for the new governments (Preble, Ashford, & Evans, 2016). The results were conflicts that were exceedingly costly in terms of blood and treasure, while neither yielded a definitive accomplishment of the national objectives. What has become typical in asymmetric conflicts is that the conflict generates international and domestic political, military, and public aversion to large-scale, United States-led operations. Consequently, many U.S. citizens continue to question the efficacy of America's counterinsurgency strategy. Following the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, there is the question as to whether the United States can and will develop a national strategy that will prevail over asymmetric threats to its security (Hammes, 2012).

Previous Approaches to the Challenges of Asymmetric Warfare

Academics and military professionals have attributed the complications in the military operations that resulted from the September 11, 2001 attack to be a case of myopia, of fighting an irregular or asymmetric war (Thomas, 2011). The effects of the Vietnam War deeply ingrained in the U.S. military psyche, and overwhelming success that the 1990/91 Gulf War produced, the view became that, rather than make better preparations for asymmetric war, it was best to avoid potential quagmires and to consign

in the operations doctrine the concept of "Operations Other Than War"(Thomas, 2011). Wariness to engage in an asymmetric conflict creates a reluctance, also, to develop a strategy along with supporting programs to comprehend and successfully prosecute them (Sobek & Braithwaite, 2005). Ricks (2012) describes the reasons for the lack of a viable asymmetric doctrine, let alone a strategy, as a post-Vietnam, military-produced trend. Excellent battalion-level commanders that were once promoted to flag rank were not prepared for the changing demands of the post-Soviet era yet were expected to make decisions at the strategic level concerning asymmetric operations (Ricks, 2012).

When strategy is debated in the academic environment, whether a course of action is a tactical perspective versus a strategic one is an academic exercise. However, when applied to a real conflict, the choice of developing a tactical level strategy instead of developing a national strategic level becomes precarious in the development of methodologies that a strategy produces (Hoover Institute, 2015). This is observed in tactical strategies based on clever moves with the goal of achieving surprise over a fixed enemy. This element of surprise becomes the focal point instead of a national strategy that outlines the goal to achieve a sustained victory (Ricks, 2012). The goal of a successful strategy is based on a desired long-term political outcome achieved over a temporary military one (Ikenberry, Slaughter, & Slaughter, 2010). It is argued that, in Afghanistan, military strategy devolved into numerous strategies for a desirable political and military outcome (which was not reached) and thus failure transpired (Livingston & O'Harlan, 2014).

Challenges of Asymmetric Warfare and National Security Strategy

The literature on the study of terrorism demonstrates that terror is a tool utilized in asymmetric warfare (Banks, 2011). This suggests the argument that a different strategy in countering the asymmetric adversary is required, as opposed to the separate and stand-alone counterterrorism policy (in which there has not been enough research conducted in examining the asymmetrical method of war as part of the national security strategy) (Erye, 2010). War has been deemed by both scholars and professionals as a struggle where either a nation-state or a non-state actor will arm, plan, or strategize differently from the other based on resources, culture and (most importantly) the goals that are formed when entering a conflict (Paulus, 2009). Asymmetric warfare is also recognized on the tactical level; it requires a particular kind of strategy and has been described as "Irregular Warfare" in many military doctrines (Balcells & Kalyvas, 2014). Within the purview of military field commanders, asymmetric or irregular warfare is described as a type of military dispute where one side makes the attempt to exploit the characteristics of the other by challenging the ability to provide security and stability (Gentile, 2013 & DOD, 2010).

The 9/11 terrorist attacks and the resulting war in Afghanistan are the best-recognized recent models of asymmetric warfare in which a weaker foe attacks by out-maneuvering a stronger force through the employment of tactics and methods unforeseen by that stronger foe (DiPaulo, 2005). A number of professionals and scholars describe asymmetric war as significant and insignificant clashes among nations or groups that have dissimilar military, economic, and political stratagems and capabilities. Since the

reemergence of Afghanistan as the focal point in the counter-terrorism policies of the United States and is held as an example of that national strategy, new research into cultural, economic, military and political responses to terrorism, counterinsurgency, and other methods of asymmetric warfare have been conducted (Paulus, 2009).

The Gap in the Literature

Following the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 there has been a rapid outgrowth in the field of terrorism-based research resulting from the substantial increase in funding for terrorism-related research and education programs. Prior to the 9/11 attacks, the field of terrorism research was predominately based on historical accounts as they relate to political struggle. Traditionally, the benchmark case is that of the 1972 Munich Olympic attack and these types of attacks culminated in Al Qaida-centered attacks against U.S. assets at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia and the American Embassy in Kenya during the 1990s (Stampnitzky, 2013). Following the 9/11 attacks, the field rapidly grew from a minor field of study within security or political studies into a significant field of study that has generated its own journals, centers of research with prominent scholars and experts leading the movement for research funding projects, conferences and degree based programs. The significance of this rapid rise in the study of terrorism is the lack of a cohesive interpretation as to what terrorism actually is, how is it caused, and whether it is a political, martial or social science (Ranstorp, 2009). Though there have been many critics as to the viewpoint of what generates qualified studies in the field of terrorism, there is a consensus that the field does not generate enough fieldwork such as is provided by a narrative study in which life experiences that incorporate

terrorism are investigated. It is probable that the growing sense of unease found in recent scholarly studies about the development of asymmetric warfare has resulted from concerns about the global war on terror (WOT) (Ranstorp, 2009).

Since 2001, a great deal of funding has been put forth to fund research in the field of terrorism studies; this has resulted in the expansion of the field and created new scholars and professionals. Yet, we are no closer to answering the question, "What strategy should a nation employee to defeat terrorism?" The consequential unproductivity of focusing on a success strategy in regard to this topic is partially due to the United States government's approach of providing funding for research without providing the essential information concerning national objectives within academia (Sageman, 2014). This creates the gap between academia, professional environments, and the national security community. This, in turn, leads to suppositions about what terrorism actually is and how to defeat it – with little empirical grounding in academia as well as in professional environments (Sageman, 2014). A possible resolution for this unproductivity is to collect nonsensitive data and compare this data to the examination of the people that enforce national security strategy as well as those that receive the results of the strategy.

Roots of the Afghanistan Strategy

In defining terrorism and the overlapping of terrorist studies with insurgency, the current discourse has shifted focus – from one of initial nation state internal conflict erupting past borders to one resulting in criminal activity that is classified as terrorism since the perpetrators have the goal of supporting political, religious or social objectives

of their cause as opposed to criminal gain (Stampnitzky, 2013, p. 46). This shift caused experts to focus their arguments away from counterinsurgency and toward redefining terrorism as a main element of social conflict. The result was a definition of terror that includes the obscurities of politics, morality and rationality as three motivators for a terrorist (Lampnitzky, 2013). Prior to the 9/11 attacks, the field of terrorism studies was disjointed and, admittedly, a relatively new field for social science that can trace its roots to the study of insurgent of guerilla warfare based on the activities of post-World War conflicts. The "War on Terror," with the subsequent engagement in Afghanistan, resulted in competing definitions of "terror" – between organizations tasked with countering terrorism and policymakers, who do not seem to see the difference between an insurgent and a terrorist, as a consequence of the strategy of the United States during the conflict (Wainscott, 2015).

This strategy, using the conflicting definition for terrorism, would steer the operations in Afghanistan by employing previous counterinsurgency and terrorism studies from the post-Vietnam period to present day (Wilson, 2007). The connections between counter insurgency and terrorism, when used as methods to develop strategies when engaging in asymmetric warfare, are based on two factors proposed by Horne (2006) in that the techniques and goals to wage war by the groups are similar. Thus the belief that an insurgency and terrorism are compatible allows for a singular strategy that combats both threats.

The core to the development of the strategy is supported by two studies conducted by Galula (1964) and Trinquer (2006) that are based on their experiences in the Algerian

liberation war from France. Both Galula and Trinquer ground their views on experiences gained from combating an insurgency based on a faction that grew from the local population of Algeria. These early counterinsurgent experts provide two unique views on the requirements of developing a strategy against an asymmetric adversary that prevails in many academic and professional communities today.

Galula (1964) presents the argument that a military solution to countering an insurgency is counterproductive in that it ultimately alienates the host population that both the insurgency and counter insurgency depend upon for survival and success. Basically, it is Galula that provides the strategy (employed by the American Surge in Afghanistan): that a successful counterinsurgency program is based on a "Clear-Hold-Build" strategy that is the cornerstone in U.S. and Coalition activities (Petraeus, 2013). The goal of this strategy is to deny the insurgency a base to operate and to convince the local population that the established government is a stronger and better option for them over the insurgents (Weisiger, 2014). This philosophy has become a foundation of the 2013 published DOD Counterinsurgency manual as well as the American operational goal in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014 (Cordesman, 2015). Thus, the basic idea that success is dependent upon popular support requires the tactic of clearing a population base of insurgent activity, holding the base in order to prevent the insurgency from reentering, and building a physical, security, economic and political infrastructure that once successful in an area can be replicated in ever growing large spheres of influence (Wilson, 2012).

Countering the view that asymmetric war is a competition for popular support is Trinquer (1964), who presents the argument that asymmetric war is not a battle for the popular support, but a battle to destroy the insurgent and the insurgent's political power. Trinquer argues that terrorism and insurgency are directly linked. He observes that insurgency spills beyond the borders of any nation or state and employs the techniques of terror through an increasing cycle of violence in order to obtain its goals (Trinquer, 1964). It is Trinquer, using experiences as a French officer serving in Algeria following service in Indochina, who points out that the population is but one aspect of the conflict; the center of gravity for modern war (asymmetric war), however, is the ability of the adversary to propagate the capacity to wage war. Thus, Trinquer argues that a security strategy should be centered on destroying the adversary's ability to wage war, including eliminating the enemy's military, political or cultural organizations (Thornton, 2007). A further aspect of Trinquer's philosophy concerning asymmetric strategy (adopted by the United States government for a short period of time) is the employment of torture as a means to counter the fear created by terrorism (Burke, 2008). Trinquer demonstrates that the actions of the French during the struggle for Algerian independence in the 1950's were very effective at crushing an insurgency that depends upon local popular support for all of its need. However, the techniques and tactics that allow the tactical victory were also the catalyst for strategic defeat by the global population, which withdrew support for the French forces in Algeria. The result was that France granted Algeria independence, ultimately proving that winning battles alone will not guarantee success (Lee, 2006).

The difference between the professional and academic camps about asymmetric strategy can be found in the differences between Galula's and Trinquer's theories. This can be summed up in the differences between defining the type of struggle that they faced in Algeria. Galula express that a counterinsurgency/counter terrorism strategy is a political, and ultimately a legal, issue between the government and the adversary; the solution is the use of law and order to create stability (Galula, 1964). Trinquer, on the other hand, contends that counterinsurgency/counterterrorism requires a new use of military capabilities to defeat the enemy (Wilson, 2012). This lack of clear definition of what the struggle is has created the effect of a war with no clear strategy for victory – or a clear vision of what success is and how will it be measured. This lack of clarity in a measurable strategy will ultimately lead to an insurgency or terrorist victory, as the larger more powerful nation state loses popular support through fatigue of constantly struggling against an elusive enemy that continues to survive (Sullivan, 2007).

Defining Asymmetric War

Many definitions exist for asymmetric warfare. A more general definition is: a dominion in which military activities that dictate that national security asymmetry is the operating, establishing, and contemplating strategy differently than the opponent in order to exploit advantages through the use of an opponent's weaknesses (Department of Defense, 2010). The goal of this method is to gain the initiative that generates a greater freedom of action. It can be a political strategy, military strategy, information-cultural strategy or a combination of all. It contains dissimilar methods, skills, principles, establishments, time, or a combination of any of these (Porter, 2006). Asymmetric

warfare can be a short-term or long-term struggle; it may be contained within a single country or span across a region – and even the globe (Cordesman, 2012). The issue with asymmetric warfare is that it can be instituted as a grand strategy or used as a tactical means that allows a singular method for a discrete struggle; or, it can be practiced in conjunction with symmetric approaches that will have psychological and physical aspects. The United States military has employed asymmetric activities on a tactical level as prescribed by the US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency (COIN) manuals. These are actions that assist in mitigating negative impacts of operating in an asymmetric environment in which the United States military has shifted from a conventional force, capable of meeting and defeating a symmetric foe such as the former Soviet Union, to one in which small unit commanders are assigned to areas and regions within a combat zone (DOD, 2010). Yet, the strategy that placed these small units in an asymmetric war has yet to address the goals or the desired end-state for the conflict (Cordesman, 2012).

Defining a Strategy for Afghanistan

During an interview with Colin Powell concerning the U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, his response to the strategy employed was: "You can say, 'Go take that hill,' or, 'Take out the Taliban,' at the moment, but if your goal is to create a functioning democracy, is that the role that a military operation will achieve?" (National Geographic, 2016). This concept is found in the challenge of developing a national strategy that meets the national objectives, yet is achievable with the resources and culture it has to work with. Not only is there challenge in working the Afghanistan culture but also dealing

with the subcultures of the diplomatic, intellectual, military and economic domains that exist in the United States (Biddle, 2008). When addressing an asymmetric war, tacticians within those domains of the U.S. will argue that no country is more asymmetric in warfare than the United States. Historically, the United States military has valued adaptability in warfare strategies – from George Washington's changing the Continental Army's training doctrine at Valley Forge to the Shock and Awe campaign in the opening hours of the Iraqi Freedom Campaign (Gray, 2005). A key factor in the current version of American adaptability in war has been its growing reliance on employing technology, especially standoff technology to project its power. This is based on the assumption that reducing American causalities, while increasing hostile casualties with overwhelming force, will result in a short, relatively bloodless war. This is supported by agreement between strategists in academic and military domains that, once an adversary's military infrastructure is defeated, a stable political and social infrastructure will follow (Linnemann, 2016). Regrettably, the reliance on this predilection as basis for a national strategy has repeatedly directed the nation into making a strategic overreach in accomplishing objectives with a result in an unbalanced force structure, which ultimately results in costing the nation much in blood and treasure as well as a loss of faith in the national leadership (Crane, 2013).

In 2014, the United States national budget for defense was over $610 billion – an amount the eclipses the next seven countries combined (Peter G. Peterson Foundation, 2015). The result is a nation that becomes more enamored with the advantages of technology and in the United States creating a disparity in conventional military spending

for high dollar technology to human based, asymmetric programs. Regional adversaries find themselves unequal to matching, let alone defeating, the United States in terms of military power. This, in turn, creates a modern version of a David and Goliath situation in which the regional adversaries take on the role of David. As long as conventional inequalities exist, it is to be expected that less powerful adversaries will employ the "weapons of asymmetric warfare such as terrorism and insurgency" (Cordona, 2015).

Understanding Afghanistan and Terrorist Organizations

The core to all strategy development is to understand the adversary as it pertains to asymmetric warfare and to understand the target population that the adversary depends upon (Tarzi, 2005). Ahmad Shah Durran unified the Pashtuns tribes in 1747, in effect creating the nation of Afghanistan as well. During Great Britain's colonial era, the country was used as a barrier against the Russian empire. Afghanistan attained independence from British domination following the Great War in 1919, during which the country was rule by a monarch until it briefly experimented with democracy. That experiment with democratic rule ended with a 1973 coup and, again, with a 1978 Communist counter-coup (Meinshausen, 2010). The Soviet Union invaded to support the tottering Afghan Communist regime in 1979, touching off a long and destructive war in which asymmetric insurgency war proved greater than the use of conventional symmetric forces. After ten years of an insurgent-based asymmetric war, the Soviets withdrew in 1989 (Meinshausen, 2010). In 1966, following the political void created by Soviet withdrawal, a series of subsequent civil wars saw the country come under the Taliban, a hardline Islamic-based, Pakistani sponsored movement that emerged to end the country's

civil war and anarchy. The Taliban allied with Al Qaida for both political and financial support as well as ideological fusion. This fusion resulted in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks that became the catalyst for a U.S. lead coalition conducting military action that toppled the Taliban and assumed the responsibility of establishing a modern Afghanistan government (Meinshausen, 2010). In December 2004, Hamid Karzai became the first democratically elected president of Afghanistan and Afghanistan's National Assembly was inaugurated the following December (Jefferson, 2008). Despite a strategy to create a stable central government, the loss of the Afghan popular support in the provinces due to corruption and poorly executed national government strategy allowed for a resurgence of the Taliban. This resurgence supports continuing provincial instability, particularly in the south as well as the eastern regions that border with Pakistan, where serious challenges remain for the Afghan Government (Robinson, 2014).

Afghanistan Tribal System

In its most basic definition, an Afghan tribe is an extended family; each tribe can be traced back to a single man through a direct blood relationship (Meinshausen & Wheeler, 2010). Tribal systems regulate the life of most Afghans with the tribal members being heavily dedicated to their associated tribe in a manner that, when called upon, they assemble in arms under the tribal chiefs and local clan leaders (Khans). Islamic law rules Afghan culture. Each follower is compelled to bear arms at the ruler's call, though this is seldom required (Meinshausen & Wheeler, 2010). The Afghan peasant or merchant goes to war for much the same mixture of reasons as the western

office worker or factory worker: partially having a desire for adventure as well as a desire to avoid losing honor in the eyes of his or her family and tribe. The Afghan have an ingrained dislike for invading foreigners that equates to fighting an outsider as revenge against those that threaten his family, his tribe, or his faith (Meinshausen & Wheeler, 2010). It is the same Afghan culture, tribal system and socio-economic scheme that terrorist/insurgent/criminal organizations receive support and recruits from – as well as the national government military, police, and civil service workers (McChrstal, 2009). Both sides depend on the acceptance and support of the tribal system and socio-economic scheme.

Terrorist Organizations in Afghanistan

The Taliban is by far the largest and most active and effective terrorist organization in Afghanistan (CIA, 2012). Its stated goal is to restore the fundamentalist regime it established in the mid-1990s in Afghanistan. The origins of the Taliban begin in Pakistan with the backing of Saudi finances. Because many Taliban members are Pashtun in their ethnicity, a large part of the organizations support comes from Afghanistan's Pashtun community (Hammidov, 2006). The chaos in the lack of central leadership created by the withdrawal of the Soviet Union allowed the Taliban to gain popularity among Afghans due to the constant warring and the lack of stability created by different Mujahidin elements in Afghanistan following the years of the Soviet occupation. The Afghan people were tired of the fighting and lawlessness that had consumed the country and believed that the Taliban would end corruption and restore peace (Cordesman, 2012). Taking on the role of an insurgent against outside invaders,

the Taliban has gained the reputation for being able to withstand both Afghanistan Government and American led coalition forces that try to eradicate it (Kilcullen, 2011). After fifteen years of conflict against the United States, the Taliban has demonstrated that it has the ability to provide financial, logistical, and military support to its fighters, followers, and allies. Many local Afghans have observed, as have coalition forces and non-governmental organizations (NGO), that the Taliban carries out operations in Afghanistan with the support of other groups such as Al-Qaida and the Haqqani Network (Kilcullen, 2011). These groups frequently work together to oppose Coalition Forces and the Afghan National Army because they have the common goal of ridding Afghanistan of what they consider to be their chief competition (Cordesman, 2012).

The Taliban crosses the line from insurgent to criminal element through its significant ties to Afghanistan's opiate trade, which supplies 89 percent of the world's opium. For example, in 2009, the Taliban netted $49-$78 million from Afghanistan's opiate trade, making it the group's largest source of internal funding (Harpviken, 2012). A growing body of reports indicates senior Taliban commanders in southern Afghanistan have expanded their direct involvement in the drug trade to include the transnational trafficking of heroin, which could provide them with year-round revenue (UNODC, 2010). The Taliban is extending its capabilities from local insurgency to international criminal organization, which allows the organization to venture into regional and transnational terrorism by direct operations in Pakistan, Turkmenistan, and other South Asia nations – as well as provide planning, training and logistical support numerous terrorist organizations in the Middle East and Africa (Roy, 2012).

The Taliban as a Shadow Government

The Taliban was restricted in its ability to maintain the dominant power it held in the region immediately following the U.S.-led invasion in 2001. By 2006, with billions of dollars spent and thousands of lives lost in rebuilding Afghanistan, the insurgency had not only survived, but recovered enough to begin gathering momentum as the dominant political and economic force in Afghanistan (Bank, Nevers, & Wallerstein, 2007). During a discussion centered on Afghanistan and employment of national strategy there, Lieutenant-General Michael Maples (U.S. Army), functioning as the director of the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) in 2006, told the Senate Armed Services Committee, that he expected 2006 would see double the amount overall level of violence in Afghanistan from 2005. Despite intensive counter-insurgency operations by the end of 2006, Jane's Terrorism & Insurgency Centre (JTIC) confirmed that there were 322 attacks in 2006 as opposed to the 176 recorded in 2005 (JTIC Report, 2007).

The above-mentioned increase in violent acts was predominantly due the actions of the Taliban and represents the significant factors behind the Taliban resurgence (Holbrooke, 2009). According to a joint Department of Defense and Department of State report released in November of 2006, the Afghan police force was largely incapable of carrying out routine law enforcement or providing a basic level of security and governance. The authors of the report concluded that the official figure of 70,000 trained police officers was inflated and estimated that only 30,395 officers were adequately trained and equipped. The reconstruction of the Afghan National Army also proceeded slower than expected, with fewer than 40,000 troops mobilized by the end of

2006, out of a target of 70,000 (DOD Report, 2011). The report demonstrates the lack of a critical component to the national strategy: the Host Nation must demonstrate that they are stronger and more morally grounded in the needs of the population than the insurgent (Biddle, Christia, & Their, 2010).

Although the Taliban still lacked the capacity to challenge combined Coalition Forces and Afghan National Army (ANA) forces in open warfare, the increasingly sophisticated use of asymmetric tactics (particularly the deployment of improvised explosive devices or IEDs), and the introduction of suicide bombers employed for the purpose of threatening the stability of Afghanistan demonstrate that the Taliban adapted their strategy in order to survive and win against the Coalition and Afghan government (Holbrooke, 2009). To support the chaos that the Taliban is creating through their asymmetric campaign shadow governments have been instituted with their own public support and justice directives. These shadow governments, headed by a selected governor, are responsible for resource allocation for their specific provinces as well as administering justice through Shari'a courts (Paul, Clarke, Grill, & Dunigan, 2013). These shadow governments ensure activity is being conducted according to the Taliban High Council strategy for regaining and maintaining power in the region (Hammidov, 2006).

Adversaries and Populations

A reoccurring disparity in the literature is the comparison between the types of adversaries and the social geopolitical environment that an asymmetric war will be conducted in. A common element that all warfare shares is that there will be adversaries

opposing one another in order to achieve their goals (Hammes, 2005). Thus, warfare requires an understanding of what the local as well as global populations' perceptions of the adversary and of the problem that created the conflict. This requirement is compounded by the perception of the role of the Unites States, which is key to recognizing the strategy needed to obtain national goals. Whenever the United States, as well as its allies, engage in a conflict area, it is important to acknowledge the nontraditional asymmetric battle zones such as mass media and social networking that extends even to the most remote areas of the conflict area that are believed to be "off the grid" (Toft, 2011). Those messages embed stereotypes and preconceptions of Americans and western coalition forces. By virtue of their presence in Afghanistan (the longest asymmetric struggle since September 11, 2001) American and coalition forces are considered outsiders at best and, at worst, an occupying force (Meinshausen & Wheeler, 2010). In Afghanistan, the Afghan National Police (ANP) is often the focus of joint operations when engaging in tribal or local outreach operations because members of the ANP are mostly locals. The Afghan National Army can still be considered outsiders because, usually, the units of the army are from other parts of Afghanistan. As such, in an asymmetric environment, it is important to understand that partnering and working through local national representatives can mitigate a good deal of local suspicion and unrest as advocated through the U.S. Army and Marine Corps COIN practices and procedures (Meinshausen & Wheeler, 2010). However, COIN does not solve the bigger problem of countering, mitigating and destroying terrorism.

The strategist that develops national goals in defeating terror as a form of warfare must understand the organizations and actors within the asymmetric conflict. These opposing organizations in an asymmetric conflict operation are found in the following four major categories of adversaries, which are: criminals, terrorists, insurgents, and accidental guerillas (Jefferson, 2008). Each category of adversary has a different set of goals and methods that they employ to achieve their goals. Yet, each adversarial category must be considered individually as well as a single group of enemies in order deal with each in a decisive manner (Pool, 2010). Many scholars, planners and professionals have made a mistake in assuming that there is no difference between these groups – as well as making the incorrect assumption that each group represents a separate and different problem. These failures to understand certain distinctions have resulted in the improper application of strategy and the resulting tactics being employed (Hoolebrooke, 2009). These misunderstandings of the adversary and their goals prevent successful accomplishment of the national goals and can be argued to generate undesirable consequences (Fawcett, 2013). It is noted that criminals, terrorists, insurgents, and accidental guerillas do use common networks and share common short-term objectives. For example, a human trafficking network operated by criminals could also be used to move narcotics, weapons, or money in support of insurgent and terrorist groups (Fawcett, 2013).

Characteristics of Criminals, Terrorist, and Insurgents

A noted misstep in developing a strategy is when a "one size fits all" approach is used in determining that all adversary groups should be lumped together (Cordesman,

2014). Though many of the types adversaries, as well as the subgroups may deem associated with the United States and the governing power of the conflict area as the common enemy, they are different, not only in their ideology and goals, but also in their strengths and vulnerabilities. The result is the use of only one strategy that is incapable of properly addressing a transnational terrorist group such as Al Qaida and will strengthen a criminal organization such as the Haqqani Network (Banks, 2011). Typically, terrorists and insurgents are motivated by an ideological or dogmatic goal, whereas criminal groups are motivated by personal gain. There are some groups, like the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) that began as a political terrorist organization with a socialist based political agenda and then evolved into profit based criminal enterprises when the political objective was not feasible (Weisiger, 2014). Many times, the criminal, terrorist, insurgent and accidental guerilla objectives overlap and each group can be found crossing the boundary defining criminals, insurgent, terrorist and guerillas as the situation necessitates (Toft, 2012). One conundrum for the national security strategist is that criminal activity within a region is often misidentified as terrorist activity, as well as terrorist organizations, routinely engages in criminal activity, support insurgencies, and use accidental guerillas to further their goals (Tuck, 2012). Thus, the strategist must develop a detailed knowledge of the conflict area in order to determine if direct and indirect attacks are occurring as the result of a terrorist group, a tribal leader involved in organized crime, or as part of a tribal dispute with a neighboring tribe (Schiff, 2012). A rocket attack (against a coalition base) may be funded by a local criminal leader and conducted by a local farmer (filling the role of an

accidental guerilla) in an effort to show his strength to a rival faction or to members of his own family or tribe (Dobins, 2010). A strategy that requires these activities to automatically be labeled as terrorism will result in the counter operations being designed in a manner that will alienate the local population and support the terrorist organization that had nothing to do with the attack (Meinshausen, 2010). Competition between criminal organizations, terrorist organizations, and insurgent groups frequently impacts the local population's activities, which are compounded by the application of counter terrorism strategy within the conflict area (Hoolebrooke, 2009).

While criminal groups are motivated for personal gain requiring support for illegal activities through the sale of their criminal activities, terrorist organizations are motivated to conduct similar activities, but for political gain (such as Al-Qaeda) and attempt to influence the political arena by targeting a selected population, such as political and civilian targets (Metz, 2010). Typically, these terrorist groups fail to garner widespread support within the target populations that, under the established counterinsurgency strategy, is a positive result of countering their capabilities (DOD, 2013). Yet, the transnational terrorist group understands that the support of the local population may not be available to them, requiring that they develop techniques, tactics, and procedures to mitigate the requirement of local population support by using limited local supporters, planning operations in other locations, arriving the day of the attack to conduct the operation, and leaving after the attack (Robinson, 2014). These methods reduce the requirement of engaging the local population for support and yields the benefit for the terrorist organization of having the host government or American military

routinely conducting reprisals against the select areas of the local population, which, in turn, results in popular support for the terrorist organization (Robinson, 2014). Terrorist groups can be specifically targeted by law enforcement or the military without having a polarizing effect on the general population, but well-organized and lead groups such as Al Qaida understand the gaps between military and law enforcement capabilities and use these gaps to exploit their goals (Thornton, 2007). Easily confused with terrorist groups, insurgent movements that pursue the goal of revolutionary change with successful insurgencies leverage wide-scale public support for their cause. A strategy that employs control measures that would normally work against terrorist organizations when used against an insurgent movement may alienate the public and create a wider base of support for the insurgent movement (Priyedarshi, 2010). These groups can be confused with terrorist organization as they use the methods associated with terrorism in that they can be both outsiders, as well as aligned tribally, to a location and their supporting infrastructure may overlap and look very similar (Pool, 2010). An anomaly to the structure of the first three groups is the fourth group, known as the "accidental guerilla," which describes fighters that are frequently local tribesman that become involved in the conflict because they are "overcome by events" or "caught in the middle"" of a conflict (Kilcullen, 2011). These individuals are typically locals who do not necessarily believe in the insurgent agenda, but will fight alongside the insurgents because they either believe they are fighting a common enemy such as an invader or for financial means to supplement their income. While terrorists will willfully die for their cause, insurgents may or may not believe that self-sacrifice is required, and criminals and accidental

guerillas almost never adhere to suicide as a means of achieving their goals (Meinshausen, 2010). The accidental guerilla can shift rapidly from supporting the terrorist to supporting the host national government or even directly supporting America if tribal, family, or personal gain support the shift. The impact that an accidental guerilla, who are usually locals and thus a good metric for how the general population will support either cause, provides motivation for the terrorist/insurgent/criminal element employing the accidental guerrilla directly to conduct their war with the intention of using accidental guerillas to fight against asymmetric foes such as the United States (Kilcullen, 2011).

Terrorist groups and insurgent movements are, in general, highly inspired to fight for the organization's goals, often to the death. They usually exhibit good discipline and better training than local tribesmen and will organize themselves into military-style units. Through international support, they have at their disposal a full array of weapons that may include more advanced weapons with which to wage war against their intended target in order to appear as strong as the governing and supporting militaries (Meinshausen, 2010). Two significant factors that can force a terrorist group to shift their focus from their ideological goals toward criminal enterprises are greed and desperation. The terrorist or insurgent groups fall victim to greed when the lure of the profitability of the criminal activity becomes more important than their ideological goals. This transition disconnects these groups from public support and makes them a more manageable threat. Yet, the criminal activity does provide an ability to fund their goals, especially when the goals are modified from strictly ideological to one of gaining power (Deng, 2007).

Characteristics of the Accidental Guerilla

The accidental guerilla is a local who, due to circumstance, environment or culture, has taken up arms against the host nation as well as outsiders. Frequently, accidental guerillas in Afghanistan are armed with only personal small arms, typically Kalashnikov and Enfield rifles in various degrees of repair (Killcullen, 2011). They may lack magazines and small arms ammunition for a sustained fight and often demonstrate poor training and marksmanship skills, as well as fire discipline. They dress in traditional clothing and lack formal uniforms and field gear. They usually seek to break contact immediately in confrontations with coalition troops. Most are illiterate (a few are educated), but they know how to use and maintain technology ranging from Kalashnikovs to cordless phones to building Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). They are intimately familiar with local and regional terrain and tribal power structures and are usually aware of outsiders that enter their village or area. Accidental guerillas may lack motorized transport and logistic support. They will almost always join whichever side they perceive to be more successful (Killcullen, 2011).

The degree of participation by the accidental guerilla will vary and can be categorized as local nationals that will support insurgent group they align with (such as the Taliban, or Jaysh al-Islam, or Kataib Thawrat al Ishrin) because they believe in the propaganda, are ideologically motivated, and perceive that the insurgent group is winning. They are also locals who accept pay from extremist leaders to fight or conduct violent acts on a temporary (but occasionally recurring) arrangement of a few days or weeks. Extremist leaders seek out locals with financial burdens for recruitment. Typical

financial burdens include gambling debts, sick family members, impending marriage, property purchase, and victims of extortion. Accidental guerillas are locals who are coerced or deceived into working for extremist groups and may be forcibly recruited at gunpoint. They may also believe that coalition forces will kill or capture them for any past anti-coalition activity, no matter how insignificant or long ago it occurred (Kilcullen, 2011). This type of activity may not directly support the terrorist or insurgency, but many counterterrorist tactics will result in reprisal against the accidental guerrilla – which results in the local population turning away from American military objectives.

Equating Counter-Terrorist Operations with Counter-Insurgency Operations

The National Strategy for Countering Terrorism (White House, 2011) that defines the current national strategy to combat and eliminate terrorism, as well as the causes of terrorism, place focus on counterterrorism operations. Using Afghanistan as the model for success or failure of this strategy, the United States employs both counterterrorism and counter insurgency operations to achieve the national strategy (Kilcullen, 2013). Counterterrorist operations tend to focus on eliminating members of a specific terrorist cell, often using dynamic operations resulting in direct violence. Political leaders, as well as military professionals, who support the concept that eliminating the organizations network will eliminate the crisis caused by terrorism often celebrate this tactic (Gentile, 2013). Yet, when used against the insurgent, this approach has proven to be ineffective, as the elimination of the network does not eliminate the underlying problem and violent action motivates the host population to support the insurgency (Gentile, 2013).

National Security Decision Makers and the Strategic Plan

In 2014, through a democratic process, Afghanistan established a new government. As of October of 2014, the country instituted a Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) and a status of forces agreement (SOFA) with the United States (Katzman, 2014). For all of the political rhetoric that has been offered, Afghanistan is still the forgotten war at a time when the Taliban is making significant gains in reinstituting their authority. With the official ending of the longest war in American history, the American experiment in nation building seems to have failed in that Afghan noncombatant casualties are intensifying, the Afghan economy is in crisis, and there still are no clear plans for any post-2014 aspect of transition which counters the Taliban strategic goals (Katzman, 2014).

A significant observation made by both professional and scholars is that the withdrawal of Coalition Forces from Afghanistan at the end of 2014 severely strained the region's transportation/logistics infrastructure and this reduction in basic logistic support will hamper the Afghanistan national government as well as the provinces and district governments to maintain stability and control through commerce (Cordesman 2014). U.S. diplomatic rhetoric implies continued support for Afghanistan without really addressing either its weaknesses or its failures as a partner. Though the Afghanistan National Army has assumed combat operations against the Taliban, as well as the supportive terrorist organizations such as LeT and Al Qaida, various analysts suspect that the National Government can maintain its power and control over the country against the Taliban strategy to retake its power (Hultman, 2012). In December of 2014, the Loya

Jirga, Afghanistan's traditional grand assembly of tribal elders, as well as local community leaders, overwhelmingly recommend a longer-term role for the U.S. military and its coalition partners in assisting the country in maintaining its security (Katzman, 2014).

As it relates to asymmetric war and end goals for the Afghanistan strategy, the surge's inelastic schedule weakened American leverage on Afghani political, economic, and military influence against the Taliban and with the anticipated drawing down of American forces, will reduce the Taliban's motivations to negotiate (Cordesman, 2014). With the drawdown of coalition forces, the Taliban has changed its objectives from surviving and resisting coalition forces to a strategy that involves confronting the Afghanistan government to establish itself as the dominate political, military, and economic power – not only in the country, but also in the region (Paul, 2013). Meanwhile, its military and economic advantages gained from alliances with associate terrorist or insurgent organization reduce its incentives to negotiate (Cordesman, 2015). The Congressional Research Service reports that insurgents are increasingly confident, as "ongoing withdrawals of coalition forces have largely corresponded with a weakening of Kabul's ability to govern outlying districts." An assessment of Afghan security forces authorized by the DOD calculates that the Taliban will pick up the pace of its campaigns and increase its influences into areas between 2015 and 2018 (Katzman, 2014).

In the intervening time, the Taliban incursion in criminal affairs has produced revenues from a bumper poppy harvest, as well as other illegal trafficking. This has resulted in the Taliban's incentives to reach a negotiated settlement being minimal. The

venturing of the Taliban has resulted in more than a few of its factions demonstrating less an ideology-driven armed opposition group than a profit-driven criminal faction (DOD Report, 2014). Though the news is a black mark on the success of the Afghanistan strategy, there is a ray of hope in that the Taliban was unsuccessful in achieving one of its major strategic objectives for 2014, which was the mass interference in Afghanistan's provincial and presidential elections (Cordesman, 2015).

The Strategic Vacuum in Afghanistan

The extent of the American strategy for Afghanistan and Central Asia is demonstrated mainly through actual world events as well as the media's impact on American assessment to leave Afghanistan (Cordesman, 2015). Former Defense Secretary Gates stated that the current national priorities retreated from Afghanistan as a strategic principal for national security, even as the Commander in Chief sanctioned a conventional military centered surge in Afghanistan in 2010 (Thomas, 2011). Then following the surge, he designated a deadline of 2014 for a U.S. combat role to be over, regardless of the status of the Afghanistan strategy (Gates, 2014).

It has been made clear that following 10 years of support, mentorship, and protection Afghanistan still lacks an effective government; this represents a failed or improperly employed strategy (Cordesman, 2012). Afghanistan is rated as one of the most corrupt countries in the world; it has squandered its financial support and will sustain the budget and economic crisis the moment outside aid, to include military spending, is reduced (Cordesman, 2014). The current professional, military, and diplomatic community judges that the national government in Afghanistan will be unable

to generate and sustain an effective military and law enforcement forces without significant financial aid, military advisors to support all levels of military, and law enforcement activities – including logistic communication and control support (Katzman, 2014).

American rhetoric, from presidential speeches to key leaders pledging support, implied a policy of continued support of the Afghanistan national government without appropriately addressing its failings in governing Afghanistan independently – or its failure as a partner in the war on terrorism by countering the Taliban and associated violent extremist organizations (Hoffman, 2007). The reality of what the future strategy of the United States in Afghanistan is reflected in the January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance (DOD, 2012). This document states that the United States intended to leave Afghanistan, concentrate on other regions of the world with the Pacific being the leading area of concern, and thus basically fall into the habit of declaring victory when the strategy changes and focusing on another area without a long-term solution (Savun & Phillips, 2009). The document further called for the United States only to engage with military or economic resources in such areas in which national interests are directly involved and only in proportion to the importance of those interests (Cordesman, 2014). It explicitly states the United States should avoid hostilities similar to the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. A supporting statement suggests that, in the future, the United States will avoid large-scale land-based conflicts that require American force commitments in a conflict area of limited strategic value and, instead, focus on

developing strategic partnerships where the partner would perform the central role of confrontation with our adversary (DOD, 2012).

A Strategy for Disappointment in Afghanistan

The critical issue for the development of strategy is found in 2009 when General Stanley McChrystal took command of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) with the task of conducting an initial strategic assessment. That assessment, and subsequent ISAF campaign, were based on the Obama Administration's core goals of disrupting and defeating Al Qaida, reversing the Taliban gains in political and social gains, and strengthening the government in Afghanistan to take over the fight against the Taliban and its associated organizations (White House, 2011). This strategy provided the prospect of more troops, more civilian expertise, more resources, and more high-level leadership attention. However, it also limited the time-span of these resources, allowing the extreme violent organizations to survive and thrive if they could survive the surge, which was contrary to General McChrystal's assessment (Cordesman, 2014).

In December 2009, in a speech given at West Point, President Obama announced that a troop surge would take place. Yet, he also stated that those surge troops would begin to draw down in July 2011 (DeYoung, 2010). This statement created a direct and determined date for withdrawing, regardless of the current events, the status of Afghani forces to defeat the Taliban, and the Afghani government to govern in fashion that ensures the two goals (Cordesman, 2014). In November 2010, at the NATO Lisbon Summit, the Afghan government and the NATO Allies, including the United States, agreed to pursue a formal process, called "Transition," in which responsibility for

security would shift over time to the Afghan Government. This process was to begin shortly thereafter – in early 2011 – and was to be completed by the end of 2014 (Cordesman, 2015).

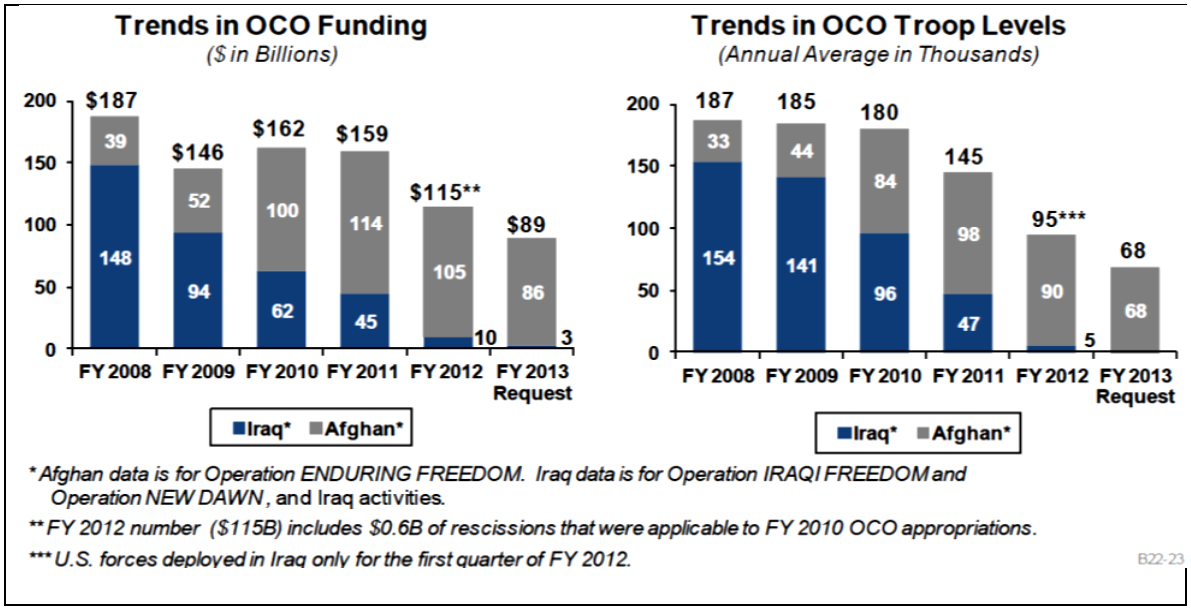
President Obama announced parameters for drawing down U.S. surge forces in June 2011. From the surge peak of about 100,000 U.S. troops, the U.S. troop commitment in Afghanistan would decrease by 10,000 troops by the end of 2011 and by a further 23,000 by the end of September 2012, declining to a total of 68,000 by that date. Afterward, the pace of further drawdowns would be "'steady" and, at some point, the mission would change "from combat to support" (Katzman, 2014). The NATO Chicago Summit held in May of 2012 added a new step to the Transition process established in 2010. One major new step was that the Afghans national government was meant to accept responsibility for security throughout Afghanistan by mid-2013 and lead in conducting security operations. The international forces that were then the backbone of counter-terrorism/counterinsurgency operation, as well as nation building activities, would shift to playing a primarily supporting role (Cordesman, 2015).

The counter to nation building activities is a strategy of reactive security as it reacts to terrorist attacks. This counter results in negative response, by both the population of the country through increased spending (which the taxpayer must fund) and the target population of the strategy, through heavy handed security responses (Enders & Sandler, 2011). The reactive measures result in actions that target terrorist organizations following a terrorist event, but usually fall within populated areas, which results in collateral causalities. The consequences of the action result in new recruits and cultural

support for the terrorist or insurgent organization's targets population (Chenoweth, 2013), making the strategy one that in the cyclic in requiring more resources for more reactive actions which in turn supports the asymmetric based terrorist organization while it weakens the liberal democracies ability to maintain security and stability both home and abroad, while receiving diminished resources as continued high operations drain the treasury (Chenoweth, 2013).

An indicator as to how any well strategy for combating terrorism and conducting operations is working may be found in the Outside Continental United States (OCONUS) Contingency Operations (Flanagan & Schear, 2008). The trends, demonstrated in Table 2 (Cordesman, 2012), indicate that increase in both funding and troops allocated to the conflict, a decrease in both amount of money and number of troops is needed before sustainable security in Afghanistan may be accomplished. These indicators track with the observation that major powers will grow weary when engaging in an asymmetric conflict (Duyvesteyn, 2008). Thus, for the adversary who looks for metrics to indicate success, budgeting and manpower allocation reports are key for the development of their strategy (Duyvesteyn, 2008).

Figure 1. Trends in OCONUS Contingency Operations



Note: Adopted from *The U.S. Cost of the Afghan War: FY2002-FY2013 Cost in Military Operating Expenditures and Aid Prospects for Transition*, p. 7 by A. Cordesman, May 15 2012, The Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Strategic Challenges, National Interest Against Local Reality

Current discussion on strategy for Afghanistan reasonably commences with the fact that the United States has interests in Afghanistan and the region. In theory, U.S. national security strategy, as it relates Afghanistan and the region, should be concerned about the spread of violent extremism, including nuclear proliferation from Pakistan, as well as a destabilized Afghanistan being the fulcrum for a nuclear confrontation between Pakistan and India (Schroen, 2004). This theory is successful and also allows for a stable Afghanistan, quelling these concerns by making sanctuary less available to violent extremists, encouraging state stability in Pakistan by lowering the temperature between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and by making Afghanistan less available as space for proxy contestation between Pakistan and India (Katzman, 2014).

In practice, observers and practitioners disagree about both the interests at stake and their relative weight compared with U.S. interests in the rest of the world. The Obama Administration reasonably and consistently articulated two core goals for the war – to defeat Al-Qaeda and to prevent future safe havens in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Hoffman, 2013). The Obama Administration made some refinements and changes in emphasis over time. In his 2013 State of the Union address, President Obama described the goal as defeating the core of Al-Qaeda" with no mention of defeating the Taliban, Haqqani Network, or Let as transnational violent extremist organizations that threaten the stability of the region and the world (Kilcullen, 2013). In a new and narrower formulation, between 2010 and 2011 in its reports to Congress, the DOD revised its description of the strategic architecture of goals, objectives, and activities, subtly narrowing the scope of ambition (Katzman, 2014).

On May 27, 2014, President Obama made a statement at the White House that he would effectively end any major U.S. role in the war by the time he left office, regardless of the conditions that emerged (Cordesman, 2015). Following the DOD Guidance Paper on National Strategy (DOD, January 2012), President Obama expressed support for this statement in previous strategy conferences in which he would only provide support similar to the number of post 2014 transition levels of military advisors, enablers, and counterterrorism officers that the International Stability Force (ISAF) and the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) commander requested from a single year (Cordesman, 2014). Since the American led coalition conducted a surge in 2009, the strategy has been the rapid transition over of security responsibilities to the Afghans. In

2013, Afghani forces assumed the lead for combat operations. This transition has allowed for a steadily draw down by American troops and Coalition forces (Cordesman, 2015).

State of the Strategy

The basic premise of the strategy is to develop a competent set of Afghan forces that can defend the nation from insurgents and outside influences while, at the same time, reducing the insurgent threat that Afghan forces can manage in the future with very limited support from the international community (Arreguín-Toft, 2012). By Afghan and coalition accounts, the basic logic of the campaign has proven to be sound with this assumption based on the overall improvement of Afghan forces training and effectiveness in dealing with the insurgency as well as the adaptation of Afghan forces in conducting widespread counter insurgency operations (Cordesman, 2012). This assumption by the collation is arguably inaccurate, as it relates to on a report of Afghan forces falsely reporting their gains against insurgents during Operation Mashaak (in which success against insurgents was reported, but the reality is no insurgents where engaged) (Keeble, 2011). This type of action shows that a realignment of coalition activities from a strategy to succeed to one of withdrawing under false appearances.

Many academics, as well as military and diplomatic professionals, contend that if the strategy is not working, it should be discontinued immediately (not gradually) given its extraordinary cost regarding lives being affected and resources being expended (Cordesman, 2015). For Congress, the next steps in the war in Afghanistan, including

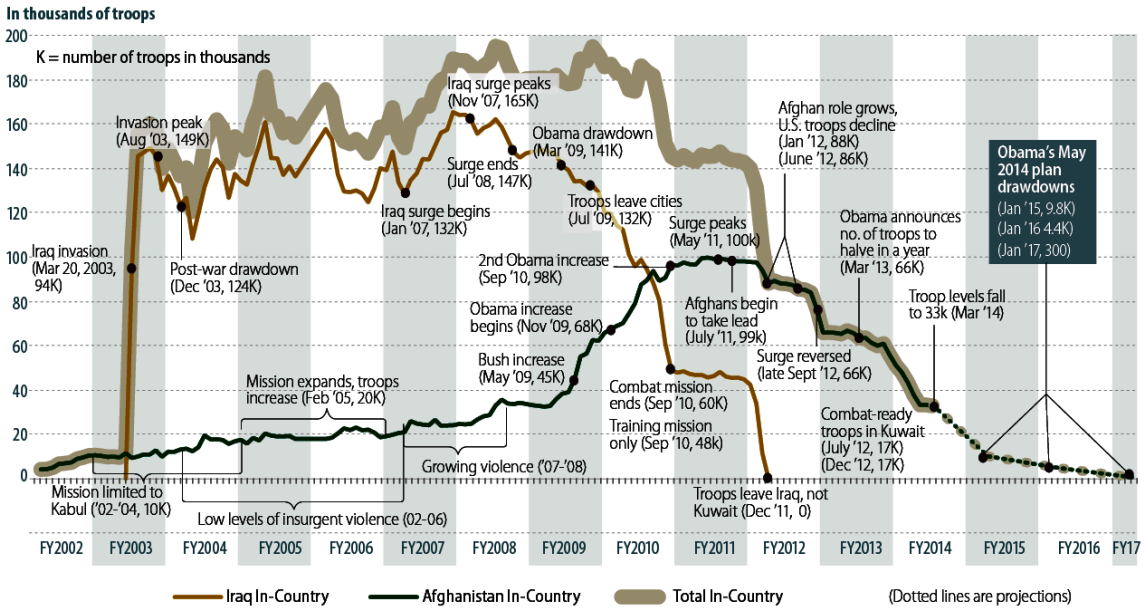
near-term policy decisions by the U.S. and Afghan governments, raise several basic oversight issues:

1. Do the costs associated with a continued U.S. force presence in Afghanistan justify the means?
2. Resources spent on Afghanistan strategy should be used in "'re-setting" the American military and restoring its readiness as it transitions from a Counterinsurgency force.
3. How will the accountability for a sound strategy that protects U.S. interests be measured and enforced?
4. How do the non-military U.S. government agencies integrate their areas of responsibilities in support of broad U.S. political strategy for Afghanistan?
5. How will the appropriate prioritizing of this effort equate to conflicting national security exigencies?

The key to these questions is the Congressional Report: “The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11” (2014) that details the cost in manpower and resources to support the strategy for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (Belasco, 2014). Figure 1 provides the initial investment, the follow-on increase in manpower and resources with the sudden decline of manpower and resources as the nation moved away from centering its strategy on winning the conflict in Afghanistan, as well as Iraq with a focus on withdraw. This supports the asymmetric conflict theory through the argument that an adversary does not try to destroy the strong foe by directly overpowering them, but relies instead on the foe,

in this case the United States, to tire from constant conflict, with victory always just outside of the foe's reach.

Figure 2. Boots on the Ground In-Country, FY2001-FY2017
In thousands of U.S. troops



Note: Adopted from *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11* p 9 by A. Belasco December 8, 2014, Congressional Research Service Report RL33110.

How Does This Strategy End?

Most agree that the war in Afghanistan, with all its asymmetric warfare related challenges and underlying cultural, religious, and political foundations, is unlikely to end in a decisive triumph on the battlefield (Schiff, 2012). There is broad disagreement that persists regarding what way the conflict may be best resolved so that a long-term basis for stability in Afghanistan, as well as a U.S. centric perspective, will protect U.S. interests over the long-term (Tuck, 2012). The current prominent approach to asymmetric strategy is the war termination approach, otherwise known as the Doha

process, which is based on a rather narrow concept of reconciliation (Sobek & Braithwaite, 2005). This approach has become a high-level, top-down arrangement between the Afghan leadership and senior Taliban leadership that employs a relatively short timeline to identify common ground between the primary belligerents (Tarzi, 2005). So far, use of this approach has shown the use of discrete confidence building measures in specific functional or geographic areas as positive steps toward a formal agreement (Tuck, 2012).

The launching of the Taliban political office in Doha, Qatar on June 18, 2013, was a major event in the Doha process. However, there are many interpretations of this process that explain it went terribly awry and infuriated many Afghans (Ross, 2007). This failure was compounded by the Taliban insisting on portraying the office as the political representation of the Afghan people and themselves as representatives of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the country's formal name under Taliban rule (Katzman, 2014). This self-declaration of representing the Afghan people has created a firestorm among the local tribes that are not Pashtun, which is how they identify the Taliban, as well as the academic and business consortiums, resulting in further discourse and political stalemate in the Kabul as well as support for the Afghan forces in the field conducting counter insurgency operations against the Taliban (Katzman, 2014).

Looking Forward to the Results of a Strategy

Ever since the Taliban's revival in Afghanistan in 2005 or 2006, Kabul has been combating the insurgency with direct combat support, material assistance, training, and advice from the American lead International Security Assistance Force (Coalition). With

cessation of the Coalition combat mission at the end of 2014, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) will have to battle a still-unbroken Taliban without key Coalition-provided enablers it has thus far relied on (DOD Report, 2014). Strategically, Afghanistan's security forces are hampered by a national strategy copied by the American method that emphasizes a security force presence in and the defense of virtually every province and district in a country larger than France (Cromartie, 2012). Tactically, the ANSF have continuing problems, including lack of cooperation between army and police forces (which is a key element of a successful counter-insurgency operation), predatory behavior antagonizing the local population through graft and cultural friction point, the pilferage of supplies and pay and a high operational tempo contributing to exhaustion and low morale in many combat units (DOD Report, 2014).

Looking forward, Afghanistan's economic weakness makes the current level of security force spending close to the highest in the world when measured against the country's gross domestic product (Vrooman, 2005). This alone makes any strategy requiring Afghanistan to carry out American strategy unsustainable. Kabul's economic constraints will compel a reduction of security force personnel to reduce costs and other counterinsurgency programs that support nation building. This reduction would be an unparalleled action by a government confronting a regime-threatening insurgency (Cordesman, 2015).

Challenges Created From A Strengthen Adversary and Weakened Ally

The literature has indicated that tackling the issues created by violent extremist groups like the Taliban, LeT, and Haqqani Network, let alone Al-Qaida without a

flexible, but achievable, strategy creates great challenges, not only for the directly affected area, but the region and, ultimately, the globe. Because such groups do not adopt a fixed order of battle, their center of gravity is less easily defined than are nation-states. A violent extremist group's ideology and the environment in which it operates make them poor candidates for a strategy based on finding and neutralizing a center of gravity for such groups because they do not draw back to defeat mechanisms and, thus, do not lend themselves well to critical vulnerability selection. By contrast, a group's credibility with a local population is potentially a more useful concept for scoping future operations as it satisfies established prerequisites, allows for the development of discrete vulnerabilities, and allows for flexibility in planning. The core to building creditability with populations requires a synergy among, not just the multiple military disciplines, but also the diplomatic, economic, cultural, and social disciplines (DiPaolo, 2005).

Diplomatic work on the local level is the backbone of successful national strategy yet this work building trust and relationships is frequently trumped by contrary US actions, such as the United States' responses to the Arab Spring have sent unintended messages to Central Asian States and associated asymmetric group such as the Taliban, LeT, and the Haqqani Network. This is represented in the open source reporting demonstrating that the Taliban is initiating new attacks on Afghan children (Giustozzi, 2009). This can be relative as many Afghans do not view the new and resurrected Taliban as the example of a just organization, but they are perceived as more consistent in providing security and insuring basic community services than is the Afghan National Government (Cordesman, 2015).

The national strategy that relies on the Afghanistan National government to take the fight to the enemy must adapt to the loss of asymmetric enablers and declining funding at a time when Taliban military operations are more aggressive and ambitious than in the past and as insurgents seek to exploit more permissive battlefield conditions and spread perceptions of the group's ascendancy during the ongoing international drawdown. The success of the Taliban strategy is demonstrated by the thousands of fighters it a massed in 2014, after years of mostly small scale tactics hit-and-run guerrilla warfare with the strategy that intended it to outlast the American and Coalition military presence (Cordesman, 2015). It is expected that this trend will continue through 2018 as the insurgency shifts to a more conventional military footing to directly challenge the Kabul government and the Afghanistan National Army. As the American transition takes place, regardless of the current events, the Taliban will demonstrate their ability to seize ground from the national government, even temporarily. This show of force by the Taliban highlights to Afghans the group's growing relative military capabilities and reinforces perceptions that local security forces cannot provide durable security.

Conclusion

The literature establishes that there is a gap in American strategy, one that is demonstrated through the last 15 years in which the American Security Strategy has waned from the original mission of destroying Al-Qaida and preventing threats to the nations to one of transition away from war at any cost. This change is due to a loss of focus in strategic insight that was created from a lack of perception and attention to the art of strategic thinking (Robinson et al., 2014). Using the same paradigm of strategic

development, professionals and scholars have reported that the requirement for victory is taking all available assessments into consideration in order for the Afghanistan National Security Forces to successfully support the U.S. strategy of preventing Afghanistan from ever again becoming a haven for terrorists that threaten Afghanistan, the Central Asian States, and the Middle East, as well as the world, they will need a sizable force of about 373,400 persons, with some structural and posture adjustments, through at least 2018 (Katzman, 2014).

Current assessments of the ANSF indicate that this force is not likely to defeat the Taliban militarily, but that if it can hold against the Taliban insurgency through 2018, the likelihood of a negotiated settlement to the war will increase. So, too, however will a negotiated peace achieve the goals as outlined by the national strategy (Schroden, Norman, & Meyarle, 2014). The Afghan security ministries that support the national security forces will require international support to maintain the current levels of capability and, more than likely, significant support to keep some sort of capability (Cordesman, 2012). The need for more than senior advisors to include lower level tactical and logistical support at least to 2018 and that this assistance mission will need authorities similar to those of the mission in Afghanistan today (Cordesman, 2014).

The literature has demonstrated that the current strategy of transitioning security from American and Coalition forces to the Afghanistan government in order to achieve the goals of American national strategy requires a sustained commitment of the international community to Afghanistan. American strategists claim that this long-term commitment is likely to mitigate tensions in the region and increase prospects for

regional cooperation. However, scholars have warned that withdrawal or reduction of international community support is likely to have consequences that are contrary to the strategy of the United States, including a renewed civil war in Afghanistan, the growth of violent extremist groups, and an increased instability in the region resulting in tension between nuclear armed Pakistan and India as well as Russia and China (Cordesman, 2015).

The literature denotes that a national strategy must incorporate an understanding that it has the ability to influence the regional and asymmetric global conflict by actions taken on both a tactical and strategic level and should strive to take actions that will promote positive consequences (second and third order effects). It is easy to overlook the influence that a short-term operation has in the conflict area in asymmetric warfare. The long-term approach must ensure that short-term activities, such as a security force, may launch dozens of direct military attacks a day to disrupt a designated adversary. However, the actions result in only short-term success and yield little support from host nation population since the operations disrupt the daily lives of local villages. The realistic view of what does work, how it works, and why it would not work need to be implemented.

There are multiple cultures to understand in an asymmetric environment; yet, the two with most impact are the extremist/insurgent/terrorist and that of the local population. A strategy that includes an understanding of the enemy, yet does not take the goals and objectives of the people into account will fail. The result will be an adversary that gains strength at the end of American commitment and a population seeking stability

and security regardless of who it comes from. A strategy that implements tactical programs informed by an understanding the culture through partnering with local representatives and redeploying counterparts conveys the cultural nuances of the immediate environment of operations. Yet, nation building and cultural understanding are not enough to achieve the strategic goals if stability and security are lacking. The strategic goal is not only to defeat the extremist/insurgent/terrorist by taking away their popular support or (more importantly) by mitigating the popular fear they create, but to defeat the means, motivation, and methods that an asymmetrical adversary employs to create or support the extremist, insurgent, and terrorist.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

In this study, the primary researcher conducted a narrative investigation to discover the impact of the national security policies as they relate to the Afghanistan conflict by examining the application and results of the policy. The researcher weighed the impact of the strategy through the perceptions and experiences of both those that have endured and implemented the policy. With this qualitative study, the researcher strived to determine the magnitude of the security policy as it related to achieving its objectives. The problem that the researcher intended to solve with this study was the fact that, after 16 years of conflict, the Afghan people no longer support the strategy as well as follow-up policies. An in-depth study of the results of the strategy via an examination of the policies and operations was intended for a better evaluation of the strategy. The National Command Authority was examined as a structure in the development of current and future security strategy designed to the specific needs of the asymmetric warfare. Collecting and analyzing this data can assist in creating an environment conducive to developing a successful strategy and strategy implementation in the form policies and programs for those responsible for defending the country.

The significance of employing a qualitative research method as opposed to a quantitative method is that the qualitative approach was best suited to acquire and explain the data needed to answer the proposed research questions. Of the different research designs available in qualitative research, the narrative design is the preferred method for examining real world issues, such as those resulting from the impact of a national

security strategy upon the people that it is designed to secure (Creswell, 2013). The narrative approach of examining a specific situation, in lieu of trying to examine a very broad topic requiring an impractical survey, is a method that allowed the researcher to achieve the goal of this study. Applying a narrative methodology allowed the primary researcher to narrow down a very broad field of research into one researchable topic that was manageable to address the research questions.

In this chapter, all issues related to participant confidentiality will be addressed, the research design for the study described, an explanation given for the rationale in employing the method of inquiry, and a rich description of the theory that justifies the analysis. One element to explaining the purpose and scope of the analysis was the selection and justification of the sample population. The role of the researcher will also be discussed, including data collection procedures. Finally, this chapter will include the data analysis framework, along with issues of the quality assurances for the work conducted, the impact of ethics upon the study, and the measures taken to ensure the protection of participants.

Research Design and Rationale

The selection of the appropriate research design is required in order to maximize the opportunity of attaining valid answers to the proposed research questions as it provides the scholar with a blueprint to guide the research process through the examination of topics, populations, methods, and purpose of the study (Babbie, 2007). This chapter of the study was designed to demonstrate my rationale for the concepts, methods, and traditions of the research employed therein. The objective of this chapter is

to validate the selection of the research methodology to achieve the desired outcomes of the investigation.

Research Question

This research project focused on discovering and expounding on the information that will address the central research question of: How do the American strategic perceptions of an asymmetric adversary in Afghanistan affect the conflict outcome and are Afghan public perceptions of the outcomes of the strategy a positive or negative influence when it comes to supporting a strong stabilized and free from terrorist influence democratic country?

This question is far reaching, which allowed for a broad area to research and influence the answer. The following comprehensive questions were used to support and narrow the research inquiry:

1. How is the effectiveness of conventional martial actions measured in Afghanistan as an asymmetric conflict?
2. What were the perceptions of the Afghan people and Americans implementing the operations of the strategy to combat the terrorist (asymmetric) adversary and the resulting stability created from the strategy from 2001–2011?
3. What were the perceptions of the Afghan people on the presence of the large footprint of international coalition forces from 2001–2011 and did it support or detract from the strategy of removing the threat of terrorism and stabilizing the country?

Central concept. The most appropriate strategy to allow a scholar to collect and organize data from participants is qualitative research. In particular, the narrative method presents the opportunity for the scholar to be positioned to collect experiences without being constrained by a structured questionnaire interview in the study (Creswell, 2013). One of the major objectives of explanatory research is to build theories that researchers can then use to explain a phenomenon to predict future behavior or associated events (McNabb, 2008).

Qualitative research is the most all-inclusive method with which to observe the impact of experiences that belong to a single person (Giorgi, 1997, p. 236). According to Creswell (2013), a grounded qualitative inquiry affords the scholar an elevated level of quality that allows the project to focus on the core of the research problem. The qualitative research method is the application of narrative research that can provide a specific contextual focus, such as asymmetrical battles or the affected population of a nation embroiled in a terrorist/insurgent conflict (see Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). The benefit of selecting the narrative approach was the ability it afforded to guide the research through an explanatory research lens. The explanatory lens studies the impact of a strategy to a conflict area by using the testimonies of those affected (Beverly, 2005). This design allowed the collection of data to be tailored to the Afghan experience by collecting of Afghan nationals' perspectives and experiences, which demonstrated Afghans are the direct recipients of strategy activities that can determine if the strategy was either a success, a hindrance, or contradictory to the national goals (see Chase, 2005).

Research tradition. The employment of qualitative research results is an extensive methodological approach that requires a submethodology to be selected from many research methods to be employed (McNabb, 2008 p.274). Descriptive research is accepted as a mean to conduct the most transient on means to produce a detailed yet systematic analysis of the (McNabb, 2008 p.275).

The qualitative research method allows the scholar to focus on multiple methods; this involves an interpretative approach to the target population (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A pool of information was collected, as a practical foundation for the study, through interviews that included perceptions of strategy and policies as well as the experiences of the participants. Employing a qualitative study better assisted in the researcher's comprehension of the participants' experiences and how they developed their perceptions (see Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Seidman (2006) explains that qualitative research gives a better perspective of the participants' actual setting and how the participants live their personal lives.

Qualitative methodology uses various methods of research, such as narrative, biography, grounded theory, ethnography, or phenomenology (Creswell, 2013). The commonalities in each design are that they are focused on participants who share the context of the subject, yet the researcher employs an outsider-based interpretation and control of the study (Creswell, 2013). The objective of this research effort was to examine the experiences of persons that implement strategy and policies as well as persons that received the actions of the strategy. Examining the works of McNabb

(2008), it was understood that qualitative research has at its core, three broad classifications: interpretive research, explanatory research, and critical research (p. 275).

The core to narrative research is the validation of the personnel affected by the target issue through the examination of real life experiences as the means to measure the research topic (Yin, 2014). The employment of life experiences is an advantageous part of the social science investigation, yet the scholar may not always depend upon the data to stand-alone for evidence and support for the conclusions of a report. Therefore, scholars can use targeted documentation, such as relative government testimonies, fiscal reporting, or other such data, to support the narrative. Utilizing chronology as the means to establish a beginning, middle, and an end for the data collected provided me with a basis for selection in my ability to collect accounts of the impact of strategy and policies to discover the success or failure of the strategy. For these reasons, it was determined that a narrative research design was appropriate for this study.

Role of the Researcher

The cornerstone for accurate research is the delineation of the role of researcher in collection, analysis, and final deposition of data (Creswell, 2013). The researcher has the role of the primary collector and moderator throughout the phases of the data selection, data collection, data analysis, and report writing. The primary researcher was located in the United States during most of the research process. There were no trips to Afghanistan in order to collect data; however, some data was acquired from secondary sources, such as published documents and information from Afghanistan. Key components for the researcher in this study were the logistical, ethical, and personal issues that required the

restricting of the considerable amount of sources for information that were available to me. This restriction required the filtering of bias from previous research on the topic. To mitigate this, a strict research protocol was used, applying the fundamentals of content analysis and attentive to the identified units of analysis. Another challenge was filtering the information collected through Afghan understanding of the interviews and ensuring adequate documentation of experiences to ensure the data were not corrupted. This possibility of corruption was mitigated through the use of triangulation of the interviews, reports, and documentation.

Mitigating bias. The qualitative method provided a meant by which to generalize a topic in order to capture a more diverse population (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2004). For the purposes of eliminating the bias introduced by the scholar, a grouping process was employed to understand the experiences of those that implement national security strategy as well as those that are affected by the activities that the strategy creates. To reach the objectives of the study, the qualitative study was the best method to conduct this study. The reality of modern war, especially one deemed a "war on terror," is that it is defined as asymmetric (Hammes, 2005). An adversary will employ the tools of the asymmetric conflict, chief of which is the control of culture through communication, shadow governments, and infiltration of religion to intermingle among the people with the goal of mitigating the advantages of the host nation's government – in this case, Afghanistan (Bergen, 2009). The potential for researcher bias was seriously considered and measures were taken to ensure that bias was both accounted for and mitigated. An example of employing a mitigation technique is, for example, realizing

that fifty percent of the participant pool is from the Afghan culture, whereas the researcher is not. To mitigate a possible communication bias between two cultured, the researcher selected Afghan participants that were formally educated, demonstrated a high working knowledge of American style English language, and worked with American forces or government officials in Afghanistan.

The research focused on two groups of participants: Afghan nationals, which the previous paragraph addressed, and former U.S. Government personnel that implemented American strategy in Afghanistan. A bias that needed to be addressed as it pertains to the second group is the primary researcher's military background and practical experience with the Afghan conflict, which could have created an inadvertent bias. Contrasting with other vocations, the profession of arms demands a constant moral contemplation concerning the legality and purpose of its practitioners. This moral contemplation is a balance of the expected military gain as it reflects achieving a strategy to the unintended damage and injuries that are result from the actions. This moral discipline includes the application of the rules for the employment of legal and moral acceptable application of weapons and methods with at its core the avoidance of civilian casualties (U.S Army). A soldier is required to make moral judgments as to what is right or wrong (MCDP 1-1, 1997). While conducting objective research, the inadvertent lens of a Marine's moral judgments about the data can lead to researcher bias. To mitigate this bias, controversial topics (such as the effect of Islam on good governance), perceptions or conflict resolutions of the war (such as whether Afghanistan a just war), and/or American activities in Afghanistan following the Soviet withdrawal as a precursor to the rise of the

Taliban. This study focused, not on the personal, but on the research questions at hand. To end with, this study made use of cultural experts to review the final analysis and findings to ensure that bias was minimized and different cultural viewpoints were respected.

Methodology

The employment of qualitative research results in an extensive methodological approach that requires a sub methodology to be employed, selected from many research methods. In order to answer the research question, it is assumed that qualitative research is the most all-inclusive method to obtain the impact of the experiences sustained of a period of time (Giorgi, 1997, p. 236). According to Creswell (2013), a grounded qualitative inquiry affords the scholar an elevated level of quality that allows the project to focus on the core of the research problem. Descriptive research is accepted as a means by which to conduct the most transient on means to produce a detailed yet systematic analysis of the (McNabb, 2008 p.275).

Qualitative methodology utilizes various methods of research such as case studies, biography, grounded theory, ethnography, or phenomenology. The commonalities, however, in each design are that they are focused on participants that share the context of subject, yet the researcher employs an outsider based interpretation and control of the study (Creswell, 2013). The objective of this research effort was to examine the experiences of persons that implemented the strategy and policies as well as the persons the received the actions of the strategy of the United States military in Afghanistan. Cortazzi (1993) proposes that narrative research, with its centric asset of

providing a chronology for a sequence of events, is the factor that places narrative apart from other types of research. The core to narrative research is the validation of the personnel, affected by the target issue, through the examination of real life experiences as the means to measure the research topic. The employment of life experiences is an advantageous part of the social science investigation, yet the scholar may need more that the data for evidence and support for the conclusions of a report. Thus, using targeted documentation from the Literature Review found in Chapter 2 (such as relative government testimonies, fiscal reporting, or other such data) to support the narrative in forming questions and sparking dialogue with the participants was useful. Using chronology as means to establish a beginning, middle, and end for the data collected provides a basis for selection in the ability to collect the accounts of the impact of the strategy and policies to discover the success or failure of the strategy based on the impact of that the strategy had upon the participants experiences. A narrative research study was realized to be appropriate for this study.

Quantitative methods are valuable in clarifying relationships and differences between variables. Although the quantitative method is limited, it can equate the interconnection and origins of relationships in complicated settings (Cronbach, 1975). Though sufficient in determining relationships in complicated settings, the quantitative approach was not appropriate to tackle the requirements of the research for this study. To understand the participant's perceptions and attitude in order to measure the success or failure of the strategy, a context-specific study is essential for accurate collection of the cause (Maxwell, 2013). A quantitative research method would not be able to capture and

interpret the experiences of the participants since a quantitative study is limited in providing constructed variables (Maxwell, 2013)

Population and Participants

The principles of qualitative research sampling are to establish a process design in which the instrument becomes the researcher. The researcher then develops a strategy of engaging persons or activities within specific situations (Maxwell, 2013). With this as the guiding principle, the participants selected were national security strategy and counter-terrorism policy implementers and recipient of the actions created by the strategy and policies. The participants were selected from two groups: implementers and receivers. The implementer group consisted of participants selected from those with experience with the Special Forces community in Afghanistan. The second group of participants was selected from Afghan nationals that lived under the American counter-terrorism strategy in Afghanistan post-9/11. A purposive sampling was used to gather participants to ensure that all participant groups were eligible to be part of the proposed study. Neuman (2003) argues that the participants shall be representative of the centric population directly impacted by the subject. Instituting a sampling structure facilitates the ability of the scholar to identify the limits of the participants' experiences with the projects' topic. The sampling structure distinguishes between persons who are viable prospective participants and those who are not (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Focused sampling allows for important aspects of the participant's perspectives and experiences to be conveyed, resulting in the scholar achieving a deeper understanding of the topic (Patton, 2002).

Such a sampling structure demonstrates that the participants signify the target populace. It defines the function and the inclusion of the population group concerning the needs presented in the study (Patton, 2002). The sampling structure is in line with Berg's (2001) discussion on how purposive sampling assists in identifying the individual required in answering the research question and their attributes by identifying the significance of their perspectives and experiences. The participants' personal experiences represented the recipient population and interjected insights to the issues presented by the study. Though the original proposal for the study suggested the use participation of 12 or 14 participants, there was five participants from the implementers group and five participants from the receiver group used in the final analysis. Though fewer participants than the originally estimated number participated, due to the nature of narrative methodology, this reduction did not impact the scope or saturation of the study. To achieve a thematic inundation on the subject: there are 10 participants divided into two groups. The first group consisted of five former U.S. Special Forces soldiers, with numerous tours of duty in Afghanistan; the second group consisted of Afghan citizens that lived through the Soviet, Taliban, and American interactions with Afghanistan during various conflicts. Using their testimonies in this qualitative research study, the narrative approach provided valuable data for this study (Czarniawska, 2004).

Informed Consent

As an outsider, especially with the Afghan population, it was difficult to secure the trust of the target participants. It was vital to obtain their trust in order to conduct a successful narrative study (Maxwell, 2013). Before scheduling the initial interview and

establishing the observation period, the participants were presented with the appropriate informed consent letter (Endicott, 2010) that expounded upon the need for and purpose of the investigation, as well as provided an explanation of the research process. During the initial meeting, there was also a discussion that covered the introduction to the research project, the purpose of the study, expectations, and information needed from each participant. Thus, the data that this research is based on (both direct and observed) is predicated upon the informed consent of the participants. To ensure that the integrity of the research and confidence of the participants, the requirements of the Walden University Academic Review Board were followed, including the requirement that all participants are required to provide their full name on the consent letter. The personal information that the consent letter contains was maintained in strict confidentiality. The security of these documents, as well as others that may provide insider information on the participants' activities will be secured by a locked filing cabinet located in a locked office with controlled access for a no less than three years and no more than five years. Upon completion of this academic project, shredding will destroy the consent forms containing personal information.

Confidentiality

As the research employed the narrative approach, the establishment of trust between researcher and participants was paramount. With this in mind, the informed consent letter that provided personal details about the participants will be kept in strict privacy and confidentiality. To ensure the participants understood the confidentially of the information, the informed consent form contained information explaining how the

participants' information will remain confidential and will only be released when personal approval is obtained. The confidentiality statement explains, in detail, for the participants the reason their information is needed and that their information is protected and secure. This statement of procedure illustrates the scope of protection against improper disclosure of information, which, in turn, improves the dependability and validity of the data that was collected. To ensure the integrity of the study, the participants signed an informed consent form to provide proof that they understood and concurred with the participants' and researchers' responsibilities during the project. Due to the structure of the narrative methodology in requiring personal interaction between the participants and the scholar, the study's privacy and confidentiality has been stringently executed during this research project. The basis of the research required that an environment of trust exist between the participant and the scholar; thus, an agreement was reached between members of the research project that the information stated during the interview would not be disclosed to others without obtaining the permission of the participant.

Data Collection

The use of the narrative method of research required investigating the participants' life stories through multiple means of observation – from the direct interview with unstructured questions, to observations of reactions to statements. The instrumentation that collects this data is commonly an audio recording device (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000), with which the participants recorded their stories, as well as a journal, with written observations made by the primary researcher. The dynamics of the

data collected incorporated the participants' experiences, as well as their perceptions of the research subject, required a data collection method that include observations, interviews, and audio materials (Creswell, 2000). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) confirm that the core to the narrative research method is, not only the collection of life stories through observation and interviews, but also the need to chronograph the data into past, present, and future ideas. To accomplish this, the scholar collected examined, and analyzed the data into a "re-story" of information (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Unlike a rigid interview process, observations are made and participants' stories are recorded, but the manner and mannerism they engaged in while discussing the experience is also noted. The face-to-face discussion with the participants employed an informal or semi-structured series of guided questions that were used only to spur the memories of the participants in order to support the researcher understanding the participants' experiences with the American national security strategy and counter-terrorism policies in Afghanistan (Czarniawska, 2004). Employing face-to-face dialogues in qualitative studies has advantages and disadvantages (Maxwell, 2013). The benefit of the researcher having direct contact with the participants is that non-verbal communications may be observed and documented, both of which add necessary material to the proposed study to accurately capture the essence of the storyline (Czarniawska, 2004). Though the time to transpose the observers' notes to the correct timeline is time-consuming, the overall cost for collecting direct and observed data was reduced through the data collection and transcribing phase being made simpler. However conducting face-to-face dialogues with the participants with the challenges of time and replication

that narrative method of research require is often a hindrance in data collection and coding, since the data would be very narrow in scope as it is but a small group's experiences. Yet, this small group provided a lifetime of experiences and perceptions on the research topic that supported scope and scale of research conducted.

Instrument Selection

The principles of qualitative research sampling include establishing a process design in which the instrument becomes the researcher, who then develops a strategy for engaging persons or activities within specific situations (Maxwell, 2013). The reason for this is that qualitative research requires data to be collected that cannot be obtained through a scientific measure, such as is used by a quantitative method. The narrative approach is a people-centric research method that presents the goals, as Creswell (2013) stipulates, for decisive test groups that represent the context of the subject from the individual and the environment. This allows the data to capture heterogeneity from the participant, which provides a critical exam of the theory through the lens of the data provide by the participant. This method establishes a precise assessment for the goal that variances between situations or individuals depend upon the selection of the collection and coding instrument became the principal force for the qualitative scholar (Creswell, 2013).

Data management was provided by NVivo software, which is designed to sustain the qualitative process by affording a non-numerical and unstructured information index that is searchable, as well as to provide the researcher with a capacity to theorize (Nvivo, 2017). The simplicity of the product is reflected in the importation of data directly from

a word processing file such as Microsoft Word or a PDF document as well as photos, videos, surveys, and audio files, all of which can be coded directly to the assigned folder (Nvivo, 2017). The data management element allowed the researcher to view the information through data groups that are visible to scholars as columns of data portions. The groups of information will correspondingly permit the scholar to include field notes as well as insert other documentation, such as updates of the information as the collection and analysis process takes place. Support for the research is found in the program that arranges the data into themes and codes. The program allowed for immediate feedback of files and codes that provides an establish control of the data and enhanced the quality control requirement (Nvivo, 2017). The strong point for Nvivo is that, unlike other programs, it is not just an excellent data management tool, but demonstrates its value by the ease of learning the program for a social scientist that may not have experience in data manipulation. This ease, in turn, reduces the possibility of false interruption of data through mismanagement of the tool.

Data Analysis

This project relied on the raw collected data to be transcribed and analyzed through the NVivo computer program to code and analyze the responses collected. The determination of themes and trends in the data provided by the individual responses allowed the NVivo program to determine themes and trends – and reduced the introduction of false analysis caused by researcher bias (Nvivo, 2017). One advantage in using the program is that coding data provided by the program was more valid and provided an easier means to verify the process, while the disadvantage in using the

program was that the each sentence is not coded, but the content of the source. The semi structured interviews used to develop a dialogue between the participants and researcher based on the research questions posed in this study. Each face-to-face interview was recorded and transcribed to ensure the validity and reliability of the obtained data, along with all field notes and corresponding documentation. The NVivo qualitative software analyzed the transcribed interviews to categorize developing themes as well as elements of the information provided by the participants and the environment that added to the insight of those that have implemented American national strategy in Afghanistan and those that received the activities that the strategy created such as an Afghan national experiencing a "Secure-Hold-Build" operation in his clan compound.

The core of the qualitative method of research is to solve the "how and why" of the research topic, with the narrative inquiry being employed to gain these answers through the discovery of knowledge based on a person's knowledge, both experienced and perceived, on the research topic (Polkinghorne, 1995). The stages for analyzing the data from the interaction with the participant's and the observations of the environment to include documentation included:

1. Selecting the participants, developing the interview questions to support dialogue, maintain observations notes of the environment and feedback from the participant during the interview, and determining appropriate documentation to review and interject into the dialogue.
2. Select the raw data to be coded and analyzed by reducing and eliminating peripheral data to obtain the essence the experiences and perceptions of the

American strategy employed in Afghanistan as the basis for success or failure of strategy.

3. Employ a diachronic organization process to place the data in a linear cataloging to formulate a beginning, middle and end of the narrative to identify core themes of the experience and perceptions of American strategy in Afghanistan.
4. Interpret the data for identification and verification of central patterns, themes, and regularities as well as contrasts, paradoxes, and irregularities. The interpretation of data is recognized as the researcher using the narrative inquiry process of melding the interpretation of the narrative created by the participant, while also constructing their meaning from their observations of the environment, and sources of influences that created the narrative.

The narrative was created from both participants description of the experiences and perceptions of the encounters with the employment of American strategy in Afghanistan as it pertains to the American group and receiving the results of the strategy as it pertains to the Afghan group (Polkinghorne, 1995). The process employed for this qualitative narrative study assured the participants that trust in the process would allow them to express their experiences as well as their perceptions. The collected data was identified and analyzed appropriately. Following the establishment of the pertinent themes and patterns, the assigning of variables was established. The interpreted data included a final narrative relating the experiences and perceptions of the employers and

receivers of American strategy were presented to answer the research question posed by this investigation.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Evidence of quality. For this research, the use of the term "validity" is to confer the strength of conclusions, as well as the overall quality of the research. Validity is defined as the "best available approximation to the truth or fallacy of a given inference, proposition, or conclusion." (Yin, 2009) Validity, when applied to research within the social sciences, encompasses four types: conclusion validity, internal validity, constructs validity, and external validity.

Yin (2009, p. 40) discerns that the quality of a research design should be evaluated by employing a logic test and endorses the following four tests:

1. Construct validity: Determine the functioning procedures for the concepts to be examined. This is based on establishing operational sets of measures to establish construct validity is probably one of the greatest challenges in narrative research (Yin, 2009, p. 41). This investigation achieved construct validity during the data collection findings.
2. Internal validity: In this study, internal validity seeks to establish causal relationships among variables. Yin (2009) declares that every time an event cannot be observed in case study research, an inference has to be made. This investigation employed NVivo qualitative analysis software to support the identifying trends and relationships of the collected data. The software

assisted in pattern matching, resulting in the development of logic models (Yin, 2009, p. 41).

3. External validity: The purpose for employing external validity is to delineate the area that the investigation findings can be simplified (Yin, 2009, p. 40). External validity determines whether or not a study can be generalized beyond the narrative research. This study used the asymmetric conflict theory that reproduced amongst the narrative cases to enhance external validity.
4. Reliability: Reliability validates that this investigation can be replicated (Yin, 2009, p. 40). To enhance reliability, this investigation targeted the data collection phase using multiple sources of evidence, establishing a narrative study database using NVivo, establish a chain of evidence, and reviewed the findings. This investigation ensured that as many phases as possible in the research design are explained and operationalized.

Ethical Considerations

In this research, the highest standard of ethics was ensured. Though there were cultural differences amongst the participants, there was a set of moral norms that were applied to a conglomerate of activities, in turn based on a code of ethical conduct. Universal ethical codes are important in relation to cultural differences because ethics, in its purest sense, enables a person or an organization to decide whether or not to do the right thing when at an ethical crossroad (Roth, Todd, Stavropolus, & Babik, 1996).

The uniqueness of this study is the comparison of a central phenomenon, (American strategy in Afghanistan) as it relates to two cultures. Though there is an

argument that there are shared ethical values and traditions that cross cultures, there is also a preponderance of research covering global ethics that suggests different national cultures have different perspectives regarding ethical values and practices (Buller, 2000 p. 27). The ethical risk for this research was to view data through lens of one culture over another with the results of a skewed narrative data analysis. To reduce risk, the study does not judge differences as erroneous, but rather as simply different and thus coded appropriately.

The maintaining of security, confidentiality, and anonymity was a cornerstone in conducting research on participant's experiences with the Afghan conflict. To mitigate these concerns this study used data collected directly from researcher interviews, observations, or direct supporting report analysis due to the potential risk involved during data collection in an active conflict zone. Further reduction of risk is that no information will be taken from vulnerable populations such as individuals under the age of 18 years old or over the age of 65 years old, as well as those that are detained personnel. The researcher coded all data obtained from the interviews by employing NVivo and certified that all research was conducted in accordance with the Walden University endorsed Standards of Best Practices, provided by the American Association for Public Opinion Research. No data was utilized from sources with questionable practices or a biased opinion on the research problem.

Summary

The first acknowledged modern counter-terrorism strategy of the United States was outlined by President Ronald Regan; it specifies that the United States will react

promptly and decisively to root out terrorism (Bank, Nevers, & Wallerstein, 2007). During Regan's presidency, five major terrorist events occurred and, since this statement on counter-terrorism was made, every U.D. President has thereafter issued similar statements, resulting in the United States dedicating critical national resources in waging a war on terror. No strategy has been developed, however, that addresses adversaries exploiting asymmetric warfare through terrorism. Thus, no metrics have evolved to determine whether any particular strategy is successful. As Arreguin-Toft (2012) demonstrates, by using the Asymmetric Conflict Theory to explain the significance of asymmetrical war upon the current political environment, and functions as a warning to decision-makers to get strategy correct, irrespective of relative power. Arreguin-Toft's (2012) argument makes the perilous consequences of neglecting the significance of strategic collaboration clear. Such strategies ought not be based on the Newtonian paradigm. Instead, he proposes that choice incorporate the Asymmetric Conflict Theory to develop a process to defeat the asymmetric adversary (Toft, 2012). The core reason to employ a qualitative method using narrative research methodology in this study was to determine what approaches to a strategic policy of employing conventional military forces may be used in effects-based operations to increase the effectiveness of military operations against an asymmetric adversary? Basically, how can using a strategy based on employing a modified Cold War organized and trained conventional force defeat a foe that adapts to challenging the nations will within all environments that touch society.

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry is to scrutinize the experiences, as well as the perceptions, of people that are charged to employ the American strategy in

Afghanistan as well as the experiences and perceptions of the strategy as viewed from persons who were affected by programs created by the strategy. The qualitative research will investigate the probability that the success or failure of a national strategy may have a relationship to experiences and the perceptions of the people that employ, as well as those that endure the activities that the strategy creates. The objective of this study is to add to the field of knowledge concerning the development and implementation of successful national security strategy in the manner that allows for the mitigation of terrorism and strengthens individual and national security.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The focus of this chapter will be to explain how data was collected and analyzed for this study. This will include a discussion examining the process and methods used to collect as well as control the data and my methods of interpretation. The purpose of this study was to determine whether there could be benefits in shifting U.S. security policies to include a greater focus on developing an asymmetric strategy to focus on the adversary as opposed to the manner in which the conflict has been conducted. Two main research questions emerged from this idea. First, can the strategy of focusing on the asymmetric adversary within an asymmetric field of conflict and the threat of terrorism reduce the terrorist organizations' recruitment an provide a stronger, more permanent solution to terrorism than employment of conventional military action in individual areas of conflict? Second, what are the advantages for U.S. national security of employing this approach in altering domestic and foreign security policy to achieve a sustainable reduction of terrorist attacks on the U.S. homeland and interests abroad?

There will be four areas of review within this chapter. In the first segment, context of the study will be provided, including an explanation of the role of the researcher while collecting the data. The second segment will include a discussion of the collection of data as well as an explanation of the main codes and resulting application of how the conventional-centric main code was applied during the analysis of the documents. In the third segment, data collection methods and coding under the asymmetric-centric main code will be explained. Throughout the second and third

sections, statements obtained from the participants through the narrative inquiry-based interviews will be offered. The final section will contain a summary of the processes employed to obtain the conclusion of the study.

Setting of the Study

The Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) granted approval to perform the acquisition and analysis of data to support this inquiry on May 10, 2017. The IRB approval number for this research project is 05-12-17-0380121, which expires on May 11th, 2018. The basis for this narrative inquiry was to obtain data through the use of informal interviews with those personnel that implement national strategy through policies and programs as well as Afghan nationals that receive the effects of the national strategy. 12 to 14 participants were to be interviewed, but, being unable to find an adequate participant pool, this study was limited to 10 participants. The structure of the narrative process allows for a reduction in the number of participants that does not affect the outcome of the study; it also has a noticeable impact upon the saturation of the data collected (Creswell, 2013).

The initial basis for this narrative inquiry questions was to obtain an experience of those who were subjected to the American strategy for the War on Terrorism through the Afghanistan War experiences of both the Americans involved in initiating the strategy and the Afghans that received the actions of the strategy. To support this inquiry an examination of the strategy through a review of professional texts and scientific manuscripts that specifically concentrated on the current war on terrorism and subsequently focused on the counterterrorism/counterinsurgency operations in

Afghanistan was conducted. The documents selected from the literature review involved official policy and U.S. government reports to Congress. These documents provided a sound foundation in previous studies in asymmetric conflict as well as current viewpoints as to the policies and actions of the U.S. War on Global Terrorism and as its activities in Afghanistan. Though referenced in this study, neither in-depth analysis nor coding of the literature was completed prior to the study. Appendix D presents the coding tree, which will be discussed in-depth in this chapter. Analysis of the documents supported the findings from the literature review and provided strong data that addressed the research questions. There was a requirement to detail the actual experiences and preconceptions of those that have directly implemented or received the actions based on current strategy and policies. Though the participants had numerous diverse experiences, it was initially determined that looking at implementers of strategic policies as well those that receive the actions of the policies would fortify the documents analyzed in satisfying the research questions.

The purpose of this study was comparing, as well as contrasting, the findings of the analysis by examining the participants' stories, so it was determined that the narrative research method was the most suitable form of research methodology to employ. A narrative study is a research methodology of examining the individual's experience of the world and events that includes capturing both the experience as the perception of a life event (Creswell, 2013). Employing the narrative inquiry in qualitative research has been demonstrated to provide a straightforward version of the facts that have directly affected the lives of the participants as well as the impact on their future decisions (Creswell,

2013). This approach permits the participants who are involved in the research to present their experiences and perceptions in their own words (Creswell, 2013). The requirements of this study necessitated that the research questions were designed as to stimulate the examination of the strategy implemented in Afghanistan as part of the counterterrorism policy. With this in mind, narrative inquiry was applied as the final step in the collection and analysis of the data because this was the most appropriate method to confirm or reject the data analysis.

The goal of the study was for the participants to provide a detailed account of their experiences about living and working in Afghanistan under the implementation of American strategies and its potential effect on mitigating terrorism. The questions were articulated in a manner to allow the participant to express their account of their experience of living and working in Afghanistan. The information provided by the literature analysis provided additional support for the interview protocol. Background information about the participants will be presented, for the purpose of clarification, including what contacts the participant had with implementers of American strategy and specifically the intervention of American-led coalition activities from 2001 to 2015.

Demographics

In this study, the experiences of two groups of participants were examined. The first group consisted of five Afghans that lived in Afghanistan before and during the American invasion and occupation. The Afghan participant pool was selected from educated Afghans that held various but respected positions within Afghan society. These positions range from one lawyer, to two businessmen, one doctor, and a contractor

interpreter/student. All of the participants worked with Americans as interpreters and advisors following the American invasion and participated in the American programs to stabilize and rebuild Afghanistan. The second group of participants was selected from former U.S. Army Special Forces operatives that conducted several tours in Afghanistan to implement stabilization and nation building as part of the American strategy. The Special Forces operatives were chosen because of the core mission of Special Forces to work with indigenous personnel within a conflict zone to ensure victory through the ability of the people of a nation being able to defend itself. Their work allowed them to live alongside Afghans in a way that provides an insight into American policies and programs in Afghanistan as viewed from those that are on the ground implementing strategy in a way that no other group of Americans can provide.

Data Collection

The opening discussion with the first participant group (Afghanistan Group [AFG]) began on May 19, 2017 and was concluded on May 24, 2017. The second participant group (American Group [AMG]) interviews began on May 24, 2017 and concluded on June 9, 2017. All members of both participant groups indicated that their predilection was to complete the interview process during one sitting in its entirety but allowed for the possibility of further interviews as needed for clarification. Ann additional interview with the fifth participant from the AMG (AMG 5) was conducted on June 23, 2017, for the purpose of clarifying data points after the initial data were collected and analyzed.

The interviews were recorded using a Sony PC compatible ICD-PX333 digital voice recorder. The device employs voice-operated recording that starts and stops automatically with of a voice. Each participant was allowed to examine the device and approve its use during the interview. The device has a timer display, which enabled the researcher to make notes associated with the time indicated by the comment or observation requiring a notation.

The primary researcher supplied the protocol for the interview and the consent form was sent to all participants 5 days prior to the first scheduled interview. The participants discussed the consent form and interview protocol with me to ensure that they understood the process and granted access under the protocol requirements. The consent form was signed and returned on the day of the interviews. As is the custom in conducting a research interview, the consent form and protocol documents were read to the participant immediately before the interview to assure that these materials and intent were accurately understood. After the interview was concluded, the recording was transcribed using HyperTranscribe software that converted the verbal record into a written one to allow coding. HyperTranscribe was selected based on the program's high reliability, ease of use, and the security it provided.

The significance of using a narrative inquiry is that it relies on the words of the account (Creswell, 2013). One unexpected issue was the Afghan participant mastery of the English language. All Afghans were formally educated and used the syntax of the English language in a more proper way than the American participants and the researcher. Accordingly, the word "asymmetric" was substituted for any word with a

similar definition (such as irregular, unconventional, and, the most used word, guerilla). The relevance of codes will be briefly discussed in the summary of this chapter, as well a frequency chart provided, found in Appendix D. A copy of the corresponding transcript was presented to each participant and all recordings and transcripts are secured and will be kept secured per the procedures delineated in Chapter 3.

The Afghan group (AFG). The first participant (AFG1) of the Afghan group was born in 1980 in Kabul, Afghanistan. The participant was born into a family of seven siblings. As is the case of many families in Afghanistan, there were three generations living in the same home. According to the participant, the importance of American policies was notable from the very beginning of their life. The family had originally lived in a smaller village outside of Kabul. During the father of AFG1's early life in the farming village, the grandmother determined that her children would receive an education from the American International School in Kabul with a promise of better opportunities for her grandchildren. The family then moved from the village to Kabul so that the participant's father and his siblings could attend school. According to the participant, the family sacrificed all of their lands to make an American education a reality. The participant stated that this was the beginning of the attitude toward experiencing American policies that would ultimately be passed down.

The second participant (AFG2) in the Afghan group was born in Kabul in 1971 into a family of merchants. He attended the Kabul Medical School and became a doctor of pediatrics. He supported the Mujahidin during the Soviet war, but did not support the Taliban during their rule. It was during the Taliban rule that he became taxi driver with

the experiences of talking to everyone in Afghan society. When the United States invaded, he made use of his mastery of the English language to work as an interpreter for the Americans. He worked with the Americans for ten years before receiving a visa to immigrate to the United States, where he works within his family business. His ten years of working alongside Americans gave him ample life experiences concerning the effects of American policies and programs that it strategy create.

The third participant (AFG3) in the Afghan group was born in Kandahar in 1977 into a family of merchants. His family traveled throughout Afghanistan as well as trips to Iran and Pakistan to sustain their business, which ranged from selling palm oil used for cooking to household goods and carpets. This participant was also educated at the American International School in Kabul where he received his MBA with a specialty in international business. This participant remembers the Soviet war through discussions with parents, but does have actual experiences with the Taliban during their rule as well as the impact that America has made to Afghanistan since 2002. Upon graduating school, this participant also worked with American forces as both an interpreter and logistics contractor before receiving his visa to immigrate to America. He currently supports his family business in Washington DC area.

The fourth participant (AFG4) from the Afghan group was born in a village outside of Marjah Afghanistan in 1982. His father was a farmer and truck driver who ensured his son was educated at Kandahar University, where he learned English along with receiving a degree in mechanical engineering. When the Americans forces took Kandahar in late 2002, he volunteered his services as interpreter and guide. He worked

for 8 years alongside American Marines and Special Forces Teams as they conducted national building operations. He became an American Citizen in 2011 with the sponsorship of the Marines and Green Berets that he worked with and is currently working in Iraq as an interpreter for the Coalition forces as well as a student in the Northern Virginia area.

The fifth and final participant (AFG5) from the Afghan group was born in Kabul. His father was a lawyer, and he followed in his family tradition by attending law school in the United Arab Emirates in 2004. It was from his father that he learned English and later mastered the language while at Kabul University. Upon receiving his law degree, he returned to Afghanistan to work with the Afghan National Government. His duties direct placed him in a position to observe American policies and programs as they directly affected the Afghan population. He is currently working in the United States, but plans to return to Afghanistan at a later date.

The American group. The first participant (AMG1) in the American group is the former commander of the Asymmetrical Warfare Group and a retired U.S. Army Special Forces Colonel. He is a Special Forces officer who has been in the Army 24 years with assignments that included duties as an instructor at the coveted Army Ranger school, as well as commanded two Special Forces Operational Detachment A-Teams (ODA) as well as numerous other assignments during the10 years of the Global War on Terror. These duties involve implementing counter-terrorism and counterinsurgency policies through direct action, nation building and various staff positions both abroad and in the United States.

The second participant (AMG2) in the American group is a former Team Sergeant in the U.S. Army Special Forces. Before becoming a Team sergeant, his job function was within the ODA was Special Forces Medic in which he served four tours as a medic and one tour as a team sergeant in Afghanistan. He is fluent in Farsi and Dari, the two major languages of Afghanistan. The majority of the time he was in Afghanistan, he was assigned to sector within the Helmand and Kandahar provinces of Afghanistan requiring that he live with the Afghan troops an directly intermingle with the Afghan population while implanting policies and programs from a higher command.

The third participant (AMG3) from the American group is a former Special Forces Warrant Officer. Before becoming a Warrant Officer, he served as a communication specialist within an ODA. Much like participant two, he served four tours as a communication specialist and one tour as Team Warrant Officer. He is fluent in Farsi and has a working knowledge of Arabic. He served his Afghanistan time in the Kandahar and Kabul providences. His duties required that he interact on a daily basis with local the Afghan population as well as live with as trusted advisor with the Afghan Government forces as they implement American policies and programs.

The fourth participant (AMG4) from the American group is a former Special Forces Intelligence chief. Before becoming an intelligence chief, he performed the duties of a Special Forces engineer with the task to help rebuild many of Afghanistan's infrastructures. He also has many tours in Afghanistan with three tours as an engineer, one tour as an intelligence chief and two tours as a contractor working for the U. S. State Department. He speaks Farsi and Dari as well as French.

The fifth participant (AMG5) from American group is a former Special Forces intelligence chief with seven tours in Afghanistan. He speaks Farsi, Pashtun, and Dari, which has allowed him to work alongside Afghan nationals as an advisor to the Afghanistan government as well as advised very senior district, province, and country officials. He holds a Masters of Science degree in Internal Affairs from University of Maryland and is the most experienced of the participant in observing the cause and effects of American policies and procedures during the Afghans war.

Data Analysis

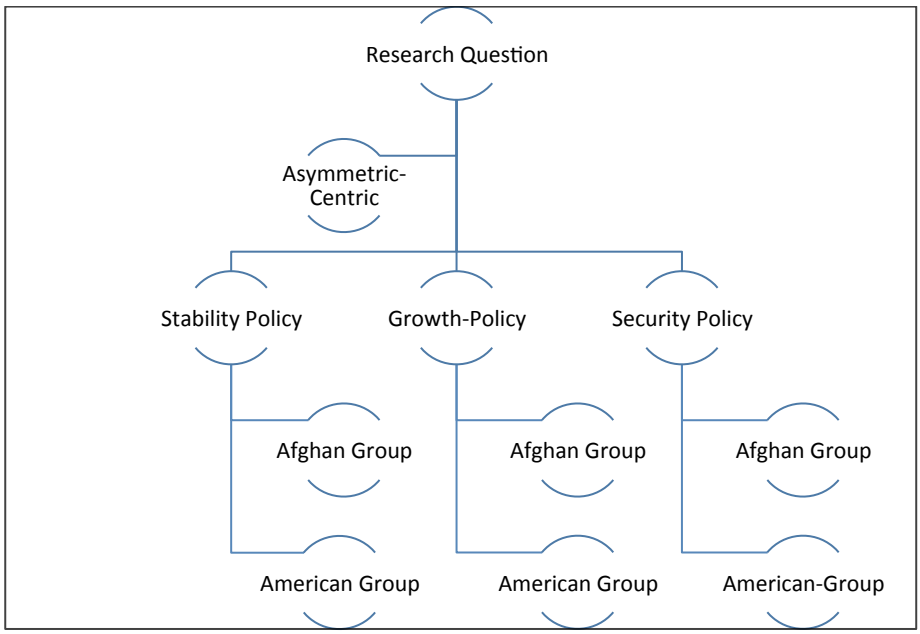
In order to analyze the experiences of the participants with American strategy and policy implementation as well as develop a foundation for the parameter questions utilized in the narrative inquiry, an examination of the transcripts was conducted. The control of this study was through the establishment of three distinct categories. Anonymity was ensured through the assigned a designation that could not specify an identity of the person contributing direct statements and general discussion points. These designations can be found later in this chapter. The three stages of the analysis consisted levels of review. Codes were developed into two general categories that support the theory and the research questions. The parent code categories representing the theoretical basis for the study were conventional-centric (CC) and asymmetric-centric (AC) and aligned with definitions of these terms as found in Arreguin-Toft (2012).

The research questions concerned the benefits that can be realized for national security through the provision of an asymmetric warfare strategy. The nature of the study established the need to use the same codes in each phase of data collection. To satisfy the

research questions regarding actions that would influence countering and mitigating the threat of terrorism through conventional centric (military) interventions or asymmetric centric (irregular warfare) interventions involving developing an asymmetric strategy that addresses multiple elements of the conflict. The analysis produced sub-codes that, though necessary, were different, but shared characteristics for these areas. There were a limited number of codes secondary to the specific target of the study. More codes were not necessary to answer the research question. These codes were specifically the research question and addressed the general nature of the research questions.

For clarification of the process, please see Figure 3, which provides a diagram of the asymmetric centric (AC) coding framework used to analyze data in this study. A similar coding framework was used for Conventional centric (CC) codes. Figure 2 also illustrates the process for data collection.

Figure 3. Illustration of the Process for Data Collection



The coding process derived the distinction between American-centric based on the American group and Afghanistan-centric based on the Afghanistan group. The most predominant aspect that determined what was categorized as conventional centric or asymmetric centric was the theme that arose from that specific portion of the data. If the overall theme indicated that the experiences from actions or policy were directed toward direct action with enemy combatants or insurgents, then the data was placed in the category of conventional centric. If the initial focus was applied directly toward terrorist organizations, then the data was coded under "conventional centric." The same process was applied to the asymmetric centric codes as well as the initial focus that determined that the actions applied toward holistic action and reaction toward the national threat then the data was coded toward asymmetric centric.

The application of sub-codes was determined by examining the factors of the coded statement. Many of these applications were quite simple in that most of the comments were specific in the sub-code areas. This minimal design provided for a detailed examination and analysis of the documents. The main codes chosen were simple, conventional centric and asymmetric centric. The child codes (security, growth, and stability) were used under both of the main codes. Likewise, the sub-codes were also used in both of the main codes. This was designed to examine the data consistently for both of the approaches. A full coding chart can be found in Appendix D, and detailed explanations of the specific sub-code findings are included within each section.

Nvivo Mac software was chosen as the tool for processing the codes (QRS International, 2017). The Nvivo Mac software is designed for coding systems from

simplistic to complex as well as assist in developing themes and grouping the codes. All of the interview transcripts and field notes were converted into text or ". txt" documents to be used in the coding software. The design of the coding tool supports the researcher that may not be a cyber-authority, making the coding task more accurate. Following data entry, the information is converted into detailed codes and grouped with the codebook. The manipulation of the program was assisted with a continuously available tutorial that provided interactive training program from the NVivo company. The initial level of coding was performed first to gain an aspect as to what the data presented. The codes were applied to the testimony and any additional statements made by participants.

Possible discrepancies in the software coding could have occurred due to language syntax employed by the participants. The researcher who determined the code following the first stage is that the transcripts were manually coded using a highlighter with specific colors for designating each sub-code mitigated this possible discrepancy. Though the process is redundant, it does assist as a means to confirm many codes applied to the analysis as well as ensured quality control method outside of the software is employed that supports the placement the codes in significant categories (security, stability, growth). The final step to the interview analysis coding process was a top-level application of codes. The child codes were applied to the two main codes (conventional- and asymmetric-centric). Following this level, a frequency report of each level was entered into an Excel spreadsheet. The frequency report for the document analysis will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Coding is a method that is extensively utilized by the social scientist for qualitative research is to find and document the themes contained in the statements is to use the theme or "within words" technique (Saldana, 2009). The analysis of these themes found within the statements requires numerous levels of examination to ensure the codes were accurately interpreted and applied with the intention of the participants and documents are entirely understood.

Narrative Inquiry Process

The asymmetric centric and conventional centric approaches are defined within this study as those actions encompassed by the War on Terror to include Operation Enduring Freedom, the American lead action in Afghanistan. The asymmetric centric approach is a designator that concentrates the specifics of the asymmetric methods in many different aspects of power through force, cultural, economic and political avenues in countering the threats that create terrorism in the country rather than focusing actions solely on the conventional centric program that employs a singularly military solution to the problem. Originally, a bias that the researcher may have identified was based on historical events; in other words, all actions from the U.S. military might be primarily conventional centric. However, a majority of documents from the literature review make statements that lead to the asymmetrical-centric side of the study. For example, documents *DOD Document Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership* (2014) and *DOD Report on the Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan* (2014) have overwhelming statements of asymmetric-centric themes.

In the *DOD Report on the Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan* (2014), presents the testimony of the military commanders of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in 2009 operations. This statement reflects numerous comments from the participant groups relationship of having non-military government agencies, he states, "we work together to figure out what's going to be required as we provide security to make it more durable, because the governance and development parts need to flow in almost simultaneously" (DOD, 2014, pg. 205). This statement, from a military official, is only one of many that indicate the development of civilian government and the continued internal security and welfare are the intentions of the U.S. and the ISAF in general. The official continues in his testimony stating that larger issues in the area of asymmetric-centric reforms are in many cases a more in-depth time consuming issue (DOD, 2014).

Analysis Through Theoretical Foundation and Conceptual Framework

The explanation for the responses that the participants give on their perceptions of the American strategy for the war, it is arguable certain that “asymmetric” is amongst the broadest if not the most encompassing. This study has placed that the Asymmetrical conflict theory can be categorized through the examination of various existing and potential concepts of asymmetric conflict (Chase, 2011). Employing the asymmetrical conflict theory in analyzing the responses of the participants can characterized three different sub-themes through which asymmetry may be deduced as it applies to strategy. These three sub-themes to strategy are “security, stability and economic growth which represents the arenas that the conflict is waged within. Thus, this recent approach in defining strategy can result in a misunderstanding through the misapplication of the terms

asymmetry strategy and/or asymmetric conflict distorts the adversary and leads us to make major strategic blunders (Angstrom, 2011). This is demonstrated in the strategy of concentrating on threats rather than adversarial strategies. By employing the asymmetric conflict theory over conflict theory, the examination of strategy for Afghanistan to be understood through the strategic nature, goals, and overall concepts of American strategy in Afghanistan as judged by the operations the strategy dictates (Peceny & Bosin, 2011).

Strategy through Security

The indication that asymmetric-centric themes in providing a strategy for long-term security and stability to allow Afghanistan to grow out of being a receptacle for terrorism are referenced in both participant groups in which the theme was noted 43 times. The language of the testimonies indicates that metrics being used by the Coalition is directed to the developing, maintaining, or protecting internal stability and security of the country with a reliance on the development and training of the Afghan National Army with a lesser degree of focus on the development of the National Police. The army is not being raised as a field army that repulses foreign attacks but in line with working with an internal police force that is focused on a civil stability for the nation. The child codes obtained from the Afghan group indicate that more interaction between the police and Afghan Army is missing, creating a lack of stability and security. AMG5 participant gave a strong reference that the strategy is focused on recruiting and training the army as well the subsequent police force. Though the strategy is focused on the Afghans protecting themselves from outside intervention as well as defeat the ongoing insurgency When asked about the operations of the Coalition forces with the Afghan National Army

and Police, the second Afghan-group participant stated, "I think the need for the coalition to build the national army while conducting operations is a requirement. I believe this because the strategy to secure Afghanistan and its borders, which includes the need for a strong military arm to safeguard the nation against domestic as well as foreign intervention." The participant demonstrated his passion for the need for a strong military that works with American and coalition forces. He expressed this sentiment in the failed rollout of Afghan operations with the follow-up statement of, "The issue is that the strategy to develop an Afghanistan National Army did not take into account the local culture or the needs of the tribes. This is demonstrated by the current culture that the Afghan National Army as it stands currently does not have a culture of soldiers being faithful to the nation or sees the United States as a partner against terrorism. An explanation for this is based on the all of the Afghan-group participants indicating that the haphazard way that America has been conducting this war of ideas, which results in people not wholeheartedly accepting the narrative that America only wants to help and is not an invader. The current culture, especially in the rural areas, cannot accept that America's goal is to help them obtain their freedom from the Taliban" (AFG2).

The asymmetric centric core codes reveal that American and Afghan security operations working with stability operations (AC1b & AC2b) were the two most prominent themes. Personal security (AC2b) was prominent with the term used ten separate times during the dialogue, which is supported, by term Afghan national security (AC1b) being revealed nine instances within the document. The information depicted in the “DOD Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan" (2014) is

based on a detailed report to Congress that addressed the abilities of the Afghan national government to protect the people. This report is predominantly focused on U.S. government programs that the support of Afghan national government actions in Afghanistan, which includes the use of conventional U.S. troops. The majority of the report involved U.S. troops conducting operations aimed at securing a designated area, with minor programs focused on training Afghan personnel with the goal of leaving the area recently secured under the protection of Afghan Security Forces.

It is observed that this DOD Report (2014) contains multiple references in which the actual strategy of U.S. forces securing a particular area had the ultimate goal of the areas security to be left to the Afghan forces recruited across the country with the mission to provide area security and the rule of law. A note source of information indicates that a large amount of the American troops were elementary aged children at the time of the 9/11 attacks which was the catalyst U.S. actions in Afghanistan which leads to the observation that they may have an inadequate recollection of the 9/11 attacks. The significance of this element of data is that the conventional based operations for seizing, securing and stabilizing have continued for so many years, that many of the military personnel fighting the conflict were in the first grades of elementary school when the 2001 attacks on the U.S. occurred. This point was observed by the AFG2 in that he states: "After 15 years after the initial U.S. intervention in Afghanistan indicating that the strategy in using conventional methods is either slated for this style of war."

Strategy Through Stability

The participants' interview results display a premise that stability is a key element of strategy by the issue that stability is mentioned eight times by the Afghan group and seven times by American group. The codes frequency pertained in the conventional-centric-local stability (CC3b) section. The testimony is directed at the strategy of relying on Afghan Security Forces (ASF) as the linchpin of the U.S. strategy for establishing and maintaining stability in the region with only assistance provided by the U.S. or Coalition forces. Though the discovery of the code is noteworthy, this testimony was in the area of personal security (CC2b) and not stability CCb3). The goal of country and implication is that Afghanistan security is the major theme within these documents. This was coded as being conventional-centric because the focus is on conventional forces, either traditional civilian government agency being the catalyst for security.

An observation was made from both groups of participants that revolve along asymmetric-centric codes through the method that employed separate civilian programs to build the stability through welfare programs for Afghan citizens with a focus on non-military agencies activities. The analysis was centered on methods that employed separate civilian programs to build the stability through welfare programs for Afghan citizens that are administered by U.S. citizens. AFG5 asserts that it is the civilian authority that is fundamental to the national security of Afghanistan even more than military power. This theme is supported by the interviews with AFG1, AFG3, and AFG4 as well as AMG1 and AMG5 participants, though not its intention the codes that the interviews provided demonstrate the lack of cohesion between conventional military

programs aims at establishing security and civilian-based programs aimed at providing stability. The codes from all participant interviews to include both the Afghan and American groups indicating that there is a lack of cohesion through the use of conventional based war over an asymmetric one. The coding suggests that regardless of the U.S. agency, the American focus is on the use of conventional centric approaches for establishing stability and security.

A more detailed examination of the Afghan participant group interviews brings to light the collection of testimonials as to the need or impact American policies programs in relationship to stability for the various regions. It must be noted that when addressing conventional centric approaches, participant AFG3 mentions that American policies are a deterrent to violence. The participant further explained that civilian power is as fundamental to national security as military power is, yet the testimonies indicate the failure of the two working in unison, which is a requirement for asymmetric methods (Arreguin-Toft, 2012). This testimony places the belief of the participant on the failure of the approaches and disjointed of the programs that were recommended and intended to become policy for this government agency. The programs as relayed by participant AMG1 demonstrates that the strategy that non-military U.S. government agencies are more prone to develop civilian building programs as an approach to concluding the struggle was confirmed through coding. The parent code regarding asymmetric centric strategies is found forty times throughout the document.

The American and Afghan participant groups responded to interview questions by indicating the limited mention of security and stability as a global strategy as a result of

American activities in the U.S. as well as Afghan policy statements and documents. The participants replied that, at first glance, it is hard to know exactly why the mention of strategy based on security and stability for Afghanistan is lacking. Participant AMG5 stated: "when you look at the business development sector, there is a fair amount of work in American asymmetric policies. " The participant continued to be somewhat perplexed by the question stating, "I have not given much thought to that." After thinking for a short period, the participant did state, "In the first couple of years, early in the intervention in Afghanistan, 2001, 2002, 2003, there was a lot of focus on stability and democracy by ensuring every Afghan is franchised. Sadly the emphasis appeared to be on numbers that reflected quantity over a deep-seated embedment into the culture that would be required for success."

During the interview process, the participants from both groups were asked about personal experiences and the personal influences of American strategies for Afghanistan as it relates to counterterrorism and counterinsurgency. Interview Questions 1-10 were answered mutually through the narrative that followed. These questions were related to the influence that American policies had on the Afghan's character and that influence in potential involvement in violent or peaceful activities. The participant AFG1 and AMG5 mutually identified that the early American policies experiences while foundational for removing the Taliban did not have an impact on the future in these areas. It was sometime during the 2002 military campaign that American policies influenced these areas of security and stability. Participant AFG1 was very explicit about the impact that American counterterrorism and counterinsurgent strategies had on current events

personally. The statements indicated that the current strategy involving counterterrorist/counterinsurgent are directly proportioned to the effectiveness of nation building based on foreign aid for developing countries. A specific target for this direct action as a result of a national strategy is the humanitarian and nation-building programs amount and type found in Afghanistan. The American Group participants indicated that they are always thinking of using favorable asymmetric policies to aid in developing an environment of security and stability for Afghanistan. The account maintained the comparisons to mastering a mystery of what works and what does not. This accounting of policies and programs includes the allocation of funding to specific programs that are in most cases not interrelated with a single strategy or measure for success in nation building or countering the threats to security and stability. So, according to the answers of the American Group of participants, there was most definitely an American strategy whose influence is locally positive yet overall on the strategic level has not been positive.

Strategy Through Growth

The additional analysis of child codes under the asymmetric-centric approach exposed that a preponderance of data from the codes falls along the growth category. Twenty-three codes were found relevant to the asymmetric-centric approach. The quantity of indicators aligning with the growth (also mentioned by participants as prosperity) category is very close to the stability child codes that were applied 22 times in the interviews. The growth categories 23 indicators found the category had 14 observed to be within the sub-code of the rule of law (CC2a). The sub-code of personal security had eight indicators (CC2b). The remaining code was concluded to be general to the

larger child code category (CC2). It is observed that 20 separate instances political corruption was mentioned as a supporting argument. These were unambiguous testimonials to desire for the empowerment of the Afghan citizens as the process of self-rule. The revelation of the empowerment testimony is in a general sense but was notable in several sections explicitly mentioning gender guidelines for education in Afghanistan three times within the document. According to AFG4, "there should be a mutually created standard that respects our culture. This will ensure common ground for the development of tribal and business owner assistance."

Child codes for asymmetric-centric-stability (AC3) were noted almost as many times as child codes under growth (AC2). Of the 32 times that AC3 codes were applied, 19 of them were applied under the sub-code of regional stability (AC3a). Participant AMG5 formulated possibilities and experiences to Afghanistan stability with a non-conventional military action such as American-Afghanistan business partnerships will lead to economic and cultural growth. This particular sub-code was noted multiple times throughout the document and specifically several times in relation to Afghanistan. Supporting AMG5 comments is the "DOD Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan" (2014) tracks indicate that the forces of instability and natural disasters will increase over the next decade in areas critical Afghan prosperity (DOD Report, 2014). The testimonial along with this document reinforces the requirement for an asymmetric-centric approach to developing a strategy with its direct application to the security of the U.S..

The previous observation denotes there is a direct correlation of economic growth to Afghanistan internal protection. The child codes that aligned with the asymmetric-centric security (CC1) are found 12 times in the Afghan participant group document and nine times within the American participant group. Deciphering the child codes and sub-codes under security, American national security (CC1a) was applied eight times in the document and Afghan Security (CC1b) was applied twice. The remaining two codes fell into the general category of Security (CC1). A point of observation is that the report does support the testimonies of the Afghan group in continuing to work with other U.S. activities to secure regions that are characterized as high risk for U.S. interests.

The literature review conducted in Chapter 2 provided an examination of the American strategy and policy process. These documents also addressed the potential strategies and policies that could exist within the war on terror through established actions conducted by a conventional centric approach to directly focusing on the enemy. The literature demonstrated that American strategy and resulting policies are concentrated in a conventional-centric-U.S. security (CC1a) sub-code. It should be noted that participant AMG1 cautions against the potential of alienating cultures through violations of basic human rights resulting from strategies and policies that directly confront those that support terror in a direct military fashion.

Following the preliminary coding process of the participants demonstrated a portion of studying strategy to improve it was less than helpful in addressing the research questions initially proposed. It is affirmed that a qualitative analysis of this study with

the goal to influence positive social change should take into account this the differences between the literature, reported information, and the testimonies of the participants.

The American group of participants referred the funding for programs both military (conventional centric) and welfare (asymmetric centric) program with and goals that relate to the strategies and follow-on policies for Afghanistan. The American group stated that funding is a key metric for establishing and maintaining security and stability in Afghanistan as well as the success rate for the growth programs that support the national strategy. According to AMG5, "the United States redeveloped its strategy for Afghanistan from the asymmetric support actions focused during the Soviet occupation during the 1980's to a shift in the use of direct conventional activities in counterinsurgency operations following the attacks of September 11, 2001."

The bulk of the codes attached to these testimonies were asymmetric-centric. asymmetric centric approaches were utilized seventeen times during the AMG5 testimony review. The child codes and sub-codes applied resulted as follows: asymmetric-centric-security (AC2a) was applied seven times, asymmetric-centric-stability (AC2b) was applied five times, asymmetric-centric- Afghan domestic security (AC1b) was applied four times, and asymmetric-centric-local stability (AC3b) was applied once to the report. A finding from the American group experiences that needs to be noted is the observation of a conventional-centric code being applied once, which is found the sub-code area of conventional-centric-counterinsurgency (CC2a). While the sub-code was in the area of conventional-centric and related to counterinsurgency, a unique quality to this application was that the participant speaks of counterinsurgency for

not only conventional approach directly, but also for Afghan operations directly involved in the conflict. The objective of the strategy of counterinsurgency measured in this case is naturally inferred to be for any program directly involved in the conflict, regardless of status.

The question of strategy and the effects of the strategic policies for Afghanistan were posed to the participants. In a follow-up interview, (May 24, 2017) participant AFG4 commented on the state of stability and growth in the country and the personal impressions on foreign influences on growth. The response is summarized here: "The United States has constructed numerous schools and built roads, yet it seems that all the programs are based on quantity which seems to the metric that they use. But when it comes to the quality of a program that is based on the success it is difficult to measure. Thus nobody wants to touch it. There is not much more to say, except for the success rate of economic growth within Afghanistan. It seems that the solution is responding to Taliban or Haqqani Network attacks but I don't see actively setting up the compounds and villages to be empowered to reject the terrorist." Participant AMG4 addressed this issue in his statement about conventional strategy in his statement: "Why, because all of the focus has been on using military controlled counterinsurgency operations while also trying to conduct counter-terrorism and nation-building. Right now it is how many programs do we have, or how many organizations have their independent programs. So, nobody questions the more important question, which is, 'what are we accomplishing.' 'How is the program achieve our goals?' 'How many people can read?' I am not talking about individual programs, but about all the programs as one strategy to achieve the

strategic goal. My concern is that our leaders, as well as the nation, view all the programs as one big operation, yet in reality, each governmental organization is doing their own thing without thought as to how the program supports other programs and ultimately the war effort, and regrettably, those questions aren't asked

Following the dialogue with the participant AMG4 the researcher asked if this was just a bureaucracy using the best practice possible for organizations involved in the process. The reaction was, "It is the amount of funding that is being wasted by the GIRoA as well as the turmoil that the process creates? But when it is examined in details how do we tell the warfighters that risk their lives or the taxpayers how we have been using their lives and wasting their tax money? It is a great achievement to spend so much blood and treasure to liberate the Afghans from the Taliban and contain Al Qaida, but I think that level of reaching our goal is deceptive. Misleading because we focus so much on the number of programs and money is involved in achieving success for the program that we forget about the quality of making the country truly secure and stable."

Establishing Trustworthiness

The practice of narrative inquiry as a means for research can be described as establishing validity grounded on the aspect that it encompasses the participant's experience as well as perceptions of key events in his or her life. Thus, through narrative inquiry, the credibility of any study lies in the recovery and interpretation of the experience and the perception of the person who experienced the events that the study covers. In this study, as outlined in Chapter Three, the life experiences and, more importantly, the perceptions of U.S. intervention in Afghanistan were compared to the

policies that have been in place for the United States since Operation Enduring Freedom began in 2001. The collection of these experiences were outlined in Chapter 3. Through previous experience working with Afghan nationals and the U.S. Army Special Forces soldiers, a pool of willing participants became available to the scholar. Communication with these participants was made after they were no longer affiliated with the U.S. Government, which allowed for unhindered relationships to be established and sequences of dialogues between the researcher and participant to be scheduled. As part of the narrative methodology, the research processes included coding of the testimonies, the interview transcripts, and the researchers' field notes. This coding was completed with the use of NVivo software and the interjection of manual observations from the researcher's field notes. The coding process is defined in detail in a later portion of this chapter.

Results

The objective of the research was to focus on the evidence that addresses the central research question: How does the American strategic perceptions of an asymmetric adversary in Afghanistan affect the conflict outcome and are the Afghan public perceptions of the outcomes of the strategy a positive or negative influence towards supporting a strong, stabilized democratic country, free from terrorist influence? The purpose of this question was to qualify whether Afghans and Americans perceive the current conventional strategy of employing large numbers of conventional troops on the ground as successful – or whether an asymmetric approach would be deemed more

welcomed. The evidence is based on the results of the interviews as described in this chapter.

The interviews had fewer conventional centric codes applied with the transcript analysis than the asymmetric centric codes. These codes occurred 44 times in the interview transcripts. The child codes revealed that security was prevalent with 28 codes, followed by stability that was applied seven times, and constancy applied nine times. The sub-code level exposed the impact of U.S. domestic security with this code applied 16 times, followed by Afghan domestic security 12 times. Then it drops to local stability six times, personal security four times, and economic opportunity three times. The significance of these findings is that quite a few of the comments used in the analysis were chosen as conventional centric to explain or justify the current strategy. To be fair-minded with conveying the statements that are referenced, reports on current activities as well as an existing policy that have a directly reflected in the testimonies and public statements of military officials are included.

Though there are numerous explanations for the reason that there are a lower number of conventional centric applications rather than asymmetric-centric applications, the leading one for this researcher is the asymmetric nature of the participant's duties while in Afghanistan. There could be various reasons that explain the limited number of responses regarding conventional centric approaches, but the predominant point is from the participant's interview responses. Nevertheless, these details were not immediately exposed in the analysis. Various reasons that affect the outcome are discussed in detail under recommendations in Chapter 5.

Participant AFG1 stated that there are different opinions held by Afghans on the actions of Coalition Force, particularly about the Americans – ranging from attitudes about their presence in Afghanistan, to the results of their policies, and consequences of their actions. For example, following the post-Soviet invasion, the country experienced turmoil in which the Taliban rose as the dominant power in the country. The participant specified that the perception of the Taliban between the Soviets departure and September 11 attacks were one of an era of "killing and violence, with family against the family."

The participants from the Afghan group continued to express their recollections of the Post-Russian Taliban period; twenty comments are directly related to the security of the country in that section. The discussion did present a unique view of the Taliban in that, during their direct rule, for many people, the threat of theft or assault by criminals was lessened, but fear from the Taliban using violence was constant. The anti-Taliban feelings that erupted following the American actions of 2001-2002 was based on the knowledge that the Taliban provided security based on fear, not stability. Participant AFG 2 utilized the phrase "very, very brutal" several times during his interview. The participant presented his view of the activities conducted by the Taliban: "Are a cultural offense to Afghans." It was during this portion of the dialogue that the participant AFG2 made clear his perceptions of the Taliban in his statement that the Taliban was "destroying the humanity of the Afghans, while the American tried to restore it."

The influence that the U.S. conventional military demonstrates in Afghanistan strategic policy is reported in the literature review found in Chapter 2. From the many documents literature review, one document (*Transition in Afghanistan: Losing the*

Forgotten War? The Need to Reshape US Strategy in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia) references the conventional centric approaches employed or Afghanistan stability (Cordesman, 2015). The surprise was that the majority of the results from the American Group of participants also indicated a similar opinion as to the one found in Cordesman (2015) document. Upon examining the participants' testimonies, there was a fairly even application of codes between the child codes of conventional centric-security (CC1) and conventional centric-stability (CC3). One category missing from the application in the American Group was coded under the child code conventional centric welfare (CC2). A further examination of the statements reflects that the topic is not directly related to a particular experience. This is a predictable aspect of the coding process based on the charge of the activity.

A report published by the Congressional Research Office *Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policies* in 2014 tasked with providing specifically examined concern and actions in Afghanistan to "increase the understanding of Afghan experiences with American strategy for security assistance" (Katzman, 2014). The document specifically addresses the use of state security and stability in the country. The report's executive summary notes that the aggression and violent actions that the Taliban employ is a method of indoctrination to their ideological beliefs. The report provided a foundation for the researcher to explore this subject with the participants but the dialogue provided an unexpected discovery. Unlike other government or military inferred documents found in Chapter 2, the bulk of this report pertained to what this scholar interprets as asymmetric centric measures that were employed or should have

been employed in Afghanistan during U.S. involvement. The testimonies from the dialogue that the researcher established with the participants resulted in asymmetric centric codes being used 17 times in their statements. The bulk of child codes concerned within this document were in the asymmetric centric security category (AC1). Specifically, the asymmetric-centric-Afghan security (AC1b) was applied three times in the report, asymmetric centric-welfare (AC2) was applied twice (one time for each of the sub-codes, AC2a and AC2b), and twice for asymmetric-centric local stability (AC3b). The remainder of the codes applied was generally applied in the asymmetric centric category.

A key point discovered through the interview process was the final two questions that each participant received regardless of the groups. These questions, found in Appendix A, address the perceptions of the Afghan people as to American strategy of creating stability to combat terrorism and the large footprint of American forces. The narrative that followed was significant in its simplicity in reaching the core of what the participants perceive about American strategy to this researcher. Participant AFG1stated, "My experience has taught me that violence is not really about anything. I always have this kind of message to my own family, which is that violence begets violence. I don't think violence gets you anywhere." The statement continued to refer to the policy of the Coalition forces of pursuing the Taliban and Haqqani Network members. Participant AFG1 stated, "what the strategy to remove the Taliban and build Afghanistan through violence, I think it created more violence that made the Taliban stronger, now when

America leaves the Taliban will be more powerful than before because it is perceived that they defeated America."

Participant AFG4 made a significant statement regarding a need to change U.S. policy towards more humanitarian interventions rather than military with the military working with non military agencies in providing security but not managing the programs. Participant AFG4 stated their needs to be opportunities in Afghanistan that economic and educational prospects by stating, "they join the Taliban in regions where people are hopeless such as Helmand and Kandahar. In those regions, the government is not offering any services to them, where there are no clinics, where there are no schools. So if you provide alternatives to the Taliban, then I don't see why anyone would join them." Participant AFG4 completed the interview with a statement that, if people have the right incentives, they are less likely to join the ranks of the Taliban.

Participant AMG5 addressed what he believes to be a gap between the policy of employing asymmetric centric programs in a unified method of nation building and the reality of conventional-centric method of using the military to solve all problems. His statement, "I believe it is never too late to change direction but it would have saved a lot of blood and treasure if they had established an asymmetric strategy at the beginning. Being one of the members that originally was on the ground at the very beginning we did fine in defeating the Taliban. What went wrong is that they just held on to the mentality. This is when it should become a little more asymmetric-centric." This was presented as being an asymmetric approach based on not relying on the conventional military as the primary mover for nation building. Participant AFG5 made the opinion that the best

manner for the U.S. to eliminate the vast majority of troops in the country is doing a surge for the education and other supporting humanitarian endeavors.

Summary

The data that were collected in this study was obtained and structured in an organized manner that is consistent with the procedures outlined in Chapter 3 and approved by the Walden University IRB. A two-step manner was employed to use the data acquired through the analysis of testimonies of Afghan and American participants in the conflict in Afghanistan. This data was coded with the codes listed in Appendix D using NVivo software. The process by which the analysis took place was a three level coding process. The sub-codes or detailed level of codes were applied first, and then the child codes and lastly the two main codes of asymmetric-centric or conventional-centric approaches were applied. This seemingly reversed system of coding provided a very detailed manner of analysis and review of the testimonies and documents to prevent the omission of any potential data that might have been missed.

The first phase of data collection provided the foundation for guidance questions posed in a narrative inquiry of human participants that were both Afghan and Americans who have lived in Afghanistan and had direct contact with the operations involved in education in the country. While narrative inquiry provides details more through the experiences of the people involved (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), for consistency of the study, the same codes were applied to the transcript. The data revealed some confusing results. The most notable confusion disclosed by the data analysis is the difference between the stated intentions of the Afghan group supporting American conventional

military actions and the reality of shared experience through the viewpoint of the Afghans and American who has experienced life in the Afghan War. It has been revealed that the difference lies with the actions taken since 2003. A more detailed discussion of this will take place in Chapter 5, as well as one concerning recommendations and reflections gained through the study. The analysis contained in Chapter 5 will include the implications for positive social change that the results revealed.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

In this study, the benefits or deficiencies regarding the shift of U.S. Security Strategy to include asymmetrical alternatives to countering terrorism as opposed to a conventional were examined. This study was conducted to determine whether an asymmetrical strategy could be an effective alternative to the continued use of conventional military action alone. The war in Afghanistan has continued for 16 years, making it the longest armed conflict in the history of the United States (Taylor, 2015). "The Costs of War," a project of Brown University's Watson Institute, reports that, in total, over 149,000 people have died in the conflict since the 2001 invasion (Taylor, 2015). The report includes the deaths of American and Coalition forces to include civilian contractors and the Afghanistan government forces as well as the 26,270 Afghan civilian deaths and the 21,500 Pakistani civilian deaths (Taylor, 2015). According to a separate report to Congress, the financial cost of the conflict was estimated, in 2015, to be approximately $668 billion in Afghanistan alone (Congressional Research Service). These figures alone make the cost of the war in Afghanistan in blood and money staggering. By examining the potential benefits of asymmetric alternative, it may be possible to achieve not only a decrease in financial cost, but also, more importantly, a reduction in the human cost of the war, with the possibility of a victory in the War on Terror.

Restatement of the Problem

As the U.S. war on terror has continued since 2001, the strategy developed for national security should result in the elimination of terrorist groups and stability within conflict zones such as Afghanistan. With this strategy of using conventional force to eliminate terrorist groups and achieving stability in Afghanistan, it can be reasonably expected that terrorist attacks will be reduced and the need for American interaction in Afghanistan will be diminished. There are successes in the American-Afghanistan conflict, such as the institution of a democratic government system as opposed to the totalitarian rule of Taliban (Cordesman, 2015). However, Afghanistan continues to experience insurgent attacks from both Al Qaeda and Taliban forces as well as the growth of the Haqqani Network into a regional terrorist force. Thus, it could be argued that the Afghan War, at best, is still raging and, at worse, is a defeat for American strategy and power (Cordesman, 2015)

Summary of the Study

In Chapter 1, the theoretical framework for the study was introduced through an explanation of asymmetric strategy as opposed to a conventional warfare strategy, which employs traditional military methods to defeat the threat of terrorism. This is a wide-ranging subject so within this chapter, the explanation as to why Afghanistan was used as the field of research was investigated. Also included in Chapter 1 were the research questions, the method of research employed, and the implications for positive social change that guided this project.

In Chapter 2, a comprehensive analysis of existing literature related to the war on terrorism, the American strategy results of Afghanistan conflict, and the examination of asymmetric strategy as opposed to conventional approaches were provided. The direct relationship of the aforementioned to the involvement of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, the results of 16 years of war, and the status of the terrorist originations that the strategy was supposed to defeat were examined. The literature review consisted of an examination of journal articles, texts, and reports on the Afghanistan conflict, combatting terrorism, and developing post-Cold War strategy for a post-Cold War environment. This analysis also included how terrorist organizations recruit members and what the primary motivations of individuals are in becoming terrorists. Much of this discussion was informed by the asymmetric warfare theory (Arreguin-Toft, 2012) and how it relates to the motivation for a terrorist organization to wage war on a global power.

In Chapter 3, an explanation of the foundation of the research design for the study that included how the data were collected was presented. The study was conducted using a qualitative methodology with a narrative inquiry approach. The narrative inquiry was preceded by an in-depth analysis of documents that specifically dealt with strategies to include the policies and programs for that strategy in Afghanistan. These were examinations, testimonies, and policy statements of government agencies and nongovernmental organizations. The narrative inquiry design is based on gaining life experiences from participants that experienced the subject of research (Creswell, 2013). For this research study, interviews were conducted with persons who lived in Afghanistan and experienced first-hand the American policies and programs that the

National Security Strategy for Afghanistan caused. The participant pool was evenly divided into one group of educated Afghans that experienced the American strategy and a second group that was made up of an equal number of American Special Forces soldiers that conducted numerous tours of duty working alongside Afghans in implementing the national strategy. To provide a stakeholders' point of view, a document analysis coded within the protocols established by Walden University IRB was used.

The results of data collection were discussed in Chapter 4. This chapter included an explanation of the three levels of coding that applied to the interview transcripts as well as the documents. In Chapter 4, the results of the narrative inquiry that consisted of analysis of several policy documents and interviews conducted with the participants were further addressed.

Interpretation of the Findings

The research question developed to guide this study was: How does the American strategic perceptions of an asymmetric adversary in Afghanistan affect the conflict outcome and are the Afghan public perceptions of the outcomes of the strategy a positive or negative influence towards supporting a strong, stabilized democratic country free from terrorist influence? This research question addressed the question of whether there were positive results from this approach and whether these measurements provided the means to eliminate or reduce the potential effects of terrorism in general. The collection of data in the study yielded information that indicated that, at a minimum, a consistent asymmetric approach is a possible solution to stabilizing Afghanistan in order stop terrorism in the region. The results of this study demonstrate, also, that further research

should be conducted concerning actual programs enacted and measuring their success against the national strategy to prevent terrorism. In the literature review in Chapter 2, key documents related to strategy policies of the American government to include the military and nongovernmental agencies were provided. This analysis revealed that it was, and continues to be, the intention of the U.S. government to pursue a single strategic approach to eliminating or reducing the terrorist threat in Afghanistan. However, through the narrative inquiry, it was found that, while it may be the intention of the existing policy to provide a successful strategic approach for a stable Afghanistan, this is not what is occurring. This finding will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

The first stage of data collection resulted in the largest number of codes, in either an AC theme or a CC theme. The examined documents showed that the organizations engaged in the Afghanistan conflict have a strategic policy that intends on using nonmilitary approaches to build a safe and secure Afghanistan. In the literature review portion of the study, the history of the Afghanistan conflict as well as the interaction between the American Coalition; Afghans; and the adversaries to include the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and Haqqani Network were examined. Those examinations also provided indications that because of the unique nature of the background of the conflict, this particular situation dictates an approach that is different from a conventional military-centric approach.

The focus of the strategic approach to eliminating the threat of attacks from within Afghanistan is noble and apparently the intention of the American and Coalition forces. However, the responses in the participants' interviews contrasted that intention

with specific testimonials regarding the continued conventional military action. The most obvious outcome of this portion of the research study was that while the intention was to provide a more military-centric approach, the Afghan citizens are not interpreting the continued presence of American or Coalition troops as an approach to helping them. It can be explained that the respondents felt that the military conventional-centric approaches continued with little regard to the AC approach. Again, it must be noted that this is simply the viewpoint of a small group of Afghans (now living abroad) as a comparison to the indications made by the document analysis. This is certainly a limitation, but the participants' contribution proved to be valuable within the overall context of the study.

While the study was a qualitative study that involved dissemination of information from multiple sources, there should be little question as to the intention of the documents. The data was derived from the participant group interviews and included stakeholder documents that led to 166 codes applied to the AC approach over 44 codes applied to the CC approach. Each of the codes was based on the words and phrases contained in the testimonies and documents resulting from the application of using Nvivo software for data analysis.

The most notable statements evaluated came from AMG of participants. It might be assumed that those in AMG would have a more CC approach to any type of conflict; however, as discussed in Chapter 4, the AMG participants testified that an AC approach formed around providing basic human needs is the intention of the United States in

Afghanistan. However, the respondent interviews indicated that although there may be an intention to use an AC approach, the reality is that this method is not being followed.

Further examination and coding of testimonies as well as documents from nonmilitary government agencies further indicated that the strategy of employing conventional forces using or indicating the use of violent actions through a CC strategy provoked those who suffer from it. The results indicated that a CC approach that relies on direct violent response to terrorism would continue to incite the population toward supporting the adversary and away from establishing a stable Afghanistan. In the results of this study along with testimonies and documents that make up the basis of the research, the psychological influences of human beings were not observed. The data suggested that the more aggressive the counterterrorism activities are, the greater the potential grows for recruiting more terrorists. The participant interviews indicated that the philosophy of revenge is a reality and that the continued "eye for an eye" view on the part of Al Qaeda and Taliban insurgents is based on the continued actions of the United States and the Coalition forces.

Limitations of the Study

The narrative inquiry interview was in stark contrast to the conclusions drawn from the document analysis. It should be noted that one limitation of the narrative inquiry was that a small group of Afghans and Americans were interviewed – and that they are all men. The participants shared personal experiences with the American policies in Afghanistan, so the overall impact was not revealed. This limitation is addressed further in the recommendations section of this chapter. While the participants

do mention the incorporation of women into Afghan policy, the limitation does not allow for generalization of information.

The Afghan group participants experienced life in Afghanistan from the Soviet occupation through the civil war, and Taliban takeover as well as their involvement of American and Coalition forces beginning in 2001. The information they imparted included the influence of the recent Afghan history and how terrorism has brought the country to the world stage of events. The American Group provided in-depth knowledge of American and Afghan relationship in defeating terrorism. Both groups report that the asymmetric method of strategy that had the most influence was the provision of education and the exchange of information.

Several comments made by the Afghan participants were related to young Afghans that are recruited for terrorist activities within Afghanistan. These can be examined in the perceptions of the people based on their age and influences. One notable statement within the narrative interview was the perception of the Soviet occupation during the AFG1 participant's elementary school days. His only remembrance and perception of the Soviet troops in their tanks were giving him candy on his way to school. His statement also included that the adult perception of the Soviet occupation is probably very different. This is monumental to the point of discussing recruiting young people into violent activities against certain targets. Based on Arreguin-Toft's (2012) discussed in Chapter two, this particular perception could very well be one of the asymmetric activities employed by terrorist organizations. Consequently, one conclusion made in this situation was that perception could be enormously consequential on decision-making

processes regarding future strategy. As mentioned in Chapter one, a force using conventional based strategy will make the recruitment easier for terrorist organizations using an asymmetric method such as education and mentorship of the young.

Participant AFG1 relayed on American strategy of building Afghanistan into a democratic country with self-rule on the implications of education and other essential security, stability, and growth provisions for humans. This is supported by the testimony of AFG4 on his travels throughout Afghanistan; the participant also communicated how his family endeavors that included educational opportunities for his extended family and friends to build a stronger and independent family.

The research question asked if the asymmetric centric approach would be a more viable alternative to the prevention of terrorism. This is about the evidence provided in Chapter four, which refers to both the Afghan and American participant groups reference to the Taliban becoming stronger after it was almost eliminated in the early stages of the conflict. The Taliban growing in strength is the critical indicator that a conventional centric strategy is failing. The continued references to the perception of heavy handiness by military forces and the "eye for an eye" mentality reinforces that simple force only incites anger and, ultimately, continued attacks in a vengeful atmosphere. A limitation of this study is the evidence that shows that human nature takes precedence over any other influence. The participants from both groups noted, in many different places in the data acquisition process, that there are definite thought processes for humans in an area that is rife with terrorism. One of the most notable quotes the given was from participant AFG1regarding the perception of the Afghan people on the American strategy: "I'll

answer the question on the success of American strategy and that is you are not winning the war in Afghanistan. Why is Afghanistan not improving? Why aren't you winning the war? This is the question to ask." This statement could be interpreted to mean that the perception of the Afghans is that the United States and Coalition forces have little to no thought about the actual strategy for Afghanistan and its citizens. As determined by the literature review and data collection, the impact of personal perception is vital in asymmetric war. The asymmetric adversary requires that the population be it a regional, national or global based on believes that they are winning the conflict they engaged in. For Al Qaeda and the Taliban, it is making the Afghans, and the various tribes, clans and ethnic groups believe that they are defeating the Americans. A strategy that addresses this perception would be required to for America and the Coalition forces to win. If American is to win than a reexamination of the strategies should occur. This includes, not only looking at the national strategy, but also taking action that will adequately protect the American people and reveal a more cost-effective and permanent solution than simply entering a sovereign nation with conventional military force. After 15 years of war, there must be some movement toward a solution that does not Afghan and American lives. A limitation of this research is while the data analysis disclosed that there should be an alternative, the actual activities taken have shown something different. This is not only evident in the literature review, but also in the contrasts made through the narrative inquiry.

The participant interviews demonstrate that it is the perception that many Afghans, as well as Americans that have served in Afghanistan, that the U.S. is only an

occupying force, not a force of peaceful reform. As presented in Chapter two this is the goal of the asymmetric adversary, and it appears they are winning, based on the perceptions of a small group narrative. There is an indication that positives could come from this shift in strategy for the U.S., though the findings are inconclusive. This is based on several factors. First, the study itself had limitations in the area of participants. Since only 10 participants were willing to participate, the narrative inquiry portion of the study only has the experiences of these ten people.

Recommendations

There are many different possible strategies, policies, and programs that the United States could employ in Afghanistan. With the reduction to less than 10,000 combat troops that has taken place since 2014 (and now the possibility of a new strategy requiring more troops and funding the strategy to be used in moving forward) are critical for the success of the Afghanistan. Based on this research, the policy of the U.S. government is already dominated with statements that an asymmetric centric strategy was the intention for operations in Afghanistan. Nonetheless, the determining factor is the type of forces and the amount of funding committed to the region demonstrate that for the largest part of the conflict conventional military action was the policy, which is primarily geared towards seeking out the enemy. This is correspondingly supported by the contrasting viewpoints from the participants' narrative. It would be credulous to state that in the security condition created by the 9/11 attacks with the defeat of terrorist organizations could be solved with a 100% certainty by the use of an asymmetric strategy. However, the research has shown some indication of the possibility of using a

greater emphasis on asymmetric strategy that employs a unified objective, such as employing education as an instrument in the war on terrorism. Therefore, from a national strategy standpoint, further examination on the use of agencies such as USAID and non-governmental agencies and the provision of all aspects of benevolent aid in these conflicts must occur in the future. This change in strategy does not directly address amending the direction of terrorist organizations, but as revealed in the research may have an effect on the recruitment of future terrorists. A significant statement from participant AFG5 considered relying on the use of force in defeating the Taliban. The participant stated, "What was the strategy to eliminate the Taliban... just kill them all. If the strategy was to kill the Taliban then why is there more Taliban? What has been accomplished in the last 15 years? A Stronger Taliban now than before." The deduction taken from this statement is that relying on a conventional based strategy increases the violence that, in turn, makes the Taliban stronger by recruiting newer members to carry forward. The influence of long-term programs such as education and other humanitarian interventions could instill a more robust sense of self-worth that should reduce the opportunities for further recruitment. The participant did state that continued humanitarian endeavors require a strategy committed to long-term programs that include but not limited to providing humanitarian approaches can influence change.

An additional recommendation for future study lies in the examination of incorporating women, both Afghan and American, into the strategy which includes operations, education, training and what impacts to success that may exist. The narrative inquiry used only the general information about strategy in Afghanistan. The

examination of experiences through the experiences of women who have either received ether impact of the strategy or implemented strategy may provide significant insights into the potential impacts of using symmetric actions as a strategy for the future. This could entail a physical presence in the country to conduct the interviews. This recommendation along with an examination of psychological influences of potential terrorists could reveal more in-depth data.

Another strong recommendation from the study is further research that delves deeper into of what an asymmetric strategy would consist. Research that delves deeper into the topic employing both qualitative and quantitative methods may reveal further advantages to the use of asymmetric strategy as a means to succeed in conflicts of this type. This study reveals some of the perceptions of current strategy and the potential solutions of the use of an asymmetric strategy to counter terrorism. Participant AFG1 made what may be one of the most insightful comments: "When the Russians came you helped those that would fight them, America was there and all the fighters knew it but not one of your Marines was in Afghanistan. We, America and Afghanistan won that conflict, now the entire American might is here and we are losing." This statement resounded in his observation of the past when the United States used an asymmetric strategy in the Soviet conflict as to the present strategy of direct confrontation and wondering what the future will be for his homeland as America begins a new chapter in the fight for Afghanistan.

As previously stated, this study does not provide all of the answers, only answers to the research question. Future studies should contain examinations into both the

emotional or psychological motivations of terrorist organization recruits, as well as deeper strategy analyses about what specific strategy, policies, and procedures could be used in the future.

Further recommendations are based on the narrative inquiry interviews. Near the end of the each interview, each participant was asked what their recommendation would be to the United States concerning winning the war against the Taliban and other terrorist-supporting organizations in Afghanistan. The recommendations were surprisingly quite simple. The participants stated the same sentiment in their own ways, but their perspective could be summed up by participant AFG5's response: "the list of things America could do would belong. But the one true thing to do is to be realistic. There are too many things that cannot be changed, nor would they have to be changed…bringing democracy, which was a goal in the early days, was only measured by elections. Having elections does not guarantee a democracy. More importantly, an election may not provide the leadership needed to win against the Taliban." Participant AMG5 made the most defining statement when he said: "Before democracy will flourish Afghanistan needs a strong leader that ensure the people are prepared for it. If not the people will not support democracy. You can't just expect it to work if you haven't done any of the groundwork for it."

A further discussion point was centered on defeating the Taliban. All the participants have fought the Taliban for the entirety of the conflict and the comment each made in one way or another is: "America hasn't defeated the Taliban in 15 years of war." When asked whether can the Taliban be defeated, the response from the American group

was "it was almost was defeated in 2002 and 2003." This discussion implied that the participants believe their defeat is possible – with an irregular approach. "A military presence will be needed initially, but the Taliban (like any other terrorist/insurgent group) is very fluid. It is not like Al Qaeda in that they are not outsiders, so they are not easy to identify whom the Taliban are and who they are not.... To defeat you have been to work on people's attitude that they are losers which deter people from joining their ranks." The key to the statement was summed up by the participant AFG5 when he said: "After America pulls out of Afghanistan the people will see the Taliban as the victor with the power and they will be more likely to support them. The keyword used was that it was 'survival.'"

With the withdrawal of American and Coalition forces that began in 2014, there is the possibility that the Afghan people believe that Afghan government may provide strength and stability for the Afghanistan. Both of the participant groups believe this is one of the main reasons that Afghans do not speak out against the Taliban. The perception of the participants is, again, only a small group's perspective. However, if this is truly the perception of Afghans after 15 years of conflict, then the study indicates a failure in understanding the type of conflict that Afghanistan has evolved into has occurred. If the Kabul government collapses and the Taliban regain control, it is probable that they will again provide a safe haven for terrorist organizations. If this happens, then, the entire Afghan experiment would have failed with not only a major waste of lives, funding, and resources, but a significant setback in the Global War on

Terrorism. Therefore, the asymmetric strategy approach should be examined more thoroughly as recommended.

Implications for Positive Social Change

This project is based on the events begun on September 11, 2001. America, the victor of the Cold War now faces an adversary that disregards the need to match the symmetry in power against the United States. Instead, this new enemy challenges the country to an asymmetric conflict that exploits the unbalance in power as a source to waging war and succeeds in obtaining its strategic goals. The United States reacted by employing its vast resources of military, intelligence, economic, and diplomatic capabilities to overwhelm the enemy in the same fashion that it won the Cold War: by using energy, resources, and size to develop and implement a counter terrorism strategy based on preventing terrorist attacks by overwhelming the enemy (Savun & Phillips, 2009).

The question is, how does the American counter terrorism strategy of preventing a terrorist attack relate to defeating an asymmetrical foe? In searching for an answer, this study has reviewed numerous findings on the impact of foreign policy to include military actions as it relates to terrorism. Yet, few studies address the structure of the strategy in defeating the asymmetrical threat. This is compounded by the additional question, after 16 years of using the American conventional might in military, political, and judicial capabilities whether American dominance in conventional warfare is linked to an increase in terrorist activities against the American interest and instability in the region in which so much blood and treasure has been spent (Sobek & Brathwauite, 2005). The

implications for social change are in the methodologies that American leadership employs to develop the strategies of national security as it relates to terrorism. This study reveals the impact of asymmetric war as it is practiced against the United States, with the core of the study examining the asymmetries of the will of one opponent over another. Thus, social change is altering the way we look at the War on Terror – as not a war on a terrorist organization, but a conflict of wills in which an opponent believes he or she is fighting for a vital interest, such as survival, and will use all avenues of human interaction as means to achieve their goals (Khouri, 2008).

The first and most obvious observation is that an asymmetric strategy that not only counters but defeats an asymmetric enemy would have positive effects on the amount money and blood spent in any action of this type. The document analysis indicates that the intention of the current strategy is to provide security, stabilization, and economic growth. This was made apparent in the majority of the documents discussed in the Chapter two, as well as the primary motivation for the narrative inquiry. To instigate positive social change, the objectives must be made a reality. While the American leadership forms strategy based on America's need for security through the intended strategy to build security, stability and economic growth for Afghanistan, the actions resulting from this strategy are not being perceived as such by the Afghans or the Americans implementing the strategy. A shift in creating an asymmetric strategy that is directly reflected by the attitudes and perceptions of the Afghans and the people that implement the strategy into a reality will be necessary. An asymmetric centric approach to a global counterterrorism strategy using Afghanistan as the initial test of the strategy

could save not only lives, but also become a concrete approach to solving similar conflicts in the future. However, the data in this study alone does not support this opinion. The strongest implication this study has on positive social change is that, while the U.S. strategy provides a semblance of social change, these objectives must be made into a reality of winning the war by the United States affecting positive social change in the country of Afghanistan.

Conclusion

This research study was an analysis of data covering one part of a larger problem. The research questions centered on discovering the answer to one portion of an asymmetric conflict and that is: what is the perception that the Afghans and Americans who fight the war have about the American strategy to win it? The research indicates that there are many positive ways to provide an asymmetric strategy by providing basic assistance to the people of Afghanistan. The employment of conventional military forces in the role of counterterrorism/counterinsurgency has proven to be less successful in previous involvement by the U.S. in an effort to protect itself. As presented in Chapter two, involvement in asymmetrical conflicts such as Vietnam and (more recently) in Somalia by U.S. conventional forces ended in less than favorable conditions. Yet, the intentions of the United States are not the reality that the Afghan people perceive – nor is it the reality that is perceived by Americans on the ground in Afghanistan. While some headway has been made in basic humanitarian aid, the focus has still remained on the conventional military intervention. As the years progress after the withdrawal of American and Coalition forces, the world will see exactly how the internal workings of

the country will progress. Based on the results of the analysis presented, this could possibly mean either Afghanistan will follow a democratic government model or revert to the Taliban rule of religious-based tyranny way. Should control revert back to the Taliban, the actions of the past 15 years will have been wasted.

This research demonstrates that, when facing asymmetrical adversaries, the United States need not seek a conventional military solution to conduct counterterrorism activities, but must instead recognize that an asymmetrical war is a war of will power, not firepower. The results of the data from this study support what Kristensen (2009) observes in that the United States and other nations will need to get past the reliance on the military sweeping the field of battle of its foes through fire power and technology and find a way to work out the different methods in responding to the long war that asymmetrical conflict represents. Scholars in the field have demonstrated that an asymmetric battleground is very fluid and the best way to prepare for this is by allowing everyone (soldiers, diplomats, and especially the target population) to be as dynamic as they need to be in order to win (Morris, 2003). Part of having an asymmetric strategy would include such things as being able to quickly respond and enact changes without the need for a long and disenfranchised chain of command approval. By having the mind of someone considered to be free thinkers, and then being able to think outside the box, the asymetric conflict theory could be applied in rapid and successful fashion. One such example might be that, instead of a instilling democracy, maybe reestasblishing a democratic monarchy would provide a solution for a working government (Morris, 2003).

There are many lessons that can be learned from the last 16 years of American involvement in Afghanistan. The greatest lesson that should be learned is that when conventional military actions involve a civilian population, all that is remembered is that there was death and destruction. As a global leader, as well as a sovereign nation, the United States of America should take the lead in setting an example in protecting, not only itself, but all those who oppose tyranny. A large part of this example is finding a more permanent solution than simply committing to conventional military action.

A larger portion of this issue lies within the inconclusive results of this study. The fact that the United States has expressed its intentions of providing humanitarian support and has spent billions on aid, it has not followed through in a productive manner. For the United States to effect a permanent solution, not only for itself, but also for its global partners, protection from asymmetrical adversaries such as terrorist organizations will have to be properly perceived by persons around the globe. The fact that the Afghanistan War has become the longest war in American history demonstrates that the intention may be present, but actions are not accomplishing the strategic goal. At a minimum, the employment of an asymmetric strategy to counter an asymmetric adversary is an approach that should be researched further and examined for its positive implications.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol and Interview Questions

A key standard for qualitative data analysis and collection is the research discovering that everything observed, either deliberately or accidently, is potential data. The qualitative researcher would not restrict the scope of data collection in an inflexible manner, such as enforcing formal rules that decide which data is irrelevant without first reviewing what the data is. With this in mind, this scholar will discover the frustration in collecting, organizing and analyzing data can create the complications of determining validity as well as having data overload. The problem of data overload is in some ways more intractable. The evaluator must continually make decisions about what data are relevant and may change these decisions over the course of the project. The evaluator must work to focus the data collection process so that data is recovered, catalogued and coded and if necessary retrievable as the analysis takes place (Creswell, 2013).

This narrative inquiry is designed to examine the life experiences regarding their perspectives of and experiences with the American national security strategy as a viewed through the analysis of individual's story that is a foundation of the larger influences created by counter-terrorism national strategy as it pertains to Afghanistan. The research will focus on two groups of participants, the Afghan nationals that worked with US Government personnel and the former US Government personnel that implemented American strategy in Afghanistan. The manner for interviews will be in person and when the participants are separated by great distance in which personal interviews are not

practical that the interview will be via Skype on a secured internet connection. This environment and approach will allow the inquiry participant to be in his or her own comfortable setting and deliver all interview answers via Skype. The participants are identified from a field gathered personal experience with US Army Special Forces and the Afghanistan citizens while serving in Afghanistan.

The questions are meant to elicit a story of the participant's complete life experiences. This includes any life experiences prior to the intervention of the United States following the September 11, 2001 attacks and experiences after U.S. intervention with the policies and programs created to support the national strategy. These will cover the years between 2001 and 2016. Specific follow up questions such as "how did this influence your perceptions" or "how did this make you feel" may be added to each area. The data collection is a narrative inquiry and this will entail gathering many details concerning the life influences of the participant.

No video will be recorded. However, two digital audio recorders will be used during each interview session to assure that each interview is securely attained. It is planned that no more than three interview sessions will be needed and each interview session will not exceed 45 minutes but more interviews may be needed pending on the data recorded and analyzed. As a means of supporting the data collection and analyses extensive field notes will be taken by the researcher to sync discussion points and add an observation element. The field notes will contain observations made by the researcher in regard to body language, facial expressions, or a change in the tone of voice.

The participant consent process will include a signed consent, with a full description of the study. All participant consent request will be read to the participant prior to each session in order to provide a clear understanding of the purpose and structure of the session. The participant will also be given the opportunity to read the main interview questions as well. This includes a reassurance that the identity will be kept confidential and all research data will remain secure.

Proposed Interview Questions

The following questions will be used to guide the semi-structured interviews of the participants:

1. What are your experiences with the American involvement in removing the Taliban and establishing the current Afghanistan government? (Affective)
2. What is your current attitude towards American involvement in Afghanistan? (Conative)
3. Do the American policies in security and stability program help you with your standard of living? (Cognitive, Affective, Conative)
4. How do you think factors in American policies and programs from 2002 to present encourage you to support similar programs? (Cognitive)
5. What are your perceptions with regard to the American policies and programs countering the Taliban insurgency and defeating terrorist like Al Qaida? (Cognitive)
6. Do you feel like the policies and program helps you alleviate your problems in terms of long-term security and stability? (Affective)

7. Do you think that the application of the policies and program is fair and just to all Afghans in the rural as well as the urban areas of Afghanistan? (Cognitive)
8. Do you think that American policies and programs can help in attaining and independent safe and security Afghanistan free of controlling terrorism, criminal and radical organizations that use terror and violence as means to maintain control over the population? (Cognitive)
9. What elements are still lacking in the American strategy to make Afghanistan a safe and secure independent state? (Cognitive)
10. Why do you think that American strategy to include the policies and programs that it created is successful in making Afghanistan safe and secure? (Cognitive)

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate
Telephone Script

Hello, my name is Bob Hayworth, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University.

Do you have a few minutes to talk?

I will be conducting a study to examine the strategy that has been developed and employed by the United States to counter terrorism and utilized during the conflict in Afghanistan. The core to the research is determining what approaches can a strategic policy of employing conventional military forces in effects-based operations increase the effectiveness of military operations against an asymmetric adversary? Basically, how can using a strategy based on employing a modified Cold War organized and trained conventional force defeat a foe that adapts to challenging the nation's will within all environments that touch society.

I would like to invite you to participate in my study. Your involvement will be limited to a 60 minute or less virtual videoconference and providing available documents for my review. Confidentiality will be assured, and since your participation is voluntary, you can discontinue your involvement in the study at any time.

If you are willing to participate, I would like to email a consent form for your review that delineates more information on the study to include some sample questions. From what I have outlined, do you have an interest in participating?

Appendix C: Coding Tree

Conventional-Centric	Asymmetric-Centric

Security CC-1	Growth CC-2	Stability CC-3	Security AC-1	Growth AC-2	Stability AC-3

US Security CC-1a	Rule of Law CC-2a	Regional Stability CC-3a	US Security AC-1a	Rule of Law AC-2a	Regional Stability AC-3a

Afghan Domestic Security CC-1b	Personal Security CC-2b	Local Stability CC-3b	Afghan Security AC-1b	Personal Security AC-2b	Local Stability AC-3b

Due to the nature of the study, a use of codes that are similar is necessary. In order to answer the research question regarding strategy that creates actions that could have influences on terrorism through conventional-centric (military interventions) using applied violence (direct actions) to remove the Taliban or asymmetric-centric through building and assisting the citizens of the region (humanitarian, business develop, and special ops interventions), it is necessary to have the codes that are different, yet share attributes for these areas. There are a limited number of codes secondary to the specific target of the study. More codes are not necessary to answer the research question. These are specific for the research question and will address the general nature of the research questions