

# ***BETWEEN TWO MILLSTONES***

## ***THE BATTLE OF POPULAR MOBILIZATION IN COUNTERINSURGENCY WARFARE***

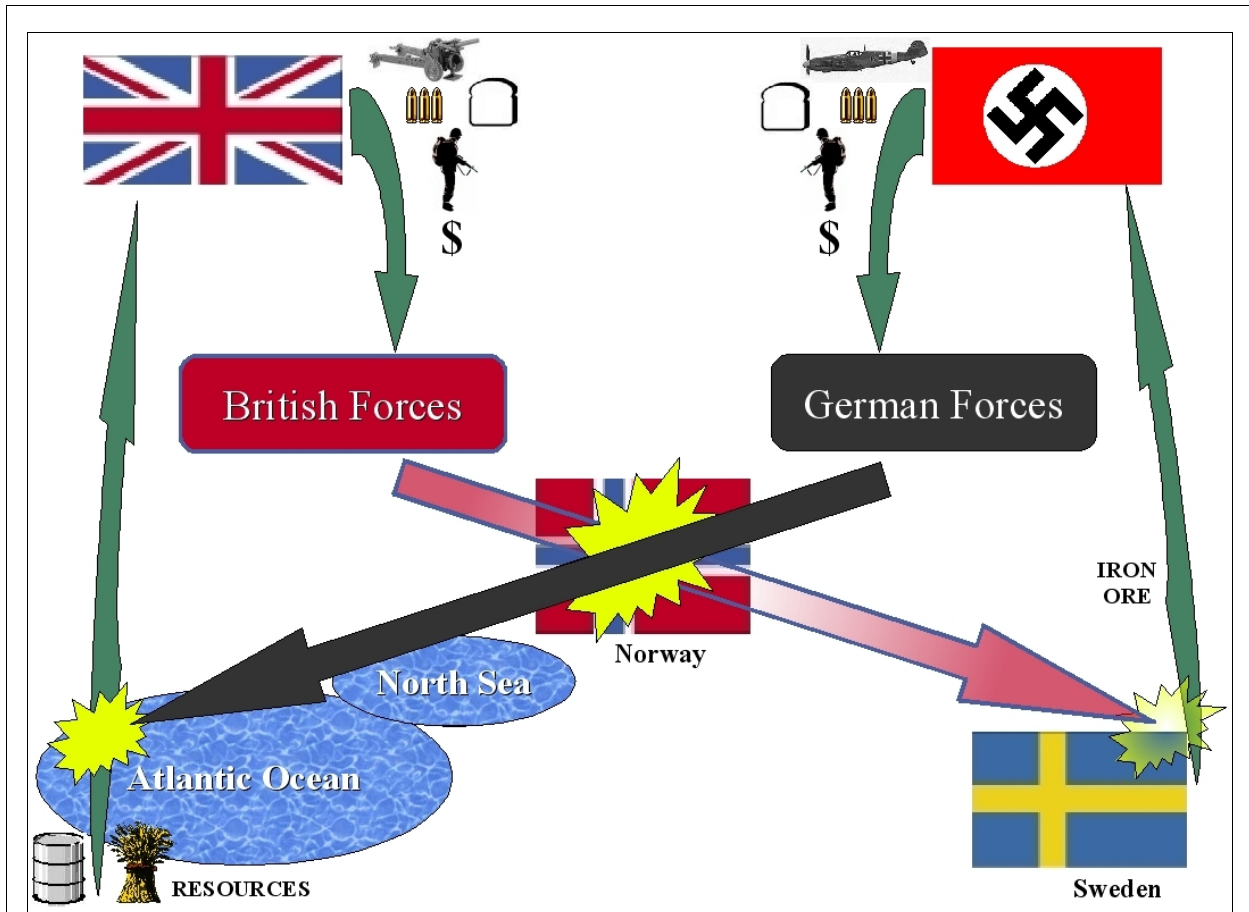
At the outset of the twentieth century, Canadian soldiers participated in a major counterinsurgency effort in South Africa,<sup>1</sup> known as the Boer War. Then the first half of the century was occupied with fighting the Germans on the fields of France, the waves of the Atlantic, and the skies of Europe. The midpoint found Canadians battling Communists in Korea, and the second half of the century was occupied with preparing to battle the Russians until the end of the world- the end of the world being a distinctly possible outcome from such a conflict. At the close of the century, the prospect of being a belligerent in a major war looked very remote, and peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention missions became prominent. At the outset of the next century, Canadians soldiers again find themselves participating in a counterinsurgency war, this time in Afghanistan.

What does the course of the twenty-first century hold for the Canadian military? Whether or not it will be dominated by counterinsurgency challenges, or include a stern dose of other challenges like the past century, God only knows. At this early stage in the century, at least, counterinsurgency is the style of warfare that Canada must master. Part of the challenge for Canadians is that counterinsurgency (COIN) is, to our minds, not the normal kind of war. Our conception of normal warfare is embodied in the experience of the two world wars we fought against the Germans, and we call this style of warfare conventional. The war that we prepared to fight against the Russians would have been called conventional if it was likewise typified by armies fighting on battlefields, but not if its most salient feature was a massive exchange of thermonuclear salvos. That would be the Armageddon style<sup>2</sup>, which thankfully the world has never yet seen demonstrated. The essence of the conflict in COIN warfare is also quite different from our conventional conception of warfare, and therefore enigmatic to us. One particular aspect which is quite different between the two is popular mobilization, or force generation. In a conventional conflict, force generation is far removed from the battlefield. In an insurgency

conflict, popular mobilization is the heart of the battle, a reality which makes the population feel itself to be caught between two millstones.

## CONVENTIONAL WARFARE

In what we call a conventional conflict, each belligerent has exclusive access to its primary pool of manpower, revenue and resources. For a concrete example, consider the Second World War, and in particular the British-German contest for Scandinavia. In April 1940 both belligerents prepared invasion forces.<sup>3</sup> Britain's aim was to cut off German industry from Swedish iron ore and the German navy from Britain's Atlantic supply lines, while Germany's aim was to ensure its continued access to both. Germany was quicker off the mark and won the campaign (9 April- 8 June). Now to tell the tale from the British or the German side, a historian would be expected to trace the decision making process in the German and British political and military commands, and the movements and combat engagements of the troops, planes and ships on the map. But it would seem oddly out of place to us if the account included detailed coverage of recruitment campaigns and war-bond fund raising in Britain or Germany. We expect these topics to be covered separately under a theme like "War on the Home Front." This would be a book unto itself or else a distinct chapter or volume within a book or series covering the Second World War as a whole.



*"CONVENTIONAL" WARFARE: Conflict Diagram For Scandinavian Campaign, April 1940*

*Flags represent homelands, including their governments and populations.*

*Green arrows represent lines of supply and force generation.*

*The British plan to conquer Sweden through Norway (red arrow) was thwarted by the German conquest of Norway (black arrow).*

*(See bibliography for image copyright details)*

During the campaign in this example, British force generation was proceeding within the confines of the British Isles and overseas territories, German force generation was proceeding within the confines of greater Germany, and the actual combat was occurring by sea, by land and by air in the North Sea and Norwegian fjords and mountains. Of all the war assets that were made or at least stocked within the borders of Germany- manpower, equipment, weaponry, ammunition, food, finance and fuel- none of these could be tapped by the British. They were exclusively at Germany's disposal. The same was true of assets within the British Isles and Empire- none of these things could be tapped by the Germans. While the extent to which the British forces would benefit from these assets was dependent on proficiency in mustering and

directing the nation's will to work and sacrifice for the cause, there was no danger of these assets feeding the German war machine instead. The people were loyal to the British crown, and they carried every other asset in tow with them. German bombing could diminish the intact quantity available to the British, but never make any of them available to the Germans. Out on the sea lanes, Germany could sink and even sometimes capture assets inbound from the empire to Britain, or outbound to the British forces deployed in Norway. (Consequently, the combat at sea also attracts attention, as a naval form of conventional warfare). Yet as long as the assets were ashore in British territory, Germany had no hope of gaining them for itself.

This scenario is normal in what we call conventional warfare. Whatever assets are within the perimeters of one belligerent's territory are denied to the other. The story of a typical conventional war is the story of each nation striving to extend its territorial perimeters by driving back those of its opponent, destroying or seizing their assets in the process. Within the territorial perimeter of each belligerent, the population and the assets thereof can be harnessed only for the exclusive use of that nation. During the Second World War, there was no contest over whether the city of Birmingham would field battalions for His Majesty the King or for the Fuhrer.<sup>4</sup> There was no campaign fought over whether the savings of the British people would be invested in His Majesty's Royal Air Force or in Hitler's Luftwaffe.

## INSURGENCY WARFARE

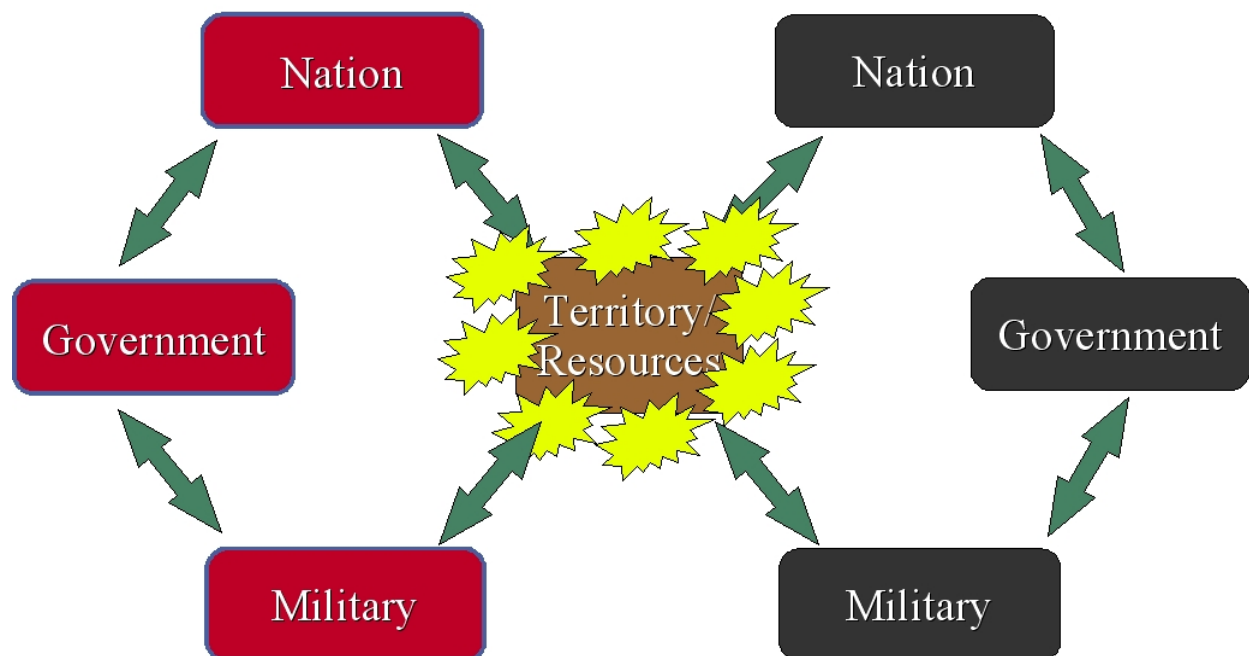
The case in insurgency warfare is very different from this. As concrete example of this, the Malayan Emergency of 1948-1960 is represented in the conflict diagram below. In this insurgency, Communist guerrillas attempted to mobilize the population to overthrow the British colonial government. Government forces were able to effectively constrict foreign inputs to the guerrillas at the border. (A fairly conventional military task, and conducted under favourable circumstances). However, in this conflict, unlike a conventional one, the Communist insurgents were able to draw extensively on the population within the country. With initial success, they attempted to draw recruits, food and money from the population while denying them to the



Below are two simple schematic diagrams which depict this essential distinction between insurgency and “conventional” modes of conflict. In each case, a complete political entity is conceptualized as a realm with four elements- a **nation** inhabiting a **territory**, with a **government** ruling it and a **military** protecting it all. In a conventional conflict, two nations are competing over whose realm a given piece of territory will be included in. In the concrete example given earlier, the Germans and British fought over whose sphere of control Norway would be forcefully incorporated into. In the diagrams, the difference between the conventional and the insurgency conflict is that the latter has only one nation, not two. In a conventional conflict, the battles are fought over which nation will control the territory. In an insurgency conflict, the battles are fought over which government will control the nation (Malaya in the given example). The victor of this struggle wins control of the territory.

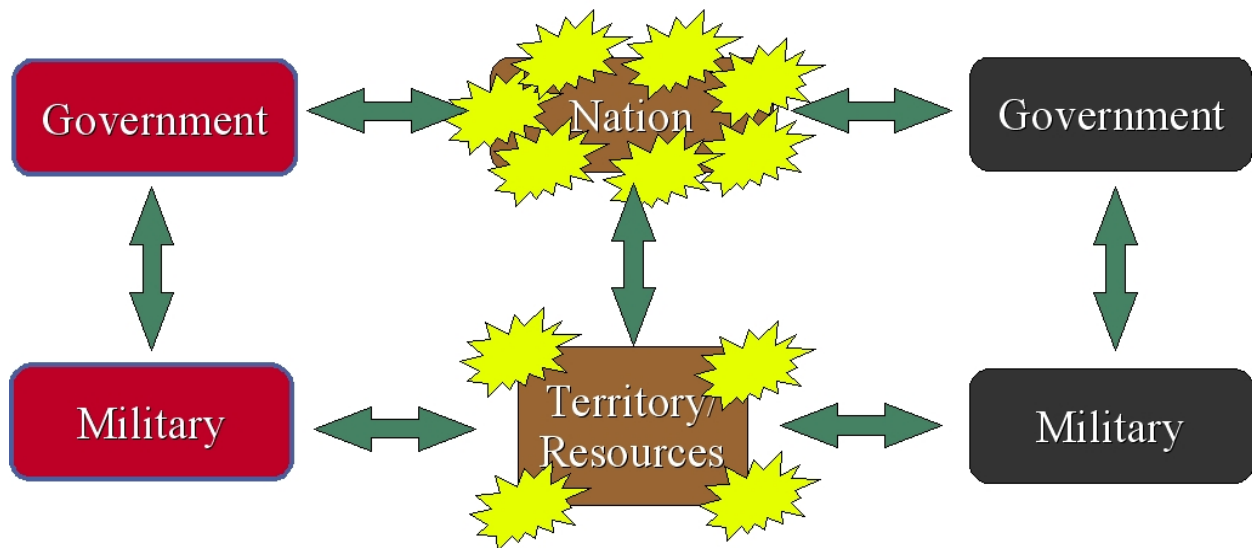
## “Conventional” Conflict:

Battles fought over which Nation will control the Territory



# Insurgency Conflict:

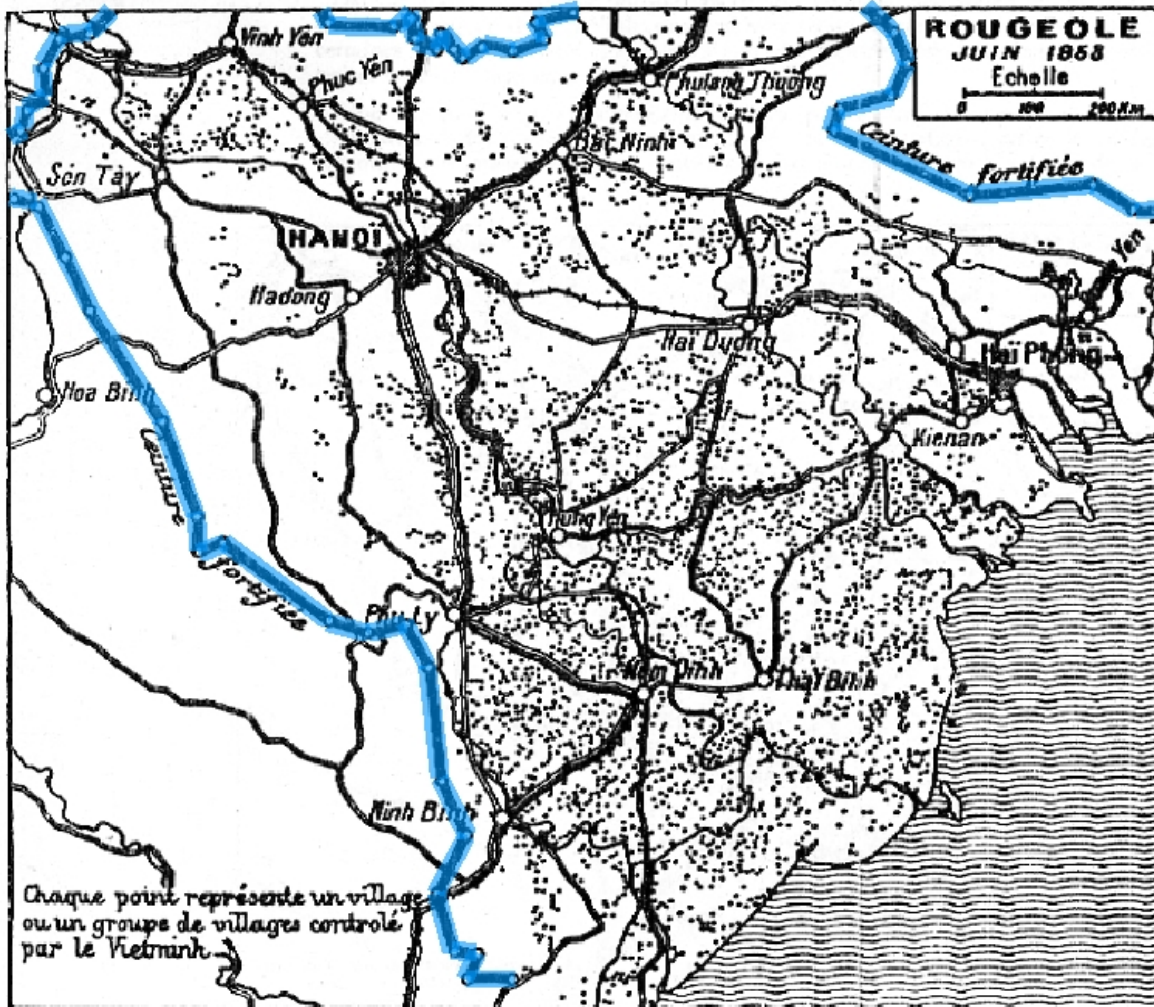
Battles fought over which Government will control the Nation  
Victor of this struggle wins control of Territory



## WINNING THE TERRITORY BUT LOSING THE NATION

Early in the Vietnam conflict, Bernard Fall observed that the Vietminh were very effectively gaining control of the population, while the French derived a false sense of security from their control of the territory. Arriving at the Red River Delta in June 1953, he asked the French briefing officer for a sit rep. In reply he was told, "Well, we hold pretty much of it; there is the French fortified line around the Delta which we call the "Marshal de Lattre Line"--about 2200 bunkers forming 900 forts. We are going to deny the communists access to the 8 million people in this Delta and the 3 million tons of rice it produces. We will eventually starve them out

and deny them access to the population.”<sup>6</sup> Fall observed that there were 8,000 villages within the perimeter of the defences, and on further inquiry the French acknowledged that the Communists had a few areas of control within the perimeter.



*Le delta du Tonkin (juin 1953)  
Tiré du livre de Henri Navarre  
« L'agonie de l'Indochine »*

*Map showing the Vietminh infiltration of the French defensive perimeter which Bernard Fall described.*

*Map source: La Marine Française en Indochine de 1939 à 1956, Tome V (Marine Nationale, Etat-Major de la Marine. Service Historique. 1992)*

However, when Fall queried students at the University of Hanoi, he got a very different

*Between Two Millstones  
Lawren M. Guldmond  
CDAI Conference 2006*

‘sit rep’: “They said that their home villages inside the Delta were communist-controlled and had communist village chiefs, and just about everybody else said the same thing: that both the French and the Vietnamese Army simply did not know what was going on.”<sup>7</sup> Fall confirmed their report by locating statistics on two basic measures of government control: he found that the bulk of the villages within the Delta were no longer paying taxes to the government, and the teaching posts at most government schools were vacant. Fall concluded that the Communists were asserting administrative control over 70 percent of the territory within the French battle lines, and therefore the official French map of the situation was “complete fiction and had absolutely no bearing on the *real* situation inside the Delta.”

Here then is one of the defining differences between a conventional invasion and an insurgency. In both cases the goal is to detach the population from the existing government structure and harness it to a new one. In a conventional attack, only as the opposing army is progressively driven out is the link severed between the people and the existing government. In an insurgency, the work of severing the people from the old government and connecting them to the rival one is conducted while the old army is still present.

“U.S. Field Manual (Interim) 3-07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, defines insurgency as [an] ‘organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict. It is a protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken government control and legitimacy while increasing insurgent control. Political power is the central issue in an insurgency’<sup>8</sup>” It is a contest over who can effectively exert political control over the population.

During the conflict then, the population lives in a situation where rival warring factions are laying competing claims to their allegiance. Now in time of war, governments demand that their subjects do such things as provide money (taxes and war-bonds), contribute to the war effort, serve in the military, and provide information about enemy activities. Since each faction demands that its people conduct themselves with hostility towards its rivals, it is impossible for the people to accede to the demands of all sides, and they are caught on the horns of a dilemma. Here is how an African in the midst of the Rhodesian Bush War described it: “If we report to the

police, the terrorists kill us. If we do not report, the police suspect us of harbouring terrorists. We just do not know what to do.”<sup>9</sup> In Malaya, the Chinese peasants who were the object of competing British and Communist political claims described their situation as that of being caught “between two millstones.”<sup>10</sup>

In such a conflict, you cannot escape being a traitor in the judgment of at least one faction. As Canadians, this tragedy was not part of our collective 20<sup>th</sup> century experience of war, and this may hinder us from grasping the magnitude and significance of this reality.

## THE MILLSTONE OF GOVERNMENT FORCE

When a sector of the population is infiltrated by insurgents, government forces often come to equate the entire group with the rebels, and treat them in correspondingly brutal fashion.

While the Malaya Emergency (1948-1960) is celebrated as the prime example of how to win against a Communist insurgency by winning hearts and minds, it is instructive to note that the initial British efforts had the effect of alienating the people. Their first problem was that their administration, returning to Malaya to reclaim it from the Japanese, failed to establish effective rapport with the Chinese community, which was 37% of the population. When the insurgency announced its presence by commencing a campaign of violence, the British and their Malay colleagues were unable to discern between loyal Chinese and subversive Chinese. “Faced with a scared, sullen population and with no understanding of Chinese ways, and consequently with no hard evidence on which to act, the security forces tended to suspect everyone.”<sup>11</sup> Every Chinese person was viewed as a ‘bandit’ or potential bandit, so they were all bashed around.

The British pursued a strategy of enforcement terror, based on the notion that the Chinese by disposition were inclined to lean toward whoever frightens them more. High Commissioner Gurney advocated the need to make them see the government as “stronger than the bandits and at the same time inspiring greater fear”<sup>12</sup>, and excused the police and army for breaking the law on a daily basis. Troops shot frightened villagers who fled from patrols and those who were suspected of aiding the guerrillas, and burned down villages.<sup>13</sup> The government threatened to

punish anyone who yielded to the guerrilla's extortionate demands for money, a policy which the tiny population of Europeans strongly advocated, indifferent to the fact that unlike them the peasants did not have the protection of personal firearms and police escorts. People who had obeyed the guerrillas at gunpoint were hanged by the government for not resisting.<sup>14</sup> While engaged in all this repression, some soldiers took the opportunity to indulge in rape.<sup>15</sup>

The net effect of all this abuse was to make the Chinese feel themselves to be refugees from their own government, and many people who would rather not have been involved in the conflict at all were driven to join the guerrillas.<sup>16</sup> The deteriorating situation was salvaged when a new mindset and strategy were infused in the government by Sir Gerald Templer, appointed as the new High Commissioner in 1952. He gave new direction to the security forces, making them behave as protectors of all citizens, including the Chinese. The police were retrained with emphasis in basic civil policing duties rather than paramilitary operations.<sup>17</sup> This was part of Templer's larger program which had the goal of "*winning hearts and minds*," and from which the phrase entered our lexicon.

Furthermore, by issuing 50,000 shotguns to the Chinese guards of the New Villages in which the government was relocating the peasants, Templer empowered the Chinese community to participate in its own defence against guerrilla coercion. No longer the victims but now beneficiaries of security efforts, the Chinese population became less fearful of guerrilla reprisals for cooperating with the government, and became willing to provide information about the insurgents. This in turn enabled the security forces to engage and destroy insurgent forces much more effectively. Templer achieved a turn around by transforming the government into a genuine protector against insurgent violence, whereas before it had been a millstone which was crushing the people against the complimentary guerrilla millstone.

The adoption of a strategy of enforcement terror is not unique to the pre-Templer administration of Malaya. In Peru, security force operations under the direction of Vladimiro Montesinos attempted to crush the Shining Path and MRTA guerrillas by a strategy in which "hundreds of innocent civilians were killed in a shock therapy designed to exterminate the guerrillas and scare the general population from even sympathizing with any of the movements."<sup>18</sup> In Nepal, "security forces often assume that the rural population actively

supports the Maoists and kill suspected Maoist sympathizers, even when it is clear that the civilians have had little choice but to house and feed the Maoists traveling through their villages.”<sup>19</sup> The price of refusing to shelter them is often death. The Maoists are feared, but “the Nepali security forces are equally, if not more, feared by the civilian population,” and “have been implicated in thousands of summary executions and other unlawful killings of suspected Maoist rebels and civilians.”<sup>20</sup>

For the civilian population in an insurgency war, the experience is often very much like being crushed between two millstones. One of these is the government force, and the other is the insurgent force.

## THE MILLSTONE OF LIBERATING INSURGENCY

One of the great and tragic ironies of the typical revolutionary campaign is that the people whom the guerrillas claim to be fighting on behalf of suffer terribly at the hands of their would-be liberators.<sup>21</sup> Since the insurgent goal is to sever the population from the existing government structure and harness it to a new one, the typical *modus operandi* is to kill everyone who works for the government, and everyone who has to do with them.

Having convinced themselves that their ideology alone is the good way for the people, the liberators judge any individual who does not join in their struggle to be an enemy of the people. Now from the perspective of the rebels, there are only a few true, intractable, enemies of the people, whom they execute as they identify them. From the perspective of the people, however, nearly everyone of them feels himself in danger of being branded an enemy of the people. As historian Crane Brinton observed, during a revolution no one is safe from accusation: “Even the humblest person, the person indifferent to politics, can never tell when the lightning is going to strike him or his household, when he may be haled into court as a class enemy or a counterrevolutionary.”<sup>22</sup>

Revolutionary leaders need the people to participate in the liberation of the people, and the reality that most of them do not believe in the cause and willingly join is a problem requiring a solution. It never seems to dawn on them that perhaps it is legitimate for the people to decide

they do not need or want their revolution:

The revolutionary leader's attitude, when he begins to realize that the masses do not understand, share, or desire his goals, is to insist that the masses be made to do so, even if that can only be accomplished against their will and values. The misunderstanding thus becomes exclusively the fault of the masses, who allegedly lack political consciousness. Because the masses do not “understand” what is in their own interest they must be “educated” by their superiors- that is, the self-appointed vanguard. The further one moves to the left, from the communist parties to the extremes of Sendero, the clearer this arrogance becomes.<sup>23</sup>

The above mentioned arrogance of the Peruvian Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) guerrillas is manifested in the harsh methods they used on the Quechua Indians they claim to be fighting for:

If the Indians understood and accepted Sendero's aims, well and good; if they did not, which appears very often to have been the case, so much the worse- for the Indians. On the basis of such perceptions, Sendero cut off the fingers of the illiterate Indians who had voted in the 1983 elections (which, incidentally, represented a triumph for the legal Left in Peru) and shot large numbers of villagers in the name of educating the masses.<sup>24</sup>

In the warfare that we call conventional, a government may compel some of its citizens to join the military by a legal mechanism which we call a draft. Insurgent groups may lack the bureaucratic apparatus, formality and standardized implementation typical of a nation state, but they do have their own ways of conscripting.

The Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda recruits most of its soldiers by abducting them as children and forcibly indoctrinating them. As soon as they are captured, they often compel them to betray the most sacred of loyalties: “Twenty-thousand children have been abducted - often forced to kill their own parents so they have no way back.”<sup>25</sup> “Not uncommonly they [LRA] will steal perhaps three kids from the same family and then, in the bush, force the youngest two to kill the oldest one.”<sup>26</sup> Besides making them kill their own family, the LRA is quick in general to compel the children it abducts to join them in murder. “If one [abducted] child attempts to

escape, the rebels force the other abducted children to kill the would-be escapee, usually with clubs or machetes. Any child who refuses to participate in the killing may also be beaten or killed.”<sup>27</sup> Often the victim is from the same village, so they are compelled to kill their friend. Their hands now stained with the blood of their parents, siblings, or friends, they are thus “initiated into their new life as rebels, bound to the cause by a terrible cocktail of guilt, fear and violence.”<sup>28</sup>

Peru’s Sendero and MRTA also practice conscription by mass abduction:

They would kidnap peasants, men, women and children, and force them to fight. Many massacres of peasants by the terrorists in the 1980s alienated the masses. In the most extreme cases, the MRTA would go and kidnap entire families and force them into the jungle, to work the fields, to grow crops (particularly coca); to be indoctrinated with the communist ideology and to breed new fighters. These groups of as many as 200 kidnapped individuals, known as the *masas* (masses), in some cases were in captivity in the Amazon jungle for as long as a whole decade.<sup>29</sup>

Whereas in a classic conventional conflict, the belligerents have little chance to steal each other’s manpower, in an insurgency they compete directly for it. The people kidnapped and conscripted by the LRA, Sendero, MRTA or Prachanda Path are all thereby taken away from the government, and lost to its war effort and its general economy. In Vietnam, both the Vietcong and the ARVN (South Vietnamese army) practiced conscription, drawing from the same population. This meant that many of the soldiers the ARVN issued draft notices to wound up in the enemy force instead. A study of Viet Cong motivation and morale found that many VC soldiers had joined chiefly because they thought it a lesser evil than joining the ARVN.<sup>30</sup> This dynamic of the same recruits being simultaneously sought by both sides is all but absent in a classic conventional campaign.

The brutal methods of conscription described above are not the only techniques in the insurgent’s repertoire. Revolutionaries employ a variety of techniques, from mild persuasion to harsh coercion, to force people to join their movement, or deter them from helping the

government.

Stephen Hosmer's study, *Vietcong Repression and Its Implications for the Future*, documents the *modus operandi* of a thoroughly administered system for eliminating the government of South Vietnam, one functionary at a time. Everyone who worked for the government was intimidated by means of threatening letters and personal visits, indicating that if they did not promptly repent of being reactionary (loyal to the government) and rally to the revolutionary cause, they would be assassinated.<sup>31</sup> These threats were also extended to people who utilized government services. The frequency with which the Vietcong did actually assassinate people gave the threats a dreadful weight.

Maoists often abduct large groups of people and compel them to listen to days of indoctrination lectures, a practice still common in Nepal, where the rebels have been frequently abducting high-school classes.<sup>32</sup> In Vietnam, Communist cadres pursued a systematic program of indoctrinating the entire the population. They conducted compulsory group indoctrination sessions for entire villages, and those individuals who were identified by the Vietcong as needing special attention were confined to their village and "kept under constant observation by other villagers or local security cadres."<sup>33</sup> Those under scrutiny were required to do thought reform exercises and meet regularly with the cadres to review their progress until they were successfully reeducated. This could take 6-24 months, depending on the degree of the subject's 'reactionary stubbornness.'

The ultimate goal of the Maoist thought reform process, first implemented in the Chinese revolution, was to make the person betray and abjure all their loyalties to the old order. This included not only government but also their social class and family, and especially to denounce one's father, "both as an individual and as a representative of the old order. This was the ultimate symbolic act in the thought reform of young Chinese, and many found it to be extremely painful."<sup>34</sup>

These systematic methods bear some resemblance to the way that we in our society compel abusive parents and criminals to submit to supervision and counseling by case workers from Family and Community Services and Corrections Canada. They also bear resemblance to the way the mafia conducts extortion and witness intimidation. (The analogy to the mafia has

good historical warrant, as the Sicillian mafia originated from patriotic insurgents fighting against occupying powers<sup>35</sup>, and many modern insurgent armies have evolved into criminal syndicates, such as the IRA<sup>36</sup>, FARC<sup>37</sup> and Sendero<sup>38</sup>).

The net effect for the people enduring this Vietcong program of repression is something that is hard for us in Canada to imagine. Just try to imagine a Canada in which the mafia is aiming to *conquer* Canadian society from within. Here is how you personally experience it: They assassinate several of your co-workers at Revenue Canada, extort protection money from you, then abduct you and lecture you on the evilness of Canadian social structure, intimidate you into quitting your job, then send you home under the supervision of a case worker who keeps constant tabs on you and incessantly interrogates you about your progress in acknowledging the error of your ways, all the while insinuating that worse things will befall you if you do not see things his way soon. Furthermore, your friends and family have received “notices” too, and they are expressing great anxiety about the prospect of getting killed for your stubbornness.

This scenario may seem bizarre, improbable, and irrelevant to an academic paper on warfare, but if it does it is because we fail to grasp how an insurgency war is experienced by the population among whom it occurs. When Canada conducts a counterinsurgency campaign, none of this goes on in our own hometown, so we may fail to appreciate the tremendous impact of these activities on the outcome of the conflict. While the importance of winning hearts and minds in counterinsurgency is often stressed, the considerable effort which the insurgents devote to capturing hearts and minds often gets overlooked. For the Vietminh, their “case work” of monitoring and intimidating everyone in the village was viewed as “the most important point of the revolutionary task.”<sup>39</sup>

As noted earlier, in insurgency warfare the heart of the conflict is the competition for the allegiance of the population. The insurgent force aims to detach the population from the existing government structure and harness it to their political structure. To do so, they typically scare off or kill everyone who is a point of contact between the two parties.

The Vietcong were particularly well organized and strategically minded about how they did this. According to Bernard Fall, no one heeded his early warnings about the extent to which they were doing this. In Saigon, 1957, he sifted through the obituaries and found that 452 village

chiefs had been murdered in the previous year. This was during the ‘peace’ between the wars. In 1959 he mapped out the fact that there was a broad ring around Saigon in which all the village chiefs had been assassinated, thereby cutting off the government’s interaction with the population. Fall states that by the time the US government got alarmed in 1961, “the communists had killed about 10,000 village chiefs in a country that has about 16,000 villages.”<sup>40</sup> By 1963 Communist administrative control was so extensive that they were collecting taxes in all but 3 out of 45 provinces, being so well ensconced in 27 of them that they were issuing bonds, receipts, and tax declarations. The Communists were consolidating their political control, in spite of the existing South Vietnamese government.

A current example of an insurgent force severing the government from the people is found in the Prachanda Path [Maoists] of Nepal:

Because the Maoists often kill individuals to punish them for rejecting Maoist rule—that is, collaborating with the government, engaging in non-Maoist political activities, refusing to pay extortion—the Maoists often carry out their executions in plain view, and occasionally demand that local villagers and family members of the victims be present during the killings in an attempt to ensure the maximum deterrent effect on the population. In other words, the Maoists clearly use targeted killings to intimidate local villagers, ensuring that villagers know that deviance from Maoist demands will result in a brutal death. Because the killings are aimed at instilling fear, they are often accompanied by horrific torture and slow and painful killing methods, making the victim suffer for hours before death. In other cases, Maoists simply execute their victims with a single gunshot.<sup>41</sup>

Showing themselves savvy with twenty-first century ways, they post articles on their websites boasting about their killings.<sup>42</sup>

## TODAY’S INSURGENCY IN AFGHANISTAN

Regarding the current conflict in Afghanistan, there does not seem to be much good

material in the public domain studying the motivations of Afghans who become insurgent foot soldiers. There are shelves full of books on what drives Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants, and those zealous jihadists who travel from distant lands to join the fight. Yet little seems to have been done to assess what are the micro-incentives that induce the local rank and file to join. RAND researcher Austin Long states there is need for a Motivation and Morale study of today's insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan, like the one that was done on why people chose to join the Vietcong, to ascertain whether those who place IEDs today are typically driven by intrinsic hostility, or payment, or threats, or something else again.<sup>43</sup>

The great majority of the insurgent techniques described above for systematically forcing the population to get on side with the insurgents come from Maoist revolutions,<sup>44</sup> and emphasis on this effort, known as politicization, is a hallmark of Mao's strategy. Yet we are not facing Maoists in Afghanistan today. Does this then invalidate the applicability of the analysis made herein to Canada's counter-insurgency in Afghanistan? No. While Mao's teachings provided a clear articulation of the strategy and emphasized it, it is not difficult for those ignorant of Mao to realize the utility of murdering "traitors" on their own, or to unreflectively do so under the impulses of inflamed hatred.

If there was little indication that those resisting the Karzai government made little effort to sever the population from the government in the first few years, this is no warrant for confidence. Like any other armed force, an insurgent force is quite capable of responding to an initial repulse by amending its strategy. When ZAPLA (the army of Mugabe's ZANU party) repeatedly suffered the extermination of its guerrilla infiltration teams by Rhodesian security forces, they made a fresh strategic assessment. They concluded not only that "the guerrillas had not had adequate training," but also "that the peasants had not been politically prepared for armed struggle." According to one of their commissars, Mayor Urimbo, "It was realized that the people had to be mobilized if we were to conduct a successful struggle. Tongogara in particular had learned in China that it was vital to mobilise the people and it was that lesson which shaped future strategy. He brought the new strategy which said if you want to win a revolution it is not only a revolution of the gun but a revolution of mobilising the masses."<sup>45</sup> (This also demonstrates that those who did not begin with Mao's advice are capable of picking it up along

the way).

Similarly, the Vietcong regrouped after sustaining severe losses in the course of their Tet Offensive and decided to switch their focus to attacking the personnel involved in the pacification program,<sup>46</sup> which was the equivalent of our reconstruction and development efforts.

In Afghanistan, according to Human Rights Watch, “In 2004, a more robust and aggressive strategy by the coalition managed to push the opposition forces out of some... areas, prompting the U.S. and Afghan governments to pronounce (again) that the Taliban were on the verge of defeat. But in 2005, Taliban and other opposition forces changed tactics, away from direct confrontations and instead began focusing on civilians and civilian institutions, such as teachers, low-level bureaucrats, schools, and aid workers, an approach similar to that used by anti-U.S. forces in Iraq. At least nine clerics were killed in Afghanistan in 2005.”<sup>47</sup>

According to Rahman Ibrahim, the former police chief of south-eastern Paktia province, insurgents are currently hard at work “killing the leaders of the province”: “They tried to assassinate the governor, the chief of police, the head of intelligence, the army chief. They tried to kill government employees.” “They pay people to burn schools and organise roadside bombs, they pay to bring unrest to the region.”<sup>48</sup>

In the report, *Lessons in Terror*, Human Rights Watch documents that there were 204 attacks on students, teachers and schools between January 2005 and 21 June 2006, including 17 assassinations.<sup>49</sup> Since education is a primary means by which modern governments connect with their populations, insurgents often target schools and teachers.

Threatening “night letters” are also common, featuring threats such as [facial] acid attacks or murder for girls who go to school and men who work for NGO’s.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, many schools have closed down again.<sup>51</sup>

A tribal elder, cited by Human Rights Watch, said, “The people have no rule of law, it’s the rule of the gun. The Taliban will kill you, or the government will kill you—one is worse than the other. There is absolute oppression and terror—there is no peace here. Might is right, the gun rules.”<sup>52</sup> This man lives between two millstones.

In conducting our academic discourse about how to conduct counterinsurgency warfare, it

is essential that we keep sight of the fact that the population involved is likely finding the experience as if they were caught between two millstones. However much our reconstruction and development projects may demonstrate that we have noble intentions for the welfare of the people, they cannot give their support to the government unless it can resolve this dilemma for them. If the government cannot shield them from the coercion of the insurgent force, they will not dare to give you their hand, even if you have made a winning appeal to their hearts and minds.

In recent years the concept of the ‘strategic corporal’ has gained great traction in our defence circles. The essence of this concept is that the actions of a soldier as low in the hierarchy as a corporal can have a tremendous effect on the hearts and minds campaign, and thereby alter the strategic outcome. Trained to positively impact the population’s perception of us, the corporal becomes an asset of strategic importance.

The strategic corporal is our messenger to the people, and the messenger is the message. What we need to recognize is that the insurgents have an answer of their own to the message of the strategic corporal. It is the message conveyed to the people, those pressed between two millstones, when they behold the murdered teacher- the strategic corpse.

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Me 109 [fighter plane] image from [www.taphilo.com](http://www.taphilo.com). Used in accordance with stipulated terms and conditions.

- <sup>1</sup> A COIN victory, but not one to be proud of: See Chris Madsen, "Canadian Troops and Farm Burning in the Boer War," *Canadian Military Journal*, Summer 2005, p49-58.
- <sup>2</sup> The standard taxonomy is as follows: A war fought with high explosives only would be termed conventional; a war fought largely with high explosives but also a few nuclear explosives would be termed a limited nuclear war; a war in which nuclear explosives were used with abandon would be termed a strategic nuclear war (aka Armageddon).
- <sup>3</sup> Richard Petrow, *The Bitter Years: The Invasion and Occupation of Denmark and Norway April 1940- May 1945*, (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1974) p16-17, 35-37. Ultimately French and Polish troops also participated in the unsuccessful defence, as of course did the Norwegians themselves.
- <sup>4</sup> Whatever instances of traitors and defectors there may have been, these were but pinpricks without significance for the overall equation.
- <sup>5</sup> Lest I be accused of oversimplifying, I will remark that it was not an ethnically homogenous population, but the demographic details of the Malay/Chinese/Tamil/jungle tribes distribution, while vitally important to fully comprehending that war, have no bearing on the point being made here.
- <sup>6</sup> Bernard B. Fall, "The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency," *Naval War College Review*, Winter 1998, Vol. LI, No. 1 [reprint from April 1965 issue]
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> Montgomery McFate and Andrea V. Jackson, "The Object Beyond War: Counterinsurgency and the Four Tools of Political Competition," *Military Review*, January-February 2006, p13. Insurgency is an "organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict."
- <sup>9</sup> The Rhodesian Bush War (1965/1972-1980) is the conflict that led to the end of white rule in Rhodesia, which the victorious African nationalists, dominated by Robert Mugabe, renamed Zimbabwe. The African name for this conflict is the Second Chimurenga.  
Ken Flower, *Serving Secretly: An Intelligence Chief on Record: Rhodesia into Zimbabwe 1964-1981*, (London: John Murray (Publishers) Ltd, 1987), p122.
- <sup>10</sup> Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency 1948-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p76.
- <sup>11</sup> Stubbs, p73.
- <sup>12</sup> Stubbs, p75.
- <sup>13</sup> Stubbs, p74.
- <sup>14</sup> Stubbs, p75.
- <sup>15</sup> Stubbs, p75.
- <sup>16</sup> Stubbs, p88.
- <sup>17</sup> Stubbs, p157.
- <sup>18</sup> W. Alejandro Sanchez, "The Rebirth of Insurgency in Peru," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol.14, No.3 (Autumn 2003), p188.
- <sup>19</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Civilians Struggle to Survive in Nepal's Civil War," *HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH*, VOL. 16, NO. 12 ©, p 26-27.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> For instance, "Of the civilians who were killed by the MCP [Malayan Communist Party], more were Chinese than of any other racial community." Stubbs, 125. The MCP's membership was almost entirely Chinese and as the first phase of their campaign, liberating the Chinese community, was never accomplished, the revolution as far as it got was all about liberating the Chinese- which meant they bore the brunt of it.  
Similarly, it is said of the LRA rebel movement in Uganda, which is comprised mostly of Acholi tribe members, that "it is as much a cult as an army, preying on the mainly Acholi people of the north, the very people it claims to represent."  
Callum Macrae, "Uganda's Fallen Child Rebels," BBC News, 8 April, 2004,  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3608003.stm>
- <sup>22</sup> Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution*, ( New York: Vintage Books, 1952), p189.
- <sup>23</sup> Radu & Tismaneau, 12.
- <sup>24</sup> Radu & Tismaneau, 14.
- <sup>25</sup> Martin Plaut, "Profile: Uganda's LRA Rebels," BBC News, 6 February 2004,  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3462901.stm>
- <sup>26</sup> Callum Macrae, "Uganda's Fallen Child Rebels," BBC News, 8 April, 2004,  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3608003.stm>
- <sup>27</sup> Human Rights Watch, *The Scars of Death: Children Abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda* (Washington: Human Rights Watch, 1997).
- <sup>28</sup> Callum Macrae, "Uganda's Fallen Child Rebels," BBC News, 8 April, 2004,  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3608003.stm>
- <sup>29</sup> Sanchez, p188.

- <sup>30</sup> Austin Long, "On Other War: Lessons From Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research," (Arlington, VA: RAND Corporation, 2006), p32.
- <sup>31</sup> Hosmer, p10.
- <sup>32</sup> Associated Press, "Rebels abduct 90 high school students from remote mountain school in Nepal," 27 June 2005. [http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/cpress/20050627/ca\\_pr\\_on\\_wo/students\\_kidnapped](http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/cpress/20050627/ca_pr_on_wo/students_kidnapped) "The students are typically taken from their schools and kept by the rebels for two or three days to be indoctrinated in communist ideology before being released and sent back to their villages."
- <sup>33</sup> Stephen T. Hosmer, *Vietcong Repression and Its Implications for the Future* (Lexington, MA: Heath Lexington Books, 1970) (© The RAND Corporation), p59.
- <sup>34</sup> Robert Jay Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism: A Study of "Brainwashing" in China* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc, 1961) , p267. The Communist cadres told their pupils that "the most important part of the reform of an intellectual was the denunciation of his father- since the intellectual almost invariably comes from a wealthy family which must have been anti-Communist, and if he does not denounce his father he cannot be a faithful citizen of the new regime." p268.
- <sup>35</sup> Jo Durden Smith, *Mafia: The Complete History of a Criminal World*, (London: Arcturus Publishing Ltd, 2003), p17.
- <sup>36</sup> Thomas E. Hachey, "Irish Republicanism Yesterday and Today: The Dilemma of Irish Americans," ed. Winston A. Van Home, *Ethnicity and War, Vol. III*, (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1984), p168. "The IRA has come a long way since its early days of dependence upon the United States. Fund raising is mostly done at home nowadays, by means of protection rackets, brothels, massage parlors and bank stickups." [cit. New York Times Magazine, 1 March 1981]
- <sup>37</sup> Thomas M. Sanderson, "Transnational Terror and Organized Crime," *SAIS Review*, Vol XXIV, No 1, (Winter-Spring 2004), p51. Narcotics trade.
- <sup>38</sup> Sanchez, p190. Narcotics trade.
- <sup>39</sup> Hosmer, p40.
- <sup>40</sup> Bernard B. Fall, "The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency," *Naval War College Review*, Winter 1998, Vol. LI, No. 1 [reprint from April 1965 issue]
- <sup>41</sup> HRW, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place," p54.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid, p54.
- <sup>43</sup> Austin Long, "On Other War: Lessons From Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research," (Arlington, VA: RAND Corporation, 2006) p68.
- <sup>44</sup> The insurgencies in Malaya, Vietnam, Peru, and Nepal were conducted by Maoist communists, but not the LRA in Uganda.
- <sup>45</sup> André Astrow, *Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lost Its Way?* (London: Third World Books, 1983). [1st printing by Zed Books] p41.
- <sup>46</sup> Dale Andrade and Lt Col James H. Wilbanks, "CORDS/Phoenix: Counterinsurgency Lessons From Vietnam For The Future," *Military Review*, March-April 2006, p11.
- <sup>47</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Lessons in Terror: Attacks on Education in Afghanistan*, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH VOL. 18, NO. 6 ©, p22.
- <sup>48</sup> "Afghanistan's hidden war" BBC News, 27 July 2006. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/5220514.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/5220514.stm)
- <sup>49</sup> HRW, *Lessons in Terror*, p4.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid, p3,4.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid, p5.
- <sup>52</sup> HRW, *Lessons in Terror*, p22.