TRIBAL ALLIANCES:
WAYS, MEANS, AND ENDS TO SUCCESSFUL STRATEGY

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PREFACE

The U.S. Army War College provides an excellent environment for selected military officers and government civilians to reflect and use their career experience to explore a wide range of strategic issues. To assure that the research developed by Army War College students is available to Army and Department of Defense leaders, the Strategic Studies Institute publishes selected papers in its Carlisle Papers in Security Strategy Series.

The author of this paper argues that recognizing the potential value of tribal organizations, particularly in the "arc of instability stretching from the Western Hemisphere, through Africa and the Middle East and extending to Asia," is a must to enhance successful peace and stability operations. He provides conclusions and recommendations to further facilitate national military policy successes.



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ABSTRACT

To be successful, National Security Strategy and National Military Strategy must utilize all elements and tools of power at their disposal. In a military area of operations, particularly in countries in the Middle East that are lacking adequate traditional state-based public administrative organizations or institutions, U.S. national military policy must recognize the value that tribes can bring to the spectrum of military operations. Recognition of the potential value of tribal organizations, particularly in the "arc of instability stretching from the Western Hemisphere, through Africa and the Middle East and extending to Asia," is a must to enhance successful peace and stability operations. The following conclusions and recommendations are offered to further facilitate national military policy success.

Four conclusions, linked to the essential elements of analysis and the thesis at large, were found to be of value. First, tribes are not considered explicitly in the National Security Strategy or the National Military Strategy of the United States as a tool of military power. Some implicit linkages can be assumed. Second, tribes offer value in all bands of the spectrum of military operations—from pre-crisis access to conventional warfare. Third, when considering tribal alliances as a tool for success, recognize and evaluate thoroughly the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing tribal resources. Finally, throughout history, both past and present, tribes have delivered functional capability (intelligence, security, combat arms, etc.) to successful military operations.

In light of the conclusions offered, three recommendations are provided. First, make tribal partnerships an explicit tool of national security policy. The example of the Northern Alliance during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM provides an historical example of success. Second, use tribes across the full spectrum of military operations. The successes tribes have shown in various bands of the spectrum of military operations indicate further potential for tribes as a force multiplier. Finally, use tribes across the continuum of military campaign phases, from Phase I (Deter and Engage) to Phase IV (Transition). Tendencies are to use tribes in one phase of military campaigns.

TRIBAL ALLIANCES:
WAYS, MEANS, AND ENDS TO SUCCESSFUL STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

Many were surprised at the speed of the fall of Saddam Hussein and the Ba`th Party—and also taken aback at the lack of sustainable institutions through which the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) could establish governmental control. In the wake of this institutional void, extreme political, economic, and social pressures have been placed on U.S. forces to provide a wide array of civil and infrastructure products and services. These range from electric power, sewage treatment, educational systems, and law and security services, to governance and health provisions. U.S. media sources have highlighted the fact that an enormous amount of funds have been approved and allocated—but yet to be channeled and delivered to the people of Iraq. Recently in Congress, "the administration hopes to redirect more than 20 percent of $18.4 billion [$3.5B] in reconstruction funds to cope with an escalating insurgency and the glacial pace of rebuilding."[1]

Why the glacial pace? One obvious reason is the current chaotic security environment that causes contractors, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and charitable groups to reconsider their efforts. Another contributing factor is that Iraqi governance institutions responsible for security and infrastructure are not yet fully operational. A third may be U.S. *national military strategy's* (NMS) failure to clearly delineate or theorize capacities for alliance-building, which leads to the thesis of this paper.

In a military area of operations, particularly in the Middle East, that is lacking adequate state-based public administrative organizations or institutions, U.S. *national military policy must recognize the viability of tribes as an effective organizational entity for the near-term delivery of a wide variety of functions—including infrastructure and civil sector products and services***.** Recognition of the use of tribal organizations, particularly in the "arc of instability stretching from the Western Hemisphere, through Africa and the Middle East and extending to Asia"[2] to enhance successful peace and stability operations can be an effective national military strategy enabler.

Why consider tribes? It is important, in lieu of other choices, for three reasons: economic, social, and political gain. Tribes are an immediate source of a skill base, and can be used quickly to improve the local economy and employment. Tribes are a cohesive indigenous social structure; a new organizational institution does not have to be built. Building relationships with tribes shows cultural awareness, respect for the local populace, and stores political capital that can be used over the long term.

Approach.

This paper examines existing military policy through the *military* facet of the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME) model as seen in Figure 1. More specifically, this approach tests the thesis [*U.S. national military policy must recognize the viability of tribes as an effective organizational entity*] of this paper by examining three essential elements of analysis (EEA).

EEA.

The three EEAs that are used as focal points for the discussion in this paper are framed in the form of questions. What does the current U.S. *national security strategy* (NSS) and NMS explicitly or implicitly state about the role of tribes as an element or tool of national power? What are the roles (ways, means, and ends) that tribes can play in the success of U.S. national military security strategy? What are the strengths and weaknesses of tribal contributions to consider as tools of national power?

Scope.

Supporting the thesis of this paper are several boundaries. First, this paper takes a national policy perspective as opposed to a regional or local level viewpoint. Second, while there are many national security documents that effect military operations, this paper focuses predominately on the provisions contained in the NSS and NMS of the United States. Third, the geographic scope of this paper pertains to tribes located in the Middle East.

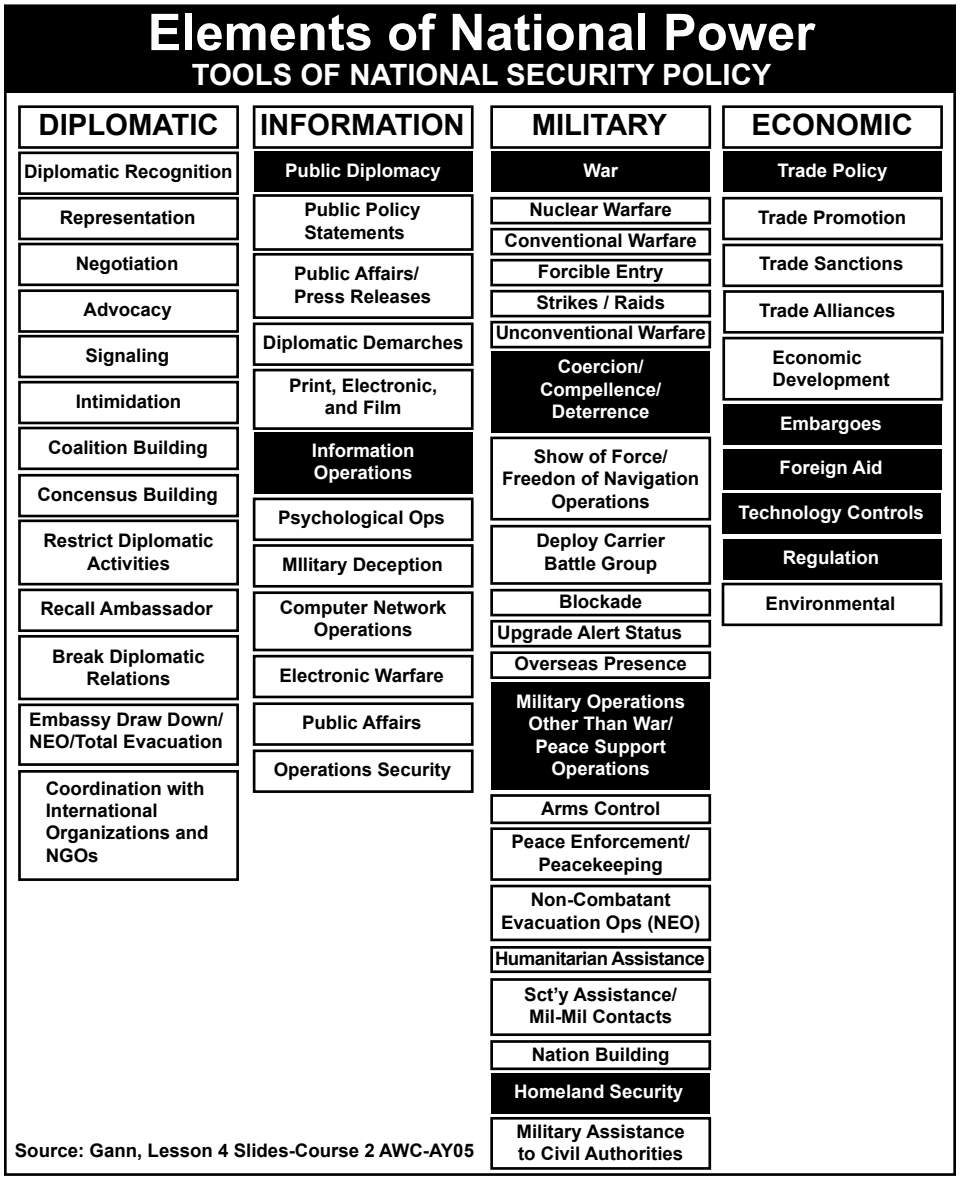

Figure 1. Elements of National Power.

Assumptions and Limitations.

Two key assumptions are pertinent to this paper. First, the information in this paper is temporal in nature due to the information cutoff of November 20, 2004. Thus, information regarding the effects of tribal organizations on the Afghanistan elections of 2004 is not available. Second, tribes are chosen as a topic because they are one of many social or political institutional choices (others being NGOs, contractors, local militias, and religious groups) that could deliver a wide variety of services in the near term.

Terms.

One of the foundations supporting this paper is a baseline definition of the term "tribe." There are many definitions available from a myriad of experts. A short definition provided by Ernest Gellner, a prominent Middle East sociologist, states, "a tribe is a local mutual-aid association, whose members jointly help maintain order internally and defend the unit externally."[3] A more expansive tribal definition is provided by Richard Tapper, which this paper uses as a baseline term.

> Tribe may be used loosely of a localized group in which kinship is the dominant idiom of organization, and whose members consider themselves culturally distinct (in terms of customs, dialect or language, and origins); tribes are usually politically unified, though not necessarily under a central leader, both features being commonly attributable to interaction with states. Such tribes also form parts of larger, usually regional, political structures of tribes of similar kinds; they usually do not relate directly with the state, but only through these intermediate structures. The more explicit term confederacy or confederation should be used for a local group of tribes that is heterogeneous in terms of culture, presumed origins and perhaps class composition, yet is politically unified usually under a central authority.[4]

ANALYSIS

The U.S. NSS and NMS highlight the need to "foster relationships among U.S. allies, partners, and friends."[5] What does this mean beyond this broad and general statement? More specifically, what is implied implicitly or explicitly about tribal relations in the NSS and NMS and its subsequent elements of national power (Figure 1) that enables tribes to be used as ways (broad courses of action), means (resources) or ends (clear concise objectives)[6] to support strategy? (see Figure 2.)

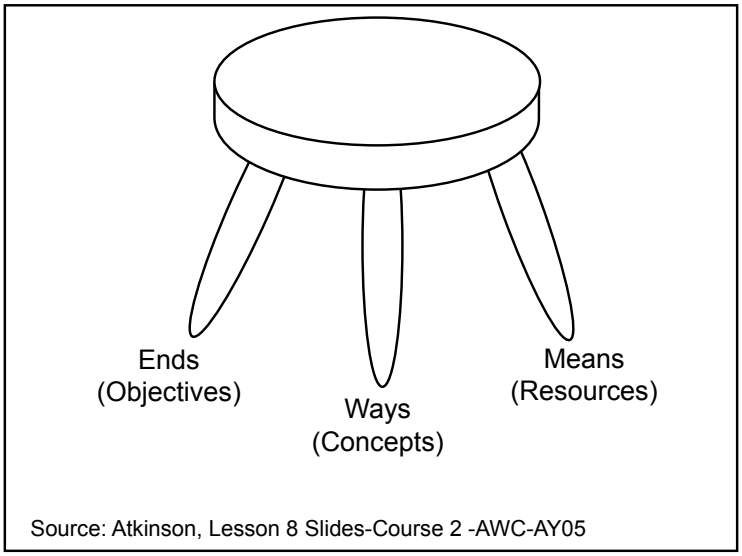

Figure 2. Key Components of Strategy .

Ways: Alliances and Coalitions.

One "way" or broad course of action to achieve NMS success is through the establishment of alliances and coalitions with states and organizations with similar interest. The NMS states "strong alliances and coalitions contribute to mutual security, tend to deter aggression, and help set conditions for success in combat if deterrence fails."[7] The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Coalition of Countries assembled and aligned against Iraq during Operation DESERT STORM are an example of a successful alliance and coalition. Yet, the NSS and the NMS shows a lack of breadth and depth. For

example, alliances with tribal confederacies are not explicitly referenced in the NMS. Additionally, potential coalition building with tribes is not explicitly mentioned as part of the NSS. How important is this omission? History and recent events offers some insights.

The use of tribal alliances by a powerful state possessing an organized and effective military is well-rooted in history. Julius Caesar used diplomacy to align with several tribes in Gaul in order to undermine opposing Gallic tribes during his campaigns in France. Military conflicts throughout U.S. history have benefited from tribal alliances. During the Indian Wars between 1865-80, "Brigadier General George Crook, one of the army's most renowned Indian fighters, [is credited] with initiating the use of Indian 'allies' and claimed that their diligent efforts diminished the soldier privations and hardships."[8] More recently, in the 20th century, the United States used tribal coalitions to contribute to the success of military operations in Vietnam. Montagnard (the Degar people) and Hmong tribes were aligned closely with U.S. forces fighting in a regional conventional war and counterinsurgency operations in Vietnam during the 1960s and early 1970s.

*Alliances***.** Strong alliances are an effective "way" or approach that is used to achieve successful military operations. Most recently, during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) in Afghanistan, U.S. forces worked closely with the Northern Alliance, a confederation of tribes in the Northern rim of Afghanistan, to defeat Taliban forces throughout Afghanistan. This alliance paved the way for a successful military operation, and ultimately a successful national election.

The concept of forming alliances, coalitions, and partnerships with tribes is not unique to the realm of strategy. The United Kingdom continues to foster relationships with a traditional tribal ally—the Gurkhas of Nepal. These Gurhkas are organized into a British brigade that has served in operational assignments in Kosovo, East Timor, Sierra Leone, and Bosnia. The British, through their alliance with Gurhkas, have paved the way for many successful military operations.

With any alignment, the risks and benefits must be weighed. There are risks in forming alliances with tribes. One is that an alliance may have downstream effects, such as tipping local tribal influence in favor of one clan over another. Another risk is the ability of the tribal Shaykh to control or deliver the representative power of the tribe to the alliance partner.

> The growing independence of the individual(s) from his tribe raises serious questions about the power of the tribe to control its members. Thus even though the tribal Shaykh supports the king, it is no longer clear this support extends beyond the Shaykh and some of the other senior elders of the tribe, and it may not be reflected in or convertible to more generalized support of the members of the tribe.[9]

While this particular text focuses on the situation in Jordan, it is a weakness that has been highlighted by tactical commanders in Iraq during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). The ability of the Shaykh or tribal elder to influence tribal participation may be directly related to geographic location, the local history of tribal infighting, or the degree to which centralized governments suppressed the tribes. An elder or Shaykh may have more influence in a more traditional Bedouin tribal social structure, particularly when located in the rural or more remote regions of Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen, Sudan, and Iraq. Such is the case for Fadel Sesese Mohamed, a 72-year-old tribal leader who traveled to Libya to participate in a peace conference earmarked to end Sudan's Darfur crisis.[10]

The level of development of civil society (presence of NGOs, governmental institutions, independent community-level groups) in a country may also be a consideration in the effectiveness of tribal alliances. In some more Westernized or advanced countries in the Middle East, tribal influence may be waning and may not be a factor due to the existence of other civil institutions that have usurped tribal influence. In some instances, tribes have been forcibly settled in areas, and some were targeted for suppression like the Dulaymi tribe under Saddam Hussein. In other countries that do not possess a significant level of civil society, tribes may represent the most active and representative social institution in the region—and be an effective tool for operational success.

Coalitions. Another subtle yet effective use of a tribal partnership or coalition can be seen through the role that the Kurds of Northern Iraq played in conducting insurgency and counterinsurgency operations against the former Saddam Hussein regime. (See Figure 3.) Between Gulf Wars I and II, the Kurds (an ethnic group comprised of many tribes), with the support of the United States, employed their peshmerga or fighting units. This military force, combined with other elements, was a destabilizing factor in Iraq that created continuous internal military and political pressure for the regime. In essence, this tribal effort "helps to create favorable regional balances of power that help bring pressure to bear on hostile or uncooperative regimes."[11] This partnership between the Kurds and U.S. coalition forces during OIF contributed greatly to operational success in the Northern Front in Iraq. Yet if this partnership continued without further evaluation, it could affect U.S. relations with Turkey.

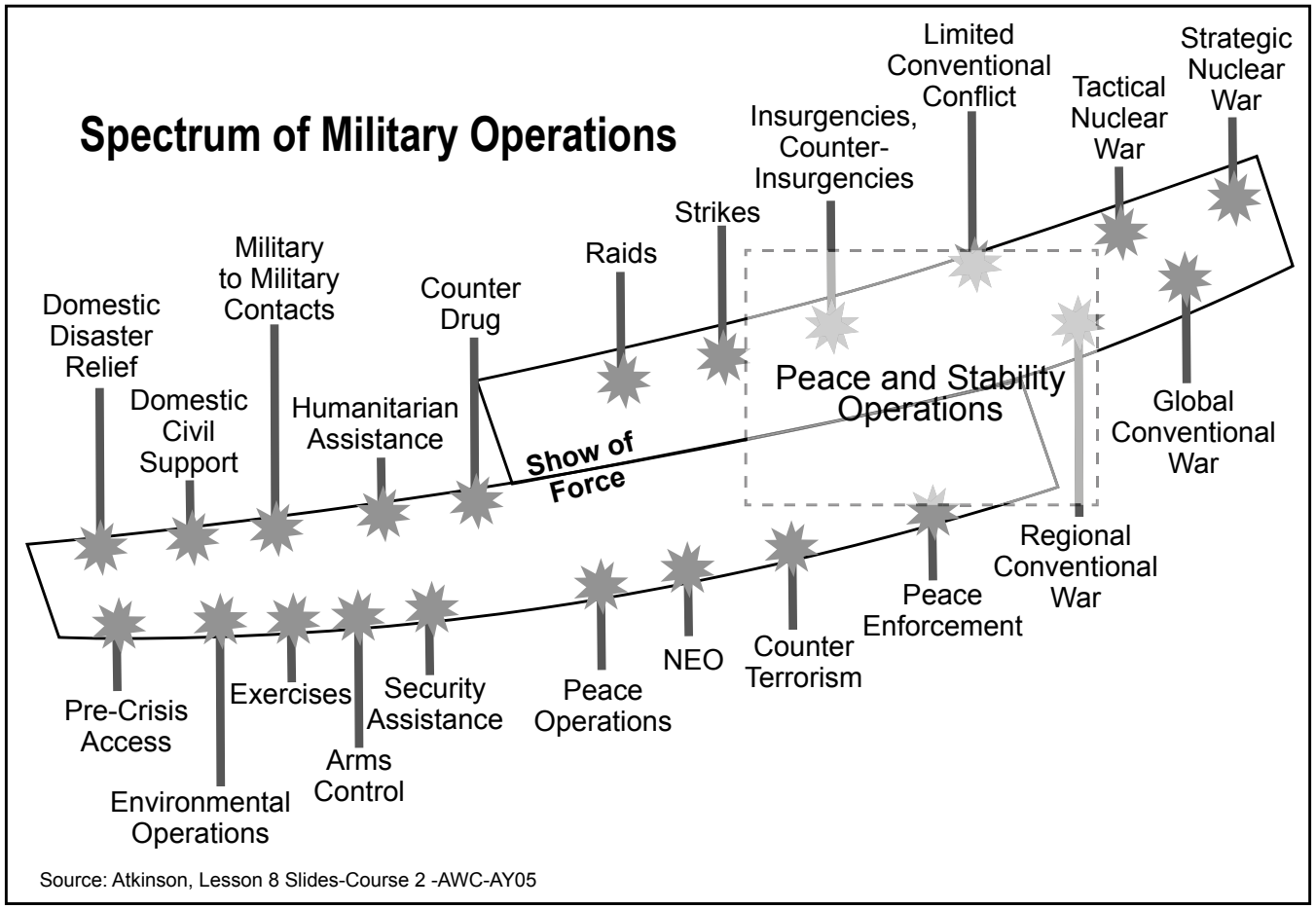

Figure 3. Spectrum of Military Operations .

Tribal coalitions or partnerships have been seen in support of the nation-state, as well as against the nation-state. One need not look beyond the support of Jordan's tribal-based army to recognize the support of tribes on behalf of the nation-state. Many other examples can be cited on either side of this equation. Tribes in other regions of the Middle East have also been noted as destabilizing forces to state-based administrations. "Tribal groups in Iran and Afghanistan are conventionally viewed as historically inveterate opponents of the state."[12] A scenario similar to Turkey's view of the destabilizing effect of the Kurds of northern Iraq is feasible in Iran. For example, a 21st century coalition with cross-border (Iran and Afghanistan) tribal groups (Brahui and Baluchs of Southern Afghanistan) could have a destabilizing effect on the theocratic regime of Iran.

Insights. Several insights regarding the role of tribal relationships in national military policy begin to emerge. First, from a positive perspective, tribal alliances and coalitions have made and are making real contributions to operational successes in regional conventional wars and counterinsurgencies. (See Figure 3.) This technique is not unique to the United States; the British and others have used it as well.

Second, tribes are an established social organization capable of supporting common interests. Working with organizations such as tribes is easier than dealing with disaggregated groups. However, working with social organizations (e.g., tribes) as a surrogate partner is not explicitly stated in the NMS. Implicitly, if one assumed that a tribe is a sovereign nation, as Native American tribes are classified in the United States, it could be assumed that tribes are a logical extension of alliances, coalitions, and partnerships.

A third positive perspective, as seen in the examples of the Kurds in Iraq and the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, is that tribes can help to bring pressure on totalitarian governments, and effect a favorable balance of power and ultimately contribute to regime change.

Consider the disadvantages of using tribes as an alliance or coalition partner. Some have been cited earlier. Significant weaknesses to recognize are tipping the status quo balance of power between different tribes and generating an environment or living climate that gives disadvantage to nontribal residents of tribally-dominated areas. Growth in tribal power and influence, as in the case of the Kurds, can affect the *regional* balance of power. Turkey frequently has reminded the United States that it would look unfavorably upon a Kurdish state. Alliances with tribes can also prove to be fleeting and unproductive, due to the waning influence of some tribes which are driven by "the organizational changes in the nation-state, particularly in internal security, land registration, and agrarian reform."[13] Tribal influence may depend on geographic location. In an urban area, the solidarity and strength of the tribal community may be diminished. Yet in more undeveloped regions, particularly where Bedouin pastoralist society structures dominate, the tribal strength, solidarity, and traditional roles of the Shaykh or tribal elder are prevalent.

Means: Multinational Capability.

U.S. history contains numerous examples where our military has participated with other nations and organizations in the fight for freedom. The challenge of time, resources, and distance on the U.S. Government (USG) emphasizes the need for multinational partners to share the burden of success. Some partners possess unique types of hardware and software; others bring unique knowledge of the local cultural landscape and unique language skills. Others simply contribute "fighters"; all are valued as enablers to success.

U.S. authorities and military commanders fully recognize the need for multinational partners. Commanders need sufficient troop strength, skills, and knowledge to ensure adequate stability and security operations. A wide variety of multinational sources have been used to supplement U.S. forces in operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Most recently, Northern Alliance forces were used in Afghanistan during OEF to provide a wide array of capabilities. The use of complementary multinational capabilities is not exclusive to U.S. warfare in the 21st century. Brigadier General Nelson A. Miles, commander of the Department of Arizona during the Indian Wars of the late 19th century, used Indian capabilities. Miles and other commanders found friendly Indian tribes to be of great use in supplementing their capabilities.

> The most common and important duties of such Indians include the following: interpreting and translating, carrying dispatches and mail; serving as "secret service" agents (i.e. spying and acting as provocateurs); trailing; peace-talking (i.e. encouraging surrender); hunting; providing escorts for hunting parties of prominent men, for

paymasters, for scientific expeditions, and for visitors to Indian country; patrolling the railroad lines; guarding railroad construction crews and surveyors; identifying unknown Indians; engaging in combat with hostilities (either independently or together with troops), performing guard duty at picket stations and military posts; helping to keep order on the reservations when Indian police were unable to handle disturbances; chasing Army deserters and more.[14]

The relationship between Indian tribes as allies was eventually altered as they were militarily subdued and confined to reservations. This short-term relationship can be characterized as more advantageous to the U.S. military than to the tribal nations of the United States. This fleeting arrangement has implications (e.g., long-term sustainability) for the 21st century and the U.S. reputation in working with other native or indigenous groups.

The need for multinational capability was in the news during the fall of 2004, particularly concerning the adequacy of the level and availability of scarce skill sets of troops during OIF. "The Iraqi conflict has exposed a looming manpower problem: a full-blown peacekeeping operation would require as many as 500,000 troops."[15] Many options are underway to address this challenge: more use of coalition troops, training of Iraqi nationals, and procurement of military support through contracts.

A number of these labor-enhancing options are focused on providing supplemental assets that are distinctly *functional* in nature. For example, Japanese coalition forces are providing combat service (e.g., engineering) and combat service support (e.g., medical) type functions.

These labor saving options are embodied in the NMS policy guidance to use "joint force, interagency, nongovernment organizations, and multinational capabilities in a synergistic manner."[16] Again as before, what is implied implicitly or explicitly in the NMS that enables tribes to be used as constructive *means* (resources) to support successful strategy? The answer, after a thorough NSS and NMS review, is that tribes are not explicitly highlighted. Yet tribal capabilities have been used throughout history, and continue to be used as a "means" or resource to contribute to military operational success. Caesar used tribes as part of his combined arms team.[17] More recently, tribes have been used to supplement or substitute for many military functional areas traditionally performed by military forces.

*Intelligence***.** The NMS highlights and emphasizes the need for improved intelligence collection to counter the growing terrorist threat. Of particular need are "human collectors . . . a critical element in the collections system; they provide the ability to discern the intention of adversaries and produce actionable intelligence for plans and orders."[18] Tribes historically have been sources of local intelligence, albeit with provisos. Our traditional allies, despite the pitfalls of changing loyalties and quid-pro-quo agreements, have used tribes. The British and French Intelligence Services in the 1920s used local tribes as valuable sources of intelligence; "throughout, tribal intelligence officers relied on indigenous intermediaries from Shaykhs to shepherds to secure their entrée into clan groups."[19]

Domestically, tribes have also performed unique intelligences related services. U.S. Marine Corps policy solicited active partnerships with various Native American tribes in World War II. The Navajo tribes of the Southwestern portion of the United States were used as "human encryption machines" to counter Japanese code breakers in the Pacific campaign.

Today, Pakistani tribes[20] have joined the hunt for Osama Bin Laden, illustrating the NMS point that "the application of force against widely dispersed adversaries, including transnational terrorist organizations, will require improved intelligence collections and analysis systems."[21]

*Security and Law Enforcement***.** The NSS emphasizes the need for improved security and law enforcement as a success factor for democratic societies. In fact, the current (Fall 2004) emphasis on reprogramming resources[22] for the training of security and law enforcement officers in Iraq is an embodiment of enabling "rule of law and intolerance of corruption so that people are confident that they will be able to enjoy the fruits of their economic endeavors."[23]

Tribes have contributed to multinational capabilities, particularly in the security and law enforcement functional area. Tribes adept at operating in varied physical geographic regions provide unique

security capabilities, particularly in desert, mountainous or coastal littoral regions. Turkey, a NATO ally, has used Kurdish tribes on the Turkish-Iraqi border to curb infiltration of terrorists. "In Turkey, the authorities responded to the guerilla offensive unleashed by the Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK) in 1984 by establishing a similar Kurdish militia, the village guards (*koy koruculari*) . . . several of these korucu units were well-known smuggler tribes, who knew better than anyone else how and where the border could be crossed."[24] Israel uses Bedouin tribes in the Negev Desert in Southern Israel to provide southern border security for the Egyptian-Israeli and Jordan-Israeli borders. Yet this model may be tenuous at best, as seen in the October 7, 2004, attack at several Red Sea resorts in Egypt.[25] Expansive desert regions and rival tribal groups may counter policies directed at using tribes as security blankets. Despite the recent security failure in southern Egypt, a more geographically limited area seems to prove more successful. Bedouin tribes south of the Gaza strip cooperate in providing security for the border at Gaza. More specifically, Bedouin tribes within the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) are stationed along the southern Gaza strip for border security duties.

Currently (Fall 2004), in OIF U.S. forces are using tribes to guard oil pipelines.[26] This illustrates their ability to enhance the security and economic well-being of Iraq.

Previously, under the Saddam Hussein regime, tribes were used as internal security forces. "Although Saddam had loyalists in the party . . . it was his tribesmen, Tikritis, Beijis, and Duris, who became the backbone of his security system."[27] Using a concentric ring security concept, Saddam Hussein insured his personal protection by using loyal tribal members from his own clan. "One of his first acts was to establish a presidential protection force—the Himaya—based on young Tikritis, mainly from his own tribe."[28]

*Combat Arms***.** The use of tribes as a member of the combat arms team has been seen throughout history, and has been briefly mentioned earlier in this paper (Ghurkas of Nepal, or the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan). Tribes, whether classified as members of an alliance, as surrogate forces, or mercenaries, have been members of the combat arms team throughout history. Examples can be found in the use of tribes in the French and Indian Wars in the mid-18th century and against the Ottoman Empire during the early 1900s.

Another example, in the post-World War I era, is that of the British under the Command of Captain John Glubb, who established the Desert Mobile Force to maintain order in Jordan. This force, comprised of Bedouin tribes, was used to "defend Transjordanians against attacks by non-Transjordanians, such as the Arabian Wahhabis, and against attacks by other tribes within Transjordan. . . . The Huwaytat was the first major Transjordanian tribe to succumb to Glubb's blandishments and became the backbone of the Desert Mobile force."[29] Eventually, this force emerged as the foundation for the Jordan Arab Army, and tribal members continue to contribute significantly to the forces of the Jordanian Army today.

Great Britain and the United States are not the only countries to use tribes as part of the combat arms team. The Soviet Union used tribes in Somalia as a surrogate army to protect Soviet interests in the region during the Cold War years. Siad Barre, a tribal general, is a good illustration of first gaining the support of the Soviet Union, then the United States.[30]

Saddam Hussein used tribes as mercenaries to quell internal disturbances, and to fight external threats as well.

> The Ba`th party revived military tribalism. The Ba`th regime rediscovered and exploited military tribalism among the Kurds. The tribal Aghas (or chiefs) of the Sorchy, Mezouri, Doski, Herki and Zibari tribes were recruited as mercenaries to fight against the nationalist Kurdish movement as early as 1974.[31]

Later, during the Iraq-Iran war, Saddam Hussein used the Kurds as a mercenary force to fight the Iranian Revolutionary Army and destabilize the Western region of Iran. "The 150,000 or so men who made up the Kurdish tribal mercenary units, [were] dubbed the Battalions of National Defense . . .

and the war depleted Iraq's resources and plunged it into huge debt, estimated at between $40-50 billion."[32]

Civil Affairs. A critical component to effective Phase IV Transition Operations (Figure 4) is the ability to administer and or provide local governance services. Currently, military civil affairs units are charged with the establishment of the administration of justice, settling land and water disputes, the registration of land, education, and law and order operations. Department of Defense (DoD) and Army transformation planners have listed civil affairs as a function to be examined for outsourcing to other delivery methods. Using existing institutions, either state or social, to administer basic civil services is a theme introduced earlier in this paper. In the absence of existing state institutions, how can typical civil societies' service requirements be provided or administered in a quick and efficient manner? One way is to use traditional groups such as tribes that have had experience in performing local governance roles and functions.

Examples of using tribes to deliver local governance services are easily found. During the 1990s, deteriorating economic conditions and crumbling governance institutions caused Saddam Hussein to use tribes to govern at the local level.

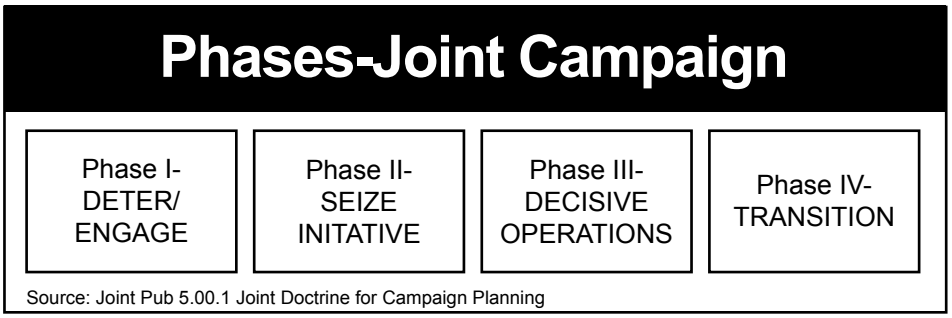

Figure 4. Phases of a Joint Campaign .

> Major tribes, mostly Sunnis, were charged with national security tasks; minor tribes took local duties such as law and order, disputed settlement and tax collection. All were encouraged to operate as an extension of state organs. The revival of the tribes as social actors stems from the need to fill the void created by the destruction of civil society institutions, and from the decline of the state itself as the provider of security and justice.[33]

Dr. Dawn Chatty, a Middle Eastern anthropologist, provides a more positive example. Dr. Chatty provides valuable insights into the use of existing local institutions to deliver infrastructure services. The solution is services to the tribe by the tribe. The beneficiaries are the local Bedouin tribal community. In the desolate interior Omani town of Haima, the Bahkiit brothers, respected members of the Harasiis tribe, contributed to their own personal as well as the community's welfare.

> Recently in 1986 the Ministry of Water and Electricity required a company to grade a road from Haima to a nearby oil installation. A number of local trading companies owned by other Harasiis tribes men sought the contract. It was awarded to the Bahkiit brothers in part because their tender was lower than the others, but also in some measure for past services rendered. Several years earlier when the Ministry of Water and Electricity had been unable to find a local contractor to transport water to the newly opened boarding school at the rate the government was prepared to pay—almost half the rate offered by the local subcontractors of the oil companies operating in the region, the Bakhiit brothers stepped in rather than see the school opening postponed another year. In an area as vast and as sparsely populated as the Jhiddat il Harassiis, little is private and the Bakiit brothers quickly came to be viewed as local source of support for the community as a whole.[34]

*Insights***.** Using tribal contributions as a "means" or a resource of achieving multinational operational success has advantages and disadvantages. One advantage of employing the organizational strength of tribes is that historically they have provided valued assistance to intelligence, security and law

enforcement, combat arms, and civil affairs capabilities. Recognition of this "means" as a functional support tool is not explicitly stated in the NMS. Considering the broad range of nations across the "arc of instability" that are comprised of ethnic-tribal units, one could implicitly deduce that tribes are included as part of "multinational capability" in the NMS. A second advantage to using tribes as a resource provider ("means") is that tribes bring unique cultural and physical geographic knowledge to the success of any military operation. Tribes know the terrain, the language, and the culture; tribes contribute to the cultural learning of American military forces.

Conversely, incorporating tribes as part of a multinational capability may not encourage democratic or modernizing practices among the society as a whole. More specifically, U.S. associations with tribes may be interpreted as a silent agreement to practices such as discrimination against women or tribal out-groups. Similarly, it is hoped that the sins (mandated settlement policies, land use restrictions, and failure to honor tribal treaty commitments) of colonial tribal policies are not carried forward into the 21st century by U.S. military commands. A distinct disadvantage in working with tribes as a "means" to strategy success is fragmentation. Depending on geographic location, tribal connections among members may not be as coherent as in the past.

End: Building the Infrastructure of Democracy.

Expanding the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy is a key part of the NSS and the NMS. This encourages and enables people to rule themselves in a representative fashion and defend themselves from the bonds of tyranny and terrorism. It also lessens the demands on U.S. military forces, as enablers of the National Security Strategy, to intervene on behalf of free people from the yoke of tyranny. More free democratic nations in the world equals less of a probability for U.S military intervention.

A central component in this paper is the role of tribes in achieving the "end"—this is to say the infrastructure of democracy as cited in the NSS. Can tribes act as a building block to foster Middle Eastern democratic institutions and thus lessen the need for military intervention? Are democratic values or traits common or even inherent to tribal social fabric? For example, is it seen that tribes are representative in nature, intent on securing public health services (i.e., inoculations), emphasizing education for all, developing economic markets, and promoting equal justice and the rule of law? In some cases, examples of tribal representative leadership can be found in the Bedouin community that exists throughout many countries in the Arabian Peninsula. Shaykhs take on representative roles of their Bedouin tribal community, not unlike an alderman in Chicago's urban environment. Further exploration of building the infrastructure of democracy through tribes in several Middle Eastern countries is now discussed.

Jordan. At the very core of the discussion of building Middle Eastern democracies is the existence of democratic values or norms. Certain tribal customs or traits in various countries throughout the Middle East have exhibited some parallel form of traditional Western democratic values or norms. Analogous to a farmer planting a crop, tribes may be a seed upon which Jordan is growing a democratic society. One unique Middle Eastern technique is the process of conflict resolution to provide justice. This is a mediation session in the local community carried out by members of a clan who have senior status or are well-respected. Some view the process nebulously, or not on par with Western style justice. Yet, it can be considered as a building block, and Jordanian society accepts it as a method of justice.

> A significant process that has contributed to civil society in the Middle East for generations . . . the indigenous process of conflict resolution used to settle disputes at the local level before, after, or instead of resorting to formal civil and Islamic courts. This local area of conflict resolution, rather than newly formed political parties, recent elections, or new voluntary associations, lies at the heart of civil society in Jordan.[35]

Another hallmark of democratic rights is freedom of assembly and speech. Western society views the ability to gather and speak freely on topics or issues of concern to the public as an essential right. Protesting in support of or against an issue is permitted and encouraged in many Western countries. Public protests like demonstrations are not usually allowed in Middle Eastern states and published protests are sometimes censored, but vocal opposition is quite often tolerated.

The free elections held in Afghanistan in the fall of 2004 represented a major step in that society's march to democracy. A similar goal is targeted for Iraq in January 2005. This will allow the people of Iraq to vote for their future. Jordan has held elections in support of its constitutional monarchy over the past decades. Jordan's tribes have played a significant part in their country's elections over the past decades, and helped the King stabilize the country. In fact, tribes may be considered as an example of a form of a representative polity.

> In the recent Jordanian election . . . tribal leaders on the other hand won 49 seats, with the remaining ten seats divided between the leftists and nationalists . . . four years were not enough for the Islamists to defeat the oldest, most legitimate and most persistent organization in Arab society: the tribe.[36]

In essence, tribal affiliations have been used as a quasi-political party to secure the votes of its members and seats in parliament. These tribal seats in Jordan's "Congress" provide a representative voice in local or state government; a democratic trait. Representing a group of citizens concerns and needs is the essence of representative government. Consulting with government on behalf of a constituency is a key function of the representative, and in this case the tribal representative. Jordan's tribes, while not an ideal model from a Western viewpoint, do provide a form of representative voice. Richard Antoun writes that:

> While neither family nor tribe is regarded as a civil society institution in traditional writings on civil society, both must be considered in any discussion of Jordan that seeks to understand those forces that serve as a buffer between the state and society, as well as those forces that may play a role in furthering the liberalization process. [37]

*Yemen***.** Yemen is a country not particularly known for its stability. On the contrary, it is primarily known more for its backwardness and as a haven for terrorism. This young nation-state is dominated by tribal alliances and confederacies. One might state that neither democratic organizations nor any form of legal guarantees in Yemen are in any congealed shape. Some even offer that Yemeni society is "primordial" in nature, and that any comment about the democratic nature of Yemeni society would be akin to lunacy.

> Part of the resolution of this paradox rest on whether we accept the notion that "primordial" is the opposite of civil, so that civil society necessarily excludes activities organized on a tribal religious or regional basis. Many urban intellectuals positively balk at the notion that anything associated with tribes can be regarded as civil . . . enduring tribal loyalties, occasional vengeances or banditry, and patron-client relations between Shaykhs and followers all impede the formation of modern civil institutions.[38]

Other perspectives offer that instead of viewing Yemeni society as primordial, perhaps looking for early seeds of democratic values may be a more useful perspective. Tribes in Yemeni society, as in other Middle Eastern societies, may, in fact, possess democratic traits, which might indicate a potential for growth to a more mature stage such as in Jordan. While not on a par of Western society, rough-hewn building blocks in Yemeni tribal traditions can help to create a democratic society. During the period from May 1990 to April 1993, tribal democratic traits surfaced.

> It might be argued that tribal organization has its democratic elements: elections to Shaykhships, a consensus mode of decisionmaking, an ethic of equality among tribesmen, and a form of political organization capable,

> at least in the north, or protecting its members and clients from the abuses of state power. . . . Among the most remarkable developments during the 3-year transition period were seven or eight tribal conferences attended by tens of thousands of men, publishing resolutions demanding the rule of law, pluralism, local elections, fiscal responsibility, other civic demands, and arranging for mediation of tribal disputes.[39]

Comparing the condition of Yemeni society and the influence of tribal norms to some of the early "tribal" conditions of the United States may help to give some perspective on the formation of a democratic society. The use of various ethnic or so-called "tribal" groups, such as the Irish or Italians, as a polity or constituency in the mid-to-late 1800s in Boston or New York may be a reminder that the U.S. democratic process has had its own rough-hewn side, and some of those tendencies continue today.

*Kuwait***.** Kuwait's society offers a small opening in the window of a well-controlled quasi-democratic society. The al-Sabah tribe, similar in nature to the al-Saud tribe in Saudi Arabia, controls the governance of Kuwait society. The freedoms of assembly and representative government are present, but severely limited. Like other Middle Eastern societies, the particular nature of assembly to discuss and debate issues is found in the form of the *diwaniyaa*. "The Kuwaiti tradition of the diwaniyya, a form of public meeting based in the home and therefore beyond the scope of the law governing public assembly, has provided an alternative forum for the discussion of politics, or any other subject, relatively unimpeded by the state."[40] Thus a democratic trait can be seen in Kuwait society.

Regarding representative government, again limited steps are seen, and other democratic institutions have been initiated. Some of these institutions may not be tribally centered, yet understanding the tribal basis of Middle Eastern societies causes one to reflect on how much tribal influence and support has gone to building democratic institutions.

> Kuwait offers a rich case study of an Arab society in which citizens have striven over decades to keep the state "within substantive and procedural confinement." To do so, Kuwaitis have sought to create the institutions of a civil society including: a representative parliamentary democracy, a free press, an independent judiciary, and organizations representative of various interest groups independent of government control.[41]

Oman. Oman's social organization is predominantly tribal. Tribal social organization, however, does not assume exclusion of basic democratic values. Fundamental values of free economic opportunity and trade, representative leaders, and belief in the promise of an education in order to advance in society are common to tribal members in Oman.

One particular Bedouin tribal organizational trait recognizes the responsibility of tribal leadership to represent the tribe, interface with the state, and negotiate agreements with sedentary communities on behalf of the tribes.

> The pivotal position in that organization is the Shaykh. He is the central leader and traditionally enjoys a vast and ill-defined field of privileges and commands. He regularly exercises authority over pasture allocation, settling of disputes, and representation of the tribe to sedentary peoples or central authorities.[42]

Insights. Positive as well as negative insights on the role of tribes as a building block towards the infrastructure of democracy can be drawn. First, from a positive perspective, tribes actively progress and mature, developing the foundations for a democratic society, as seen in Jordan. That is not to say it is an ideal model, but a source of stability in governance. Second, tribes have several inherent democratic traits that are somewhat similar in nature to those of Western society. These are forums for discussion of issues, a consensus mode of decisionmaking, representation of the interests of tribal members to the state and other communities, an ethic of equality among tribesmen, and the promotion of education.

A more sanguine view is that comparisons between tribal and Western democratic traits cannot be made easily. This is due to the lack of women's rights, dominance of a paternalistic structure, and the constant factionalism and resulting instability of Middle Eastern countries built upon tribal organizations. The presence of security-based states, many of which are founded upon a primordial tribal culture, is the primary counter explanation for the absence of true democratic values. However, the examples of Jordan and Turkey indicate that the positive democratic traits of tribes can be used as a foundation for furthering the construction of democratic states.

CONCLUSIONS

Several conclusions emerge from the discussion thus far. These conclusions are linked to the essential elements of analysis and the thesis at large.

Tribes Not Explicitly Considered in NMS.

Relationships, alliances, coalitions, or partnerships with tribes are not an explicit consideration of the NSS or NMS. Likewise, the contributing tools (Figure 1) of military power make no reference to the potential for tribal coalitions or surrogate partnerships. Why? Perhaps tribes' presence and potential are relevant to operational tactics, and invisible on the radar screen of national security policymakers, and applicable only at the theater level.

However, the scope of this paper is limited. Other national level security policy documents such as the *Strategic Plan* for the U.S. Department of State and other like documents represent fertile fields for further investigation.

Tribes Offer Value in All Bands of the Spectrum.

Tribal organizations have been a valued partner primarily in the peace and stability operations box of the spectrum of military operations as seen in Figure 3. This is evidenced by contributions of the Kurds in Northern Iraq and the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. Tribes may hold the potential for operational efficiency beyond peace and stability operations. However, one must recognize the strengths and weaknesses in this proposition. Opportunities abound for specific investigation into how tribes can further contribute across the full spectrum of military operations. How tribal organizational structures in one particular country (Iraq) may provide inter-regional (Iran, Afghanistan, and Sudan) insights into another country in the Central Command (CENTCOM) area of operations (AO) or other Combatant Commands (COCOMs) is another research area ripe with potential.

Recognize Socio-Political Aspects of Tribes.

We should recognize and assess the inherent advantages and disadvantages (Table 1) of tribes if we intend to turn to them in the interests of national security.

Potential for Functional Capability through Tribes.

There is potential for enhancing functional capability that goes beyond the current usage of tribes to provide combat arms, intelligence, security and law enforcement, and civil affairs services. Specifically, exploring the inherent capacity of tribes to provide engineering, medical, and educational assistance is an area for further consideration and investigation. Examples of tribal functional contributions in the CENTCOM AO show potential as a force multiplier, and a source of additional capacity for border

ADVANTAGES*	DISADVANTAGES*
Enduring social institution: established social institution that provides members a sense of social identity; heterogeneous in terms of culture, presumed origins and perhaps class	*Fragmentation*: tribes in area may not be coherent social groups; can be vertically divided; one section may enthusiastically cooperate while another opposes it
Local representation: serves as a buffer between the state and society; acts as a patron on behalf of a client (tribal member) to the state	*Illusion of representative power*: tribal shaykh may have enjoyed past support of state or tribe; it may no longer be clear this support extends beyond the Shaykh/senior elders
Collaborative discourse: acts as a focal point serving as centers for protest and resistance; forms basis for neighborhood cooperatives; promotes consultation and brainstorming through structures like the *majlis* or *diwaniyya*	*Endogamy*: fosters familialism and patrimonialism, while bolstering patriarchy; power holder and challengers alike primarily rely upon and trust their own family network
Conflict resolution: provide indigenous process of conflict resolution used to settle disputes at the local level before, after, or instead of resort to formal civil and Islamic courts	*Vengeance retribution*: product of enduring tribal loyalties, occasional vengeances or banditry, and patron-client relations between Shaykhs and followers all impede the formation of modern civil institutions
Latent (to Westerners) democratic traits: possess a consensus mode of decisionmaking; an ethic of equality among tribesmen, and a form of political organization capable of protecting its members and clients from the abuses of state	*Leadership through power struggles*: tribal leadership is completely at the mercy of its lack of organizing principle other than custom
Engine for regime change: may provide local and regional pressure to affect current state; affects a favorable balance of power/ regime change	*Unfavorable balance of power*: provides disadvantage to those nontribal residents of tribally-dominated areas; can tip the balance of power—locally and regionally
Diplomatic characteristics: possess mechanisms of diplomacy: patron-client relations, influential third-party mediator	*Sustainable alliances*: temporary alliances can ultimately cloud downstream relations with government
Armed force multiplier: source of armed fighting force; brings a code of chivalry; ways of rallying armed men to a cause; tradition of military excellence—the Ikhwan in Saudi Arabia or the Arab Legion in Jordan	*Lack of military discipline*: armed fighting force is untested and unreliable; subject to whims of operational environment and labor market
Military functional roles: have provided valued functional assistance to intelligence and security and law enforcement capabilities	*Nepotism*: having a particular family name, or having a relative in a particular position in business means opportunity
*Note: depending on perspective, advantages can be seen as disadvantages and visa versa	

Table 1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Tribal Alliances.

patrol, intelligence gathering, local law enforcement and adjudication, and other military support roles. This is particularly significant in countries where traditional public administrative or governance institutions are absent. Tribes become important because they provide a sense of community, representation of local population's needs—such as employment—and a local information data source.

RECOMMENDATIONS

NSS and NMS should utilize all elements and tools of power at its disposal. In a military area of operations, particularly in countries in the Middle East that are lacking adequate traditional state-

based public administrative organizations or institutions, U.S. national military policy must recognize the value that tribes can bring to the spectrum of military operations. Recognition of the potential value of tribal organizations, particularly in the "arc of instability stretching from the Western Hemisphere, through Africa and the Middle East, and extending to Asia,"[43] and specific planning and policies implemented with the tribes will enhance successful peace and stability operations. The following recommendations are offered to further facilitate national military policy success.

Create Tribal Partnerships with Tribes.

The geographic distribution of tribes across the globe (especially the Middle East and the Islamic World), the contribution of tribes past and present to the "ways" (Figure 2) of successful strategy, and the potential value of tribes as a force capability multiplier are three reasons to consider tribal partnerships as an explicit tool (Figure 1) of national security policy.

Explore Tribal Utility.

There is potential for tribes to contribute to the success of national military strategy across the spectrum of military operations (Figure 3). Tribes have and are contributing to the success of military operations in many portions of the spectrum of military operations. Additionally, they have exhibited success in providing functional capacity (intelligence and law enforcement) and acting as a force multiplier. Further work is recommended to explore and evaluate the viability of tribal organizations contributing to other bands of the spectrum of military operations and other military functional specialties in all COCOMS.

Use Tribes Across All Campaign Phases.

Tribes, as highlighted in this paper, have made significant contributions to successful Phase III-Decisive Operations (Figure 4) of joint campaigns—particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq. U.S. policymakers should use tribes across other phases of joint campaigns. Specifically: examine using diplomatic power to engage tribes now to build and shape future alliances; expand cooperative work with tribes and other cultural groups that can contribute to security efforts in the seize initiative phase of a joint campaign; continue use of tribes to achieve success in decisive operations phase of joint campaign; and, determine use of tribal capabilities in the transition phase of a campaign.

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