



Journal of
**Conflict
Transformation
and
Security**

Vol. 10 | No. 1 | 2023

ISSN: 2045-1903

Bianntual, peer-reviewed. Published by CESRAN International

Journal of Conflict Transformation & Security



Journal of Conflict Transformation & Security

Editors-in-Chief:

Prof. Alpaslan Özerdem – alpozerdem [at] cesran.org

Prof. Nergis Canefe – jcts.editors [at] cesran.org

Book Editor:

Prof. Nur Koprulu – jcts.editors [at] cesran.org

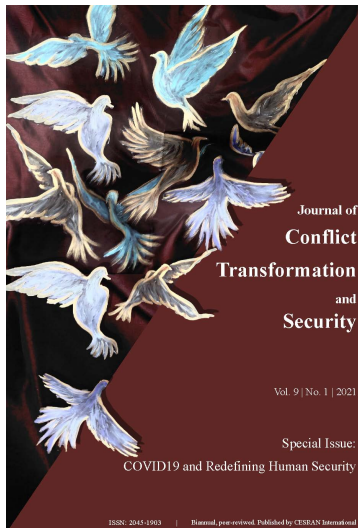
Editorial Board*:

- **Galya Benarieh**, Northwestern University, USA
- **Nasreen Chowdhory**, University of Delhi, India
- **Kenneth Christie**, Royal Roads University, Canada
- **Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón**, African Centre of Excellence for Inequality Research (University of Cape Town), South Africa
- **Marisa Ensor**, Georgetown University, USA
- **Scott Gates**, PRIO, Norway
- **Cathy Gormley-Heenan**, University of Ulster, UK
- **Paul Gready**, University of York, UK
- **Fen Hampson**, Carleton University, Canada
- **Tim Jacoby**, University of Manchester, UK
- **Khalid Khoser**, Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Switzerland
- **Roger Mac Ginty**, Durham University, UK
- **Mansoor Murshed**, ISS at Erasmus University and Coventry University
- **Emanuele Sommario**, Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, Italy
- **Arne Strand**, CMI, Norway
- **Mandy Turner**, University of Manchester, UK

The Journal of Conflict Transformation & Security is published on behalf of the Centre for Strategic Research and Analysis (CESRAN) as bi-annual academic e-journal. The articles are brought into use via the website of CESRAN (www.cesran.org). CESRAN and the Editors of the Journal of Conflict Transformation & Security do not expect that readers of the review will sympathise with all the sentiments they find, for some of our writers will flatly disagree with others. It does not accept responsibility for the views expressed in any article, which appears in the Journal of Conflict Transformation & Security.

* The surnames are listed in alphabetical order.

INDEXING & ABSTRACTING



- EconLit
- Genamics JournalSeek
- Index Copernicus
- Index Islamicus
- Peace Palace Library

The Journal of Conflict Transformation and Security (JCTS) provides a platform to analyse conflict transformation and security as processes for managing change in non-violent ways to produce equitable outcomes for all parties that are sustainable. A wide range of human security concerns can be tackled by both hard and soft measures, therefore the Journal's scope not only covers such security sector reform issues as restructuring security apparatus, reintegration of ex-combatants, clearance of explosive remnants of war and cross-border management, but also the protection of human rights, justice, rule of law and governance. JCTS explores the view that by addressing conflict transformation and security holistically it is possible to achieve a high level of stability and human security, requiring interventions at both policy and practitioner level. These would include conflict management, negotiated peace agreements, peacekeeping, physical reconstruction, economic recovery, psycho-social support, rebuilding of primary services such as education and health, and enabling social cohesion. Other macro-level governance issues from constitution writing to state accountability and human resource management also need to be considered as part of this process of change.

Peer-reviewed | Academic journal

By **CESRAN International** (Centre for Strategic Research and Analysis)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARTICLES

7

Editor's Introduction to the Special Issue On the Protracted Crisis in Afghanistan - Decolonial Perspectives

By Susanne Schmeidl and Mujib Abid

12

Cultural Biases in Contemporary U.S. Afghan Policy

By Morwari Zafar

26

Failing to Decolonise Knowledge Production in the Periphery: The Compromise of Afghan Research and Higher Education 2001-2021

By Jeremy Simpson

42

Taliban Performativity through the Distortive Orientalist Looking Glass

By Sepi Azerbaijani-Moghaddam

57

Beyond *Watan*: Valency of Place among a Fragmented Afghanistan Diaspora

By Zarlisht Sarwari

INTERVIEW

69

Interview with Hamid Parafshan and Omer Sabore

By Mujib Abid

BOOK REVIEWS

76

Omar Sadr

Negotiating Cultural Diversity in Afghanistan

By Mejgan Massoumi

82

My Pen is the Wing of a Bird. New Fiction by Afghan Women
&

Andrea Chiovenda

Crafting Masculine Selves: Culture, War, and Psychodynamics in Afghanistan

By Sari Kouvo

ARTISTIC INTERVENTIONS

89

Art as Hope, Art as Refuge, Art to Give Voice: Suffering and Hopes of Women in Afghanistan

By Tamana Barakzai

International Think-tank www.cesran.org

Consultancy

Research Institute

CESRAN International is headquartered in the UK

CESRAN International is a member of the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI)

CESRAN International is a think-tank specialising on international relations in general, and global peace, conflict and development related issues and challenges.

The main business objective/function is that we provide expertise at an international level to a wide range of policy making actors such as national governments and international organisations. CESRAN with its provisions of academic and semi-academic publications, journals and a fully-functioning website has already become a focal point of expertise on strategic research and analysis with regards to global security and peace. The Centre is particularly unique in being able to bring together wide variety of expertise from different countries and academic disciplines.

The main activities that CESRAN undertakes are providing consultancy services and advice to public and private enterprises, organising international conferences and publishing academic material.

Some of CESRAN's current publications are:

- THE REST: Journal of Politics and Development (tri-annual, peer reviewed) www.therestjournal.com
- Journal of Conflict Transformation and Security (biannual, peer reviewed)
- Political Reflection Magazine (quarterly) www.politicalreflectionmagazine.com
- CESRAN Paper Series
- CESRAN Policy Brief
- Turkey Focus Policy Brief

CESRAN International also organises an annual international conference since 2014

International Conference on Eurasian Politics and Society (IEPAS)

www.eurasianpoliticsandsociety.org

- **Ranked among the top 150 International think tanks**

The Old West and The Wild East: Cultural Biases in Contemporary U.S. Afghan Policy

Morwari Zafar*

Georgetown University

ABSTRACT

Abstract: The collapse of the Afghan state in August 2021 to the Taliban has ushered many explanations to account for the United States' (U.S.) and international community's failure to anticipate and prepare for the eventuality. Many Afghans, who fought socially, politically, or militarily against the Taliban under the umbrella of the international community, have been left to deal with the retribution. Looking specifically at the American context, I argue that Afghans were essentialized into cultural caricatures, which enabled the senior U.S. political leadership to absolve America of any further obligation to its allies. By deconstructing the cultural knowledge upon which American military and political strategy revolved, this paper will uncover the deep-seated biases that instrumentalized Afghan culture into a reference point for America's victory in the country as well as its failure.

Keywords: *Afghanistan, knowledge production, colonialism, culture, and counterinsurgency*

Biographical Note: Morwari Zafar is an adjunct professor of Afghanistan's Political History at Georgetown University. She has worked in both the international development and defense sectors, focusing on diaspora engagement. She served as a Next Generation National Security Leaders Fellow at the Center for a New American Security in 2016, and is currently a research fellow at the University of Oxford's Rothermere American Institute conducting an ethnographic study of militias and gun rights activism in the state of Virginia. Morwari is the founder/CEO of The Sentient Group, a human-centered research, education, and training consultancy. She holds a PhD in Social Anthropology from the University of Oxford.

"I have never been of the view that we should be sacrificing American lives to try to establish a democratic government in Afghanistan — a country that has never once in its entire history been a united country, and is made up — and I don't mean this in a derogatory way — made up of different tribes who have never, ever, ever gotten along with one another."

-Joseph Biden, President of the United States of America, 2020-present¹

President Biden's comments in the wake of the United States' haphazard withdrawal from Afghanistan perhaps came as a shock to many Afghans, largely because the myth of endemic discord belied the truth. Surely, the sitting U.S. president would recall the stretches of peaceful governance and relative economic growth prior to the long-term destabilization incurred by the U.S.-Soviet proxy war in Afghanistan from 1978 to 1989. However, President Biden's comments resonated with my observations from an ethnographic research project on American-led cultural knowledge production and the U.S. war in Afghanistan, which forms the basis of this paper. Five years prior to Biden's statement and the withdrawal, I sat across a desk from a U.S. Army Captain during an interview, watching his features animate in thought under the sallow light of his office. An Information Operations Specialist, he presented me with various pre-deployment training materials that aimed to help U.S. military personnel navigate Afghanistan's complex social landscape. He reflected on the futility of America's venture, arguing that "you can see how everything is related to the tribes and the power play between [sic] them [...] But the more you read about how they think and why they think that way, you realize that we're fighting a never-ending war."² Such ideas informed my main finding – that U.S. military and civilian leaders I interviewed pointed to reconstructed notions of Afghan history, culture, and social customs as a frame of reference for the failures of America's ambitions in Afghanistan. Biden's and the Army Captain's beliefs replicated the idea that despite

Western attempts at progressive governance and accountability, Afghanistan's perceived inherent characteristics rendered conflict a *fait accompli*.

This article, by drawing upon a thematic analysis of fieldwork interviews and literature produced on Afghanistan, answers how and why America has been able to sidestep its political responsibility in Afghanistan. Specifically, the article elucidates the elements of the relationship between Orientalized reconstructions of 'Afghanistan' and 'Afghans' and the disastrous denouement of America's war in the country. I argue that the U.S. national security and foreign policy apparatus, buttressed by the U.S. military-industrial complex, systematically privileged Westernized historiographies over the realities of Afghanistan's political history, engineering revisionist narratives as touchpoints for policy justifications that infringed on Afghanistan's national sovereignty and, most importantly, the lives of the Afghan people. I will first discuss the content of U.S. military pre-deployment training materials through which Afghanistan's socio-political history was continually reconstituted and address the concepts and ideas that emerged through such reproductions.

Secondly, to emphasize the latter point, I highlight the trope of 'Cowboys-and-Indians' rhetoric in the way the U.S. military demonstrated their understanding of Afghans and Afghan culture. The image is as emblematic of the U.S. government's and military's desired subjugation of Afghan tribes and communities, as it has been of its prior attempts to defeat First Nation confederations. I conclude the paper by underscoring how such tropes and essentialized narratives has allowed America to excuse itself for the unabashed betrayal of its Afghan counterparts to the Taliban, while continuing to oversee the erasure of Afghanistan's social memory and civil society.

Background & Methodology

In the years following the 11 September 2001 Al Qaeda attacks in the United States, the U.S.

¹Biden, Joseph, "Terror attack at Airport," 26 August 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/08/26/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-terror-attack-at-hamid-karzai-international-airport/>

² Zafar, Morwari, COIN-Operated Anthropology: cultural knowledge, American counterinsurgency, and the rise of the Afghan diaspora, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. University of Oxford, 2017.

government's response in Afghanistan increasingly resembled neo-colonial mythmaking to justify occupation. While Afghanistan was not directly involved in the attacks, the presence of Osama Bin Laden, Al Qaeda's senior leader, in Afghanistan compelled the U.S. to launch strikes against the Taliban, his protector, whose Islamic emirate presided over a draconian anti-West theocracy – a regime that re-emerged in 2021 with America's support. In the bewildering negotiations of war and peace, the U.S. government, especially during the U.S. military's counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign from roughly 2009-2012, generated an entire industry around knowledge production that could seemingly decode Afghanistan as the mythical graveyard of the empires, aloof to the reality of Afghanistan as a functioning state for decades prior to the Soviet Invasion in 1978.

The inaccessibility of Afghanistan both as a complex terrain and as a culture so divergent from the West became referent point for the challenges America faced in winning the war against the Taliban and instituting a government supportive of U.S. interests in the region. To better access Afghanistan, the U.S. military-industrial complex took charge in marshalling indiscriminate expertise that would ultimately distort the U.S.-led war as internecine warfare among Afghans, who have “never, ever, ever gotten along.” Led by defense contracting companies and funded by the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. effort centered on the Afghan-American diaspora as local proxies of Afghans in Afghanistan³. As contractors, some Afghan-American were cultural and linguistic interlocutors, tasked with helping the U.S. government communicate across a culture divide. In much the same way, local Afghan translators also assisted U.S. forces against the Taliban, earning Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) to immigrate to the U.S. due to the risk of retribution in country.

The research upon which this paper is based was partly auto-ethnographic, as my initial research questions crystalized while I worked as a consultant on a military pre-deployment training program. With my doctoral inquiry as a point of departure, I was compelled by the collapse of Afghanistan to the Taliban regime in

August 2021, and America's political maneuvering as it As an Afghan-American woman, I became fascinated by the wildly differing narratives of Afghanistan that emerged from other Afghan-American contractors, the U.S. military and foreign policy communities, and Washington D.C. think tanks. Absent amongst us was the voices of Afghans local to Afghanistan. The experience culminated in a four-year doctoral research project on cultural knowledge production for U.S. counterinsurgency operations, through which I examined the U.S. government's use of Afghan-American contractors as translators, cultural advisors, and role-players. Afghan-Americans were asked to interpret for their American supervisors yet denied an equal and meaningful voice in American foreign policymaking. From 2013-2016, I conducted semi-structured, qualitative interviews with 58 Afghan-American contractors from the San Francisco Bay Area, California, and the Washington D.C. metro area (primarily northern Virginia); the largest diaspora hubs in America. In addition, I conducted interviews with 45 U.S. military personnel across the military services. During that time, I also made observations of 10 training events to better understand the production, application, and performance of knowledge about Afghanistan as part of U.S. government-sponsored cultural education programs. The term U.S. military-industrial complex is employed throughout this paper to define the public and private sector entities that develop, implement, and/or fund American security initiatives domestically and internationally. The original research, produced for a dissertation, has been adapted here by adding some textual analysis of influential documents to address the evolution of biases that has allowed the U.S. government to ignore obligations to the Afghan people after 20 years of a protracted war.

Literature Review

In analyzing my findings for this paper, I drew on Talal Asad's pioneering work on colonial encounters to explore the relationship between knowledge, power, and the creation of colonial subjects⁴. Generalized anthropological representations of colonial subjects were as

³ Monsutti, “Anthropologising Afghanistan,” 269.

⁴ Talal Asad, *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*.

indispensable to colonial rule in the nineteenth century, as they have been in the post-colonial Western security state, and is an apt overarching framework for the analysis of the cultural knowledge production discussed in this article. Asad views cultural translation, as a facet of knowledge production, 'is inevitably enmeshed in conditions of power [...] Given that is so, the interesting question for enquiry is [...] how power enters into the process'.⁵ Asad's critique offers a vantage point for the relationships between contractors elicited as experts and vested with the authority to define Afghanistan and the military and government structures that appropriate and instrumentalize such knowledge. In the administration of U.S. political and economic power in Afghanistan, the military-industrial complex was part and parcel of constructing a new Afghan imaginary. And in articulating its control, the U.S. government co-opted Afghan-American contractors as neo-colonial mechanisms and the closest proximation of a distant civilization. During my fieldwork, the decision-makers in the U.S. government and military I encountered would often sidestep and legitimize biased descriptions of Afghans and Afghanistan. Pointing to the inclusion of a handful of Afghan-Americans who had provided 'native' expertise, policymakers remained blind to the dynamics of the diaspora, such as migration experiences, class, and social status, that might compromise the objectivity of their knowledge and observations.

Such "comprador intellectuals" are at the heart of Hamid Dabashi's critique in *Brown Skin, White Masks*. Drawing on the experience of Iranian and/or Muslim thinkers in America, he exposes the problematic effect of race and neo-colonialism in the way knowledge is produced and performed. Said's discourse on Orientalism is useful in understanding the essence of Dabashi's argument. Said illuminates the relationships that enable the articulation and reconstitution of distant places and people. He writes:

For decades, the Orientalists had spoken about the Orient, they had translated texts, they had explained civilizations,

religions, dynasties, cultures, mentalities [...] The Orientalist was an expert [...], whose job in society was to interpret the Orient for his compatriots. The relation between Orientalist and Orient was essentially hermeneutical: standing before a distant, barely intelligible civilization or cultural monument, the Orientalist scholar reduced the obscurity by translating, sympathetically portraying, inwardly grasping the hard-to-reach object.⁶

Dabashi's native informers are effectively Orientalist scholars, lauded and rewarded by the American government and institutions specifically because they choose to reify, legitimize, and perpetuate the machinations that extend the reach of Western imperialism⁷. Dabashi's and Said's arguments aptly contextualize my observations and findings. Devoid of influence in the U.S., Afghan-American contractors specifically capitalized on cultural knowledge and translation opportunities as an entry into a sphere of power and authority, otherwise unavailable.

Extending the context on race and colonialism, the literature on the language and imagery of America's colonization of Native Americans, also provides a framework through which to view the discussion in this paper. The U.S. military-industrial complex, over the course of the Global War on Terror and thereafter, has straddling the line between fact and fiction in producing material on Afghans and Afghanistan. The knowledge and media needed to sustain the projection of U.S. power formed an idea of Afghanistan firmly steeped in a colonial legacy reflecting Asad's "crisis of representation".⁸ During my interviews with non-Afghan participants, both military and civilian, even creative fiction, such as the acclaimed *The Kite Runner* by Khalid Hosseini, was alluded to with as much authority as an ethnographic, academic text. Despite America's stated intentions to support post-war economic development and women's rights, for example, the rhetoric and imagery likening Afghanistan to the early American frontier wars tells of domination, not assistance. In an analysis of the 'Indian country'

⁵ Asad, "The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology," 163.

⁶ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 222.

⁷ Hamid Dabashi, *Brown Skin White Masks*.

⁸ Asad, "The Concept of Translation in British Social Anthropology," 163.

imagery of the 'Wild West,' Stephen Silliman examines the application of such metaphors by the U.S. military in the U.S.-occupied Iraq and Afghanistan.⁹ Silliman's work is important in deconstructing the problematic characterization of individuals such as Noor Afzal, an Afghan tribal elder, as "Sitting Bull," by former U.S. Army Major James Gant in his concept paper *One Tribe At a Time*, a proposal on winning the war in Afghanistan.¹⁰ Sitting Bull was the prominent Hunkpapa Lakota Chief, who resisted U.S. government policies to subdue and subjugate Native American populations. Gant's intention may have been one of respect, but the fact that the framing of the experience and encounter drew upon America's own colonial past is a recognition of the disparity in power and the vestiges of a White Savior Complex. Furthermore, Silliman notes a rhetoric colored by the conquest of the First Nations also affects citizen-state modalities between the U.S. government and present day Native Americans. The use of the colonial terms and eponyms "represents the language of colonization in the present. Summoning this kind of metaphor for a military effort in the Middle East conveys that the occupying troops are agents of colonization, imperialism, and the presumed highest orders of civilization."¹¹ Silliman notes that the comparison is challenging for Native Americans in the U.S. military, whose identities as Americans are so flippantly associated with foreign adversaries, terrorists, and insurgents. In the occupation of Afghanistan, Afghan-Americans have not fared much better. Many contractors within the diaspora have watched as the knowledge they helped circulate to assist U.S. military forces has cannibalized the integrity of their own cultural heritage, enabling U.S. leaders to shrug off any responsibility in the collapse of the Afghan state to the Taliban and its rapid erosion of human rights.

Reconstructing the Wild East

In 2009, the U.S. government, under former president Barack Obama, took concerted steps towards stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. I was then working as program officer on a U.S. Agency of International Development (USAID) project, based in the capital, Kabul. At the same time, the U.S. military began to work closely on coordinating development projects with aid agencies, a task that blurred the line between security and international development. Recognizing that the provision of aid was a conduit to "winning hearts and minds," the U.S. government's and military's approach morphed from solely counter-terrorism to counterinsurgency from roughly 2009 to 2012 (although a more diluted form of COIN would be sustained once the U.S. mission shifted to training, advising, and assisting the Afghan National Security and Defense Forces.¹² The effect of the evolution was far-reaching. In this section, I will present a thematic analysis of the material representations of Afghanistan produced by the U.S. military-industrial complex and abetted by Afghan-American contractors as 'native' experts.

Among the array of materials developed to elucidate Afghanistan, the Master Narratives developed by the U.S. Directorate of National Intelligence's Open Source Center spoke volumes about the caricaturization of Afghan culture and people.¹³ Sourced from "Afghan experts" in the diaspora and think-tank communities, the Narratives established a new threshold of expertise that relied on the experience of Afghan-Americans as sufficiently reflective of their presumed counterparts in Afghanistan, despite many being born in the United States or having been outside of the Afghanistan for more than two to three decades.¹⁴ The series of documents claims to be the "historically grounded stories that reflect a community's identity and experiences, or

⁹ Silliman, "The 'Old West' in the Middle East," 237.

¹⁰ Gant, Jim, "One Tribe At a Time," <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/one-tribe-at-a-time>.

¹¹ Silliman, "The 'Old West' in the Middle East," 243.

¹² U.S. Department of the Army, "Counterinsurgency Manual," <https://irp.fas.org/doddir/army/fm3-24.pdf>.

¹³ Open Source Center 2011.

<https://publicintelligence.net/ufouo-open-source-center-master-narratives-country-report-afghanistan/>

¹⁴ Open Source Center 2011: 40-42

explain its hopes, aspirations, and concerns [...] effective communicators in Afghanistan invoke master narratives in order to move audiences in a preferred direction”.¹⁵ During my research, I found that the stories oriented COIN professionals in crafting strategic communications and messaging to influence Afghans in support of American efforts instead of the Taliban. The master narratives presented six audience segments: Central Government Supporters, the Taliban, Pashtun Nationalists, Tajik Nationalists, Turkic Nationalists, and Hazara Nationalists, claiming the “condensed narrative description simulates the voice of someone who believes in the narrative itself, helping communicators and analysts immerse themselves in the mindset of the foreign audience”.¹⁶ The preoccupation with the “mindset” of Afghans not only meant that “foreign audiences” could explain their Eastern counterparts, but that their mindsets were knowable. Six Master Narratives with their corresponding audience segment (meaning who would espouse the ideology) comprised of The Great Game, Liberators of Afghanistan, Preserving Local Rule, Pakistan Takeover, and Right to Rule. Each of these constituted “outward looking narratives” and included an “inward looking” explanation that further articulated the beliefs. For example, the Taliban are noted as the audience segment who ascribe to the narrative Liberators of Afghanistan. The inward-looking account notes that they are:

Afghan freedom fighters [who] have always protected the people and liberated the country. Today the Taliban has inherited this jihad, leading the people against the most powerful army in the world. As their grandfathers and fathers did before them, Afghans must fight against the foreigners and their puppet government in order to restore the Islamic Emirate and Afghan independence.¹⁷

In attempting to capture the sentiments of the Taliban, the document denies the complex regional politics which spawned and

strengthened their movement. It implies that the Taliban see themselves as *indigenous* freedom fighters, homogenizing the group whose roots stretch deep into Pakistan and whose membership consists of the Haqqani Network, a terrorist organization now presiding over the state of Afghanistan.¹⁸ Inherent in the binary categorization of the Afghan psyche, per the narratives, is a denial of the tensions that exist in the negotiation of everyday life after a U.S.-led proxy war with the Soviet Union in the 1980s leading to a civil war, and the subsequent U.S. invasion during the Global War on Terror. That the Afghan population could be so easily segmented gives no consideration to the very real possibility that a Tajik nationalist may also support the central government, or enact different aspects of their identity according to the social worlds in which they had to operate. The profiles generated about Afghans lack the nuance that might otherwise be afforded to those in Western societies. Most gravely they afford an easy means for a foreign government, like the United States, to ambiguously legitimize a violent, extremist organization like the Taliban as a native byproduct of Afghanistan’s endemic turmoil. Consequently, the Master Narratives trap Afghans in simplistic vignettes of a perceived Afghan way of life, while offering limited authentic ethnographic data.

In my study, I also found that the oversimplification was further complicated by Afghan-American contractors who often repeated whatever they heard about the country in the absence of native expertise. Majid, one of my research participants, was an Afghan-American instructor for a large private defense contractor on a pre-deployment cultural orientation program¹⁹. Majid and I spoke after he had taught an hour course on cross-cultural understanding to a group of U.S. Army personnel for which he had donned a traditional woolen *pakol* hat and a *piran tumban*, an embroidered tunic and pants, to lend authenticity to the interaction. In his late 50s, Majid had not been to Afghanistan in 31 years in 2015. During the training, he had presented a slide drawing upon Geert

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Open Source Center 2011: 6

¹⁷ Open Source Center, Master Narratives, [https://publicintelligence.net/ufouo-open-source-](https://publicintelligence.net/ufouo-open-source-center-master-narratives-country-report-afghanistan/)

[center-master-narratives-country-report-afghanistan/](https://publicintelligence.net/ufouo-open-source-center-master-narratives-country-report-afghanistan/).

¹⁸ Thomas Ruttig, Loya Paktiya’s Insurgency.

¹⁹ Names of research participants have been pseudonymized.

Hofstede's *Six Dimensions of Culture* and Edward T. Hall's work on cultural contexts to further explain the difference between America and non-Western traditions.²⁰ A Dutch social psychologist, Hofstede wrote at length about the impact of national cultures on organizational behavior. Hall, on the other hand, was an American anthropologist chiefly concerned with the disparities in behavior and decision-making across the world. He discussed the effect of culture on communication, devising a binary structure through which the world could be divided into the modern and the traditional. During COIN, Hall's research was adapted in various cultural familiarization trainings I participated in and observed to make sense of the security and governance challenges America faced in Afghanistan, leading to conclusions that Afghanistan subscribed to "informal governance," and "collectivist" forms of social organization within a "high-context" culture"; a referent for the perceived insular focus on community, family, and relationships.²¹ Such constructs empowered diaspora contractors to emulate the formulaic generalizations they learned and experienced on the job. In our interview, Majid admitted:

the soldiers know more about Afghanistan than a lot of Afghans. Some of the presentations are so detailed I don't think many Afghans know the information [...] The high-context, low-context stuff was new to me [...] I learned to explain Afghan culture and the way Afghans are in the way that they [the U.S. military] talked about it [...] like explaining the backwards nature of Afghans because they are in traditional societies. But respect is very important to them because they are also high-context people.²²

Implicit in Majid's view was an 'us' and 'them' characterization that solidified the differences between the East and West, with Afghans constituting the savage masses. Rather than account for the historical forces of occupation and imperialism that have punctuated

Afghanistan's political and economic stability, their "backwardness" in opposition to Western progressiveness is discussed as innate, a product of a fixed social environment. Also missing from Majid's account is any critique of the limitations of the theoretical models so commonly applied to Afghanistan. Nor does it address how Afghanistan, and its urban and rural centers, may have evolved under the pressures of empire-building historically. During our conversation, Majid simply borrowed and reified tropes developed by the U.S. military-industrial complex. In defining what Said deemed a "hard-to-reach" object, Majid and others like him, perhaps unwittingly, continued to paint Afghanistan with a broad brushstroke, producing an essentialized image that could paradoxically justify invasion, intervention, withdrawal, and abandonment.

The fixation with tribes and a bucolic imagery of Afghanistan surfaced throughout my interviews and was reinforced by the rhetoric of senior government leaders. I was struck by the irony of 'expertise' – that it was so commodified by the military industrial complex, and yet often lacked depth and quality. At the height of the war, Steven Pressfield, a creative writer, maintained an influential blog dedicated to answering "how to win the war in Afghanistan [...] It's the tribes, stupid."²³ In my research, I encountered Pressfield's ideas referenced in instructional training materials and presentations to the military, as well as in general conversations (let alone American media channels). Despite his métier as a writer, having had no professional experience in Afghanistan, his musings have been lauded by leaders like General David Petraeus, the former Commander of the U.S. Forces and International Security Assistance Forces in Afghanistan and head of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, for disseminating the idea that "the real force in Afghanistan isn't Islamism or jihadism. It's tribalism."²⁴ The statement is significant because, like the Master Narratives, it shifts the focus from Jihadist violent extremism, a chief import of the U.S. government and international community as a counterweight to Soviet influence in the late

²⁰ Edmund Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*; Edmund Hall, *Beyond Culture*; Geert Hofstede, *Culture and Organization: Software of the Mind*.

²¹ Edmund Hall, *Beyond Culture*.

²² Zafar, "COIN-Operated Anthropology," 231.

²³ Pressfield, "It's the Tribes Stupid," [no date] <https://stevenpressfield.com/ep-1/>. The website also now serves as site to purchase self-help books.

²⁴ Ibid.

1970s and 1980s, to a socio-political problem emanating from Afghan values and social structure. Asma, an Afghan-American who worked as a translator for the U.S. government and had been a doctor in Afghanistan, strongly opposed the heavy emphasis on tribes as a socially constructed issue. She reflected that “this tribal idea is used for everything, but it wasn’t that big of a deal in Afghanistan. The tribes were still supporting the king. Maybe not because they wanted to, but because they knew they had to. But now we just hear ‘oh this is tribal and that is tribal,’ and everybody forgets history.”²⁵ Contrary to Afghanistan’s historical realities, the insular concentration on Afghan social structure perpetuates the belief of an irreparable divide between the East and West reminiscent of Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilizations,” and posits American influence as a saving grace.²⁶ Following a brief visit to Afghanistan with a Marine general, Pressfield cautions Americans that:

Afghanistan is ancient; it’s not coming into the modern world any time soon. Afghanistan is tribal. We’re not going to turn it into New Jersey in the next eighteen months. The Machine can’t overcome those realities by itself, and it can’t connect across the gulf between East and West, ancient and modern, unless it can bring to bear a dedicated element whose task is to do just that. I’m not a believer yet. I want to be. When I see that dedicated component—and see it in the field, being supported by our unbeatable Machine—maybe I will be.²⁷

In my interviews and personal experience, the gravitas with which U.S. policymaking circles have consistently afforded people like Pressfield validate trite observations devoid of meaningful empiricism. They are not myopic

reflections from an early 19th century thinker, but 21st century opinions clinging on antiquated ideals and a racialized social imaginary. As my research showed, such opinions form the baseline of the biases that shape policy decisions towards Afghanistan as a contemporary “White Man’s Burden,” a sentiment President Biden’s dismissive justification of the U.S. withdrawal, at the outset of this paper, so cuttingly underscored.²⁸

Reproducing the Old West

Among the prime examples of the reductionist framing of Afghanistan in U.S. government cultural familiarization texts is the representation of Afghanistan as ‘Indian Country.’ Former U.S. President George W. Bush employed the trope in a public address in 2007 to emphasize the unruly and savage character of the areas in which Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters hid, explaining: “[T]his is wild country; this is wilder than the Wild West. And these folks hide and recruit and launch attacks.”²⁹ Within the U.S. context, the concept of the Wild West or Indian country has an explicitly racialized political dimension that reaches back to the U.S. wars with Native Americans and U.S. government’s dominion over tribal lands.³⁰ The colonial subjugation of the First Nations and Native American populations in America is a sobering aspect of U.S. history, and it serves as a superficial referent for the U.S. experience in Afghanistan. But in my research, I found documents that discussed ethnographic knowledge in the U.S. military to be replete with such examples. During my fieldwork observations, trainings and discussions on current events in Afghanistan often drew heavily on oversimplified comparisons to cowboys and Indians, as well as imagery in Hollywood Westerns depicting famed battles. Supporting Silliman’s observation, I too noticed (whether conscious or unconscious) the association with cowboys and the U.S. military

²⁵ Zafar, “COIN-Operated Anthropology,” 232.

²⁶ Samuel Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*.

²⁷ Pressfield, “Downrange: An Informal Report of a Trip to Afghanistan,” March 2010, <https://stevenpressfield.com/2010/03/downrange-an-informal-report-of-a-trip-to-afghanistan-with-marine-gen-james-n-mattis/>

²⁸ Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden,” <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/kipling.asp>

²⁹ Bush, “President Discusses War in Afghanistan,” 15 February 2007, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/02/20070215-1.html>

³⁰ Kaplan, “Injun Country,” 21 September 2004, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB109572689960923141>; Silliman, “The Old West in the Middle East,” 237.

forces as the 'good guys,' and Indians and insurgent Afghans as the 'bad guys.' In fact, Majid, who I observed briefing U.S. military personnel at training exercises on four different occasions, consistently described Afghanistan as the Wild West. To him Americans were cowboys, and Afghans were the ungovernable Indians. During one of the exercises I observed, an Air Force Major contested Majid's use of "Indian," pointing out that correct term is Native American. While Majid stopped using the referent altogether, he continued to describe communities in the south and southeast of Afghanistan as inherently lawless and degenerate, despite having spent no time at all in Afghanistan's southern provinces. He based his assessment on what he had gathered from speaking to U.S. military personnel and contractors, assigned to the most remote corners of Afghanistan's southern regions, where the conflict was most intense. In some training exercises I observed, contractors (Afghan-American and otherwise) used film clips from old Western movies to illustrate the dynamics the U.S. military might face in Afghanistan upon deployment, by emphasizing the cowboy and Indians trope. When I asked where they had come across the clips, most of the contractors had been provided them as a useful resource by either their military counterparts or the defense contracting companies for whom they worked. In at least three of ten observed exercises, the contractors produced excerpts from popular literature that similarly reconfigured the war in Afghanistan as the Wild West because they believed such representations would resonate with U.S. military audiences.

The facile allusion to America's past and the negligent portrayal of Native Americans and native Afghans has empowered colonial representations awash in assumptions and stereotypes. Entertainment presides over empiricism in the anti-intellectualism that characterizes the U.S. government's approach to understanding Afghanistan. The writer, Robert Kaplan, captures the instinctive recall to America's past among Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan. His discussion uncovers

an eye-opening lexicon marshalled to describe the U.S. experience in Afghanistan, often associating 'Old West' or the 'Wild West' with areas of Afghanistan that were deemed ungovernable. "Injun Country,"³¹ he notes, signified Afghanistan's southern and southeastern provinces.³² The term connotes an area that lacks governance, and thus constitutes the populations in the south and southeast as the 'new Indians' – insurgents that should be conquered and made subjects of the U.S.-backed central government.

Deconstructing the nomenclature of operations further illustrates the casual prejudice with which Afghans were regarded throughout the U.S. occupation. Deeply problematic is the unwavering conviction with which senior U.S. government and military leaders I interviewed treated narratives like Gant's essay, *One Tribe at a Time*. Gant's article effectively reduces the Afghan war to a tribal conflict, arguing that tribal engagement would help Afghans rally to the American side in defeating the Taliban. While Gant was ultimately discharged for going against military orders, his ideas perpetuated the belief that his anecdotal experience could be applied writ large to Afghanistan as a nation, despite the fact that not all of Afghanistan is socially organized into tribes. As a follow up, Ann Tyson's book *American Spartan* further glorifies Gant's noting that U.S. military leaders saw him as Afghanistan's T.E. Lawrence, the famed British military officer who abetted the Arab revolt against Ottoman occupation in 1916.³³ Tyson views the Afghans she met through the same lens as Gant – an honor-bound traditional village preserved in time. Despite the ironic sentimentality of rapport between the villagers and Gant, Tyson's account is typical of the "White Gaze," a racialized power asymmetry reinforced in peacebuilding and development that entrenches the very inequities and conditions humanitarian work endeavors to change.³⁴ The paternalism of the White Gaze divests non-Western communities of agency and capacity. According to Tyson's writing, only she and Gant have the power of knowledge to change the course of the war. The Afghan villagers' agency is circumscribed by their

³¹ *Injun country*, meaning Indian Country, is a trope used to describes areas of limited central governance. In the military, it has been used in places such as Iraq and Colombia.

³² Robert Kaplan, *Imperial Grunts*, 203.

³³ Ann S. Tyson, *American Spartan*, 25.

³⁴ Pailey, "Decentering the White Gaze," 729.

adherence to tradition and Islam. P.T Zeleza's critique of such epistemic constructions explains the effect as one that "seeks to universalize the West and provincialize the rest."³⁵ The "provincialization" Tyson's book accomplished recenters the Afghan village in the Great Plains of America. Gant defies military orders to teach Afghans to mobilize as militias and protect themselves, all the while mastering their culture and gaining their trust by communing with Sitting Bull. With Gant as a mythologized protagonist, it is difficult to move beyond the White Savior complex so characteristic of the power dynamic between Gant, Tyson, and the Afghan villagers, and equally reflective of American colonialism.

Perhaps the most prominent example of the Native American referent in U.S. government discourse is the codename for the operation to kill or capture Osama Bin Laden: Geronimo. The operation was named for the Apache tribal leader who fought against the Americans, evaded capture, and died as a prisoner of war in 1909. Following the killing of Osama Bin Laden by U.S. Navy Seals on May 2, 2011, The National Congress of American Indians released a statement criticizing the use of Geronimo in the context of the Global War on Terror, imploring that "To associate a Native warrior with bin Laden is not an accurate reflection of history and it undermines the military service of Native people."³⁶ Taken together with the prevalence of the 'Indian Country' trope in texts about Afghanistan, the contemporary American system does not seem all too distant from the prejudiced machinations of political power that expanded its global and domestic reach in the 19th century. Silliman offers an apt critique of the damaging effects of exploiting the Native American experience as an edifying comparison to U.S. occupied territories:

even if the rendering of terrorist and infidel zones in the Middle East as "Indian Country" serves more as historical metaphor, and even if soldiers would not consider their Native American neighbors or fellow soldiers

today as terrorists, one still cannot escape the problematic renarration of those historical Indian Wars as conflicts with terrorists, despite the obvious common thread of the United States as the invader.³⁷

The disregard for the centrality of Native Americans history to U.S. history constitutes a thought-provoking consideration for Afghans and Afghanistan, who are even farther removed from the historical realities of American society. Are all conquests the same to the U.S. government? If the experience of the U.S. military and Native American tribes can be so easily applied to adversarial contexts, what does it imply about the relationship between Native Americans and the U.S. government today? And if Native Americans are afforded so little consideration despite their belonging and membership in America, Afghans and Afghan-American will likely not be afforded voice and visibility despite the U.S. government's overtures to equity and equality. Such observations and the research upon which this paper has been predicated are a jarring reminder of the precarity of belonging and membership in America.

Throughout my observations and interviews (and even now merely looking at representation across think tanks and mainstream media), a distinct lack of Afghan voices persists in the executive arenas of U.S. foreign policy and national security sectors, which are disproportionately dominated by white Anglo-Saxon decision-makers or those of European ancestry. With the exception of Zalmay Khalilzad, the former U.S. ambassador to Iraq and special envoy to Afghanistan, most Afghan-Americans, when engaged by the state, were often employed almost exclusively as defense contractors in supporting roles rather than in positions with any policy-planning or programmatic authority. Even in Khalilzad's case, if America was the foot bearing down on Afghanistan, Khalilzad was arguably the shoe, protecting and assisting American interests in the region.³⁸ A good example is the tax-payer

³⁵ Zeleza, "African studies and universities since independence," 133.

³⁶

<https://www.ncai.org/news/articles/2011/05/03/>

[ncai-releases-statement-on-use-of-geronimo-as-name-for-osama-bin-laden-operation](#)

³⁷ Silliman, "The Old West in the Middle East," 243.

³⁸ Anderson, "American Viceroy," 19 December 2005,

funded United States Institute of Peace's Afghanistan Study Group included 38 members and advisors from the public and private sectors of which only two were Afghan-Americans.³⁹ It might be little wonder that the Group's final report, published in February 2021, fell atrociously short in its assessment of a Taliban takeover.⁴⁰ In August 2021, as the Taliban advanced its control over Afghanistan's provinces in the wake of America's ill-equipped withdrawal, a telling paradox emerged. The U.S. government appeared to lean on the same reductionist sketches, as exemplified by President Biden's speech, to justify both the U.S. invasion as well as the nature of the withdrawal. And despite their contribution to the U.S. military effort, Afghan SIV holders scrambled to secure safe passage out of Afghanistan through private means in the absence of a coherent evacuation plan by the U.S. government.

This paper has shown that the cultural knowledge produced and employed during COIN within the U.S. military-industrial complex impacted the perceptions and outlook of American decision-makers towards Afghanistan. Under the guise of state-building and security, the overt allusions to the conquests against and subjugation of Native American tribes in relation to the suppression of the Pashtun tribes is paradigmatic of the American government's glib, hegemonic, and extraordinarily discriminatory posture towards Afghanistan and its populations. As the constructed narratives about Afghanistan gained traction politically, they have reinforced the binary categories through which Afghan culture could be differentiated from America and the West. As noted before, this is strongly Orientalist in nature, but the operational effect of such biased ideologies is far more consequential. For Afghan-American contractors endowed with the credibility of 'native expertise,' Afghanistan's contemporary circumstances were more often imagined and idealized, than a reflection of lived experiences. These 'experts' were akin to modern-day Orientalists of the 19th century, drawing on the same problematic literature and viewpoints to

revive exoticized images of Afghanistan as a distant land, curious and elusive only because of its opposition to a Western, progressive ideal. Nonetheless, the U.S. military and government willingly assumed that Afghans in America could reflect, in voice and thought, Afghans in Afghanistan, whose experiences not only negated the idealized tropes of warrior tribes, but were far more complex and shaded by the trauma of two foreign occupations and the dismantling of Afghan society, culture, and political history – legacies of the Soviet-Afghan war and its legitimization of religious fundamentalism and extremist violence.

Condemning Afghanistan as a perpetually lawless territory devoid of 'Western' elements of progress, such as education, equality, and women's rights, has allowed political leaders, like President Biden, to shirk responsibility and point to Afghan culture as the reason the Afghan government's collapse was inevitable. Even beyond that, the cultural framing positioned groups like the Taliban and Haqqani Network, a designated terrorist organization, as indigenous counterparts with whom Afghans must contend in the absence of continued U.S. assistance. At the time of writing, Afghanistan and its long-suffering population remain at an impasse with the Taliban administration amidst colossal violations of human rights and rampant poverty. If any silver lining has emerged in the discourse on Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover and U.S. withdrawal, it may be this: a resolute push, particularly within academe, to decolonize the literature and perspectives on Afghanistan. It is no coincidence that most of the literature referenced in this paper as the most commonly cited texts on Afghan culture within the U.S. system are written by non-Afghan writers. Based on what I have encountered through my research and my lived experiences in the Washington D.C. policy space, most decision-makers on Afghanistan policy are males of Anglo-Saxon/European ancestry who have been privileged with the authority to speak on and for Afghans they may have never met. The conscious effort at inclusive representation has been apparent across panels and programs

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/12/19/american-viceroy>; Shahrani, "War, Factionalism, and the State in Afghanistan," 722.

³⁹ United States Institute of Peace, "Afghanistan Study Group Final Report," February 2021,

<https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/02/afghanistan-study-group-final-report-pathway-peace-afghanistan>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

that now feature, with earnest interest, Afghan voices, particularly those directly affected by U.S. policies and negotiations. This is important because it not only allows for a more representative collection of voices and thoughts, but it also creates a much-needed space to articulate and preserve Afghanistan's tremendously complex social and political history. The dialogues that may emerge from the inclusion of Afghan scholars and civil society can contest the trivialization of Afghan culture and society by drawing upon a shared social memory of Afghanistan as a nation. While efforts to decolonize knowledge about Afghanistan are ongoing, a more robust repudiation of prejudiced U.S. policies and political leaders must also ensue. While the world will experience no shortage of wars, irrespective of the changing nature of warfare, communities must speak and act against the explicitly biased negotiations of power that render the most affected populations silent and invisible. For Afghanistan, time will likely erode the constructed illusions that have overcome the country and the Afghan people, but what will endure remains to be seen.

References:

- Anderson, John L., "American Viceroy," *The New Yorker*, 11 December 2005.
- Asad, Talal, "Thinking about terrorism and just war," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 23, No 1, 2010, p.3-24.
- Asad, Talal, "The concept of cultural translation in British social anthropology," James Clifford and George Marcus (eds.), *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography*. Berkeley, University of California, 1986.
- Asad, Talal, *Anthropology and the colonial encounter*, London, Ithaca Press, 1973.
- Dabashi, Hamid. *Brown Skin, White Masks*. London, Pluto Press, 2011.
- George W. Bush, "President Bush Discusses Progress in Afghanistan, Global War on Terror," 15 February 2007, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/02/20070215-1.html>.
- Hall, Edmund T., *Beyond culture*, New York, Doubleday, 1976.
- Hall, Edmund T., *The hidden dimension*, New York, Doubleday, 1966.
- Hofstede, Geert, *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind* (2nd edition), New York, McGraw-Hill, 2005.
- Huntington, Samuel, *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of the world order*, London, Simon & Schuster, 1996.
- James Gant, "One tribe at a time: The way forward," 26 October 2009, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/one-tribe-at-a-time> (accessed February 11, 2013).
- Joseph Biden, "Remarks by President Biden on the Terror Attack at Hamid Karzai International Airport," 26 August 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/08/26/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-terror-attack-at-hamid-karzai-international-airport/>
- Kaplan, Robert, *Imperial grunts: The American military on the ground*. New York, Random House, 2005.
- Kaplan, Robert, "Indian country," *The Wall Street Journal*, 21 September 2004, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB109572689960923141>.
- Kipling, Rudyard, "The White Man's Burden," *McClure's Magazine*, 1899, <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/kipling.asp>.
- Monsutti, Alessandro, "Anthropologizing Afghanistan: Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters,"
- Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 41, No 1, 2013, p[. 269-285.
- National Congress of American Indians, "Statement on Use of 'Geronimo' as Name for Osama bin Laden Operation," 3 May 2011, <https://www.ncai.org/news/articles/2011/05/03/ncai-releases-statement-on-use-of-geronimo-as-name-for-osama-bin-laden-operation>.
- Open Source Center, Directorate of National Intelligence, "Master narratives: Afghanistan country report," January 2011, <https://publicintelligence.net/ufouo-open>

source-center-master-narratives-country-report-afghanistan/.

decolonization," *Transition*, Vol. 101, 2009, pp.110–135.

Ruttig, Thomas, "Loya Paktia's Insurgency," *Decoding the Neo-Taliban*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2009.

Said, Edward, *Culture and imperialism*, New York, Knopf, 1993.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1978.

Shahrani, Nazif M., "War, Factionalism, and the State in Afghanistan," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 104, No 3, 2002, pp.715–722.

Silliman, Stephen, "The "Old West" in the Middle East: U.S. military metaphors in real and imagined Indian Country," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 110, No 2, 2008, pp.237–247.

Stephen Pressfield, "Downrange: An Informal Report of a Trip to Afghanistan with Marine General James Matthis," March 2010, <https://stevenpressfield.com/2010/03/downrange-an-informal-report-of-a-trip-to-afghanistan-with-marine-gen-james-n-mattis/> .

Tyson, Ann S., *American Spartan: The Promise, the Mission, and the Betrayal of Special Forces Major Jim Gant*, New York, William Morrow, 2014.

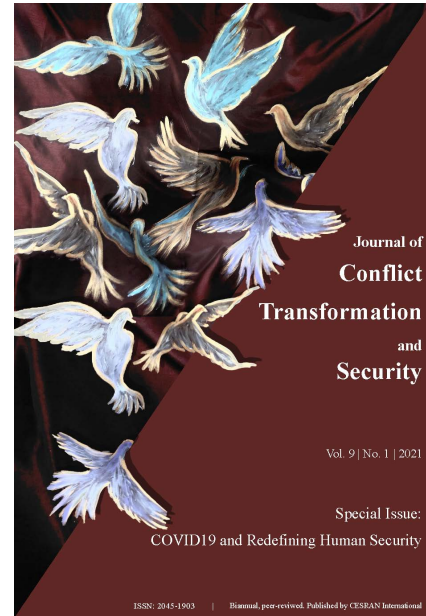
United States Department of the Army, "U.S. Army/Marine Corps counterinsurgency field manual," 2 June 2014, <https://irp.fas.org/doddir/army/fm3-24.pdf>

United States Institute of Peace, "Afghanistan Study Group Final Report: A Pathway for Peace in Afghanistan," February 2021, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/02/afghanistan-study-group-final-report-pathway-peace-afghanistan>.

Zafar, Morwari, "COIN-Operated Anthropology: cultural knowledge, American counterinsurgency, and the rise of the Afghan diaspora," Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Oxford, 2017.

Zezeza, P.T., "African studies and universities since independence: The challenges of epistemic and institutional

JOURNAL of CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION and SECURITY



ISSN: 2045-1903

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Journal of Conflict Transformation and Security (JCTS) is for academics, policy makers and practitioners to engage in discussions on a wide range of peace, conflict and human security related issues in a multidisciplinary forum with contributions from political science, security studies, international relations, development studies, post-conflict reconstruction studies, economics, sociology, international law, political history, and human geography.

As an international refereed e-journal, edited by a group of acclaimed scholars indicated in the Editorial Board, the Journal of Conflict Transformation and Security is published at its own website <http://www.cesran.org/jcts>. It welcomes submissions of **articles** from related persons involved in the scope of the journal as well as **summary reports of conferences and lecture series** held in the social sciences. Submissions in comparative analysis, with case studies and empirical research are particularly encouraged.

Prospective authors should submit 5.000 - 10.000 word articles for consideration in Microsoft Word-compatible format. For more complete descriptions and submission instructions, please access the Editorial Guidelines and Style Guidelines pages at the CESRAN website: <http://www.cesran.org/jcts>. Contributors are urged to read CESRAN's author guidelines and style guidelines carefully before submitting articles. Articles submissions should be sent in electronic format to:

Prof. Alpaslan ÖZERDEM - Editor-in-Chief - alpozerdem@cesran.org
Prof. Nergis CANEFE - Editor-in-Chief - nergis.canefe@cesran.org

Publication date: Spring issue — April
Autumn issue — October