

The Real Key to Success in Afghanistan

Overlooked, Underrated, Forgotten,
or Just Too Hard?

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Nangarhar Agribusiness Development Team members confirm cash-for-work project has been conducted in a corruption-free manner

For the U.S. Government and its coalition partners to fully achieve their goals in Afghanistan, the vast majority of the Afghan people—regardless of their ethnicity, tribe, age, gender, social status, income, occupation, current political alliances, or current ideology—must somehow begin to see beyond their differences and personal interests and come together as a team to build a better future for themselves and their children.

At first glance, this may not appear even remotely possible, especially to many coalition forces personnel who have worked closely with the Afghans and seen first-hand how self-centered and complicated their personal agendas tend to be. However, consider that Mahatma Gandhi was able to persuade an entire nation of more than 300 million Hindus and Muslims to put aside their longstanding mistrust to participate in a peaceful but concerted “Non-Cooperation Movement” in the 1920s that eventually led to India’s independence from Great Britain.

Gandhi’s example suggests that the same kind of wholesale change in behavior might also be possible in Afghanistan. However, such a dramatic and far-reaching realignment of goals and actions, if it can be achieved at all, clearly must be driven by selfless, courageous, visionary, and highly ethical leadership—what is commonly known as *transformational leadership*—as it was in India under Gandhi’s influence.

Gandhi did what all transformational leaders strive to do. He inspired the people to come together to pursue a common dream, to think beyond themselves and work for a greater cause. Such leaders establish and leverage a shared vision to pull their followers to action. Transactional leaders, on the other hand, aim to accommodate the specific needs and wants of individuals or subgroups in return for their cooperation or support. While still able to motivate their followers to a point, transactional leaders tend to be less effective and less able to effect change than their transformational counterparts.

In his Pulitzer Prize–winning book *Leadership*, first published in 1978, James

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MacGregor Burns points out that “Transformational Leadership occurs when leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Their purposes, which might have started out as separate but related, as in the case of transactional leadership, become fused.”²¹ Bernard M. Bass, another pioneer in the study of transformational leadership, makes this comparison: “Whereas transformational leaders uplift the morale, motivation, and morals of their followers, transactional leaders cater to their followers’ immediate self-interests. The transformational leader emphasizes what you can do for your country; the transactional leader, on what your country can do for you.”²²

Currently, Afghanistan’s senior leaders seem either unwilling or unable to lead their people in transformational ways and tend to rely on transactional techniques to achieve their goals. For example, Governor Gul Agha Sherzai of Nangarhar Province routinely pays off tribal leaders within his province as a way of temporarily resolving land disputes and other important issues. However, even for Governor Sherzai and those like him, adoption of a more transformational leadership style is not beyond possibility. It is widely accepted among experts in the leadership field that people can improve their ability to lead if they are motivated and empowered.

U.S. Government and its coalition partners should begin to focus more intently on training, empowering, and inspiring Afghan government officials, military commanders, and other leaders to lead their people in more altruistic and transformational ways. In cultivating effective transformational leaders, the role of the coalition would shift from an impetus for evolutionary change to a catalyst for revolutionary change. Viewed another way, the coalition would finally begin to address the root cause of the problems in Afghanistan rather than just their symptoms.

Challenges to Leader Development

There are significant challenges associated with this approach. The first is that senior Afghan officials, including President Hamid Karzai, may not be open to any form of leadership training, coaching, mentoring, or advice from coalition forces. The second is that formal and informal leaders throughout Afghan society seem to lack the basic character traits of conviction, integrity, selflessness, and empathy upon which effective leadership skills—and transformational leadership skills in particular—must be built.

If senior Afghan officials are not open to working with coalition forces to improve their leadership capabilities, U.S. and coalition forces leaders must ask themselves if there is value

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Furthermore, it is likely that improved leadership would be well received by the majority of Afghans. As the situation currently stands, the people are forced to choose between two unattractive options: the current government, which is corrupt and inept, or the Taliban, which is oppressive and sometimes sadistic and maniacal. An influx of transformational leadership intent on uniting the nation with a shared vision of hope, peace, prosperity, freedom, and responsive and accountable governance would offer a much more palatable third option that is likely to excite the people and call them to action. As French playwright Victor Hugo once said, “The thing that is more powerful than all the armies in the world is an idea whose time has come.”

The fact that transformational leadership is so vitally important yet so fundamentally lacking in Afghanistan suggests that the

in attempting to develop transformational Afghan leaders at lower levels of government and, if so, whether they should also include tribal, religious, and other informal leaders.

The traditional Western view of leadership is that it is most effective if driven from the top down. In practice, however, leadership does not always abide by the standard rules of organizational design. For example, while Gandhi was clearly the most influential leader in India from the 1920s until his assassination in 1948, at no time did he hold an official position within the Indian government.

Furthermore, leadership of an entire nation does not necessarily have to—and for that matter cannot—come from a single individual. Good transformational leaders are needed at all levels, from all disciplines, and from all across a country to set the example, hold their people accountable, and convey and reinforce the vision. One could even argue

that the greater the concentration of good leaders at lower levels, the more pressure the people themselves are likely to place on senior leaders to improve their performance.

However, while transformational leadership need not be driven from the top, it is critical that formal and informal leaders throughout the country share and profess a common vision, as that is the only way to truly unify the masses. Such a vision must provide widespread appeal, be ethically sound, and be clearly articulated and repeatedly communicated to all. In the case of Afghanistan, the national vision should place the Muslim faith at its core and might even incorporate some of the less radical and more altruistic tenets of the Taliban ideology in an effort to win over large numbers of insurgents or at least quell their passion for insurrection.

The bottom line is that—in the absence of motivated, capable, and cooperative senior Afghan leaders—it is imperative that the United States and its coalition partners act on behalf of these officials and temporarily assume the critical role of developing transformational leaders at lower levels and from all geographical regions and walks of life. Furthermore, the gap between leader supply and demand is currently so great that the coalition would be well advised to set up a kind of transformational leader production line to generate effective leaders in the huge quantities needed.

Building Character

The second challenge facing coalition forces is even more daunting. According to the book *Afghanistan 101: Understanding Afghan Culture* by expatriate Ehsan Entezar, the Afghan culture is not conducive to generating competent, broad-minded leaders. Because of the nation's war-torn history, the people are preoccupied with survival and look more to their families and communities for security and opportunity than their government. That makes them extremely loyal to their families but unwilling to contribute to the welfare of the nation at large, especially when ethnic boundaries are crossed. Nepotism is thus rampant within the government, and officials view their positions as a means to acquire power and wealth for themselves and their families rather than a way to serve their people.³

Therefore, in establishing this leader production line, coalition forces cannot simply send corrupt and self-serving Afghan officials and military commanders to traditional skills-

based leadership courses and expect them to emerge as effective transformational leaders. Because effective leadership—transformational or otherwise—must be built upon a solid foundation of values, ethics, and principles, the coalition must, in addition to training these officials on the technical aspects of transformational leadership, try to instill a deep-rooted, life-changing, personal transformation in them. Like the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future in Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, the coalition must provide these officials with an experience that leads to adoption of a more altruistic, passionate, and caring mindset that extends beyond family, tribe, and ethnicity.

But while it is probably not possible to completely overhaul the character of these self-serving officials, commanders, and other leaders in the dramatic way the ghosts transformed Ebenezer Scrooge, it still may be feasible to influence the ways these leaders think and operate at a fundamental level. Stephen Covey, author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* and *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness*, says: "If you want to make minor, incremental changes and improvements, work on practices, behavior or attitude. But if you want to make significant, quantum improvement, work on paradigms . . . i.e., perceptions, assumptions, theories, frames of reference, or lenses through which you view the world."⁴

A field of study called Transformative Learning Theory (TLT), first introduced by Jack Mezirow in 1978, provides a framework for accomplishing the types of quantum

assumptions as appropriate based on internal logic, emotion, or a combination. Ultimately, because assumptions are the building blocks of HOMs, significant revision of the former can result in permanent and substantive transformation of the latter.

According to Mezirow, the process of transformation of a HOM usually begins with what he calls a disorienting dilemma—a statement, situation, or event that does not neatly fit into a learner's system of beliefs or schema.⁶ Certain carefully crafted questions can also manifest themselves in the form of a disorienting dilemma. Once learners experience such a dilemma, the associated internal cognitive dissonance or emotional discomfort may compel them to challenge their assumptions, eventually leading to transformation of one or more of their HOMs. Mezirow describes transformative learning as a 10-step process beginning with the introduction of a disorienting dilemma and ending with "reintegration."

While transformative learning is certainly never guaranteed and cannot be forced upon those who are not open to it, the introduction of a disorienting dilemma is intended to help learners see themselves and the world around them more clearly and accurately, and thereby open them up to more productive and authentic ways of thinking and acting. Dr. Sharon Lamm, a transformative learning researcher, claims: "transformative learning can result in a better quality of life; more differentiated, inclusive, complex, reflective perspectives manifested in successful action;

transforming a "habit of mind" is the most difficult kind of transformation but also the most epochal

improvements to which Covey refers. Mezirow says that transforming what is called a "habit of mind" (HOM)—a way of thinking about a particular subject or theme—is the most difficult kind of transformation but also the most epochal.⁵ According to TLT, HOMs are founded in underlying assumptions developed subconsciously over a lifetime—many of them culturally induced and formulated at a young age. The theory tells us that the key to transforming HOMs is to get learners to recognize the existence of, and understand the role of, these underlying assumptions; reflect upon, assess, and critique them; engage in rational discourse with others to gain new perspectives; and reformulate and reintegrate these

and a more humble, tolerant, patient and empathic way of being."⁷ Other researchers report similar findings. Furthermore, in a paper called "Exploring the Relationship between Learning and Leadership," Lillas Brown and Barry Posner make the case that "transformative learning theory can be used to assess, strengthen, and create leadership development programs that develop transformational leaders."⁸

As alluded to earlier, an HOM common in Afghan government officials and other formal and informal Afghan leaders is the belief, attitude, or feeling that corrupt and self-serving behavior is justified. In an attempt to transform this counterproductive HOM in

as many of these leaders as possible, coalition forces might carefully design and conduct intensive multiday workshops to stimulate the thought processes necessary for transformative learning. Mezirow believes that activities such as metaphor analysis, life history exploration, learning contracts, group projects, role playing, case studies, simulations, and journal writing can sometimes achieve this goal.⁹

To maximize their impact, these activities might also pose some thought-provoking questions to the participants such as: Can a person be corrupt and still be a good Muslim? Do you think corrupt officials go to heaven? Do you view corruption as stealing? Would you rather live modestly and be remembered as a person who did everything he could to help his people or live extravagantly and be remembered as someone who stole from his people and kept them from breaking their cycle of poverty? Do you think it is right for one man to live in a beautiful mansion while his neighbor, who is just as talented and works just as hard, lives in a slum? What do you think will happen to Afghanistan if government officials continue to put themselves before their people? Why do you think some Afghans support the Taliban rather than the government?

Because different Afghan leaders are likely to be moved by different stimuli, use of a wide variety of techniques and questions may help coalition forces open up the transformative learning process to as many participants as possible.

Improving Transformational Leadership Skills

As coalition forces work to improve the character of government officials and other leaders through transformative learning, they must also teach Afghans the necessary skills to be better transformational leaders. The Afghans must first be taught the basics: the fundamental principles of good leadership and the attitudes and behaviors commonly found in good leaders such as selflessness, integrity, candor, competence, empathy, and loyalty. They might also be exposed to historical examples that highlight some of the more spectacular successes and failures associated with or attributed to both good and bad leadership.

Eventually, however, Afghan leaders should understand how to apply the four components of transformational leadership as identified by *Handbook of Leadership* author Bernard Bass. These components are idealized influence, inspirational motiva-



U.S. Air Force (Bart Lomont)

Agricultural extension agent conducts training class in Kajere Village, Afghanistan

tion, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Idealized influence is the practice by which leaders set high standards for followers primarily by serving as role models and leading by example. Inspirational motivation is the process of establishing and communicating a shared vision, enabling followers to think and act beyond their own self-interests. Intellectual stimulation is the practice of encouraging followers to challenge their own assumptions and beliefs. Finally, individual consideration is the process of getting to know followers on an individual basis and then mentoring, coaching, and demonstrating care and empathy for them.¹⁰ In combination, these processes enable transformational leaders to achieve guided transformative learning in their followers and, consequently, more closely align these followers' values and goals.

To introduce these concepts and begin to develop these skills, coalition forces might utilize classroom training. They might even combine transformational leadership training classes with the transformative learning workshops discussed earlier.

Providing Leadership Training Opportunities

To reinforce what was taught in the classroom, the coalition must next ensure Afghan leaders have opportunities to practice their newly acquired leadership skills and provide them candid and timely feedback on their performance.

For example, after an official completes a transformational leadership course, his coalition forces counterpart might encourage him to prepare an inspirational speech or a set of talking points for a radio broadcast that incorporates some or all of the components of transformational leadership. In doing so, the coalition forces leader might help the Afghan leader lay out a plan and timeline for accomplishing the task and meet with him every few days to monitor progress and provide feedback. If the Afghan underperforms, the coalition leader might call for more frequent, lengthy, and intensive mentoring sessions.

To achieve the best results, the United States and its coalition partners should consider conducting transformational leadership workshops, classes, and on-the-job leadership training in iterative and progressive phases. In other words, initial classes, workshops, and on-the-job training might introduce and reinforce simple concepts and tasks while follow-on activities might address more advanced and complex concepts and behaviors.

Leading by Example

To demonstrate the positive impact of transformational leadership and to further reinforce the Afghans' newly acquired leadership skills, coalition forces must lead by example. They must show the Afghans what "right" looks like in everything they do. For instance, coalition forces leaders must have a clear vision of what they are trying to accomplish, be well prepared for every

meeting engagement, demonstrate that they are willing to work just as hard as or harder than the Afghans, meet deadlines and keep promises, and exhibit genuine care and empathy for the people. Furthermore, they must project a positive outlook that instills hope, confidence, and enthusiasm in the Afghans. The more closely coalition forces work with the Afghans, the more opportunities they will have to lead by example.

A Real-world Success Story¹¹

During the past several years, coalition forces have employed what are called National Guard Agribusiness Development Teams (ADTs) to help revitalize the agriculture sector within Afghanistan. These teams operate at the provincial level and below and work closely with government officials to improve agricultural sustainability and productivity while also enhancing agribusiness value chains.

Recently, members of the ADT assigned to Nangarhar Province in eastern Afghanistan recognized that, if they were to make a lasting impact, they would have to do more than just help the Afghans solve technical agriculture problems; they would also have to develop and improve the quality of the provincial- and district-level leadership associated with this sector. Based on this realization, they focused on training, empowering, and inspiring the provincial-level Director of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (DAIL) and his district-level Agriculture Extension Agents (AEAs) to be better leaders.

The members of the Nangarhar ADT were not familiar with TLT and had only a cursory knowledge of transformational leadership. Yet following their instincts, they applied several of the techniques and principles described above and achieved remarkable success. Specifically, they conducted basic leadership training classes for the DAIL and his AEAs, offered these officials hands-on training opportunities to practice and refine their leadership skills, provided them candid and real-time feedback on their performance, regularly coached and mentored them, and demonstrated effective leadership behaviors by leading by example.

With regard to hands-on leadership training opportunities, the ADT developed a structured and transparent process for managing small, agriculture-related cash-for-work projects and then began to allow the AEAs to lead and manage these projects. When the ADT discovered early on that some

of the AEAs were embezzling funds intended for laborers, the ADT leadership called them out on their misdeeds in the presence of the DAIL. The ADT also provided the AEAs a detailed report card after each project to summarize their performance and let them know where they needed improvement.

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The ADT's efforts to address corruption and improve performance produced positive results. First, because the DAIL was embarrassed that some of his people were found to be skimming funds, he began to take a strong stance against corruption with his subordinates. On several occasions over the next few months, the ADT saw him lecture his AEAs on the detrimental impacts of corruption and the importance of transparency. Second, as word spread that the ADT was being relentless in identifying and confronting corrupt officials, the other AEAs abruptly fell in line and began following the ADT's cash-for-work process to a tee. Third, as a result of the report cards, the AEAs improved their leadership performance with every project.

Through coaching and mentoring, the ADT also made the DAIL more aware of the importance and power of his position and taught him how to inspire and unite the farmers of his province with a shared vision. When the ADT helped the DAIL prepare a set of transformational sound bites for a radio broadcast, he got such positive feedback from his followers that he continued to use and build upon these sound bites in subsequent speeches where he visibly inspired farmers to want to come together as a team and take charge of their own development.

But while the ADT's classroom training, on-the-job training, and mentoring proved effective, the team's biggest impact may have come through leading by example: holding themselves and the Afghan officials accountable, working hard and side-by-side with the Afghans, constantly displaying an attitude of optimism and hope, and demonstrating genuine care for the people. Over time, this appeared to cause many of the officials with whom the team worked to question the morality of their own corrupt and self-serving behavior and to assume a more selfless and

productive way of thinking. By the time the ADT had completed its 10-month deployment, corruption within the Nangarhar DAIL's organization had been greatly reduced and the DAIL himself seemed to have adopted a radically new mindset of selfless service and genuine care for the people.

However, while the ADT was successful in improving the quality of the leadership in the agriculture sector in Nangarhar, the team could have had an even greater impact had there been a national-level leader development plan to guide their actions, had leader development been identified as one of the ADT's primary missions from the start, had the team been thoroughly trained on how to develop effective transformational leaders, and had they been provided national-level support in achieving that end.

Setting Up a Transformational Leader Production Line

To improve the quality of Afghan leadership on a national scale and to the greatest extent possible, coalition forces should develop a plan and establish a process to take in as many formal and informal leaders as they can find; try to instill in them a personal transformation to improve their characters; teach them the fundamentals of basic and transformational leadership; infuse in them a vision of hope, peace, prosperity, and freedom; and send them back to share that vision and effectively lead their people. Even if the coalition is only able to improve the collective performance from a grade of F to C, it would likely still sway the bulk of the population to support their government.

In establishing this transformational leader production line, the United States and its coalition partners should emphasize leadership development from every possible angle in order to achieve maximum impact. For instance, coalition forces should:

- Develop and issue a comprehensive campaign plan to improve the quality and cohesiveness of leadership in all sectors, at all levels, and across all geographic regions of Afghanistan.

- Design a series of culturally appropriate transformative learning workshops and transformational leadership classes to enhance the character of government officials and other leaders while simultaneously improving their leadership knowledge and skills. Ensure these workshops and classes are developed by experts in their respective fields and conducted at national, regional, and provincial levels.

- Ensure leaders who undergo these workshops and classes are provided with on-the-job training to solidify and reinforce their newly acquired knowledge and skills. Simultaneously and intensively coach, mentor, and provide candid feedback to these leaders.

- Set a consistently outstanding example of transformational leadership, transparency, accountability and commitment to excellence for Afghan leaders to follow.

- As effective transformational Afghan leaders emerge from these efforts, utilize them to train and mentor other Afghans. According to Barry L. Boyd of Texas A&M University, “Finding success stories and using the voice of the Afghans to tell those success stories (i.e., peer-to-peer communication) is one of the most effective means of diffusing an innovation—and transformational leadership is certainly an innovation.”¹²

- Reward, support, and praise leaders who exhibit selfless service, competence, and other basic leadership qualities, and find innovative ways to make life difficult for those who do not. For example, the United States and its coalition partners might influence the Afghan media to endorse the election or reelection of good leaders while exposing the misdeeds of those who continue to demonstrate self-serving behavior. Coalition forces might also restrict or deny funds to districts where corruption and ineptitude are prevalent and redirect those funds to districts that are well led. Here again, the coalition should leverage the Afghan media to ensure the people know that the amount of development funding they are receiving is a function of the quality of their leadership.

- Put much greater command emphasis throughout their own ranks on developing Afghan leaders; in other words, reengineer civilian and military directives, plans, policies, and programs to put leader development at the forefront. As part of this process, the coalition should redesign predeployment training programs so deploying personnel better understand the concept of transformational leadership and how to foster it among the Afghans. All U.S. and coalition forces workers

in Afghanistan—civilian, military, or contractor—should be made aware that developing Afghan leaders is one of the coalition’s top priorities and should be trained on how to contribute to achieving that goal.

- Redesign metrics to measure and focus on the quality, and changes in the quality, of Afghan leadership rather than more tangible variables like the number of Afghans employed, number of businesses started, or amount of money spent. U.S. and coalition forces should also reward their own leaders, both military and civilian, for success in advancing leadership among the Afghans.

- Immediately eliminate U.S. and coalition practices that reward bad leadership. For instance, it is imperative that the coalition set up systems, processes, and management controls that hold Afghans accountable and allow tracking of development funds all the way to their intended recipients. If coalition forces continue to allow Afghan officials to skim funds, they add fuel to an already large fire.

Transformational Leadership vs. Transformative Learning Theory

It is important for all stakeholders—those designing and conducting classroom training and workshops, those participating in these activities, and coalition forces coaching, mentoring, and leading by example—to understand the relationship between transformational leadership and Transformative Learning Theory.

Both models provide a framework for radically changing the ways in which people—followers in the case of transformational leadership and learners in the case of TLT—think and act, but transformational leadership is intended to transform group behavior while TLT focuses on the individual. However, the two activities are mutually supportive in the sense that TLT facilitates transformational leader development while transformational leaders leverage TLT to achieve intellectual stimulation and help effect a convergence of values and goals among their followers.

Conclusion

During the past 10 years, it has become painfully obvious that without some kind of direct intervention, Afghanistan’s poor leadership is not going to improve no matter how much time and money the coalition spends. And unfortunately, leadership is the one factor that absolutely must be fixed if the United States and its coalition partners are to achieve their goals. As former White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles once said, “Leadership is key to 99 percent of all successful efforts.” Without good leadership, there is no shared vision among the people, no accountability, and no good example for the public to follow. Without shared vision, there are no common goals and unity. Without accountability and standards, government workers do not perform. And without a good



Soldier surveys abandoned coalition-sponsored solar-powered well

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example, the people are unmotivated to support the common good.

General Stanley McChrystal, USA (Ret.), former commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, pointed out in his now superseded counterinsurgency guidance that “The [Afghan] people are the prize.”¹³ Since populations throughout history have consistently followed and supported competent, visionary, empathic, and highly ethical leaders, one could argue that the ongoing struggle for power between the Taliban and the government will eventually be won by the side with the most and best transformational leaders.

Poor leadership is not the only significant problem in Afghanistan, and U.S. and coalition leaders should therefore continue to pursue traditional security, governance, and development lines of operation. However, good policies, processes, infrastructure, and equipment are no substitute for good leadership—and, in the end, they are of little value without it. It is therefore imperative that the coalition begin to put more emphasis on empowering and inspiring Afghan government and military officials as well as religious and tribal leaders at all levels to better lead their people. Ultimately, it is transformational

left the country, and the Taliban would once again challenge the government for control.

The recent success of the Nangarhar ADT suggests that, despite the various challenges, it is possible for coalition forces to significantly improve the quality of Afghan leadership—at least on a small scale. However, isolated pockets of good leadership scattered across the country are unlikely to bring lasting change or significantly impact the outcome of the war. For the United States and its coalition partners to permanently transform the Afghan culture—which is really what this is all about—they will have to generate a critical mass of effective transformational leaders that continues to sustain and build upon itself once coalition forces have left the region. To achieve this, the coalition must begin to tackle the problem more deliberately, more aggressively, and on a much grander scale.

Looking beyond Afghanistan, the United States must recognize that in any region where good leadership is lacking, there are likely to be problems that threaten U.S. interests. Poor leadership exacerbates poverty, invites corruption, promotes unrest, and creates a vacuum likely to be filled by insurgency. A more proactive and globally focused approach to leader development might help prevent conflicts, improve

intuition all suggest that developing effective transformational leaders should be viewed as the centerpiece of this strategy. JFQ

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¹ James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (Harper and Row, 1979), 20.

² Bernard M. Bass, “Two Decades of Research and Development in Transformational Leadership,” *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* 8, no. 1 (1999), 9–32.

³ Ehsan M. Entezar, *Afghanistan 101: Understanding Afghan Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corporation, 2010), 27–109.

⁴ Stephen R. Covey, *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 19.

⁵ Jack Mezirow, “Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice,” *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, no. 74 (1997).

⁶ Jack Mezirow, “Transformation Theory of Adult Learning,” in *In Defense of the Lifeworld*, ed. M.R. Welton (New York: SUNY Press, 1995), 50.

⁷ Sharon Lamm, “Transformative Learning,” *Leadership in International Management*, 2000.

⁸ Lillas M. Brown and Barry Z. Posner, “Exploring the Relationship Between Learning and Leadership,” *The Leadership and Organizational Development Journal*, 2001.

⁹ Mezirow, “Transformative Learning.”

¹⁰ Bernard M. Bass, *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations* (New York: Free Press, 1985).

¹¹ Barry L. Boyd, “Using a Case Study to Develop the Transformational Teaching Theory,” *Journal of Leadership Education* 7, no. 3 (Winter 2009). I found inspiration for this section from Dr. Boyd’s article.

¹² Email from Dr. Barry L. Boyd, Texas A&M University, dated October 19, 2011.

¹³ Stanley A. McChrystal, *ISAF Commander’s Counterinsurgency Guidance*, November 10, 2009.

¹⁴ Robert M. Gates, “A Balanced Strategy,” *Foreign Affairs* (January 2009).

the coalition will have to generate a critical mass of effective transformational leaders that continues to sustain and build upon itself once coalition forces have left

Afghan leaders—not coalition forces—who must rally the people to take charge of their own development, security, and future and who must make the people understand that poverty, ignorance, greed, and radicalism are the true enemies.

As things currently stand in Afghanistan, the U.S. Government finds itself in much the same position it did in Vietnam in the early 1970s—fighting a protracted, unconventional, and domestically unpopular war, spending a lot of money on development without achieving the desired effects, and propping up a corrupt and inept government. Given enough time and resources, the United States and its coalition partners could physically rebuild Afghanistan from the ground up. But without a parallel effort to develop effective Afghan leaders, conditions would return to status quo once coalition forces

the quality of life for those living in failed or failing states around the world, and possibly even bring or return vitality and prosperity to those states.

Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates commented, “Where possible, U.S. strategy is to employ indirect approaches—primarily through building the capacity of partner governments and their security forces—to prevent festering problems from turning into crises that require costly and controversial direct military intervention. In this kind of effort, the capabilities of the United States’ allies and partners may be as important as its own, and building their capacity is arguably as important as, if not more so than, the fighting the United States does itself.”¹⁴ Although Secretary Gates does not specifically mention leader development, history, experience in Afghanistan, and