

## PREFACE

Let us first define ‘culture’ as all that which a people or a class of people in class-divided societies deems worthy to be preserved and handed down to the next generation, be it language, beliefs, institutions, laws, modes of production, practices, rituals, customs, objects, memories, etc. Generally, culture is what constitutes the horizon for and supports a population’s social and economic activity, art, science, communication, thought, spirituality, and other modes of interaction, but this too could easily be expanded to include more. The initial objective of this research was to invoke hermeneutics to discover an effective and employable method of directing a foreign culture. This was not an original objective of the military operations conducted in the state we will be examining: Afghanistan. However, with further research we found enough convincing evidence that it was impossible to implement an employable method of directing a foreign culture under the conditions that exist in Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that culture cannot be influenced by other means, but attempts to do so with a military force will not only fail, but will make matters worse. Stated otherwise, Western military objectives in failed states need to be about national security, and not the exporting of our culture, because culture cannot be positively directed via these methods. To avoid misunderstanding and confusion, it should be emphasized that although this work contends that military force cannot be used to effectively direct a foreign culture, it is not meant that foreign cultural elements are not sometimes the appropriate targets for military force. A military force is a tool of violence, and there are times when violence is appropriate, specifically when it is intended to suppress those who exercise violence against the innocent. For

instance, those who direct attacks against civilian populations, our own or those of other peace-abiding nations, pose a clear threat to our national security and are the appropriate targets of counter-violence, regardless of their nature. Other instances that are not direct threats to our national security, but that involve gross violations of decency against norms promoted and sanctioned by the United Nations, are also the appropriate targets of violence. Preventing a culturally motivated genocide is a suitable objective for a call to arms, but the imposition of universal suffrage or the adoption of a particular form of government within a foreign state is not. Ultimately, what needs to be remedied is when we enter a military force into a foreign land for appropriate purposes, we must not prolong our action there attempting to *attain* objectives that are not allowed to be attained, because the means to attain them have been put out-of-bounds, such as the closing or ‘discontinuation’ of the Madrassas throughout the world as the *sine qua non* condition for the regression and eventual cessation of Islamic terrorism in the world, and the establishment and continued funding for the operations of Islamic schools whose mandates would be consistent with the spirit of the provisions of the UN Charter of Human Rights, as a clear alternative to the Koranic Schools funded by wealthy devout Saudis which have been time and again shown to be a hotbed of Islamic radicalism around the world.

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## NOTE

1. The main insurgency group in Afghanistan calls itself The Taliban, which means ‘students’ in English. These ‘students’ openly identify themselves as the graduates of Koranic schools whose establishment and operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan and throughout the world, wherever Muslims can be found in any significant numbers, are funded by devout wealthy Saudi, not all of whom are necessarily members of the reigning royal family. These schools are known to teach a fundamentalist, i.e., literal, interpretation of the Koran as the only true teaching of the Koran, and therefore of the one and only, absolute Truth, i.e., the very word of God Almighty and his command, which is expressed in Sharia law, which happens to be the law that is applied in Saudi Arabia, where Islam originated in the seventh century. The mere fact

that the main insurgency group in Afghanistan calls itself ‘Taliban’ is evidence enough of the impact these Koranic schools have had in Afghanistan and of how ‘a culture may be directed by foreigners’. If one is looking for substantiation of the influence of the ‘Madrasahs,’ these Koranic schools established with Saudi funding and extolling a fundamentalist teaching of Islam, then one should look to Indonesia, the furthestmost country from Saudi Arabia with a majority Islamic population which has grown progressively intolerant of more liberal interpretations of the Koran and moved closer to applying Sharia Law as the law of the land, ever since these Koranic schools have been allowed to be established and operate in this multiethnic country. Further evidence of the cultural dimension of the Taliban insurgency can be found in the closing of all schools for girls in the country, and the destruction of monuments considered to belong to World Heritage by UNESCO, while the Taliban were in power. The destruction of historical monuments is evidence of an unyielding intolerance toward foreign cultures, even those which are ‘historical,’ i.e., ‘dead,’ but whose monuments are still a testament to the human spirit. It should be added that the Koranic schools admit only boys. We would need to ascertain whether these boys receive in such schools any kind of education that would pass as education in any civilized country, especially a basic education in science. If not, this would imply that neither boys nor girls in Afghanistan and in western regions of Pakistan under the control of the Taliban receive an education meeting the elementary criteria of the right to education included in the Charter of Human Rights of the United Nations. We should also add that science flourished in Islamic civilization in the period of its apex, i.e., between the eighth and the fourteenth centuries, i.e., before philosophical schools, which were largely built upon the furthering of Ancient Greek philosophy and science, were banned in Sunni Islam because of the threat they posed to the Muslim faith or established power.

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