Original Article

State-building and the armed forces in modern Afghanistan: A structural analysis

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Abstract NATO's ISAF mission in Afghanistan ended on 31 December 2014. The future of Afghanistan is now largely in the hands of the Afghan National Army (ANA). NATO countries have invested billions of dollars in the ANA to create an actor that can provide stability and partner with the Afghan government to further state development. But civil-military relations in Afghanistan have proven historically difficult. NATO allies believe that the ANA will be a partner for the government, but the military might also intervene in governance, and become a destabilizing force. Using the unique timing of the ANA's development and NATO handover, this article applies the Stepan-Desch's structural theory of civil-military relations to the case of Afghanistan to hypothesize about the future of Afghan civil-military relations. It argues that, given the dominance of internal threats in Afghanistan, it is highly likely that the military will intervene directly in Afghan governance, rather than maintain a western standard of military non-involvement in governance.
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> Your kingship is unstable, the service incentives are unattractive, and I am longing for home.
>
> Deserting Afghan Soldier to Afghan Amir Sher Ali, Circa 1865
>
> <div align="right">(Cited in: Jalali (2002))</div>

Introduction

On 1 January 2015, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan assumed full responsibility for the provision of security within the borders of the Afghan state.

To complete the withdrawal of NATO combat troops by the end of 2014, the Alliance focused on the development and professionalization of the Afghan National Army (ANA). The goal was to produce a military establishment adherent to western civil-military norms to be a partner with the civilian government in further state development. The logic underpinning this goal is the fact that the longest period of stability and modernization in modern Afghan history, from the mid-1950s to early/mid-1970s, coincided with the existence of a strong, centrally controlled western style military that was a partner in a (gradual) modernization process alongside a civilian government.

The ANA is the most critical component to the preservation of security and stability in Afghanistan following the conclusion of NATO combat operations.[1] The ANA is Washington's 'exit strategy'. [2] This is not the first time that foreigners have sought to create a centralized regular Afghan military force to facilitate an exit strategy. Imperial Britain attempted to establish a centralized Afghan army in the 1830s to enable withdrawal of the British Indian Army from Afghan territory following the first Anglo-Afghan War. British consolidation of military force in Kabul, however, backfired resulting in the outbreak of second Anglo-Afghan War in 1878 and the eventual expulsion of the British without achieving Whitehall's objectives in Afghanistan. The historical record provides good reason to investigate and question whether NATO's development and professionalization of the ANA will allow the Afghan government to consolidate security gains following the end of the ISAF mission (Flournoy and O'Hanlon, 2013).

Will the ANA be a tool of state power working for the people of Afghanistan or will it turn into yet another armed group aiming to impose its own will and interests on the people through direct involvement in governance? The Obama Administration's assumption that the ANA will serve as a partner for stability is most likely a poor one. It is highly probable that the military will become directly involved in Afghan governance.

Contemporary Afghanistan presents a unique opportunity for political scientists. Rarely do we have a chance to employ theory predicatively. Much scholarship in international relations (IR), and the subfield of international security studies, strives to be parsimonious and predictive, however, most analysis in IR is done retrospectively rather than predicatively – theory and hypotheses are tested through historical case studies. The danger of this approach is that the historical case studies are written to fit the theory, not vice versa (George and Bennett, 2004). The Afghanistan case provides scholars of civil-military relations with an opportunity to engage in hypothesis testing to evaluate the predictive ability of structural theory. This allows us to advance our knowledge of civil-military relations, while avoiding selective case bias since we do not know whether the outcome will confirm or refute our hypothesis (King *et al*, 1994).[3] This work seeks to break down what Nye has called the problem of 'scholars on the sidelines', pursuing a theoretically driven enquiry focused on a contemporary research question by bridging the gap between

research and policy (Jervis, 2008; Nye, 2009). This approach is similar to that taken by Mearsheimer (1990) in his seminal article 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War,' where he used neorealist theory to make a hypothesis about the future that remains one of the most studied and debated works in the field. My goal in this project is to conduct a historical case study, from which to draw lessons, and to set the parameters for this 'experiment'. In doing so, I seek to avoid what political scientist Mead (2010) labels 'scholasticism' in political science – where the academy retreats into overly theoretical studies without seeking to engage topical challenges. This approach also allows us to attempt to make predictions that may be of use to policy makers, as they seek to further state development in Afghanistan in 2015 and beyond.

I use a structural approach to hypothesize about the future of civil-military relations in Afghanistan following the end of the US-led NATO combat mission on 31 December 2014. This method was pioneered by Alfred Stephan who worked on civil-military relations in Latin America, and later innovated by Michael Desch. On the basis of structural theory, I hypothesize that it is very likely that the ANA will become directly involved in the governance of Afghanistan because of the internal nature of the threat oriented at the state and the Afghan society. The military's involvement in governance will come in the guise of 'preatorianism' (a guardian coup) and will likely occur even if the United States and NATO forces remain in the country.[4] I utilize a structural theory, since realism allows efficacy to other variables when structure is indeterminate. Thus, here my goal is to test the accuracy of structural theory on a case study that is 'in progress' so to speak – it is the closest we can get to an experiment in IR. This case of contemporary Afghanistan should be an 'easy' case for a structural theory of civil-military relations to explain. (George and Bennett (2005), p. 122.)

My hypothesis assumes that the international community continues to fund the lion's share of the ANA budget for at least the next decade (Rubin, 2013a). All indications are that this will be the case for, as Stephen Biddle points out, paying US $4–6 billion to the ANSF per year as opposed to $120 billion to support US-led operations is a bargain (Biddle, 2013; Jones and Crane, 2013).[5] Seth Jones and Keith Crane, from the Rand Corporation, both recommend, in a recent Council on Foreign Relations report, that the United States, and principal allies such as the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Japan, fund the ANA with $5 billion per year, plus an additional $3.3–3.9 billion in assistance to the government. The NATO and the United States also have no desire to see Afghanistan collapse (immediately at least), so it is the respective national interests of NATO allies (especially the United States) that the ANA is funded for the medium term. I also assume that the structural environment will not be significantly impacted if the United States/NATO follow-on mission 'Resolute Support' is implemented. Although the estimated 10 000 NATO troops will help to provide stability, it is doubtful that they will be able to better secure the situation than the much larger number of international troops currently

deployed.[6] Furthermore, these troops have a training remit, not a broad combat remit. Therefore I assume that they will have a negligible impact on the structural threat environment.

Finally, I assume that Afghanistan is a reasonable case study for a structural theory of civil-military relations for two reasons. First, because NATO has instituted a civilian-military dichotomy within the Afghan government and analysing NATO's policy and the structural environment against the yardstick that the Alliance chose is logical. Second, since the early twentieth century, successive Afghan rulers have implemented and maintained a western style system of civil-military relations. There have almost always been sub-state armed forces within the system, but the state has not been totally ungovernable as a result. Much of the contemporary literature on state building and military development in modern Afghanistan is grounded in a Orientalist perspective of the 'other', as Mosutti (2013) writes it is 'colonial body of literature constructed with the romantic representation of an unruly and remote region cut off from the outside world, a trope that remains influential ever now … the image of an insular, isolated land where change can be brought about only if induced from outside continues to pervade many policy reports and scholarly works.' Change has occurred, however, from within Afghanistan, as well as from outside – in any event change and stable governance is possible as history illustrates (albeit not without challenges). The idea of a 'limited social order' within Afghan society raises interesting questions and challenges to civil-military relations in Afghanistan, but it does not reduce the legitimacy of this examination of the United States and European assumptions about the role of the ANA.

The next section explores the literature and civil-military relations and outlines a structural approach to the study of civil-military relations. I then turn to the case study of modern Afghan civil-military relations, where the case supporting the theoretical predictions is explored and developed. My review of the twentieth century history is based on secondary literature, while my study of the twenty-first century state-building efforts utilizes secondary literature and new interview-based empirical material collected during three research trips to Afghanistan over a 6-year period. Finally, I conclude by evaluating the weakness of the structural approach and the role that intervening variables may play in the future development of civil-military relations in Afghanistan. Only time will tell if this exercise in theory testing a structural approach to civil-military relations yields accurate predications.

Contemporary Research on Civil-Military Relations

The field of civil-military relations is, as Feaver (1999) notes, 'one of the truly interdisciplinary fields of study in social science' encompassing a diverse number of methodological approaches from various schools of thought including sociology, history, regional studies, psychology and political science. The central problem of

civil-military relations, regardless of approach, is the same. The essential focus is on political agency. In the process of state creation, armed forces are utilized to mitigate, and ideally defeat, both internal and external adversaries. In the classic western model, once the state is created, a military continues to exist to defend it against external threats. The core challenge is that, in creating an organization capable of wielding great violence to protect society, an organization capable of imposing itself on the will of the people is also created (Lasswell, 1941a; Huntington, 1957; Janowitz, 1960; Janowitz, 1964, 1977; Moskos, 1970, 1986; Nordlinger, 1977; Pearlmutter, 1977; Horowtiz, 1980; Savras, 1999; Sorenson, 1999). This problem is most acute in newer democracies and countries in transition such as Egypt and Pakistan. Civil-military scholarship asks 'how does a society ensure that an organization with more coercive power than the civilians it serves subjects itself the will of the people?' Social scientists have taken numerous approaches to this central problematique of civil-military relations, which developed over time as a result of the pressing challenges of a specific era (Rosen, 1995; Schiff, 1995; Feaver, 1996).

'The central task of the political sociology of the military' argued Stepan (1988) 'is to look at both the military institutions and the political system and to determine how the institutional characteristics of a *particular* military establishment shape its response to influences coming from the political system'. This goal can be reached in any number of ways, through various methodologies. One set of scholars in civil-military studies focuses on the issue of civilian as opposed to military control of governance – essentially a first order problem in civil-military relations. This generation of scholarship developed during the era of decolonization during the 1950s and 1960s (See, for example, Nordlinger, 1977; Pearlmutter, 1977, Horowitz, 1983 or Dix, 1994). Another group of scholars predominately examines second order issues in civil-military relations; principally the establishment of democratic governance over the defence and security sectors (Dix, 1994; Cottey, 2002; Croissant and Kuehn, 2007). These challenges were evident in the post-Cold War era cases across Eastern and Central Europe where the concern was not military subordination to civilians, but rather democratic governance of military institutions. Finally, there is a literature related to third order problems of civil-military relations, such as the proper balance of civil-military relations in advanced democracies (Avant, 1998; Desch, 1998; Bland, 2001; Owens, 2006a; Bruneau and Tollefson, 2007; Desch, 2007). These writers are preoccupied with understanding the appropriate balance between civilians and the military in the creation of foreign and defence policy and are mainly American researchers writing on the 'crisis' of civil-military relations in the United States.

Within these three difference sets of enquiry one finds three different approaches: normative, empirical/descriptive and theoretical.[7] Each brings something unique to the study of civil-military relations. The normative lens is important because the central civil-military problematique grew out of a democratic tradition focused on the subjugation of the military to elected civilian leaders, despite the fact that the military

possesses the ability to impose its will on society should it choose to do so. Within political science the focus on the normative approach has been establishing what criterion meets the definition of civilian control. These studies were aided by empirical work on specific cases, developing a massive descriptive literature on civil-military arrangements in different societies around the world. Finally, building on both the normative discussion and the typologies of empirical studies, theoretical work in political science on civil-military relations focuses on understanding cause and effect. This social scientific approach uses a dependent variable (DV), the prediction, and an independent variable (IV) that explains the outcome. Intervening variables between the DV and IV may also be introduced to add more explanatory power to a parsimonious theory. Many contemporary political scientists seeking patterned generalizations of cause and effect in international affairs favour this approach. Political scientists therefore can describe and also explain and predict developments in other cases *ceteris paribus*.

The earliest applications of structural theories to civil-military studies yielded paradoxical results (Lasswell, 1941b; Andreski, 1954). Andreski argued, for example, that increasing external threat would increase civilian control of the military. Lasswell thought it was tougher for civilians to control the military in a more challenging international environment. Michael Desch, seeking to clarify this paradox, developed a scientifically rigorous structural theory of civil-military relations that argued, in threat environments with a high external threat the military would be more amenable to civilian control than in a case where the military is oriented inwards on domestic threats.[8] Desch (1999b) also incorporated the independent variables of other scholarship within civil-military studies – personality, domestic institutions and military culture – as intervening variables within a structural theory making it the most comprehensive predictive theory available in the field, while still working to be true to Occam's Razor and parsimony.

The structural approach is, as Snyder (1990) convincingly argued, a logical place to start, despite a wealth other scholarship that argues for using other explanatory variables. In a structurally indeterminate system realism and its critics make similar predictions about state behaviour leaving the real focus of these competing theories on structurally determinate environments. Using structural theory on the Afghan case allows us to examine under which conditions structure is more determinate than in others. (Desch (1999a), p. 132).

This structural theory of civil-military relations is based on the premise that threats are the independent variable. As an analytical category, threats are split between external (international) threats and internal (domestic) threats. They also vary in intensity from high to low. These may be 'perceived' or 'actual' threats, but what matters in this study are that actors believe that a threat exists (Jervis, 1976; Cohen, 1978; Jervis *et al*, 1985). In this article I define an internal threat as a challenge to the government's monopoly on the legitimate use of force. An external threat is defined as a challenge to the sovereignty of the state. An external

threat threatens the entire state and is here defined as a direct, rather than indirect, military challenge to the state. A domestic threat may affect only the state and society or it may be a threat from society to military and civilian institutions.[9] The 'state', following Stepan (1988), is not simply 'government' but rather 'it is the continuous administrative, legal, bureaucratic, and coercive system that attempts not only to manage the state apparatus but to structure relations between civil and public power and the structure many crucial relationships within civil and political society.' (p. 4.) The assumption is that 'the structural threat environment affects character of civilian leadership, nature of military institution, cohesiveness of state institutions, nature of civilian control and the convergence or divergence of civilian and military ideas and culture.'[10] Any large, complicated organization will be faced with division, but threats help to orientate an organization in a particular manner.

The structural theory of civil-military relations cannot predict individual coups, but it can help one to understand the general conditions of civil-military control in a particular instance by providing answers to the questions; 'When will civilian control increase?' and 'When will it decrease?' Desch's structural theory allows us to make five propositions about the relationship of threats on civil-military relations.

P1 – External threats focus the attention of the state outward, thereby producing unity within the state.

P2 – Domestic threats to state and society, but not to the military, are unlikely to negatively affect civilian control. The military should remain subordinate to the civilian government.

P3 – A domestic threat to the military and civilian institutions is more likely to lead to higher levels of military involvement in national governance, i.e. a military supported civilian dictatorship.[11]

P4 – A domestic threat from the civilian state and society towards the military increase the likelihood of direct military rule.[12]

Structural theory is most useful when the threat environment is fairly clear, that is, high levels or external threat and low levels of internal threat or vice versa. Mixed conditions, such as low levels of external threat and internal threat or high levels of both are harder to analyse. In these indeterminate situations the role of intervening variables is stronger. 'Structure' writes Desch, 'tends to establish parameters; actual outcomes are sometimes determined by other factors'. Therefore, in structurally indeterminate environments domestic ideational variables like military doctrine come into play. The allocation of resources by the military is derived from military doctrine and, as such, doctrine can have internal consequences on the state. Doctrine may play a determining role in structurally indeterminate instances in three ways. (Desch, 1999a, b, pp. 17–19.)

First, a military doctrine oriented towards counter-insurgency and internal threats increases the likelihood of military intervention in governance since the military already has a strong capacity and tendency towards domestic policing. Second, 'pattern of assumptions, ideas and beliefs that prescribe how a group should adapt to its external environment and manage its internal affairs,' more commonly known as organizational culture, can impact military behaviour. Deeply embedded norms of civilian control favour military non-involvement in governance. Finally, societal conceptions about the use of force and the limits of military involvement in society can play a deciding role. Is society more accepting of military realism, where the good of society is placed above the good of the individual? Or do concerns about civil liberties and a view that the military is a danger to 'liberty, prosperity and democracy' dominate the national discourse?

In situations with high levels of both internal and external threat, the military will most likely stay outside of governance. In this situation competing threats may divide civilians within government and it may also split society's conception of the chief threats and the best way to remedy them. The latter invites military involvement in government, but the external threat simultaneously challenges the military to focus beyond domestic challenges, restraining their involvement in governance. The possibility of disharmony is great, but perhaps not as great in a situation with low levels of external and internal threat. In this case the military may fracture within itself as to its proper role, while the government and society may be also be at odds over the nature of the threats and the order of primacy in threat perception. Thus the possibility of civil-military discord in this case is also high. Given that there is no clear threat to bind parties together one should expect a greater degree of military involvement in governance than in other scenarios.

While Desch presents a methodologically sound approach to the study of civil-military issues, his conflation of 'politics' and 'governance' detracts from his theory. Desch, like much of the civil-military literature, refers to the involvement of the military in the government of a state as 'sustained military intervention in politics'.[13] Here politics is used as synonymous with 'governance'. This usage of the word 'politics' and a conflation of 'politics' and 'governance,' however, creates an analytical haze. It invites one to look at the military in a binary fashion – either the military is not a political actor and therefore does not attempt to come to power or it is political, meaning that it wants to seize power from civilians. This approach overlooks Abrahamsson's (1971) insightful argument that *the military is always a political entity and therefore is an active interest group in national politics*. The central question that should preoccupy scholars is whether or not a military is political, but to what degree it overrides, controls or directly intervenes in domestic governance.

A political military does not necessarily mean that the military wants to govern the country. Of course, the military as a political actor can also be problematic. As Samuel Huntington wrote over 50 years ago, 'the problem of the modern state is not armed revolt but the relation of the [military] expert to the politician.'

This problem is much evidenced today in the disagreements between the President Obama's 27 year-old foreign policy advisor and four-star generals.[14] Disagreements between former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and 'his' generals in the run up to the 2003 Iraq War highlights another such complicated relationship (Owens, 2006b). Peter Feaver argues that a risk just as sinister to the state as a military coup is the 'ability of the military to destroy a state by draining it of resources in a quest for ever greater strength as a hedge against the enemies of the state.'[15] Such a threat does not require military control over the governance, but it does require the state to play 'politics' and to be a political actor to secure funding and assets.

A clearer analytical distinction would be to use the term 'governance'. A military that wants to participate in governance is one that wants to be in power, share power with civilians or intervene to install a civilian government of the military's choosing. An example of such a state of affairs is modern day Pakistan. A military that does not want to govern or share in governance, may, nonetheless be political, as is the case in the United States where the military has often made effective use of the media and the public process to lobby of institutional interests. General David Petraeus was a master in this regard (Williams, 2013). In this article the central focus is not whether or not militaries are political actors, but whether or not they involve themselves in governance. With this correction the analytical usefulness of the structural theory is strengthened. The question now is how does structural theory, as it is understood and studied in western scholarship, fit with the case of Afghanistan?

Civil Military Relations and the Afghan Threat Environment, 1900–2001

NATO's attempt to reform the Afghan state is not novel. From 1838 to 1841 the British attempted to create a centralized military to support their chosen client government in Kabul, but their efforts backfired (Steward, 2011; Preston, 2012). Afghan ruler Dost Mohammed Khan then attempted to create his own centralized military, which went on to fail miserably against the British in the second Anglo-Afghan War (1878–1880) (Chapman, 1881; Duke, 1883). Four decades later Amanullah Khan attempted to institute a top-down modernization of the state and the military. The goal of military modernization was to create a modern army that was trained, professional and disciplined. This military would be loyal to the state, not tribal chieftains, and its primary occupation was the internal pacification of Afghanistan, coupled with defence against external threats (Tapper, 1983; see also Karimi, 1997; Potocki, 2013). A Turkish military mission to Kabul supported the modernization of the Army, and eventually developed a small corps of well-trained officers. The military modernization program, however, did not yield an army large enough to pacify the internal threats challenging Amanullah Khan's rule and his monopoly on the use of force.

The king's reform agenda in favour of secularization, compulsory education, woman's rights, the establishment of a civil service, a judiciary system based on western ideals and government regulation of teaching mullahs inflamed internal opposition towards the monarchy (Poullada, 1973). In 1928 following a *jirga* to discuss the monarch's latest modernization agenda, tribal khans led by Habibullah Kalankani, resisted and launched an armed revolt against the government (Rubin, 1995). Amanullah Khan's modern military force completely collapsed, shrinking from 23 000 regulars to only 11 000 – far too weak to balance the tribal militias contending for power. From the middle of the nineteenth century up to the 1930s the structural threat environment was dominated by internal threats. In this period the internal threat came in the form of opposition to central government-led reforms to state and society from patrimonial interests who wanted to maintain a 'limited access order' (North *et al*, 2009).

In a limited access order, individuals controlling patrimonial networks dominate the social and political system. Limited access political orders are not inherently unstable. As Grissom notes, stability is achieved when competition between patrimonial elites evolves 'towards a mutually agreeable bargain in which different networks control rents in proportion to the relative balance of power' (Grissom in Farrell *et al*, 2013). Ultimately these threats were so strong that they prevented the development of an effective centralized military force. At this point in time it was not possible to identify a civil-military arrangement similar to that in western countries. This would change in the mid-twentieth century.

The next Afghan king Muhammed Nadir Shah, chosen through a *jirga* of Pashtun chiefs in 1929, recognized the numerous internal threats arrayed against a centralized Afghan state and understood that tribal support was essential to maintain power and 'national' cohesion. Nadir Shah, therefore, implemented reform at a slower pace than his predecessor Amanullah Khan and was careful not to antagonize tribal leaders recognizing that he required their patronage to maintain power. Nadir Shah understood that 'a strong army and accruing financial solvency were critical' to the preservation of his family's dynasty and the modernization of Afghanistan (Tomsen, 2011). During this Afghan 'Era of Tranquility,' Afghanistan enjoyed 49 years of peaceful modernization and nation building. Social reforms contributed to the establishment of a permanent, professional and educated regular officer corps. Predominately coming from the upper and middle class, educated, urban Afghan families, these young officers were as reform minded as many of their civilian counterparts in Afghan government institutions. The Afghan state had some of the trappings of a democratic state, but it was a royal oligarchy. Nevertheless, there was a divide between the civilian government and the king's professional armed forces.

Muhammad Daud, commander of the Kabul Army Corps and a cousin to the king, was emblematic of the young men educated and trained in the military during this period (Ewans, 2001). With continued assistance from the Turkish military Daud enlarged the reform-minded officer corps who supported a centralized and secular

state. In 1953 power transferred from Zahir Shah to Daud, who was appointed Prime Minister in an inter-family transfer of power. Afghanistan continued to follow a modernization agenda that was broadly politically liberal in nature, but despite proposed constitutional reforms, the government of Zahir Shah relied on a great deal of tribal patronage to maintain power. Internal threats to the state were sated, but not eradicated (Saikal, 2004). In 1964 King Zahir signed a new constitution that reduced the influence of the royal family by banning their appointment to the Council of Ministers. The overall orientation of the military was still on maintaining the prominence of the security through the continuation of the monarchy against forces *within* the state that may be opposed to the government.

Around this time, in the 1950s and 1960s, Afghanistan became caught up in the global Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States. As a result of US assistance to Pakistan, Afghanistan went to Moscow for development assistance to help ease concerns in Kabul that rival Pakistan might gain an upper hand in the diplomatic wrangling over the unsettled border between the two countries. Increased cooperation with the Soviet Union on development issues also impacted the ideology of the military, which was still overwhelmingly focused on internal threats to the state. A modernization fervour among Afghan officers began to orientate the officer corps' ideology towards Marxism. Financial support from the USSR totalling USD 1265 million in economic assistance, and USD 1250 in military aid between 1956 and 1978, helped to bolster communist sympathies within the officer corps (Rashid, 2002).

Domestically, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) represented Communism in Afghanistan during this period and was split between a moderate wing (*Parcham*), and a more extreme wing (*Khalq*). The *Parcham* wing of the party supported a gradual evolution towards socialism, because low-levels of industrialization in Afghanistan meant that Afghanistan had yet to reach the stage of proletarian revolution as outlined in the *Communist Manifesto*. Educated, urban Persian speakers dominated the *Parcham* side of the party. *Khalq* on the other hand, driven by relatively uneducated, non-elite Pashtuns, favored a clear break with the past and institution of a radical communist agenda. An inability to balance the competing views of PDPA members led former-Prime Minister (and former General) Daud to side with the *Parcham* wing of the PDPA and launch a military-backed coup against the government in July 1973 while his cousin, King Zahir Shah, was visiting Italy. After a successful coup, reform minded Daud broke with Afghan custom assuming the tile of President and declaring Afghanistan a republic, rather than perpetuating the royal oligarchy under his name. This is the first example of a stable Afghan national military intervening directly in Afghan governance. The second instance of military involvement in governance, however, was not far away.

The PDPA government under Daud's rule continued to institute a modernization agenda across Afghanistan, but resistance from the more rural segments of the population to the communist modernization program increased. Resistance was highest in the religious and rural south. So long as the military and government

remained united, however, it was possible to maintain a near monopoly on the use of force in Afghanistan and to advance the economic and social modernization agenda of the government. Unfortunately, the political conflict between the more extreme *Khalq* wing of the Afghan communist party and the more bourgeois *Parcham* wing of the party worsened and skidded out of control. On 27 April 1978 the political dispute within the PDPA erupted in violence with aerial attacks launched against the Presidential Palace followed by a ground attack by segments of the Afghan military loyal to the ideals of the radical communist ideas of the *Khalaq* wing of the PDPA. Military forces stormed Kabul, overpowered the Presidential Guard, and killed the moderate Daud and his family. Within 6 years Afghanistan had experienced its second military coup.

The leaders of the revolution attempted to unify the PDPA immediately following the coup, but political disunity continued unabated. Making matters worse, the PDPA instituted widespread and deep communist reforms across the country, including numerous changes offensive to Islam, prompting the development of a widespread rural insurgency against the primarily urban communists. The removal of the royal family and PDPA policies led to disastrous political conditions as Malley and Saikal noted:

> [the PDPA] regime was not in a position to exploit the traditional legitimacy that had helped sustain its processors, and in the context of its grossly overambitious program of social transformation…it was obliged increasingly to resort to coercion to maintain its position (Malley and Saikal, 1992).

Here the story of Afghanistan becomes more tragic and a full-on insurgency against the communist government (1979–1992) and subsequent civil war (1992–2001) would destroy the modern, centralized Afghan state. At this time, the Afghan Army continued to exist so long as it was funded by the Soviets. Even after the Soviets withdrew, the Afghan Army was able to hold its own against insurgents. With poor internal revenue generation, because Moscow stopped funding Kabul, the military fractured and dissolved. From 1992–2001 it is impossible to identify Afghan civil-military relations that follow a western framework.

For the purposes of this study, however, it is possible to conclude that from 1933 until 1978 Afghanistan was largely a stable state with a system of government best typified using Giddens' analytical typology of state development, as a 'nation-state enclave' in development to what we understand as a fully fledged 'nation state' (See: Giddens, 1987 and Rubin, 1988). Although not a democracy and not a comprehensive 'nation state,' Afghanistan enjoyed a civil-military divide between a largely civilian government under the noble head of state and a non-noble prime minister (after the 1964 constitutional changes). The royal family often had military experience but was not serving in the military and ministers were civilians. In the 1970s the Afghan state, society and military all believed that they faced an external threat from Pakistan over the disputed border (the Durand Line), but internal threats

were more acute, and the military was largely geared to maintain internal peace and stability (Table 1).

During the 1970s, the internal threats outweighed external concerns. A tribal insurgency against the government, motivated by a concern over social reforms, was a concern for political and military leaders in Kabul and the heated domestic politics of the era, reflecting the global ideological struggle between communism and democracy, made the domestic political arrangement highly charged and rather unstable. Structural theory, therefore, is supported by this historical case as the theory predicts that the likelihood of military involvement in governance would be high. The outcome, that the military would twice involve itself Afghan governance in the 1970s to bring a new government to power, is no surprise to structural theorists.

Development of Professional Afghan Armed Forces Since 2001

Rebuilding the Afghan state and the development of new Afghan armed forces began soon after the completion of US-led major combat operations in 2002. The first group of soldiers trained by western governments was the first Battalion Afghan National Guard trained by British forces. The American Green Berets began training two more battalions later that year (Giustozzi, 2007).[16] In March 2002, journalist Ahmed Rashid reported that the US military was sending 1800 troops to argument the existing US and British military training program that was already underway. A new 600-man battalion, composed of troops from 29 of Afghanistan's 32 provinces, was already in development. This 'Presidential Guard' as it was called was, according to US General McColl, 'the central symbol of the new Afghanistan and its security structure' (Rashid, 2013). The process was not easy; by the end of 2002 the British trained battalion of 600 men was already down to 200 (International Institute for

Table 1: Structural theory and Afghan environment 1973 and 1979

Theoretical variable	Structural
External Threats	*Condition*
Internal Threats	Moderate – concern of border with Pakistan. (1973 and 1979)
	Unrest within more traditional (tribal) segments of Afghan society against the military (centralization of force) and Kabul government (centralization of sovereignty) (1973)
	Ideological schisms within society over the nature of government – monarchy vs. republic (1973)
	Strong ideological division within military and government and progress of communist revolution in Afghanistan (1979).
	Increasing tribal opposition (1979)

Conditions in this environment indicate a high probability of military involvement in government, in line with historical events.

Strategic Studies (IISS), 2002; International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), 2010). Meanwhile, observers on the ground reported that militias, such as *Jama't-e Islam*, had over 20 000 full-time fighters.[17] The training of the Afghan military rested with the US Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A) based in Kabul. CSTC-A would help to expand the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC), and with additional US trainers the programme was expanded with good results. Over 6000 recruits joined the ANA in 2004 and 1 year later the number of enlisted men tripled to 18 000 (The Military Balance 2004, 2004).

By the end of 2006, the ANA had swelled to 30 128 relatively well-equipped regulars. These soldiers were distributed around five corps based in Kabul (201st ANA Corps), Gardez (203), Kandahar (205), Heart (207) and Mazar-i-Sharif (209) (Chan, 2007). In this early phase of the engagement, US money was flowing into Afghanistan and most of it was spent on security, predominately on the development of security forces, including the ANA.[18] At this point the US Department of Defense had already recognized the need for long-term support of the ANA, allotting $2 billion annually to sustain the armed forces in 2007.[19] Long-term financial support would remain a topic of discussion as NATO approached the 2014 transition agreed at the summit, especially given that the size of the ANA stood at 195 000 as of late 2012. Formal ANA training was conducted at three locations: the KMTC, National Military Academy of Afghanistan (NMAA) and the Command and General Staff College (CGSC). There was also a Special Forces Training Center (SFTC) at Camp Moorehead that provided training similar to the US Ranger course.

Within the ANA, mentoring and pairing programs maintain learning though partnership of NATO soldiers with Afghans. At the KMTC soldiers with leadership potential are selected for the NCO course, after which time they are reintegrated into their *kandak* (battalion) with regular soldiers. One of the chief problems the ANA faced was/is a dearth of officers, in particular junior officers. Although the NMAA can train 300 officers a year, classes have been much smaller with only 91 in the 2009 class and 239 in the 2010 class.[20] Although NATO will be withdrawing combat troops in 2014, there are plans for a long-term NATO support presence to allow for further mentorship and training.[21] In July 2012 British Prime Minister David Cameron announced that the United Kingdom had signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to provide mentors and advisors to the new Afghan National Officer Academy modeled on the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in the United Kingdom.[22] Such programmes are designed not only to teach officers how to fight wars and lead men, but also to imbue the officer corps with a reverence of the western ideal of democratically elected civilian-led military forces.

Many of the traditional challenges with the development of a regular, centralized Afghan Army have resurfaced in the current efforts to build the ANA. Recruitment has been relatively robust, but the quality of the recruits is often rather low. The volunteers are brave, but the lack of a formal educational system from 1995–2005

means that most of the young men joining the ANA are illiterate and innumerate. NTM-A worked with local tribal and religious leaders to recruit soldiers. A fair number of elders assisted NATO in recruiting young men under the rubric of Afghan nationalism and rebuilding Afghanistan. However, there remain strong pockets of resistance against such efforts, and without the blessing of family and tribe; few would be able to join the ANA. If tribal and village elders move against the ANA or the Afghan state, further recruitment would be affected.[23] Desertion remains problematic, with the *New York Times* reporting rate of seven to 10 percent despite substantial pay increases.

The overall attrition rate through 2012, a critical year for ANA development, according to NTM-A was 27 per cent for the ANA; the norm should be 17 per cent. The Afghan National Air Force (ANAF) attrition rate was much lower at 9 per cent. All the forces are exceeding their retention and re-enlistment goals with the ANA having a reenlistment rate of 63 per cent and the ANAF a very robust 80 per cent reenlistment rate.[24] According to NTM-A, the primary reasons soldiers desert or do not re-enlist include homesickness, poor leadership and/or pressure to return home and care for the family. The military also suffers from significant manpower depletion through combat fatalities. The Brookings Institution puts the number at 1200 dead ANA soldiers in 2012 and 560 in 2013 (ANP fatalities were even higher at 2200 in 2012) (Afghanistan Index, 2014). Overall, 13 729 ANSF have were killed from 2001–Feb 2014, with an additional 16 511 injured (ibid.)

Despite these challenges NATO has managed to build what RAND analyst Adam Grissom referred to in 2011 as 'a very impressive looking army'. The ANA currently runs over 100 training facilities, educating around 27 000 soldiers per year. Numerous challenges remain including maintaining a high quality force and retention, not to mention improving operational effectiveness.[25] Somewhat problematic is the moral hazard posed by 100 000 NATO forces. It is difficult to gage the true operational effectiveness of the ANA when the Afghan military can rely on ISAF to deal with severe operational challenges facing the ANA (Grissom (2013), 263–269).

The focus on the development of the ANA and the ease of training soldiers, compared with the development of a professional civil service, means that the ANA is by far a more effective institution than much of the central government (with various ministries and power interests) in Kabul. The case of Afghanistan is not unique in this regard as (Tygesen, 2012) notes; external interventions tend to produce 'weak and dysfunctional civilian institutions *vis-à-vis* relatively stronger and more functional military institutions'. There is thus a predilection on such scenarios for the military to involve itself in governance, since the research indicates that weak and corrupt governance by civilians, leads to a higher probability of direct military intervention in state governance known within civil-military studies as 'preatorianism' (Bienen, July 1974). Discouraging this type of behaviour is not easy, but all NATO training has been geared around reducing this pressure.

Interviews with NATO trainers illustrate that NATO officers believe that the best way to instill western civil-military normative standards into the Afghan military is to lead by example. Interview subjects report that Afghan officers are routinely interested and amazed by Western officers that work for one President or Prime Minister on a Monday and then a week later work for another one following a democratic change of power in their homeland. The Afghan officers see that their NATO counterparts have a vote, but that they do not run for office and they serve the state, not an individual.[26] There is a clear and evident effort within the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan to develop a military doctrine within the officer corps deeply imbued with western style norms respecting civilian control of the military. This process may work, since previous studies on the socialization effect of NATO illustrate that culture and normative transfer does occur though cooperation and involvement in institutions (Gheciu, 2005; Frank, 2013).

Government institutional arrangements in Kabul have also been designed to provide civilian oversight of the military. The Ministry of Defense (MOD) must submit to Parliament approval of expenditures. The ministers and deputy ministers in the MOD are all civilians, and a professional civil service is in development to ensure that future civilian oversight is robust. Defense Minister Wardak lost a confidence vote in Parliament. The *New York Times* reported that 'Lawmakers complained about a range of troubles at the Defense Ministry, including corruption in the contracting procedures, a failure to respond to attacks beginning in Pakistan and favoritism in appointments.' Bismullah Khan, the interior minister, was also dismissed by the Parliament for similar problems in his ministry. Both men were close to President Karzai and at the top of the national security structure in Kabul (Rubin, 2013b). The ability of Parliament to dismiss both men, and the peaceful resignation of both men indicates some progress on governance and especially in the realm of civilian oversight of the Ministry of Defense and the military. The situation, although, may also be read as a minister, who fell out of favour with the president, being thrown to the wolves.

NATO also carefully monitors appointments of officers to leadership positions and it has worked to achieve an ethnic balance in the armed forces, and especially the office corps, which was, up until recently, dominated by Tajiks at the level of colonel and general.[27] The goal, according to a senior leader at NTM-A, is 'to leave a stable security platform on which the Afghans can build an eventual monopoly of the use of force.'[28] Within the Afghan officer corps there seems to be a strong belief in the professional nature of the military and the need for military subordination to the civilian government.[29] Only time will tell whether this assessment is accurate or not. General Karimi, the chief of the ANA, spoke at length about this issue. More mid-level and junior officers from across Afghanistan echoed his sentiments, and NTM-A international staff working with the Afghans also stated in various discussions that there was a strong belief in military subordination to civilian government within the ANA officer corps.[30] Currently the officer crops is composed of three generations of officers; those trained by the Soviets, former Mujihideen fighters, and the newly

NATO trained forces. The younger NATO trained officers are being promoted as quickly as possible to further socialize the army in towards a western model of civil-military relations and a western standard of operations.

The Structural Environment in Afghanistan

NATO has infused billions of dollars in developing a cohesive ANA that will serve an Afghan civilian government to facilitate a gradual modernization of the Afghan state. NATO has also invested a great deal of time and effort to ensure that this new ANA respects western norms on the relationship between the armed forces and society. The structural environment in Afghanistan, however, is one dominated by internal threats. The structural theory of civil-military relations leads one to predict that in such a situation the structural factors – internal threats – will lead to military involvement in governance. If this is not the case, then the analyst must look at intervening variables to figure out why this case deviates from what structural theory perceives as the norm.

Internal threats from society directed at the military and the central civilian government in Afghanistan emanate from economically interested actors (warlords) as well as from ideological/religious actors that wield force.[31] The US Department of Defense concluded in 2010 that 'The insurgency in Afghanistan is Taliban-dominated and includes three major groups: the Quetta Shura Taliban (QST), Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin (HIG), and the Haqqani Network (HQN). These groups cooperate and coordinate at times, with their areas of operations appearing geographically and demographically determined' (US Department of Defense, 2010).

'Economic insurgents', more commonly known as 'warlords', are embedded within various layers of Afghan society, in many cases they are even funded by international monies intended to develop Afghanistan. The Committee on Government Oversight and Reform, Subcommittee of National Security and Foreign Affairs in the US House of Representatives released a report in 2010 that concluded that a large portion of $2.1 billion in US government contracts went to warlords. The report noted that i) security for the US supply chain was provided predominately by warlords; ii) that highway warlords ran a protection racket to secure contract money; iii) protection payments from the United States made up a large portion of Taliban income; and iv) the US supply chain fuelled corruption and undermined US strategy in Afghanistan (US House of Congress, 2010). Large capital outlays by the United States to facilitate rapid economic development in Afghanistan attracted economically interested actors in Afghanistan to come to the 'assistance' of the United States. 'Most of these units,' wrote Ali Jalali, were 'composed of armed groups affiliated with warlords and their allies who jumped onto the anti-Taliban bandwagon as soon as the radical militia crumbled under the weight of the coalition bombing campaign.'[32] These warlords now have a vested interest in the perpetuation of conflict within Afghanistan so as to secure additional income. Furthermore, consolidation of a monopoly of force

with Kabul would permit an expansion of Kabul's power and a reduction in 'ungoverned' spaces that the warlords need to conduct their illicit business. The warlords are, therefore, a strong internal threat to the Afghan state, military, and society.

Although ethnic and tribal affiliations remain important, the destruction of the tribal social structure through various regimes in the twentieth century meant that 'local security' migrated to armed groups under the control of warlords, which while most have some sort of tribal and ethnic foundations, are not longer principally social units as much as they are socio-economic ones (Collier, 2000; Le Billon, 2002; Sedra, 2002). Following the supposed conclusion of major combat operations in 2002, Washington policy-makers thought it best to integrate the warlords into new state structures rather than challenging them, but this approach was not without problems.

Most of the 'vassals' of the bigger warlords have already found their way into the provisional Afghan army, which was formed in early 2002. They have been recognized as colonels and generals, often without any technical know- how, proper military training and not necessarily having shown great military skills. Their incorporation into the army was seen as the lesser evil for a country that first of all needs peace, although the troops of what is now known as the Afghan Military Force have often been involved in criminal activities and have contributed to undermining the security of the country. Their patrons, however, are unlikely to be satisfied with an appointment of that kind. In fact, since some of these 'vassals' have received grades as high as three- or four-star general, there is little room left in the military hierarchy to satisfy the ego of men used to absolute power. Unsurprisingly, therefore, such warlords have turned away from becoming part of the military hierarchy.

The early proliferation of the ANA by warlords abated naturally, a trend that was reinforced through more rigorous vetting procedures implemented by NATO.[33] Fewer warlords within the military mean an increased likelihood that the ANA remains cohesive, but warlords will nevertheless pose an internal threat to the Afghan state.

At the moment, the threat warlord militias pose to the Afghan state is low, but only because most of their interests have not been directly challenged by the United States and NATO forces in Afghanistan. If GIRoA and the ANA do not confront warlords then corruption will continue to undermine the popularity of the government with the Afghan people, further eroding the government's attempts to gain a monopoly on power. But if the state starts to act against warlord interests, the warlords are likely to then resist with armed force posing a significant challenge to the GIRoA and ANA. Because the ANA is oriented around managing this armed internal threat, the military is more predisposed to direct intervention in governance. When this is coupled with the weakness of the Afghan civilian government, the likelihood of ANA intervention increases. Ideally the police would deal with internal security, but the ineffectiveness and corruption of the police forces, coupled the scale of the challenges, and necessitates an inward looking military (Perito, 2009; Royal United Services Institute, 2013).

The civilian government is riddled with corruption that threatens the future stability of the country (Cordesman, 2012). Transparency International ranks Afghanistan as the third most corrupt country in the world, which could prompt a 'guardian coup' where the military steps in to 'save the Afghan state' (Transparency International, 2013). The World Bank, the UN Development Program, and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime all find that Afghanistan suffers from extensive and serious corruption (Heineman, 2013). A joint Kabul University-Konrad Adenauer Foundation poll of the Afghan electorate in 2010 found that 70 percent of the population had no confidence in their government and 65 percent were not satisfied with the government's work (Gebauer and Kazim, 2013). Warlordism also means lower tax receipts undermining GIRoA's ability to fund the military needed to assert Kabul's authority. Because the civilian government is both simultaneously weak and rather corrupt, there is an increased probability that a sense of 'military prerogative' might develop within the ANA officer corps. Military prerogative is when 'the military as an institution assumes they have an acquired right or privilege, formal or informal, to exercise effective control over its [the state's] internal governance.' (Stepan, 1988, p. 93.)

The quantitative statistics support classification of the structural environment as one dominated by internal threats are evident. Indicators, such as Enemy Initiated Attacks (EIA), have remained consistent over the last several years. The nature of such metrics is difficult to appraise and there are generally revisions to the official numbers. For example, the German Ministry of Defense initially reported a reduction in security incidents for 2012, but then revised its figures for security incidents upward in January 2013 reporting a 10 percent rise in security incidents over the year 2012, although the MOD argued, somewhat paradoxically, that the security situation still had improved (Muller, 2013).

The US Department of Defense (DOD) noted in its 2010 annual report on the situation in Afghanistan that overall kinetic activity in Afghanistan continued to dominate the security environment. As the DOD put it:

> Kinetic activity continues to exceed historical trends. There have been increases in all methods of attacks, except IEDs, which were lower in August 2010 than they were in August 2009, and direct fire (DF) is increasing at a higher rate than indirect fire (IDF). This is possibly due to the amount of resources it takes to attack utilizing IDFs versus DF and IEDs. Overall kinetic events are up 300 percent since 2007 and up an additional 70 percent since 2009 (US Department of Defense, 2010).

Two years later, the 2012 annual report concluded that 'Taliban senior leaders remain capable of providing general, strategic guidance to the broader insurgency and channelling resources to support operational priorities, in particular in RC-S, RC-SW, and RC-E'(US Department of Defense, 2012). The surge implemented by the Obama Administration in 2009 did provide more troops to blanket the country,

although the troop-to-population ratio remained low. Although the insurgents retained the 'capability to carry out attacks at roughly the same level as last year [2011]' various types of security incidents, such as IED incidents, decreased and then levelled off through 2012 (US Department of Defense, 2012). This led the DOD to argue that,

> The nature of the EIAs indicates insurgents are reacting to defend areas, rather than shaping or more proactively engaging the coalition. Insurgent attacks are becoming more isolated and occurring away from population centers. The majority of Afghanistan's 405 districts now experience very low levels of EIAs; 80 percent of attacks occurring districts with only 20 percent of the population, and nearly half of all attacks country-wide occur in just 10 districts – which contain only 3 percent of the population. Alternately, RC-W, RC-N, and RC-C account for 57 percent of the Afghan population, but only experienced roughly nine percent of all EIAs p. 20.

The number of attacks in 2011 and 2012 may be lower than in 2010, but it is substantially greater than, in fact double, the number of attacks before the surge. Violence is not consistently nationwide, but it is strong in particular parts of the country – enough so to be of serious concern to Kabul and the ANA. This domestic threat, worryingly, is also supported externally making it even more difficult to manage. In December 2010 all 16 US intelligence agencies concluded in the US National Intelligence Estimate 'that large parts of Afghanistan are in danger of falling to the Taliban. They confirm that Pakistan is unwilling to end its secret support for the Taliban which uses Pakistani territory as a safe haven'(Cockburn, 2013). The DOD supports this assessment in its 2010 Annual Review writing that 'The porous border between Afghanistan and Pakistan continues to allow insurgent groups in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPk – North West Frontier) Province to conduct cross-border operations in the Pashtun-dominated areas of eastern and southern Afghanistan.'[34] There is thus a strong external element to the security threats within Afghanistan. This problem is not a recent development (Johnson and Mason, 2008).

Pakistan became increasingly involved in Afghanistan during the *jihad* against the Soviets in the 1980s and then in the 1990s as the country descended into Civil War (Rashid, 1999). How then should Pakistani involvement in Afghanistan be categorized? Does Pakistan present an internal threat around which Afghans can cohere thereby decreasing the chances that the ANA attempts to intervene in Afghan governance? Or does the involvement of Pakistan supporting the Taliban insurgency create an internal threat so strong that Pakistan is screened from Afghanistan's focus? Afghans generally blame Pakistan for most of the insurgency within Afghanistan. Then again the Afghan government has also blamed NATO for Afghan insecurity, and Pakistan argues that the United States creates insecurity in Pakistan and Afghanistan (Abawi, 2012). If Pakistan stopped supporting the Taliban, the Taliban

would still exist (although they would probably be weaker). The Taliban movement, composed of Afghan Taliban and Pakistani Taliban, is a threat to the Pakistani government, which rather ironically then reinforces the Pakistani military's claim to involvement in Pakistani governance – perhaps an eerie omen of things to come in Kabul. Although the Afghan Taliban are focused on regime change in Afghanistan, the permissive environment of extremism fomented by Pakistan indirectly fuels the internally focused Pakistani Taliban, as well as directly assisting the movement in Afghanistan.

The security situation remained volatile through 2013–2014. The Office of Diplomatic Security at the US State Department noted in its 2013 report on Afghanistan that 'Afghanistan remains an extremely dangerous country. Criminal activity runs the gambit from the regular operation of several local, regional, and international terrorist organizations and other organized criminal elements to individual thefts, home invasion, assaults, etc' (US Department of State, 2013). *The Washington Post*, reporting on the 2013 National Intelligence Estimate on Afghanistan, noted that the American intelligence community believed that the security gains made into 2014 would reverse by 2017 without continued US/NATO involvement, and that even with involvement, the Taliban would increase in power to challenge the central government following the end of combat operations (Londono *et al*, 2013). Despite the NATO's best attempts, the government in Kabul would not hold a monopoly on the use of force and could expect significant challenges from the Taliban, as well as from warlords. The Afghanistan NGO security office reported that Afghan insurgent attacks rose 47 percent in the first quarter of 2013 (Beste *et al*, 2013). In 2013 it was estimated that the government in Kabul controlled 30 percent of the country, while the Taliban controlled only 4 percent, but greatly influenced another 30 percent (Katzman, 2014). In the run-up to the presidential elections on 5 April 2014 Afghanistan was wracked by violence. Several high profile attacks, including several on targets in Kabul, resulted in the deaths of several westerners and illustrated the ability of the Taliban to strike in seemingly protected areas. On election day there were 286 insurgent attacks in Afghanistan (Partlow, 2014).

Sentinels of Democracy?

A structural theory of civil-military relations offers a parsimonious approach to the study of civilian control over the military institution. While structural theory cannot predict a coup, it can help us to understand the conditions that affect civil-military control and it allows us to determine if there is a high or low probability of a coup. At the moment NATO believes that creating a strong military is a necessary precursor to developing a stable Afghanistan. NATO expects that, following the western model, the military will be subordinate to an elected civilian government. However, this assumption seems questionable. Attempts to establish a centralized military force in

Afghanistan failed until the twentieth century. While far from perfect, in the twentieth century Afghan leaders succeeded in creating a force that sought to project the government's writ internally and to defend against external enemies. Military consolidation, however, eventually led to military intervention in governance. Such was the case in 1973 and again in 1979 when the military supported coups against the government. Both of these cases follow the expectations of structural theory. Faced with an array of internal threats the military became animated against the government in an attempt to preserve the state. The collapse of the Afghan state in 1991 saw the destruction of the military, but over the last decade NATO has succeeded in establishing a military in Afghanistan that is arguably the most effective institution in Afghanistan. The general effectiveness of the military offers it once again the potential to intervene directly in government. This capability, coupled with the a structural environment dominated by internal threats challenging the state's monopoly on the use of force leads structural theory to expect directly military intervention in Afghan politics (Table 2).

Military involvement in governance will likely take the shape of the military as the critical pillar underwriting a civilian oligarchy. It is highly unlikely that democratization will progress substantially when NATO leaves Afghanistan. It is highly likely, however, that a democratic façade will be utilized to substantiate a civilian dictatorship. If the forthcoming elections are seen as illegitimate, the probability that the military will intervene at some point to change the government are also quite high. Similar cases to this situation are Pakistan and Egypt. In both cases the militaries have intervened in domestic politics to oust or change a government. The challenge for Washington will be deciding what policy to pursue if this occurs. When the Egyptian military decided to remove the democratically elected President Mursi from power, the US response was to at first sit quietly, but then eventually to withdraw some monetary support as stipulated by US law. The response to this decision in

Table 2: Structural theory and Afghan environment 2014

External Threats	Moderate – no overt external threat from Pakistan, but support for insurgents complicates matters.
Internal Threats	Threat from economically motivated actors (aka 'warlords') who benefit from a lack of governance across Afghanistan (that is, Haqqani Network)
	Threat from large segment of Pashtun population in Southern and parts of Eastern Afghanistan towards centralization of military force and government in Kabul.
	Threat from internal religious movement (Taliban) opposed to constitutional and social arrangements under the current government.
	Extensive corruption within Afghan government, lack of 'justice' (self-made threat to the government – increases structural threat opposition).

Conditions in this environment indicate an extremely high probability of military involvement in government.

Washington, however, was not unanimous with some lawmakers arguing as Democrat Elliot Engel put it 'These actions make it tougher for us to influence them, not easier, because I think if you're helping, you have some influence. If you're... pulling away, then their attitude is going to be, 'Well, why do we have to listen to you?'' (Zengerle, 2013). This begs the question whether or not the US goal should be stability, where the military manages order or democratic rule and western style civil-military relations, that while more compatible with western values, may not be the most stable order for a weak, developing state.

There are some that might expect the ANA to fracture as it did in the early 1990s. However, nationalist sentiments are prevalent among Afghans, especially the more educated and urban Afghans. It is possible for Afghans to "dual-identify": having a tribal identity and an Afghan one. The western tendency to constantly equate the problems of Afghanistan and other countries in the Middle East and South Asia as rooted in 'tribalism' is often based more on an Orientalist view of these conflicts, rather than clear anthropological study (Gonzalez, 2009). In fact, tribalism was greatly reduced (through violence) in the civil war and a leaked US diplomatic cable noted that tribalism can also be positive: 'The international community needs to engage tribes without arming them, and reinvigorate the traditional tribal system by instilling confidence in the population. Securing the people will go a long way to improve their willingness to resist the Taliban' (US Mission to Nato, 2008). Tribalism, far from being problematic, could be part of the solution. This is not to say that tribalism is never problematic, but just as the officer corps was a motivator of modernization in the 1950s–1970s, the contemporary Afghan officer corps appears committed to state modernization. Given that the principal adversaries are now warlords seeking power and profit, and the religious-extremist Taliban-movement, as opposed to tribes seeking to preserve autonomy, tribal drivers are less likely to split the officer corps. While tribal divisions exist and could be problematic, if the ANA is externally funded, it is unlikely that the ANA will simply fracture along tribal lines (although this will most likely happy if ANA funding stops and each ethnic group takes what they can to bolster private interests). Furthermore, the Pakistani element of the insurgency, as well as the state of bilateral Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, helps to push the Afghan officer corps and Afghan society together.

If the ANA does not intervene directly in governance then analysts can turn to intervening variables in an attempt to explain the outcome. It might be that the institutional culture cultivated by NATO trainers took hold and kept the military wedded to non-involvement in governance. In this case then, it will be necessary for scholars to revisit the agency versus structure debate as applied to the study of civil-military relations. The result might also be explained by the source of funding to the ANA. With the vast majority of money coming from democratic countries, the donors can apply pressure for the ANA to support the civilian government rather than involving themselves. The influence of donor funds on military behaviour was evidenced during the Arab Spring in Egypt when the military refused to fight against

civilians for fear of losing their US military assistance totalling $2 billion annually since 1979 (*The Daily Telegraph* (UK), 2011). Although as of late this influence seems to be waning. Another possibility is that the ANA refrains from involvement in governance because of certain individual leader thereby illustrating the need to factor agency more strongly into the analysis. But if a structural approach to civil-military relations does have predictive ability, NATO and the United States should question their assumption that the ANA will be a force promoting democracy and contributing to stability in Afghanistan in 2015 and beyond.

Acknowledgements

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Michael John Williams is Clinical Professor of International Relations and Director of the Graduate Programme in International Relations at New York University. His research focuses on civil-military relations and the intersection of law and technology in warfare. His most recent publications include *Law, Science, Liberalism and the American Way of Warfare* (Cambridge University Press 2015), 'The Afghan War, 2001–2012' in the *Oxford Encyclopedia of American Military and Diplomatic History* (Oxford 2012) and, *The Good War: NATO and the Liberal Conscience in Afghanistan* (Palgrave Macmillan 2011). He was an investigator in the Sustainable Peacebuilding Network, a collaborative research project involving 20 scholars from six countries, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and directed by Professor Roland Paris (Ottawa).

Notes

1 This assertion is based on interview held in Afghanistan in October 2012 including; interview with EU Political Officer on 26 October (Kabul), interview with NTM-A Senior Management Official 26 October (Kabul), Interview with Members of COMISAF Team 18 October (Kabul), Interview with NATO Voluntary National Contribution Military Officer (United States) at NATO HQ 19 October (Brussels).

2 This observation is drawn from several interviews in Afghanistan in October 2012. Interview with EU Political Officer 26 October 2012 (Kabul); Interview with NTM-A Senior Management Official 26 October 2012 (Kabul); Interview with NATO Voluntary National Contribution Military Officer (United States) at NATO HQ19 October 2012 (Brussels); Interview with German Military Office 21 October 2012 (Mazar-i-Sharif). Such an 'exit strategy' does not preclude a status of forces agreement (SOFA) that would keep some NATO/US troops on the ground in a supoort and training capacity. At the time of writing a SOFA between the Government of Afghanistan and the United States had not been agreed.

3 Single case studies are never as effective for theory testing as multiple case studies, but they do contribute to the advancement of knowledge and development of theory.

4 It remains to be seen if NATO and US forces stay in the country as a status of forces agreement has not been reached at this time. A draft text was agreeed, but President Karzai then demanded revisions to the document, which was supposedly finalized.

5 There is of course the possibility that at some point in the future the international community will tire of funding the ANA, but it is safe assumption that this will not happen within the next 5 years which is the scope of this article.

6 As of 10 December 2014 there were 13 336 ISAF troops on the ground according to NATO: http://www.isaf.nato.int/troop-numbers-and-contributions/index.php

7 Feaver, 'Civil-Military Relations', pp. 216–217.

8 Desch, 'Soldiers, States and Structures,' pp. 330–392; Desch (1999a).

9 Desch, 'Soldiers, States and Structures,' p. 391.

10 Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military*, p. 13.

11 Desch, 'Soldiers, States and Structures,' p. 391 cites Alberto Fujimori's Peru as an example of such an arrangement.

12 Examples include Brazil 1964 and Chili in 1973.

13 Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military*, p. 15.

14 Interview with Senior US Policy Advisor (Ret), London, 14 October 2013.

15 Feaver 152

16 'A Blueprint for the Afghan Military' CJTF-18, 18 November 2004

17 Interview with US Army Special Operations Officer cited in Grissom (2013), 263–269.

18 'Three-Quarters of US Aid to Afghanistan Going on Security' Agence France-Presse, 10 August 2006.

19 Transcript of Testimony by Mary Beth London, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Defense for International Security Affairs to US House of Representatives Armed Services Committee on 13 February 2007.

20 'J5 Branch CSTC-A „CSTC-A Key ANA Data Points'

21 Discussions at NATO ISAF HQ. Kabul. 19 October 2012. Interview at Afghan Ministry of Defense. 24 October 2012.

22 Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 'Afghan National Army Officer Academy Agreement,' 19 July 2012.

23 Interviews with NTM-A staff, Kabul Afghanistan, October 26, 2012, Interview with Senior Afghan Military Officer, Ministry of Defense, 24 October 2012.

24 'Briefing at NTM-A' ISAF HQ, Kabul, 24 October 2012.

25 *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Washington DC: Department of Defense, April 2011, p. 12.

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27 Interview with Senior US Officer in NATO ISAF command. ISAF HQ, Kabul, 25 October 2012.
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    Kabul, 31 March 2010; Interview with Senior ANA Officer, Kandahar, 2 April 2010; Interview with
    NATO Officer, Kandahar, 2 April 2010.
31 Warlords are defined here as economically interested actors that have significant military capabilities.
32 Ali Jalali, 'Rebuilding Afghanistan's National Army', p. 79.
33 Interview with NTM-A Officer. NTM-A ISAF HQ, Kabul, 26 October 2012.
34 'Report on Progress towards Security and Stability in Afghanistan', p. 43.

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