Towards mercenary anthropology?

The new US Army counterinsurgency manual *FM 3-24* and the military-anthropology complex

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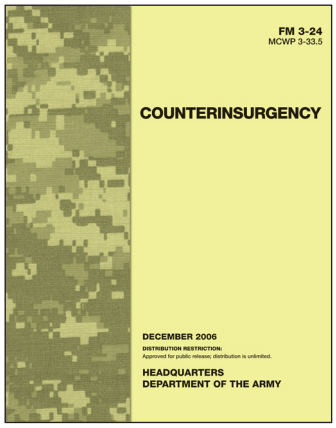
Fig. 1. Photo used at the launch of the new counterinsurgency manual on 15 December 2006: 'An understanding of the people and culture of the host country is an important aspect of counterinsurgency. Here, 1st Lt. Jeff Harris (center) and Capt. Robert Erdman explain to Sheik Ishmael Kaleel Gomar Al Dulayani what was found in houses belonging to members of his tribe during a cordon and search mission in Hawr Rajab, Baghdad, Nov. 29, 2006. The Soldiers are from Troop A, 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment.'

Editor's note: This is the second of two articles in this issue of ANTHROPOLOGY TODAY *looking at how anthropological research, and that of other social and behavioural sciences, is being appropriated in war. For replies to Roberto González by David Kilcullen and Montgomery McFate, see pp. 20-21.*

On 15 December 2006 the US Army released a new counterinsurgency manual, *FM 3-24*. It is the first US Army manual dedicated exclusively to counterinsurgency in more than 20 years. At least one anthropologist played a role in preparing the 282-page document: Montgomery McFate, a cultural anthropologist from the US, co-authored a chapter entitled 'Intelligence in counterinsurgency' with a military intelligence specialist.[1] In addition, the Pentagon adapted the work of Australian infantry officer David Kilcullen for an appendix entitled 'A guide for action'. Though the media has widely reported that Kilcullen is an anthropologist, he in fact holds a PhD from the School of Politics of the University of New South Wales.[2] Together, the contributions of McFate and Kilcullen account for nearly 50 pages of *FM 3-24*.

Such involvement in the preparation of the counterinsurgency manual is the latest development in a trend that has become increasingly evident since 2001: the use of 'cultural knowledge' to wage the 'war on terror'. The 2006 American Anthropological Association (AAA) meetings included a special panel featuring four anthropologists working with military and intelligence agencies – an event that in some ways heralded the revival of militarized anthropology.[3]

These developments raise a number of questions. What exactly did McFate and Kilcullen contribute to *FM 3-24*? Why would military and intelligence officials express such interest in cultural knowledge in recent years? To what extent are private contractors to the military seeking cultural expertise for counterinsurgency work? What are the ethical implications and other consequences of such work? And how are anthropologists responding to these developments?



Anthropology's contributions to *FM 3-24*

FM 3-24 is a counterinsurgency handbook written by dozens of contributors.[4] 'Cultural knowledge' is highlighted in the first chapter:

> Cultural knowledge is essential to waging a successful counterinsurgency. American ideas of what is 'normal' or 'rational' are not universal. To the contrary, members of other societies often have different notions of rationality, appropriate behavior, level of religious devotion, and norms concerning gender. Thus, what may appear abnormal or strange to an external observer may appear as self-evidently normal to a group member. For this reason, counter-insurgents – especially commanders, planners, and small-scale unit leaders – should strive to avoid imposing their ideals of normalcy on a foreign cultural problem (p. 1/15).

This is elaborated in chapter 3 (co-authored by McFate), which begins by carving out an anthropological niche: 'IPB [intelligence preparation of the battlefield] in COIN [counterinsurgency] requires personnel to work in areas like economics, anthropology, and governance that may be outside their expertise… external experts with local and regional knowledge are critical to effective preparation' (p. 3/2).

Chapter 3 defines terms including society, social structure, language, power, authority and interests. It also emphasizes the importance of culture, a 'web of meaning … [that] influences how people make judgments about what is right or wrong, assess what is important and unimportant, categorize things, and deal with things that do not fit into existing categories' (p. 3/6).

Another section highlights 'rituals, symbols, ceremonies, myths, and narratives':

1. Confirmed by the author in email communication with Montgomery McFate on 22 January 2007.

2. Appendix A of *FM 3-24* is an adaptation of an essay by David Kilcullen (2006). Both Kilcullen and McFate were profiled by journalist George Packer in the 18 December 2006 edition of the *New Yorker* magazine. Packer erroneously described Kilcullen as holding a 'doctorate in political anthropology'. Kilcullen's PhD dissertation (2000) was submitted to the School of Politics, University College, University of New South Wales, in affiliation with the Australian Defence Force Academy. Kilcullen conducted fieldwork in West Java (1994, 1995 and 1996) and in East Timor (1999-2000). In the thesis he makes reference to using multi-disciplinary fieldwork techniques, including anthropological techniques and analysis.

3. Paul Nuti, AAA Director of External, International, and Government Affairs, organized the panel (entitled 'Practicing anthropology in national military and intelligence communities').

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Fig. 2. British troops standing guard in Jerusalem, 1920.

> The most important cultural form for counterinsurgents to understand is the narrative… a story recounted in the form of a causally linked set of events that explains an event in a group's history and expresses the values, character, or self-identity of the group… Commanders should pay special attention to cultural narratives of the HN [host nation] population pertaining to outlaws, revolutionary heroes, and historical resistance figures. Insurgents may use these narratives to mobilize the population. (p. 3/8)

In a subsequent chapter (entitled 'Executing counterinsurgency operations'), readers are informed that they should 'develop countermessages and counternarratives to attack the insurgents' ideology. Understanding the local culture is required to do this' (p. 5/10). The reference is presumably to propaganda exercises.[5]

The final sections of chapter 3 review HUMINT (human intelligence), SIGINT (signal intelligence), OSINT (open source intelligence), IMINT (imagery intelligence), MASINT (measurement and signal intelligence), GEOINT (geospatial intelligence), and 'intelligence collaboration' between US agents and 'host nation' officials.

In anthropological terms, the chapter is not innovative. It is essentially a primer on cultural relativism and social structure. At times it resembles a simplified introductory anthropology textbook – though with few examples and no illustrations. Much of the material is numbingly banal. Some concepts are incomplete or outdated, notably the culture concept, which suggests that culture is:

> a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that members of a society use to cope with their world and with one another; learned, through a process called enculturation; shared by members of a society: there is no 'culture of one': patterned, meaning that people in a society live and think in ways forming definite, repeating patterns; changeable, through social interactions between people and groups; arbitrary, meaning that soldiers and marines should make no assumptions regarding what a society considers right and wrong, good and bad; internalized, in the sense that it is habitual, taken for granted, and perceived as 'natural' by people within the society. (pp. 3/6-3/7)

Entirely absent from this definition is the notion of culture as a product of historical processes – in spite of the fact that for at least the last quarter century anthropologists have stressed that culture has been profoundly shaped by capitalism, colonialism and other political and economic forces on a global scale. Instead, chapter 3 treats cultures as internally coherent, easily bounded and one-dimensional – in a manner reminiscent of the structural-functionalists of an earlier era.

Appendix A of *FM 3-24*, adapted almost entirely from David Kilcullen's essay 'Twenty-eight articles' (2006b), is strikingly different in tone, content and purpose. It is inspired by T.E. Lawrence, who in 1917 published the

3-9. IPB in COIN operations follows the methodology described in FM 34-130/FMFRP 3-23-2. However, it places greater emphasis on civil considerations, especially people and leaders in the AO, than does IPB for conventional operations. IPB is continuous and its products are revised throughout the mission. Nonetheless, predeployment products are of particular importance for the reasons explained above. Whenever possible, planning and preparation for deployment includes a thorough and detailed IPB. IPB in COIN requires personnel to work in areas like economics, anthropology, and governance that may be outside their expertise. Therefore, integrating staffs and drawing on the knowledge of nonintelligence personnel and external experts with local and regional knowledge are critical to effective preparation.

3-11. *Open-source intelligence* is information of potential intelligence value that is available to the general public (JP 1-02). It is important to predeployment IPB. In many cases, background information on the populations, cultures, languages, history, and governments of states in an AO is in open sources. Open sources include books, magazines, encyclopedias, Web sites, tourist maps, and atlases. Academic sources, such as journal articles and university professors, can also be of great benefit.

Fig. 3. Two paragraphs from the FM 3-24 *manual relevant to anthropology and to professional academics. IPB = Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield, COIN = COunterINsurgency, AO=Area of Operations.*

4. *FM 3-24* is a joint publication with the US Marine Corps (USMC). The USMC equivalent is *Marine Corps Warfighting Publication* 3-33.5. Although the names of General David Petraeus (US Army) and Lieutenant General James Amos (US Marine Corps) appear in the preface, most of the material was written by others.

5. Historically, anthropologists have been involved in wartime propaganda campaigns. For example, Gregory Bateson designed and executed 'black propaganda' campaigns in Burma, Thailand, India, China and Ceylon.

6. At the 17 November 2006 AAA panel, McFate noted that 'colonialism' was the model being used, without further elaboration.

7. The new 'anthropological' work is reminiscent of earlier periods such as World War I, when Franz Boas revealed that four anthropologists had used their work as a cover for spying on German officers in Central America. During World War II, the Office of Strategic Services (the CIA's precursor) used anthropologists to spy against the Nazis and for information about how best to maintain the colonial order (Price 2002b). Others created propaganda for the US military, conducted national character studies and assisted with the internment of 110,000 Japanese and Japanese-Americans. In the 1960s anthropologists were involved in counterinsurgency work in Thailand for intelligence agencies, while others were implicated in the ill-fated Project Camelot (Wolf and Jorgensen 1970, Horowitz 1967). The fact that this work was sometimes carried out in secret, with no informed consent and potentially devastating results for native peoples, led to an outcry that eventually resulted in the adoption of the 1971 AAA ethics code which stipulated that the interests of anthropologists' research subjects should take precedence above all else. See Gusterson (2003, 2006) for discussion of pressures that have transformed the AAA's ethics code over the last quarter century. For discussion of secretly funded Cold War programmes leading to clandestine anthropological research, see Nader (1998). Yet another recent article describes a US Department of Defense programme that

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Fig. 4. British troops searching local people in Jerusalem, 1920.

would research how local populations behave in war zones (Bhattacharjee 2007).

8. Petraeus drew international attention after commanding the US Army's 101st Airborne Division, charged with policing northern Iraq from 2003-2004. The 'warrior-intellectual' term comes from a *Washington Post* report (Ricks 2007). This and other news articles profiling either Kilcullen or McFate have been remarkably uncritical – see for example Packer (2006), Stannard (2007), and Stallworthy (2007).

9. Many articles in these journals are poorly written and inaccurate. When 'anthropological' works are cited, key arguments regarding ethical and theoretical issues are sometimes omitted. For example, a *Military Review* article makes the unsupported claim that 'anthropologists en masse, bound by their own ethical code and sunk in a mire of postmodernism, are unlikely to contribute much of value to reshaping national-security policy or practice' (McFate 2005a: 37) – even though a recent collection demonstrates that dozens of anthropologists are contributing to national security by directly informing citizens about US foreign policy issues (González 2004). The same article falsely asserts that Margaret Mead's popular ethnography *And keep your powder dry* (1942) is 'a book on US military culture' (ibid.: 31), when in fact it is a national character study of the US focusing almost entirely upon civilians. A recent article in *Small Wars Journal* credits Thomas Jefferson with the 'original establishment' of anthropology and describes Jefferson's ethnological work on Native Americans as 'military intelligence' though this is completely unsupported by the author's source (Tyrrell 2007: 15). The same article makes sweeping generalizations about 'the general community of anthropologists in North America' based upon three comments posted at www.savageminds.org, a website for anthropology aficionados (ibid.: 24).

10. Dale Eickelman (2001) provides insight by noting that al-Qaeda is not so much 'deeply moored in history' (McFate's words) as it 'is thoroughly modern, representing the dark side of globalization… it has developed into a flexible multinational organization' that uses 'new communications technologies' to disseminate its ideology. Eickelman does not rely upon notions of a primordial, homogeneous

piece 'Twenty-seven articles' for *Arab Bulletin*, the intelligence journal of Great Britain's Cairo-based Arab Bureau. (According to Kilcullen, the title was intended to allude to Lawrence's essay, which is a well-known piece among many who do counterinsurgency work.)

Although Lawrence's essay was written as a practical guide for British officers employing Arabs in battle against the Ottoman army, Kilcullen's *FM 3-24* appendix is written for US troops seeking to win 'hearts and minds'. Lawrence wrote his articles as 'commandments', and Kilcullen follows suit. Examples illustrate both form and content:

> *Lawrence*: Learn all you can about your Ashraf and Bedu. Get to know their families, clans and tribes, friends and enemies, wells, hills and roads. Do all this by listening and by indirect inquiry. (Article 2)
>
> *Kilcullen*: Learn about the people, topography, economy, history, religion, and culture of the area of operations (AO). Know every village, road, field, population group, tribal leader, and ancient grievance. (p. A/1)

Kilcullen, like Lawrence, counsels a patient approach, emphasizing co-optation of locals:

> *Lawrence*: Go easy for the first few weeks. A bad start is difficult to atone for, and the Arabs form their judgments on externals that we ignore. When you have reached the inner circle in a tribe, you can do as you please with yourself and them. (Article 1)
>
> *Kilcullen*: Do not try to crack the hardest nut first. Do not go straight for the main insurgent stronghold or try to take on villages that support insurgents. Instead, start from secure areas and work gradually outwards. Extend influence through the local people's networks. Go with, not against, the grain of the local populace. (p. A/5)

Like Lawrence, Kilcullen also emphasizes gift-giving as a way of winning people over, though Kilcullen is more interested in providing 'social work':

> *Lawrence*: If you can, without being too lavish, forestall presents to yourself. A well-placed gift is often most effective in winning over a suspicious sheik. Never receive a present without giving a liberal return, but you may delay this return (while letting its ultimate certainty be known) if you require a particular service from the giver. (Article 16)
>
> *Kilcullen*: COIN operations can be characterized as armed social work. It includes attempts to redress basic social and political problems while being shot at. This makes CMO [civil-military operations] a central COIN activity, not an afterthought. (p. A/7)

At times, the wording is nearly identical, though Lawrence is explicit about who is to be 'handled':

> *Lawrence*: Handling Hejaz Arabs is an art, not a science. (Introduction)
>
> *Kilcullen*: This is art, not science. (p. A/7)

Interestingly, Lawrence is never mentioned in the appendix. Kilcullen's other written work makes a passing reference, but does not acknowledge the degree to which Lawrence's ideas and style have been influential. Nor does it mention the dark side of Lawrence's career – for example, his reliance on terrorist techniques (repeated dynamite attacks upon the Hejaz Railway).

There are significant differences between Lawrence's 'Twenty-seven articles' and Kilcullen's appendix. Lawrence includes information about how to dress, speak and interact with Arabs. In contrast, Appendix A includes little such ethnographic detail. Kilcullen provides guidelines for how to 'prepare', 'execute' and 'end the mission', noting that 'engagements are often won or lost in moments; whoever can bring combat power to bear in seconds wins' (p. A/3). Other guidelines are more specific. For example, a section advises counterinsurgents to 'engage the women; be cautious around the children'. Since homesick soldiers are often tempted to 'drop their guard with kids', the appendix warns that insurgents might use children as agents; therefore, children should be treated cautiously. The section also recommends 'co-opting neutral or friendly women through targeted social and economic programs' (p. A/6).

The appendix advises counterinsurgents to 'have local forces mirror the enemy, not US forces'. Rather than train local police in US-style tactics, the appendix recommends that they be encouraged to imitate 'the enemy's capabilities and seek to supplant the insurgent's role' (p. A/7). Still another section suggests that small-scale programmes be given preference over large ones, since 'local conditions' favour success.

Like chapter 3, the appendix emphasizes narrative: 'most societies include opinion-makers – local leaders, religious figures, media personalities, and others… [whose] influence often follows a single narrative – a simple, unifying, easily expressed story or explanation that organizes people's experience… Undercutting their influence requires exploiting an alternative narrative' (p. A/7).

Despite its energetic prose, the appendix includes little substantive cultural knowledge. At bottom, Appendix A is a collection of counterinsurgency guidelines for manipulating local social relationships in order to pry insurgents away from bases of support. (In fairness, Kilcullen has written several articles published in peer-reviewed journals that examine theoretical aspects of counterinsurgency in greater depth – for example, see Kilcullen 2006a.)

FM 3-24 generally reads like a manual for indirect colonial rule – though 'empire' and 'imperial' are taboo words, never used in reference to US power. The authors draw historical examples from British, French and Japanese colonial counterinsurgency campaigns in Malaya, Vietnam, Algeria and China. They euphemistically refer to local leaders collaborating with occupying forces as the 'host nation' (rather than indirect rulers) and uniformly describe opponents as 'insurgents'. Yet they never mention *empire* – hardly surprising, since *FM 3-24* is a document written for the US Army and Marine Corps, and from a perspective ensconced within US military culture.[6] Indeed, is it possible to imagine that any US Army field manual would ever use such terms?

Instead, *FM 3-24*'s authors imply that a culturally informed occupation – with native power brokers safely

co-opted by coalition forces, community policing duties carried out by a culturally sensitive occupying army, development funds doled out to local women, etc. – will result in a lighter colonial touch, with less 'collateral damage' and a lower price tag. The question of whether military occupation is appropriate is not addressed, nor is there any serious exploration of assessing the legitimacy of insurgents' grievances. This is not just a simple oversight. Because it ignores the broader context of US imperial power, it is incomplete, inadequate, and at times inane.

Is it anthropology at all?[7] That McFate, Kilcullen and others have uncritically committed social science to goals established by the Pentagon – goals that under the Bush administration include missions resembling colonial-style police operations in the Middle East and Central Asia – is indicative of a rapidly evolving approach to counterinsurgency.

'Warrior-intellectuals' as counterinsurgency experts

Military interest in culture coincides with a broad shift within the Pentagon – the rise to power of 'a small band of warrior-intellectuals' in the post-Rumsfeld era, led by US Army General David Petraeus, the new commander in Iraq.[8] Petraeus, who has a PhD in international relations from Princeton, has recently assembled a team of social science PhDs who have risen to prominence as the Bush administration desperately seeks to improve the situation in Iraq. This initiative has received wide media coverage, including a sympathetic front-page *Washington Post* profile of Petraeus' inner circle, notably Kilcullen, who is 'on loan' to the US military from the Australian government.

The 'warrior-intellectuals' depart from the Pentagon's conventional wisdom. In his counterinsurgency writing, Kilcullen encourages troops to 'lighten their combat loads and enforce a habit of speed and mobility' (2006: 104), advocates 'building trusted networks' by 'conducting village and neighborhood surveys to identify community needs' and suggests that soldiers 'win the confidence of a few villages, and then work with those with whom they trade, intermarry, or do business' (ibid.: 105). He also urges military commanders to 'remember small is beautiful… Keep programs small' (ibid.: 107). Such tactics are apparently anathema to many in the Pentagon.

FM 3-24 features a foreword by Petraeus and Lieutenant General James Amos (USMC) which reveals much about their world view and interest in cultural knowledge: 'conducting a successful counterinsurgency campaign requires a flexible, adaptive force led by agile, well-informed, culturally astute leaders… Our Soldiers and Marines deserve nothing less' (p. 1). Ironically, the 'new' approach relies upon an antiquated culture concept (in the work of McFate) and a reinterpretation of Lawrence's counterinsurgency tips from the 1910s (in the work of Kilcullen) – perhaps not surprising for 'warrior-intellectuals' seeking particular forms of cultural knowledge that might facilitate indirect rule over foreign lands. Like the colonial administrators of yesteryear, today's 'nation builders' find practical use in a one-dimensional culture concept.

The fact that *Time* magazine could describe *FM 3-24* as 'radical', 'revolutionary', and 'Zen tinged' is a sobering reminder of the intellectual impoverishment of an increasingly reactionary mass media (Klein 2007). It also reveals a broader pattern of cultural militarization.

The military-anthropology complex

There are other signs that connections between anthropologists, military counterinsurgency experts and intelligence agencies are multiplying and deepening. Journals such as *Military Review* (published by the US Army's Combined Arms Center) and the online *Small Wars Journal* have featured articles explicitly advocating a more 'anthropological' approach to war fighting.[9]

Some retired generals have even called for 'culture-centric warfare'. Testifying before the US House Armed Services Committee in 2004, Major General Robert Scales argued that 'during the present "cultural" phase of the war… intimate knowledge of the enemy's motivation, intent, will, tactical method and cultural environment has proven to be far more important for success than the deployment of smart bombs, unmanned aircraft and expansive bandwidth' (Scales 2004: 2). Furthermore, Scales suggested the US military could learn a lesson from the British:

> [T]he British Army created a habit of 'seconding' bright officers to various corners of the world so as to immerse them in the cultures of the Empire and to become intimate with potentates from Egypt to Malaya. Names like China [*sic*] Gordon and T.E. Lawrence testify to the wisdom of such a custom… At the heart of a cultural-centric approach to future war would be a cadre of global scouts, well educated, with a penchant for languages and a comfort with strange and distant places. These soldiers should be given time to immerse themselves in a single culture… They should attend graduate schools in disciplines necessary to understand human behavior and cultural anthropology (ibid.: 4-5).

Interest in 'anthropological' expertise for battlefield application is increasingly framed in terms of 'human terrain'. For example, a recent article in *Military Review* explicitly makes the case for the creation of 'human terrain systems' (HTS) which are

> being specifically designed to address cultural awareness shortcomings at the operational and tactical levels by giving brigade commanders an organic capability to help understand and deal with 'human terrain' – the social, ethnographic, cultural, economic, and political elements among whom a force is operating… HTS will provide deployed brigade commanders and their staffs direct social-science support in the form of ethnographic and social research, cultural information research, and social data analysis (Kipp et al. 2006: 9)

'Human terrain' studies date back seven years, when retired US Army Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Peters published 'The human terrain of urban operations' (Peters 2000). Since then others including Kipp et al. (2006) and McConnell, Matson and Clemmer (2007) have cited the need for 'anthropological' participation in military operations. Although these military scholars have varying goals for 'cultural knowledge', they share a limited conception of culture.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon has created a new project called Human Terrain System, and its director is currently recruiting social scientists to joint pilot teams in Iraq and Afghanistan as 'cultural advisors'. According to an article by Montgomery McFate and Andrea Jackson, such teams might provide one part of a larger organizational solution to the Defense Department's 'cultural knowledge needs'. The article stresses the need for a proposed organization to 'augment the military's ability to effectively plan, train, and operate in the complex human terrain of weak states by conducting unbiased, accurate field research in countries of interest and administering related programs' (McFate and Jackson 2005: 21).

At the same time that this proposal for 'unbiased, accurate field research' was issued, one of the authors was arguing that the military needed to better understand an ambiguously defined 'adversary culture' in Iraq composed of 'tribal warfare', blood feuds and other customs typical of 'an enemy so deeply moored in history and theology' (McFate 2005b: 43). This remarkable conclusion was based not on participant observation, but largely on reports from the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal*. The article did not provide even a minimal distinction between 'adversary culture', Arab

'adversary culture' to explain al-Qaeda's ideology or actions. Consequently, his analysis leads to dramatically different proposals: 'The best long-term way to mitigate the continuing threat of terrorism is to encourage Middle Eastern states to be more responsive to their populations' demands for participation.'

11. Job description posted online at http://aaanet.jobcontrolcenter.com/search/results. Job code 800299 (accessed 15 March 2007).

12. Job description posted online at https://cp-its-rmprd.saic.com/main/careerportal. Job ID 77639 (accessed 20 March 2007).

13. Job description posted online at http://www.l-3com.com/careers/search.aspx. Job requisition number L-3 GSIOK26153 (accessed 20 March 2007).

14. Job description posted online at https://iif.mpri.l-3com.com/iif/jobs/jobsummary.html. Job ID 2545 (accessed 20 March 2007).

15. Job description posted online at http://www.boozallen.com/careers/9001843. Job ID 1047712 (accessed 1 May 2007).

16. Job description posted online at https://jobs.brassring.com/en/asp/tg/cim_jobdetail.asp?jobId=642472. Job Requisition ID 6484BR (accessed 1 May 2007).

17. Historian Alfred McCoy (2006a) has recently analysed how interrogation techniques employed by US spy agencies have evolved to incorporate behavioural science research. He examines how brutal torture methods were augmented by the work of American and Canadian psychologists in the 1950s and 1960s, who discovered that sensory deprivation, disorientation and self-inflicted pain could break down the human psyche more effectively than physical assaults. These scientists unwittingly paved the way for what McCoy calls 'a distinctively American form of torture' relying on psychological assaults, used extensively by the CIA and its proxies during the latter half of the 20th century (McCoy 2006b). Since 2002, US interrogators have used Behavioral Science Consultation Teams. According to McCoy, US agents at Guantánamo Bay under General Geoffrey Miller's leadership created a 'de facto behavioral research laboratory' attacking 'cultural sensitivity, particularly Arab male sensitivity to issues of gender and sexual identity'. Miller was assigned to Iraq in 2003, where he was charged with transferring interrogation techniques from Guantánamo Bay to Iraqi prisons (ibid.). Although anthropological knowledge was not implicated in the CIA's culturally specific interrogation techniques until the late 1970s (Price 2002a),

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Fig. 5. British officers at a Baghdad palace, October 1932.

societies, Islam in its various forms, Wahaabism, and the ideology of al-Qaeda. Instead, it declared that al-Qaeda and Iraqi insurgent 'adversaries neither think nor act like nation-states… their form of warfare, organizational structure, and motivations are determined by the society and the culture from which they came' – which begs the question of *which* society and *which* culture, given that al-Qaeda's members come from approximately 60 countries?[10] Small wonder that facile 'unbiased' notions of culture are preferred by soldier-scholars working for government agencies: they appear to provide ideological justifications for military occupation through appeals to orientalist stereotypes.

But government agencies may be only the tip of the iceberg. Contractors to the military are probably employing many more anthropologists as the privatization of the military grows apace. The following is a small sample of contractors currently recruiting anthropologists to service military operations:

1. BAE Systems is advertising a 'field anthropologist' position for deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan for what appears to be counterinsurgency support work. The job is 'designed to dramatically improve the collection, interpretation, understanding, operational application, and sharing of local cultural knowledge… [it] facilitates the collection, analysis, archiving and application of cultural information relevant to the unit commander's operational decision-making process.'[11]

2. Hicks & Associates (a subsidiary of the multinational Science Applications International Corporation) is advertising a 'research assistant' position for a project that 'investigates the evolution of subnational identities within and across states, and the implication of culture on attitudinal perspectives of other groups… [in] Tunisia and other North African nations… the position requires a background in anthropology… Arabic language skills are a plus.'[12]

3. L-3 Communications is advertising a position for 'cultural expert – Middle East'. Duties include 'technical intelligence data gathering and analysis skills and abilities to manage, develop, implement, and administer intelligence analysis programs and policies for customer applications'. Candidate 'MUST be fluent in Arabic, Pashtu, or Persian-Farsi… MUST have knowledge of prevalent Sunni and Shia tribes in the Middle East… US Citizens applying must hold PhD in History or Anthropology'.[13]

4. Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI) is advertising a 'COIN operations specialist' position in order to 'provide Brigade Combat Team or Regiment, battalion and company-level leaders of Coalition units and brigade and battalion-level leaders of Transition Teams (MiTT/NPTT/BTT) and the Iraqi Security Forces (Iraqi Army and Iraqi National Police) with a fundamental understanding of COIN principles, lessons learned and TTPs required to execute full-spectrum operations in the Iraqi Theater of Operations… a Master's Degree in Military Science, Psychology, Cultural Anthropology' is preferred and military experience is a requirement.[14]

5. Booz Allen Hamilton is advertising a position for a 'war on terrorism analyst' who will conduct 'research into adversary and target country elements of power, including political, military, economic, social, infrastructure, and information (PMESII) systems to assist military planners... conduct evaluations of terrorist adversary and target country response to effects based activities... [and] work with joint military planners and the inter-agency community to determine planning options to achieve War on Terrorism efforts and objectives'. Qualifications include a BA or BS degree, with 'knowledge of political science, economics, social anthropology, infrastructure, or information operations preferred'.[15]

6. The Mitre Corporation is advertising a 'sr. artificial intelligence engineer' position 'to play a role in applying modeling and simulation as an experimental approach to social and behavioral science problems of national significance... [and] to apply social sciences to critical national security issues.' Desirable applicants will have a 'PhD in a social science discipline (e.g. anthropology, sociology, sociolinguistics, medical anthropology, cultural geography, comparative social and cognitive psychology, cultural communication studies, science/technology studies, international labor/industrial relations, industrial/organizational psychology, comparative political science, public administration.)' [16]

Counterinsurgency consulting is the latest phase in the 'weaponization of anthropology' – the process by which military and intelligence agencies employ social science as

McCoy's work implies that such processes are now well under way.

18. The resolutions were written by Roberto González and Kanhong Lin in October 2006 (*Anthropology News,* January 2007, pp. 17-18).

Bhattacharjee, Y. 2007. Cross-cultural research: Pentagon asks academics for help in understanding its enemies. *Science* 27 April: 534-535.

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Fig. 6. A US Army soldier with the 1175th Military Police Company hands out school supplies and other humanitarian assistance to children who have been treated at a civic action medical programme in the Tagab district of Kapisa province, Afghanistan, 30 April 2007.

just another weapon on the battlefield (Price 2006). When such work is carried out covertly and without informed consent it represents a grave breach of the AAA's code of ethics. When it is carried out by anthropologists working as cultural mercenaries – hired to design or implement culturally specific counterinsurgency campaigns or extreme interrogation tactics[17] – the ethical transgressions are graver still.

Oppositional forces

The crass use of 'anthropology' and 'cultural knowledge' in the military deserves fuller and deeper analysis. A preliminary approach might include exploration of the degree to which anthropologists who write military field manuals (as opposed to academic texts) have adhered to contemporary professional standards. Shouldn't anthropologists be responsible for conducting work that reflects *current* methodological, theoretical and ethical concerns? Answering this question affirmatively would surely preclude consulting work for counterinsurgency projects.

The potential consequences of anthropologists engaging in counterinsurgency work could be wide-ranging, with multiple impacts on military personnel as well as those living under occupation. But when such work is performed clandestinely this undermines and endangers the work of anthropologists more generally, not to mention their families and informants, potentially putting them at risk. It is plausible that 'once Thai peasants or Somali clansmen learn that some anthropologists are secretly working for the US government, they begin to suspect all other anthropologists. Anthropologists have a professional obligation to one another not to conduct slash-and-burn fieldwork' (Gusterson 2003: 25). Those serving the short-term interests of military and intelligence agencies and contractors will end up harming the entire discipline in the long run, particularly in an era of rapid global communication.

Such collaboration leads down a slippery slope that may ultimately prove disastrous for anthropologists and those with whom we work. If the discipline moves towards open co-operation with counterinsurgency efforts today, what is to keep it from moving towards more covert co-operation tomorrow – or eventually, towards a mercenary anthropology in which cultural knowledge itself is used as a weapon? The words of anthropologist Neil Whitehead (2005) serve to remind us that over time, counterinsurgents tend to mirror their enemies:

> As we look at counterinsurgency campaigns, those counter-insurgency campaigns tend to proceed by exactly the same kinds of military ploys that are being used by their terrorist enemies. So the selective assassination of individuals, the planting of particular kinds of bomb, or the mining of particular kinds of places which are heavily used by civilians even if they are at the same time being used by terrorists – these are all ways in which the military activity of the state, as it engages with a terrorist enemy, itself becomes more like terrorism.

Counterinsurgency campaigns in which the state has resorted to terroristic 'military ploys' include those in Guatemala, Vietnam, Algeria, Northern Ireland, East Timor, Chile and Argentina, to name but a few examples over the last half century.

It is with such concerns in mind that two resolutions were submitted to the AAA at its November 2006 annual meeting.[18] One condemns torture and the use of anthropological knowledge as an element of torture, while the other condemns the US occupation of Iraq. Nearly 300 anthropologists – the largest number in decades – packed the conference auditorium and adopted both resolutions, which have now been submitted to the full membership by postal ballot, and voting continues as this article goes to press. If passed, the resolutions will send an unambiguous message to the military and intelligence agencies seeking to recruit anthropologists (as well as to anthropologists working on their behalf), namely that AAA members oppose wars of aggression and will stand united against activities that might breach our professional ethics.

Although academic resolutions are not likely to transform US government policies (much less the practices of contractors to the military) these do articulate a set of values and ethical concerns shared by many anthropologists. They could potentially extend and amplify dialogue among social scientists around issues of torture, collaboration with the military, and the potential abuse of social science in the 'war on terror'. Anthropologists may well inspire others to confront directly – and resist – the militarization of their disciplines at this critical moment in the history of the social sciences. ●

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