

The Afghanistan Experience: Democratization by Force

CORA SOL GOLDSTEIN

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On 7 October 2001, the Bush administration launched Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) to dislodge al Qaeda forces, neutralize the Taliban in Afghanistan, and decapitate their respective leadership. President Bush insisted that the United States was not at war with the Afghan people or with Islam, and the Afghan civilian population was not identified as the enemy. Therefore, the Pentagon attempted to minimize civilian casualties. OEF toppled the Taliban regime, but did not eliminate the Taliban influence in Afghanistan. The Taliban, although expelled from power, still preserved connections with the rural Pashtun.

Following the fall of Kabul in November 2001, the American agenda for Afghanistan rapidly metamorphosed into a nation-building project. In theory, the reconstruction and democratic reform of Afghanistan offered an opportunity to transform one of the poorest countries on earth. Afghanistan had a 90 percent illiteracy rate, one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world, and an average life expectancy of just over forty years. The living conditions for women were particularly harsh and cruel, since the Taliban had restricted their access to education, health care, and work. President Bush justified nation-building in Afghanistan in moral and political terms. After liberating “[Afghanistan] from a primitive dictatorship . . . we had a moral obligation to leave behind something better. We also had a strategic interest in helping the Afghan people build a free society . . . because a democratic Afghanistan would be a hopeful alternative to the vision of the extremists.”¹ The idea of liberation played an overwhelming role in President Bush’s postwar strategy for Afghanistan. The Bush administration assumed that once freed from the shackles of the Taliban tyranny, the Afghan population would embrace the Western agenda of reconstruction and institutional development. The Western allies put in place an interim government in Kabul led by Hamid Karzai, and

Cora Sol Goldstein is an associate professor of political science at California State University, Long Beach. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. Her book, Capturing the German Eye: American Visual Propaganda in Occupied Germany, focuses on the US experience in postwar Germany. She has published in Military Review, Diplomatic History, German Politics and Society, Intelligence and National Security, and Internationale Politik.

the *loya jirga* approved a new constitution in 2003. The International Security Assistance Force, under British command, began training a new Afghan army, and the United Nations developed a humanitarian assistance plan as well as educational initiatives to combat illiteracy and increase educational opportunities for girls and women.

It is evident the ambitious American-led project of democratization faltered. After eleven years of combat, the United States and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies have drastically modified their objectives in Afghanistan. President Obama decided to withdraw the majority of American forces by 2014, and his administration has narrowed the aims of American intervention in the country. The Obama administration's goal is to leave behind native military and police structures that in principle should prevent al Qaeda and other terrorist groups from operating with impunity. Why has the United States been unable to accomplish its original objectives in Afghanistan when it was able to radically transform two formidable enemies, Germany and Japan, following World War II (WWII)?

Several competing explanations have been advanced to explain this failure. David Edelstein, Chair of the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, claims that military occupations succeed only if they occur in a "threat environment" in which the security, survival, and integrity of an occupied territory is menaced. According to Edelstein, in the absence of a strong and believable external threat, the desire for self determination is inevitable, and the emergence of a significant movement of resistance, unavoidable.² Dov S. Zakheim, the former Undersecretary of Defense, claims the Bush administration seriously underfunded the reconstruction of Afghanistan because it had become increasingly focused on Iraq.³ In fact, Afghanistan received less assistance per capita than did postconflict Bosnia and Kosovo, and the budget for the reconstruction of Afghanistan amounted to less than half of what the United States spent in Iraq. Jason Lyall, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Yale University, attributes the Afghanistan failure to bad planning, and blames the Bush administration for creating a weak and over-centralized Kabul government that does not have real political authority.⁴ Stanley N. Katz, Professor in Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, and others, claim that a project of democratization by force cannot succeed in an underdeveloped society without significant endogenous experience in democratic constitutionalism.⁵ Seth Jones, political scientist at RAND Corporation, emphasizes the difficulty of state-building in a country that lacks the tradition of a strong central government, and where "power has often come from the bottom up."⁶ He asserts the number of coalition troops in Afghanistan was never sufficient to ensure law and order, and this fact led to a security vacuum permitting the emergence of the insurgency.⁷ Although these explanations are plausible and may to some extent be correct, it is this author's contention that the main reason why the United States failed to radically transform Afghanistan is the type of war that preceded the occupation phase. OEF, a limited counterterrorist war, left intact the capacity of the occupied society to react against the foreign

invader. The American experience in Germany and Japan suggests that, in the absence of ideological and political congruence between the occupied and the occupier, democratization by force can only have a chance of success in the aftermath of a war that results in the catastrophic defeat of the enemy. WWII was maximally destructive and brutal, and violence was often indiscriminate. In WWII, the Allies not only destroyed the enemy armies but also deliberately targeted the civilian population of Germany and Japan.⁸ When the war ended with the unconditional surrender of the Axis powers, the Germans and the Japanese were in a state of psychological paralysis and war weariness that made them compliant. The magnitude of defeat had multiple effects:

- It diminished the risk of resistance and armed insurgency.
- It allowed the military governments to achieve and maintain a monopoly of violence, information, and propaganda in the postwar.
- It enabled the occupiers to implement their revolutionary political and ideological agenda.

The absence of insurgency permitted the process of reconstruction and reeducation to proceed unchallenged. In the case of Afghanistan, there was no ideological congruence between the occupiers and the occupied, and the war was deliberately designed to minimize collateral damage. There were relatively few civilian casualties, and OEF did not destroy the multilayered bonds between the rural Pashtun population and radical Islamist militants. When the Bush administration began the process of reconstruction and democratization, the NATO allies struggled with the discrepancy between their agenda and the aspirations of the Afghan population. The transformative postwar project faltered because OEF had not created the context of possibilities in which a military occupation could impose a lasting and radical political agenda on a nonreceptive population.⁹

The case of Afghanistan exemplifies the challenges associated with attempting to democratize a reluctant population by force. Small wars aimed at regime change do not create the conditions for executing such ambitious agendas as nation building. The decapitation of the regime's leaders or the transient defeat of a guerrilla movement does not necessarily lead to popular support for a program of radical change inspired by the victors. A military occupation following a war with limited violence will exacerbate nationalism, sectarianism, and militarism, passions that fuel resentment and the violent rejection of a foreign agenda. In Afghanistan, the presence of the Western allies, and their attempt to impose ideas of governance, first generated skepticism, then political resistance, and finally the emergence of a full-fledged insurgency. NATO forces became involved in a counterinsurgency operation that inevitably led to human rights violations and unacceptable excesses. This resulted in the consequent loss of the moral high ground that supposedly inspired the original occupation, and led to the collapse of the transformative agenda.

Germany and Japan

The occupation of the Axis powers were not improvised affairs. The nature of the enemy was the subject of intensive debate prior to the declaration of war against Germany and Japan. Psychological, sociological, anthropological, cultural, and political analysis of the German and Japanese regimes intensified after 1942. Even before Pearl Harbor, the US Army created the School of Military Government to train military officers on the complex tasks of conducting military occupations. This initiative expanded rapidly after the Casablanca Conference in January 1943.¹⁰ The American military occupations of western Germany and Japan were revolutionary. While in endogenous revolutions extreme violence continues throughout the consolidation period, the violence associated with the American transformative occupations occurred before the occupations. In WWII, the Allies demanded the unconditional surrender of the Axis, and to attain this strategic objective they used their complete arsenal to destroy the German and the Japanese armies, cripple their war industries, and create havoc among the civilian populations. The Allies occupied Germany and the United States occupied Japan after a hugely destructive war in which none of the belligerents abided by the present-day Western rules on the treatment of civilian populations.

The consequences were catastrophic. The American forces who occupied both countries found a landscape of physical devastation. Two eminently developed and urban societies had been decimated. The Germans and the Japanese were psychologically shattered by the magnitude of defeat and struggled to survive in an environment characterized by social dislocation and political anarchy. Following the unconditional surrender of the Axis powers, the American military governments were able to institute a revolutionary program of political, ideological, and cultural change. The dimension of the German and Japanese defeat permitted America to develop transformative occupation agendas without fear of armed resistance. Even though large sectors of the German and Japanese populations were initially resentful of the allied victory and adhered to the ideological tenets of the defeated regimes, they accepted the new normative principles imposed by the occupiers. In both Germany and Japan, the cult of ultranationalism and racism was suppressed, and the success of American political, cultural, and educational reforms is underlined by the fact they did not reemerge once the countries became independent and sovereign.

Much of Germany had been reduced to rubble. By the end of the war, a quarter of the German population had been killed or taken prisoner. More than five million German soldiers had lost their lives, leaving more than a million widows.¹¹ Eleven million German soldiers had been taken prisoner by the Allied forces. The Anglo-American strategic air campaign had caused 600,000 civilian deaths and wounded 900,000. Münster, Lübeck, Augsburg, Köln, Bremen, the Ruhr industrial region, Berlin, Hamburg, and Dresden had been subjected to punishing air raids. The bombing of Dresden had caused between 25,000 and 30,000 deaths, and the 27 to 28 July 1943, air raid of Hamburg had resulted in 42,600 civilian deaths.¹² The Soviet invasion of Germany was bloody and

merciless, and the battle for Berlin alone resulted in 100,000 civilian deaths. More than seven million people were left homeless. The Nazi Party and the German civil administration collapsed, and the German currency ceased to exist. There was no police, no public transportation, and communication networks had been obliterated. There were severe shortages of food, coal, gas, and electricity. The situation was aggravated by the flow of millions of Germans returning to Germany—those escaping from the former eastern territories, demobilized soldiers, and the recently liberated survivors of Nazi camps. The German population was weary, dispirited, and in shock. Civil society was totally disrupted, and it was the Allied presence that provided stability and prevented a total collapse of order and descent into a Hobbesian world.

In Japan, the situation was similarly catastrophic. Two million Japanese soldiers and close to one million civilians had been killed by the end of the war. The deliberate air bombing of the main Japanese cities resulted in 400,000 civilian deaths. Every Japanese city, apart from Kyoto, had been targeted by the American air force. Tokyo was first bombed on 18 April 1942. In mid-February 1945, the US Air Force conducted 2,700 sorties against Tokyo and Yokohama, and on 9 March, 334 B-29s launched a major incendiary attack against the capital that killed 83,000 Japanese civilians, injured 100,000, and left 1.5 million homeless. On 23 to 24 May, 500 bombers dropped 1.5 million incendiaries, sparing neither residential nor industrial areas.¹³ In fact, casualties from the carpet bombing of Tokyo and Nagoya with conventional explosives rivaled those from the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with atomic bombs. The systematic air campaign left millions of civilians injured, sick, and malnourished, and nearly nine million people were homeless. The Japanese army was shattered and the institution disgraced. The Japanese industrial sector was in shambles—one third of all industrial machine tools were destroyed and four-fifths of the Japanese commercial fleet had been sunk. Defeat had left Japanese society fractured, ashamed, and disoriented.¹⁴

Germany and Japan were not liberated—they were occupied as defeated nations. The Americans were not merely interested in the capture, punishment, or proscription of the leaders of the genocidal enemy regimes, but rather in the radical ideological reeducation of the civilian populations who had willingly accepted or tolerated them, and who had been involved in the racist and expansionist projects of their respective governments. For decades, the German and Japanese societies had been indoctrinated in an ideology of extreme and extremist ultranationalism, and were influenced by antidemocratic, illiberal, racist, and militaristic traditions. In the case of Germany, the defeat in World War I (WWI), the Russian Revolution, the Versailles Treaty, and the Weimar experience, created a fertile ground for political radicalism. Hitler capitalized on this violent discontent and emerged as the popular leader of a police state built on extreme nationalism, ultramilitarism, antisemitism, and terror.¹⁵ In the case of Japan, the country's ultranationalist, militaristic, autocratic, nationalist, and imperialist tradition was exacerbated in 1926 when Emperor Hirohito took power. From then on, the Japanese government engaged in a massive nationalist

and racist propaganda campaign to justify its expansionist agenda for the control of Asian resources. Japan waged WWII as a holy war of the superior Yamato race against China and the Allies.

In 1945, the American political project for Germany and Japan included the complete restructuring of the political culture, the ideological tenets, and the institutional framework of both countries. In both occupations, the idea was to transform nationalist, racist, militarist, and authoritarian societies into nonaggressive liberal democracies allied with the United States. Joint Chiefs of Staff Directive 1067 (JCS 1067), the military directive that informed the American occupation forces in Germany until 1947, specified the aims of the American occupation as denazification, democratization, demilitarization, and economic decentralization. JCS 1380/15, the directive that informed the American military government in Japan, stipulated a similar agenda of reconstruction and reform. It instructed the Supreme Command of the Allied Forces (SCAP) in Japan, General Douglas MacArthur, to change Japan from a feudal, racist, and militaristic empire into a peaceful democracy allied to the United States. SCAP was to democratize, disarm, demilitarize, and implement economic reform (the deconcentration of the Japanese *zaibatsu*.)

Although in both cases the occupation governments led a process of revolutionary reform that went against prevalent structures and mores, the Americans did not confront armed resistance. In Germany, during the first weeks of the occupation, the US Army underlined its power by conducting surprise raids looking for hidden weapons, which occasionally culminated in executions that served as public warnings. In Japan, the Americans engaged in preemptive displays of force. For example, after Japan surrendered, a continuous parade of B-29 super-fortresses, naval bombers, and fighters flew over the country to intimidate the population. The day in which the document of unconditional surrender was signed, a flight of 462 B-29s darkened the sky over Tokyo Bay.¹⁶ The catastrophic nature of the defeat, and the continuous threat of violence, allowed the Americans to enforce their rules, orders, and policies on malleable populations who did essentially what was demanded. In 1945, the United States had 1,660,000 troops in Germany; by the end of 1946 the number had been reduced to 200,000. In November 1945, there were 386,000 American troops stationed in Japan, but by mid-1946, given the lack of resistance and insurgency, the number dropped to approximately 150,000.¹⁷

In the absence of resistance, the American military governments started the process of physical reconstruction while simultaneously advancing their political and ideological agendas. The Office of Military Government US (OMGUS) and SCAP were able to guarantee security, feed the population, avoid sanitary disasters, restore public transportation, and ensure an adequate supply of oil and carbon. In Germany, the US Army first, and then OMGUS, embarked on a massive campaign of purging, censorship, propaganda, and iconoclasm. During the first month of the occupation, the US Army carried out the confrontation policy, and forced thousands of German men, women, and children living in the vicinity of German concentration camps to tour the

premises, to bury corpses, and to attend funeral services for the dead. In the first stage of the occupation, American rhetoric emphasized German civilian complicity with the crimes of the Third Reich. This stress on German collective guilt waned rapidly, but the denazification and demilitarization campaigns continued. The Americans outlawed Nazi political, military, and repressive institutions, banned Nazi, nationalist, and militarist propaganda, and tried Nazi leaders and military commanders involved in crimes against humanity. Nazi racial laws were eradicated from German legislation, and Nazi premises, property, assets, and loot, were seized. The display of Nazi uniforms, parades, flags, and symbols was banned. Street names, public monuments and statues, and symbols associated with Nazism and militarism were destroyed or removed.¹⁸ OMGUS made the entire adult population in the American zone and sector fill out *Fragebogen*, detailed political questionnaires. In July 1945, 80,000 Nazi leaders were arrested, and 70,000 Nazi activists were fired from the civil service. By 1 June 1946, more than 1,650,000 Germans—approximately one of every ten persons in the US zone—had been investigated, and 373,762 (nearly one fourth) removed from their positions.¹⁹ Eighty to eighty-five percent of teachers were dismissed for political reasons, and university faculties were purged.²⁰ This process amounted to a revolution from above to radically change German politics, culture, and self-perception.

Although Hitler's popularity waned in the last months of the war when it became obvious that the war had been lost, the catastrophic defeat of the Third Reich did not automatically denazify the Germans. American intelligence surveys from 1945 to 1949 indicate that many Germans still harbored antidemocratic feelings. One year after the end of the war, only three in ten Germans in the American zone and sector were consistently prodemocratic, according to OMGUS estimates.²¹ Polls taken in September 1946 indicated fifty-five percent of respondents in the American zone, and forty-four percent in the American sector of Berlin, still believed National Socialism "was a good idea badly carried out."²² In December 1946, OMGUS intelligence analyses found "an increase in antisemitic feelings among the German people."²³ In May 1947, OMGUS intelligence analysts reported increased German hostility against the American presence in Germany, increased nationalism, increased political apathy, increased contempt toward Germans working for the US military, and increased antisemitism and racialism.²⁴ This reality puts in perspective the significant effort that was required to reform German society and culture, and to suppress the open allegiance to Nazism, militarism, antisemitism, and ultranationalism. American control, not simply German conviction, blocked the immediate reemergence of public expressions of Nazism, militarism, and antisemitism in occupied Germany.

The postwar occupation of Japan was also a revolutionary process. General MacArthur ruled the country as the American viceroy and exerted unrestricted authority over the Japanese population. His actions, as well as those of his subordinates, were unappealable and beyond criticism. SCAP transformed the role of the emperor and reshaped religion in Japan. The emperor was

kept as the symbolic head of government, but was forced to renounce his divinity. Hirohito became a figurehead devoid of political and religious power, a puppet of the military government. This was a radical departure from tradition, because Japan had a state religion, Shinto, in which Hirohito was the highest priest, the representative on earth of the sun goddess, the “race-father,” and the commander-in-chief of the imperial Japanese armed forces. MacArthur outlawed Shinto, and dissolved the hitherto uncontested alliance between church and state that had been one of the foundations of modern Japanese ultranationalism. In 1947, a small group of lawyers from the government section of SCAP wrote a new constitution for Japan. This document replaced the 1889 Japanese constitution, a fundamentally antidemocratic document (allegedly a gift from the gods), that concentrated all power in the hands of the emperor and his ministers. The old constitution codified racism, militarism, authoritarianism, and imperialist dogma, and limited franchise. The new constitution was in many ways more progressive than the American. It mandated the strict separation of religion and state, abolished the patriarchal household system, guaranteed civil liberties, religious freedom, and women’s equality, gave women legal and voting rights, and established the Peace Clause. In fact, SCAP controlled every facet of Japanese life—information, propaganda, politics, finances, economics, education, law, science, culture, trade, taxation, trade unions, and military intelligence. SCAP’s censorship was massive and all-encompassing. For example, the Japanese were forbidden from discussing Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and all visual evidence of the consequences of the air bombing campaign against Japan was sequestered and sent to Washington, D.C.²⁵ SCAP officers removed militaristic influences from every aspect of Japanese life. Military and paramilitary organizations were disbanded, and military equipment destroyed. Military officers and civil servants who had directly participated in the design and execution of imperial war policies were arrested and tried for war crimes. Existing political parties and associations came under SCAP control, and the bureaucracy, police, and judicial system were purged. Japanese cultural life, from film to literature, was screened and censored. Approximately 201,845 persons were purged between 1945 and 1948.²⁶

Afghanistan

OEF was a high-intensity conflict, short in duration and waged with precision-guided munition, special operation forces, and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) personnel. The air campaign, intense as it was, was limited to conventional military targets, that were few. The air war (7 October to 9 December 2011) caused between 2,500 and 3,000 civilian deaths. In December 2001, another 640 to 800 civilians were killed as a result of American ground operations. After the battle of Mazar-e-Sharif, on 9 November 2001, the Taliban regime crumbled, and on 9 December 2001, the Taliban were expelled from Kandahar. Many of the surviving leaders of al Qaeda and the Taliban managed to retreat to their Pakistani sanctuaries, while their disbanded forces blended into the Afghan civilian population. By the time of the demise of the Taliban

regime, 0.014 percent of the Afghan civilian population had been killed by allied military operations. The percentage of civilian casualties in Afghanistan is similar to those of the American interventions in Grenada in 1983 (0.045 percent), in Panama in 1989 (0.04 percent), and in the Gulf War in 1990 to 1991 (0.016 percent). It is evident the vast majority of the Afghan population was not directly affected by OEF and emerged from the war neither traumatized by defeat nor convinced of the inevitability of radical exogenously imposed change.

In Afghanistan, the Americans tried to transform a tribal, ethnically divided, illiberal, and undemocratic society into a functioning democracy. Similar to Germany and Japan, large sectors of the Afghan population did not want to be educated, reformed, and administered by the invaders. Yet, contrary to the cases of Germany and Japan, the Afghan population was neither decimated nor compliant, and the Taliban still constituted a real political option in much of the country. OEF had not created a context auspicious to the consequent nation-building program, yet the Bush administration saw the “reconstruction” of Afghanistan as a political opportunity to expand American soft power in the Muslim world, and transformed a counterterrorist operation into a military occupation theoretically committed to sweeping moral, political, and educational reforms.

The American-led transformation project was well received by sectors of the small urban elite, mostly born and educated under the Communist regime of President Mohammad Najibullah, but not by the rural Pashtun majority. The large Pashtun majority in the rural areas, motivated by religious or ideological convictions, fear of Taliban reprisals, distrust of or outright opposition to the Karzai government, and resentment of the foreign occupation, offered a good breeding ground for the insurgency. In particular, the socially reactionary Pashtun did not welcome the Western agenda. Their attitude toward the deposed Taliban regime was complex and ambiguous. The Taliban succeeded in maintaining order through the rigid implementation of the Sharia. In the case of women’s rights, for example, the Taliban simply codified into law the traditional practice of treating women as second class citizens.²⁷ It was obvious, from the very beginning of the NATO military occupation, the invaders’ conception of law and order and of political reform was not congruent with the aspirations of many Afghans. The occupiers’ ideological and cultural package for Afghanistan clashed with the mores of the land, and its lofty objectives underwent a process of attenuation and degradation.

In 2002, the Taliban started their guerrilla war against the coalition forces and the weak and corrupt Kabul government.²⁸ The small number of coalition forces was unable to find and destroy the huge caches of hidden arms spread across Afghanistan. Pakistan offered a sanctuary, and the porous border between the two countries allowed the bidirectional flow of people, weapons, and intelligence. By 2003, Taliban insurgents controlled much of rural Afghanistan and were able to carry out suicide missions and assassinations in the cities. The Taliban gained political traction by establishing local underground governments with civilian administrations that collected taxes

and operated schools and Islamic courts. They had functional links with war lords, rural strongmen, and farmers, and were able to establish law and order at the local level. The 2004 general elections extended Karzai's tenure, but the country was already destabilized by the Taliban insurgency that harassed Western forces, derailed reconstruction efforts, and terrorized Afghan cities and rural areas. The number of Afghan civilians killed by the Taliban rose systematically after 2006.

The coalition forces waged a counterinsurgency war while implementing, with increasing difficulty, a nation-building project in the midst of violence and increasing hostility towards the Western allies and their political objectives. This was a certain recipe for failure, because effective physical and political reconstruction is impossible in a context characterized by insecurity. The NATO forces had the almost impossible task of fighting a guerrilla movement with deep connections with the rural population, while simultaneously trying to make their program of reforms compatible with the local hierarchies and customs of Afghanistan. The coalition forces used violence with great restraint on the assumption that this would gain the good will and acceptance of the civilian population. They also dropped the idea of forcing radical cultural and ideological change in Afghanistan, and instead stressed the need for cultural sensitivity training for their own soldiers. The allies did not attempt to impose the strict separation between religion and state and accepted the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. In other words, the United States and its NATO allies progressively reduced their expectations and did not challenge the ideological and cultural tenets of the Afghan population that did not fit with democratic liberalism.

In November 2009, given the rising wave of insurgency, General Petraeus convinced President Obama to commit an additional 30,000 American troops to Afghanistan. Even with the surge, the military situation continued to be critical, and in 2011, President Obama and the leaders of the NATO nations were forced to redefine what success meant in Afghanistan. The president ordered the withdrawal of 10,000 troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2011, and announced that another 23,000 would be leaving by the summer of 2012, and the remainder of combat forces by 2014. In the new paradigm of reduced expectations, the task of the NATO forces in Afghanistan is to achieve a modicum of stability.

Conclusion

A transformative military occupation targeted at the radical political and ideological restructuring of a society is akin to a revolution from above carried out by a foreign power. The military government involved in a transformative occupation acts as a revolutionary organization that takes control of the invaded country. It removes the vestiges of the preexisting government, dismisses the previous authorities, dismantles the police and security services, and presides over the judicial and the educational systems. The occupation government monopolizes the use of force, information, and propaganda, and excludes

people, ideologies, and organizations that represent actual or potential threat to their revolutionary agenda. Accordingly, it represses, purges, censors, and proscribes. Social revolutions of this magnitude imply the radical redesign of social mores and governmental institutions according to the tenets of the victors.

Military occupations are likely to engender resistance, hostility, and nationalism.²⁹ Opposition to a military occupation may be reduced if there is either significant ideological congruence between the occupier and the occupied, or if the occupied population has been so devastated by the preceding war that it is unwilling and unable to resist. The German occupations of Austria (1938-45) and northwestern France (1940-44) exemplify the dynamics of an occupation where there is a significant degree of ideological congruence. In Austria, there was widespread popular support for annexation—Austrian antisemitism was strong and pervasive even before the *Anschluss*, and many Austrians aspired to be part of the German economic recovery touted by the Nazi regime. Even when the military situation deteriorated for Germany, faith in Austrian-German integration under Hitler's leadership persisted. The support for the Third Reich and its murderous antisemitic policies diminished only in the last months of the war.³⁰

In 1940, when the *Wehrmacht* conquered France, many French were deeply disenchanted with liberalism and the democratic system of government, and were eager to give the Germans the benefit of the doubt. France had had fourteen different governments between 1933 and 1939, and in 1940 the mood was anti-Republican. The Nazis found a deeply divided country, polarized between the extreme right and the extreme left, both antidemocratic. The French right, Catholic, antisemitic, fanatically anticommunist, and antisocialist, had a long history of grievances against the Republic, dating back to the French Revolution and peaking with the Dreyfus Affair. Hitler's 1933 victory in Germany not only energized the French extreme right, it caused fissures in the *Parti Communiste Français*. Important Communist leaders left the Party attracted to the idea of a pan-European national socialist revolution. The German occupation offered the anti-Republican majority a chance to imagine a radically new country freed from the shackles of politics as usual. During the first two years of occupation, even though Hitler considered the French culturally and racially inferior, many French imagined a Franco-German partnership once the Nazis won the war.³¹ Preexisting ideological congruence allowed the Nazi occupation governments in Austria and France to make radical political, legal, and social changes and conduct genocidal policies with minimal resistance and with the acquiescence, or collaboration, of the occupied.

When there is no ideological congruence between the occupier and the occupied, a transformative military occupation government can operate successfully if the population of the defeated country has been physically and psychologically shattered by the magnitude of the preceding war, and cannot organize a nationalist insurgency. During WWII, the Allies were driven by an unflinching commitment to strategic and tactical objectives, and targeted both the enemies' armies and their civilian populations. The number of civilian and

military casualties, the number of prisoners taken, the level of physical destruction, and the total institutional and political collapse of Germany and Japan, left the vanquished populations disconcerted, powerless, subdued, and malleable. Even in the absence of ideological congruence between the American occupiers and the occupied populations of western Germany and Japan, the American military governments did not have to confront military insurgency, and were able to implement radical programs of social and political engineering. OMGUS and SCAP developed their agendas of change even when the objectives of the ideological and political revolution clashed with the ideological and political tenets of the deposed regimes. In occupied western Germany and Japan, the Americans banned or reformed preexisting political and legal institutions, parasitized those bureaucratic frameworks that were deemed useful, and banned all expressions of militarism, nationalism, and racism. They manipulated, directed, and controlled German and Japanese political and cultural life by overt and covert methods with an admixture of punishment, threats, negotiations, and cajoling. Negative policies were complemented with positive measures designed to provide the German and Japanese populations with new political, cultural, and social paradigms. The absence of insurgency allowed the American military governments to impose their revolutionary political, social, economic, cultural, and ideological changes while engaging in the urgently needed physical reconstruction of the devastated countries.

In those cases where there is no ideological congruence between the occupier and the occupied, and where the occupied population has not been reduced to passive impotence, the occupying power can either resort to genocidal violence attempting to preempt the emergence of an insurgency or be prepared to deal with resistance and armed rebellion. The German occupation of Czechoslovakia (1938) and Poland (1939), and the Soviet occupation of Poland (1939), illustrate the first alternative. The Nazis and the Communists killed tens of thousands of military officers, scientists, intellectuals, artists, teachers, doctors, priests, and writers, in order to eliminate potential leaders of an insurgency. Extreme genocidal violence, however, does not automatically solve the problem of insurgency, as the Nazis learned in Poland with the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (1942) and the Warsaw Uprising (1944). Afghanistan illustrates the second alternative. There was little ideological congruence between the Western alliance and the occupied, and the Taliban regime was deposed with minimal civilian suffering. In this case, the occupation forces adopted a military and political strategy targeted at winning the “hearts and minds” of the Afghan noncombatant population. This strategy has met with limited success because insurgency emerged and the transformative project was derailed. NATO forces found it increasingly difficult to impose law and order, guarantee security, and monopolize information and propaganda, the essential prerequisites for radical ideological, institutional, and political change.

Small wars do not create the conditions for nation-building projects when the occupied population is uninterested in, or hostile to, the transformative agenda. OEF defeated the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan, but much of

the rural Afghan population, essentially untouched by the war, was reluctant to adopt the NATO agenda of political and social reforms, enabling the Taliban to reorganize their clandestine networks, rearm, and provide a political alternative. This led to the rapid emergence of resistance, insurgency, and anarchy, and to the resultant collapse of American plans for the transformation of Afghanistan into a functioning democracy. The Afghanistan experience indicates small wars targeted at regime change do not create the context of possibility for the success of transformative military occupations and should not be followed by occupations aimed at nation building.

NOTES

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2. David M. Edelstein, *Occupational Hazards: Success and Failure in Military Occupation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 23, 157.
3. Dov S. Zakheim, "Where We Went Wrong in Afghanistan," *The National Interest*, October 7, 2011.
4. Jason Lyall, "Afghanistan's Lost Decade: What Went Wrong Between the Two Bonn Conferences," *Foreign Affairs*, December 15, 2011.
5. Stanley N. Katz, "Gun Barrel Democracy? Democratic Constitutionalism Following Military Occupation: Reflections on the US Experience in Japan, Germany, Afghanistan and Iraq," *Princeton Law & Public Affairs*, Paper No. 04-010, May 2004. Also see Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George W. Downs, "Why Gun-Barrel Democracy Doesn't Work," *Hoover Digest*, April 30, 2004; Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, "How Development Leads to Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 2 (March/April 2009).
6. Seth G. Jones, "Going Local: The Key to Afghanistan," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 7, 2009.
7. Seth G. Jones, "Getting Back on Track in Afghanistan," Testimony presented before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia on April 2, 2008, 4. See also, Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009); and Seth G. Jones, *Hunting in the Shadows: The Pursuit of Al Qaeda Since 9/11* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012).
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