Counterinsurgency By Other Names: Complicating Humanitarian Applied Anthropology in Current, Former and Future Warzones

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Abstract: This paper draws on three information sources to critically evaluate how new U.S. counterinsurgency strategies are transforming the delivery of humanitarian aid in warzones. Emerging critiques from within the NGO humanitarian assistance community find growing concern over, and resistance to, the military's use of conflict zone humanitarian assistance to further military goals. Anthropological contributions to past war-related counterinsurgency operations are considered, and patterns of past problems with divergent goals from anthropologists and military sponsors are identified. Newly available military manuals and governmental cables disclosed by WikiLeaks further document how military and civilian governmental agencies use humanitarian aid as a form of counterinsurgency. The paper concludes by reviewing some of the options available to anthropologists working on humanitarian aid projects in conflict zones.

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Counterinsurgency By Other Names: Complicating Humanitarian Applied Anthropology in Current, Former and Future Warzones.[1]

During the 1990s, in part in response to the Kosovo crisis and a shifting geopolitical landscape, new critiques of humanitarian relief in warzones and conflict regions developed among aid workers, social scientists and political observers. These critiques did not take the inherent goodness of humanitarianism as a given, but instead used consequentialist ethical frameworks to evaluate projects' outcomes (Duffield 2001:75). Crises in Rwanda, Kosovo, Somalia and elsewhere highlighted the ways humanitarian relief is rarely a neutral enterprise and is embedded within political economies of warfare, and how the contingencies of biopower impacts the distribution of aid can blur lines separating humanitarianism, soft power and hard power.

During the past decade the U.S. Defense and State Departments has increased its reliance on counterinsurgency programs as core elements of U.S. military and civilian-managed operations around the globe. These programs operate in regions marked by conflict, war and civil unrest and include the widely publicized military-linked Human Terrain Systems program, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in Iraq and Afghanistan delivering Humanitarian assistance, and USAID projects delivering agricultural assistance, infrastructure improvement, or (re)building hospitals, schools or other services. As clearly expressed in the philosophy of the new *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, establishing and maintaining needed goods and public services in regions of conflict, is now recognized by U.S. military strategists as an important weapon for undermining insurgencies. As anthropologists increasingly take on roles in

environments dominated by humanitarian aid and counterinsurgency, these emerging critiques take on an increasing importance for discipline.

Counterinsurgency (COIN) refers to a broad range of strategic practices meant to weaken potential challenges to political legitimacy. During the Twentieth and Twenty First Centuries, counterinsurgency military doctrine has included economic improvement projects and armed assassination programs—all designed to support specific groups (Price 2010). The U.S. military's new *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* describes counterinsurgency as "those political, economic, military, paramilitary, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency" (FM 3-24:1-3). To the extent that soft power counterinsurgency includes the cooption and subjugation of populations that might otherwise be engaged in resistance, anthropologists' contributions to counterinsurgency projects frequently raise serious ethical and political red flags, as participation in the such projects necessarily aligns anthropologists with efforts to undermine local groups opposed by those running counterinsurgency operations.

With post-Cold War American military expansions and increased use of the U.N. as a tool for American hegemony, with claims of 'just wars" comes new skepticism of a broad range of international activities (Drayton 2013). The American military's rehabilitation of counterinsurgency as a viable military tool brings increasing awareness that the American military's interest in humanitarian aid is sometimes something more self-serving than what generally comes to mind when thinking of "humanitarian assistance."

The appointment of David Petraeus as the CIA's Director of Central Intelligence signaled the Obama administration's commitment to global counterinsurgency; a commitment that

continues after Petraeus' departure. In *Armed Humanitarians*, Nathan Hodge chronicles the recent shift within military culture from a nearly exclusive reliance on armed force, to an increased use of contractors for humanitarian tasks designed to placate warzone populations. Hodge situates the development of Human Terrain Teams within a larger humanitarian project using counterinsurgency tactics under a broad banner of kinder-gentler humanitarianism making unmeasured claims of less lethal conquest and occupation (Hodge 2011).

The increased reliance on Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO) taking on support roles, fostering "stabilization" in warzones coincides with the larger American neoliberal project of increased out-sourcing of state functions. One of the transformations of these functions is an ideological shifts that distances the behaviors of these actors as if they operated independently of U.S. military actions. Functionally, NGO's increasingly risk acting as off-shore actors providing plausible deniability to American-backed military projects.

This shift in America's militarization of humanitarian aid in warzones was most clearly acknowledged in 2001, just weeks after the 9/11 attacks, when Secretary of State Colin Powell referred to NGO's as "force multipliers for us, [which are] such an important part of our combat team," crudely acknowledging American leaders now viewed NGOs as components of American combat operations (Powell 2001). Powell's remarks sparked strong reactions within the NGO community. While some efforts to reframe Powell's analysis tried to downplay the cynical implications of his admission, there have been obvious post-9/11 shifts in the ways the American military was using humanitarian aid.

As Michael Barnett and Jack Snyder observed, one manifestation of these shifts are efforts by U.S. military personnel to, "shed their uniforms in favor of civilian clothing as they

delivered relief. Perhaps most controversially, the U.S. assembled PRTs units that combined military personnel and humanitarian objectives. The United States was hoping to win over the Afghan population, but it also blurred the roles played by military aid personnel" (Barnett and Snyder 2009:167). When Colin Powell's characterization of humanitarian NGO's as military "force multipliers" is combined with the U.S. military camouflaging itself as civilian humanitarian NGO workers, such forms of humanitarian aid function like technically-severed but remotely-coordinated military appendages. It becomes increasingly difficult on a behavioral level to meaningfully differentiate between military counterinsurgency operations and those of some humanitarian NGOs operating in warzones—yet ideological distinctions remain powerful forces that can distract some participants from focusing on these behaviors. When the military delivers humanitarian aid in warzones, it ceases to be strictly humanitarian aid; when independent actors such as NGOs do the same, the status of this aid is complicated by the military uses of this aid. These shifts damage humanitarian aid's necessary core values embracing political neutrality.

Barnett and Snyder describe how American military Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) mix humanitarian and military objectives in Iraq and Afghanistan in ways that inevitably bring a "blurring of boundaries" that "cast all aid workers as part of the U.S. military effort, jeopardizing their access to those in need and their very safety. Although there remains considerable controversy regarding the motives of those who attacked aid workers, for those operating in the field there was little doubt that the confusion of roles diminished the humanitarian space and endangered their lives" (Barnett & Snyder 2009:167).

But the most explicit, dangerous, and ill-advised linking of a military project with what a humanitarian project was the CIA's use of Dr. Shakil Afridi to run fake Hepatitis B immunization medical services as part of the U.S. plan to locate Osama Bin Ladin. In early 2011, Dr. Afridi ran a phony vaccination program as a front for a CIA operation that went door to door in rural Pakistan collecting DNA searching for Osama bin Laden, eventually collecting data used to identify bin Laden's compound (Mazzetti 2011). The widespread distrust generated by this CIA abuse of humanitarian aid could doom millions to contracting polio and other preventable diseases. Now, all humanitarian aid workers risk becoming part of an unacceptable CIA calculus in which the killing of one individual is valued higher than the resulting millions who now stand to contract polio and other immunizeable diseases (Boone 2012).

After the CIA's use of Dr. Afridi to located and kill Osma bin Laden, a group of prominent humanitarian organizations (including CARE, InterAction, the International Rescue Committee, and Mercy Corps) wrote to the CIA protesting the Agency's use of Dr. Afridi (Shah 2012). Joel Charny, VP at InterAction complained that "we can't have bogus humanitarian activities going on in the name of national security" (Shah 2012). The fallout for these actions will be with us for some time to come, in December 2012, nine Pakistani health workers were murdered while conducting home visits to administer polio vaccines to children (Closser 2013). Yet the Afridi case is only a slightly more egregious example of the ways that the Pentagon now routinely relies on Humanitarian groups to assist in counterinsurgency operations.

In the next section, I consider two lines of analysis criticizing growing counterinsurgency uses of humanitarian aid: one line comes from within the aid community itself, the second comes from anthropological theory. When critiques from aid workers and anthropologists are

combined, we find a shared awareness of the ways that humanitarian projects are now integrated into larger systems of power. Several historical episodes illustrating anthropological contributions to past counterinsurgency projects are considered, and a final section explores an emerging mix of government documents (from State Department cables, FOIA documents, military doctrine, etc.) confirming that military forces are relying on independent humanitarian aid providers to support their counterinsurgent goals as "force multipliers."

The Humanitarian Aid Community & Anthropologists Theorizing Conflict Zone Aid

During the last dozen years, a growing number of humanitarian aid workers have produced a critical body of literature questioning humanitarian aid's links to military campaigns. These emerging internal critiques connect "independent" humanitarian assistance with military projects controlling theatres of operation. In a recent collection of critical essays published by Doctors Without Borders, *How People in Crises Perceive Humanitarian Aid,* Abby Stoddard's essay, "Collateral Damage: Internationalized Counterinsurgency and its Toll on Humanitarian Action" concludes that, "in counterinsurgency doctrine the provision of aid is not merely supportive of the military strategy, but central to it. This would seem to negate the concept of separate 'humanitarian space' and leave very little room for classical neutral humanitarian action. This would be the case even if the military and the independent aid agencies worked in strictly separate spheres of aid." (Stoddard 2012: 147). In a chilling extension of this logic, Stoddard concedes that under these conditions, attacks on humanitarian workers are rational, where "aid becomes a military activity then aid providers become a legitimate military target" (Stoddard 2012:147).

Other authors writing from within the humanitarian aid community note this aid's closeness to military operations connects their actions to counterinsurgency. For example, Hugo Slim asks: "What is the difference between Sphere's NGO Handbook on humanitarian response and a counter-insurgency manual? This question is not as facetious as it may sound because much enlightened counterinsurgency strategy focuses on improving people's lives through relief and development work" (Slim 2004:34). Slim does not make this comparison to criticize humanitarian projects linked to counterinsurgency programs, he instead argues that counterinsurgency operations and many humanitarian aid projects share similar *moral* goals—meaning, democracy, freedom etc., though Slim ignores the military's routine use of force in the name of such goals to non-democratically install change.

Colin Powell has not been the only government official pushing humanitarian NGOs to openly support US counterinsurgency operations. In May 2003, USAID administrator Andrew Natsios berated international NGOs for not identifying humanitarian aid as funded by the US. Soon after Natsios' attack, the American Enterprise Institute and the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies launched the NGO monitoring "NGO Watch" website, which posts ongoing attacks on humanitarian NGO activities it views as not fully supporting US military policies (see Stoddard 2003; http://www.globalgovernancewatch.org/ngo_watch/).

David Rieff describes a broad range of identities taken on by humanitarian aid workers over the course of the last four decades, these include:

> "humanitarian as noble caregiver, as dupe of power, as designated conscience, as revolutionary, as colonialist, as businessman, and perhaps even as mirror. There is humanitarianism as caring, as in Rwanda; humanitarianism as emancipation, as in

> Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban; humanitarianism as liberation, as in the case of humanitarian support for the rebels of Southern Sudan; and humanitarianism as counterinsurgency, as it was in Vietnam and may yet be again in Afghanistan" (Rieff 2002:88).

It is this range of roles played by global humanitarian worker that complicates our understanding of humanitarian work, and creates problems for any single interpretation of the moral, political, and functional meanings of humanitarian work. Yet, the increasing reliance of humanitarian aid workers on military personnel for protection, and shifting military recognition of humanitarian aid's increasing role in counterinsurgency operations diminishes the legitimacy of humanitarian neutrality claims.

Post-9/11 political developments spawned a range of critical anthropological analyses of humanitarian work. Fassin and Pandolfi's 2010 collection *Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions* provides the clearest anthropologically informed critique of the current merger of humanitarian and military projects. Fassin and Pandolfi argue that "humanitarian interventions could be seen as having replaced just wars" (Fassin & Pandolfi 2010:13). Fassin acknowledges the possibility that humanitarianism can be "a smokescreen for the conduct of what is no more than brutal realpolitik and classical liberalism as usual" (Fassin 2010:270). Laurence McFalls argues that, "feigning a nonpolitical, humanitarian vocation, NGOs, whose missions and methods can change with the prevailing wind, in fact embody a politics of arbitrary life force imposing its values and visions" (McFalls 2010:327).

But not all anthropologists view the situation so bleakly. Peter Van Arsdale, argues that anthropologically-based cultural knowledge can help reduce friction in military-dominated settings; with a form of so-called "pragmatic humanitarianism," which "respects rather than castigates humanitarian intervention involving military and peacekeeping personnel" (Van Arsdale 2012:205). The political stance of using anthropological skillsets to assist in "stabilization operations" is assumed by Van Arsdale as being part and parcel of a commitment to humanitarian goals.

Anthropologist Maximilian Forte links armed humanitarianism to a broader history of imperialism, observing that new ideologies claiming humanitarian goals for armed American internationalism, is a "a cynical return to the first new [American] imperialism" of the late Nineteenth Century, with two camps now being formed: "those who call for an unconstrained, unilateral imperialism, and those who seek empire through the pursuit of 'humanitarian' objectives" (Forte 2010:13). Both Fortes and Rosalia Stillitano note that this shift towards the new humanitarian-militarism extends beyond U.S. military practices, with Canadian peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan militarizing implementing counterinsurgency tactics with the "militarization of humanitarian aid" (quote Sillitano 2010:142, c.f. Fore 2010:18).

Laura Hammond rejects claims that a rise in violent attacks on humanitarian aid workers are due to increasing accidental confusion that these aid workers are allied with military missions and personnel. Hammond finds the,

> "manipulation of reputation, mandates, and identities is an explicit military tactic. The tactic is effective because it is rooted not in the weakness of humanitarianism as an enterprise but in its strength. Because of the power of humanitarianism, its subversion,

> either through co-option or attack, becomes a powerful way of sending a message not only to civilians trapped in the conflict but also to those living in safer places who might be a position to offer their public, material, or financial support to the war effort" (Hammond 2008:173).

As U.S. military doctrine used by occupying forces envisions support roles to be fulfilled by humanitarian aid workers, the occupied increasingly connect those delivering aid to counterinsurgency. According to Hammond "attacks against aid workers are carried out not because people do not understand the power of humanitarianism, or because humanitarianism is weaker than ever before, but precisely because they do comprehend it and seek to gain power for themselves through the very act of targeting such a potent symbol. It is perhaps aid agencies themselves who are most confused about their own role in armed conflict and unable to prevent themselves from being implicated in it" (Hammond 2008:177).

Hammond draws on anthropologist David Riches' theory interpreting violence as performance connecting performer, observer and victim (see Riches 1986). In analyzing the brutal 2004 beheading of CARE's Iraq country director Margaret Hassan, Hammond stresses that Hassan's murders understood how this dramatic act would play to an international audience. This was a performance stressing the insecurity of Iraq, showing the Iraqi "counterinsurgency to be much stronger than the Western military machine had portrayed it and the occupation forces to be powerless to prevent such violence" (Hammond 2008:178-179).

Sarah Lischer describes US military personnel's delivery and withholding of humanitarian aid as a coercive means of gaining support in rural Afghanistan. Lischer cites a

New York Times quote by a US Army Lieutenant delivering blankets to a rural Afghan village as saying, "the more they help us find the bad guys, the more good stuff they get," and observes that "such strategic use of so-called humanitarian resources again angers NGOs engaged in relief work in Afghanistan" (Lischer 2007:105).

Perhaps the best known example of claimed humanitarian counterinsurgency projects seeking anthropological contributions is the Human Terrain Systems (HTS) program. HTS extends many of the same arguments used by humanitarian programs to recruit participants and to justify specific counterinsurgency programs (González 2010; Price 2011a). Unlike other self-identified humanitarian projects, HTS's level of embedment with military forces moves beyond the now common levels of protection and other support services provided by military forces in warzones. HTS uses claims of being a humanitarian program to recruit otherwise reticent social scientists.

Disciplinary History Informing Counterinsurgency Critiques

Anthropologists have historically contributed to a variety of counterinsurgency programs, though political critiques of such contributions have increased during the past half-century. During the Second World War, anthropologists played central roles in a range of *insurgency* campaigns during the Second World War—whether Edmund Leach in Burma, Tom Harrisson is Sarawak, or Carleton Coon's OSS commando missions in North Africa; as well as counterinsurgency operations in the War Relocation Authority's camps housing Japanese American citizens in the American west.[2]

One example of American anthropologists' contributions to military-linked counterinsurgency operations during the Second World War were anthropologists'

contributions to interned Japanese-American citizens in the War Relocation Authority (WRA) camps. About two dozen American anthropologists worked for the WRA (Price 2008:143-170). Most of these anthropologists supported WRA goals of maintaining order in the camps, reducing the possibilities of insurgencies or other uprisings, and other activities that were largely described in the literature as being motivated by a desire to improve the lives and conditions of internees—activities which would be described as "humanitarian" today.

Most of these WRA anthropologists and other social scientists, like Alexander Leighton, sought to coopt detainees through managerial forms of social science that tried to make their detainment more pleasant, and less prone to uprisings. Mostly these efforts involved improving camp conditions by adapting the total institution's food and other amenities to better meet Japanese-American's cultural expectations. Walter Goldschmidt later described the internment as "a case of rape, but the anthropologists who went into the War Relocation Authority felt that they could serve to ameliorate this situation even if they could not stop it, and this they did" (Goldschmidt 1977:298).

Anthropologist Peter Suzuki rejects the possibility of the sort of anthropological "amelioration" described by Goldschmidt, instead arguing that anthropologists' fieldwork in the camps did not improve internees'' lives, that whatever changes "anthropologists accomplished could have been readily achieved by run-of-the-mill bureaucrats, whose roles as Community Analysts or social researchers would not have left the sense of disappointment that now exists because professional anthropologists did, in fact, work in these camps" (Suzuki 1981:45).[3]

Not all anthropologists working for the WRA conceived of their role as being that of counterinsurgents, a few, like brothers Morris and Marvin Opler, undertook actions designed to

empower these captive citizens. Their approach included: supporting efforts to resist detainment, helping detainees file legal briefs fighting for their freedom, resisting bureaucratic efforts to isolate and break detainees, collecting detailed ethnographic information clarifying the internal logic of camp riots, segregation at Manzanar and using the limited power available to the Oplers within this governmental agency to fight and argue for the dignity and freedom of detainees. The Oplers paid for these successes with workplace marginalization. Yet the Oplers' efforts at resistance within this agency offer some hope and guidance to model how anthropologists can push-back within bureaucratic structure to fight for the independence of peoples within "humanitarian" systems designed to coopt and control them under principles of counterinsurgency.

There are other humanitarian-motivated counterinsurgency-linked anthropological examples from other wars. During the Vietnam War anthropologists made numerous witting and unwitting contributions to counterinsurgency operations. Perhaps this war's most egregious abuse of anthropology occurred when U.S. Special Forces commandeered the ethnographic writings Georges Condominas, hijacking his writings for use in deadly operations (Condominas 1973). Several other anthropologists' contributed to projects linked to counterinsurgency operations that they conceived primarily as having humanitarian goals.

For over a decade, anthropologist Gerald Hickey used his ethnographic knowledge to write RAND Corporation reports used in the design and implementation of military counterinsurgency programs in Vietnam (see Price 2011b:129; Hickey 2002). Hickey's motivations for engaging in this work was fundamentally humanitarian—with clearly expressed desires that his work be used to reduce harm to the populations he studied; though the record

of military and intelligence agencies' actual uses of his RAND reports shows military and civilian authorities consistently ignoring recommendations counter to military goals, and in some instances, his ethnographic knowledge being used for militarized ends. Hickey's conceptualization of his work as fundamentally humanitarian (reducing harm to the Hmong), prolonged his lengthy involvement with RAND and the US military; an involvement which he viewed bitterly in the end, with anger at the military's unwillingness to incorporate his recommendations—and at anthropologist colleagues who viewed him as supporting an unpopular war. Hickey's humanitarian hopes kept him involved in this work for over a decade, even as the military used his work in ways he did not approve (see Price 2011b; Hickey 2002).

In 1962 Hickey coauthored a report on the Strategic Hamlet program—a program that used ideologies of humanitarian assistance to support the military's strategic plan to move highland villagers out of the path of the Vietcong by uprooting entire villages and relocating them in fortified compounds in new lowland regions (Donnell & Hickey 1962). Strategic Hamlet promised increased protection, safety, economic security, and other humanitarian goals for these relocated villagers, but at its core it was a counterinsurgency program designed to isolate villagers from contact with the Vietcong. Hickey wrote numerous RAND reports criticizing specifics of American military and civilian activities, with motivations aligned with humanitarian concerns for the Hmong peoples he had studied since the 1950s. But Hickey's humanitarian motivations nurtured blind-spots that limited his understanding of how his own work was being used by the military in armed counterinsurgency campaigns. These humanitarian motivations led Hickey to continue work assisting Rural Reconstruction Teams, writing critical evaluations of U.S. strategy in Vietnam, which led to little measurable assistance to those he aspired to

protect, some of this work simply helped RAND and the Pentagon continue to justify military counterinsurgency policies (see Price 2011b).

Hopes of humanitarian-contributions led Hickey down a well-financed path he hoped would help local populations as he continually re-hitched his wagon to RAND, believing he was offering humanitarian assistance, while his work supplied military strategists with rationalizations and information that was at times transformed by the needs of combat and counterinsurgency campaigns.

Manuals, Cables and Doctrine Reveal COIN's Views of Humanitarian Aid

Another source of information revealing how military and intelligence institutions strategically view humanitarian aid comes from military manuals, internal communiques, and other governmental documents relating to humanitarian aid in warzones.[4] A brief analysis of such internal documents, coming from sources including WikiLeaks, TRADOC, and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, adds a coherence to this narrative with the inclusion of document voicing military state and intelligence agencies interests in how NGOs and other humanitarian groups assist counterinsurgency operations.

Publications like the *Guide to Nongovernmental Organizations for the Military* stress that the U.S. Department of Defense respects the independence of NGO aid organizations and their workers (Lawry 2009). The *Guide* recognizes the established limits and roles of NGOs operating in warzone and conflict regions (see chapter 18, "NGOs and the Military" Lawry 2009). While such clear expressions of delineated roles and duties as found in the *Guide* are fairly common in military manuals, several military documents show more self-serving uses of humanitarian NGOs. The *Guide to Nongovernmental Organization for the Military* argues that,

"aid efforts undertaken to assist counterinsurgency strategies or build the state cannot be impartial because they are not based with an exclusive eye upon need. Such aid should not be attached to the term "humanitarian" (Lawry 2009:376). One's acceptance of this position in part depends on how conservatively one defines counterinsurgency; those who recognize a broad range of conflict zone economic assistance, public service and infrastructure improvement programs as elements of counterinsurgency programs may be less likely to fully agree with Lawry's proposition, yet this is exactly what such programs are.

The Army's 2009 *Commander's Guide; Employing a Human Terrain Team in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom: Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures* (No. 09-21) conceives of humanitarian operations as potential opportunities to gather intelligence, and describes one of Human Terrain Team's functions as facilitating "humanitarian assistance missions. . . .[which can] create an opportunity for the team to gather local socio-cultural information that helps shape the unit's planning" (CALL 2009: 10).

The Department of Defense's 2009, Joint Publication 3-24 on *Counterinsurgency Operations* (JP 3-24), stresses that the key to establishing the Provincial Reconstruction Teams' (PRT) para-colonial outposts in Iraq and Afghanistan is that PRTs rely on NGOs working in the area to "share information" and to work with them and to "communicate about civil-military sensitivities" (JP 3-24,, B-4). Because NGO's "play important roles in resolving insurgencies," JP 3-24 emphasizes that commanders need to learn about them, noting that "building a complementary, trust-based relationship is vital." Recognizing that some NGOs will want little or nothing to do with American military personnel, the manual advises they should "ensure the security of NGOs to the extent that the NGO will allow," but the manual also warns that "some

illegal and potentially adversarial organizations will attempt to claim status as an NGO" (JP 3-24, IV-3).

The utility of using aid as a weapon in stressed in the US Marine Corps' *Counter Irregular Threats: A Comprehensive Approach,* as it advocates knowing "when to fight with weapons and when to fight with information, humanitarian aid, economic advice, and a boost towards good governance for the local people" (USMC 2006:5). The new *Counterinsurgency Manual* (FM 3-24) clarifies the importance of coordinating humanitarian work with military operations, and advises that "Political, social, and economic programs are usually more valuable than conventional military operations in addressing the root causes of conflict and undermining an insurgency" and then identifies "humanitarian aid workers" as one of the groups of actors to help work on these issues (FM 3-24, 2-2). The manual recommends protecting humanitarian assistance personnel for many reasons including "creating a secure environment by co-op-opting local beneficiaries of aid and their leaders" (FM 3-24, A-47).

A Special Forces Manual on International Defense Operations identifies NGOs and other international organization as important sources of useful "civil information" that can later be used by Special Forces. Humanitarian Civic Assistance projects are identified as among the "most effective" means of addressing host nation problems with insurgents (Special Forces 2007:E-16). NGOs are described as good sources on civil information that can be "entered into a central database, and internally fused with the supported elements" from Headquarters and other Defense agencies (Special Forces 2007: 4-10). The US Army's *Stability Operations* manual also stresses that NGOs are "valuable sources of information about local and regional governments and civilian attitudes towards an operation" (US Army 2008 FM 3-07,A-57).

WikiLeak's publication of the quarter-million State Department memos leaked by Bradley Manning reveals some of the private views that military and civilian governmental agencies maintain towards humanitarian aid and aid workers and inform us of larger contexts in which our work is used by others.[5] One 2009 Wikileaks memo describes the distribution of humanitarian aid to 250 people an Afghanistan PRT, who each received a blanket, bags of flour, beans, rice, sugar, clothing and medical assistance (Zwaka Village, 9/23/07). This "positive policing operation" identifies two village interlocutors: Hajji Mohammed and Saidfullah Khan, reporting that "Mr. Khan was very helpful throughout the operation, but Saidfullah was a problem throughout. We will select someone else from Saidfullah's side of the village to assist us in future HA [Humanitarian Assistance] distributions." (Reference ID 9/23/07, AFG20070923n933).

This leaked memo finds State Department personnel viewing humanitarian assistance as a means of identifying individuals cooperating with American counterinsurgency forces; embedded within such identifications are notions that future humanitarian interactions could be tools used for greater compliance with U.S. military counterinsurgency goals. Such interactions betray calculations using humanitarian aid to manipulate local populations.

Complicating Humanitarian Assistance in Conflict Zones

Laurence McFalls' essay in *Contemporary States of Emergency* opens with an account of his exchange with an earnest seventeen year old who tells him that her career goal is to undertake international humanitarian aid work. McFalls acknowledges the goodness of such intentions, observing that humanitarianism has become "the secular religion of the new millennium," and uses this point to launch a highbrow Weberian analysis of the shortcomings of

humanitarianism (2010:317). McFalls' punchline comes 5,000 words later, circling back to his meeting this earnest seventeen year old committed to humanitarian aid work, connecting these earnest intentions with a larger "Promethean effort to lend meaning to a godless, meaningless world, where the creative genius must deny and negate his or her arbitrary power. Intervention reproduces this godless, godlike structure of authority, whence its banal claim to be a matter of life and death. . . .This is what I blasphemously wanted to tell my young humanitarian volunteer, but did not dare" (McFalls 2010:331-332).

While diverging from several particulars of his Weberian analysis, I share McFalls' reticence to burst any such youthful bubbles, especially given the relative rarity of dedication to such a positive humanitarian outlook. We need people who give a damn and want to help others, yet we cannot afford to not complicate the greater context of humanitarian aid in warzones. Given the US military and civilian leadership's admissions of (in manuals, cables etc.), and demonstrated acts indicating desires to use humanitarian aid as a counterinsurgency instrument, we must complicate our understanding of, and to reject these perversions of humanitarian principles.

We must examine how the U.S. military uses good intentions and commitments to humanitarian goals to further its counterinsurgency project. We should worry less about who is funding or carrying out activities (military, non-military), or what stated motivations for such actions are, and look more directly at behaviors and functional outcomes. The uniforms, or lack of uniforms won't reveal how aid in conflict areas is being used for counterinsurgency. The new armed humanitarianism attracts supporters drawn to a noble promise of mutual aid, but frequently ignores warzone humanitarian aid's latent and manifest roles in counterinsurgency

projects. Military manuals advocate respecting procedural-walls separating NGOs and the military, and while these separations are bureaucratically real (in the sense that agencies function within their own guidelines and funding streams), such distinctions are functionally trivial. The bureaucratic structures separating those delivering humanitarian aid from military personnel bolsters internal and external legitimacy, but these bureaucratic distinctions obscure military-counterinsurgency's reliance on humanitarian aid in conflict zones. This reliance on using public perceptions of politically "neutral" or civilian governmental agencies to implement programs that would draw broad condemnations or suspicions if performed by military-intelligence agencies supporting program outcomes has a long, largely unexplored history stretching back to the Cold War.

There were recurrent episodes during the Cold War where international programs covertly receiving CIA funding were exposed by investigative journalists. In response to public outrage that the CIA was engaged in such activities, the management of these programs shifted to other governmental agencies—most commonly the State Department. With time, these activities were viewed as less nefarious because of the identity shift of the agency overseeing essentially the same projects.

Historical examples of institutional shifts from secret military/intelligence functions to "open" non-military/intelligence funding sources find academics, with time, learning to accept these activities without protest after funds shifted from military-intelligence funding sources (e.g. CIA) to more mundane funding streams (e.g. State). Two examples of such shifts illustrate this trend. After the Asia Foundation was exposed as a CIA funding front in 1967, it shifted its funding stream from the CIA to the Department of State (see Price 2011c; Turner 1967). With

this new funding base the Foundation severed ties with the CIA while continuing many of the same functions it had undertaken with secret CIA funding. Similarly, when in 1969 the CIA's covert funding of union organizations efforts to influence international labor movements and elections was exposed, funding for these programs shifted from covert CIA funds, to overt USAID funds (Greider 1969). After intelligence links to this program were removed, similar outcomes continued. In these examples, many critics of these programs came to see these programs as non-controversial, though many of these programs' functions remained the same without CIA backing. These recurrent shifts of delivering-agencies demonstrate the importance of focusing analysis not on the "agency-branding" of particular sponsors, and demonstrates the importance of focusing on the continuity of behavioral outcomes desired by military and intelligence agencies.

I raise these historical examples of agency-shifts (from CIA to State) not to claim CIA involvement in any particular anthropological humanitarian projects today, I instead highlight how specific intelligence-military functions have historically come to be seen as acceptable after they merely funding shifted from agencies associated with military-intelligence activities to agencies associated with civilian concerns.

As a member of the AAA's Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the U.S. Security and Intelligence Communities (CEAUSSIC) investigating anthropologists' interactions with military and intelligence agencies, I note that one of our key findings was that anthropologists should not make judgment of ethical standing of a particular project on the basis of who funds a project (Peacock et al. 2007). This argument was essentially stating that anthropologists could not determine the ethical propriety of project by knowing the funding

agency, they must look at particular practices and outcomes. This argued that there are not "bad agencies" (e.g. CIA, Pentagon, Halliburton etc.) there are instead good or bad practices (however, obviously some agencies recurrently engage in good or bad practices…), but there is also a largely unexplored flipside to this observation: that "good agencies" can engage in unethical, or politically questionable activities too.

Anthropologists working on humanitarian projects should not assume that military personnel understand or care about anthropologists' goals, constraints, or consequences of collaboration. In the best of cases, the military looks for humanitarian organizations to draw lines limiting interactions, in the worst, they dismiss the need for any such lines. If lines are to be drawn: anthropologists must draw them. Military uses of humanitarian aid leaves us all in a difficult position. Even if anthropologists could agree that a particular humanitarian conflict zone's aid project were clearly linked to a military counterinsurgency operation, what then? I am not prepared to argue that food or other supplies should be withheld. Inaction is not an option, but neither is pretending that humanitarian assistance has not become part of larger counterinsurgency tactics.

Anthropologists and others working on warzone humanitarian projects do have some limited choices. Chief among these are: disengagement; struggling to undermine or dismantle military uses of humanitarian aid; pretending that some sort of middle ground exists; or resigning to accept counterinsurgency-linked contributions either as something good or as a lesser-evil than starvation and other deprivations. I suspect most will see no acceptable choice but to assist warzone humanitarian aid projects simply because letting people starve, or be denied health care, clean water and other necessities is unacceptable.

One small way that anthropologists and others troubled by warzone humanitarian aid's links to counterinsurgency can resist the military's quiet commandeering of humanitarian work for militarized ends is to break the silence and openly critique the militarization of humanitarian aid. We can stop referring to counterinsurgency operations in warzones as humanitarian assistance. When occupying military forces are involved, this work should be called counterinsurgency, or perhaps some hybrid phrase mixing counterinsurgency with a phrase highlighting the coercive nature of the military uses of humanitarian aid, or protesting counterinsurgent abuses of humanitarian intents (my modest suggestions include: lesser-of-two-evilsitarian aid, counter-humanitsurgency aid, life sustaining coercive aid, etc.). Anthropologists need to complicate what is going on and to increase public awareness of the militarization of warzone humanitarian aid.[6] If anthropologists are going to be counterinsurgency tools used by the military (as Goldschmidt put it, referring to WRA anthropologists) trying "to ameliorate this situation," we should must call it "humanitarian aid." If anthropologists don't like this relationship, they need to say so.

Anthropologists must develop an anthropology of warzone humanitarian aid that focuses less on the emics of aid workers and recipients, and more on the etic/behavioral/functional ways that humanitarian aid is part of military counterinsurgency strategies.[7] We need to raise awareness of counterinsurgency's uses of humanitarian aid.

In the 1950s, Sol Tax delineated "action anthropology" as a form of problem oriented anthropology which, in theory, had "no master" and operated independently from the agendas of external funders by primarily following those of local communities. He differentiated his vision of "action anthropology" from the more general forms of "applied anthropology" that

followed sponsors agendas (Tax 1950 & 1975). Tax's action anthropology provides some guidance on how we might resist military efforts to coopt humanitarian aid. Even when anthropologists actions at times align with military counterinsurgency operations, the closer these actions come to serving local populations' desires (as if such complexities could simply be identified), the closer they will be to doing at least half their job. But such an approach presupposes that humanitarian assistance can occur in military theatres with degrees of freedom that may not exist. If humanitarian operations can never be separated from the military context in which they occur, then humanitarian workers face grim choices that begin with their acceptance of the limited freedoms under which they are willing to operate. In areas dominated by military forces, in order to gain the access and influence needed to work on affected groups, concessions and compromises with those controlling the region must usually be made.

There are also lessons to be learned from Marvin Opler's World War II experiences, chief among these is the importance of aligning anthropological loyalties with those subjected to counterinsurgency controls, not employers or those controlling the freedoms of those with whom we work. Sarah Lischer advocates humanitarian aid delivery by local groups, such as the group Muslim Hands (a UK based group using local Iraqi religious organizations to deliver aid), though such options do not preclude the possibility of funding specific groups under counterinsurgent-like dynamics (2007:111).

With the rise of AFRICOM, and rapid spread of military-linked humanitarian aid programs spreading in non-warzones through Africa, we now have the rapid spread of humanitarian military narratives. Anthropologists have a role to play in challenging these

narratives, and while some colleagues and our public audiences may initially be shocked to find us criticizing something seemingly as altruistic as humanitarian aid, anthropologists need to become a prominent voice complicating public narratives and move understandings of "humanitarian aid" from uni-dimensional simplistic understandings that ignore the military's cynical exploitations, to complicated considerations of when doing "good" becomes a calculated weapon of warfare.

As individual anthropologists, there are times when we need to say no to requests to contribute to warzone humanitarian projects. Just when we say no isn't always clear. Though more obvious counterinsurgency-linked projects with a thin humanitarian veneer like Human Terrain can be easy for many anthropologists to recognize and reject, it is the slippery slope of projects claiming to save lives, reduce harm, improve quality of life, that makes it difficult to divine what actions to undertake or avoid. When anthropologists do say no, we need to explain why in ways that are institutionally appropriate. Simply saying no and expressing outrage to anthropological colleagues is useful, but letting those with power understand why we say no can hold real value (unless this articulation establishes pathways of future cooption). Such explanations have some chance of empowering ignored critics operating within the humanitarian, NGO, civilian, and military sectors.

For ethical and political reasons anthropologists working for humanitarian projects must maintain independence from the military power structures that increasingly dominate warzone arenas of humanitarian aid. Obviously, this is easier said than done, but if we can't do it, we are doing something less than anthropology and probably nothing more than implementing forms of counterinsurgency delivered more effectively than the military can deliver directly. In the

best of circumstances we can strive to identify and serve the needs of local populations living under awful conditions, and our awareness of the ways that militaries wish to weaponize humanitarian intentions as a tool of warfare can help anthropologists not become counterinsurgency tools. However anthropologists can figure out to address the complexities of warzone "humanitarian aid," at a minimum we must complicate the dominant narratives insisting we have few choices or limiting the frame we use to understand the uses of "humanitarian aid."

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[1] This paper was originally presented as a keynote address at the Annual Meeting of the Swedish Anthropological Association. Uppsala, Sweden, April 26, 2013.

[2] During the Second World War American anthropologists perhaps had greater success supporting insurgency movements resisting Axis occupations than they did developing counterinsurgency tactics.

[3] Suzuki allowed that Marvin Opler's exceptionable ethnographic work at Tule Lake "was unswayed by the madness which was going on around him and [he] continued to write sympathetic, compassionate reports" (Suzuki 1981:41).

[4] Because rules about behavior often have little bearing on behaviors, there are limits to what can be learned reading military doctrine to understand how aid is used as a counterinsurgency tool (Harris 1974). However, doctrinal statements do inform us about institutional desires, and record tensions between military desires and NGO vulnerabilities. Unlike philosophical expressions of doctrine, the cables and other communications compiled on WikiLeaks documenting military and civilian actions present data on something more than idealistic expressions of desired behaviors.

[5] Among these State Department cablegate memos, I identified 230 memos containing references to "anthropology" and "anthropologists."

[6] Pierre Minn's "Towards an Anthropology of Humanitarianism" takes important steps towards complicating anthropological understandings of and contributions to humanitarian projects, yet his work lacks a focus on the military uses of this work (Minn 2007).

[7] For examples of anthropological analysis focusing primarily on chronicling the views of humanitarian assistance providers see Fassin (2010), who exclusively focuses on what she terms an "emic" insider view, portraying how French humanitarian aid workers envision their work (2010:270), or Redfield (2005). My point is not to argue against this type of analysis, I do find it useful and important, I instead argue that we need to expand such work to include more focus on the larger political economics of conflict zones that frame these interactions.