

LETTER TO EDITOR: How to give -- not get -- the boot

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The editorial "The Afghan metric system" (Opinion, Wednesday) accurately addresses the futility of our current approach in Afghanistan. Similar to its initial operations in Vietnam, the U.S. military has implemented a conventional strategy against unconventional and well-trained guerrilla forces.

President Obama's purported system for measuring success will do little for our goal of bringing stability to the Afghan people. Former President Richard Nixon once said that we must disabuse ourselves of the popular misconceptions of how to deal with conflict.

Using a metric system that focuses on military superiority alone will solve nothing. Low-intensity conflict necessitates an analytical assessment that considers a country's socioeconomic, political and security issues concurrently in order to prevent further disorder.

The Taliban understand the necessary relationship between a country's government, security forces and people. Providing the Afghan people with sufficient food, water and medical care will go a long way in combating the insurgency. The United States needs to do more than just place boots on the ground. In order to counter the Taliban threat effectively, we must first concentrate our efforts on social and political reform.

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