U.S. Counterinsurgency: Spoilers of Instability

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The execution of current U.S. counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine is insufficient because spoilers, specifically those driven by ideology, have changed the face of insurgency and COIN warfare. The contemporary COIN environment is significantly different from the environment that colonial theorists Mao Tse-tung and David Galula experienced. While their theories and principles of insurgency and COIN identify the population as the center of gravity, contemporary spoilers have profoundly changed the operating environment. As the operating environment evolved, the doctrine also evolved. However, flaws in execution still exist for various reasons that are discussed in this paper. This research paper examines the evolution of U.S. COIN doctrine, reviews the theoretical foundation of current doctrine, offers an analysis of the environment through the lens of Mao Tse tung and David Galula compared to the contemporary environment, and identifies flaws in the application of current doctrine. Finally, recommendations are offered to diminish the impact spoilers have in the future COIN campaigns. It is argued that the current approach to waging COIN must be restructured in favor of more narrowly focused objectives.

U.S. Counterinsurgency: Spoilers of Instability

> To confine soldiers to purely military functions while urgent and vital tasks
> have to be done, and nobody else is available to undertake them, would
> be senseless.

—David Galula[1]

The execution of current U.S. counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine is insufficient in a war where spoilers, especially those who are driven by ideology, are infused with an insurgency that has alternative goals. This research does not suggest that the current doctrine is deficient, but it does propose that practical application is inconsistent and therefore deficient in its ability to defeat contemporary insurgent networks. The following examines the evolution of U.S. COIN doctrine, reviews the theoretical foundation of current U.S. COIN doctrine, offers an analysis of the environment through the lens of Mao Tse tung and David Galula compared to the contemporary environment, and identifies flaws in the application of current doctrine. Finally, options are offered to diminish the impact spoilers have in the future COIN campaigns. It is argued that the current approach to waging COIN outside the continental U.S. must be restructured in favor of more narrowly focused objectives.

Evolution of Irregular Warfare Doctrine

Army Field Manual (FM) 31–15 (Operations Against Irregular Forces) was the U.S. Army doctrine upon entering the conflict in Vietnam, and it defines irregular forces activities collectively as those that outwardly manifest resistance against local governance by a portion of the indigenous population. This doctrine characterized irregular activities as those that incorporated a range of acts to include military, political, psychological, and economic. It identified growth and success of the irregular force as being dependent on the support of the population. [2] FM 31-15 identified possible

ideological foundations for the insurgent force and causes for large-scale resistance. The manual accurately identified the six factors that most influence dissatisfaction among the population is centered on (1) national independence, (2) relief from perceived oppression, (3) elimination of foreign occupation or exploitation, (4) economic and social improvement, (5) elimination of corruption, and (6) religious expression. [3] While the doctrine does not use the term *counterinsurgent,* it makes reference to operations against the irregular force, which is synonymous with current terminology. It identifies four essential tasks that are paramount to defeating the irregular force.[4]

(1) The establishment of an effective intelligence system to furnish detailed, accurate, and current knowledge of the irregular force.

(2) The physical separation of guerrilla elements from each other, their support base in the local population, under-ground elements, and any sponsoring power.

(3) The destruction of irregular force elements by the defection, surrender, capture, or death of individual members**.**

(4) The provision of political, economic, and social necessities and the ideological reeducation of dissident elements of the population to prevent resurgence of the irregular force.

Field Circular (FC) 100-20 (Internal Defense and Development), was the U.S. Army Doctrine, in 1974 that provided basic principles for operations at the low end of the spectrum of conflict. It specifically defined insurgency as "an attempt by an organized group to overthrow a constituted government through subversion and armed conflict. The motivations of the organized group can be many and varied, but almost certainly their goals include seizure of power. All insurgencies will not fit a clearly

established pattern. Some are highly charged by religious or ethnic divisions and rooted in long standing emotional issues. Some are motivated by objectives such as separatism, local autonomy, or economic issues."[5] Assessing lessons learned from Vietnam, the doctrine evolved slightly to more accurately reflect contributing environmental conditions that have the potential to lead to unrest among a nation's population. Those conditions include (1) a population expanding more rapidly than economic growth, (2) drastically low educational levels, (3) inadequate technical skills and technological know-how, (4) primitive agriculture, (5) lack of investment capital, (6) control of capital assets by foreign nations, (7) lack of raw materials, (8) a small or nonexistent industrial base, (9) elites unwilling to share or give up any power, and (10) an inefficient, sometimes corrupt, government. [6]

Current COIN doctrine, Department of Defense Joint Publication 1-02, JP 3-24, and Army FM 3-24, defines insurgency as "the organized use of subversion and violence by a group or movement that seeks to overthrow or force change of a governing authority. Insurgency can also refer to the group itself."[7] Most recently, the U.S. Army produced the successor to FM 3-24, FM 3-24.2 (Tactics in Counterinsurgency), which combines "the historic approaches to COIN with the realities of today's operational environment."[8] Current doctrine shares similarities to its preceding versions in that the doctrine advocates that revolutionary situations may result from regime changes, external interventions, or grievances carefully nurtured and manipulated by unscrupulous leaders. At times societies are most prone to unrest when the conditions begin to improve and people's expectations rise. If resulting conditions fall short of expectations, the resulting discontent can fuel unrest and sometimes lead to

insurgency. Current doctrine also suggests that the influences of globalization, which is addressed later, and the international media may create a sense of relative deprivation, contributing to increased discontent.[9]

While each evolution of doctrine is reflective of the existing operational and strategic environment (see Figure 1), and each has specific changes from the previous versions, they all share four commonalities regarding the causes of insurgency: (1) governance usually centered around corruption or power sharing, (2) religious or ethnic fracturing, (3) opposition to foreign intervention, and (4) societal struggles including, but not limited to education, over population, weak industrial base, and primitive agriculture. It is arguable that current COIN doctrine is the most comprehensive version ever developed. However, inconsistent application across time and space has proven to produce mixed results.
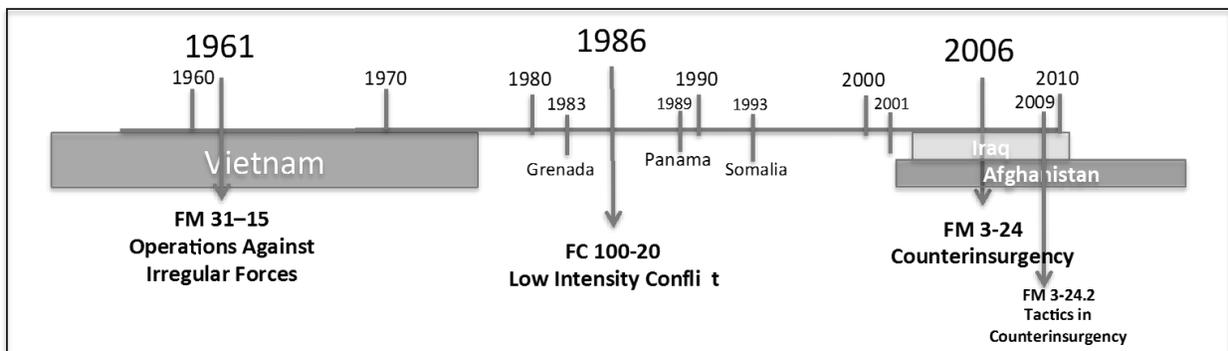
Figure 1. Counterinsurgency Doctrine Evolution

Insurgency / Counterinsurgency Theory and Principles

While the doctrine has evolved over time, the agreed upon center of gravity for all insurgencies is the population. Population as the center of gravity traces back to the theory and principles identified by Chinese theorist Mao Tse-tung and French theorist David Galula. Understanding Mao's and Galula's theories and principles are essential because the current doctrine's foundation is infused with the Galula's theories and

principles and his theory of COIN was founded on his study of Mao. It is equally important to understand the environment and context that influenced them.

Mao Tse-tung was witness to a nation that was characterized by intense turbulence. China suffered from humiliating Western rule, widespread government corruption, meddlesome international influences, and a collapsed imperial system. From 1916 to 1927, China was torn by civil war following the death of president Yuan Shikai due to various warlords' attempts to claim dominance. In 1928 the Nationalist Party seized control of the country and declared Chiang Kai-Shek its new leader. While the new leader initially allied himself with the communist, he remained aware that the single biggest threat to the Nationalist Party was the Communists. Over the next five years, the Nationalist Party waged a campaign that led to communist defeat and the Communists forced to retreat to the countryside, where there was growing peasant unrest and thus a potential base of support for an insurgency. It was against this backdrop that Mao, a Communist Party member since 1921, came to power. Mao believed that the urban-based proletariat had insufficient strength to defeat a more robust, rural, warlord driven based force.[10]

Mao realized that Chinese revolutionary strength resided in the millions of peasants who lived throughout the massive countryside, and that China's social structure and industrial based workers did not present a viable threat if the peasants could be properly organized. It was during the early stages of the communist revolution that Mao's thoughts evolved. "He did not see revolution as a spasm created by an urban proletariat that overthrows the government. He saw it as a political struggle where he must pay attention to maintaining goodwill of the people."[11] As an active army

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commander he routinely sought ways to improve effectiveness of his force. He understood two essential elements were required to ensure survivability and long-term success of the peasant revolutionary force: (1) avoid direct confrontation of a superior force, and (2) peasants needed to win. Mao and his co-commander, Zhu De, developed a simple strategic approach to these two elements and summed it up in a folk rhyme that was polarizing throughout the Red Army. The sixteen-character strategy simple stated:

> Di jin, wo tui, [When the] enemy advances, we withdraw,
> Di jiu, wo roa, [When the] enemy rests, we harass,
> Di pi, wo da, [When the] enemy tires, we attack,
> Di tui, wo jui, [When the] enemy withdraws, we pursue.[12]

The communist COIN against the Nationalists ended briefly with renewed alliance against a common enemy, Japan. A year after defeat of the invading Japanese in 1937, revolutionary hostilities were renewed between Nationalists and Communists. By then, Mao's Red Army had expanded to between 500,000 and one million troops. However, by October 1949 the Mao led Communist insurgency had chased the Nationalists off the mainland to the island of Taiwan. Mao became chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, chief of state of the new People's Republic of China, and chairman of the military commission that controlled the People's Liberation Army.[13] Following his successful campaign to rid the country of the Nationalists movement, he codified his winning strategy into his famous writing Yui Chi Chan (Guerrilla Warfare).[14]

In his writings, Mao identifies three phases and six principles that must be adopted by the insurgent or guerilla force before the goal of self-preservation and enemy destruction can be achieved. The three phases include: (1) Insurgent concentration on building political strength, while military action is limited to selective

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kinetic action. All actions, whether political or military, are designed to solidify the population's support. (2) The insurgent gains strength and consolidates control of its base areas. They begin to administer in portions of the contested area, and conduct military operations to capture arms and wear down government forces. (3) The insurgent commits regular forces in a final offensive against the government.[15] Mao's guiding principles include "(1) the use of initiative, flexibility and planning in conducting offensives within the defensive, battles of quick decision within protracted war, and exterior-line operations within interior-line operations; (2) co-ordination with regular warfare; (3) establishment of base areas; (4) the strategic defensive and the strategic offensive; (5) the development of guerrilla warfare into mobile warfare; and (6) correct relationship of command."[16]

During the insurgent strategic defense stage, the insurgency defends itself and its bases from attack by the counterinsurgent force. Throughout the defensive, the insurgent continues to conduct civil actions to win popular support, while also conducting counter attacks against the attacking counterinsurgent. When the counterinsurgent resolves to be strategically defensive, the insurgent shifts to the offensive. During this insurgent strategic offensive stage, the insurgency continues its actions to win popular support while increasing the attacks upon counterinsurgent troops and infrastructure to reduce governmental legitimacy. When the government has been put on the defensive, and the insurgency has fully mobilized, the insurgency enters the final stage-Mobile Warfare. It is during the mobile warfare stage that the insurgency transitions from guerilla tactics to conventional military operations. Essential to the transition is building a robust formation of well-trained fighters. A byproduct of

winning support of the population is the ability to mobilize the people to join the armed forces. Aside from recruiting, organizing the regular force is accomplished by merging small guerilla units, improving training, and acquiring improved weapon systems.[17] Mao's strategy for waging insurgency served as the backdrop for the French theorist, David Galula, theory of COIN.

While a student at France's St. Cyr military academy, David Galula's academic studies likely included France's long history of colonial warfare, which included France's 132 years of Algerian occupation.[18] Dating back to 1830, the French monarchy made the decision to invade Algeria for the purpose of distracting disgruntled French citizens. Under French rule, local Algerian economies were disrupted, and the French government dismantled Islamic institutions, schools, and charitable foundations. French efforts set the conditions for the development of an effective Algerian resistance that lasted 17 years. In the early 1900s, Algerian nationalism began to spread, and by 1945, the political environment had become polarized, with increasing calls for the formation of an independent Arab and Islamic state. Political negotiations with the French led to the brutal war of Algerian War of Independence in 1954, which lasted eight years. In March 1962, the French government accepted a cease-fire, and in July 1962 the Algerian people voted for independence.[19] Galula's contribution to the French war included serving as a spy in Tangier, Morocco until the Allies conquered Casablanca in November 1942. Shortly after Galula returned to the ranks of the French regular Army, he worked for a senior French officer who would eventually be assigned to Beijing as a military attaché. In 1945 during the final months of the reign of Adolf Hitler, Galula served at the behest of his former commander as one of three officers advising the

French military attaché in China. It was during his time in China that Galula became fascinated with the theories of Mao Tse-tung. He knew he had to understand the teachings of Mao and the strategic mindset of the insurgent in order to oppose them. The Chinese focus on indoctrination made a lasting impression on Galula, and so did their [Chinese] awareness of the need to be-friend the local populace.[20] In concert with the lessons learned from French defeat in North Africa, and teachings of Mao, Galula's studies led him to develop principles and strategy for defeating an insurgency, which, unbeknownst to him at the time, would be used in the development of U.S. COIN strategy in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Galula's Principles of COIN warfare include: [21]

(1) The support of the population is as necessary for the counterinsurgent as for the insurgent.

(2) Support is gained through an active minority.

(3) Support from the population is conditional.

(4) Intensity of efforts and vastness of means are essential.

Galula's strategy for defeating an insurgency includes:[22]

(1) Concentrate enough armed forces to destroy or to expel the main body of armed insurgents.

(2) Detach from the area sufficient troops to oppose an insurgent's comeback in strength, install these troops in the hamlets, villages, and towns where the population lives.

(3) Establish contact with the population; control its movements in order to cut out its links with the guerrillas.

(4) Destroy the local insurgent political organizations.

(5) Set up, by means of elections, new provisional local authorities.

(6) Test these authorities by assigning them various concrete tasks. Replace the softs and the incompetents; give full support to the active leaders. Organize self-defense units.

(7) Group and educate the leaders in a national political movement.

(8) Win over or suppress the last insurgent remnants.

Theorists' Environment vis-à-vis the Contemporary Counterinsurgency Environment

Mao and Galula's view of the operating environment was significantly different from the current operational environment. Mao and Galula were products of nations that either waged colonialism or were the recipient of dictator rule and oppression. Each witnessed gluttonous monarchies that possessed strong armies challenged by polarizing discontent elements of a disgruntled population. In each case, whether insurgent or counterinsurgent, influencing elements were contained within the territorial boundaries of a particular country.

Even though elements of Maoist insurgency principles still exist today, in the post-Mao era of insurgency there are several distinct characteristics that changed the way COIN warfare is waged.

(1) Post-Maoist insurgents are likely to rise from a global movement and are part of a global community and not simply a local community defined by territory.

(2) Post-Maoist insurgents establish long-term objectives that are sometimes intangible and unrealistic. They seek international attention and recognition through highly visible violent attacks.

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(3) Post-Maoist insurgents are comprised of cultures and nationalities that span far beyond tribal and territorial boundaries.

(4) Post-Maoist insurgents' campaign objectives reside in the cognitive dimension of the individual insurgent and their activism. The human domain of the insurgent is influenced through propaganda and media.[23]

The contemporary COIN environment that the post-Maoist insurgent operates is influenced by several factors (see Figure 2) that were limited, or non-existent, during the colonial period of Mao and Galula. These elements, or spoilers, include criminals, foreign fighters, religious fundamentalists, the Internet, safe havens, proxy states, and tribes. While all of these spoilers do not necessarily pose a negative effect on the counterinsurgent force, they can significantly influence the ways and means that COIN is waged. These elements of the current environment significantly changed how we view insurgency / COIN warfare.
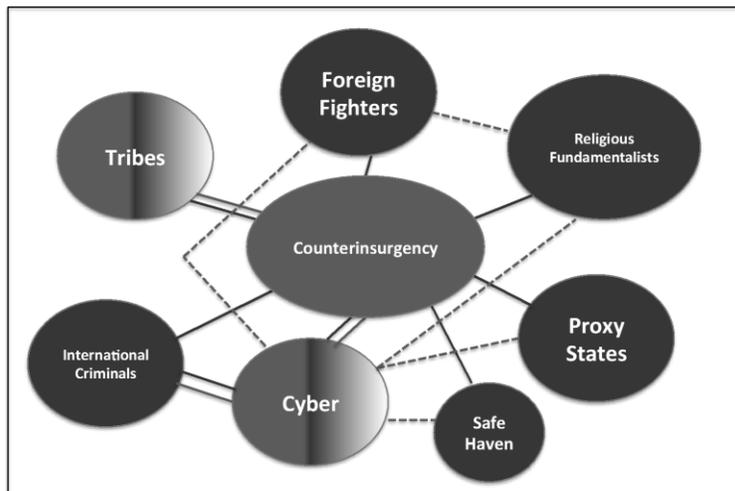

Figure 2. Post-Maoist Counterinsurgency Environment

Spoilers

Insurgency warfare, like other types of warfare, has outlier participants. Outlier participants are conflict participants who are fighting for reasons other than the original

cause of the conflict. In the case of insurgencies, outliers serve as spoilers of potential conflict termination for both insurgency and COIN. Foreign fighters from neighboring countries (Syrian, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, etc) are present in ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. These outside participants have varying motivations for participating, but most are arguably seeking armed conflict with Americans and their allies. While some are participants by coercion and intimidation, the vast majority are volunteers who are driven by ideology. The other element of conflict that is often consumed by the overarching concept of insurgency is criminal activity. Insurgent battlefields are fertile environments for domestic and international organized crime. Victims of criminal activity are not reserved for the counterinsurgent force. Organized crime actively targets both the insurgency and counterinsurgent solely for the purpose of competitive advantage within the criminal community.

Stephen Stedman, Senior Fellow at the Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law, identifies three types of spoilers (total spoilers, greedy spoilers, and limited spoilers,) who all pose different threats to the peace process. "Total spoilers are irreconcilably opposed to any compromise peace; any commitment to peace by a total spoiler is a tactical move to gain advantage in a struggle to the death. Limited spoilers can conceivably be included in peace processes, if other parties to the conflict can accommodate their limited nonnegotiable demands. Greedy spoilers can be accommodated in peace processes if their limited goals are met and high costs constrain them from making added demands."[24] Other spoilers offered for consideration include tribes, globalization, and religious fanaticism.

Tribal Impact on Counterinsurgency Warfare

Although other historical examples likely exist to prove the positive and negative

impact of tribes on COIN operations, this research focuses on the most recent

campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. As evidentiary by the tactical successes in Iraq

between 2006 and 2008, tribes have significant influence on the conduct of COIN

operations. The Anbar Awakening in Iraq proved instrumental in local Iraqis assuming

responsibility for ridding their communities of violent extremists. Personal experiences

at the tactical level show that tribal leadership is more effective at building consensus

among the population than any other method that is led by non-tribal influences. So,

why did the same techniques not prove successful in Afghanistan?

The difference between the Anbar Awakening in Iraq where tribes assumed

responsibility for security and ridded their neighborhoods of extremists, and the Taliban

in Afghanistan is that the tribal elites in Iraq asked for assistance from coalition forces.[25]

Since 2007, U.S. forces have employed teams of anthropologists who enter information

about local tribal culture and authority structures into a collaborative database.[26]

However, it was not until 2009, more than eight years after the initial invasion into

Afghanistan, that senior commanders began to focus on understanding the tribal

influences. General Stanley McCrystal, U.S. and NATO forces commander in 2009, said

he was just beginning to increase intelligence collection to understand the dynamics of

the various tribes to help identify local power brokers who could engage with coalition

forces on a regular basis.[27] David Kilcullen, former senior COIN advisor to General

David Petraeus in Iraq and advisor to General Stanley McCrystal in Afghanistan,

advocates that "it is important to remember…that population groups in a traditional

society exercise choices collectively, not individually…choices tend to reflect group

consensus…[and] this tendency is even more pronounced in tribal societies under the stress of insurgency."[28] After more than six years of protracted conflict in the region, it became obvious that tribes possessed a significant amount of influence, and in some cases, more than the elected officials. It is evident that leaders from the tactical through the strategic levels of command understand the impact tribes have on operations, but it takes a significant portion of an operational deployment to gain an understanding of the tribal influences in a particular region. Tribal influences can offer tactical advantages to both the insurgent and counterinsurgent. If the tribe(s) are sympathetic to the insurgent cause, then arguably, it is likely impossible for the counterinsurgent to gain a competitive advantage in that particular region. Conversely, the same can be said if the tribe(s) is sympathetic toward the counterinsurgent. While not clearly identifiable by outsiders, tribal boundaries should be considered just as significant as geographic boundaries drawn on a map. The challenge for both the insurgent and counterinsurgent is to determine who among the tribes are most influential and build trust and develop ways to influence them.

<div align="center">Religious Fundamentalists</div>

History shows that Islamic religion and ideology, and technology have a profound effect on the outcome on insurgent and counterinsurgent warfare. Similar to many other religions, Islamic teachings do not advocate meaningless violence, yet extremists who operate on the outer edge of the spectrum leverage strict interpretations of the teachings of the Qur'an and prey on the disenfranchised elements of Islamic society. Robert Springborg, Professor in the Department of National Security Affairs of the Naval Postgraduate School and Program Manager for the Middle East for the Center for Civil-Military Relations in a statement to the British Foreign Affairs Committee at the House of

<div align="center">14</div>

Commons asserted that U.S. and British leaders "had blurred the distinctions between the different forms of Islam which happened to operate together in the same country."[29] Dr. Springborg further emphasizes that there are three categories of interests among the various Islamic groups, and each has a different impact on COIN strategy. The first category is "global insurgents or transnational jihadists who believe that the resuscitation of the state was inherently in opposition to their concept of Islam."[30] These globalized insurgents', jihadists', or total spoilers motivations are rooted in their interpretation of their religion.

Amritha Venkatraman of the Delhi Policy Group explains the manner in which religion can cause the emergence of Islamic violence. Even though he does not provide a comparison between Islam and other religions when evaluating the impact of Islam on violent Jihad, he suggests that a religious premises exists for violent Jihad in the eyes of a Muslim; a perspective that is nearly impossible for a non-Muslim to imagine. The religious basis for Islamic terrorism is primarily found when extreme interpretations of the Qur'an's tenets on violence and revivalism are directed toward obtaining an equally radical version of revivalism in specific geopolitical conditions.[31]

According to the Qur'anic principle of jihad, "terrorists emphasize the Qur'an's tenets on violence and revivalism in their religious interpretations and present it as a legitimate foundation for the use of violent aggression."[32] The Qur'an recognizes three types of jihad for this purpose. They include: "internal, external, and inter-communal."[33] "The Quran permits the use of violence as an optional method for all three forms of Jihad, but it limits the use of violence in "internal" and "external" Jihad."[34] Specifically, the Qur'an states, "if two parties of the believers quarrel, make ye peace between them.

Then if one of them does wrong to the other, fight that which does wrong, till it return to

Allah's command. Then, if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act

equitably."[35] However, it also states, "a believer would not kill a believer except by

mistake. And he who kills a believer by mistake should free a believing slave, and blood

money should be paid to his people unless they remit it as alms."[36] Ironically, the Qur'an

allows inter-tribal violence in order to remedy intra-societal problems that might interfere

with the Islamic law and well being of Islamic society. "The most indispensable

prerequisite in the Qur'an's dialogue on violence is that, force should be used only when

the Shariat has been violated and needs to be persevered as the very work of God

Himself."[37] An extremist believer might consider tacit support to non-Muslims on Islamic

soil as cause to wage inter-communal Jihad.

Islamic violent extremists are able to legitimize their movement as an act of

violent jihad permitted by the Qur'an essentially because of religious sanctions that

permit the use of violence as an act of defense and to preserve the will of God in Islamic

communities. The method of attack used by extremists has also evolved over time.

Islamic jihadists have adopted the use of suicide bombers, which is similar to sacrificial

methods used by other non-Islamic extremists. James Dingley from Northern Light

Review in Belfast, Ireland investigated the motivations of suicide bombers and hunger

strikers through reference to their social environment to provide an understanding of

why and how the human body is used as a terminal weapon and how to respond to it.

Dingley's works focused primarily on the hunger strikes, but with inference that suicide

bombers may be understood in a similar way, because they also use their bodies as the

prime weapon. Understanding self-sacrifice like hunger strikes and suicide bombers is

important because this is a recurring tactic in many conflicts. A human sacrifice tactic surprises and offends the sensibilities of most-Western civilizations and their concepts of legitimate violence.[38] Western inabilities to understand human sacrifice further serves to erode public support for continued COIN operations. Human sacrifice also serves to demonstrate the commitment that an insurgency will undertake to achieve tactical and strategic success.

Meir Litvak, Department of Middle Eastern History at Tel Aviv University, analyzed the concept of martyrdom by the Islamic Resistance Movement of Palestine, Hamas, as a central pillar of Palestinian identity and as a major source of political mobilization and national empowerment. Like many other extremist groups in the Middle East and East Asian countries, Hamas presents martyrdom as the epitome of jihad and of Islamic belief. Litvak goes further by analyzing the concept of jihad as it relates to offensive and defensive movements. Islamic legal doctrine recognizes two types of Jihad: (1) offensive jihad, "whose goal is to expand the territory ruled by Islamic law"[39], and (2) defensive jihad whose goal is to protect existing possessions of Islamic rule from Zionist, or Western influence.[40] Hamas regards the jihad against Israel as defensive for two reasons: the first is what it sees as the usurpation of Palestine and the dispossession of its true inhabitants, the Muslim Palestinians, by the Zionists. Litvak suggests that martyrdom, according to Hamas, is a means of waging jihad that results in an honorable death bestowed by God and eternal pleasures in the afterlife. Litvak declares, "The Palestinian Muslim Brethren (MB) concluded that educational jihad and the return of the Muslim masses to true Islam were the essential preconditions for any confrontation with Zionism."[41] Even though the MB throughout all Arab nations advocate

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a rigid, and uncompromising deportment against the existence of Israel, "they view the loss of Palestine in 1948 primarily as a symptom of a deeper moral and social disorder within the Islamic world that stemmed from the abandonment of Islam and the adoption of Western ideologies and culture."[42]

"While Hamas is a modern Islamist movement, it makes a great effort to ground its concept of jihad in the teachings of the great scholars of traditional Islam in order to acquire greater religious legitimacy and respectability."[43] Hamas defends its commitment to jihad by referencing numerous and "explicit passages in the Qur'an and numerous references in the hadith (traditions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad). These references discuss jihad and prove "beyond any doubt" that it is a duty (wujub) incumbent on the Muslims, and not simply a permissible principle (ibaha). Therefore, laxity in the practice of jihad is viewed as reprehensible (munkar)."[44] Islamic teachings dictate offensive jihad as a collective duty of all Muslims, yet requires only a sufficient, albeit indeterminate, number of Muslims to take part. Sufficient participation suffices to fulfill the obligation for all Muslims.[45]

Osama Bin Laden's messages to his faithful followers were rooted in the teachings of his mentor Abdallah 'Azzam. Azzam advocated "that any land that was once under Muslim rule, but was subsequently lost to the infidels, should be restored to Islam only through jihad."[46] He also asserts that it is the individual duty of every Muslim to wage jihad until Muslim rule is restored.[47] "Islamic conquest, in the eyes of Islamists, represents the implementation of a divine ordinance thereby commanding believers to bring the divine message to those who have not yet received it. Islam, they purport, resorts to jihad only when it is required to remove the obstacles that impede the

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transmission of God's message. Infidels who oppose by force the genuine, well-meaning attempt to offer them Islamic justice, in other words, to place them under the rule of Islam, are in fact the aggressors, and the jihad against them becomes a defensive measure."[48]

Globalization of Insurgency

Arguably, the most influential element of post-Mao insurgencies is the ability of an insurgency to attain global reach through the use of technology and decentralized planning and execution. "The basic organizational units of global jihad are small. It is not a territorial constituent with a high volume of support that forms the basis of global jihad, not an ethnic group, not a religious denomination, of the population of a particular patch of land, and not a nation on its way to liberation-its core building blocks are small groups of like-minded, but diverse individuals who become radicalized among peers, in universities, prisons, mosques, sports clubs, and neighborhoods. Once radicalized and excluded from the mainstream, the bonds to peers become more intense as in-group pressure mounts, and they may be further forged on trips abroad to study Arabic, learn the "true" Islam, or undergo military training in a camp."[49]

It is not debatable that the ways which warfare is waged has evolved. Colonel Thomas Hammes, USMC, states in his book "*The Sling and The Stone"* revolutionary adversaries have shifted away from total destruction of their enemy's armed forces through the use of force, to one of changing the minds of their enemy's political decision makers through the use of information. Colonel Hammes accurately assesses that today's revolutionary soldiers have demonstrated success against forces that are more technologically advanced, and more militarily powerful.[50] Modern day insurgents, terrorists, and spoilers alike have significantly benefited from their expansive use of

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technology from the local through the global level. Locally in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, insurgents maximize the use of commercially produced communications systems that allow them to coordinate their efforts to kinetically engage counterinsurgents forces. The advent of the Internet has facilitated insurgent ability to recruit sympathizers from across their nation and around the world. Operating within the cyber domain gives the contemporary insurgent the ability to reach virtually beyond their borders which enhances their ability to influence perceptions of their cause, increases their ability to learn new tactics and techniques, and wage an information campaign that capitalizes on their successes and magnify COIN failures. Insurgent responses to counterinsurgent acts are almost immediate and far-reaching, as exemplified in a recent article in the Canadian Press. In response to Canadian forces withdrawal from the war in Afghanistan, The Canadian Press stated the Taliban expressed victory in their statement that said, "Your sacrifices have brought us freedom. The beacons of your blood have lit the way to independence. Celebrate the victory and freedom from the Canadians."[51] The insurgency has the capability to exploit COIN mishaps (collateral damage against civilians and civil infrastructure), and conduct a misinformation campaign on a global scale throughout the cyber domain. While the U.S. strives to dominate just as effectively in the cyber domain as it does in the other domains, defeat is unlikely in the near-term. Aggressive investment in offensive and defensive cyber capability is required to stay ahead of the continuous evolution of the insurgent's cyber capacity to disrupt his ability to operate globally.

Safe Haven

Every country is divided for administrative and military purposes into provinces, states, counties, districts, zones, etc. "Border areas are a source of weakness for the

counterinsurgent, whatever his administrative structures, and this advantage is usually

exploited by the insurgent. By moving from one side of the border to the other, the

insurgent is often able to complicate operations for the counterinsurgent. Long borders,

particularly if the neighbouring countries are sympathetic to the insurgents, as was the

case in Greece, Indochina, and Algeria, favour the insurgent."[52] Current doctrine,

specifically FM 3-24, defines sanctuary as a term that is constantly evolving. Safe

havens were once only considered physical areas, such as bases, but today's

insurgents also draw on cyber sanctuaries on the Internet, global financial systems, and

the international media. These virtual sanctuaries are used to try to make insurgent

actions seem acceptable to internal and external audiences. As previously mentioned, a

robust COIN cyber capability is needed to counter the insurgent's capacity and disrupt

his freedom of movement throughout the cyber domain.

In the case where an insurgency is operating in a predominately Islamic country,

particularly Afghanistan and Iraq, geography plays a significant role in the strategic plan

for the insurgent. Iraq is land locked by other Muslim countries like Iran, Saudi Arabia,

Kuwait, Jordan, Syria, and Turkey. Afghanistan is land locked by Iran, Pakistan,

Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. Insurgencies in both countries receive

relatively unlimited support from state or non-state sponsors of terrorism disguised as

supporters of defenders of Islamic land. Support comes in the form of safe havens,

freedom of movement and freedom to plan and launch attacks before returning to the

safety of the border country. FM 3-24 states "sanctuaries in neighboring countries

provided insurgents places to rebuild and reorganize without fear of counterinsurgent

interference. However, modern target acquisition and intelligence- gathering technology

make insurgents in isolation, even in neighboring states, more vulnerable than those hidden among the population. Thus, contemporary insurgencies often develop in urban environments, leveraging formal and informal networks for action."[53] This post-Mao era shift to the urban environment further strengthens the premise that the population is the center of gravity. Essentially, counterinsurgent forces have to contend with both the internal forces of the host nation and the outside influences from neighboring countries that have a stake in the success of the insurgent.

<center>Failure to Educate</center>

By the time some U.S. senior leaders began to understand the various dynamics of the COIN environment, and the current doctrine was published to the force, the insurgency campaign was underway in Iraq and Afghanistan. The force generation operational tempo was too rapid to allow leaders, tactical through strategic, to be properly educated by the professional military education system and reinserted into the operational environment. The failure, or unwillingness, of the most senior U.S. leaders (political and military) to recognize and acknowledge that an insurgency had developed, further led to the delay in educating the leaders at the operational and tactical level. The publication and practical application of the new doctrine occurred on the battlefields of the Middle East instead of the various schoolhouses where commissioned and noncommissioned officers receive formal training on the emerging doctrine. Additionally, instead of military organizations training for full spectrum operations, which include COIN, they were training to fight the last war, namely Operation Desert Storm. Large formations engaged one another in desert battles of the National Training Center, and the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. While at the Army's Joint Readiness Training Center, insurgency or low intensity conflict waged for merely a few days before

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returning to conventional warfare. At the operational and strategic level, the focus was much the same. In some cases, especially during surge operations in Iraq, U.S. military units at the brigade and below echelon barely had enough time following a deployment to reset their equipment, replace personnel shortages, and begin individual and collective training before they were deploying yet again. Officers and noncommissioned officers were delayed from attend professional military education (PME) courses due to critical positions they occupied in the deploying unit. The institutional arm of the military also suffered from a lack of experienced professionals who had firsthand familiarity with the COIN environment because they still resided in the operational force. The lessons learned at the operational and tactical level were captured in various forums (Center for Lessons Learned, RAND studies, unit standard operating procedures, BLOGS, etc), but junior leaders lacked synthesis of experience and structured learning received at the various PME institutions.

Inconsistent Application

During the years of persistent conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, force generation cycles directed 12-15 month deployments for Army brigade combat teams, and even shorter deployments for Marine Corps, and Air Force units, which meant continuous turnover of commanders over a long period. "The length of operational tours is affecting the success of counterinsurgency operations. Building trust with locals takes time, but if operational deployments are only from four to six months long, it cannot be expected that an adequate level of knowledge and respect between the main players can develop."[54]

Each operational rotation means altered perception, and new application of doctrine. This inconsistent application was apparent very early into the Iraq campaign.

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While working as part of General Casey's Multi-National Forces Iraq staff in 2005, U.S. Army Colonel William Hix and Colonel (Retired) Kalev Sepp visited with thirty-one American brigades, battalions, and regiments across the country to survey leader's knowledge of COIN. During their visits, they assessed that only twenty percent of the commanders understood counterinsurgency and were actually applying its principles. Sixty percent of the commanders seemed to understand COIN, but were challenged to understand how the doctrine equated to an actionable plan. The most challenging concept was delegating authority to junior officers and further entrusting Iraqi security forces. Most disturbing were the twenty percent of commanders who not only ignored the elements of the COIN campaign plan, but also were fueling the insurgency.[55] While mission command allows commanders the flexibility to operate within broad higher headquarters intent, it can lead to appropriate application in some areas, but not in others. Possible solutions to ensure long term application by the same leaders at every echelon, i.e. longer combat tours, is almost certain to incite vehement disapproval from the American people. This course of action means leaving service members deployed to combat theaters for years instead of months. While it was acceptable during World Wars I and II, today's society would baulk at the idea of servicemen and women being deployed in harm's way for several continuous years without coming home. The other course of action recommends abandoning mission command in exchange for directed course of tactical, operational and strategic warfare from the strategic level of command. This course is unfeasible, unreasonable, and untenable. Therefore, inconsistent application of doctrine will continue to result in unequal consequences

across the theater of war until leaders at every level are properly educated, trained, and most importantly, convinced that the doctrine actually works when properly applied.

Recommendations

Insurgencies will certainly exist into the foreseeable future, and will likely have evolved into more complex, and adaptive organizations. Just as the insurgencies and spoilers will evolve, U.S. COIN doctrine, education and training, and methods of execution must also evolve. The following are three broad recommendations that should be undertaken to better prepare the warfighter for the next COIN campaign.

The current doctrine is accurate in its assessment that the population is the center of gravity for both the insurgent and counterinsurgent force, and the strategic ends and means are appropriate. However, as the strategic and operational landscape is likely to change in the coming years, the doctrine should reflect the change, just as it has done in the past. FM 3-24.2 succeeds in its efforts to describe the operational environment of an insurgency and offers offensive and defensive considerations for the counterinsurgent force. Yet, the doctrine is tailored specifically for the tactical level organization and it makes assumptions that strategic level efforts will shape operational lines of effort. Successive versions of doctrine should reflect potential impact of the spoilers of instability and ways and means to counter their effects at the operational and strategic level. Doctrine must also reflect the ways to incorporate a whole of government approach to waging COIN. Caution should be taken to not use doctrine as a rigid roadmap to success because rigidity leads to inflexibility in an ambiguous environment.

The professional military education system should be refined to ensure our officers and noncommissioned officers are armed with the requisite cognitive skills and tools to assist them in functioning effectively in a complex and ambiguous environment

typically found in a COIN. The officer education system has already taken significant efforts to educate junior and senior officers at functional and joint courses. However, the noncommissioned officer education system curriculum is not commensurate with the officer education system curriculum. A significant amount of time is invested in the students who attend the Captains Career Courses, Command and General Staff College, and Senior Service Colleges. Conversely, only a fraction of the time spent educating commissioned officers is spent educating senior noncommissioned officers. Senior noncommissioned officers should have the same opportunities to conduct in-depth studies at the tactical through strategic level and return to the operational force with the requisite cognitive skills to operate, and advise the officer leaders in a complex and ambiguous environment.

Historically, doctrine is only formally taught at the various institutions, yet the majority of a leader's career is spent in the operational environment. It is recommended that an institutional bridging solution is developed to maintain those cognitive skills during the years between formal institutional learning. While the U.S. Army Forces Command is employing efforts to bridge the gap between times spent in operational units and times spent in resident institutional programs (Figure 3),[56] more effort is required to instill doctrine and lessons learned. Efforts to deploy mobile training teams to organizations preparing to deploy to the COIN operational environment is effective, but the educational bridging solution should be more frequent, mandatory, tailored and integrated in long-range training plans to refresh the doctrine taught at the various institutions, and capitalize on lessons learned and experiences of those who have recently returned from the operational theater.

Figure 3. FORSCOM Leader Toolbox

Next, all training environments should return to full spectrum operations, which includes COIN as a critical component. While most of the combat training centers (CTC) are transitioning back to full spectrum operations, it is recommended that brigades execute longer CTC rotations that begin at home station which should include developing an understanding of the operational environment (OE). By allowing leaders the time to develop an understanding of the OE, expectations are adequately managed to prevent an unrealistic level of expectation of short-term success since the effects of COIN efforts have a tendency to take years, not months, to metastasize into quantifiable measure of effectiveness.

While the development of regionally aligned forces is an attempt to build regional expertise among operational units, personnel need repeat operational tours in those same organizations. Combatant and operational commanders are encouraged to assign habitual battlespace to the same organizations. The relationships developed throughout an operational deployment can be continuously cultivated with repeat assignments of units to the same operational area. The force generation model (train-deploy-redeploy-

reset) used for more than a decade had relatively short transitional processes. The relief in place processes should be a much longer process that begins several months before the next operational deployment. Some units execute this better than others, namely special operations forces, but the same should be mandated for conventional forces.

Conclusion

The execution of current U.S. COIN doctrine is insufficient in a war where spoilers, especially those who are driven by ideology, are infused with an insurgency that has alternative goals. However, the ways are inconsistent across time and space. At the tactical and operational level significant reforms and investments are needed in COIN doctrine evolution, leader education and training, and execution. If the military is going to be successful on the future COIN battlefield, leaders at every echelon must be properly educated with doctrine that has evolved with the environment, training environments must reflect the actual operational environment, and execution must be consistent throughout the OE over a prolonged span of time.

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