

# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

*Form Approved*  
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 04-05-2009		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> Final Draft		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> 30JAN09-03MAY09	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> Go/ No-Go Criteria for the JFC in Counterinsurgency Operations.				<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b>  George M Lowe, LCDR, USN  Paper Advisor: Professor Carrington				<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b>  Joint Military Operations Department Naval War College 686 Cushing Road Newport, RI 02841-1207				<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b>				<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>	
				<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited.					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> A paper submitted to the Naval War College faculty in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Joint Military Operations Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b>  In determining whether or not the U.S. government should engage in counterinsurgency operations with military support, the Joint Force Commander should evaluate four criteria before committing forces. The first is an attainable agreed upon desired end state. The second is the host nation's willingness to address the grievances of the population. The third is the host nation's ability to provide security for the population. The fourth is the host nation's ability to collect intelligence on the insurgency. What the JFC should evaluate is the host nation's potential capability in each of these areas if properly trained or mentored. Current counterinsurgency doctrine does not look at the four criteria mentioned above as go/no-go criteria. The single most important factor in a counterinsurgency operation is the affected government. The JFC should look for the least intrusive means possible to support the host nation in any counterinsurgency operation. True counterinsurgency success lies with the host nation's willingness to provide for their people through sound governance.					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Counterinsurgency, Joint Force Commander, Host Nation, Desired End State, Security, Intelligence					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b> UNCLASSIFIED			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>  19	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b> Chairman, JMO Dept
<b>a. REPORT</b> UNCLASSIFIED	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b> UNCLASSIFIED	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b> UNCLASSIFIED			<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)</b> 401-841-3556

**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R.I.**

**Go/ No-Go Criteria for the Joint Force Commander in Counterinsurgency Operations**

by

**George M Lowe**

**LCDR USN**

**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**04 May 2009**

## Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Discussion/analysis	2
Counter Argument	10
Conclusion	12
Recommendation	13
Bibliography	16

## **Abstract**

In determining whether or not the U.S. government should engage in counterinsurgency operations with military support, the Joint Force Commander (JFC) should evaluate four criteria before committing forces. The first is an attainable agreed upon desired end state. The second is the host nation's willingness to address the grievances of the population. The third is the host nation's ability to provide security for the population. The fourth is the host nation's ability to collect intelligence on the insurgency. What the JFC should evaluate is the host nation's potential capability in each of these areas if properly trained or mentored. Current counterinsurgency doctrine does not look at the four criteria mentioned above as go/no-go criteria. The single most important factor in a counterinsurgency operation is the affected government. The JFC should look for the least intrusive means possible to support the host nation in any counterinsurgency operation. True counterinsurgency success lies with the host nation's willingness to provide for their people through sound governance.

## INTRODUCTION

The United States has been involved in counterinsurgency since the U.S. was formed. Although the ultimate decision for U.S. involvement in counterinsurgency operations is political<sup>1</sup>, the Department of Defense (DOD) historically has played a significant role in nearly all these operations. Since the U.S. engagement in Afghanistan and Iraq, much has been written about counterinsurgency operations and its link to counterterrorism. The services themselves have rewritten Field Manuals, such as the United States Department of the Army *Field Manual 3-24*, that concentrates on service capabilities and tactical employment. Additionally, the recent U.S. Government *Counterinsurgency Guide* highlights the necessity and tasks for interagency partners in the counterinsurgency realm. Little has been written however, at the Operational or Joint Force Commander (JFC) level to guide commanders when to employ forces and when to caution senior leaders about military involvement.

The thesis of this paper is that the JFC should evaluate four go/no-go criteria in counterinsurgency operations before committing forces to the affected nation. While not all encompassing, these four criteria, when analyzed, will provide insight into the greatest probability for success for the JFC. These four criteria were chosen because they stand the test of time, and will be relevant for decades to come. The four criteria are; attainable desired end state agreed upon by all U.S. Government departments; host nation willingness to address the populations' grievances; host nation ability to provide security; and host nation ability to collect intelligence on the insurgency. The counter argument for this paper

---

<sup>1</sup> United States Government *Counterinsurgency Guide*, (January 2009): Preface (paragraph 6), <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf> (downloaded 01 February 2009)

highlights that current U.S. doctrine does not evaluate the four criteria listed above as a go/no-go decision. This paper will not address transnational counterinsurgency dynamics or their complexities. This paper assumes that the U.S. Government has full consent from the host nation to aid in the counterinsurgency operation.

Insurgencies will continue to be a prominent security concern for the United States in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.<sup>2</sup> “While the possibility of conventional conflict remains, the fact is that, at the moment, the main powers of the international system are deeply reluctant to engage in it. Insurgency however, can and will flourish in the modern environment. The strains created by globalization, by the collapse of weak state structures, by demographic, environmental and economic pressure, by the ease of cooperation by insurgent groups and criminals, and by the appearance of destructive radical ideologies, all augur a period in which free and moderate governance is at risk.”<sup>3</sup> Two hundred plus years have paved the way for some basic assumptions in the way America engages in counter insurgency operations. Although necessary for success, the main effort is rarely military. The focus should be on the host nation, by, with, and through. A deep understanding of the people and their culture is essential. Finally, the U.S. government and the people of our nation must have the patience to persevere.<sup>4</sup>

## **DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS**

The first criteria the JFC should evaluate before committing forces to a counterinsurgency operation is an attainable desired end state that has been agreed upon by

---

<sup>2</sup> United States Government *Counterinsurgency Guide*, (January 2009): Preface (paragraph 5), <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf> (downloaded 01 February 2009)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, Preface (paragraph 5)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, Preface (paragraph 3)

all parties involved. The base of any sound military or government decision is a plan. In a military plan, tactical actions are developed to support operational objectives. These operational objectives must then support regional, theater, and strategic objectives. All must feed into the desired end state. All lower actions must support higher goals.

Destroying or expelling from an area the main body of the guerilla forces, preventing their return, installing garrisons to protect the population, tracking the guerilla remnants-these are predominantly military operations. Identifying, arresting, interrogating the insurgent political agents, judging them, rehabilitating those who can be won over-these are police and judicial tasks. Establishing contact with the population, imposing and enforcing control measures, organizing them into a party, doing all the constructive work needed to win the wholehearted support of the population-these are primarily political operations. The expected result-final defeat of the insurgents-is not addition but multiplication of these various operations; they all are essential and if one is nil, the product will be zero. Clearly, more than any other kind of warfare, counterinsurgency must respect the principle of a single direction.<sup>5</sup>

This single direction begins with the desired end state. The desired end state takes into account the diplomatic, military and economic actions that are to going to shape the environment for success.<sup>6</sup> In counterinsurgency operations, this desired end state also needs to take into account the host nation desires as well as the regional balance of power. It does little to defeat an insurgency in one country if by doing so the region is set up for a conventional conflict. "Defining the desired strategic end state requires a great deal of discussion among political and military leaders. Properly defined and understood, the desired strategic end state is the key prerequisite to determining the method, duration, and intensity of using one's available sources of military and nonmilitary power to accomplish a given military or theater strategic objective."<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Praeger, 1964), 87

<sup>6</sup> Milan Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare* (Newport: USNWC 2007), I-44

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, I-45

In counterinsurgency operations, the desired end state must also set the framework for determining when a strategy is successful and when the conditions are met for military withdrawal. Low-level insurgencies may continue in countries years after the main threat has been marginalized. However, international support for counterinsurgency operations will likely be linked to the main threat. Consequently, this means a counterinsurgency mission may end well before the insurgency is completely destroyed.<sup>8</sup> The JFC should discuss these issues with lead Department of Defense officials prior to getting involved in the counterinsurgency operation and throughout the conflict.

The U.S. government must never forget that the most important actor in a counterinsurgency operation is the host nation. The ultimate success of the counterinsurgency operation is only as good as the political strategy the host nation adopts.<sup>9</sup> Many times the U.S. Government's perception of the insurgency, host nation, and the host nation's population were not consistent with the people they were trying to help. The JFC should recognize the fact that his forces may be seen as the aggressor by both the insurgency and the host nation's general population. Any plan devised by the JFC should highlight that a truly effective strategy requires the main effort be the host nation themselves. This perception must resonate with the host nation's population as well as the insurgency.<sup>10</sup> This will go a long way to legitimizing the host nation government, one of the prerequisites for a successful counterinsurgency operation.

The second criteria the JFC should evaluate before getting involved in a counterinsurgency operation is the host nations willingness to address the grievances of the

---

<sup>8</sup> United States Government *Counterinsurgency Guide*, (January 2009): 16, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf> (downloaded 01 February 2009)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 29

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 29



population. While mainly a political question, the JFC should be intimately involved in determining this factor. “Where the security environment prevents U.S. civilian agencies from operating freely, the U.S. military may be required to provide extensive support to political, economic, and government efforts in there stead....Given the differences in risk acceptance and the large and enduring resource imbalance between civilian and military agencies this is simply a fact of life: officials and policy makers must plan accordingly.”<sup>11</sup>

The fact that an insurgency has taken hold in a country illustrates that the host nation is not adequately addressing all the needs of it’s own people. Additionally, the fact that the host nation has asked for foreign intervention highlights how desperate the situation has likely gotten. What the JFC should look for is a willingness in his host nation counterpart, and the political leadership of the host nation, to adopt measures that will get to the root of the insurgency. In most insurgencies the core grievances with the host nation are legitimate. The potential cost in U.S. lives is not worth the risk if the host nation is not willing to change.

If the host nation is willing to change, some guidelines should be followed to enhance the legitimacy of the government. The host nation needs to show their population that they are going to start addressing their needs. Since the political strategy is the key function in counterinsurgency operations, the JFC should support Department of State efforts to strengthen the host nation’s capacity and capability to respond (and be seen responding) to the needs of the people.<sup>12</sup> Political messages aimed at the host nation’s population should come from their own officials. The target audiences for each message should be analyzed as well as the medium for transmission. Additionally, an agreed upon measure of effectiveness should be adopted by both the host nation as well as forces supporting in the

---

<sup>11</sup> United States Government *Counterinsurgency Guide*, (January 2009): 24, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf> (downloaded 01 February 2009)

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 23-24

counterinsurgency operation. “Messages are delivered partly through media operations, but more prolifically and often more credibly through the thousands of daily interactions between the population, the government and the security forces. Every action in COIN sends a message, which means the words and deeds must be synchronized. Messages cannot simply be spin, they must be grounded in truth and reflect a genuine willingness on the part of the affected government to undertake real reforms that address it’s peoples needs”<sup>13</sup>

The third criteria the JFC should consider before committing U.S. forces to counterinsurgency operations is the host nations’ ability to provide security for the population. Security is more than ensuring physical violence is not occurring in a specific area. “The paramount concern is the absence of physical violence, but other relevant factors include maintenance of laws, the protection of human rights, freedom to conduct economic activity, public safety, and public health.”<sup>14</sup> This broader view of security is the foundation for counterinsurgency operations and an area DOD will be tasked to perform the majority of the functions. The JFC should evaluate what the host nation is currently providing, what coalition partners are willing to support with, and the capabilities the JFC currently has to use. The final objective for the JFC is to provide broad security and a similar standard of governance down to the local level.<sup>15</sup>

Physical security efforts must not focus to greatly on strengthening the military and police forces of the affected nation. Such capacity building should only be part of a broader process of Security Sector Reform (SSR), in which the whole system is developed, including the civil institutions that oversee the security forces and intelligence services, the legal framework and the justice institutions that implement it. It is particularly important that a sense of civil ownership and accountability should

---

<sup>13</sup> United States Government *Counterinsurgency Guide*, (January 2009): 20-21, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf> (downloaded 01 February 2009)

<sup>14</sup> Headquarters Department of The Army “FM 3-24” *Counterinsurgency* (December 2006): 1-24, <http://www.usgcoin.org/library/doctrine/COIN-FM3-24.pdf> (downloaded 20 February 2009)

<sup>15</sup> United States Government *Counterinsurgency Guide*, (January 2009): 22, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf> (downloaded 01 February 2009)

extend to the local level and that all elements of the security apparatus should be trusted by the population. Taking this broader view of security is very useful to countries engaged in counterinsurgency, since it links the reduction of violence to the improvement of many of the issues that are most important to a population. Indeed, effective SSR may address many of the grievances that initially fueled the insurgency.<sup>16</sup>

As soon as feasible, the JFC should shift from combat operations to law enforcement functions. This will help legitimize the host nation government and portray the insurgents as criminals instead of freedom fighters. Host nation forces must be used in both the combat operations and the policing action. Even if their capability is limited, the population should see the host nation forces out in front, with the U.S. and coalition playing a supporting role.<sup>17</sup> The JFC should also leverage the coalition partners when trying to reform the judicial system. While DOD has a robust capability to help the host nation military and to a lesser extent their police force, the DOD is very limited in its capacity to help assist in law making.<sup>18</sup> While the DOD may see the need for a secure physical environment as the first step in unsecured areas, other U.S. government agencies are cautious to use this approach. The JFC needs to understand the sequencing and synchronization of physical security with other factors that are in play in a particular area. “Unsecured areas provide particular challenges to many actors who are best able to remedy political and developmental deficiencies, but this does not mean that establishing security must be seen as a necessary precursor to economic and governance activity: rather, security, economic and political efforts should ideally be developed simultaneously.”<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> United States Government *Counterinsurgency Guide*, (January 2009): 22,

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf> (downloaded 01 February 2009)

<sup>17</sup> Headquarters Department of The Army “FM 3-24” *Counterinsurgency* (December 2006): 1-24,

<http://www.usgcoin.org/library/doctrine/COIN-FM3-24.pdf> (downloaded 20 February 2009)

<sup>18</sup> United States Government *Counterinsurgency Guide*, (January 2009): 23,

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf> (downloaded 01 February 2009)

<sup>19</sup> United States Government *Counterinsurgency Guide*, (January 2009): 23,

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf> (downloaded 01 February 2009)

Although every insurgency is different, insurgents historically have used four different tactics when trying to defeat security forces. The first is provocation. The goal of the insurgency in this tactic is to conduct some sort of perceived atrocity in order to get security forces to over react or act irrationally. The second tactic is intimidation. In this tactic the insurgents attacks local government officials trying to prevent them, or allowing those in their control to take action against the insurgents. The third tactic is protraction. The goal of the insurgent is to erode the political, and populace will of the governments involved in the counterinsurgency operation. The fourth tactic is exhaustion. In this tactic insurgents attack assets of the host nation government and the coalition in order to get them to partake in expensive security measures that are rarely effective.<sup>20</sup> The JFC needs to be aware of the tactics the insurgency is trying to employ so that he can best defend against it. More important, the soldiers and commanders he has deployed to the host nation need to be aware of potential traps the insurgents are trying to set. Over reacting to an insurgent attack could erode months or years of hard work in a particular area.

The fourth criteria the JFC should evaluate before becoming committed to a counterinsurgency operation is the host nation's ability to collect intelligence on the insurgency. "Without good intelligence, counterinsurgents are like blind boxers wasting energy flailing at unseen opponents and perhaps causing unintended harm. With good intelligence, counterinsurgents are like surgeons cutting out cancerous tissue while keeping other vital organs intact."<sup>21</sup> Since the U.S. is usually at a disadvantage compared to the insurgents when it comes understanding the host nation's culture, customs, and traditions, the

---

<sup>20</sup> United States Government *Counterinsurgency Guide*, (January 2009): 10-11, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf> (downloaded 01 February 2009)

<sup>21</sup> Headquarters Department of The Army "FM 3-24" *Counterinsurgency* (December 2006): 1-23, <http://www.usgcoin.org/library/doctrine/COIN-FM3-24.pdf> (downloaded 20 February 2009)

U.S. must rely on what the host nation is capable or willing to provide. Counterinsurgency intelligence must combine political, economic, socio-cultural, infrastructural, and environmental knowledge.<sup>22</sup> Unlike other military operations, the tactical operator must understand the operational and strategic intent of the insurgency. All forms of intelligence will be collected and analyzed in a counterinsurgency operation. Human intelligence, however, often makes the greatest contribution to success in counterinsurgency operations.<sup>23</sup> This factor illustrates why the host nation's ability to collect on the insurgency is so important. It takes many years to introduce, develop, and cultivate a robust HUMINT network. As the U.S. has found out over the past nine years, it often takes a network to defeat a network.

Insurgents require many things at different stages of their insurgency to make them sustainable and successful. "Insurgents require supporters, recruits, safe havens, money, supplies, weapons, and intelligence on government actions. A robust insurgency can be waged with the support of just a small percentage of a given population. From the remaining majority, insurgents only require compliance."<sup>24</sup> The population from which the insurgency thrives can be divided and subdivided into six categories. The first category is part of the population that is friendly to the host nation and supportive of their actions. This category can be subdivided into those that are supportive due to their position in society, economic status or connection to the current government and those that are supportive, but will move to a more neutral position if the host nation does not satisfy their particular needs. The second main category, which is the majority, are the people both neutral to the host nation

---

<sup>22</sup> United States Government *Counterinsurgency Guide*, (January 2009): 19, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf> (downloaded 01 February 2009)

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 19

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 19

government and the insurgency. Within this category you have those who provide passive support to both the host nation government and the insurgency. The final category comprises the population that is hostile to the host nation government. This is where the bulk of the active insurgency comes from. Within this category you have those that can be reconciled and those that are true believers in the cause. The only option for the host nation in dealing with the true believers is for the counterinsurgency to either arrest or kill them. All other categories should be closely monitored and, if needed, eventually folded back into productive society. In order for an insurgency to thrive, grow, and advance, they must publicly advance their cause. This provides the counterinsurgency vulnerabilities that can be exploited.

Counterinsurgents should always be looking for potential fracture lines where the coincidence of interest between the ideological leadership and a particular part of the insurgent network is weakest. A wedge may be then created through the use of the carrot (political, economic, and development benefits) and stick (detention and disruption) operations. Key “bridging” individuals (insurgents, who by personal connection link whole tribes or their groupings to the insurgent leadership) should be a priority for reconciliation or detention, but to achieve this, a deep understanding of regional sociology and relative motivations are critical.<sup>25</sup>

### **Counter Argument**

Current U.S. doctrine does not evaluate all four criteria highlighted in the previous section of this paper as a go/no-go decision for the JFC. Both the Department of the Army *Field Manual 3-24* and the U.S. Government *Counterinsurgency Guide* discuss the need for the host nation to address the populace’s grievances and the need for the host nation to provide security. The lack of attention paid to an attainable agreed upon desired end state,

---

<sup>25</sup> United States Government *Counterinsurgency Guide*, (January 2009): 15, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf> (downloaded 01 February 2009)

and current intelligence capabilities of the host nation, would likely increase the amount of time U.S. counterinsurgency forces stay in an affected nation. In addition, the current Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) model should not preclude JFC from evaluating the four criteria listed in this paper. The make up of the PRT underscores the need for an agreed upon desired end state prior to the U.S. government getting involved.

A model for civil-military cooperation is the provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) first fielded in 2003 in Afghanistan. PRTs were conceived as a means to extend the reach and enhance the legitimacy of the central government into the provinces of Afghanistan at a time when most assistance was limited to the nation's capital. Though PRTs were staffed by a number of coalition and NATO allied countries, they generally consisted of 50 to 300 troops as well as representatives from multinational development and diplomatic agencies. Within U.S. PRTs, USAID and Department of State leaders and the PRT commander formed a senior team that coordinated the policies, strategies, and activities of each agency towards a common goal. In secure areas, PRTs maintained a low profile. In areas where coalition combat operations were underway, PRTs worked closely with maneuver units and local government entities to ensure that shaping operations achieved their desired effects. Each PRT leadership team received tremendous latitude to determine its own strategy. However, each PRT used its significant funding and diverse expertise to pursue activities fell into one of three general logical lines of operations: pursue security sector re- form, build local governance, or execute reconstruction and development.<sup>26</sup>

This is further highlighted by the PRT leadership structure in Iraq. "The U.S. Embassy National Coordination Team (NCT) provides operational guidance and direction to the PRTs, with strategic and policy guidance given by the Joint Executive Steering Committee (JESC). The JESC is comprised of U.S. Mission officials, representatives from U.S. and Coalition military as well as Coalition partners, and the Iraqi government."<sup>27</sup> This shared responsibility within U.S. government agencies and the host nation only work if they are all working toward a common goal. Ultimately, the success of any counterinsurgency operation

---

<sup>26</sup> Headquarters Department of The Army "FM 3-24" *Counterinsurgency* (December 2006): 2-12, <http://www.usgcoin.org/library/doctrine/COIN-FM3-24.pdf> (downloaded 20 February 2009)

<sup>27</sup> Embassy of The United States of America, Iraq *Provincial Reconstruction Team Fact Sheet* (June 2006) <http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/contracts/pdf/AI2-ProvincialReconstructionTeams-FACTSHEET.pdf> (downloaded 14 April 2009)

will be the result of the host nation's actions, not the present coalition supporting the operation.

## CONCLUSION

Counterinsurgency operations need to begin with a well thought out plan. This plan should clearly articulate the political desired end state, strategic and theater objectives, and operational objectives that support the larger cause. The JFC needs to obtain clear guidance from the Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) and the Secretary of Defense as needed. The military portion of the counterinsurgency operation must be supportive of U.S. political objectives and the desires of the host nation. "Effective counterinsurgency requires multi-faceted and integrated operations that apply civilian and military capabilities across information, security, political and economic functional areas. The goal of intervention in a COIN campaign is to help the affected government achieve control over its sovereign territory by establishing, developing, and consolidating legitimate, effective government institutions."<sup>28</sup> In evaluating whether or not the U.S. should engage in counterinsurgency operations with military support, the JFC should evaluate four criteria before becoming involved. The first is an attainable agreed upon desired end state. The second is the host nation's willingness to address the grievance of the population. The third is the host nation's ability to provide security for the population. The fourth is the host nation's ability to collect intelligence on the insurgency. If the host nation was doing all these things well, counterinsurgency forces from other nations would unlikely be needed. The JFC should look

---

<sup>28</sup> United States Government *Counterinsurgency Guide*, (January 2009): 50, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf> (downloaded 01 February 2009)



for a host nation capability, if properly trained or mentored, in each of these areas. Current U.S. doctrine does not evaluate all four criteria highlighted in this paper as a go/no-go decision for the JFC. Both the Department of the Army *Field Manual 3-24* and the U.S. Government *Counterinsurgency Guide* discuss the need for the host nation to address the populace's grievances and the need for the host nation to provide security. Ignoring the need for an attainable agreed upon desired end state, and current intelligence capabilities of the host nation, would likely increase the amount of time U.S. counterinsurgency forces must remain in an affected nation. The single most important factor in a counterinsurgency operation, however is the affected government. True counterinsurgency success lies with the host nation's willingness to provide for their people and provide sound governance. Without these two factors, no counterinsurgency operation will be successful in the longterm.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations for the JFC are based on the research conducted for the previous portions of this paper. In most instances, the JFC for a counterinsurgency operation will come from the staff or subordinate command of the Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC). Many times the Theater Special Operation Command (TSOC) will be the lead effort. The TSOC Commander and his staff should become familiar with host nations that may be susceptible to insurgencies. Personal relationships with host nation counterparts are critical to potential future success. In any counterinsurgency operation, intelligence will be the driving factor. As previously discussed, human intelligence is the key component. The TSOC Commander and his staff must become familiar with the host nations capabilities to collect

information on the population and the insurgency imbedded within it. If these capabilities are unsatisfactory, then an effort should be made early on through the host nation to build a viable HUMINT network. This network can range from reporting coming from military and police units that are operating within the population to pseudo operations the host nation is conducting clandestinely. The information gathered must be processed, vetted, and analyzed so that the host nation can fully understand the problems they are facing. The JFC should deploy trained intelligence personnel to assist the host nation in these capabilities.

In most situations, the JFC will work any counterinsurgency operation or coordination with a host nation through the U.S. Country Team. This provides the JFC with valuable access to information and capabilities of the host nation. The JFC must establish a good working relationship with the Chief of Mission and Defense Attaché operating within the affected country. This relationship must be built early and cultivated often. One way to accomplish this is by supporting the Country Team with augmentation in specific skill set areas. The JFC and the Chief of Mission must communicate true intentions as to the job and intent of the augments. If executed correctly, the JFC can build corporate knowledge on a potential affected host nation while bolstering the effectiveness of the Country Team.

As previously discussed, personal relationships with host nation partners are vital to sound counterinsurgency operations. The JFC can help build these relationships by participating in host nation exercises. The JFC should look to participate in exercises with forces that would conduct the mission if called upon to do so. This is key at every level of command that is invited to participate in the exercise. Building trust with a host nation is hard if you send one set of forces to conduct training, then a completely different set of

forces to execute the mission. In addition, host nation leaders should be invited to the U.S. for meetings and conferences as much as feasible.

Ultimately, the JFC should look for the least intrusive means possible to support the host nation in a counterinsurgency operation.

Depending upon the strength, legitimacy, and effectiveness of tools available to the affected government, the U.S. Government may play a subtle role in countering an incipient insurgency or may intervene more forcefully. For reasons of cost, to minimize any backlash from the population against foreign presence, and to protect the sovereignty of the affected government, policy makers should select the most appropriate, most indirect and least intrusive form of intervention that will still have a high probability of achieving the necessary effect. Counter-intuitively for some planners, it is often the case that less intrusive and more indirect the approach selected, the more likely it is to succeed, though this may be dependant on the maturity of the insurgency.<sup>29</sup>

The JFC has a range of options available to him to support the host nation in counterinsurgency operations. The support can be as subtle as augmentation to the country team, as previously mentioned, to an ongoing Foreign Internal Defense initiative with the host nation, to a full counterinsurgency operation. Regardless of the option, if the support provided is not consistent with the goals and objectives of the host nation, the counterinsurgency support is unlikely to succeed. Final success or failure in counterinsurgency operations lies with the host nation and their capability to govern and care for their people. The JFC, the Department of Defense, and the political leadership of the U.S. Government should never lose sight of this fact.

---

<sup>29</sup> United States Government *Counterinsurgency Guide*, (January 2009): 40, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf> (downloaded 01 February 2009)

## Bibliography

Calwell, Charles E. *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1996.

Galula, David. *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*. New York, NY: Praeger, 1964.

Hoffer, Eric. *The True Believer*. New York, NY: Harper, 1951.

Taber, Robert. *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare*. Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2002.

Trinquier, Roger. *Modern Warfare*. New York, NY: Praeger, 1964.

U.S. Army. *Counterinsurgency*. Field Manual (FM) 3-24. Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 15 December 2006.  
<http://www.usgcoin.org/library/doctrine/COIN-FM3-24.pdf> (downloaded 20 February 2009)

U.S. Government. *Counterinsurgency Guide*. Washington, DC: Department of State, 13 January 2009. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf> (downloaded 01 February 2009)

Vego, Milan N. *Joint Operational Warfare*. Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War Collage, 2007.