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14. **ABSTRACT:** Violence and destruction are inherent in the nature of war. The recent pervasive U.S. reliance on a counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine which focuses on civilian and military efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of insurgency, by concentrating on population centric grievances and incentivizing Host Nation governments to undertake reforms addressing these grievances rather than the annihilation of an enemy (insurgents), has proved to be problematic in winning decisive victories. Globalization and the interconnectedness of global economies created an environment where state boundaries are dissolving, people are identifying themselves along different identity lines, and the conflicts coming out of these identity politics are less conventional, state-on-state conflicts. Instead, states will see more unconventional conflict characterized by violent actions directed at not only challenging the legitimacy of the states within which they exist but challenging borders, neighboring states, and the very populations within which they reside. This type of conflict, regardless of how it is characterized, cannot be effectively controlled using conventional methods. Current U.S. doctrine does not adequately address an effective and decisive way to conduct these operations. Lessons can be learned, distilled, and put into practice by analyzing what was done correctly and what was done incorrectly in previous insurgencies, like Malaya, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

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RE-INVENTING COUNTERINSURGENCY DOCTRINE: WHY THE UNITED STATES FAILED IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

by

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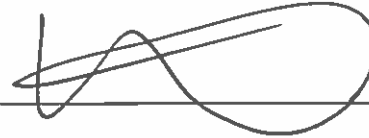
by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense. This paper is entirely my own work except as documented in footnotes.
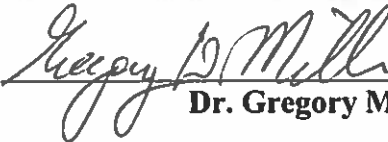
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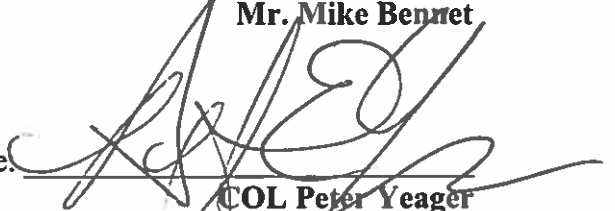**Dr. Gregory Miller**

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ABSTRACT

Violence and destruction are inherent in the nature of war. The recent pervasive U.S. reliance on a counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine which focuses on civilian and military efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of insurgency, by concentrating on population centric grievances and incentivizing Host Nation governments to undertake reforms addressing these grievances rather than the annihilation of an enemy (insurgents). This strategy has proved to be problematic in winning decisive victories. Globalization and the interconnectedness of global economies has created an environment where state boundaries are dissolving, people are identifying themselves along different identity lines, and the conflicts coming out of these identity politics are less conventional, state-on-state conflicts. Instead, states will see more unconventional conflict characterized by violent actions directed at not only challenging the legitimacy of the states within which they exist, but challenging borders, neighboring states, and the very populations within which they reside. This type of conflict, regardless of how it is characterized, cannot be effectively controlled using conventional methods. Current U.S. doctrine does not adequately address an effective and decisive way to conduct these operations. Lessons can be learned, distilled, and put into practice by analyzing what was done correctly and what was done incorrectly in previous insurgencies, like Malaya, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

By definition, military intervention requires a certain amount of death and destruction, even when the intent is solely to protect a civilian population from an aggressive or hostile government. To be successful, it also requires a coherent strategy, with identified and clearly articulated end-states and political support from the government sponsoring the military activity. A key component of successful intervention is the fundamental understanding of the commitments (time and national treasure) required to achieve said end-states. This is especially true when fighting insurgencies. Insurgencies are generally a fight between a non-ruling portion of the population and an established ruling body. This type of conflict is often complex. It can take different forms; have vastly different motives, and end-states unique to the insurgents. However, the one thing that is similar in all of these types of conflict is that the insurgents need to have the support, whether coerced or freely given, of the general population within which they live.[1] This allows them the freedom of movement and resupply they need to continue to conduct operations. All of these factors play an important part in determining how governments or outside entities (i.e., colonial powers, and the United States) deal with this type of conflict.

Guerilla warfare, "describe[s] the use of hit-and-run tactics by an armed group directed primarily at a government and its security forces for political or religious reasons."[2] It is a tactic in which, "[a] strategically weaker side assumes the tactical

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[1] David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 10.

[2] Max Boot, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present* (New York: Liverlight Publishing Corp, 2013), xxiii. While Max Boots definition is not significantly different than the DoD definition it is slightly less ambiguous and nuanced.

offensive in selected forms, times and places."[3] It is not a new phenomenon and states have tried to counter it for as long as it has been around. Its roots can be traced as far back as the beginning of the written word. This type of conflict is generally conducted along asymmetric lines, using hit and run tactics, aimed at, "persuad[ing] as many people as possible to commit themselves to the movement, so that it gradually acquires the quality of the "mass."[4] These small wars are often not small and can have an enormous influence on the outcome of the state within which they occur. The tactics employed by guerillas (insurgents) fall into multiple categorical descriptions (i.e. suicide bombings, terror tactics, or terrorism). When these descriptions are used to try to define the doctrine vice the tactics they fall short in defining exactly what the threat is and further complicate the discussion needed to effectively combat the threat.

In the cases of Iraq, after the initial invasion, and Afghanistan, the United States government and military misunderstood, or chose to ignore, the basic tenet that death and destruction are inherent in war and conflict. This is evidenced in the United States' reliance on a revised Counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine focused almost solely on winning the "hearts and the minds" of the local population with an emphasis on minimizing collateral damage at the expense of suppressing and destroying the insurgents. This strategy is fundamentally flawed because it ignores the historical context of previous violent encounters in the area; it ignores the identity politics at play, and does not appreciate the complexity of the situation on the ground. The inability of the U.S. military and other government agencies to adequately and accurately define the scope and parameters of this type of conflict, and the inability of the political elite to fully

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[3] Samuel P. Huntington, (introduction) In Franklin M. Osanka, *Modern Guerrilla Warfare: Fighting Communist Guerrilla Movements* (New York: The Free Press 1962), xvi.
[4] Samuel B. Griffith II, *MAO Tse-tung: On Guerrilla Warfare* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 2000), 21.

understand the intricacies involved in this type of conflict, played a key role in the lack of success in Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition, the U.S. and Coalition strategies articulated and implemented in both Iraq and Afghanistan, ignored or subverted the basic Clausewitzean tenet of conflict, violence. These strategies, beyond the initial invasion, in Iraq had little tolerance for the violence, personnel, or actions required to correctly conduct operations to suppress violent groups of insurgents, intervene in civil wars, and build nations.

This type of conflict, whether it truly is counterinsurgency, civil war, or some amalgamation thereof, requires the protracted involvement of a nation willing to expend its national coffers and the lives of its citizens. Because of the U.S.' ill-fated belief in its counterinsurgency strategy, a lack of understanding for the actual socio-political circumstances on the ground, and an almost cookie cutter approach to two very different problems, the United States continues to implement a Counter-Insurgency doctrine which is too simplistic and truly does not appreciate the complexities or political support required to win. Because the increasing occurrence and nature of the conflicts in which the United States will be involved are diametrically opposed to how the United States currently conducts COIN, the United States will continue to have a difficult time achieving what would be considered a win.[5]

According to some New War theorists, such as Mary Kaldor, Shannon D. Beebe, and Martin van Creveld, globalization is the leading cause of states losing their legitimacy as the sole arbiters of violence, economic prosperity, and security.[6] Due to the

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[5] COL Gian Gentile, *Wrong Turn: America's Deadly Embrace of Counter-Insurgency*. (New York Press: 2013) 5-10.

[6] Mary Kaldor and Shannon D. Beebe, and Martin van Creveld have all written on a new propensity for counterinsurgency type conflict (New War) that is rising in conjunction with the decline of the state. Their

de-legitimization of the state and the speed of global interconnectedness, people are reverting to identities no longer so closely associated with the state. These identities fall along the fault lines of ethnicity and religion.[7] The increasing identification along these lines leads to conflicts within a state between the perceived majority and minority and a challenge to the state itself.[8] Because of the protracted nature of New Wars, there will be an increased economic and political cost to the states trying to counter this type of conflict. Large state-on-state conflicts are becoming rare and it is less likely that states will continue to face each other in the conventional sense. It is more likely that the United States, and the world as a whole, will face an increasingly complex set of threats. Due to the inability of governments to bring the violence to an end, these threats will pressurize the stability of the state from within while affecting the stability of neighboring states.[9]

The U.S.' track record fighting these types of conflicts is not spectacular. These failures result from a lack of defined strategy, including opaque and often nebulous end-states, which sometimes are not even achievable. Moreover, the strategy used is derived from doctrine, which is fundamentally sound, however, often applied incorrectly and tends to ignore the basic facts inherent in conflict and war. These failures in counterinsurgency doctrine are often detrimental to attaining victory.

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theory is that wars of the future will be fought by varying combinations of state and non-state networks, primarily using identity politics to fight in the name of a label as opposed to ideology, attempt to achieve political control rather than physical control of the population through fear and terror, and are no longer a part of the state but are financed and run through other predatory means. All of this results in the continuation or exacerbation of violence aimed at the population instead of the state. Defining 'new wars' is made within the context of a wider debate between academics on how to properly define the post-Cold War world. These theorists purport that war now has to be defined in a global construct.

[7] Samuel P. Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*: *And the Remaking of a New World Order.* (Simon & Schuster: 1996) 20-21.

[8] Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, ed 3, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 2-7.

[9] Mats Berdal, "How "New" are "New Wars"? Global Economic Changes and the Study of Civil War," *Global Governance* 9, no.4: 477-502.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

Shortly after the invasion of Iraq, the U.S. military determined that the existing doctrine for conducting counterinsurgency operations was too outdated to provide effective guidance to combat the threats they saw. In 2014, the U.S. Army and Marine Corps updated their combined Counterinsurgency Field Manual, 3-24. This field manual developed a doctrine supported by the articulation of tactics aimed at countering this specific type of threat. In FM 3-24 the main focus of counterinsurgency operations is securing the population and conducting operations in such a way that the actors conducting the counterinsurgency operations minimize collateral damage and subsequent effects on civilians. This approach is intended to win the political will and hearts and minds of the population. This is because according to FM 3-24, political will is the Center of Gravity for counterinsurgency operations.[1] Whoever has the support of the population will win the conflict. In addition, it focuses on the need of military commanders to be culturally understanding, the requirement to provide a whole of government approach, and most importantly it emphasizes that this type of conflict is protracted and requires immense political support.[2] Because of the protracted nature of this type of conflict, the state conducting the operations needs to be willing to make the investment of its national treasure for an extended period of time.

According to Joint Publication 3-24, "insurgency is the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region."[3] These types of threats involve non-state actors or armed groups who will use tactics such

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[1] The U.S. Army and Marine Corps *Counterinsurgency Field Manual,* FM/MCWP 3-24 (University of Chicago Press: 2006), 7-1-7-6.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Joint Publication 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (November 2013), ix

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as terrorism, guerilla warfare, and subversion aimed at gaining some type of concession from, or the complete overthrow of, the current socio-political entity(ies) in charge. Insurgent forces, while sometimes large and diverse, will generally try to avoid direct confrontation with the military power of governments because they are generally ill-equipped to emerge victorious in a direct force-on-force confrontation with conventional military forces.

Insurgencies are characterized by the use of, "subversion, sabotage, political, economics, psychological actions, and armed conflict to achieve its political aims."[4] This type of conflict challenges the stability and security of the state, its allies, and its neighbors by creating an environment where the population questions the ability or legitimacy of the state to provide basic functions, like security. In the last two decades there has been an increase in non-state actors challenging the legitimacy of states by using these types of tactics.[5] One of the explanations for the increase in these types of conflict is the "increasing population growth, urbanization, littoralization, and networked connectivity"[6] of urban centers. Increasing globalization has led to the unprecedented migration and urbanization of cities that have neither the infrastructure nor the social services in place to support the massive influx of people. This dichotomy leads to the creation of poor urban areas, which are marginalized, economically and politically. These areas normally exist on the fringe of society. By virtue of their exclusion from the government-controlled networks that exist within the urban environment, they have

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[4] Joint Publication 3-24.

[5] Martin van Creveld, *The Changing Face of War: Combat From Marne to Iraq*, 265-276.

[6] David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerilla* (New York: Oxford University Press,), 17.

created their own networks. All of these factors lead to the creation of sub networks, developed in a perfect environment, to foment this type of conflict.

This type of conflict is described using various terms such as asymmetric conflict, hybrid warfare, and guerilla warfare. To maintain clarity, the type of conflict used for the purposes of the case studies presented, is referred to as insurgency and the operations, strategy, and tactics aimed at countering it are referred to as counterinsurgency operations (COIN).[7]

Counterinsurgency is "primarily a political struggle and incorporates a wide range of activities by the Host Nation (HN) government of which security is only one."[8] It is an approach to tackling the insurgent problem that focuses less on military action and control and more on political control, the population, and understanding the operational environment. Counterinsurgency is an umbrella term used to describe a complete range of actions spanning the entire spectrum of government, to defeat an insurgency.[9] For the purposes of this thesis, counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine refers specifically to the doctrine outlined in JP 3-24. As laid out in JP 3-24 it is a set of tactics to be used when conducting counterinsurgency operations. COIN is used to describe both the doctrine and the operations.

Counterinsurgency operations can be successful if they are employed as part of a larger strategic doctrine, with clearly defined and articulated political end states. It is

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[7] While these types of conflict are not defined as exactly the same type of conflict and are not necessarily synonymous they are often used interchangeably further complicating the development of a doctrine. Frank G. Hoffman, "Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars." *Potomac Institute for Policy Studies.* December 2007. http://www.potomacinstitute.org/images/stories/publications/potomac_hybridwar_0108.pdf (accessed October 25, 2015)

[8] Ibid.*,* 17.

[9] David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency,* (New York: Oxford University Press), 1.

when counterinsurgency operations are conducted outside a clearly defined political strategy, with nebulous or opaque political goals, that they fail, as illustrated by Iraq and Afghanistan.

This thesis looks at three different cases where a counterinsurgency doctrine was applied to counter an insurgent threat. In one of the cases, the overall strategy employed was effective. In the other two cases the strategy was employed less effectively for a variety of reasons. The three cases studied here are the British counterinsurgency doctrine in Malaya, the U.S. doctrine in Iraq, and the U.S. doctrine in Afghanistan. All three cases are very different in the circumstances surrounding the insurgency and the subsequent counterinsurgency strategies used. However, the cases contain enough similarities in how the military acted and reacted as the conflict continued that lessons could be extrapolated from the militaries' effective use of counterinsurgency operations or from the militaries' failure to implement effective tactics. In all three cases, there were differing levels and types of established social and political governance prior to conflict and the subsequent counterinsurgency operations. There were also vastly different social, ideological, and religious make-ups.

The initial case study focuses on the counterinsurgency operations conducted by the British and Malayan government, during the Malayan Emergency, beginning in 1948. Malaya was a British protectorate with an established, British influenced government apparatus, which included a large constabulary force made up of Malayan nationals.[10] The majority of the population, ethnic Malays, saw the existing government as

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[10] John Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, (Palgrave Macmillian: New York, 2015), 47-51.

functional.[11] When the British high commissioner initially declared the emergency, he suspended habeas corpus for suspected Communists and used indigenous Malayan forces, combined with British forces, to conduct counterinsurgency operations.[12] As the insurgency continued, the British tactics became extremely brutal (forced removal and extradition of Chinese civilians into settlements, wholesale destruction of villages, and indeterminate detention without trial of suspected insurgents). However, these tactics combined with the circumstances on the ground proved effective in crushing the communist insurgency.

The second case looks at the evolution of COIN in Iraq, after the 2003 invasion. Iraq, prior to the 2003 invasion, had an established government run by the minority Sunni population, with a relatively functional infrastructure and state security apparatus to include a large army and police force. After the invasion and subsequent downfall of the Sunni (Ba'athist) regime, the support infrastructure, to include general government bureaucrats, the army, and portions of the police force, were dismantled as part of a policy of de-Ba'athification, creating a massive power vacuum and large disgruntled portion of the population. In its place, the U.S. and its allies attempted to build a government and security structure, which was representative of the population. However, the de-Ba'athification policy and the insistence, by the U.S. and it allies, on the creation of a representative democratic government set the conditions for the insurgency and had a lasting affect which was far more severe and far reaching that initially understood.

The third case study looks at how counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan would prove the hardest case to justify and resolve. One of the major justifications

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[11] Gregory Freemont Barnes, *A History of Counter Insurgency: Volume 1 From South Africa to Algeria, 1900-1954* (Denver: Praeger Security International, 2015), 133.
[12] Ibid.

provided for operations in Afghanistan was that it was an ungoverned terrorist breeding

and training ground that threatened the security of the world post 9/11 by allowing

terrorists to flourish. Afghanistan was a vast country that had been continuously

embroiled in internal conflict and external invasion since the mid 1970's. In 1996 the

Taliban, with support from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, wrested control of Afghanistan

from the Russian supported government. Many Taliban fighters were remnants of the

Mujahedeen fighters who the U.S. had trained and equipped to help with the expulsion of

the Soviet Union. Shortly after the U.S. and the Soviet Union left Afghanistan, the

Taliban imposed a hyper-strict Deobandi school of Islam mixed with Pashtunwali code

and Pashtun tribal traditions.[13] Moreover, the Taliban refused to turn Osama bin Laden,

the mastermind of 9/11, over to the U.S. While there were cities that were semi-modern,

most of the country languished under the rule of the Taliban.

There was no legitimate government, in the strictest Western sense, and very little

left of the crumbling infrastructure, making travel outside of the urban areas difficult.

When the U.S. removed the Taliban from power, it did not fully understand the tribal

dynamics at play. Based on the over exaggeration and promotion of Karzai's ability to

unite the diverse ethnic and tribal groups of Afghanistan and promises that he could not

deliver, the U.S. installed him as the president. This move proved disastrous for U.S.' and

Coalition's regime building efforts. With Iraq occurring at the same time, the U.S.

population was leery of becoming embroiled in yet another long war with nebulous end-

states, and even higher costs. Especially a conflict where the rules of engagement were

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[13] Brian G. Williams, *Afghanistan Declassified: A Guide to America's Longest War,* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 20.

even more prohibitive and the very legitimacy of the government installed was in question by the population it was supposed to represent.

These cases were chosen because on the surface they could be defined as typical insurgencies. When studied in depth it is very clear that each of these cases were very different and had intricate conditions that were not initially well understood. The authors of FM-24, when re-writing and formulating a new COIN doctrine, used Malaya as one of the examples of where counterinsurgency operations were conducted correctly. However, the correct lessons from the Malaya case study were neither extrapolated nor applied in Iraq and Afghanistan.

CHAPTER 3: BRITISH COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS IN MALAYA

At the end of the Japanese Occupation in 1948, Malaya, was a British Colonial Protectorate made up of nine sovereign states, administered by an ethnic Malayan Sultan with a British advisor. In addition, the government was made up of a large central executive legislature, to include a British majority. The British maintained a police force of around 9000 and a military of about 10 battalions.[1] The population of Malaya was a diverse mix of ethnic groups, with approximately 49 percent of the population identifying as Malayan, approximately 38 percent identifying as Chinese, and smaller Indian and European populations.[2]

The Malayan Emergency lasted from June 1948 until July 1960, with bouts of violence lasting until the final peace agreement in 1989. In 1948, following the murder of three British planters, the British Colonial government declared a state of emergency. As part of this state of emergency, the British high commissioner for Malaya enacted a set of Emergency Regulations (ER) Ordinances.[3] These ER Ordinances outlawed the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) and other leftist parties, allowed for the imposition of extreme penalties to include deportation and the death penalty, and "suspended *habeas corpus* for discrete circumstances and needs."[4] Local police were given the authority to imprison, without trial, communists and those suspected of assisting them. Due to the increasing pressure placed on the MCP by these measures enacted by the British Colonial government, the MCP retreated to the rural jungle areas where it had support from the

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[1] Gregory Freemont Barnes, vol I, 132.

[2] Dr Richard Stubbs, "From Search and Destroy to Hearts and Minds: The Evolution of British Strategy in Malaya 1948-60" (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2008), 113-118.

[3] Gregory Freemont Barnes, vol I, 132.

[4] Ibid.

minority Chinese "squatter" populations.[5] It re-formed, under the leadership of Chin Peng, as the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA). In addition, the MNLA was partly a reformation of the Malayan People Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA), which was trained and armed by the British during WWII as part of the effort to resist the Japanese Occupation. The British ordered the MPAJA to disband in December 1948 and to turn all of its weapons in to the British Military Administration. However, a large number of these forces did not disarm and instead disappeared to later return under the guise of the MCP.

The 1948 withdrawal of the Japanese left the Malayan economy devastated. The MNLA specifically targeted the economic foundations of Malaya, the rubber plantations and tin mines, as well as the British Security Forces and eventually the Chinese communities the MNLA depended on for support. A majority of the Chinese population lived in poor, ethnically similar communities, which were generally clustered together on the fringes of the jungle, providing a perfect environment for the insurgents to gather support, food, medical supplies, and information, and then disappear back into the jungle.[6]

During the initial stages of the emergency, British forces focused on eradicating the Communist insurgent threat by any means possible. The main strategy employed by the General Officer Commanding, was "search and destroy." [7] This strategy used the Army (made up of British and Malayan soldiers) and police forces to conduct aggressive large-scale sweeps targeted at ferreting out the communist insurgents and their

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[5] Dr Richard Stubbs, 113-118.
[6] John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons From Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 63-65.
[7] Dr Richard Stubbs, 113-118.

supporters. These sweeps were brutal and targeted the Chinese communities the British

believed supported communist insurgents. However, these communities were not always

sympathetic to the communist insurgents. They supported the insurgents because they

were under a more immediate and direct threat from the communist insurgents if they

were deemed to have collaborated with the British. Because of this threat, the initial

British strategy had very little effect on identifying and combatting the leadership of the

communist insurgents. In 1950, after two years of ineffective counterinsurgency

operations, the new British government summoned retired Lieutenant General Sir Harold

Briggs from retirement to assess the situation in Malaya and develop a new strategy for

dealing with the insurgents.

Sir Harold Briggs was a WWII veteran with exceptional experience in jungle

warfare, the primary reason he was chosen to develop a new strategy. The first thing

Briggs did when he arrived in Malaya was to consolidate all intelligence operations into a

single entity for coordination, collaboration, and vetting. This was done to streamline

intelligence gathering and dissemination. Briggs believed that the intricate political

dimensions of the conflict were previously ignored, contributing to the inability of the

forces in place to target the communist insurgency leadership. He understood that the

ethnic majority Malayans were not going to accept Chinese communist leaders and the

Chinese minority were not necessarily aligned with the communist insurgents.[8] The key

to Briggs' plan was the comprehensive, centrally controlled, and coordinated wholesale

resettlement of Chinese communities. The British resettled the Chinese into "new

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[8] James R. Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes: A Century of Counterinsurgency Warfare From the Philippines to Iraq,* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009), 148-154.

villages" which were fenced and under British operational control.[9] The forced

resettlement of portions of the Chinese population did not immediately have the desired

effect because there were not enough trained police forces to adequately secure and

police the new villages. This lack of control allowed the MCP to still gain access to the

Chinese population within these villages. The lack of security also allowed the almost

unobstructed flow of Chinese nationals out of these villages, with little or no control on

what they brought with them. The number of counterinsurgency incidents continued to

rise dramatically, indicating to the British that the insurgent threat was not going to be

contained utilizing current methods.[10] In addition, the inability of the British forces to

quell the insurgent attacks played into the British political rhetoric that they were going to

be embroiled in yet another long, drawn out colonial conflict.[11]

When re-elected in 1951, Winston Churchill ordered the Secretary of State, Oliver

Lyttelton, to devise a winning strategy in Malaya. This strategy took the form of

appointing a supreme warlord, General Sir Gerald Templar. General Templar arrived in

Malaya in 1952 and immediately set about making dramatic changes. He realized that the

only way he would undermine the communist insurgents was to unite the Malayan

population under a single identity.[12] He decreed that all aliens born in Malaya were

granted citizenship, made the national language for school instruction Malaya, and

explicitly addressed the issue of land tenure. In addition, a keen understanding that the

jungle could not support the insurgents backed this strategy. The only way the insurgents

survived was at the largest of the Chinese population. To combat this the British

[9] Gregory Freemont Barnes, *vol I,* 147. 2015
[10] Ibid.
[11] James R. Arnold, 153.
[12] Ibid., 159-166.

implemented a food denial strategy. This strategy not only reduced the daily food rations

given to people living inside the villages, but implemented draconian laws restricting

movement of people and goods, restricted the sale of specific items, and made the

possession of food outside of the villages illegal. Templar understood the element of

human suffering inherent in this type of strategy but strongly believed that if offered

incentives, such as the lifting of curfews, relaxation of controls over movement of people

and goods outside of the villages, and most importantly increasing food rations, he could

win the Chinese population away from supporting the insurgency.[13]

The British fundamentally understood that this conflict would be long and

protracted, however the stability of Malaya and the ability of that state to function as

normal were vital to the economic and national interests of Britain.[14] Templar's strategy

of starvation, nationalization, and incentivizing, combined with Brigg's creation of "New

Villages" and the subsequent resettlement of the Chinese population, was crucial to the

success of Britain's counterinsurgency operations in Malaya. In addition, the continued

preservation of the civil government presented a symbol of the legitimacy and stability of

the Malayan government. That the government was able to function in a mostly normal

capacity proved that the Malayan government was able and willing to endure.

The biggest lessons to pull out of this case are that the tactics used by the British

(resettlement and starvation), while extremely violent, were effective because they were

targeted at a population that was something other than ethnic Malayan. These population-

centric counterinsurgency operations were in support of British vital national interests.

The British were able to change and escalate their operations based on an evaluation of

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[13] James R. Arnold, 153.
[14] John Newsinger, 42-44.

how operations were going. Moreover, where possible ethnic Malayan's were used to conduct the operations. There was a functioning, legitimate government that was able to enforce the idea of Westphalian sovereignty while reinforcing the idea that the Chinese communists were see as other and therefore illegitimate.

CHAPTER 4: COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS IN IRAQ

Iraq is made up of a complex social and political fabric. The majority of the population prior to 2003 was Shia Muslims, followed by Arab Sunni Muslims, and Kurds. Under the dictatorial leadership of Saddam Hussein, Iraqi society tended to identify along ethnic, religious, and tribal lines rather than a national identity.[1] The Ba'ath party, made up of minority Arab Sunni Muslims, was in power since 1968. Since the Sunni Muslims dominated the main political party, they enjoyed a more privileged social and economic position in Iraqi society pre-2003. In addition, there were longstanding disputes over land located in Northern Iraq between the Kurds and the Arab Sunnis. These complex historical conflicts, competing objectives, and diverse social identities created multiple insurgent threats that were neither monolithic nor easily identifiable.[2]

In 2003, Iraq fell much more quickly than U.S. planners anticipated. The "then what" strategy was not fully developed prior to the U.S. being faced with implementing a follow on strategy. Nor were there forces in place, as U.S. civilian leadership had not heeded the military recommendation for a much larger invasion force, to secure Iraq after completion of the conventional force-on-force actions.[3] Further complicating the situation was the relationship between the U.S. Military, certain members at the Department of State, and the Secretary of Defense. This relationship was highly dysfunctional,

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[1] Gregory Freemont Barnes, *A History of Counter Insurgency: Volume II From Cyprus to Afghanistan, 1955 to the 21st Century,* (Denver: Praeger Security International, 2015), 365.
[2] Ibid., 368.
[3] John A. Nagl, *Knife Fights: A Memoir of Modern War in Theory and Practice,* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2014), 62-67.

contributing to the creation of an environment in Iraq that not only supported but also fostered insurgency.[4]

To address the lack of strategy and the subsequent void in post invasion governance and post conflict planning, President Bush created the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA). The ORHA was to be responsible for securing Iraq after the invasion and then implementing the post conflict plan. However, the ORHA was woefully undermanned and it conducted inadequate planning to undertake the task which it was assigned.[5] Had ORHA been sufficiently manned with Department of Defense personnel, to include staff planners, Department of State personnel, and other non-governmental organizations, there is the potential that it could have developed and put into place a plan that adequately addressed what a post invasion Iraqi would look like. As it stood, ORHA could not adequately answer the 'then what' question. When President Bush realized ORHA was failing at its assigned mission he took steps to remedy the situation. In an effort to increase and broaden the mission assigned to the ORHA, President Bush established the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA).

Within a month of its establishment the CPA, headed by U.S. Ambassador Paul Bremer, implemented two significant orders directing change. The first order directed the de-Ba'athification program.[6] The intention of this program was to not only remove anyone involved in the Ba'ath party from political power, but to prohibit them from ever coming back into power. Bremer's order "removed upwards of 30,000 former Ba'ath

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[4] Gregory Freeemont Barnes, vol II, 368.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

leaders from current and presumably any future political power."[7] He removed a large portion of the existing governmental structure with no replacement identified to step into the vacuum and no codified plan identifying a structure to replace it. In addition, no attempt was made to placate the disenfranchised Ba'ath leaders.

The second order Bremer implemented had much more disastrous consequences with regards to creating an environment ripe for an insurgency.[8] He ordered the disbanding of the Iraqi military, again without first identifying how these former soldiers would be taken care of, and without identifying a trained force to take their place. With this decision, Bremer "decimated the economic and social prospects of approximately 300,000 trained soldiers and officers."[9] Moreover, he removed Iraq's security apparatus without a replacement available as the U.S. and its Coalition Partners did not have enough forces in Iraq to provide security for the population, the weapons caches, or the cities. These orders not only created a cadre of humiliated, trained, and equipped ex-military personnel who made up the initial nucleus of the insurgency, but also helped create an environment where basic government functions were not provided and security could not be enforced.[10] Already porous borders became even more porous, and displaced radical Iraqi clerics and politicians returned with a vengeance.

In early 2004, attention shifted to the transfer of political power back to the Iraqis and the building of the new Iraqi Army and security forces. However, the political vacuum left in the wake of de-Ba'athification, the lack of clearly defined political end states, the absence of opportunities for Iraqi participation/shaping of the political process

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[7] Gregory Freemont Barnes, vol II, 369.
[8] John A. Nagl, *Knife Fight*, 63.
[9] Gregory Freemont Barnes, vol II, 369.
[10] Ibid.

and make-up, as well as the increasingly negative characterization of U.S. and Coalition

efforts (torture scandals and the Abu Graib prison scandal), added fuel to an already

simmering pool of discontent with U.S. and Coalition efforts in Iraq. By mid-2004 the

influx of foreign jihadists and their ideology into Iraq began pushing the insurgency

towards a more extreme end of the spectrum, with a focus on tactics often used by

terrorists (e.g.bombings targeting civilians, targeted assassinations, and bombings of

police headquarters).[11] Violent conflict continued to increase exponentially.

In the initial stages of the insurgency, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) and

the Pentagon identified the main cause of insurgent violence as the remnants of Hussein

supporters vying for a return to power.[12] In an effort to curb the insurgency, U.S. forces

embarked on search and destroy missions, aimed at killing or capturing insurgents and

reducing U.S. and Coalition casualties. These raids had the opposite effect because U.S.

and Coalition forces clumsily executed them (e.g. U.S. and Coalition forces did not have

enough people who spoke the language, and allowed men to touch, unveil, and interview

women), showing to a marked degree a lack of cultural understanding.[13] In some cases,

operations were successful as the objectives were accomplished (e.g. key members of the

regime were captured, key insurgents (terrorists) were captured or killed and violence in

major cities was quelled), however this concentration on attributing victory to the number

of insurgents captured or killed neglected the psychological and political effects these

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[11] Steven Metz, *Learning From Iraq: Counterinsurgency in American Strategy,* (Washington DC: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 41.

[12] For example ,Metz used various speeches and articles (newspaper and journals) to infer that the main vestiges of the insurgency, as recognized by CENTCOM and the Pentagon, were the remnants of displaced Ba'athists power brokers angry at their loss of power. Jim Garamore,"Abizaid: U.S. Displaying 'Offensive' Spirit in Iraq," Armed Forces Information Service, June 25, 2003, Metz, 41.

[13] Ibid.

raids continued to have on the Iraqi civilian population.[14] As these raids continued they served to further antagonize the population leading to an "aggregate increase in the support for resistance" while yielding nebulous results.[15] The insurgents seized the narrative and used these raids as evidence that the U.S. and its Coalition partners were an occupying force and not a liberating force. This narrative was powerful and increased popular sympathy and support for the insurgency.[16] CENTCOM and the Pentagon realized their lack of understanding about the Iraqi culture and the impact of these raids, and sought to adopt new counterinsurgency strategies aimed at owning the psychological battlespace. However, the growing influence of outside jihadists pushed the insurgency in a different direction.[17]

To complicate matters, by the spring of 2004, insurgent violence no longer solely focused on U.S. and Coalition forces; the porous borders allowed radical elements to take advantage, and as they moved into Iraq the insurgency began to take on an even more sectarian form, utilizing increasingly violent tactics. Moreover, insurgent leaders believed that the U.S. and Coalition forces would be departing soon, leaving the fledgling Shia dominant Iraq government vulnerable.[18] This new sectarian aspect of the insurgency proved to be more aggressive and more hostile, and created an even more complex security situation in Iraq. Whole communities and provinces now divided along strict sectarian lines. These internal socio-religious sectarian tensions added another layer to the already complex insurgency, and created more fear among the population that could not be countered by U.S. and Coalition forces' counterinsurgency operations or U.S. and

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[14] Ibid., 40-44
[15] Ibid., 29
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., 41-44.
[18] Ibid.

Iraqi security operations.[19] The main belief driving operations in Iraq up to this point was the belief that if a new Iraqi government was functional and proportionally representative of its people, the Iraqi people would turn away from the insurgents and instead support the new government.[20] However, this strategy proved harder to achieve than initially imagined. Not only did insurgent violence continue to increase at a rapid rate, the nature of the insurgency changed, pitting Sunni insurgents against Shia insurgents and both groups pitted against the current Iraqi government, Iraqi security forces, and U.S. and Coalition forces.

In September 2006, U.S. counterinsurgency operations in Iraq yielded negative results. A leaked report concluded that U.S. counterinsurgency operations failed to defeat the insurgency, violence (specifically sectarian violence) was increasing, a stable Iraqi government had yet to be realized, the Iraqi security forces were undertrained and undermanned, and resources (Host Nation, U.S., and Coalition) were inadequate to secure the country.[21] All of these factors contributed to the determination, by a group of military officials and scholars (led by General David Petraeus and his group of warrior scholars) that the reason U.S. counterinsurgency operations were failing in Iraq was because U.S. forces were not uniquely or adequately trained for the mission they undertook, that the counterinsurgency manual they were using was outdated and obsolete, and that there were not enough forces available to conduct the mission required.[22]

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[19] Gregory Freemont Barnes, vol II, 369.
[20] Gian Gentile, 92.
[21] Gian Gentile, 95.
[22] There is a group of military and government personnel who were a part of the movement to update Counterinsurgency doctrine and to push its validity. Some authors have dubbed the group the warrior scholars based on their military and scholastic acumen. These include but are not limited to John Nagl, David Kilcullen, Michele Flournoy, and Celeste Ward. Most of these names are specifically mentioned in Fred Kaplan's book, *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War,* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013), 208-283.

In an attempt to tackle rising insurgent problem in Iraq, the Army and Marines

released a revised and updated combined counterinsurgency manual (FM 3-24 followed

by a Joint version, JP 3-24). FM 3-24 laid out a counterinsurgency doctrine, which placed

an emphasis on securing the population by fostering the development of a legitimate

government and focusing on protecting the population, sometimes at the disadvantage of

the counterinsurgency forces. It states that the, "ultimate success in COIN is gained by

protecting the populace, not the COIN forces."[23] The approach it advocated was a "clear-

hold-build" style of operation.[24] This operation focused on creating a secure environment,

the establishment of control through host nation governance, and then gaining the

population's support, touted as "the hearts and minds" approach.[25] However, the number

of U.S. and coalitions forces in Iraq, even when combined with Iraqi security forces, was

insufficient to conduct even the clear portion of this operational approach. The inability

of the combined U.S. and Coalition forces to conduct even these basic operations and the

continued rise in insurgent violence prompted General Petraeus, Commander of all U.S.

forces in Iraq, to request additional forces so he could effectively conduct

counterinsurgency operations.

In 2006, the subsequent surge in troop numbers, approximately 30,000, coincided

with what became known as the Sunni or Anbar awakening.[26] Sunni tribal leaders had

become increasingly alienated by the lead Sunni insurgent group in Iraq, Al Qaeda in Iraq

(AQI). AQI flouted local tribal customs, promoted an austere form of fundamentalism

that was not palatable to Sunni Tribal leaders, and engaged in extremely brutal acts of

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[23] FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency,*(Washington DC: Department of the Army, 2006), 1-26.
[24] Ibid., 5-18.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Andrew Tan, "Counterinsurgency Since 9/11 and it's Future," *Defence Studies* 14, no 3: 245-265.

violence directed at the civilian population. Recognizing that the population was rapidly losing confidence in the Tribal leadership and its ability to keep them safe, the Sunni Tribal leaders revolted against AQI and began to work with the U.S. forces in Iraq to remove AQI. The effect on the ground was almost immediate, allowing General Petraeus to report to Washington that the counterinsurgency doctrine he helped update and refine was working well. However, the correlation and the causal relationship, if there even was one, between the two events was never fully studied nor reported at the time.[27] Many scholars emphasize that it was the combination of current environmental factors, the troop surge, the Sunni awakening, and timing, which created Petraeus' successive counterinsurgency victories, instead of a single independent variable (the surge of troops).[28]

These victories, however, were short-lived. By 2008, the political leadership in the U.S. faced mounting criticism and pressure at home as well as in Iraq in response to the prolonged nature of the conflict, the continued loss of U.S. national treasure (blood and money), and the continued presence of U.S. military forces in Iraq without clearly articulated strategic justification.[29] In late 2008, the U.S. signed a status of forces agreement promising that U.S. forces would leave Iraq by 2011. This highly publicized withdrawal deadline provided the perfect opportunity for the multitude of insurgent groups still residing within Iraq. The insurgents understood that the current Iraqi

[27] Fred Kaplan, "The End of the Age of Petraeus: The Rise and Fall of Counterinsurgency," *Foreign Affairs* 92, no 1, 75-90. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan/2013-01-01/end-age-petraeus; (accessed January 21, 2016).
[28] John A. Nagl, *Knife Fight,*170; Andrew Tan, 252; Kaplan, Fred. "The End of the Age of Petraeus: The Rise and Fall of Counterinsurgency."
[29] Gregory Freemont Barnes, vol II, 381.

government and security apparatus was neither strong enough nor stable enough to counter them once U.S. and Coalition forces left. All they had to do was bide their time.

Current conditions on the ground in Iraq, while exacerbated by the instability in neighboring Syria, support assertions that overall COIN was ineffective. The reasons are varied but there tends to be agreement among scholars that there was a lack of planning and clearly delineated end-states addressing what to do once Saddam Hussein was removed from power. This stumble in the beginning of the conflict was just the first misstep. The dismantling and displacement of Sunni power politics, and the inherent friction in tribal politics led to the creation of a government which was not seen as legitimate by a large enough portion of the population, allowing popular support for the multitude of insurgent groups to continue to flourish.[30] As conflict and violence continue to rise in Iraq, the Iraqi government struggles to provide even the most basic of functions outside of urban centers.

The U.S. military made large strides in learning from initial mistakes in Iraq and applied these lessons to refine an outdated COIN doctrine. However, the U.S. military still failed to grasp the biggest lesson it needed to learn about COIN. The changing nature of the insurgency in Iraq, and the ability of the insurgents to project power via violent terrorist tactics, gain the psychological initiative by seizing the narrative, and the coalescence of a transnational insurgent movement put U.S. and Coalition forces perpetually on the defensive.[31] The strategic initiative was not maintained in Iraq, because COIN was not applied as a part of a larger, clearly articulated and coherent strategy encompassing all of the elements of national power to include Diplomacy,

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[30] Andrew Tan, 252; Kaplan, Fred. "The End of the Age of Petraeus: The Rise and Fall of Counterinsurgency." 75-90; Gian Gentile; John A. Nagl, *Knife Fight,*170.
[31] Stephen Metz, 77-79.

Information, Military, and Economic (DIME) in a cohesive fashion. COIN in Iraq was

applied as a stand-alone doctrine, with tactics that were sometimes counterproductive,

and could not by itself create conditions leading to success. Had COIN instead been

applied as a tool of a larger strategy in Iraq, which was politically supported as an

enduring mission requiring protracted commitment of forces and money, it may have

been successful.[32]

[32] J. B Bartholomees,. *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues*. *Volumes 1 and 2. 3rd Edition*. Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2008. Defense Technical Information Center http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=870
Volume 1: Part II - The Elements of Power; Volume 2: Part I - The National System and Environment and Volume 2: Part II - The International System and Environment.

CHAPTER 5: COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan would prove an even harder counterinsurgency challenge than Iraq because, unlike Iraq, Afghanistan, after the Russians left, had no functioning central government, lacked a developed and functioning infrastructure throughout most of the country, and had a neighbor (Pakistan) who provided safe havens for the very insurgents the U.S. was trying to counter.[1] The social, ethnic, and religious make-up of Afghanistan is convoluted, with most of the population identifying themselves along ethnic and tribal lines versus a national Afghan identity. The majority, approximately 41%, of the population is Pashtun.[2] The Pashtun ethnic group is further divided along two tribal coalitions made up of approximately sixty major tribes. The next largest ethnic group is the Tajiks, who make up approximately 30% of the population. Moreover, after a couple of decades of war, Afghanistan could barely be described as a state, as none of the functions existed that identify the traditional make-up of a state, such as central government and institutions, security forces, and a cohesive national identity.

The tribal schisms, the porous border, and the lack of a central government should have been clear warning signs that a cookie cutter COIN doctrine that was believed to be working in Iraq was not going to work in Afghanistan. Afghanistan, prior to the installation of the Karzai government in 2001, lacked even the vestige of a legitimate government at both national and local levels. A presumption made in COIN doctrine is that there is at its most basic a legitimate government that can assist in conducting counterinsurgency operations.[3] However, in Afghanistan, politics, justice, and

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[1] Adam Roberts, "Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan," *Survival* 51, no. 1, February-March 2009, 29-60.
[2] Brian G. Williams, *Afghanistan Declassified: A Guide to America's Longest War,* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 16-39,
[3] FM 3-24 2014.

governance were mainly conducted at the Tribal level.[4] The Taliban understood the

intricacies of tribal politics and steered clear of regions they knew they could not control

or exert pressure. The U.S. and Coalition forces did not fully understand how these

systems worked, and in the initial stages of the conflict allowed Karzai's government to

marginalize the tribal leaders not associated with his tribal coalition and install governors

in regions who in turn created their own corrupt fiefdoms. This aura of corruption created

a pall of illegitimacy around the Karzai government.[5] In addition, the competition for

power, political and economic, routinely pitted Karzai's political appointees against each

other and anyone who opposed his rule.[6]

The Karzai government, because of how it was installed and how it operated after

it was installed, had a hard time proving itself as legitimate or representative of most of

the Afghan population outside of urban areas. It had neither the capacity nor the security

apparatus to conduct basic state functions and it was not set up to "fund nor deliver key

public services."[7] Most of the Afghan national public expenditures were paid for by

donors, to include the United States, in the form of aid packages. Moreover, key public

sector services remained highly dependent on foreign advisors and experts to even

remotely function. Because of the aid flowing into the country, and the nepotism and

corruption throughout the government ranks, Karzai had little incentive to improve

Afghanistan's public sector effectiveness or accountability.[8] Making things more

complicated was the pervasive corruption and nepotism in all levels of the government,

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[4] Brian G. Williams, 190-196.
[5] Ibid., 190-196.
[6] Bing West, *The Wrong War: Grit, Strategy, and the Way out of Afghanistan,* (New York: Random House, 2012), 247-251.
[7] Karl W. Eikenberry, "The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan." *Foreign Affairs* 92, no.5 (September 2013): 59-74. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan/2013-08-12/limits-counterinsurgency-doctrine-afghanistan. (accessed Oct 14 2015), 67.
[8] Ibid.

security forces that were nonexistent to begin with and when they were built up by U.S. and Coalition forces, barely provided basic security functions for the population, and a porous border with Pakistan which provided a safe haven for insurgent forces (Taliban, AQ) to retreat and regroup.[9] Initially, the U.S. was unwilling to publically chastise Pakistan for its role in allowing insurgents to cross its border unfettered and reside within Pakistan because of the fragile diplomatic relationship the U.S. had with the nuclear armed country.[10] This clash between non-vital U.S. national interests and vital U.S. national interests (diplomatic relations with Pakistan) played a key role in why COIN was ineffective in Afghanistan.

By 2007, the critical assumptions and goals informing the COIN doctrine for the conduct of operations in Afghanistan, based on the "success" in Iraq, were entirely too erroneous to be considered achievable in Afghanistan.[11] In addition, they were not consistent with the end-states articulated by Karzai's government. The United States saw the insurgency as a homegrown insurgency and treated it as such. Karzai, on the other hand, saw the insurgents as foreigners (Pakistani) masquerading as Afghans and wanted to treat them as such. This was not the only disconnect between the U.S. military commanders in the region and the Karzai government in defining the central premise behind counterinsurgency operations. The strategic end-states postulated by the United States Military Commanders in Afghanistan threatened Karzai's power base and put Karzai in a position where he felt obligated to oppose U.S. and coalition efforts or be

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[9] Gregory Freemont Barnes, vol II, 391-392.

[10] Adam Roberts, "Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan," *Survival: Global Politics and   Strategy*, vol 51, no 1, (February- March 2009) 29-60. https://www.iiss.org/en/publications/survival/sections/2009-5f8e/survival--global-politics-and-strategy-february-march-2009-0c8e/51-1-06-roberts-911e. (accessed January 28, 2016).

[11] Ibid

seen as a puppet of the U.S.[12] This disconnect created a Clausewitzian friction between

the Afghan government, the U.S. Military, and Civilian Advisors. This friction is

described by Karl W. Eikenberry.

> The United States strategy suffered from a serious internal contradiction.
> Its military claimed to have a winning plan that it pretended was supported
> by the Afghan head of state and commander in chief. But this was complete
> fiction. Karzai disagreed intellectually, politically, and viscerally with the key
> pillars of the COIN campaign.[13]

This friction in the basic understanding of the strategy enabled an environment where

corruption, crime, and criminal enterprises flourished and the host nation's overarching

political and military strategies were sometimes in direct conflict with the United States'

strategy. Moreover, there was a basic disconnect in the feasibility of the Karzai

government to be seen as legitimate representatives of the Afghan people when the

government did not ethnically represent a large portion of the populace. The key

weakness of the COIN doctrine approach in Afghanistan was the assumption that there

was a state (legitimate or otherwise) that wielded power, that could eventually be seen as

legitimate by the people, and that could help in efforts to either contain the insurgency or

address the reasons behind the insurgency.[14] However, other than countering terrorist

organizations, the U.S. was unable to define a politically palatable goal for Afghanistan.

This drove the articulation of an exit strategy with a specific date. This exit strategy

placed a burden on an already weak Afghan government, which was further exacerbated

by the inability of the Afghan state to provide basic security functions. This schism

allowed the insurgent groups to continue to conduct operations, and when routed,

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[12] Karl W. Eikenberry, 68
[13] Ibid., 71.
[14] Adam Roberts, 29-60.

patiently wait in Pakistani protected areas until the U.S. left the area then to return and

regain their foothold. [15]

This is not to suggest the U.S. and its Coalition partners accomplished nothing in

Afghanistan. The first ever-democratic power-transfer occurred in 2014 when President

Ashraf Ghani was voted into office. However, the vote was plagued by rumors of voting

fraud, irregularities, and intimidation, causing the United States Secretary of State John

Kerry to broker a power sharing deal between the two opposing candidates, making

Ghani President and Abdullah Abdullah the Chief Executive.[16] Afghanistan now has a

security force, which is gaining prominence countrywide, and working at cultivating an

atmosphere where the population is more willing to work with them to defend against

insurgent forces.[17] There are more trained civil servants providing expanding services,

local governments are being held more accountable by their populations, and there has

been an increase in infrastructure development in key urban areas. However, most of

these gains have been in purely urban areas. They do not address the majority of the

people, who often do not identify themselves as Afghan but rather identify along distinct

ethnic lines.

These gains enabled the U.S. and Coalition forces to reverse much of the

Taliban's momentum, giving the Afghan government time and space to continue to

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[15] Karl W. Eikenberry. 59-74.

[16] Joseph Goldstein, "EU Confirms Wide Fraud in Afghan Presidential Runoff Election," *New York Times*, December 16, 2014, (accessed December 28, 2014).
http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/17/world/asia/afghan-voting-fraud-detailed-in-new-report.html?_r=0

[17] David Rodriguiz, "Leaving Afghanistan to the Afghans: A Commander's Take on Security." *Foreign Affairs* https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan/2011-08-19/leaving- afghanistan-afghans. (accessed December 28, 2015).

expand security into the regions where it has not previously existed.[18] This security

would not be described as anywhere near the capability nor capacity it would need to be

to counter an insurgent threat, as it still relies heavily on U.S. support (e.g. economic,

advising, and assisting). Moreover, most of the effort of operations conducted in

Afghanistan and the gains achieved fall more distinctly within the realm of nation

building and not COIN.

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[18] Christopher Sims, Fernando Lujan, and Bing West. "Both Sides of COIN: Defining War After Afghanistan." *Foreign Affairs* https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2011-12-18/both-sides-coin. (accessed December 28, 2015).

CHAPTER 6: STRATEGIC RELEVANCE

War in the modern era is not going to be the same as conventional wars of the past, nor will it conform to any of the singular definitions of conflict we have seen thus far, including Counterinsurgency. It will consist of an amorphous threat and sporadic and uncertain conflicts with an enemy who is often capable of seamlessly melding back into an apathetic or cowed population. These threats are capable of employing a diverse set of tactics and techniques that could rival even the most advanced technologies and that are aimed at further undermining the political will of the government within which they operate. In addition, global trends exacerbate these problems including: population growth, urbanization, the rampant dissemination of military technology, and an increase of technical expertise.

Insurgents use tactics that are challenging for large conventional military forces to counter. Because of the disparity in capacity and capability, smaller forces of insurgents need to utilize whatever means they have available to include: battles fought in terrain that supports the insurgents vice conventional forces, the blurring of combatants and noncombatants, and the use of conventional and unconventional means to include terror tactics, criminal endeavors, and indiscriminate violence.[1] These types of tactics can also invite a disproportionate reaction from conventional forces focused on defeating an enemy that can often seamlessly blend back into the population. In addition, these tactics will ensure that the wars fought using them are neither short nor low in intensity. In addition, while this conflict meets the doctrinal definition of an insurgency there will not necessarily be an operational environment conducive to or capable of conducting COIN

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[1] David Kilcullen, Counterinsurgency, 1-13.

as the doctrine is defined now. These trends will continue to have an overwhelming effect

on the classification of future war.[2]

This type of war, whether classified as "New", Hybrid, Grey-Zone or some

amalgamation thereof, will continue to be characterized by massive amounts of violence

perpetrated by smaller groups or insurgents, normally not equipped with conventional

means, and not using conventional methods.[3] These wars will occur along seams or lines

being exploited by a population that is not definitively a part of a state identity, nor will

this type of conflict be confined to boundaries of a singular state.[4]

This type of conflict, which surges out of a sense of "competitive control,"

suggests that when the state loses control of a region (i.e. it no longer controls the

security apparatus, social services, or economic structures) that chaos will ensue.[5] This

sense of chaos and lack of security lends itself to a dichotomy where there is a portion of

a population that feels underrepresented and repressed and there is a population of elites

that tend to be exploitive and corrupt. In addition, with the increasing de-legitimization of

the state, these populations will no longer necessarily identify along state centric

identities. They will instead most likely identify along religious and ethnic identities that

defy state boundaries.[6] It is from this conflict of ideologies that this undefined type of

conflict that resembles insurgencies, will continue to arise.

Counterinsurgency operations require an enormous political will, as the conflict

will be prolonged and protracted and often extremely violent. The counterinsurgency

doctrine and subsequent operations conducted by the British in Malaya are a good

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[2] David Kilcullen. *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerilla.*
[3] Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars.*
[4] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash Of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.*
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

example where COIN was conducted successfully, however, more than just COIN

doctrine was applied. There was an overarching strategy that included COIN. Moreover,

the British understood that counterinsurgency operations were, essentially, wars of

attrition requiring high human costs on both sides, high economic costs, and often

invasive and violent tactics that could polarize the very population the operations were

seeking to protect. [7] However, the operational environment was such that the insurgents

they were fighting were seen as foreign by a large portion of the host nation they were

working with, allowing them to conduct operations in the manner they did. This distinct

separation of the insurgent ideology and the population which supports them, as

compared to the state and the population that supports them, is going to be even more

difficult to see in the future when there is less identification with a state.

A United States COIN doctrine, focused on, "protecting [the] civilian populations,

elimnat[ing] insurgent leaders and infrastructure, and…..establish[ing] a legitimate and

accountable host nation government able to deliver essential human services" is going to

require extensive expenditures of national capital and require protracted involvement.[8]

Thus far the United States has been mostly unsuccessful in applying COIN for a

multitude of reasons. One of the main reasons, is because there has not been a clear

definition of the relationship required between policy (created/articulated by civilian

leaders), strategy, and tactics.[9] According to Douglas Porch, proponents of COIN focus

on narrow interpretations of historical events where these types of operations were

effective, often discounting the true historical facts (e.g. scorched earth tactics, re-

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[7] Coined the pejorative term "coindinistas" to refer to General Petraeus and his followers. Douglas Porch. *Counterinsurgency: Exposing the Myths of the new Way of War*. Pages 1-40 and 318-346.

[8] Karl Eikenberry, p 60.

[9] Carl Von Clauswitz, *On War*, 99)

location camps, addressing the underlying causes of the insurgency, host government and nation support, and a comprehensive understanding of the operational environment) that created the conditions to win. In addition, "success in COIN often depends on whether or not the host government or nation is willing to make the sorts of reforms that earn the people's loyalty."[10]

Historical case studies suggest that this blended type of conflict (a combination of conventional and unconventional) is not a new way of war. Despite the misleading implications that this is a new way to think of war, Frank Hoffman, presents evidence that the United States too often relies on COIN as the answer for creating a strategy to fight an enemy that is often hard to define, identify, and effectively eliminate.[11] COIN is not a strategy, it is a doctrine and while it has come a long way since it was updated for Iraq and Afghanistan in 2006, the most recent update of FM 3-24 relies on an assumption that successful COIN operations require a legitimate government willing to address the root causes of the insurgency and help in efforts to counter the insurgency. In addition, COIN requires a whole of government approach that only relies on the M portion of DIME for a small part of the effort.[12] No matter how well doctrine is written, if it is not applied correctly, does not adequately define the problem and operating environment, or hinges on a superficial timeline, it will not succeed. In addition, the U.S. military has the propensity to revert back to what it knows best, which is conventional war. This was seen

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[10] Fred Kaplan, 289.

[11] Frank G. Hoffman, "Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Warfare." Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, Dec 2007. http://www.potomacinstitute.org/images/stories/publications/potomac_hybridwar_0108.pdf (accessed Oct 2015).

[12] FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency, May 2014.

in Iraq prior to the Sunni awakening, and in the operations which have been recently conducted against ISIS in Iraq.

Future U.S. military force structure should be manned, trained, and equipped to conduct both conventional and unconventional missions. This amalgamation of conventional and unconventional means can be accomplished with the full integration of all instruments of national power (a whole of government approach) geared towards achieving clearly identified political goals and strategic end states. Military operational planning and campaign design needs to more accurately reflect an approach that takes into account the nebulous nature of future conflicts, understanding that it will not be a consistent type of conflict which does not fit into a singular mold.[13]

War should only be waged in an effort to achieve clearly defined political goals, which are articulated by a responsible civilian authority and informed by the best military advice available. When clear political advice and goals are absent, and Military Commanders are directed to conduct operations to achieve far reaching nebulous goals such as "protecting the people," they will inevitably create strategies focused at the tactical level to do just that. However, how effective these strategies and tactics are in confronting this new type of conflict is debatable. Focusing on a Counterinsurgency doctrine that relies on particular set of assumptions which are not necessarily true make this all the more difficult because it does not adequately take into account a changing operational environment. In addition, a focus on protecting the population in "population centric" COIN while also building a nation's social, economic, and political base, and trying to defeat an enemy who may or may not represent a homogenous group that identifies with a national identity, and may not want more governmental representation,

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[13] Frank G. Hoffman, 7-9.

but rather the actual removal of the government, is extremely difficult.[14] These future

conflicts may in fact require a protracted fiscal and physical (boots on the ground)

involvement directed at destroying an enemy. To do this effectively needs a strategy that

outlines clearly defined political goals and end-states.

Success in future conflict becomes even more complicated when the event being

undertaken is not a vital national interest of the United States and the efforts needed to be

successful conflict with a stated U.S. vital national interest. Without a coherent strategy

that ties doctrine to politically defined end-states, and a force that is capable of

conducting successful operations target at this "new" type of war these insurgencies will

continue to threaten the U.S. National Security.[15]

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[14] Miller, Gregory. "On Winning Hearts and Minds: Key Conditions for Population-Centric COIN." *Small Wars Journal*, February 2016. http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/on-winning-hearts-and-minds-key-conditions-for-population-centric-coin. (accessed February 19, 2016).
[15] Ibid.

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