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Victory Has a Thousand Fathers

Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies

Christopher Paul • Colin P. Clarke • Beth Grill

Prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense

Approved for public release; distribution unlimited



NATIONAL DEFENSE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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Cover photo: A U.S. marine stands in a doorway after searching one of the houses of Saddam Hussein's family in Owja, Iraq, April 15, 2003. The village, which is just outside Tikrit, was the former leader's birthplace. AP Photo/Kevin Frayer.

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Preface

This research grew out of the sponsor's desire to be able to evidence the historical contribution (or lack of contribution) of activities concordant with what is now referred to as *strategic communication* to the outcomes of counterinsurgency (COIN) campaigns. The method that the RAND Corporation proposed to answer this question—a combination of historical case studies and the qualitative comparative approach—was capable of answering a much broader set of questions about the contributions of a wider range of approaches to COIN with minimal additional effort. This research, then, reports on the demonstrated effectiveness of a variety of approaches to counterinsurgency (including strategic communication) through case studies of the world's 30 most recent resolved insurgencies.

This monograph presents detailed case histories for each of the COIN campaigns examined in the analysis. A companion volume, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*, describes the qualitative comparative approach, presents findings from the overall analyses, and explains the study's case selection and methodology in more detail. It also presents an overview and in-depth assessments of the key approaches, practices, and factors that feature prominently in successful COIN operations.¹ The full case data can be downloaded at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG964/>.

¹ Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-964-OSD, 2010.

This work will be of interest to defense analysts and military planners who are responsible for evaluating current U.S. operations and COIN approaches; to academics and scholars who engage in historical research of COIN, insurgency, and irregular warfare; and to students of contemporary and historic international conflicts.

This research was sponsored by Office of the Secretary of Defense, Cost Analysis and Program Evaluation, Irregular Warfare Division, and conducted within the International Security and Defense Policy Center of the RAND National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Unified Combatant Commands, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the defense agencies, and the defense Intelligence Community.

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Summary

Thirty cases of insurgency form the empirical foundation for this research. This monograph provides more detail on the cases analyzed in the accompanying volume, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*.¹ As a prelude to the case histories, we briefly elaborate on how the cases were selected, how the data were collected, and how each case was divided into phases to better illustrate the progress and context of each case and the subsequent effect on the case outcome.

Case Selection and Data Collection

The 30 insurgency cases were drawn from a larger list of historical insurgencies developed as part of a previous RAND COIN study.² That initial list included 89 cases and purports to be an exhaustive list of insurgencies from 1934 to 2008. All cases met the following criteria:

¹ Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010.

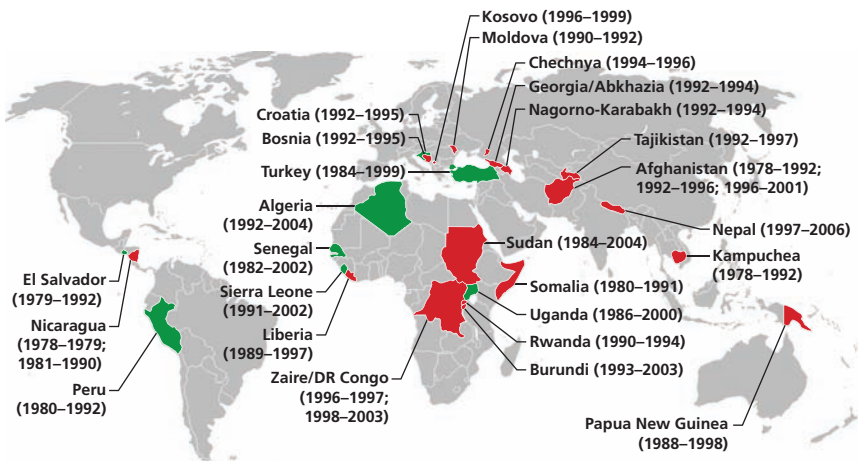
² Martin C. Libicki, “Eighty-Nine Insurgencies: Outcomes and Endings,” in David C. Gompert, John Gordon IV, Adam Grissom, David R. Frelinger, Seth G. Jones, Martin C. Libicki, Edward O’Connell, Brooke Stearns Lawson, and Robert E. Hunter, *War by Other Means—Building Complete and Balanced Capabilities for Counterinsurgency: RAND Counterinsurgency Study—Final Report*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-595/2-OSD, 2008. The initial case list was drawn from James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1, February 2003.

- They involved fighting between states and nonstates seeking to take control of a government or region or that used violence to change government policies.
- The conflict killed at least 1,000 people over its course, with a yearly average of at least 100.
- At least 100 people were killed on both sides (including civilians attacked by rebels).
- They were not coups, countercoups, or insurrections.

From that list, we selected the 30 most recently begun, completed cases for our study. Selection of these 30 cases also corresponds to a 30-year chronological span: All insurgencies began and were resolved between 1978 and 2008. These 30 cases span 26 countries and much of the globe (see Figure S.1).

Data for the case studies come from secondary sources. The analyst assigned to each case thoroughly reviewed the available English-language history and secondary analysis of the conflict for that case.

Figure S.1
Map of COIN Case Dates, Countries, and Outcomes



NOTE: Green shading indicates that the COIN force prevailed (or had the better of a mixed outcome), while red shading indicates that the outcome favored the insurgents (thus, a COIN loss).

Documentation proved voluminous for some cases (particularly those in Central and South America but also cases in which Russian or Soviet forces were involved); it was much more sparse for other cases (particularly those in Africa). In all cases, available information was sufficient to meet our data needs for the quantitative analyses. The references at the end of this volume demonstrate the range and depth of the available literature.

Phased Data

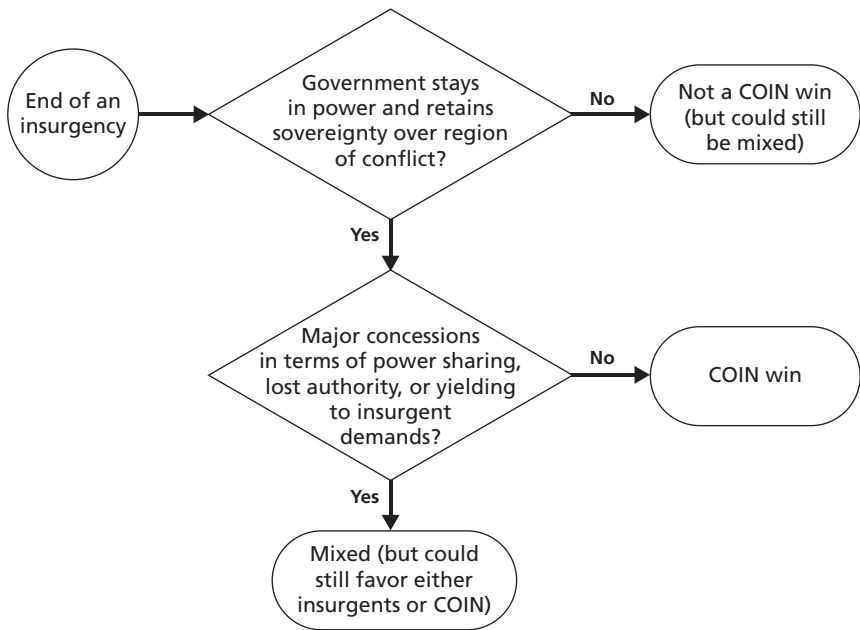
Because the approach and behavior of the COIN force, the actions of insurgents, and other important conditions can change during the course of an insurgency, we broke all of the cases into two to five phases. The phases are not of uniform duration. A new phase was declared when the case analyst recognized a significant shift in the COIN approach, in the approach of the insurgents, or in the exogenous conditions of the case. Phases were *not* intended to capture microchanges or tiny cycles of adaptation and counteradaptation between the insurgents and the COIN force; rather, these were macro-level and sea-change phases.

Assessing Case Outcomes

Since our analysis in the accompanying volume focuses on correlates of success in COIN, one of the most important elements of our case studies is the identification of the outcome of the cases (i.e., whether COIN forces actually succeeded). Many of these cases have complicated outcomes in which neither side realized all of its stated objectives and it is not exactly clear who won. While we report mixed outcomes in the case narratives, we also identify each case as either a COIN win or a COIN loss.

To adjudicate unclear case outcomes, we followed the logic illustrated in Figure S.2. First, for each case, we asked whether the government against which the insurgency arose had stayed in power through

Figure S.2
Logic for Assignment of Case Outcomes



RAND MG964/11-S.2

the end of the conflict and whether it retained sovereignty over the region of conflict. If insurgents either deposed (or otherwise led to the fall of) the government or won de facto control of a separatist region, then the COIN force did *not* win. If the government remained in power and the country remained intact, then we further considered whether the government had been forced to (or chose to) make major concessions to the insurgents, such as power sharing or loss of territory or other sovereign control, or was otherwise forced to yield to insurgent demands. If the government stayed in power, the country remained intact, and no major concessions were granted to the insurgents, then the COIN force unambiguously won. If, however, major concessions were made, then the outcome was mixed. In all cases, what constituted a “major” concession and who (the COIN force or the insurgents) had the better of a mixed outcome was decided at the discretion of the individual case analyst and was based on the distinct narrative of that case.

Applying this logic to the 30 selected cases results in eight cases that are COIN wins and 22 cases that are COIN losses. Table S.1 lists the insurgencies, the dates they spanned, and their outcomes.

Table S.1
Countries, Insurgents, and Date Spans of the 30 Case-Study Insurgencies

Country (Insurgency)	Years	Outcome
Nicaragua (Somoza)	1978–1979	COIN loss
Afghanistan (anti-Soviet)	1978–1992	COIN loss
Kampuchea	1978–1992	COIN loss
El Salvador	1979–1992	COIN win
Somalia	1980–1991	COIN loss
Peru	1980–1992	COIN win
Nicaragua (Contras)	1981–1990	COIN loss
Senegal	1982–2002	COIN win
Turkey (PKK)	1984–1999	COIN win
Sudan (SPLA)	1984–2004	COIN loss
Uganda (ADF)	1986–2000	COIN win
Papua New Guinea	1988–1998	COIN loss
Liberia	1989–1997	COIN loss
Rwanda	1990–1994	COIN loss
Moldova	1990–1992	COIN loss
Sierra Leone	1991–2002	COIN win
Algeria (GIA)	1992–2004	COIN win
Croatia	1992–1995	COIN win
Afghanistan (post-Soviet)	1992–1996	COIN loss
Tajikistan	1992–1997	COIN loss
Georgia/Abkhazia	1992–1994	COIN loss
Nagorno-Karabakh	1992–1994	COIN loss
Bosnia	1992–1995	COIN loss
Burundi	1993–2003	COIN loss
Chechnya I	1994–1996	COIN loss
Afghanistan (Taliban)	1996–2001	COIN loss
Zaire (anti-Mobutu)	1996–1997	COIN loss

Table S.1—Continued

Country (Insurgency)	Years	Outcome
Kosovo	1996–1999	COIN loss
Nepal	1997–2006	COIN loss
DR Congo (anti-Kabila)	1998–2003	COIN loss

NOTE: “COIN loss” includes the outcomes “insurgent win” and “mixed, favoring insurgents” (nine of 22 case losses were mixed outcomes favoring the insurgents). “COIN win” includes “COIN win” and “mixed, favoring COIN force.” “Mixed, favoring COIN force” occurs only once in the eight COIN wins.

Structure of the Case Narratives

The narratives in this volume are structured as follows:

- a short summary of the case
- a summary of each phase of the case, including key factors for that phase
- a discussion of the conventional explanations for the outcomes of the case, as offered in existing secondary analysis
- a list of distinct features of the case.

Beyond this, we offer no separate analysis of the individual cases; our overall analyses, presented in the accompanying volume, are of aggregate-level data across all of the cases together. In fact, one of our most striking findings is that we do not need to discuss any of the distinct features or unique narrative peculiarities of the individual cases to wholly explain the outcomes: The patterns of presence or absence of factors common to all of the cases are sufficient to explain all of the outcomes.³ In fact, our analysis supports the idea that it can be a mistake to learn too many “lessons” from a single case, as the peculiarities and distinctions of a single case may obfuscate otherwise critical and enduring relationships between COIN practices and outcomes.

³ See Chapter Four in Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010.

Abbreviations

ABH	Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
AFDL	Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo [Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo]
AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
APC	armored personnel carrier
ARDE	Alianza Revolucionaria Democrática [Democratic Revolutionary Alliance]
BRA	Bougainville Revolutionary Army
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNDD	Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie [National Council for the Defense of Democracy]
COIN	counterinsurgency
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DRG	Dniester Republican Guards

ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EO	Executive Outcomes
EPS	Ejército Popular Sandinista [Sandinista People's Army]
FAR	Forces Rwandaises de Défense [Rwandan Armed Forces]
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo [Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo]
FDD	Forces for the Defense of Democracy
FDN	Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense [Nicaraguan Democratic Force]
FIS	Front Islamique du Salut [Islamic Salvation Front]
FMLN	Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional [Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front]
FNL	Forces Nationales de Libération [National Liberation Forces]
FSK	Federalnaya Sluzhba Kontrrazvedki [Federal Counterintelligence Service]
FSLN	Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional [Sandinista National Liberation Front]
FUNCINPEC	Front Uni National pour un Cambodge Indépendant, Neutre, Pacifique, et Coopératif [National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia]

GIA	Groupe Islamique Armé [Armed Islamic Group]
GSPC	Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat
HDZ	Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica [Croatian Democratic Union]
HV	Hrvatska Vojska [Croatian army]
HVO	Hrvatsko Vijeće Obrane [Croat Defense Council]
INPFL	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
IO	information operations
JNA	Jugoslavenska Narodna Armija [Yugoslav People's Army]
KGB	Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti [Committee for State Security]
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
KNUFNS	Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation
KPNLAF	Khmer People's National Liberation Armed Forces
MFDC	Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance [Movement of Democratic Forces of the Casamance]
MLC	Mouvement de Libération du Congo [Movement for the Liberation of the Congo]
MPS	Milicia Popular Sandinista [Sandinista People's Militia]

MRND	Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour la Démocratie et le Développement [National Revolutionary Movement for Democracy and Development]
NALU	National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PKK	Parti Karkerani Kurdistan [Kurdistan Workers' Party]
PNGDF	Papua New Guinea Defence Force
PSYOP	psychological operations
RCD	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie [Congolese Rally for Democracy]
RPA	Rwandan Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RPG	rocket-propelled grenade
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SNM	Somali National Movement
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SSDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
SVK	Srpska Vojska Krajine [Serbian Krajina army]
UCLA	unilaterally controlled Latino asset

UDN	Unión Democrática Nicaragüense [Nicaraguan Democratic Union]
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNITA	União Nacional para la Independência Total de Anglola [National Union for the Total Independence of Angola]
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force
UPRONA	Union pour le Progrès National [Union for National Progress]
USC	United Somali Congress
UTO	United Tajik Opposition

Detailed Overviews of 30 Counterinsurgency Cases

This volume presents summary case studies for each of the 30 counterinsurgency (COIN) cases used for our analyses, discussed in *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*. Each entry is arranged by the year in which the insurgency began and presents (1) the country or region, specifying information regarding which insurgency (for countries or regions with multiple insurgencies in the data); (2) the date range of the case; (3) the case outcome; (4) a short summary; (5) a more detailed case narrative that addresses each phase of the insurgency; (6) the conventional explanations offered for the outcome of the case; (7) the case's distinctive characteristics; (8) a map of the country or region; and (9) a list of the factors, scored for each phase of the case.

Nicaragua (Somoza), 1978–1979

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Case Summary

Four decades of neo-patrimonial rule by a corrupt and unpopular government led to an uprising in the rural parts of Nicaragua that quickly spread from the countryside to the cities and towns surrounding the capital, Managua. The combination of effective political organization by the Sandinistas, repressive policies by the government, loss of support for President Anastasio Somoza Debayle in the United States, and a steady supply of weapons from various Latin American nations to the insurgents led to an insurgent victory in a short but bloody conflict.

Case Narrative

Phase I: “Après Moi, le Déluge” (January 1978–March 1979)

Phase Outcome: Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: In area of conflict, COIN force perceived as worse than insurgents; COIN force *failed* to avoid excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force.

Widespread dissatisfaction with Somoza’s regime had been building for years but finally came to a head following the January 1978 murder of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, editor of *La Prensa*, one of the top newspapers in Nicaragua. Riots spread throughout Managua, the capital, as well as the rural areas that had been the stronghold of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, or FSLN. Over the next several months, the FSLN began to organize anti-Somoza groups in the cities while maintaining their rural bases throughout the country. On August 23, 1978, the insurgents conducted a daring raid on the seat of government in Managua. Dressed in National Guard uniforms and driving army trucks, FSLN guerrillas stormed the National Palace and took Somoza’s friends, allies, and family members as hostages.¹

¹ Saul Landau, *The Guerrilla Wars of Central America: Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993, p. 30.

In response to the palace raid, the COIN force applied brutal tactics to insurgent-controlled areas, leveling entire blocks with artillery and heavy machine-gun fire.² The repression extended to the *barrios*, where thousands of men and women were arrested, tortured, interrogated, and killed. With world attention focused on Nicaragua and international sympathy forming behind the insurgents, several thousand Sandinistas launched a major offensive, taking control of five major cities. During this first phase of the insurgency, COIN forces were equipped with artillery and machine guns, while many of the insurgents had only small arms, and others fought with rocks, sticks, and Molotov cocktails. Somoza's air force bombed insurgent-held cities and continued to do so even after the Sandinistas retreated, taking out its frustration on the population that had provided the insurgents with support. The brutal repression exhibited by Somoza's National Guard "won the Sandinistas hundreds if not thousands of new, young recruits, spoiling for revenge."³ The next several months saw negotiations flounder as the Carter administration attempted to figure out which side to back—Somoza or the Sandinistas—until administration officials eventually decided to withdraw support for Somoza.

Phase II: "Viva el Frente Sandinista" (April 1979–July 1979)

Phase Outcome: COIN Loss

Key Factors: Insurgents adapted; insurgents received increased external support.

While the insurgents were beginning to gain momentum in the early months of 1979, militarily, the COIN forces still held the upper hand. Somoza's National Guard had nearly 10,000 troops, compared to the Sandinistas' 2,000 fighters.⁴ In addition to outnumbering the insurgents by a five-to-one ratio, the COIN force also had overwhelming

² Landau, 1993, p. 30.

³ Robert Kagan, *A Twilight Struggle: American Power and Nicaragua, 1977–1990*, New York: Free Press, 1996, p. 59.

⁴ Kagan, 1996, p. 80.

technical superiority, maintaining an air force, a tank battalion in Managua, and an elite special forces unit.⁵

What made the second and final phase of the insurgency successful for the Sandinistas was the unification of the three insurgent factions in early 1979. Under the leadership of Daniel Ortega, the Guerra Popular Prolongada, the Tendencia Proletaria, and the Tercerista/Insurreccionista organized into one homogenous group and adopted a combined political-military strategy.⁶

Fearing a prolonged stalemate, the Sandinistas laid out plans for a renewed offensive that they sought to implement in April 1979. The three-pronged strategy was to begin with calls for a general strike throughout Nicaragua's major cities. The purpose of the strike was to sew confusion, bring economic activity to a grinding halt, and serve as a general impediment to "business as usual" for the government. Second, popular uprisings were initiated in six major cities. Third, insurgent attacks emanating from the rural areas in the north and west were launched against the capital.⁷ After seeking counsel from Latin America's most well-known and successful insurgent leader, Fidel Castro of Cuba, the Sandinistas decided to switch from frontal attacks to more classic insurgent tactics, such as harassment, deception, and hit-and-run strikes. Still, for the offensive to have any real chance of success, the insurgents needed weapons.

The success of the Sandinistas in the final phase of the insurgency was the result of several factors, but undoubtedly a major element in the insurgents' offensive was their ability to acquire weapons from abroad. Venezuela, Cuba, and Panama all contributed supplies, including anti-aircraft weapons, AK-47 rifles, .50-caliber machine guns, and handheld mortars.⁸ Costa Rica was used as a transit point for delivery, and the weapons were then smuggled across the border into Nicaragua for use by the insurgents.

⁵ Kagan, 1996, p. 80.

⁶ Kagan, 1996, p. 78.

⁷ Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century*, St. Paul, Minn.: Zenith Press, 2004, p. 87.

⁸ Kagan, 1996, p. 80.

Now equipped with a robust arsenal of weapons, the insurgents were able to switch from launching sporadic attacks to more coordinated, sophisticated strikes against the National Guard. The tangible support provided to the insurgents from abroad was critical to their effectiveness in launching attacks and, overall, “the growth in the Sandinistas’ military capabilities was dramatic.”⁹ With their confidence at an all-time high, the Sandinistas announced a “final offensive” in early May and sent 300 insurgents to attack the town of Rivas, across the border from Costa Rica. By May, the insurgent force had grown tremendously—to between 2,000 and 5,000 fighters.¹⁰ While the success of the insurgents in battle can be attributed largely to the quantitative and qualitative improvement in weaponry, their dramatic increase in numbers was primarily a result of a fine-tuned political message gaining favor with the population.

With a U.S.-imposed arms embargo against the Somoza government as a result of its indiscriminate violence, the insurgents racked up successive victories in cities, towns, and villages until the capital collapsed on July 20, 1979, and Somoza was forced into exile.¹¹

Conventional Explanations

The conventional explanations for the success of the insurgents against the Somoza regime follow three main storylines. First, and the most significant factor in the Sandinistas’ military success, was the external military support supplied by Cuba, Panama, Venezuela, and Costa Rica. After weapons began pouring into the country, “the momentum of the war had shifted: the Sandinistas were on an upward course and the Guard was on a downward course. The main reason was the disparity in the flows of weapons to the two sides.”¹² Second, and a significant reason for the boost in insurgent recruitment, was the repres-

⁹ Kagan, 1996, p. 83.

¹⁰ Kagan, 1996, p. 84.

¹¹ Raymond Millen, *The Political Context Behind Successful Revolutionary Movements, Three Case Studies: Vietnam (1955–63), Algeria (1945–62), and Nicaragua (1967–79)*, Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, March 2008, p. 47.

¹² Kagan, 1996, p. 85.

sive policies and indiscriminate violence used by the Somoza regime and National Guard against the citizens of Nicaragua, as “the Somoza regime made no distinction between reformists and revolutionaries.”¹³ The FSLN’s membership increased tenfold over the course of just a year and a half, from 500 in 1978 to more than 5,000 by July 1979. Third, the Sandinistas recognized the importance of the political element of the insurgency and sought to incorporate a broad swath of groups into their ranks. By co-opting a wide range of political groups in Nicaragua—from moderates to Marxists to the Catholic Church—the Sandinistas were able to acquire the legitimacy that was so elusive to Somoza’s government and COIN forces, and they used this legitimacy to garner support in both the rural areas and the major cities.

Distinctive Characteristics

- The Sandinista insurgency was a rare example of hierarchical leadership based in rural areas combined with a networked insurgency in urban areas. This hybrid rural-urban insurgency is uncommon, but it allows insurgents to rely equally on both the countryside and the cities for sources of support.¹⁴
- U.S. President Jimmy Carter’s emphasis on human rights led U.S. policy to be steered toward the support of an insurgent group with communist leanings against a long-held, stalwart ally in Latin America.
- The Sandinistas’ war against Somoza saw the effective use of propaganda by insurgents and is an example of one of the first groups to genuinely recognize the importance of international public opinion and use it to its advantage. The insurgents influenced U.S. and world opinion through the media, even writing editorials in the *New York Times*.¹⁵
- The insurgency ended when it did in part because of pressure exerted by the Carter administration, first through an arms

¹³ Millen, 2008, p. 44.

¹⁴ The hybrid model of insurgency is espoused by Abraham Guillen in his *Philosophy of the Urban Guerrilla*, Donald C. Hodges, trans. and ed., New York: William Morrow, 1973.

¹⁵ Hammes, 2004, p. 88.

embargo and then through the veiled threat of sending U.S. troops to remove Somoza and his regime. It is a stark example of an external intervening power forcing the hand of the COIN force and paving the way for an insurgent victory.

Figure 1
Map of Nicaragua



SOURCE: Central Intelligence Agency,
World Factbook, Washington, D.C., 2010.

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Table 1
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Nicaragua (Somoza)

Factor	Phase I (1978–1979)	
	Phase II (1979)	
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	0	0
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	0	0
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	1	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	0	0
Government a functional democracy	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0
Free and fair elections held	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	1
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	1	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0

Table 1—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1978–1979)	Phase II (1979)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	1	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	1	1
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/ enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	1
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	1	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	1

Table 1—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1978–1979)	
	Phase II (1979)	
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	1
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	1	1
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	0	0
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	0
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	1
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	1	0
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	1	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	1
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	0
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	1
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	0	0
Government/state was competent	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	1
Government/COIN win	0	0
Insurgent win	1	1
Mixed outcome	0	0

NOTE: IO = information operations. PSYOP = psychological operations.

Afghanistan (Anti-Soviet), 1978–1992

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Case Summary

The Afghan insurgency of 1978–1992 has been referred to as a “textbook study of how a major power can fail to win a war against guerrillas.”¹⁶ Despite its overwhelming political and military superiority, the Soviet Union was unable to effectively “crush” the resistance fighters who rose up against it and its proxy regime in Kabul. The Soviets encountered unexpected opposition to their invasion in 1979 and were unprepared to face the challenge of upholding a weak, unpopular communist government against highly motivated Islamic fighters, or mujahadeen.

Lacking an effective COIN policy, the Soviets and the Kabul regime were at a disadvantage against the mujahadeen, who not only benefited from extensive external support (including the provision of highly effective Stinger missiles) and religious fervor, but were also in a position to “win by simply not losing.”¹⁷ Although the mujahadeen failed to unify as an insurgent force or to offer an alternative form of governance, they were able to effectively delegitimize the Kabul regime and defeat the Soviets after more than a decade of guerrilla war.

Case Narrative

Phase I: “Unexpected Resistance” (1979–1984)

Phase Outcome: Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: COIN force viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict; important internal support to insurgents significantly increased or maintained; important external support to insurgents significantly increased or maintained.

¹⁶ Anthony James Joes, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical, Biographical, and Bibliographical Sourcebook*, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996, p. 119.

¹⁷ The phrase “win by not losing,” which has been used to characterize the goals of the Afghan resistance, is a central tenet of the “continuation and contestation” approach. See Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010.

The Afghan insurgency was prompted by a bloody coup against President Mohammed Daoud Khan by the small Afghan communist party, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), in April 1978. The coup and the PDPA's subsequent imposition of a brutal Stalinist regime led to widespread popular protests. By 1979, despite significant support from the Soviet Union, rebel groups gained control of 23 of the country's 28 provinces. The Soviet Union, fearing the downfall of a nearby pro-communist state, amidst the backdrop of the Cold War, responded by launching a full-scale invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, killing PDPA leader Hafizullah Amin and installing Babrak Karmal as president.¹⁸

The Soviet Union employed tactics similar to those used during the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, moving in heavy artillery and antitank weaponry, which are not suitable for COIN warfare.¹⁹ They intended to assert control with a show of overwhelming force and empower Karmal to take on the insurgents. To the Soviets' apparent surprise, however, their invasion met fierce resistance from the Afghan population and strong rebuke from the international community, and rather than building support for a more moderate regime, it created a backlash against it.²⁰

In response to the Soviet invasion, groups of loosely aligned Islamic fighters that had formed to fight the PDPA grew stronger. Support for the mujahadeen grew as their cause became a "jihad" against "invading infidels" (effectively linking Islamic insurgency to the cause of national liberation).²¹ External support further strengthened the

¹⁸ Soviet motives for invading Afghanistan were complex. The political relationship between Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev and Afghan president Hafizullah Amin played a role, as did the politburo's concerns about U.S. interests in the region and the impact of the insurgency on Muslim populations in Soviet Central Asia, following the revolution in nearby Iran. Moreover, the desire to demonstrate its role as a world power also contributed to the Soviet Union's decision to launch what was intended to be a quick invasion. See Gregory Feifer, *The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan*, New York: HarperCollins, 2009, pp. 1–8.

¹⁹ Olivier Roy, *The Lessons of the Soviet-Afghan War*, Adelphi Paper No. 259, London: Brassey's, Summer 1991.

²⁰ Roy, 1991.

²¹ Roy, 1991, p. 17.

mujahadeen as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the United States provided sanctuary and training, as well as significant financial and military aid to their cause. They benefited greatly from their role as proxies for Muslim governments seeking to fight for Islamic freedom and for the United States in its efforts to defeat the Soviets in the Cold War.

Just as the resistance movement appeared to be unexpectedly strong, the Karmal regime seemed to be far weaker than the Soviets had expected. Much of Afghanistan's army disintegrated after the Soviet invasion, and the new Afghan government was unable to rebuild an effective military force. This left the Soviets to do most of the heavy fighting against the resistance, thus further undermining the legitimacy of the regime. Moreover, the Soviet forces proved to be undisciplined and unmotivated, which led to widespread abuse and defections and severely reduced the Soviet army's effectiveness as an occupying force. Theft on a massive scale by Afghan soldiers served to embitter the Afghan populace,²² and some members of the Soviet military actually defected to the mujahadeen.

The Soviet Union did not appear to have established a COIN strategy upon invading Afghanistan. Not expecting to face an effective Muslim insurgency, it did not prepare for long-term COIN warfare nor did it deploy its elite troops to fight the insurgency. Moreover, it did not recognize the impact that the invasion might have on the insurgency.

In the first year following the invasion, the Soviet forces pursued a conservative line of action, staging few operations and thus giving the mujahadeen time to organize and consolidate.²³ As the Afghan resistance grew, the Soviets responded with large-scale armored warfare designed for the European theater. After 1982, the Soviets made some adjustments in their equipment and tactics, conducting aerial and artillery bombardments against their targets. These operational changes served only to increase the level of casualties in the war, without allowing them to "bleed the mujahadeen, to cut their communication lines or regain lost territories."²⁴

²² Feifer, 2009.

²³ Joes, 1996, p. 122.

²⁴ Roy, 1991, p. 178

Similarly, the Soviets initiated systematic sweep operations intended to clear the countryside, particularly near the borders, to make it impossible for civilians to supply food to the guerrillas. These operations were often criticized as “migratory genocide,” because they caused a great deal of destruction and massive displacement without providing for resettlement, and thus largely backfired. By 1983, over 3 million Afghans—more than one-fifth of the Afghan population—reportedly left the country, with most going to neighboring Pakistan.²⁵

Phase II: “COIN Improves, War of Attrition Ensues” (1984–1986)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: COIN force adapted to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics; important external support to insurgents significantly increased or maintained.

The Soviets made significant adjustments to their COIN tactics from 1984 to 1986 that proved more effective. By using elite forces to carry out attacks on the mujahadeen, incorporating small-unit tactics, and relying on helicopter gunships to achieve air domination over the insurgents, they were closer to gaining an upper hand in combating the resistance. At the same time, Kabul’s army grew stronger as the result of Soviet training and increased support from local militias.

The Karmal regime also gained strength but was still heavily reliant on the Soviet Union, both politically and militarily. The regime remained factionalized, and its efforts to gain legitimacy by attempting to co-opt religious leaders and depict itself as a defender of the Islamic faith failed due to its close association with communism. (“The atheism of the Soviets was notorious and the religious symbolism was effectively expropriated by the mujahadeen.”)²⁶

The Soviets also made limited attempts to address the nonmilitary social aspects of COIN. In 1986, the Soviets initiated a brief “hearts-

²⁵ Thomas Hammond, *Red Flag over Afghanistan: The Communist Coup, the Soviet Invasion, and the Consequences*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984.

²⁶ William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 96.

and-minds” campaign in the Afghan countryside, sending small agit-prop units into villages. The Soviets also continued to launch air and artillery strikes on hostile population centers, however, so the campaign was seen only as an effort to “cloak the ruthlessness of its military activities.”²⁷ Although the civilian population became exhausted by the war and the dislocation of refugees, these hardships did not translate into support for the government.

Traditional Soviet propaganda methods of education and indoctrination also appeared to be limited by the fact that few Afghans favored communism. The Soviets sought to educate several thousand young Afghans in the Soviet Union and to transform the Afghan educational system, yet their efforts did not have a significant impact. The Kabul regime’s attempt to subject the population to a barrage of communist propaganda through radio, television, and newspapers was largely ineffective due to a lack of technology and illiteracy rates as high as 90 percent. Thus, these strategic communication campaigns had a limited effect.

Moreover, while the morale of the mujahadeen was clearly lower as a result of the Soviets attacks, they maintained sufficient popular support to sustain a force of 150,000 to 200,000 armed fighters and continued to benefit from strong external support from Pakistan and, increasingly, the United States. Thus, while the improved tactics of the Soviet Union and the Afghan army served to give them a slight military advantage in what was becoming a war of attrition, the mujahadeen did not succeed in changing the course of the war.

Phase III: “Stingers Turn the Tide” (1986–1988)

Phase Outcome: Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power; COIN force *failed* to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.

²⁷ Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, *Lessons of Modern War, Volume III: The Afghan and Falkland Conflicts*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1990.

The Soviets' military advantage proved short-lived as the mujahadeen gained better weapon technology in the mid-1980s: first, the acquisition of surface-to-air missiles and then the introduction of "Stinger" handheld antiaircraft missiles in 1986. At the same time, Soviet strategic objectives in the war appeared to be changing as President Mikhail Gorbachev established a timeline for withdrawal from the country in an effort to build support for his domestic political agenda.²⁸

The Stinger missiles, which became widely available due to U.S. assistance, drastically reduced the Soviets' ability to provide mobility or protection to their military forces. After incurring heavy aircraft losses in the spring of 1987, Soviet aircraft were forced to fly above 12,000 feet or at night. Despite some Soviet success in adopting technical and tactical countermeasures, the Stingers were able to eliminate the Soviets' air superiority.²⁹ By the summer of 1987, half of Afghan airspace was free of Soviet aircraft. Afghan resistance forces were then able to secure areas of sanctuary where their main bases and ordnance were safe from Soviet troops.³⁰ Moreover, the guerrillas were able to reduce land communication between major cities, and penetrate the Kabul government and its military, making surprise operations impossible while at the same time increasing their attacks on PDPA and Soviet forces. A number of analysts have claimed that the acquisition of Stinger missiles effectively turned the tide of the war. Others have argued that while the missiles had an impact on the Soviets' tactics, they did not change Moscow's strategy to initiate a withdrawal from the country.³¹

²⁸ Gorbachev announced in February 1986 that Afghanistan was a "bleeding wound," and "we should in the nearest future withdraw Soviet troops." Later, in November 1986, the Politburo imposed a deadline for withdrawal of "one year—at maximum two years." This change in policy was attributed to Gorbachev's interest in gaining domestic support for his policy of Soviet economic reform (perestroika). See Alan J. Kuperman, "The Stinger Missile and U.S. Intervention in Afghanistan," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 114, No. 2, Summer 1999, pp. 235–252.

²⁹ "Soviet aircraft were retrofitted with flares, beacons, and exhaust baffles to disorient the missiles" (Alan J. Kuperman and Milton Bearden, letter to the editor, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 1, January–February 2002).

³⁰ Roy, 1991, p. 23.

³¹ Kuperman and Bearden, 2002.

By 1987, the insurgents controlled most of the countryside and were able to launch attacks on PDPA leaders and the Soviets in Kabul. Although they failed to gain control of a city, the mujahadeen were able to persevere against Soviet attacks (with the aid of Stinger missiles) and continue to increase the costs of war to a level that the Soviets found unacceptable.³²

At the same time, the Afghan government remained weak. Despite a change in leadership as Najibullah took over for Karmal (by the promulgation of a new republican constitution by *loya jirga*), the government was no more popular or more successful in rebuilding its military forces that it had been before. Najibullah's effort to imbue the government with a more Islamic and less Marxist character after 1989 was seen as disingenuous and largely ineffective.³³ Though they were unable to ensure the stability of the Afghan state, the Soviets began to depart in April 1988, exiting completely by 1989.

Phase IV: "A Weakening State Struggles to Hold On" (1989–1992)

Phase Outcome: COIN Loss

Key Factors: External professional military disengaged from fighting on behalf of government; external support to COIN force from strong state/military reduced.

Remarkably, the Najibullah regime was able to remain in power in Kabul for three years following the Soviets' departure. Aided by Moscow's continued support, including vast quantities of food and military assistance (valued at US\$300 million per month),³⁴ the regime maintained a weak hold on the government apparatus. It was able to placate various regional and ethnic insurgent groups by providing greater local authority and encouraging the formation of local militias. Such

³² Cordesman and Wagner, 1990.

³³ James Wylie, "Afghanistan—Spiraling Decline," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol. 6, No. 6, July 1, 1994.

³⁴ David C. Isby, "Soviet Arms: Deliveries and Aid to Afghanistan, 1989–1991," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol. 3, No. 8, August 1991, as quoted by Maley, 2002, p. 170. "[E]ven though Soviet troops had left, Soviet planes kept flying" (Maley, 2002, p. 169).

policies were initially successful; the mujahadeen lacked the unity and drive that the presence of Soviet forces in Afghanistan had provided for their “jihad” and suffered from the immediate loss of U.S. support for their cause. Levels of U.S. military support dropped precipitously after the Soviet withdrawal, weakened by a loss of popular support in the United States after the Soviets’ departure. The United States not only reduced its arms shipments but also “bought back” Stinger missiles in the field.

Moreover, while the United States was withdrawing its support, the Soviets gave Kabul an increasing number of sophisticated weapons, such as surface-to-surface Scud missiles. Moscow’s supplies greatly exceeded dwindling U.S. help, and as the Stingers became less effective, the Afghani COIN forces tried new tactics and weaponry.³⁵

The mujahadeen also made the mistake of underestimating the power of the government forces early on. They failed to recognize the advantage that the government held in armament and organization, and erred in massacring government defectors from the regime, which reduced future cooperation with insurgent sympathizers in the army. The mujahadeen were further weakened by infighting that occurred within their own ranks as various groups and individual leaders competed for power, perceiving the Najibullah regime as doomed.

Such missteps resulted in the failure of the mujahadeen’s initial offensive on Kabul, from March to May 1989, and led to another war of attrition between the Afghan government and the mujahadeen.

Over the course of the next three years, the Afghan government’s COIN strategy of granting more power to local militias led to the progressive weakening of the state and the continued loss of national coherency among the Afghan population.³⁶ The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the loss of Soviet aid further left the government without critical means of external support. It was then no longer able to withstand the attacks from the competing mujahadeen groups. By 1991, the northern militias mutinied. Najibullah was then pressured

³⁵ Roy, 1991, p. 24.

³⁶ Gilles Dorronsoro, “Kabul at War (1992–1996): State, Ethnicity and Social Classes,” *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, October 14, 2007.

to leave office and the regime fell in 1992, leaving the country on the verge of civil war.

Conventional Explanations

While there is continued debate over the causes of the Soviets' defeat in Afghanistan, it is widely believed that Moscow's failure to consider a number of conventional COIN approaches played a role, particularly the "cultural awareness," "continuation and contestation," and "legitimacy" approaches.³⁷ The Soviets followed their traditional "crush them" policy in Afghanistan, with the intent to quickly put down the opposition with conventional forces and little consideration for the Afghan culture or popular sentiment. They failed to understand the strength of the mujahadeen's message, which combined the desire to expel an outside invader with the fight against infidels. They also failed to account for the Afghans' ability to obtain external support and continue their fight in a way in which they could "win by not losing." Moreover, from the earliest stages of the conflict, the Soviet Union faced the inherent obstacle of supporting a weak, unpopular Afghan government. The more it supported the PDPA regime with armed force, the more it compromised its legitimacy.

Boots on the ground may also be considered a factor in the Soviets' defeat, as their client forces required them to carry a much bigger share of fighting than planned.³⁸ Internal political concerns prevented Moscow from committing substantial numbers of troops to the war in Afghanistan. According to Anthony Joes, "to achieve the traditional 10-to-1 ratio of troops to guerrillas, the Soviets would have had to put at least 900,000 soldiers in Afghanistan, eight times the size of their actual commitment," and "even then there would be no assurance of a speedy solution."³⁹ Finally, a failure in flexibility and adaptability on the part of the COIN forces to adjust to the mujahadeen's use of the Stinger missiles allowed the insurgents to compensate for the Soviets' control of the airspace and gain an upper hand in the conflict.

³⁷ See Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010, for a more detailed discussion of these perspectives.

³⁸ Anthony James Joes, *Modern Guerrilla Insurgency*, Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1992.

³⁹ Joes, 1996, p. 124.

Distinctive Characteristics

- The Afghan insurgency against the Soviets was one of very few instances in which guerrillas successfully contested their conventional opponents without the assistance of conventional military forces.⁴⁰ This may be largely attributed to the introduction of handheld antiaircraft missiles, which served as a significant equalizer.
- Due to the nature of the conflict, the strategy of the Afghan resistance was not to defeat the Soviets but to make their continued occupation of the country too costly. Stalemate was the objective of the mujahadeen. Thus, the mujahadeen were able to succeed in their objectives without obtaining the level of unity or coherence necessary to control a state.
- The mujahadeen were unable to pose a realistic alternative to governance in defeating the Najibullah regime. Their victory therefore proved to be a Pyrrhic one, as it ended in an ongoing civil war.

⁴⁰ Joes, 1996.

Figure 2
Map of Afghanistan



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/I-2

Table 2
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Afghanistan (Anti-Soviet)

Factor	Phase I (1979–1984)	Phase II (1984–1986)	Phase III (1986–1988)	Phase IV (1989–1992)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	0	0	0	0
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	0	0	0	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	0	0	0	0
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0	0	0
Free and fair elections held	0	0	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	1	1	1	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0	0	1
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	0	0
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	0	0

Table 2—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1979–1984)	Phase II (1984–1986)	Phase III (1986–1988)	Phase IV (1989–1992)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	1	1	1
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	0	0	0	1
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	1	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	1	1	1
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	1	1	1	1
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	0	0	0	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	0	0	0	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0	1	1
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0	1
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	0	1
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	1	0	1	0

Table 2—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1979–1984)	Phase II (1984–1986)	Phase III (1986–1988)	Phase IV (1989–1992)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	1	1	1	1
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	0	0	0	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	1	1	1	1
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	1	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	1	1	1	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	1	1	1	1
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	1	1	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0	1	1
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	1	1	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	1	0	1	1
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustenance	0	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	0	0	0	0
Government/state was competent	0	0	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0	0	1
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	1	1	1	1
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	1	0
Government/COIN win	0	1	0	0
Insurgent win	1	0	1	1
Mixed outcome	0	1	0	0

Kampuchea, 1978–1992

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Case Summary

Fed up with the policies and cross-border incursions of Kampuchea's Khmer Rouge government, Vietnam invaded Kampuchea in December 1978. Initially welcomed for freeing the people of Cambodia from the depredations of Pol Pot, the Vietnamese quickly wore out their welcome. With the support of Thailand (and others further abroad), the Khmer Rouge reconstituted itself as a significant insurgency, and several other insurgent movements formed and contested the occupation. The 1984–1985 dry season saw the Vietnamese and their Cambodian proxies aggressively sweep the border regions free of insurgents and then build a “bamboo curtain” (with cleared ground, minefields, and defensive road networks) with their K5 plan. This ambitious operation was effective over the short term, but the bamboo curtain did not keep the insurgents out, and the forced labor involved in its construction further alienated the population. After several years of expensive stalemate, Vietnamese forces abandoned Cambodia to their indigenous proxies in 1989. The puppet government managed to hang on through the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement in 1991 and into the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission period. It was then soundly defeated at the polls.

Although the government unambiguously lost this insurgency, it is scored as a mixed outcome for two reasons. First, the principal insurgent group, the Khmer Rouge, also “lost” in that it was not particularly favored in the settlement or an important part of the postconflict governing coalition (other, more modestly sized and more moderate insurgent groups were). Second, although it withdrew and its puppet government was ultimately displaced, the government of Vietnam realized many of its more modest long-term political goals for Cambodia.

Case Narrative

Phase I: “Initial Invasion and Occupation” (1978–1981)

Phase Outcome: Favoring COIN

Key Factors: Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict; COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance; majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN forces (wanted it to win).

After a series of provocations by the Khmer Rouge (the government of Kampuchea at the time), the Vietnamese formed the Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation (KNUFNS), a mixed group of communist and noncommunist Cambodian exiles.⁴¹ The group was wholly dependent on Vietnam for its existence and support. The arrangement served to provide a veneer of legitimacy when 300 KNUFNS members, “supported” by 200,000 Vietnamese soldiers and substantial air assets, invaded Cambodia in December of 1978.⁴² The invasion was a smashing success, driving quickly into and occupying the capital, with Khmer Rouge remnants fleeing to the highlands like common bandits.

In what with hindsight seems to be a significant strategic blunder, the Vietnamese

eventually failed to use every single opportunity to maul the Khmer Rouge and destroy its combat capability: instead they allowed a considerable number to retreat to their traditional strongholds in the Cardamom Mountains. It remains unclear how [this could] happen, but many observers concluded that this was an excellent reason for Hanoi to justify the continued presence of her troops in Cambodia.⁴³

⁴¹ Country-Data.com, “Cambodia: The Fall of Democratic Kampuchea,” December 1987.

⁴² Albert Grandolini, Tom Cooper, and Troung, “Cambodia, 1954–1999: Part 3,” ACIG.org, Indochina Database, May 12, 2009.

⁴³ Grandolini, Cooper, and Troung, 2009.

Save those displaced from power, “nearly everyone else welcomed the Vietnamese invasion and accepted the government that was swiftly put in place by the invaders as preferable to what had gone before.”⁴⁴ The Vietnamese quickly established a proxy government and substantially reduced Khmer Rouge–era restrictions on travel and other civil liberties (stopping well short of full freedom of expression and representative democracy, however). There were several unfortunate side effects of the disorder and new freedom of movement, including (1) significant voluntary relocation to Thailand and (2) much of the 1979 rice crop being left untended, resulting in a nationwide famine.⁴⁵

Phase II: “Insurgency and Insecurity” (1981–1983)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: COIN or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents; flow of cross-border insurgent support increased.

The occupiers had smashed the Khmer Rouge as a conventional fighting force, and driven it from the cities. In the hills, mountains, and jungles of western Cambodia (the traditional refuge of bandits and rebels), the Khmer reconsolidated.⁴⁶ In these mountain redoubts and across the border in Thailand, the Thai government (and other external benefactors) fed, clothed, and armed Khmer refugees, putting them back on the path toward being an effective military force.⁴⁷

With the failure of the occupation government to deliver a decisive blow to the Khmer Rouge, coupled with its failure to prevent famine, it was little surprise that 1980 saw armed organized resistance against

⁴⁴ David Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2008, p. 276.

⁴⁵ Chandler, 2008, p. 278.

⁴⁶ Kelvin Rowley, “Second Life, Second Death: The Khmer Rouge After 1978,” in Susan E. Cook, ed., *Genocide in Cambodia and Rwanda: New Perspectives*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Center for International and Area Studies, 2004.

⁴⁷ Chandler, 2008, p. 281.

the proxy government and the occupiers.⁴⁸ In addition to the Khmer Rouge, other groups helped constitute the resistance. One was the Khmer People's National Liberation Armed Forces (KPNLAF), former opposition of the Khmer Rouge that was loyal to pre-Khmer Rouge Prime Minister Son Sann.⁴⁹ Another group was the National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC), loyal to Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk.⁵⁰

Despite initial military success and a relatively warm welcome, Vietnam met with fairly limited success in establishing its client regime. In addition to food shortages, security in rural areas was tenuous and major routes were subject to rebel interdiction.⁵¹

The presence of Vietnamese throughout the country and their intrusion into nearly all aspects of Cambodian life alienated much of the populace. The settlement of Vietnamese nationals, both former residents and new immigrants, further exacerbated anti-Vietnamese sentiment.⁵²

Beyond its struggles inside Cambodia, Vietnam faced substantial international pressure to withdraw—pressure to which it was willing to bow. As early as 1980, the Vietnamese diplomatic strategy was to offer to withdraw in return for guarantees excluding the Khmer Rouge from power.⁵³ The international community, including China and the United States, rejected these proposals, finding it unacceptable for Vietnam to clearly benefit from its invasion; rather, it insisted on the restoration of the previous government (the Khmer Rouge).⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Grandolini, Cooper, and Troung, 2009.

⁴⁹ GlobalEdge, "Cambodia: History," Michigan State University, 2009.

⁵⁰ Margaret Slocomb, *The People's Republic of Kampuchea 1979–1989: The Revolution After Pol Pot*, Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 2003, p. 228.

⁵¹ GlobalEdge, 2009.

⁵² GlobalEdge, 2009.

⁵³ Rowley, 2004, p. 206.

⁵⁴ Rowley, 2004, p. 206.

Phase III: “COIN Push and the K5 Plan” (1984–1985)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: COIN or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents; COIN force established and then expanded secure areas; COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control.

The 1984–1985 dry-season offensive by the Vietnamese and their proxies made significant short-term headway against all of the insurgent groups, but it also planted additional seeds of resistance among the broader Cambodian population.⁵⁵

By the end of 1983, the full length of Cambodia’s border with Thailand was a series of refugee camps and rebel strongholds.⁵⁶ The 1984–1985 dry-season offensive employed a massive Vietnamese force, bolstered by armor and artillery; by the end of the season, no insurgent bases were left on Cambodian soil.⁵⁷ After driving the rebels and their supporters across the border, the Vietnamese launched their K5 plan, conscripting tens of thousands of Cambodians to work under deplorable conditions and complete deforestation; build dykes, canals, and strategic fences; and lay minefields along the border.⁵⁸

The employment approach used for K5 and many other aspects of the proxy regime’s governance reminded many Cambodians of the depredations of the Khmer Rouge; insurgent propaganda sought to reinforce this perception.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Slocomb, 2003, p. 240.

⁵⁶ Slocomb, 2003, p. 228.

⁵⁷ Slocomb, 2003, p. 228.

⁵⁸ Chandler, 2008, p. 283; Grandolini, Cooper, and Troung, 2009.

⁵⁹ Rowley, 2004, p. 207.

Phase IV: “Stalemate” (1986–1989)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: Majority of population in area of conflict did not support/favor COIN force; COIN force and government had different goals/level of commitment.

As the Vietnamese withdrew, the insurgents rebuilt their old border bases.⁶⁰ The difficulty the bamboo curtain imposed on rebel infiltration and exfiltration into and from the interior of the country paradoxically increased the likelihood that the insurgents would seek to establish small long-term bases much deeper in country than they previously had. General security remained poor, and what goodwill the occupiers had earned had been spent. The population no longer supported the occupation.

The Vietnamese retained firm control over the cities, and their forces dominated whatever portion of the countryside they were deployed to, but the occupation remained a considerable expense—an expense that was exacerbated by insurgent action. By early 1989, the Vietnamese announced their intention to quit the country and leave it in the hands of the proxy regime and its own now substantially larger and well-armed military forces.⁶¹

Phase V: “Postoccupation Collapse of the Puppets” (1989–1992)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated; COIN force *no longer* of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas; external professional military *no longer* engaged in fighting on behalf of the government.

⁶⁰ Rowley, 2004, p. 207.

⁶¹ Grandolini, Cooper, and Troung, 2009.

Vietnam completed its withdrawal in September of 1989, leaving the security of the country in the hands of the proxy government's approximately 45,000 regular troops, supported by some 50,000–100,000 district and local militia personnel.⁶² These forces, though far better equipped than the rebels, were not as well motivated.

Indeed, as soon as the Vietnamese pulled out, the guerrilla[s] started a powerful offensive, capturing most of north-western Cambodia, and then advancing into the centre of the country, capturing considerable amounts of arms and equipment underway.⁶³

The forces of the government of Cambodia held fast until the Paris Peace Agreement was signed in 1991 and the UN peacekeeping mission arrived and prepared for elections.⁶⁴ During this period, the proxy government tried to repair its reputation and popularity by repealing harsh laws and improving governance; however, these efforts met with limited success because of the government's more durable reputation as a puppet of Vietnam populated by extremely corrupt officials.⁶⁵

Massive voter turnout (approximately 90 percent of eligible voters) in the May 1993 elections gave a strong majority to a coalition of FUNCINPEC and the political wing of KPNLAF.⁶⁶ Despite their role as the only militarily significant resistance to the occupation, former Khmer Rouge elements had little success expanding their popular support base and fared poorly in the elections.⁶⁷

⁶² Slocomb, 2003, p. 248; Rowley, 2004, p. 209.

⁶³ Grandolini, Cooper, and Troung, 2009.

⁶⁴ Arthur M. Bullock, *An Assessment of Peace Operations in Cambodia*, unpublished RAND research, September 1994, p. 8.

⁶⁵ Bullock, 1994, p. 9.

⁶⁶ GlobalEdge, 2009.

⁶⁷ Bullock, 1994, p. 9.

Conventional Explanations

One of the conventional explanations of this case is that the Vietnamese “made two fatal mistakes: they failed to destroy the Khmer Rouge in 1979, believing their new positions in the country would be unsailable, and subsequently they failed to prevent the development of additional guerrilla movements around the country.”⁶⁸

Even had they been more aggressive in pursuing former regime fighters in 1979, the Vietnamese would have faced a very daunting set of circumstances. Once any insurgency formed, there was a significant coalition of international interests ready to pour support across the porous Thai border. When the occupiers’ proxy government proved corrupt and COIN and conscription practices earned them a reputation worse than that of the Khmer Rouge government, it became just a matter of time before an insurgency would rise.

Distinctive Characteristics

- The government unambiguously lost this case, but rather than the insurgent win this implies, the outcome has been coded as mixed, favoring insurgents, because the insurgent group that did most of the fighting (the Khmer Rouge) fared much less well in the settlement and new government than other groups that were more moderate (both politically and in terms of size and contribution to the insurgency).
- Although the government of Vietnam was an occupier in this case and the puppet government it left in Cambodia ultimately failed, it seems as though the Vietnamese met many of their long-term foreign policy objectives: There were no significant incursions of Kampuchean forces into Vietnam during the occupation; they displaced the Khmer Rouge, which remained out of power; and Kampuchea ended up with a more moderate and reasonable government than when the Vietnamese had invaded (not the puppet government of their choosing, but not as bad as the Khmer Rouge either).

⁶⁸ Grandolini, Cooper, and Troung, 2009.

- The Khmer Rouge was so reviled inside Kampuchea at the time of the invasion that Vietnamese claims to be liberators were fairly credible.
- Once Vietnamese forces withdrew, the proxy forces of the puppet government were inadequate to hold the line against the burgeoning insurgency and the dissatisfied population, and their fate was sealed.

Figure 3
Map of Kampuchea



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-3

Table 3
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Kampuchea

Factor	Phase I (1979–1981)	Phase II (1981–1983)	Phase III (1984–1985)	Phase IV (1986–1989)	Phase V (1989–1992)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	1	1	1	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	1	0	0	0	0
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	1	0	0	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	1	0	1	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	1	0	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	0	0	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0	0	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	1	0	0	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	0	0	0	0	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	1	0	0	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	1	0	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	1	1	0	1	1
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0	0	0	0
Free and fair elections held	0	0	0	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0	1	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	1	0	1	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	1	0	1	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	1	0	1	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	1	0	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	1	0	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	1	0	0	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0	1	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	0	1	1	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	0	0	1	0	0
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	1	1	1	1

Table 3—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1979–1981)	Phase II (1981–1983)	Phase III (1984–1985)	Phase IV (1986–1989)	Phase V (1989–1992)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	1	1	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	0	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	1	1	1	1	1
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	1	1	1	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	1	0	0	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	0	0	1
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	1	1	1	1	1
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	1	0	0	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	1	0	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	0	0	0	0	1
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	1	1	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	1	1	1	1
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0	0	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	0	0	0	0	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	0	0	0	0	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	1	0	0	1	1
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	1	0	1
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	1	0	1	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	1	0	1	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	1	0	1	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	1	0	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	1	0	0	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	0	0	0	0

Table 3—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1979–1981)	Phase II (1981–1983)	Phase III (1984–1985)	Phase IV (1986–1989)	Phase V (1989–1992)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	0	1	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	1	1	1	1
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	1	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	0	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	1	1	1	1
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	0	0	0	0
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	1	0	1	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	1	1	1	1	0
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	1	1	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	1	1	1	1	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	0	1	1	1	1
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	1	0	0	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	1	1	1	1
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	1	1	1	0
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	0	0	0	1
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustenance	0	0	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	0	0	0	0	0
Government/state was competent	0	0	1	1	1
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0	0	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	1	1	1	1	1
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	1	0	1	0	0
Insurgent win	0	1	0	1	1
Mixed outcome	0	1	1	1	1

El Salvador, 1979–1992

Case Outcome: COIN Win (Mixed, Favoring COIN)

Case Summary

The Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) offered a significant challenge to a kleptocratic and dictatorial Salvadoran government and a corrupt, barracks-bound Salvadoran military whose only significant victories were against the civilian population. With time bought by massive amounts of U.S. aid during the 1980s, the government of El Salvador democratized and increased its legitimacy, while the military increased its competence and improved its respect for human rights. The conflict reached a stalemate in the late 1980s and was ultimately resolved through a settlement favorable to the government as external support to the insurgents dwindled and participation in the political process became an increasingly tenable approach to redressing grievances.

Case Narrative

Phase I: “Insurgency Ascendant” (1979–1984)

Phase Outcome: Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: COIN force *not* of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas; COIN or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by insurgents; in area of conflict, COIN force perceived as worse than insurgents; insurgent force individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.

In 1979, a coalition of disparate insurgent groups formed a coalition (the FMLN) that would become a significant threat to the Salvadoran government. In this initial phase, the insurgents maintained several advantages over the forces of order. First, their cause was widely seen as supported by legitimate grievances. The country existed under what was basically a feudal system, with a tiny elite class ruling, but not really

governing, the balance of the increasingly impoverished population.⁶⁹ Second, “[a]t the onset of the insurgency, the Salvadoran armed forces were a barracks-bound, defensively minded organization with severe deficiencies in command and control, tactical intelligence, tactical mobility, and logistics.”⁷⁰ The Salvadoran army did poorly in combat, and its only significant successes were in intimidating and massacring the civilian population.⁷¹ Third, the insurgents were well supported from extranational supporters, while (at the outset of the first phase, at least) the Salvadoran army languished under a U.S. arms embargo and had very low readiness levels.⁷² Fourth, the insurgents had a well-considered plan for gaining the support of the population and, unlike the forces of order, were not intimidating, extorting, or otherwise placing an unwelcome or violent burden on their fellow Salvadorans.⁷³

At their peak in the early 1980s, the insurgents controlled somewhere between 25 and 33 percent of the country and clearly had the upper hand in the conflict.⁷⁴ However, despite these advantages, popular support never evolved into the mass uprisings that their strategy required.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Benjamin C. Schwarz, *American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador: The Frustrations of Reform and the Illusions of Nation Building*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, R-4042-USDP, 1991, p. 9.

⁷⁰ Angel Rabasa, Lesley Anne Warner, Peter Chalk, Ivan Khilko, and Paraag Shukla, *Money in the Bank—Lessons Learned from Past Counterinsurgency (COIN) Operations: RAND Counterinsurgency Study—Paper 4*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, OP-185-OSD, 2007, p. 45.

⁷¹ Phillip Berryman, *Inside Central America: The Essential Facts Past and Present on El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, and Costa Rica*, New York: Pantheon, 1985, p. 50.

⁷² Rabasa et al., 2007, p. 42.

⁷³ Christina Meyer, *Underground Voices: Insurgent Propaganda in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Peru*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, N-3299-USDP, 1991, p. 2.

⁷⁴ Cynthia McClintock, *Revolutionary Movements in Latin America: El Salvador's FMLN and Peru's Shining Path*, Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1998, p. 80.

⁷⁵ Rabasa et al., 2007, p. 42.

Phase II: “Legitimacy, Development, and U.S. Support” (1984–1986)
Phase Outcome: Favoring COIN

Key Factors: COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas; free and fair elections held; majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate; external support to COIN from strong state/military; COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control.

As U.S. support began to flow in the early 1980s and the Salvadoran armed forces grew in competence, the insurgents were forced to withdraw from the cities and adjusted their strategy to guerrilla-style “prolonged popular war.”⁷⁶ The floodgates of U.S. aid truly opened with the election of José Napoleón Duarte to the presidency in 1984. Duarte’s election led to a dramatic increase in government legitimacy and significant improvement (though still somewhat short of ideal) in respect for human rights.⁷⁷ The relatively free and fair election satisfied one core U.S. condition for support, and Duarte’s stand against corruption and in favor of human rights satisfied another. “During the decade, the U.S. government spent more than \$200,000 [in aid] per guerrilla.”⁷⁸ Governance and provision of government services improved, though these improvements fell short of directly proportional with the dollar volume of aid provided.

Congressionally constrained to a limit of no more than 55 “military advisers” and no combat troops, U.S. aid consisted of arms, military trainers, and reform and civic action programs. Several of these programs made slow progress because many in the Salvadoran military resented their imposition by an outside power.⁷⁹ Though resentful of the imposition, many in the Salvadoran military recognized the incentive structure. Defense Minister Vides Casanova said, “We know

⁷⁶ McClintock, 1998, p. 83.

⁷⁷ McClintock, 1998, p. 93.

⁷⁸ McClintock, 1998, p. 9.

⁷⁹ Berryman, 1985, p. 53.

that improving our image is worth millions of dollars of aid for the country.”⁸⁰

Even if many Salvadoran counterinsurgents were principally motivated by the flow of foreign aid, they did learn, they did increase in competence, and they did improve their human rights behavior. “[T]he idea of focusing on *all* aspects of the struggle, political, social, economic, as well as military, had taken root and continued to the end of the war.”⁸¹

In addition to the increasing legitimacy of the Salvadoran government, the increasing competence of the Salvadoran army, and the other consequences (and conditions) of U.S. support, popular support for the insurgents eroded in this phase. As the insurgents withdrew to the countryside, they lost access to mass media; the transition to guerrilla operations also forced the FMLN to resort to forced recruitment, further alienating the population.⁸² During this phase, “most Salvadorans came to blame the guerrillas rather than the government for the war.”⁸³

Despite this setback, the guerrillas maintained their ability to inflict damage, as well as their extranational support and cross-border sanctuaries.⁸⁴

Phase III: “Stalemate to Settlement” (1987–1992)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: Majority of citizens in the area of conflict viewed government as legitimate; important external support to insurgents significantly reduced; COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment.

⁸⁰ Quoted in McClintock, 1998, p. 151.

⁸¹ John T. Fishel and Max G. Manwaring, *Uncomfortable Wars Revisited*, Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006, p. 111.

⁸² McClintock, 1998, p. 77.

⁸³ McClintock, 1998, p. 77.

⁸⁴ Rabasa et al., 2007, p. 42.

The lack of commitment to reform by parts of the government and the military prevented some of the gains made possible in the previous phase from being realized and precluded an earlier end to the conflict. The insurgents were able to generate an effective counternarrative. They

continually asserted that agrarian reform was not implemented and was a failure in any case; banking reform was a joke benefiting only the government; export reforms were irrelevant; elections were fraudulent; corruption of civil and military functionaries was widespread; and human rights were a sham.⁸⁵

By 1988, the conflict was stuck in stalemate.⁸⁶

Two factors helped push the conflict out of stalemate and toward a negotiated settlement. First, with the end of the Cold War, proxy support for communist insurgencies became passé, and the strong and reliable extranational support that the FMLN had historically received dried up.⁸⁷ Second, the slowly opening democratic process and the incrementally increasing legitimacy of the Salvadoran government eroded popular support for revolutionary violence and created real openings for political participation within the process.⁸⁸ Real evidence of reform and improved human rights behavior matched government and military statements to generate and sustain credibility and legitimacy. In 1992, the FMLN disarmed and demobilized as part of a settlement and amnesty agreement. The settlement included revisions to the constitution barring the military from participating in internal security, the creation of a new civilian police force, and the conversion of the FMLN into a political party, through which it gained some representation in the government.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Fishel and Manwaring, 2006, p. 108.

⁸⁶ Schwarz, 1991, p. 3.

⁸⁷ Rabasa et al., 2007, p. 44.

⁸⁸ McClintock, 1998, p. 9.

⁸⁹ Raúl Gutiérrez, "El Salvador: Amnesty Law Biggest Obstacle to Human Rights, Say Activists," Inter Press Service, March 26, 2007.

Conventional Explanations

Conventional explanations offer one or more of three core explanations for the success of the COIN force in El Salvador. First, “[s]cholars and political leaders agree virtually unanimously that U.S. aid to the Salvadoran government prevented a takeover by the FMLN.”⁹⁰ Second, when discussing what U.S. support ultimately contributed to the outcome, the argument is that “the most important component of U.S. policy was the pressure toward democratization.”⁹¹ Third, and wholly consonant with the second argument, is the explanation that legitimacy was the center of gravity in the conflict and that the government’s increasing legitimacy over the insurgents’ decreasing legitimacy enabled the ultimate settlement.⁹²

Distinctive Characteristics

- Though the insurgents were not yet at their peak strength early in the first phase of this case, they constituted their greatest threat to the Salvadoran government then because the state had such low levels of legitimacy and the military such low competence.⁹³ Later, when the insurgents were stronger, so were the forces of order (and also the commitment of the United States).
- Human rights went from heinous (more than 10,000 political murders in 1981) to merely bad (108 political murders in 1990).⁹⁴ This improvement was a much more important contributor to legitimacy than the actual end state.
- The Salvadoran military was very resistant to the reforms (e.g., democratization, human rights) attached as conditions to U.S. aid, even though these reforms were instrumental in the ultimate outcome of the conflict.

⁹⁰ McClintock, 1998, p. 9.

⁹¹ McClintock, 1998, p. 245.

⁹² Fishel and Manwaring, 2006, p. 121.

⁹³ McClintock, 1998, p. 82.

⁹⁴ Schwarz, 1991, p. 23.

- The settlement that resolved the conflict would have been an unthinkable compromise to the Salvadoran government that began the conflict. Progress toward democratization and reform (of government, property, and human rights) made a settlement possible both as something the government would consider and as something the insurgents and the population would accept.

Figure 4
Map of El Salvador



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-4

Table 4
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for El Salvador

Factor	Phase I (1979–1984)	Phase II (1984–1986)	Phase III (1987–1992)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	1	1
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	0	1	1
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	1	1
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	1	1
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	1	1
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	1	1
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	1	1
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	1	1
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	1	1
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	0	0	0
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	1	1	1
Free and fair elections held	0	1	1
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	1	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0	1
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	0
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	0
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	1

Table 4—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1979–1984)	Phase II (1984–1986)	Phase III (1987–1992)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	1
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	1	1
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	1	1
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	1	1
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	1
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	1	1
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	1	1
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	1	1
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	1	1
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	1	1	1
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	1	1
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	1	1
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	1
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	1	1
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	1	1
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	0	0

Table 4—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1979–1984)	Phase II (1984–1986)	Phase III (1987–1992)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	1	0	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	0	1	0
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	1	1
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	1	1
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	0	1	1
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	1	1
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	0	1	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	1	0	0
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	1	0	1
Government/state was competent	1	1	1
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0	0
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	0	1	1
Insurgent win	1	0	0
Mixed outcome	0	0	0

Somalia, 1980–1991

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Case Summary

Mohamed Siad Barre's regime was ousted by a decade-long insurgency that featured several insurgent groups fighting against the government. COIN forces resorted to brutal tactics, which only served to galvanize the opposition and turn the local population against the military. Somalia's clan- and tribal-based society was an ideal setting for guerrilla warfare, and the country has not had a functioning government since 1991.

Case Narrative

Phase I: "Divide and Conquer" (January 1980–April 1988)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents; COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control; COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas.

The origins of the decade-long insurgency in Somalia lie in the failed policies of General Mohamed Siad Barre, a dictator who rose to power following a military coup in 1969. Seeking to unite the disparate tribes and clans of Somalia against a single enemy, Barre launched a disastrous invasion of the Ogaden region of Ethiopia in 1977 that resulted in the death of more than 8,000 Somali soldiers and left 600,000 citizens displaced.⁹⁵ The failed campaign in the Ogaden led to the weakening of Siad's military power base. Opposition groups began to form throughout the country, some going so far as to organize a coup attempt in April 1978, composed mainly of army officers associated with the Majeerteen clan from the Mudug region, northeast of Mogadishu.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Brent R. Norquist, *Somalia: Origins of Conflict and Unintended Consequences*, thesis, Quantico, Va.: U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, January 7, 2002, p. 13.

⁹⁶ Majeerteen is also commonly referred to in the literature as "Mijertein."

According to Richard Shultz and Andrea Dew, “Barre, who was now vulnerable to armed opposition within the country, failed during the 1980s to reconstitute the army to the degree needed to destroy burgeoning insurgent activities.”⁹⁷

The leader of the Majeerteen coup, Colonel Yussuf Abdullahi, escaped to Ethiopia where he formed the main Somali insurgent group, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF).⁹⁸ In addition to the SSDF, the other significant opposition groups agitating for change were the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) and the Somali National Movement (SNM), founded by Issaq expatriates in London. The SSDF, based in Ethiopia, received support from Ethiopia and Libya while the SNM relied on funds raised mostly by the Somali diaspora in the Gulf region, Arab states, East Africa, and various Western countries.⁹⁹ Harsh repression of the Hawiye clan, the largest clan in Somalia, led to the formation of the United Somali Congress (USC).

Cold War dynamics resulted in a flip-flopping of patrons for both Somalia and Ethiopia, with the United States switching to support the former as the Soviets changed sides to back the latter. Abandoning the veneer of communism, Barre chose to embrace tribalism as his primary ideology and political strategy and used the “divide and conquer” method to rule Somalia, pitting clans and subclans against each other so that none could grow powerful enough to challenge his government. During the first two years of the conflict, Barre increased the size of the COIN force to 120,000, focused almost exclusively on defeating the nascent insurgency.¹⁰⁰ Specialized military units committed clan-specific massacres as the COIN force employed collective repression and escalating violence in an attempt to crush the insurgents with overwhelming force. Political and economic repression was espe-

⁹⁷ Richard H. Shultz, Jr., and Andrea Dew, *Terrorists, Insurgents, and Militias: The Warriors of Contemporary Combat*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2006, p. 72.

⁹⁸ Gérard Prunier, “Somalia: Civil War, Intervention, and Withdrawal 1990–1995,” *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1996.

⁹⁹ Hussein M. Adam, “Formation and Recognition of New States: Somaliland in Contrast to Eritrea,” *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 21, No. 59, March 1994, p. 28.

¹⁰⁰ Adam, 1994, p. 27.

cially severe in the north of the country, where the pro-SNM portion of the population resided.¹⁰¹

The heavy firepower employed by the COIN force prevented the various insurgent groups from uniting to pose any form of serious military threat in the early stages of the conflict. During the first phase of the fighting, the insurgents were never able to move beyond simple hit-and-run tactics. The majority of their operations consisted of targeted assassinations, sniping, ambushes, and prison breaks.¹⁰² However, as Barre's repressive policies continued, the population began to express outright support for the insurgents. Moreover, a sense of urgency permeated several of the groups, which began to feel that launching a series of spectacular attacks was their only opportunity to take advantage of growing popular support among a population that was becoming increasingly antigovernment. Between June 1985 and February 1986, the SNM claimed to have killed nearly 500 government soldiers in more than 30 operations in northern Somalia.¹⁰³ Moving into the next phase of the insurgency, the SNM and SSDF sought to capitalize on this momentum and turn the tide of the conflict in their favor.

Phase II: "The Clans Unite" (May 1988–January 1991)

Phase Outcome: COIN Loss

Key Factors: COIN force and the government had different goals/levels of commitment; insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated; COIN force *failed* to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.

By 1988, the SSDF was in shambles organizationally, mainly due to leadership problems within the group. The SNM, however, was well

¹⁰¹ I. M. Lewis, "The Ogaden and the Fragility of Somali Segmented Nationalism," *Horn of Africa*, Vol. 13, No. 2, April–June 1990, p. 58.

¹⁰² Adam, 1994, p. 29.

¹⁰³ Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Somalia: A Country Study*, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1993.

poised to launch a major attack. Up until this point in the conflict, Barre's forces dealt almost exclusively with minor ambushes and hit-and-run tactics. Now, the insurgents were able to mount more complex operations for which the COIN forces were totally unprepared. In May 1988, SNM forces captured Burao and part of Hargeisa. This marked a major turning point in the conflict because these apparent victories galvanized other insurgent groups, which began to band together to pose a more formidable threat to Barre's regime. According to Hussein Adam, "The SNM military campaign of 1988 constituted an offensive so surprising and tactically destructive that the enemy was rendered incapable of careful, planned and effective resistance."¹⁰⁴

Not to be outdone, COIN forces responded with air and artillery attacks that led to the deaths of approximately 35,000 civilian noncombatants. In response, Somali air force pilots, appalled by the wanton slaughter of civilians, defected to Ethiopia. A clear split was beginning to emerge between Barre's leadership cadre and those in the military who were responsible for executing his orders. Many perceived his actions as a desperate attempt to hold onto power. Brigadier General Ahmed Warsame, General Mohammed Said Hersi's replacement as minister of defense, enlisted the help of mercenary pilots from South Africa and Zimbabwe. Sensing that he was losing control of the country, Barre sent his Red Berets on a rampage in July 1989, rounding up and killing Issaqs, Hawiye, and anyone else believed to have subversive motives toward the regime. Several months later, at a soccer match, the Red Berets fired into a crowd, killing 62 civilians and wounding another 200. But these killings only served to further isolate Barre's regime as COIN forces' credibility vanished completely.

By 1991, Barre's government was teetering on the brink of collapse. Just as the COIN force was beginning to deteriorate, the insurgents seeking to overthrow the government were becoming more powerful and better organized. At this stage in the conflict, Mohamed Farrah Aidid's USC was strong enough to stage an organized assault on the capital, Mogadishu, in concert with several other insurgent groups. Barre was forced to flee the country on January 26, 1991, although not

¹⁰⁴Adam, 1994, p. 29.

before making off in a tank with nearly US\$27 million in gold and hard currency.

Conventional Explanations

Barre's COIN strategy was a mix of attempting to co-opt influential opposition members and brutally repressing those whom he could not bribe or coerce. In 1982, with \$90 million in U.S. aid, Barre bribed tribal leaders in the restive north of the country.¹⁰⁵ Following a divide-and-conquer approach, Barre's government succeeded in creating significant distrust between the clans, manipulating the various elements of Somali tribal society to enervate his opposition. During the first phase of the conflict, COIN forces were formidable enough to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas. When the insurgents did attempt to fight COIN forces head on, as in 1986 when they launched a classic frontal attack, their forces were thoroughly defeated.¹⁰⁶

Already imbued with popular support, a major factor in the insurgents' success in the decisive phase of the conflict was the COIN force's inability to curb tangible support to the militants. In 1988, several refugee camps between Jigjiga and the Somali frontier were erected, and they proved to be crucial to providing insurgents with sanctuary, food, and medical treatment, as well as serving as fertile grounds for recruitment.¹⁰⁷

Unable to defeat the insurgents in combat, COIN forces turned on the civilian population, using air strikes and artillery bombardments, engaging in widespread looting, and systematically raping women.¹⁰⁸ Noted Somali scholar Hussein Adams believes that "Siyad's oppressive

¹⁰⁵David D. Laitin and Said S. Samatar, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1987, p. 159.

¹⁰⁶Daniel Compagnon, "Somali Armed Units: The Interplay of Political Entrepreneurship and Clan-Based Factions," in Christopher Clapham, ed., *African Guerrillas*, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1998, p. 77.

¹⁰⁷Compagnon, 1998, p. 77.

¹⁰⁸Hussein M. Adam, "Somali Civil Wars," in Taisier M. Ali and Robert O. Matthews, eds., *Civil Wars in Africa: Roots and Resolution*, Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queens University Press, 1999, p. 179.

military machine . . . used violence for war and for internal repression without any attempt to subordinate it to the overall objectives and operation of which it was a part.” He goes on to say, “The shocking destruction of Hargeisa and Burao (Somalia’s second and third largest cities), for example, does not seem to correspond to any rational political or military objectives.”¹⁰⁹

Distinctive Characteristics

- Somalia was a chess piece in the Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. Initially a Soviet client state, Somalia switched sides and became a patron of the United States in the 1980s, receiving weapons and money to combat its domestic insurgency.
- Barre displayed an intimate understanding of Somalia’s intricate and complicated clan and tribal system, deftly manipulating the various tribes and clans against each other to maintain his power. However, as a military leader, he was never quite able to grasp COIN and such political fundamentals as the importance of cultivating an alliance with the population to retain power.
- Somalia has not had a functioning government since Barre fled the country nearly two decades ago. Ongoing and overlapping insurgencies have plagued this geostrategically important country in the Horn of Africa, which ranks as one of the poorest and most violent places on earth.

¹⁰⁹Adam, 1994, p. 29.

Figure 5
Map of Somalia



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-5

Table 5
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Somalia

Factor	Phase I (1980–1988)	
	Phase II (1988–1991)	
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	0	0
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	0	0
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	0	0
Government a functional democracy	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0
Free and fair elections held	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	1	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	1	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0

Table 5—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1980–1988)	
	Phase II (1988–1991)	
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	1	1
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	0	0
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	1	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	1
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	1

Table 5—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1980–1988)	
	Phase II (1988–1991)	
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	0	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	1	1
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	0	0
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	1	0
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	1	1
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	1	1
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	0
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	1
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	1
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	0	1
Government/state was competent	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	1
Government/COIN win	1	0
Insurgent win	0	1
Mixed outcome	1	0

Peru, 1980–1992

Case Outcome: COIN Win

Case Summary

Abimael Guzmán's Sendero Luminoso, or Shining Path, proved to be a surprisingly resilient threat to democratic Peru. Arising in the midst of a significant economic crisis that corrupt and squabbling government officials did little to resolve, Sendero was first treated as a law-enforcement problem. The threat grew largely unabated until 1982, when states of emergency were declared in many of the country's departments, allowing the military to enter the conflict. Massive repression and indiscriminant violence did little to help the government cause. The late 1980s saw shifts in government strategies, with reduced repression and new attempts to encourage development. These initiatives were marred, however, by corruption and lack of unity of effort. Though Sendero never had the support of most of the population (the group was too violent and too radical), government and military incompetence led to widespread belief that the insurgents would win. All this changed with the 1990 election of President Alberto Fujimori. The Fujimori administration's commitment to local defense forces and an intelligence-focused strategy ultimately led to the capture of Guzmán and the disintegration of Sendero.

Case Narrative

Phase I: "Complacency" (1980–1982)

Phase Outcome: Favoring Insurgents

Key Factor: COIN force *failed* to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.

Peru suffered an unprecedented economic downturn in the 1970s and 1980s.¹¹⁰ The Peruvian government, though democratic, was characteristically ineffective and unable to stem the worsening crisis. This opened the door for an insurgent organization, Sendero Luminoso,

¹¹⁰ McClintock, 1998, p. 199.

and its establishment of alternative governance structures in the economically devastated Peruvian highlands.¹¹¹ Sendero would purge local officials and establish its own authority in the villages, beating back any contestation of control brought by the Peruvian police.

In the first few years of the insurgency, the government did not take the threat seriously.¹¹² Opposition to the insurgents (such as it was) was organized by local police, and the government made no effort to improve the desperate socioeconomic conditions in the highlands or to define a clear mission for regional security forces.¹¹³

With its superior organization and a lack of effective response by the government, Sendero made significant progress. Its operations and propaganda were coordinated to create the perception that the group was a “winner” and met its Maoist strategic goals, in sharp contrast to the largely ineffective government.¹¹⁴ Throughout the conflict, the insurgents struggled to generate mass support, largely due to their radical views and their excessive violence.¹¹⁵

Phase II: “State of Emergency: State Repression” (1982–1985)

Phase Outcome: Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: COIN force or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by insurgents; COIN force collateral damage perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents; COIN force employed escalating repression.

After December 1982, [Peruvian President Fernando] Belaúnde attempted an exclusively repressive strategy that was totally at

¹¹¹ Philip Mauceri, “State Development and Counter-Insurgency in Peru,” in Paul B. Rich and Richard Stubbs, eds., *The Counter-Insurgent State: Guerrilla Warfare and State Building in the Twentieth Century*, London: Macmillan, 1997, p. 156.

¹¹² Mauceri, 1997, p. 160.

¹¹³ McClintock, 1998, p. 141.

¹¹⁴ McClintock, 1998, p. 86.

¹¹⁵ McClintock, 1998, p. 69.

odds with democratic norms. Belaúnde believed that the counterinsurgency effort of the 1960s—an overwhelmingly military effort in which human rights were not respected and in which socioeconomic reforms were not made—would be effective again in the 1980s.¹¹⁶

A state of emergency was declared in an initially small (but ever growing) number of Peruvian departments, which allowed the Peruvian military to take part in COIN operations.¹¹⁷ Military participation was solely constituted by a particularly heavy-handed and indiscriminate application of repression.¹¹⁸

Repression did little more than alienate highland populations and cost the government and military credibility nationwide. The military push was hamstrung by resource constraints and internal divisions within both the government and the military.¹¹⁹ Judicial contributions to the conflict were minimal, as time and again legal cases against terrorists were not brought to trial because bribed or intimidated judges ruled that there was “insufficient evidence to proceed.”¹²⁰

Phase III: “Deficient Developmentalism” (1985–1989)

Phase Outcome: Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force; COIN force *failed* to provide or ensure provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control.

Still plagued by a lack of internal unity both in the government and in the military,¹²¹ the state moved forward with two competing COIN

¹¹⁶ McClintock, 1998, p. 141.

¹¹⁷ Mauceri, 1997, p. 161.

¹¹⁸ Fishel and Manwaring, 2006, p. 121.

¹¹⁹ Mauceri, 1997, p. 159.

¹²⁰ McClintock, 1998, p. 146.

¹²¹ Mauceri, 1997, p. 159.

strategies: one focused on development and the other focused on ideology and military force.¹²² First proposed in 1984, the developmentalist approach finally got its turn (sort of) in 1985.¹²³ The state recognized that the highlands were particularly hard hit by the economic crisis and the heartland of the insurgency, so its goal was to increase development and job opportunities in these regions. Public investment in Ayacucho (a region in the southern highlands) quadrupled between 1985 and 1986.¹²⁴ Unfortunately, the insurgents actively resisted this development, or co-opted it, forcing government teachers to include Sendero materials in their curricula. The government did not provide the security necessary for development to have any effect. Subsequent to 1986, development funding fell off, and embezzlement became common.¹²⁵ So, while there was an initial push of development and investment, it fell far short of meeting the needs of the economically disadvantaged population in the highlands.

Phase IV: “Legitimacy, Intelligence, and Insurgent Errors” (1990–1992)
Phase Outcome: COIN Win

Key Factors: Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict; COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control; majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate; COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control; intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations; insurgents made critical strategic errors or failed to make obvious adaptations.

The election of Alberto Fujimori in June 1990 raised new hopes of resolving the conflicts within the government and making greater headway against the insurgents. Fujimori promised a better human rights

¹²²Mauceri, 1997, p. 162.

¹²³Mauceri, 1997, p. 164.

¹²⁴McClintock, 1998, p. 142.

¹²⁵Mauceri, 1997, p. 167.

record and a new commitment to developmentalism.¹²⁶ In addition to renewed government legitimacy, the Fujimori administration also brought two significant improvements to Peru's approach to COIN: first, the use of the police and the national intelligence service to track the movements of Sendero sympathizers and attempt to infiltrate the group and, second, the arming of *rondas*, peasant civil-defense militias.¹²⁷ These *rondas* were possible only because the insurgents' treatment of villagers in its areas of operation had become so harsh that the locals were finally pushed to stand up for themselves.¹²⁸ Improved intelligence and an end to internal divisions within the military allowed effective engagement of insurgent forces and effective (and rapid) support to threatened *rondas*.¹²⁹ For the first time in the conflict, the government, police, and military made effective use of what would now be called *strategic communication*, with a greater emphasis on government credibility, consistency between actions and messages, and significant efforts to woo the population in the highlands away from the insurgents (of which the *rondas* were an integral part).

The final blow came when good intelligence led to Guzmán's capture. His authoritarian management of Sendero had proven very effective when he was at large, but when he was captured, "not only was Sendero's strategic capacity crippled but also its mystique was almost destroyed."¹³⁰

Conventional Explanations

This case is usually explained through the evocation of the economic crisis as providing the insurgents with their initial impetus, followed first by excessive government complacency, then excessive government repression, then ineffective government coordination. Explanations of the outcome hinge either on the three new developments in Peru's

¹²⁶Mauceri, 1997, p. 169.

¹²⁷Mauceri, 1997, p. 170.

¹²⁸Fishel and Manwaring, 2006, p. 123.

¹²⁹Fishel and Manwaring, 2006, p. 123.

¹³⁰McClintock, 1998, p. 64.

COIN approach under Fujimori (unity of command, *rondas*, and an emphasis on intelligence) or on the failures of Sendero (Guzmán's irreplaceable authoritarianism and the lack of caution that led to his capture, or the escalating mistreatment of the population in areas of insurgent control). It remains unclear whether the effective practices adopted by the Peruvian government and military would have remained in place and been ultimately effective had the insurgency not been foreshortened by the capture of Guzmán.

Distinctive Characteristics

- Though a democracy, Peru faced an economic crisis and paralysis of government based in part on competition in politics, which cost the Peruvian government considerable legitimacy until the election of Fujimori.
- Guzmán's authoritarian leadership of Sendero was very effective while he was at large, but he had rendered himself irreplaceable in the movement, bringing the organization to its knees when he was captured.
- Military repression and continued economic crisis in the second phase of this case could have prompted massive popular support to swing to the insurgents. The insurgents, however, were not pursuing a popular ideology, nor were they particularly kind to the population in the areas they controlled (especially in the later phases of the conflict). Thus, they missed this opportunity.

Figure 6
Map of Peru



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-6

Table 6
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Peru

Factor	Phase I (1980–1982)	Phase II (1982–1985)	Phase III (1985–1989)	Phase IV (1990–1992)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	1	1
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	1	1	1	1
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	1	1	1
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0	1
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0	1
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	1	1	1	1
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0	0	1
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0	0	1
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	1	0	0	1
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	1	0	1	1
Government a functional democracy	1	1	1	1
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0	0	0
Free and fair elections held	1	1	1	1
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	1	0	0	1
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	1	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	1	1	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0	1
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	1	1	1	1
COIN force employed escalating repression	0	1	0	0
COIN force employed collective punishment	0	1	0	0
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	0	0

Table 6—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1980–1982)	Phase II (1982–1985)	Phase III (1985–1989)	Phase IV (1990–1992)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0	1
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0	1
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	0	1
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	1	1
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0	0	1
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	0	1
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	0	1
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0	1	1
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	1	1	1
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	1	1
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	1	1	1	1
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	1	1	1
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	1	0	1	1
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	1	1
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	1	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0	1
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	0	1
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	1	1	0	0

Table 6—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1980–1982)	Phase II (1982–1985)	Phase III (1985–1989)	Phase IV (1990–1992)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1	1
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	1	0
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	0	1
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	1	0	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	0	1	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	1	1
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	0	0	0
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	0	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	1	1	1	1
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	0	0	0	0
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	1	1	1	1
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	1	1	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	1	1	1	1
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	1	1	1	1
Government/state was competent	1	1	1	1
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	1	1	1	1
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	0	0	0	1
Insurgent win	1	1	1	0
Mixed outcome	0	0	0	0

Nicaragua (Contras), 1981–1990

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Case Summary

Various opposition groups came together to fight against the Sandinista government shortly after its victory over the Somoza regime in late 1979. This insurgency was a classic example of the Reagan Doctrine in action. Backed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Contra insurgents gained momentum early in the conflict by catching the Sandinistas by surprise. After regrouping and improving intelligence collection during the second phase of the insurgency, the Sandinistas regained the upper hand. Ultimately, however, the Contras emerged victorious as a result of better training and organization, as well as pressure exerted on the Sandinista government by the United States.

Case Narrative

Phase I: “Sandinistas Must Go” (February 1981–May 1985)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: External support to insurgents from strong state/military; insurgents maintained or grew force size; COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control.

The birth of the *Contras*, or counterrevolutionaries, took place almost immediately after the initial triumph of the Sandinistas in ousting the Somoza dictatorship. The first official group formed to oppose the Sandinista government was the 15th of September Legion, headed by former National Guard officer Colonel Enrique Bermudez.¹³¹ In August 1981, the 15th of September Legion merged with the Nicaraguan Democratic Union (UDN) to form the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), the main Contra organization. Another element of the FDN was the Miskito, a group of indigenous peoples from the Atlan-

¹³¹ Landau, 1993, p. 38.

tic coast of Nicaragua, largely ignored by Somoza and now in conflict with the Sandinista government over issues of land reform.

The second major insurgent force was the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance, or ARDE, which operated primarily out of Costa Rica. Between 1982 and 1985, the insurgency increased exponentially—from 3,000 to more than 15,000—largely the result of local effects of the Sandinistas’ policies and behavior, the popular appeal of the Contras’ message, and the steady flow of U.S. funding.¹³² The COIN force, on the other hand, was a small professional army with an established officer corps, known as the Sandinista People’s Army (EPS). Additionally, the mass-based Sandinista People’s Militia (MPS) supplied a significant amount of manpower in the fight against the Contras.¹³³

The CIA had an early role in organizing the anti-Sandinista insurgency, providing funding and facilitating the incorporation of Argentine military officials into the Contras, functioning primarily as trainers and advisers.¹³⁴ Under the guise of interdicting arms being sent from Nicaragua to insurgents in El Salvador, President Ronald Reagan authorized \$19 million for use in training and equipping the Contras.¹³⁵ Although Congress had agreed to appropriate the money for use by the CIA, many in the U.S. government were unhappy with some of the odious tactics being used by the insurgents, which included looting, rape, torture, and murder.

Desperate to show Congress that the Contras were winning the conflict, the CIA ordered the recruitment of “unilaterally controlled Latino assets” (UCLAs) to carry out strikes in the name of the Contras, who would then receive credit for the attacks. Beginning in September 1983, UCLAs conducted terrorist attacks against bridges, oil pipelines, and radio broadcasting facilities. Indeed, an even more nefarious

¹³²David Ronfeldt and Brian M. Jenkins, *The Nicaraguan Resistance and U.S. Policy: Report on a May 1987 Conference*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, R-3678-OSD/AF/A/RC, 1989, p. 18.

¹³³William I. Robinson and Kent Norsworthy, *David and Goliath: The U.S. War Against Nicaragua*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987, p. 253.

¹³⁴Landau, 1993, p. 38.

¹³⁵Landau, 1993, p. 38.

act was the mining of Nicaraguan harbors, which inevitably led to the destruction of foreign ships, including Dutch and Soviet vessels.¹³⁶ Furthermore, the CIA is thought to be responsible for the printing and distribution of a field manual calling for the assassination of Sandinista civilian leaders and providing detailed instructions on how to become a model terrorist.¹³⁷

The discovery of the *Freedom Fighters Manual and Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare*, in addition to the actions perpetrated by the UCLAs, brought Congress under increasing pressure from a broad range of groups, including anti-interventionists, solidarity unions, and human rights organizations. Following former CIA director Stansfield Turner's accusation that the Contras' actions amounted to nothing more than "state-sponsored terrorism," Congress voted to cut off aid to the insurgents. Moreover, despite a successful offensive by the FDN and ARDE that delivered a blow to the COIN force, a split emerged in late 1984 and lasted into early 1985 that saw ARDE forces withdraw troop support to the overall Contra effort.

Phase II: "Ortega and Strategic Defeat" (June 1985–November 1986)
Phase Outcome: Favoring COIN

Key Factors: COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence; intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms; COIN force *did not* fail to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.

Determined to press the advantage and still focused on preventing a Cuban- and Soviet-backed government from remaining in power in Nicaragua, rogue elements in the CIA and National Security Council met with Contra leaders and urged them to present a united front. The result was a reorganization of the myriad insurgent groups under the umbrella of the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO), led by anti-Sandinista politicians Adolfo Calero, Arturo Cruz, and Alfonso

¹³⁶Landau, 1993, p. 44.

¹³⁷Landau, 1993, p. 44.

Robelo.¹³⁸ Still, by the summer of 1985, the momentum had swung in the direction of the COIN force. Bolstered by a draft call-up of troops and improvised militia units, the Sandinistas' total troop numbers reached close to 60,000. With such a large force, they were able to beat the Contras back across the Honduran border.

It was not only the number of troops that contributed to increased Sandinista military strength; the period also saw a near-complete overhaul of the Nicaraguan defense forces and COIN force strategy. Humberto Ortega developed the concept of *strategic defeat* of the insurgency, which the Sandinistas were to accomplish by "breaking the initiative the Contras had maintained for several years and then eliminating their ability to develop as a political-military force."¹³⁹ One of the more successful tactics of the Sandinistas during this phase of the insurgency was to form a military cordon around a general area where the insurgents were detected and then have irregular warfare battalions, complemented by artillery and air support, encircle the Contras and annihilate them.¹⁴⁰ This could be accomplished only through significant advances in intelligence gathering and analysis, as well as an ability to use intelligence sources to infiltrate insurgent ranks.

Phase III: "America's Invisible Hand" (December 1986–April 1990)

Phase Outcome: COIN Loss

Key Factors: External support to insurgents from strong state/military; important external support to insurgents significantly increased or maintained; COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.

From late 1986 and to early 1987, the resumption of the flow of weapons and ammunition from the United States to the Contras helped the insurgents regain the upper hand in the conflict. This time, however, they would not relinquish it. Starting in the hinterlands and working

¹³⁸Landau, 1993, p. 46.

¹³⁹Robinson and Norsworthy, 1987, p. 261.

¹⁴⁰Robinson and Norsworthy, 1987, p. 261.

their way closer to the cities, the Contras captured towns and villages and sought to sever transportation and communication links between Managua and the outlying areas.

The final phase of the insurgency continued as a stalemate for years, and efforts by the Reagan administration to acquire additional funding for the Contras were rejected by Congress in 1988.¹⁴¹ Indeed, the Iran-Contra scandal, which broke in November 1986, certainly contributed to congressional reticence to approve military aid for the beleaguered Contras.¹⁴² Nevertheless, the insurgents were able to acquire shoulder-fired missiles, which were used to shoot down EPS helicopters. Furthermore, although Congress rejected requests for military aid to be appropriated, humanitarian aid was approved, and this allowed the insurgents to remain viable until elections were called for. Part of the agreement on holding elections was the voluntary demobilization, repatriation, or relocation of the insurgents during a three-month period.

The elections of 1990 were marred by accusations of fraud, voter intimidation, and U.S. meddling. In the end, the U.S.-favored candidate, Violeta Chamorro, defeated FSLN candidate Daniel Ortega by a margin of 55-41 percent, with 90 percent of registered voters participating in the election.¹⁴³

Conventional Explanations

The overarching factor in the success of the Contra insurgency was the tangible support—training, weapons, and money—provided by the U.S. government and the CIA throughout the conflict. When the COIN forces were able to achieve success, mostly during the second phase of the insurgency, it was a function of increased training and organization, a greater mastery of technology, and, perhaps most important, the denial of tangible support to insurgents. Indeed, as William Robinson and Kent Norsworthy observe, it was during this

¹⁴¹ Kagan, 1996, pp. 578–583.

¹⁴² For more information on the Iran-Contra scandal, see Kagan, 1996, pp. 502–509.

¹⁴³ Kagan, 1996.

second phase of the insurgency that “the Contra fish lost their sea.”¹⁴⁴ This was mainly accomplished through the formation of the irregular warfare battalions: 13 lightly armed, highly mobile, quick-reaction teams trained in counterguerrilla tactics. Tangible support to the insurgents also dried up during this phase because of U.S. domestic politics.

Distinctive Characteristics

- One of the most memorable incidents of the Contra insurgency is the Iran-Contra scandal, in which the United States sold arms to Iran through Israel to secure the release of American hostages being held by the Lebanese Shi’a group Hezbollah. A portion of the money from the sale of those arms was to be diverted to fund the Contras.
- Popular support for the Sandinistas was relatively high, considering that they lost the counterinsurgency. Two factors contributed greatly to their loss, especially their inability to interdict tangible U.S. support to the Contras.
- The 1990 elections, which brought the insurgency to an end, were wrought with accusations of U.S. interference. The National Endowment for Democracy is said to have spent more than \$3 million in “technical assistance.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴Robinson and Norsworthy, 1987, p. 274.

¹⁴⁵John M. Broder, “Political Meddling by Outsiders: Not New for U.S.,” *New York Times*, March 31, 1997.

Figure 7
Map of Nicaragua



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-7

Table 7
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Nicaragua (Contras)

Factor	Phase I (1981–1985)	Phase II (1985–1986)	Phase III (1986–1990)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	1	1	1
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	1	1	1
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	1	1	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	1	1	1
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	1	1	1
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	1	1	1
Free and fair elections held	1	1	1
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	1	1	1
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	1	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	1	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	1	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	1	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	0

Table 7—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1981–1985)	Phase II (1985–1986)	Phase III (1986–1990)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	1	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	1	1	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	1	1	1
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	1	1
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	1	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	1	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	1	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	1	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	1	0	1

Table 7—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1981–1985)	Phase II (1985–1986)	Phase III (1986–1990)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	1	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	0	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	1	1	0
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	0	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	0	0	0
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	1	1	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0	1
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	1	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	0	0
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	0	0	0
Government/state was competent	0	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0	0
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	0	1	0
Insurgent win	1	0	1
Mixed outcome	1	0	0

Senegal, 1982–2002

Case Outcome: COIN Win

Case Summary

A separatist insurgency, the Movement of Democratic Forces of the Casamance (MFDC), troubled the government of Senegal for two full decades. Early on, the group “capitalized upon the grievances of the local populations, and received support from them.”¹⁴⁶ However, in the early 1990s, the insurgency began receiving external support from neighboring countries the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, which led it to escalate its tactics and turn on the local population. As the government of Senegal sought to improve relations with its neighbors in an effort to stem the flow of support for the insurgency, it also attempted to cut off any remaining internal support for the MFDC through what Wagane Faye has called a “politics of ‘charm.’” “In response, the MFDC [became] engaged in the illegal exploitation of [Senegal’s] natural resources.”¹⁴⁷ Ultimately, after dividing the insurgents through co-optation and amnesty, the government was able to settle with the majority of the insurgents, and the bandit activities of the remainder subsided to the level of a law-enforcement problem. At no point during this lengthy though relatively small and low-intensity insurgency was the government of Senegal ever seriously threatened.

Case Narrative

Phase I: “Popular Insurgency and Poorly Managed State Response” (1982–1989)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: COIN or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents; COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents; majority of population in

¹⁴⁶Wagane Faye, *The Casamance Separatism: From Independence Claim to Resource Logic*, thesis, Monterey, Calif.: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2006, p. v.

¹⁴⁷Faye, 2006, p. v.

areas of conflict *did not* support/favor COIN force (did not want it to win).

Although it is easy to portray the conflict in ethnic terms (Casamance Diolas versus the national Wolof majority), the secessionist movement's roots were actually primarily political and economic in nature.¹⁴⁸ Regional grievances included the perception that the region was ignored in the allocation of central government investment, the object of exploitation and "colonization" by Senegalese relocating from the north, underrepresented in national politics, and on the losing end of regional favoritism.¹⁴⁹

The insurgency began in 1982 largely in response to heavy-handed government crackdowns on protests and demonstrations.¹⁵⁰ This initial push by the government, coupled with the insurgents' focus on local grievances and relatively low level of violence directed solely at the state, gave the insurgents tremendous initial popular support.¹⁵¹ Initially, the insurgents drew support from the population in the form of "subscriptions" or "gifts" without coercion.¹⁵² This would change in later phases of the conflict and increase the rate of decline of popular support. Throughout the mid-1980s, however, continued govern-

¹⁴⁸Andrew Manley, "Guinea Bissau/Senegal: War, Civil and the Casamance Question," Writenet/United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, November 1998, p. 2.

¹⁴⁹N. G. Smith, "Fresh Hopes for Peace," *West Africa*, September 20–26, 1993; Linda Beck, Robert Charlick, Dominique Gomis, Geneviève Manga, Nana Grey Johnson, and Cheiban Coulibaly, *West Africa: Civil Society Strengthening for Conflict Prevention Study, Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Case Study: The Casamance Conflict and Peace Process (1982–2001)*, Burlington, Vt.: ARD, Inc., December 2001; Pierre Englebert, "Compliance and Defiance to National Integration in Barotseland and Casamance," *Afrika Spectrum*, Vol. 39, No. 1, 2005; International Institute for Strategic Studies, "Senegal (Archived 2006) Historical Background," Armed Conflict Database, 2006.

¹⁵⁰Ernest Harsch, "Peace Pact Raises Hope in Senegal: After 22, Years, Casamance War Is Winding Down," *Africa Renewal*, Vol. 19, No. 1, April 2005.

¹⁵¹Faye, 2006, p. 5.

¹⁵²Faye, 2006, p. 56.

ment overreaction to protests served only to increase sympathy and support.¹⁵³

The Dakar government's approach to resolving the problem included both carrots and sticks, an approach it carried out through the entire conflict.¹⁵⁴ The initial phase, however, was characterized by a balance favoring sticks and, sometimes, poor judgment in the application of sticks. During the first seven years of the conflict, the level of violence was relatively low, and state repression appeared to be the preponderant mode of applying force. The conflict did not stray from the Casamance region and constituted no threat to the rest of Senegal.

Phase II: "Escalation and External Support" (1989–1998)

Phase Outcome: Favoring COIN

Key Factors: Important external support to insurgents significantly increased or maintained; majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN forces (wanted it to win); COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies).

A combination of generally high regional arms traffic, greater availability of weapons due to the eruption of conflict in the larger region, and exchange relationships between the insurgents and neighboring militaries increased the intensity of the conflict by 1989. The peculiar shape of Senegal, with majority of the country as a relatively homogenous mass and the Casamance as a hanging "tail" separated from the main body of the country by the Gambia, gave the insurgents in Casamance much longer borders with neighboring countries than with the rest of Senegal. In this phase, the rebels used both the Gambia and Guinea-

¹⁵³ Faye, 2006, p. 31.

¹⁵⁴ Lawrence S. Woocher, "The 'Casamance Question': An Examination of the Legitimacy of Self-Determination in Southern Senegal," *International Journal of Minority and Group Rights*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2000, p. 346.

Bissau as rear-area sanctuaries and enlisted the aid of their respective militaries in running guns and drugs.¹⁵⁵

With the increased availability of firepower and materiel support needs being met externally, the MFDC's violence increased, and the scope of that violence expanded. In response, the government sent additional military manpower and materiel to the region, including armored vehicles and heavier weapons. Due in part to government efforts and in part to competing proxy partner interests, the MFDC split into northern and southern front organizations. This split was accompanied by increased targeting of local populations, both to prevent them from cooperating with the government and to use them as part of the competition between the factions.¹⁵⁶ This led to the dramatic curtailment of popular support. Throughout the 1990s, the MFDC transformed from a popular, grievance-based insurgency into a proxy force for the disputes of neighbor countries.¹⁵⁷

Although Amnesty International documented significant human rights violations by both the government forces and the insurgents,¹⁵⁸ in this phase, popular support swung unambiguously away from the MFDC and toward the government, and it would remain there. This was partially the result of a considerable increase in government "carrot" efforts, including a new policy of decentralization and regional autonomy, as well as overtures to the rebels, such as financial payments to MFDC leaders who stopped fighting and abandoned separatist claims.¹⁵⁹

Phase III: "Reconciliation, Co-Optation, and Degradation" (1998–2002)
Phase Outcome: COIN Win

Key Factors: Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase; flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly

¹⁵⁵ Manley, 1998, p. 1.; Beck et al., 2001, p. 5.

¹⁵⁶ Faye, 2006, p. 34.

¹⁵⁷ Faye, 2006, p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ Manley, 1998, p. 10.

¹⁵⁹ Woocher, 2000, p. 346; Englebert, 2005.

decreased in this phase; insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished.

Government efforts to co-opt and incentivize the demobilization of the insurgents continued into the next phase and became better organized. Senegal is the only case (of 30) in which all seven strategic communication–related factors were realized in the decisive phase. The government also applied pressure to its neighbors to reduce their support of the insurgents. These efforts precipitated a brief civil war in Guinea-Bissau, in which both the MFDC and Senegalese government forces participated and after which the flow of support to the MFDC from Guinea-Bissau decreased dramatically.¹⁶⁰ This drove the insurgents toward seeking resources internally, which resulted in seizures of expropriable crops and general banditry.

In addition to earnest efforts to stem the flow of external support, a new Senegalese administration made a commitment to human rights and ended arbitrary arrests and the use of torture.¹⁶¹ New military capabilities focusing on “trying to win hearts and minds (domestically)—to kill rumors and restore confidence for a new beginning” were developed and employed.¹⁶²

The war-weary population applied pressure to both sides, pushing toward a settlement.¹⁶³ The decentralization effort put more authority, responsibility, and control in the hands of local leaders.¹⁶⁴ More and more insurgents took advantage of the offered amnesty. Ultimately, enough MFDC factions and elements settled in one way or another that the remainder became little more than bandits and common criminals whose continued operations were opposed by local police.

¹⁶⁰Harsch, 2005.

¹⁶¹Beck et al., 2001, p. 6.

¹⁶²Antoine Wardini, “Information Operations in Senegal,” *IO Sphere*, special ed., 2008, p. 54.

¹⁶³Sheldon Gellar, *Democracy in Senegal: Tocquevillian Analytics in Africa*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 160.

¹⁶⁴Faye, 2006, p. 46.

Conventional Explanations

First and foremost, there is consensus that “the conflict present[ed] no real threat to the state nor, despite its ethnic dimension, to Senegalese pluralism.”¹⁶⁵ Beyond that, two lines of argument for the general course of the conflict remain.

The first asserts that early errors by the government (e.g., repression) increased the intensity of the conflict and that resolution was further delayed by politics, inimical international involvement, and economic interests.¹⁶⁶ It has been suggested that the relatively modest size of the conflict also played a role, as the majority of Senegalese could largely ignore it and the broader international community paid it little mind.

The second position argues that the conflict should be understood by viewing the progress of the insurgents’ sources of support.¹⁶⁷ Initially, the MFDC had strong popular support and was freely given resources by the population. Later, this popular support gave way to extranational support. When the government succeeded in substantially diminishing this external support, insurgent behavior and the course of the conflict precluded the possibility of popular support, forcing the insurgents into banditry and local resource expropriation, a source of support that proved insufficient to sustain the insurgency in the face of effective government strategies to settle and resolve the conflict.

Distinctive Characteristics

- Peculiar geography made conflict distant from core of Senegal and made it easy for insurgents to take advantage of foreign support and sanctuaries, while they were available.¹⁶⁸
- The insurgency devolved into simple banditry and resource exploitation in later stages.

¹⁶⁵Martin Evans, “Small but Dangerous,” *The World Today*, Vol. 60, No. 8–9, August–September 2004, p. 43.

¹⁶⁶Evans, 2004, p. 43.

¹⁶⁷Faye, 2006, p. v.

¹⁶⁸International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2006.

- The insurgency never constituted a real threat to the Senegalese state.
- The conflict was small relative to many other cases. Over two decades, only 1,200 deaths (both military and civilian) resulted directly from the armed conflict.¹⁶⁹

Figure 8
Map of Senegal



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-8

¹⁶⁹Project Ploughshares, "Senegal (1982—First Combat Deaths)," Armed Conflicts Report, December 2005.

Table 8
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Senegal

Factor	Phase I (1982–1989)	Phase II (1989–1998)	Phase III (1998–2002)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	1	1	1
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	0	1	1
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	1
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	1	1
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	1	1	1
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	1	1	1
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	1	1	1
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	1
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	0	1	1
Government a functional democracy	1	1	1
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0	0
Free and fair elections held	1	1	1
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	1
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	1	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	1	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0	1
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	0
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	0
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	1	1

Table 8—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1982–1989)	Phase II (1989–1998)	Phase III (1998–2002)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	1	1
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	1
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	1
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	1	1
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	1
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	1
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0	1
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	1
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	1	1	1
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	1	1	1
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	1	1
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	1
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	0	0	0
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	1	1
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0	1
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	1	1
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	1
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	1	1
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0	1
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	1
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	1	1	1
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	0	0

Table 8—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1962–1989)	Phase II (1989–1998)	Phase III (1998–2002)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	0
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	0	0
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	1	0	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	0	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	1
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	0	0
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	1	1	1
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	0	0	0
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	1	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	0	0
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	0	0	0
Government/state was competent	1	1	1
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	1	1
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	1	1	1
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	1	1	1
Insurgent win	0	0	0
Mixed outcome	1	0	0

Turkey (PKK), 1984–1999

Case Outcome: COIN Win

Case Summary

The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) began its insurgency as the outlawed party of an ethnic minority whose very existence was denied by the Turkish Constitution. The PKK struggled initially to develop support among a Kurdish population familiar with Turkish repression and not keen on further quixotic resistance. Over time, the PKK established itself as the premiere Kurdish cultural, political, and resistance organization and won significant regional popular support for its secessionist violence. This growth in support was a product not only of PKK successes but also of the repressive and heavy-handed response by Turkish authorities.

The PKK was defeated in 1999 after several years of “big stick” COIN by the Turks. Turkish forces had taken drastic measures to separate the insurgents from the population in the mountain villages in the area of conflict, aggressively pursued the insurgents into the mountains, sought to cut off cross-border support to them, and, most tellingly, made a political deal with extranational hosts to capture the authoritarian leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan.

Case Narrative

Phase I: “Initial Insurgency” (1984–1986)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factor: Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win).

The Kurdish ethnic population is densest over a broad swath of south-eastern Turkey, northern Iraq, northern Syria, and northern Iran.¹⁷⁰ Kurdish nationalist claims are long-standing, as is the rejection of such claims. So strong was the rejection of Kurdish nationalism in

¹⁷⁰International Institute for Strategic Studies, “Turkey (PKK),” Armed Conflict Database, undated(d).

Turkey that the 1982 Turkish Constitution rejected notions of ethnicity entirely (every citizen of Turkey is a Turk), allowed only Turkish as the state's official language, and outlawed political parties claiming to represent minorities or "non-Turkish cultures and languages."¹⁷¹

Turkish Kurds, weary of state repression and not optimistic about the fruits of further agitation, were initially quite resistant to the PKK. Locals denounced PKK militants to the police, and state-sponsored village guards formed and resisted PKK incursions.¹⁷² The PKK was forced to fight its way into many villages, killing village militiamen and intimidating Kurdish villagers until its leaders were more feared than the authorities.¹⁷³ "The PKK often said the initial phase of its war was a propaganda battle, in which rebels tried to gain the trust and respect of the people and prove that they could stand up to the state."¹⁷⁴ The PKK struggled to do this in this first phase.

Phase II: "Repression and Resettlement" (1987–1989)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: COIN or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents; in area of conflict, COIN force perceived as worse than insurgents; COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control.

As the conflict wore on, Turkish forces became more earnest in their COIN efforts. In 1987, new emergency powers were granted to a regional governor, resulting in better coordination between the government and the military. Villages that could not be controlled or protected were evacuated, sometimes forcibly. This, of course, fueled a PKK propaganda campaign blaming the state for the destruction

¹⁷¹ Aliza Marcus, *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence*, New York: New York University Press, 2007, p. 85.

¹⁷² Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror: For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, London: Routledge, 2006, p. 37; Marcus, 2007, p. 98.

¹⁷³ Mango, 2006, p. 38.

¹⁷⁴ Marcus, 2007, p. 119.

of Kurdish villages.¹⁷⁵ This propaganda campaign was further fed by Turkish security forces' heavy-handed approaches, including intimidation, random arrest of Kurds after PKK attacks, and civilian casualties and collateral damage from engagements.¹⁷⁶

Still, the PKK struggled for popular support, in part because of its continued intimidation in the villages and compulsory conscription of young Kurds. In the words of one militant, "I knew the military conscription law would cause people to turn against us. You would take people, and then the village would react, then the people you took would run away, and then you had to kill them."¹⁷⁷

While both the PKK and the state were engaged in behaviors reviled by the local population, news of abuses by the authorities spread much more broadly and credibly than word of PKK abuses. This was in part because small mountain villages often did not have the means to get regular televised news or newspapers, and Kurds in general were inclined to dismiss reports of PKK violence against civilians as government lies.¹⁷⁸ Independent of its behavior, the PKK was winning the battle for regional popular support.

Phase III: "Insurgency Grows in Popularity" (1990–1993)

Phase Outcome: Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control; in area of conflict, COIN force perceived as worse than insurgents.

In a clear sign the government felt it was losing the propaganda battle, the government issued a special decree in April 1990, giving the regional governor the power to ban any Turkish publications

¹⁷⁵ Mango, 2006, p. 38.

¹⁷⁶ Marcus, 2007, p. 113.

¹⁷⁷ Marcus, 2007, p. 117.

¹⁷⁸ Marcus, 2007, p. 116.

that misrepresented events in the emergency rule region—at least misrepresented them according to the government’s view.¹⁷⁹

The early years of the 1990s showed support in the region of conflict turning squarely in favor of the PKK, and the government still engaged in activities that fueled that support.

Mass protests and riots in Kurdish regions were met by state violence and repression, pushing even more of the population toward the PKK.¹⁸⁰ “The PKK’s ability to mobilize so many people was a direct challenge to the state’s authority and Turkish security forces reacted harshly, making little distinction between civilian sympathizers and the armed rebels themselves.”¹⁸¹ State violence was costing the Turkish state legitimacy in the region.¹⁸² Riding this upswell of support, the PKK began to expand its portfolio to nonviolent political activities and legal politics, including Kurdish publishing and cultural events.¹⁸³

Direct action against the PKK guerrillas in the mountains was not going well for Turkish security forces, either.

Turkish soldiers, usually new to the region, were hampered by their inexperience, the foreign terrain, and a certain uncoordinated approach to fighting the rebels. The technological advantages of the Turkish military—fighter jets, helicopters, and tanks—were not that useful against highly mobile, small guerrilla teams who knew their way around the mountains and dense forests.¹⁸⁴

Turkish forces would come to the edge of the mountains but would not enter; they would retire to their barracks at night, leaving the PKK free to emerge and operate under cover of darkness. Eventually, Turk-

¹⁷⁹ Marcus, 2007, p. 129.

¹⁸⁰ Marcus, 2007, pp. 142–143.

¹⁸¹ Marcus, 2007, p. 176.

¹⁸² Marcus, 2007, p. 177.

¹⁸³ Marcus, 2007, p. 160.

¹⁸⁴ Marcus, 2007, p. 168.

ish forces withdrew from many of their forward outposts, and their convoys faced daring daylight attacks; many in the village guards, once a significant deterrent to PKK operations, tried to turn in their weapons.¹⁸⁵

Phase IV: “Triumph of the Big Stick” (1993–1999)

Phase Outcome: COIN Win

Key Factors: COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control; flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased; important external support to insurgents significantly reduced; insurgents’ ability to replenish resources significantly diminished; insurgents made critical strategic errors or failed to make obvious adaptations.

In 1993, the political situation in Turkey shifted to favor the hardliners.¹⁸⁶ This brought important changes in government COIN tactics. Turkish soldiers would now move into the mountains and stay for weeks at a time, hunting guerrillas with small, mobile strike forces of their own.¹⁸⁷ Turkish forces significantly improved their ability to use air strikes and air mobility, finally bringing their technological advantages over the insurgents into play.¹⁸⁸

Repression continued, and perhaps even worsened. “PKK attacks now were met with all-out shows of force that made little distinction between civilian and rebel.” Forced relocation efforts redoubled, and as a result, more and more villages simply ceased to exist.¹⁸⁹ As one former militant noted, “The psychological situation that created support for the PKK didn’t change . . . but the state managed to change the physical situation. They emptied all the areas between the cities and mountains.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁵ Marcus, 2007, p. 219.

¹⁸⁶ Marcus, 2007, p. 225.

¹⁸⁷ Marcus, 2007, p. 223.

¹⁸⁸ Marcus, 2007, p. 188.

¹⁸⁹ Marcus, 2007, p. 221.

¹⁹⁰ Marcus, 2007, p. 223.

In previous phases, the PKK had benefited from the active or passive support of some of Turkey's neighbors, including Syria and Iraq. In 1995, the Turkish military launched an incursion into Iraq to destroy PKK bases there.¹⁹¹ These attacks caused temporary disruptions in PKK operations but also underscored the difficulty of gaining serious ground in this way. More successful was 1998 pressure on Syria to stop harboring the insurgents (including the PKK leader, Öcalan) or face the consequences.¹⁹²

Under pressure from effective military operations, forced resettlement, and Turkish efforts to dissuade external supporters, the PKK began to run short of food and had trouble recruiting, largely because of the difficulty of accessing sympathetic populations.¹⁹³

Öcalan retained his absolute authority over the PKK, refusing to allow his field commanders the flexibility to adapt to new situations on the ground.¹⁹⁴ His paranoid authoritarianism and lack of flexibility brought disaster on the PKK, and he was captured in Kenya in 1999 after being forced to flee Syria.¹⁹⁵ After his conviction, "Ocalan offered to act as a peace broker, and ordered the PKK to stand down from its armed struggle."¹⁹⁶

Thus ended this chapter in the history of the PKK. The organization subsequently revitalized itself, however, and continues to agitate and generate attacks inside Turkey as of this writing. In recent years, the Turkish government has made great strides in recognizing and respecting Kurdish rights, though stopping well short of the autonomous Kurdish homeland demanded by some.

¹⁹¹ Marcus, 2007, p. 245.

¹⁹² Marcus, 2007, p. 269.

¹⁹³ Marcus, 2007, p. 223.

¹⁹⁴ Marcus, 2007, p. 240.

¹⁹⁵ International Institute for Strategic Studies, undated(d).

¹⁹⁶ International Institute for Strategic Studies, undated(d).

Conventional Explanations

Conventional explanations of Turkish success over the PKK emphasize one of two factors: either Öcalan's errors and the organizational blow that his capture represented, or the separation of the PKK from its supporters. Explanations that focus on support emphasize either the importance of external support, arguing that its withdrawal led to the collapse of the PKK,¹⁹⁷ or the importance of physical separation from popular supporters inside Turkey.¹⁹⁸

Distinctive Characteristics

- During the course of this COIN campaign, the Turkish government and military pursued several courses of action that led to poor COIN outcomes elsewhere, including collective punishment, civilian repression, and resettlement for population control. Without the capture of Öcalan, it is quite probable that the insurgency would have persisted longer than it did; the subsequent reemergence of conflict with the PKK is evidence for this assertion.
- Öcalan, the PKK leader, made several extremely poor choices. First, he jealously precluded the possibility of any rivals for authority within the organization or a reasonable succession; when he was captured, the leadership suffered an insuperable blow. Second, he was out of touch with the situation on the ground in Turkey in the late 1990s and insisted that his field commanders adhere to untenable strategic and tactical guidance.
- Though a significant regional security threat and nuisance, the PKK never really threatened the Turkish state.
- This is a particularly challenging case for which to find unbiased data. The conflict is well documented, but the fact that "the Kurdish issue" remains highly contentious and partially unresolved means that there are many who have an ongoing stake in how history perceives this conflict.

¹⁹⁷Mango, 2006, p. 31.

¹⁹⁸Marcus, 2007, p. 223.

Figure 9
Map of Turkey



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-9

Table 9
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Turkey (PKK)

Factor	Phase I (1984–1986)	Phase II (1987–1989)	Phase III (1990–1993)	Phase IV (1993–1999)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	1	0	0	1
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	1	0	0	0
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0	0	1
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	0	1
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	1	1	1	1
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	1	1	0	1
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	1	0	0	0
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	1	1	1	1
Free and fair elections held	0	0	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	1	1	1
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	1	1	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	1	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	1	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0	1
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	1	0	1
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	1	1	1	1

Table 9—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1984–1986)	Phase II (1987–1989)	Phase III (1990–1993)	Phase IV (1993–1999)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	1	0	0	1
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	1	0	1
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	1	1	1	1
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	1	1
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	1	1	1	1
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	1	0	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	1	1	1	1
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	1	1	1
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0	0	1
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	1	0	1	1
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0	1
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	1	0	1
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	1	0	1
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	0	1
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	1	1	1	1
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	0	0	0

Table 9—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1984–1986)	Phase II (1987–1989)	Phase III (1990–1993)	Phase IV (1993–1999)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0	1	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	0	1
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	1	1	1
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	1	0	0
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	0	0	0
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	1	1	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	1	1	1	1
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0	0	1
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	1	1	1	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	1	1	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	1	1	1	0
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	0	0	0	0
Government/state was competent	1	1	1	1
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	1	1	1	1
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0	0	0
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	1	1	0	1
Insurgent win	0	0	1	0
Mixed outcome	1	1	0	0

Sudan (SPLA), 1984–2004

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Case Summary

The civil war in Sudan pitted the developed Arab Muslim government in the north against the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), representing the Christians and animists in the rural, oil-rich South. The northern-based government sought to extend Islamic law throughout the country and benefit from the south's oil wealth while the southern rebels fought to obtain autonomy. An ineffective COIN strategy motivated by religious convictions and a "military-first" approach hampered the Sudanese government's attempts to crush the insurgency. Despite factionalism within the SPLA and changes in its external sources of support, the insurgents were able to continue to launch attacks on government forces and Sudan's oil pipelines and infrastructure in the south. After two decades of fighting and widespread famine, the government bowed to significant international pressure to agree to a negotiated settlement with the SPLA that included a power-sharing agreement with the south and the promise of a referendum on secession.

Case Narrative

Phase I: "Forced Islamization Leads to Insurgency" (1984–1991)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: COIN or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents; COIN force failed to provide or ensure provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control; important internal support to insurgents significantly increased or maintained.

Eleven years after Sudan's first civil war ended, new tensions arose in 1983 when pressure from Sudan's pro-Islamic parties forced President Jaafar Nimeiri to impose sharia law across the country and revoke the south's autonomous status (which had been granted under the Addis Ababa peace accords at the end of the previous war). In response to the government's actions, a group of rebellious Sudanese soldiers from

the south joined with Anya-Nya rebels from the first civil war to form the SPLA. The SPLA, under the leadership of Colonel John Garang, instigated a campaign of violence against the central authorities, which quickly escalated into a full-scale war.

Throughout the 1980s, the government in Khartoum went through a number of leadership changes, yet none of the subsequent military or civilian regimes was willing to revoke sharia law or allow political autonomy for the south.¹⁹⁹ Instead, the government responded to attacks by the SPLA with conventional military offensives. “Khartoum ignored any possibility of attacking the insurgents politically.”²⁰⁰ Strategic communication played little role in the conflict as Khartoum’s campaign to Islamize the country fell on deaf ears in the Christian and animist south.

The Sudanese government’s cultural insensitivity, combined with its disregard for the needs of the population, led to widespread, severe economic and physical deprivations, which significantly reduced the popularity of the government in the region. The SPLA also gained relatively more support than the government as a result of the brutality of the Sudanese troops.

The SPLA spent the 1980s consolidating its leadership, expanding its base in southern Sudan, and developing supply lines from Ethiopia. While the insurgents initially undertook predatory attacks in the region, they eventually adopted a more sophisticated approach that sought to foster local support, which allowed it to achieve greater success. By 1991, the SPLA controlled most of the south—with the exception of a few government garrison towns—and was on the verge of expanding its operations into the north.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi negotiated with the SPLM in 1986; however, he was overthrown by the National Islamic Front before he was able to conclude a peace agreement.

²⁰⁰Joes, 1996, p. 177.

²⁰¹Robert C. Glickson, “Counterinsurgency in Southern Sudan: The Means to Win?” *Journal of Conflict Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Spring 2005.

Phase II: “Military-First Approach Fails” (1992–1998)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced; COIN force employed escalating repression.

The position of the insurgents in 1992 was somewhat weakened by a split in the leadership of the SPLA and the loss of Ethiopian support (following a regime change in Ethiopia in May 1991), which left the organization without sanctuary and external support. At the same time, the Sudanese government’s COIN posture was improved by its decisions to replace its contingent of southern soldiers stationed in the south with northerners who had no ties to the area of conflict and to launch more offensive attacks against the insurgents, as well as by the acquisition of extensive foreign assistance from Iran and China. Still, the government’s gains during this period were offset by its tactical deficiencies and strategic errors.

While attempting to turn the tide of the war with a major military offensive, a large number of casualties caused a reduction in public support for the war effort and lowered troop morale. The manner in which the military pursued its operations in the south also limited its chances of obtaining a base of local support. Rather than defining its actions against the insurgents in strictly military terms, the government stated its goals in religious terms, as an attempt to “wipe out” the Christian and animist rebels.²⁰² Moreover, the Sudanese forces made a strategic error in focusing on large-scale conventional operations and committing atrocities against civilians. By adopting a military-first approach and a strong religious message, the Sudanese government was unable to exploit the tribal and political divisions that existed in the region, and the conflict became more protracted and bitter.²⁰³

Within a few years, the insurgents were able to take advantage of the Sudanese government’s mistakes and turn the tide of the war back in their favor. The SPLA ultimately gained strength by joining forces

²⁰²Glickson, 2005.

²⁰³Joes, 1996, p. 178; Glickson, 2005.

with other opposition groups and forming a confederation, known as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). This unified group was able to launch more effective attacks and gain additional support from Uganda, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, which sought retribution for the support that the Sudanese government was providing to radical groups in their own countries. The NDA launched its first joint offensive in January 1997 and by the end of the year consolidated its hold on a number of strategic locations in the south.

Fighting continued throughout the 1990s, leading the rebel groups to gain the advantage. In mid-1997, the government agreed to peace talks, but the civilian reforms that it proposed were not sufficient to appease the rebels, and a new state of emergency was declared in 1999.

Phase III: “Oil Discovery Fuels Conflict, International Pressure Forces Negotiations” (1999–2004)

Phase Outcome: COIN Loss

Key Factors: Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict; COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control; insurgents’ claimed grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict.

The rebel campaign began to wane in 1999, weakened by the onset of a severe famine and a reduction in external support for the SPLA due to the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea and Uganda’s involvement in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.²⁰⁴

Even more significant was the discovery of new oil reserves in the south in 1999. Oil became an increasingly important source of income for the Sudanese government and made oil-rich areas and infrastructure primary strategic targets. Government forces sought to depopulate areas to secure opportunities for greater exploitation (often by bombing civilians and the humanitarian operations that supported the population, forcing them to leave), while rebel forces attempted to hamper the

²⁰⁴“Security, Sudan,” *Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment*, December 4, 2008.

expansion of oil operations with attacks on foreign oil companies and the nation's oil pipeline.²⁰⁵

Both government air strikes and SPLA assaults on government forces increased in 2000, leading to a war of attrition. The SPLA controlled most of the less productive rural areas, and progovernment forces tightened their grip on the new oil-producing border regions and southern garrison towns. Benefiting from its growing oil exports (accounting for economic growth rate of 8.3 percent in 2000), the government could support its regular army as well as irregular forces in border areas and various armed southern groups.

The war continued in 2001 despite attempts at international mediation. The SPLA gained strength by joining forces with a rival militia, the Sudan Defence Force, to launch a more significant campaign against the Sudanese government in June 2001 and announced that it intended to step up attacks on the country's oil industry.²⁰⁶

In June 2002, the government and the SPLA began more successful negotiations in Kenya. Largely the result of international pressure and the mediation of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the peace talks continued despite interruptions by violent clashes between opposition and government forces. The government agreed for the first time to accept the right of the south to seek self-determination. Finally, in May 2004, the government and the southern rebels agreed on power-sharing protocols as part of a peace deal and consented to the division of oil and non-oil wealth. By January 2005, a comprehensive peace agreement was reached, establishing a power-sharing agreement and a six-year transition period after which the south would have the right to hold a referendum on independence.²⁰⁷ As a result of the agreements, fighting decreased to a negligible level.

²⁰⁵International Institute for Strategic Studies, "Sudan (SPLM/A and NDA)," Armed Conflict Database, undated(c); "Security, Sudan," 2008.

²⁰⁶"Sudan People's Liberation Army," *Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism*, January 30, 2007.

²⁰⁷International Institute for Strategic Studies, undated(c).

Conventional Explanations

The success of the SPLA insurgency can be explained by the Sudanese government's failure to achieve popular support in the south. The government's strong religious rhetoric and military COIN approach served to alienate the local population and ensured a long, bitter conflict. The discovery of oil in the region raised the stakes for the government, yet its brutal policies of forced population removal made the government appear even more repressive. Moreover, new oil installations provided more valuable targets for insurgent attacks. The successful negotiations that ended the conflict after 20 years have been widely attributed to the impact of international pressure that brought the two sides to the table and forced them to reach a compromise agreement. This settlement gave the south the autonomy it had been seeking and the insurgents a victory.

Distinctive Characteristics

- The Sudanese conflict was unique in terms of the long-standing motivation of the government to Islamize the south, which was predominantly Christian and animist.
- The conflict did not resemble a conventional war or insurgency. The vastness of the country and the primitiveness of communication impeded the forces of all sides, robbing commanders of much of their control over the fighting. Battles were rarely fought, and those who were attacked were most often innocent civilians rather than formal combatants.²⁰⁸
- The drawn-out conflict continued despite a severe famine and humanitarian disaster in which more than 2 million people died, with millions more displaced.²⁰⁹ International relief efforts were often the target of government attacks. The extent of the humanitarian disaster led to greater regional and international pressure toward achieving a peace agreement.

²⁰⁸Hailes Janney, "Oil Reserves Transform the Sudanese Civil War," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, May 23, 2001.

²⁰⁹CountryWatch, "Sudan (Darfur and Chad)," undated.

- The discovery of oil fields in southern Sudan changed the nature of the conflict somewhat by placing new economic importance on the region. It also gave the government an interest in depopulating the region and provided the insurgents with new targets. In addition, it may have contributed to the government's interest in ending the conflict to more effectively exploit its resources.

Figure 10
Map of Sudan



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-10

Table 10
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Sudan (SPLA)

Factor	Phase I (1984–1991)	Phase II (1992–1998)	Phase III (1999–2004)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	0	0	0
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	0	0	0
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	0	0	0
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0	0
Free and fair elections held	0	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0	1
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	1	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	0	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	0

Table 10—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1984–1991)	Phase II (1992–1998)	Phase III (1999–2004)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	1
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	0	0	0
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	0	1	0
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	1	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	1	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	1	1	1

Table 10—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1984–1991)	Phase II (1992–1998)	Phase III (1999–2004)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	1	1	1
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	0	0	0
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	1	1
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	1	1	1
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	1	1	1
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	0	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	1	1
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	0	0	0
Government/state was competent	0	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	1	1	1
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0	1
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	0	0	0
Insurgent win	1	1	1
Mixed outcome	1	1	0

Uganda (ADF), 1986–2000

Case Outcome: COIN Win

Case Summary

The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) launched an insurgency against the Ugandan government in 1986, undertaking brutal attacks on civilians in the western region of the country. While a nominally Muslim group, the ADF did not have a clear religious agenda. Its vaguely stated goals were to overthrow the government and rid Uganda of Rwandan Tutsis. ADF attacks against civilians and military outposts increased in 1998, aided by external support from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sudan. Initially, the Ugandan government was unable to maintain security in the region, but it eventually contained the insurgency by attacking the ADF's rear bases in the DRC and developing special COIN units trained in mountain warfare.

Case Narrative

Phase I: "Campaign of Terror with Uncertain Goals" (1986–1998)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: Insurgents delegitimized through civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior; COIN force failed to create a perception of security among population in areas it controlled or claimed to control; COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.

The ADF was a nominally Muslim rebel group opposed to the Ugandan government. The group was formed by the merger of puritanical Muslim Ugandans of the Tabligh sect from Central Uganda and the former National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU).²¹⁰ It

²¹⁰The ADF is often considered an extension of the NALU, a local liberation movement formed in 1988 to express opposition against the Ugandan government led by President Yoweri Museveni. The NALU opposed the presence of foreign nationals and the establishment of refugee camps for Rwandans in Uganda. The NALU's active period lasted from 1988 to 1998, during which time it was allegedly involved in a series of terrorist attacks against civilians.

later developed links to soldiers of the former Zairian Mobutu regime, ex-Rwandan forces, and Interahamwe Hutu militias operating in the region.

While maintaining a vaguely religious ideology, the leaders of the ADF did not operate with an overtly religious agenda. Their only stated objective was to overthrow President Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement and to liberate the country from "Rwandese Tutsis."²¹¹ There were few Muslims living in the region of conflict in western Uganda. ADF leaders from central Uganda established their base of operations in the Rwenzori mountain region due to its protective terrain, proximity to the DRC, and potential for exploiting ethnic conflict in the area rather than as a source of local support.

The ADF also received external support from the DRC and Sudan and set up rear bases in neighboring Zaire, where it was able to recruit and train fighters and launch sporadic attacks on Ugandan territory. Most of its early attacks were conducted against local civilians.

The insurgent group did not appear to be of particular concern to the Ugandan government until 1997, when the ADF launched a series of attacks on unprotected villages and camps for internally displaced persons in western Uganda that resulted in the further displacement of tens of thousands of civilians. It also allegedly attacked Ugandan army personnel near the Ugandan-DRC border.

Attacks and atrocities increased the following year. The ADF was suspected in bomb attacks in Kampala and implicated in the murders of hundreds of civilians and in attacks on police and Ugandan military (Uganda People's Defence Force, or UPDF) bases. The insurgents were particularly noted for their brutal attacks on schools and colleges.²¹² Their deadliest attack occurred on June 8, 1998, when rebels set a college dormitory on fire, killing 80 students and then abducting 80 others.²¹³ These attacks served to further delegitimize the ADF among the local population.

²¹¹ "Allied Defense Forces (ADF)," *Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism*, April 6, 2005.

²¹² "Allied Defense Forces (ADF)," 2005.

²¹³ Paul Nantulya, "Exclusion, Identity and Armed Conflict: A Historical Survey of the Politics of Confrontation in Uganda with Specific Reference to the Independence Era," in

The Ugandan military engaged the rebels in an attempt to protect the civilian population, yet it could not contain the ADF rebels. Museveni's COIN strategy, which called for the use of heavy weapons, such as tanks, armored personnel carriers (APCs), helicopter gunships, and fighter aircraft, was largely ineffective because the UPDF lacked adequate training, maintenance, and command-and-control capabilities.²¹⁴ Although the movement did not pose a military threat to the regime, it proved resistant to the UPDF's efforts to crush it and left the population with the perception that the government could not adequately secure the area. Diplomatic efforts in 1998 seeking to complete a security pact with the DRC to prevent the ADF from establishing bases on the border between the two countries also failed. Thus, rebel attacks and atrocities escalated.

Phase II: "Cross-Border and COIN Offensive" (1999–2000)

Phase Outcome: COIN Win

Key Factors: COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition; flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased, remained dramatically reduced, or largely absent; security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase.

In 1999, the Ugandan government adopted a new strategy of attacking ADF bases in the DRC. Using its own forces alongside proxy forces in the DRC, the UPDF was able to cut off the rebels' supply line. The army simultaneously increased its COIN efforts in Uganda, launching Operation Mountain Sweep in late 1999. With 6,000 troops specially trained in mountain warfare, the operation was said to have resulted in the deaths of more than 20 rebels and a "depletion of the enemy's

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, ed., *Politics of Identity and Exclusion in Africa: From Violent Confrontation to Peaceful Cooperation*, conference proceedings, Senate Hall, University of Pretoria, July 25–26, 2001.

²¹⁴ Thomas Ofcansky, "Museveni's War and the Ugandan Conflict," *Journal of Conflict Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Spring 1999.

strength both in terms of personnel and equipment.”²¹⁵ The combination of the cross-border offensive and the intensified COIN effort within Uganda allowed the COIN forces to gain the upper hand in the conflict. By April 2000, the ADF’s military chief surrendered, and many of the group’s unit commanders were either arrested or killed.

ADF forces recovered somewhat in the following year, with the help of additional weapons and military training from Sudan and, possibly, the DRC (in retribution for the assistance that the Ugandan government provided to the SPLA and the Congolese rebel groups). They resumed their attacks on civilian targets in western Uganda, but these attacks did not result in a significant number of fatalities.

The Ugandan government ensured its victory over the ADF in 2001 (a year after the threshold of fatalities had been reached), through a combination of political and military efforts. First, a general amnesty law for guerrillas was implemented, allowing for the release of a number of ADF prisoners. It reportedly resulted in the surrender of 272 rebels in three months and led to a suspension of rebel activity during the Ugandan elections. Then, the government responded to a resurgence of ADF attacks with a renewed military offensive known as Operation Maliza, which sent Ugandan army battalions to both sides of the Ugandan-DRC border. This military operation significantly degraded the ADF’s manpower, equipment, bases, and logistics and inhibited the group’s ability to execute cross-border raids.

Conventional Explanations

The success of the Ugandan government in containing the ADF insurgency may be partially explained by the ADF’s lack of popular support in its area of operations in western Uganda. The Islamic-based insurgency in a largely Christian country never posed a serious threat to the government. The Ugandan military also adopted an effective COIN strategy against the ADF during the second phase of the conflict. It shut down the ADF’s rear bases in the DRC and cut off its external

²¹⁵ Integrated Regional Information Network, “Army Claims Success in Campaign Against ADF,” December 29, 1999, as quoted in International Crisis Group, *Scramble for the Congo: Anatomy of an Ugly War*, Africa Report No. 26, December 20, 2000.

supplies, then launched aggressive attacks on ADF forces in the Rwenzori mountain region with specially trained alpine COIN units (Operation Mountain Sweep). Finally (after the number of attacks was substantially reduced), the government offered amnesty to the remaining members of the group.

Distinctive Characteristics

- The ADF did not have a unifying ideology. The insurgency group was a conglomeration of various armed elements that was only nominally Muslim. By working with a diverse group of militias and outside armies, including the Interahamwe, former Zairian forces, and former Rwandan armed forces, the ADF neutralized its Islamic identity.²¹⁶
- The insurgency did not have a strong base of popular support. The leaders of the ADF were not native to western Uganda, where the group was based, nor was the population there predominantly Muslim. Many ADF recruits were from outside the country, leading the insurgents to be viewed as outsiders. Moreover, the ADF did not win popular support with its brutal attacks on civilians.
- The conflict was closely tied to regional events, particularly the war in the neighboring DRC. The ADF maintained rear bases in that country and launched attacks across the border. Benefiting from chaos in the DRC, the group engaged in crime and smuggling to support the Ugandan insurgency and networked with other rebel groups and foreign militaries that were active in the region (such as the Interahamwe and former Rwandan forces). When the conflict in the DRC began to wind down, the ADF lost much of its support, along with its rear bases, to Ugandan raids.
- The ADF never posed a military challenge to the Ugandan government. It tended to avoid direct confrontation with the army, concentrating on a terror campaign against civilians. The Ugandan government was more concerned about the Lord's Resistance Army, a Christian insurgency group active in the northern part of the country.

²¹⁶Nantulya, 2001.

Figure 11
Map of Uganda



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-11

Table 11
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Uganda (ADF)

Factor	Phase I (1986–1998)	
	Phase II (1999–2000)	
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	1	1
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	1
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	1	1
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	1	1
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	1	1
Government a functional democracy	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	1	1
Free and fair elections held	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	1
COIN force employed escalating repression	0	0
COIN force employed collective punishment	0	0
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	1

Table 11—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1986–1998)	
	Phase II (1999–2000)	
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	1
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	1
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	1
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	1	1
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	1	1
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	1	1
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	1
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	1	1
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	0	0
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	1	1
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	1
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	1
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	1
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	1	0

Table 11—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1986–1998)	
	Phase II (1999–2000)	
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	0
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	1
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	0
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	1	1
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	1	1
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	0
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	0	0
Government/state was competent	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	1	1
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	1
Government/COIN win	0	1
Insurgent win	1	0
Mixed outcome	1	0

Papua New Guinea, 1988–1998

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Case Summary

The insurgency on the island of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea was sparked by a protest of local landowners against the policies of outside mining companies. The protests became increasingly violent after the government sent in troops to defend the mines, leading to the evolution of a wider secessionist movement. Attempts by the Papua New Guinea army to crush the rebellion by employing local militia forces and instituting a military and economic blockade of the island failed. After six years of low-intensity conflict, the president of Papua New Guinea contracted with a private military firm to aid his COIN efforts. This decision led to the collapse of the government and a decline in public support for the military effort. Political negotiations were then pursued, leading to agreement on a cease-fire in 1998 that promised broad powers of self-governance for Bougainville.

Case Narrative

Phase I: “Mining Conflict Sparks Rebellion” (1988–1989)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factor: COIN or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by insurgents.

The insurgency in Papua New Guinea was sparked by a conflict over mine development on the island of Bougainville. Building on a history of opposition to outside mining companies and the intrusion of “mainlanders” into the region, a group of local landowners launched a campaign of sabotage against the mines.²¹⁷ The group initially focused on the pollution caused by gold and copper mining and the lack of financial benefit provided to the local economy, but it quickly evolved into a broader secessionist movement after the government sent in troops to defend the mines.

²¹⁷ WomenWarPeace, “Case Study: Bougainville—Papua New Guinea,” undated.

Forming the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA), the local landowners launched a three-week armed campaign in December 1988 that led to the closure of the mines and the declaration of Bougainville independence. The government reacted swiftly and brutally to the attacks. It enacted a state of emergency and initiated a military campaign against the BRA. The government also supported a group of Bougainvilleans who were opposed to independence, the Bougainville Resistance Force (BRF).

Papua New Guinea's military was ill equipped to conduct effective COIN operations. Although it received equipment and logistical support from the Australian government, it could not crush the popular insurgent movement or prevent the BRA from halting mining operations. As a result, a low-intensity conflict between the government and the BRA rebels ensued.²¹⁸

Phase II: "Blockade Backfires" (1990–1996)

Phase Outcome: COIN Loss

Key Factors: COIN or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by insurgents; COIN force employed escalating repression.

After a brief attempt at negotiation failed, the Papua New Guinea government took a different course of action in 1990. It withdrew its personnel and imposed a military and economic blockade on Bougainville. The government expected that the blockade would lead to the collapse of civil administration in the rebel area and that the disappearance of services would undermine support for the BRA. Instead, the situation worsened. The BRA failed to establish order; there was widespread destruction of property, displacement of people, and resentment against the government, culminating in a declaration of independence.

Toward the end of the year, security forces returned to the north and the government attempted to reestablish basic services in the

²¹⁸Frida Moller, Karl DeRouen, Jr., Jacob Bercovitch, and Peter Wallenstein, "The Limits of Peace: Third Parties in Civil Wars in Southeast Asia, 1993–2004," *Negotiation Journal*, October 2007.

region. In doing so, it made use of local “resistance” forces opposed to the BRA. Still, continued opposition from the BRA and its supporters, exacerbated by well-publicized reports of human rights violations by security forces, proved to be a barrier to the resolution of the conflict.²¹⁹

By 1991, there were also increasing signs of insubordination and lack of discipline within the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF), including credible allegations of actions outside the accepted uses of warfare and indications that members of the officer corps were becoming disaffected and openly disobeying government orders.²²⁰ The government also implemented a form of forced resettlement in an attempt to separate the population from the BRA by moving civilians to government-run “care centers,” which resulted in the displacement of more than 65,000 civilians.²²¹ This policy was also largely unsuccessful.

The conflict dragged on for six years, with the BRA rebels retaining limited military assistance and sanctuary from the nearby Solomon Islands. Thousands of people in Bougainville died as a result of the economic hardship imposed by the blockade, which the government finally lifted in 1996.²²²

Phase III: “Political Scandal Leads to Negotiations” (1997–1998)

Phase Outcome: COIN Loss

Key Factors: COIN force and the government had different goals/levels of commitment; insurgents’ claimed grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict.

²¹⁹R. J. May, “Challenging the State,” in *State and Society in Papua New Guinea: The First Twenty-Five Years*, Melbourne: Australian National University, 2004.

²²⁰Gary Brown, “Crisis in Papua New Guinea: Military Mutiny and the Threat to Civilian Democratic Rule,” Parliament of Australia, Parliamentary Library, Research Note 27, April 3, 2001.

²²¹WomenWarPeace, undated.

²²²United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Assessment for Bougainvilleans in Papua New Guinea*, Minorities at Risk Project, December 31, 2003; WomenWarPeace, undated.

By 1997, the conflict in Bougainville had come to a stalemate when the PNGDF were unable to stop the BRA attacks or defeat the secessionist movement. Papua New Guinea's prime minister, Julius Chan, became increasingly concerned about divisions in the military caused by the conflict and the international criticism that his country had received for human rights abuses. He sought military assistance from a foreign corporation, contracting with the London-based Sandline International.

Sandline was contracted to employ soldiers with experience in Africa to train the PNGDF in COIN operations and possibly engage in direct actions against the insurgents.²²³ The decision to employ an outside force for military assistance was viewed as a vote of no confidence by the military and led to a near mutiny by senior PNGDF leaders. President Chan was forced to cancel the Sandline contract, but reverberations of the affair led to the collapse of his government and effectively ended any option of a military solution for Bougainville.

Subsequently, there was a greater emphasis on negotiations. The BRA and government leaders met for talks in New Zealand in July and October 1997, making notable progress for the first time.²²⁴ Additional talks led to a cease-fire in April 1998 and the signing of the Bougainville Peace Agreement in 2001. The peace agreement granted broad powers of self-governance to Bougainville and a referendum on independence in the future. (A minority faction of the BRA, led by its founder, Francis Ona, refused to play any part in the peace process and continued to occupy the site of the former mine. However, the group no longer engaged in violence.)²²⁵

Conventional Explanations

The conventional explanation for the failure of the Papua New Guinea government to contain the Bougainville insurgency is that its brutal

²²³Brown, 2001.

²²⁴Parliament of Australia, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Trade, *Bougainville: The Peace Process and Beyond*, Report No. 90, October 21, 1999.

²²⁵GlobalSecurity.org, "Bougainville Revolution," last updated April 27, 2005a; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2003.

COIN policies served to increase support for the insurgents. The government's apparent lack of concern for the safety and basic needs of the local population in permitting the human rights violations by the army and instituting a punishing economic blockade on the island prevented it from winning any popular support. The decision by the government to reach a negotiated settlement to the conflict is often attributed to the Sandline affair, in which the president's employment of a private military contractor caused a near mutiny of the army and essentially eliminated the possibility of pursuing more aggressive COIN actions.

Distinctive Characteristics

- The insurgency in Bougainville was based on both ethnic and economic conflicts, as the inhabitants of the island are ethnically different from those on the mainland.²²⁶ The island residents are darker-skinned Melanesians whose ethnic kin populate the neighboring Solomon Islands.²²⁷ "A broad sense of ethnic separateness, which drew upon a clear difference in physical appearance between Bougainvilleans and mainland Papuan 'red skins' and a feeling that Bougainville had been neglected by the administration, encouraged the growth of pro-independence nationalism."²²⁸
- The government's decision to institute a military and economic blockade on Bougainville was unique among COIN efforts. Few insurgency conflicts offer such an opportunity (i.e., an insurgency located on an island), and few governments have chosen to take such a radical step, which has the potential to create severe hardship for the entire civilian population.
- Even more unusual was the BRA's ability to sustain an effective guerrilla campaign for nearly a decade, despite the presence of the naval blockade and the absence of lootable or obstructable

²²⁶Moller et al., 2007.

²²⁷United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2003.

²²⁸Brown, 2001.

resources.²²⁹ To maintain their support, the insurgents were able to rely on handmade weaponry and their ability to smuggle food and small weapons from the Solomon Islands.

- Political scandal played a major role in the conflict as well. Had it not been for the Sandline affair, which led to the failure of the Chan administration, the government may not have chosen to pursue a negotiated settlement so soon and the conflict could have continued.

Figure 12
Map of Papua New Guinea



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/I-12

²²⁹Karen Ballentine and Heiko Nitzschke, *Beyond Greed and Grievance: Policy Lessons from Studies in the Political Economy of Armed Conflict*, New York: International Peace Academy, October 2003.

Table 12
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Papua New Guinea

Factor	Phase I (1988–1989)	Phase II (1990–1996)	Phase III (1997–1998)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	0	0	0
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	1	1	1
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	0	0	0
Government a functional democracy	1	1	1
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0	0
Free and fair elections held	1	1	1
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	1	1	1
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	1	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	0
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	0

Table 12—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1988–1989)	Phase II (1990–1996)	Phase III (1997–1998)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	1
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	0	0	0
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	0	0
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	1	1	1
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0	1
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	1	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	1	1	0

Table 12—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1988–1989)	Phase II (1990–1996)	Phase III (1997–1998)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	1	1	1
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	0	0	0
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	1
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	1	1	0
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	1	1	1
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	1	1	1
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	1	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	0	0
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustenance	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	1	1	1
Government/state was competent	1	1	1
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	1	1	1
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	1	0
Government/COIN win	0	0	0
Insurgent win	1	1	1
Mixed outcome	1	0	0

Liberia, 1989–1997

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Case Summary

What began as a civil war soon descended into a frenzy of violence, with as many as seven armed insurgent groups vying for power simultaneously. Soldiers from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), supplanted a deteriorating government as the primary COIN force. Atrocities were committed by all sides, including the COIN forces, as each side sought to gain control over valuable natural resources, such as diamonds, gold, iron ore, and timber. After 13 failed attempts to reach a peace agreement, the conflict was finally terminated when Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) received the tacit approval of Nigeria to sit for elections.

Case Narrative

Phase I: "Taylor and the NPFL" (December 1989–August 1990)

Phase Outcome: Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: COIN or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents; COIN force (plus allies) and insurgents (plus allies) *lacked* sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles; COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment; COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment.

On December 24, 1989, Charles Taylor led an invasion force of approximately 150 insurgents, fighting under the banner of the NPFL, into Nimba County in Liberia's north-central region. The insurgents crossed the border into Liberia from Côte d'Ivoire and were supplemented by dissidents from Sierra Leone, the Gambia, and Guinea, as well as an attachment of Burkinabe soldiers.²³⁰ Descending on the capital, Monrovia, the insurgents encountered two infantry battalions of

²³⁰Stephen Ellis, "Liberia's Warlord Insurgency," in Christopher Clapham, ed., *African Guerrillas*, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1998, p. 155.

government troops from Samuel Doe's Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). The fight broke down along ethnic lines, with insurgents consisting of primarily Gio and Mano tribesmen. The COIN force was largely Krahn and Mandingo and consisted of several groups operating in various parts of the country at different times.²³¹

Brutal tactics by the COIN force against civilians provided a significant boost to insurgent recruitment, and their ranks swelled from 150 to 10,000.²³² No-holds-barred fighting escalated, and it was the civilians who paid the highest price. By July 1990, the insurgents splintered into competing factions, with Taylor heading the NPFL and Prince Johnson forming the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), which seized the capital and took over the presidential mansion. Another armed faction vying for power was the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO), a group that consisted of exiled Krahn and Mandingo army officers who regrouped in Sierra Leone and Guinea.²³³ At the height of violence, there were no fewer than seven armed groups fighting each other for control over Liberia's territory and resources.²³⁴

Drug-crazed child soldiers roamed the cities and villages of Liberia, engaging in mass looting, rape, and wanton slaughter. It was not uncommon for victims to be set on fire or beheaded, and there were widespread rumors of cannibalism.²³⁵ Taylor's NPFL forces controlled

²³¹It should be noted that there were some exceptions to this division along ethnic lines; not every insurgent group was completely monolithic. According to Stephen Ellis,

In fact, in most circumstances, this mobilization of ethnic identity was more rhetoric than reality, as every faction included substantial numbers of fighters of diverse ethnic origin, and ethnic allegiance became really important only when a local grievance, rooted in local history and land disputes, became caught up with national factional activity (Stephen Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War*, New York: New York University Press, 1999, p. 105).

²³²J. E. Herring, "Liberia: America's Stepchild," *Small Wars Journal*, 1997.

²³³ULIMO split during its nascent stages, forming ULIMO-K (Kromah faction), led by former Information Minister Alhaji Kromah, and ULIMO-J (Johnson faction), headed by ex-civil servant Roosevelt Johnson.

²³⁴Ellis, 1998, p. 156.

²³⁵Herring, 1997, p. 28.

roughly 90 percent of Liberia by August 1990, and in an effort to restore order to the country, ECOWAS convened and decided to deploy a peacekeeping force to Liberia under the auspices of the ECOMOG.²³⁶ ECOMOG's most significant accomplishment in the early stages of its deployment was to prevent the NPFL from overrunning Monrovia.

Phase II: "We Fight to Loot" (September 1990–March 1996)

Phase Outcome: Favoring COIN

Key Factors: Insurgents made critical strategic errors or failed to make obvious adaptations; COIN force adapted to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.

ECOMOG consisted of soldiers from five West African nations, including Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, the Gambia, and Nigeria, the regional hegemon, which headed the group. Taylor was particularly opposed to outside intervention, especially as he consolidated control over the majority of the country outside the capital. Although initially welcomed as a temporary stopgap to the widespread violence, ECOMOG soldiers soon found themselves involved in looting, plunder, and general corruption, with the Nigerian contingent singled out as especially rapacious.²³⁷

It was also during the first month of ECOMOG's deployment that the INPFL captured and killed AFL leader Samuel Doe.²³⁸ Shortly after Doe's execution, the ECOMOG force commander, Major General Joshua Dogonyaro, appointed Amos Sawyer as head of an interim government. As ECOMOG planes and heavy artillery bombarded NPFL positions on the outskirts of Monrovia, Taylor intimated for the first time that he might be willing to listen to diplomatic overtures.

Although ECOMOG was sent to as a peacekeeping contingent, it betrayed its neutrality very early in the conflict, aligning with

²³⁶Ellis, 1998, p. 156.

²³⁷Ellis, 1998, p. 163.

²³⁸William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States*, Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998, p. 93.

Krahn warlords Roosevelt Johnson and George Boley and the leadership of the AFL. Taylor's NPFL received support from Côte d'Ivoire and Libya, while Guinea provided backing to the Kromah faction of ULIMO. These were not relationships of altruism, but rather marriages of convenience that allowed the respective sponsors to exploit Liberia's resources for financial gain. According to Stephen Ellis,

This situation produced powerful conflicts of interest among putative peacemakers as Liberia became a zone of contention among military and commercial elites in Abuja, Abidjan, Conakry and other regional capitals, themselves allied with interest groups as far away as France, Lebanon and Ukraine.²³⁹

In November 1991, NPFL insurgents invaded Sierra Leone, providing support to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) insurgency in that country. Taylor underestimated the impact that the departure of a significant number of his fighters from the country would have on the Liberian conflict, however. The following year, ECOMOG imposed an economic blockade and launched an offensive against Taylor's rebels. Despite achieving some success, Nigerian peacekeepers were widely accused of collusion with ULIMO insurgents.²⁴⁰ For the next several years, the various rebel groups engaged in low-level warfare, using mainly small arms. Peace agreements were signed and then ignored until a 1995 power-sharing deal known as the Abuja Agreement was signed, paving the way for the myriad warlords to jointly participate in a transitional government.²⁴¹

²³⁹Ellis, 1998, p. 156.

²⁴⁰"National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL)," *Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism*, February 9, 2005.

²⁴¹"National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL)," 2005.

Phase III: “The Final Battle for Monrovia” (April 1996–July 1997)

Phase Outcome: COIN Loss

Key Factors: Free and fair elections held; government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in the area of conflict; COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment.

By the final phase of the insurgency, the myriad insurgent groups continued to battle in Liberia, while no individual warlord could assume power without the tacit approval of Nigeria, the regional hegemon and leader of ECOMOG. To be sure, however, “the richest, most powerful and best-connected of all the warlords was Charles Taylor.”²⁴² Other warlord-cum-politicians, threatened by Taylor’s concentration of power, engaged in skirmishes with NPFL insurgents and before long, central Monrovia was wracked by full-scale warfare.²⁴³

This final battle for Monrovia allowed Taylor’s forces to engage in widespread looting, which they dubbed “Operation Pay Yourself.” In total, more than 2,000 people were killed, and the UN lost approximately 322 vehicles estimated at \$4.9 million. In the ensuing chaos, Taylor was able gain control over the gold fields and forests of south-eastern Liberia as well as the resource-rich agricultural areas around Kakata. The Nigerian government replaced the ECOMOG field commander under allegations of collusion with Taylor and the NPFL. The aftermath of the battle led to relative calm, at least by Liberian standards, and on July 19, 1997, Liberia held “the fairest elections in its history,” with a turnout of 80 percent (three-quarters of whom voted for Taylor).²⁴⁴

Conventional Explanations

For years, the insurgency in Liberia remained merely a conflict fueled by violence. The Abuja Accords, signed in 1995, fundamentally altered the landscape by adding a political dimension to the insurgency. While

²⁴²Ellis, 1999, p. 105.

²⁴³Ellis, 1999, p. 108.

²⁴⁴Ellis, 1999, p. 108.

this did not exclude violence as an option, it did force the various warlords operating in the country to consider the political ramifications of some of their actions. Charles Taylor proved the most adept at manipulating the competing factions in Liberia, creating rifts between would-be allies and using his wealth and access to resources to position himself as the savior of the Liberian people. Indeed, even with the widespread carnage that Taylor and his NPFL insurgents inflicted during the course of the war, a political slogan emerged during election time: “He killed my Pa, He killed my Ma, I’ll vote for him.”²⁴⁵

Distinctive Characteristics

- At various points during the conflict, Nigerian soldiers on the ECOMOG COIN force supported both sides of the conflict—ULIMO and the NPFL—in an apparent attempt to prolong the fighting for their own commercial gain.²⁴⁶
- Although Taylor’s forces did not have outright popular support throughout the insurgency, they received tangible support from Libya and Burkina Faso through Ivoirian territory.
- NPFL insurgents did not adhere to a single, unifying ideology, but rather espoused a broad array of interests and ideas. “Taylor and his NPFL did not promulgate a political ideology as much as a political theology, an all-encompassing commitment to a political authority across a wide range of realms.”²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵Ellis, 1999, p. 109.

²⁴⁶Ellis, 1999, p. 108.

²⁴⁷Reno, 1998, p. 93.

Figure 13
Map of Liberia



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.
RAND MG964/1-13

Table 13
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Liberia

Factor	Phase I (1989–1990)	Phase II (1990–1996)	Phase III (1996–1997)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	1	1	1
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	1	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0	1
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0	1
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	0	0	0
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	1	1	1
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0	1
Free and fair elections held	0	0	1
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	0

Table 13—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1989–1990)	Phase II (1990–1996)	Phase III (1996–1997)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	0	0	0
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	0	0	0
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	0	0	0
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	0	0	0
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	1	0	1

Table 13—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1989–1990)	Phase II (1990–1996)	Phase III (1996–1997)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	1	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	0	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	1	1	1
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	1	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	1	1	1
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	1	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	0	0	0
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	1	1
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	0	0	0
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	0	0
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustenance	1	1	1
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	1	1	1
Government/state was competent	0	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	1	1	1
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	1	1	1
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	0	1	0
Insurgent win	1	0	1
Mixed outcome	0	0	0

Rwanda, 1990–1994

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Case Summary

The civil war in Rwanda began in 1990 when the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invaded the country from its base in Uganda, seeking to establish democracy and the right of return for Tutsi refugees. After Rwandan and French forces turned back the RPF, it conducted an effective guerrilla campaign that ultimately led to the negotiation of a power-sharing agreement with the Hutu-led government. The political agreement with the RPF raised fears among the Hutu population over a reassertion of Tutsi power, however. In 1994, tensions came to a head when the plane carrying the Rwandan president was shot down and a genocidal campaign was declared by radical Hutus, who gained control of the provisional government. Over the next few months, the government became preoccupied with eliminating Tutsis and moderate Hutus. French forces withheld direct military support, which allowed the RPF to regroup and quickly defeat the Rwandan army, gaining control of the capital with little opposition.

Case Narrative

Phase I: “Insurgents Fail Conventionally” (1990)

Phase Outcome: Favoring COIN

Key Factors: External support to COIN from strong state/military; COIN force and allies had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents and allies.

The civil war in Rwanda stemmed from long-standing competition between the majority Hutu population and the minority Tutsis. While the Tutsis were given preferential treatment during the colonial period, the Hutus assumed power after independence, leading many Tutsis to flee to neighboring states where they formed opposition groups. In October 1990, one of the most prominent of the Tutsi opposition groups, the RPF, invaded Rwanda from its base in Uganda, demanding political representation and the right of return for Tutsi refugees.

The RPF functioned as a professional army led by officers who had served in the Ugandan military for decades. A total of 4,000 members of the RPF deserted their posts in the Ugandan army to lead the military attack. The Rwandan army, in contrast, consisted of roughly 5,000 troops who were moderately well equipped and fairly well led but had no experience in combat.²⁴⁸ The RPF therefore appeared to have had a chance of defeating the Rwandan army with a conventional military attack. Yet, when French and Zairian troops provided support to the Rwandan army, the army had a clear military advantage. Facing a mismatch in equipment and troops, the rebel movement was unable to conduct conventional operations against the capital, Kigali. After only weeks of fighting, the rebels were turned back by the Rwandan troops and their allies, and the groups' leader, Fred Rwigyema, was killed.

Phase II: "Political Compromise Fuels Ethnic Tensions" (1990–1993)
Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government; COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control; militias worked at cross-purposes with COIN force/government.

After retreating to Uganda, the RPF regrouped under Major Paul Kagame. Kagame resorted to guerrilla tactics, seeking to disrupt the status quo in Rwanda by fighting a light infantry war of ambush, maneuver, and deception, which proved to be more successful.²⁴⁹ The RPF was able to make territorial gains in the northern region of the country and launched numerous attacks on Rwandan troops

²⁴⁸Thomas P. Odom, *Journey into Darkness: Genocide in Rwanda*, College Station, Tex.: Texas A&M Press, 2005, p. 162.

²⁴⁹Paul Kagame was Ugandan President Museveni's intelligence chief and had reportedly been in training at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College when the RPF launched its invasion (Odom, 2005, pp. 162–163).

over the next few years.²⁵⁰ The goal of the RPF was to force the Hutu government to accept it as a political force.

When it appeared that the RPF might attack Kigali, the French openly joined the combat against the rebel forces. (According to some analysts, Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana faked the RPF attack on Kigali to prompt the French and the Belgians to intervene.)²⁵¹ This intervention forced a temporary stalemate in the conflict. At this point, Habyarimana arrested thousands of Tutsis living in Rwanda and began to organize and train local militias, collectively as Interahamwe, to fight the RPF and carry out reprisals against the Tutsi population.²⁵²

In 1992, the two sides entered into peace negotiations. While sporadic fighting continued, several peace accords were discussed, leading to the signing of the Arusha Accords in August 1993. The Arusha Accords promised to create a provisional coalition government composed of President Habyarimana's National Revolutionary Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND), the RPF, and Rwandan opposition parties and provided for UN support for its implementation. The accord was not universally supported by Rwanda's coalition government, however. Some radical political wings sought to scuttle the negotiations and began to increase the level of violence against local Tutsis and moderate Hutus. (It is suspected that the party militias were secretly armed beginning in late 1992, with support from a section of the army and the Rwandan Presidential Guard.)²⁵³ As a result, ethnic tensions continued to grow.

In January 1993, the government signed an agreement on the formation of a broad-based transitional government with the RPF.²⁵⁴ Yet, the signing of the agreement was followed by widespread violence

²⁵⁰Thomas P. Odom, "A Lesson from Rwanda: Civilian Casualties in Counter Insurgency," *Small Wars Journal*, Vol. 8, May 2007b.

²⁵¹Odom, 2007b, p. 163.

²⁵²Thomas Streissguth, *Rwanda in Pictures*, Minneapolis, Minn.: Twenty-First Century Books, 2007.

²⁵³Paul Nugent, *Africa Since Independence: A Comparative History*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 453.

²⁵⁴Nugent, 2004, p. 453.

against Tutsis by the militias, which led to renewed attacks by the RPF. New negotiations then followed, leading to more generous arrangements with the RPF, including the integration of RPF fighters into the army and the return of Tutsi refugees to the country. These negotiations, in combination with the kidnapping and execution of the Hutu president of nearby Burundi by Tutsi soldiers, served to increase Hutu concerns about a return of Tutsi power in Rwanda. The implementation of the Arusha Accords stalled as political fragmentation continued in Kigali and the armed militias grew stronger. By the end of 1993, extremist Hutu groups established a radio program that incited more ethnic fear and hatred, and militia groups became nearly as well armed as the Rwandan army, bringing rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) into the capital.

Phase III: “Genocide Turns the Tide” (1994)

Phase Outcome: COIN Loss

Key Factors: COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence; COIN or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents; major ally of COIN force substantially reduced fighting forces.

The Arusha peace process collapsed in April 1994 after an RPG brought down a plane carrying Habyarimana and the president of Burundi over the Kigali airport. While the perpetrators of the attack were never confirmed, they were widely believed to be Hutu leaders who objected to compromise with the RPF. Regardless of who took part in the attack, the incident sparked outrage in the Hutu community and led to unprecedented violence against the Tutsi population.

Radical Hutu leaders who gained control of the provisional government established after Habyarimana’s death immediately called for the killing of Tutsis and moderate Hutus to avenge the president’s murder. Kigali quickly dissolved into widespread inter-ethnic violence that spread to the rest of the country, resulting in genocide. Much of the violence was attributed to the Hutu Interahamwe. Approximately 300,000 members of the Interahamwe swept through the country,

slaughtering Tutsis. Ordinary citizens were also called upon by local officials and government-sponsored radio to kill their neighbors in what became a bizarre campaign to induce civilians and even members of the clergy to engage in mass murder.²⁵⁵ Over the course of a few months, an estimated 800,000 to 1 million Tutsis were killed.

The RPF and its military wing, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), remobilized during the genocide to take on the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) and stop the Tutsi genocide. With the country in a state of disarray and French forces no longer providing direct support to the Rwandan army, the RPF was able to advance to the capital quickly and establish control as the provisional government retreated.

By mid-June, the RPF declared a cease-fire, and on July 19, 1994, a new government was created under the presidency of Pasteur Bizimungu, a Hutu, with the Tutsi RPF receiving a majority of cabinet posts. The RPF was itself accused of reprisal killings, and as many as 2 million Hutu refugees (including former government soldiers and militiamen) fled to Zaire, Tanzania, and Burundi. France was also accused of protecting members of the former Hutu government in their retreat.²⁵⁶

Conventional Explanations

Rwanda is usually explained as a unique case in which ethnic attacks against insurgents reached a genocidal level. Initially, the failure of the Rwandan government to control the Tutsi insurgency could be explained by the inadequacy of its repression and pacification strategies. Later, however, as the Rwandan militias and radical political elements initiated exceptionally brutal attacks against all Tutsis and any Hutus deemed to be sympathizers, the government appeared to lose control of its forces. The Hutu government's loss could therefore be explained by the military's preoccupation with the extermination of Tutsis and sympathetic Hutus, which led them to be unprepared for a subsequent invasion of RPF forces. At that point, the Tutsi RPF became the more

²⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Background Notes: Rwanda," June 2008.

²⁵⁶ Linda Melvern, "France and Genocide: The Murky Truth," *The Times (London)*, August 8, 2008.

competent force and was able to take control of the capital and the country. The involvement of external forces in the Rwandan civil war is also significant, as French military assistance from 1990 to 1993 provided critical support for the Hutu government and prolonged the conflict (and may have allowed for the radicalization of Hutu political forces), while the subsequent withdrawal of direct French support in 1994 contributed to the government's downfall.²⁵⁷

Distinctive Characteristics

- The Rwandan civil war began differently from most insurgent conflicts, as the major insurgent group, the RPF, was formed outside the country in Uganda. The insurgency's forces and base of support were largely in the diaspora community. Moreover, the insurgency was better prepared than most guerrilla groups. Its leaders had gained decades of experience fighting in Uganda, first in President Museveni's insurgent campaign and later in his Ugandan army fighting a COIN war.²⁵⁸ The RPF was therefore better disciplined and better trained than the Rwandan army, which had little combat experience.²⁵⁹ Although the RPF was still forced to fight a guerrilla war against the Rwandan army, its professionalism and training enabled the rebel forces to achieve greater success against the Rwandan army and to quickly overtake the country during the third phase of the conflict.
- The COIN policies of the Rwandan government are difficult to assess. The original government led by Habyarimana sought political accommodations with the RPF, offering a power-sharing government and the integration of the RPF forces into the Rwandan military. However, the critical stage of the insurgency occurred

²⁵⁷Mel McNulty, "France's Role in Rwanda and External Military Intervention: A Double Discrediting," *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Autumn 1997; Melvern, 2008.

²⁵⁸Thomas Odom, "Guerrillas from the Mist: A Defense Attaché Watches the Rwandan Patriotic Front Transform from Insurgent to Counter Insurgent," *Small Wars Journal*, Vol. 5, July 2006.

²⁵⁹James Ciment, ed., "Rwanda: Civil War and Genocide Since 1991," in *Encyclopedia of Conflicts Since World War II*, Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe Reference, 1998a.

after the assassination of Habyarimana, when more radical Hutu groups influenced the provisional government and initiated genocide against the Tutsi minority.

- The COIN policies initiated by the Rwandan government during the critical stage of the conflict were unique and largely unprecedented. Rather than attempting to conduct a traditional COIN campaign, the radical provisional government that gained power after Habyarimana's assassination took an extreme approach, seeking to destroy not only the active minority that was supporting the insurgency but also anyone in the majority who remained openly neutral or passive (thus, the entire Tutsi community and all moderate Hutus).²⁶⁰ The government essentially conceded the military campaign and bet on turning the population against itself through genocide.²⁶¹ This policy proved ineffective. It allowed the RPF take advantage of the "distraction" of the genocide and obtain an easy, yet pyrrhic, military victory.

²⁶⁰Odom, 2007b.

²⁶¹Thomas P. Odom, comment on David Kilcullen, "Two Schools of Classical Counterinsurgency," *Small Wars Journal Blog*, February 1, 2007a.

Figure 14
Map of Rwanda



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-14

Table 14
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Rwanda

Factor	Phase I (1990)	Phase II (1990–1993)	Phase III (1994)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	1	1	0
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	1	1	1
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	1	1	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	1	1	0
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	1	1	0
Free and fair elections held	0	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0	1
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	0	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	0

Table 14—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1990)	Phase II (1990–1993)	Phase III (1994)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	1
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	1
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	1
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	1	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	1	1	1
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	1	1	1
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	1	0	0
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	0	0
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	1	1	1
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	1	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	0	1

Table 14—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1990)	Phase II (1990–1993)	Phase III (1994)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	0	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	1	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	1	1
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	0	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	1	1	1
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	1	1	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0	1
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	1	1	1
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	1	0
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	0	1
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	0	1	1
Government/state was competent	1	1	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	1	1
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0	0
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	1	0	0
Insurgent win	0	1	1
Mixed outcome	0	1	0

Moldova, 1990–1992

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Case Summary

Situated at the ethnic crossroads of several former empires, Moldova was host to violence that pitted pro-Romanian ethnic Moldovans against pro-Russian Dniesters in the early 1990s.²⁶² COIN forces were woefully underequipped and lacked a full-spectrum force. Furthermore, they were incapable of conducting high-intensity tactical assaults, despite having air supremacy and artillery superiority. The government tried relentlessly and to no avail to solve the conflict through diplomacy, as insurgents defeated the COIN forces in a short but bloody battle with the assistance of the Russian 14th Army and various mercenaries.

Case Narrative

Phase I: “Prelude to a Conflict” (June 1990–February 1992)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: In area of conflict, COIN force perceived as worse than insurgents; insurgent forces individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.

The decline of the Soviet Union was accompanied by an upsurge in Moldovan nationalism. Part of this nationalism was derived from the stark differences in language, culture, and lifestyle between the ethnic Moldovans and ethnic Russians. The former spoke Romanian, relied on agriculture, and identified with their Latin background, while the latter spoke Russian, worked in the industrial sector, and had Slavic roots.²⁶³ In June 1990, the Moldovan leadership undertook radical steps

²⁶²Moldova lies at the “ethnic crossroads” of greater Bessarabia, the intersection of German, Russian, Turkic, Romanian, and Ukrainian populations, history, and culture.

²⁶³Keith A. Barclay, *Ethnic Violence in Moldova*, Ft. Leavenworth, Kans.: School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2002, p. 38.

that led to rising tensions between ethnic Moldovans and Dniesters.²⁶⁴ Specifically, the government in Chisinau, the capital, declared independence from the Soviet Union, legally changed the official language of the state from Russian to Romanian, abolished the conscription of Soviet soldiers in the country, and declared the occupation of the Russian 14th Army illegal.²⁶⁵ In August 1990, the very small Gagauz minority declared the southeastern part of Moldova independent. And although the nascent movement was quickly smothered and defeated by force, a precedent had been set.

In September 1990, in response to these perceived provocative actions, the Slavic pro-Russian minority declared its own independence under the leadership of Igor Smirnov and the United Council of Work Collectives, announcing the formation of the Dniester Moldovan Republic (aka Transdniester) with its capital in Tiraspol.²⁶⁶ Fearing that violence was inevitable, the Moldovan interior ministry formed a special corps of 10,000 police intended to serve as a bulwark against violent separatists.²⁶⁷ The host-nation government captured and imprisoned Smirnov with the blessing of Moscow, and the insurgents responded by organizing a rail blockade from Ukraine and Russia to the west bank of Moldova. Still, because of its pro-Romanian leanings, the COIN force was viewed as something of an occupier on the east bank of the Dniester. Upon his release, Smirnov returned to Tiraspol and won elections that were rife with allegations of fraud, voter intimidation, and murder.²⁶⁸ Rather than focus on Tiraspol, the government in Chisinau concentrated on building the bureaucracy and

²⁶⁴ Ethnic Russians and Ukrainians were known as “Dniesters” because they inhabited the Transdniester region located on the east bank of the Dniester River.

²⁶⁵ For further information on the language laws, see Stuart J. Kaufman, “Spiraling to Ethnic War: Elites, Masses, and Moscow in Moldova’s Civil War,” *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 2, Fall 1996, p. 126.

²⁶⁶ Barclay, 2002, p. 42.

²⁶⁷ Edward Ozhiganov, “The Republic of Moldova: Transdniester and the 14th Army,” in Alexei Arbatov, Abram Chayes, Antonia Handler Chayes, and Lara Olson, eds., *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997, p. 163.

²⁶⁸ Kaufman, 1996, p. 128.

armed forces of its newly independent state by selling its fixed-wing aircraft (MIG-29s) to the United States, using the proceeds to purchase military trucks and associated equipment.

November 1990 brought the most violent clashes between the Moldovan police and the Dniester insurgents up to that point. The insurgents mobilized into volunteer detachments, constructed road-blocks, and took over bridges in both Bendery and Dubossary. In turn, the Tiraspol press glorified the dead as victims and martyrs, and also used the media to spread fear among the population that Chisinau sought to unite with Romania.²⁶⁹ By 1991, at independence, the Moldovan army consisted of 12,000–15,000 soldiers in three combined arms brigades that made up a truck mobile battalion, a BMD mechanized battalion, and a tank battalion, although the equipment for the tank battalion could not be funded. In addition, COIN forces had an artillery brigade, an aviation brigade, an air defense brigade, a peace-keeping battalion, a special forces battalion, a military police battalion, and an honor guard.²⁷⁰

In September 1991, the Transdniester “forces of self-defense” were organized as armed militias and formed the backbone of the Dniester Republican Guards (DRG).²⁷¹ These forces proved entirely more capable and willing to use violence than their COIN counterparts. Toward the end of 1991, a creeping putsch took control over public institutions, such as municipal buildings, schools, and police stations.²⁷² The insurgents also formed shadow institutions, securing Russian bank deposits and establishing a functioning banking system. On December 13, Moldovan police fired back at Transdnistriensians for the first time while

²⁶⁹Kaufman, 1996, pp. 127–128.

²⁷⁰Barclay, 2002, p. 44.

²⁷¹Airat R. Aklaev, “Dynamics of the Moldova Trans-Dniester Ethnic Conflict (Late 1980s to Early 1990s),” in Kumar Rupesinghe and Valery A. Tishkov, eds., *Ethnicity and Power in the Contemporary World*, Tokyo, New York, and Paris: United Nations University Press, 1996, p. 99.

²⁷²Marius Vahl and Michael Emerson, “Moldova and the Transnistrian Conflict,” in Bruno Coppieters, Michael Emerson, Michel Huyseune, Tamara Kovziridze, Gergana Noutcheva, Nathalie Tocci, and Marius Vahl, *Europeanization and Conflict Resolution: Case Studies from the European Periphery*, Gent, Belgium: Academia Press, 2004, p. 158.

defending a regional government building in Dubasari. Overall, the initial phase of the insurgency was characterized by minor skirmishes, but the insurgents did a much better job than the COIN force of preparing for the next phase of the conflict, growing its force size with mercenaries from the Don region of Ukraine and other irregular fighters from abroad.²⁷³ Moreover, by the end of the year, the insurgents had defeated the Moldovan police forces and cemented their presence on the east bank of the Dniester.

Phase II: “The Russian 14th Takes Sides” (March 1992–December 1992)
Phase Outcome: COIN Loss

Key Factors: COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics; external professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents; insurgents maintained or grew force size.

After several months of sporadic, low-level fighting, in March 1992, the insurgents conducted organized assaults on three large Moldovan police units in the Dubasari region and police headquarters in southern Transdnester.²⁷⁴ It was during this phase of the conflict that Moldovan President Mircea Snegur came under severe criticism from his constituents for not taking a firmer stance but instead relying on diplomacy. In an effort to appease his critics, Snegur altered his approach and declared a state of emergency, imposed marshal law, and established direct presidential rule in the country. On March 24, 1992, the Moldovan armed forces advanced on Tiraspol, Dubasari, and Rybnitsa in an attempt to seize the main communication lines of the region’s three main cities.²⁷⁵ Insurgents responded by implementing a rail blockade and attacking COIN forces with rockets.

²⁷³ According to Pål Kostø et al., the Cossacks and other volunteers were placed on Tiraspol’s payroll and received 3,000 rubles per month for their services (Pål Kostø, Andrei Edemsky, and Natalya Kalashnikova, “The Dniester Conflict: Between Irredentism and Separatism,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 6, 1993, p. 987).

²⁷⁴ Barclay, 2002, p. 46.

²⁷⁵ Ozhiganov, 1997, p. 177.

On April 1, 1992, a full brigade of Moldovan army and special Moldovan MVD (Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs) units attacked DRG forces in Bendery. COIN forces destroyed three Russian armored vehicles with antitank systems before ceding the battle. Bendery was the largest battle of the conflict, resulting in 1,000 dead.²⁷⁶ By May 1992, insurgents acquired additional mechanized equipment from the Russian 14th Army.²⁷⁷ In June, insurgents launched a reinforced brigade-sized attack on the town of Bendery, backed by 14th Army officers and troops. Moldovan armed forces had tanks, and the insurgents had arms and heavy weapons. It is estimated that, on each side, 15,000 armed personnel participated in the hostilities, with approximately 400 tanks and APCs and 300 artillery guns and mortars being deployed.²⁷⁸ The COIN force responded with the Moldovan Air Squadron, consisting of several MIG-29s, and bombed the bridge between Bendery and Tiraspol. It also employed howitzers, helicopters, tanks, mortars, and grenade launchers.²⁷⁹

According to Brian D. Taylor, during the Battle of Bendery, the Kremlin “tolerated if not ordered, the use of the 14th Army personnel to command PMR tanks during a key state of the battle.”²⁸⁰ Artillery fires razed the city and destroyed nearly every building and structure.²⁸¹ Civil lawlessness prevailed, and 500 people were killed, 1,500 were wounded, and approximately 80,000 were forced to flee their homes in the first days of the battle.²⁸² Finally, the Moscow Agreement ended the conflict on July 21, 1992.

The conflict ended with virtual autonomy for Tiraspol, and the Russian 14th Army remained in the Transdnier. Snegur was com-

²⁷⁶Dov Lynch, *Engaging Eurasia's Separatist States: Unresolved Conflicts and De Facto States*, Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2004, p. 33.

²⁷⁷Barclay, 2002, p. 50.

²⁷⁸Aklaev, 1996, p. 106.

²⁷⁹Ozhiganov, 1997, p. 178.

²⁸⁰Ozhiganov, 1997, p. 216.

²⁸¹Barclay, 2002, p. 50.

²⁸²Ozhiganov, 1997, p. 179.

pletely unprepared to deal with the addition of Russian 14th Army troops to the conflict, lacking both the political will and the military acumen to deploy COIN force resources effectively. Thus, the main factors contributing to an insurgent victory were the reticence of the Moldovan government to use force and the participation of the Russian 14th Army. According to Keith A. Barclay, “Moldova never used its military as the primary means of resolving the crisis. Nearly every engagement and operation was a reactionary measure taken to avert pending crisis and to appease the Moldovan nationalists.”²⁸³

Conventional Explanation

Overall, the Dniester insurgents were simply better equipped and more professional than their ethnic Moldovan adversaries. The insurgency comprised paramilitary forces and formed infantry units supported by tanks and BM-21 Grad multiple-rocket-launching systems in battalion-sized formations.²⁸⁴ Insurgents acquired 1,100 Kalashnikov assault rifles (along with 1.5 million cartridges), 1,300 grenade and mortar rounds, and 30 portable rocket launchers in military trucks from Russian troops, who also assisted by destroying several highway bridges over the Dniester River, cutting off the link to Moldova proper and preventing COIN forces from sending reinforcement. Ukraine, an outside party, enforced border security to prevent irregular fighters from infiltrating the country. According to Neil V. Lamont, “Moldovan police were no match for the attackers’ firepower, logistics, and military professionalism.”²⁸⁵

Distinctive Characteristics

- COIN forces lacked the offensive capability of heavy armor to attack and seize key terrain, even though the Moldovan police bri-

²⁸³Barclay, 2002, p. 61.

²⁸⁴Michael Orr, “14th Army and the Crisis in Moldova,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, June 1992.

²⁸⁵Neil V. Lamont, *Territorial Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict: The Moldovan Case*, Ft. Leavenworth, Kan.: Foreign Military Studies Office, originally published in *Military Review* as “Ethnic Conflict in the Transdniester,” December–February 1995.

gades and volunteers had been supplied with small arms, mortars, and APCs by Romania and trained by Romanian instructors.²⁸⁶

- Insurgent Transdnistrian forces had armor and equipment from the Russian 14th Army and defeated the mechanized infantry and antitank defenses of the COIN forces.
- As Moldova was host to the first of several insurgencies metastasizing on the periphery following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Kremlin became intimately involved with manipulating the conflict. At various points, the Russian government controlled the ebb and flow of the fighting until the summer of 1992, when other insurgencies flaring up closer to home caused Moscow to force both sides to agree to a cease-fire and end the fighting.

²⁸⁶Ozhiganov, 1997, p. 175.

Figure 15
Map of Moldova



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.
RAND MG964/1-15

Table 15
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Moldova

Factor	Phase I (1990–1992) Phase II (1992)	
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	0	0
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	0	0
Government a functional democracy	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	1	1
Free and fair elections held	1	1
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	1	1
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0

Table 15—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1990–1992)	Phase II (1992)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	1	1
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	1	1
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	1
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	1	1
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	1

Table 15—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1990–1992)	Phase II (1992)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	0	0
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	1	1
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	1	1
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	1
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	0	0
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	1	1
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	0	0
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	1	1
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	0	0
Government/state was competent	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	1
Government/COIN win	0	0
Insurgent win	1	1
Mixed outcome	1	0

Sierra Leone, 1991–2002

Case Outcome: COIN Win

Case Summary

The COIN force in this conflict comprised multiple actors. The insurgency lasted for more than a decade. The insurgents terrorized the population through looting, rape, mutilation, and murder. Control of the diamond fields was a central focus of the conflict and served as the primary motivation for the insurgents. Ultimately, British-led COIN forces quelled the fighting and restored order to the country.

Case Narrative

Phase I: “Anarchy in Freetown” (March 1991–April 1995)

Phase Outcome: Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations; COIN force (plus allies) and insurgents (plus allies) *lacked* sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, the government of Sierra Leone could no longer pay its civil servants, and the state bureaucracy disintegrated, paving the way for state failure. Most Sierra Leoneans blamed Siaka Stevens and his cronies in the All People’s Congress for dismantling the government structure while personally enriching themselves.²⁸⁷ In March 1991, a little-known insurgent group led by former army corporal Foday Sankoh and calling itself the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) emerged to challenge the government. The RUF consisted of a hodgepodge of ideologues and revolutionaries, inspired by a wide range of grievances. While some fighters were interested simply in looting the country of its vast natural resources (primarily diamonds), others were inspired by calls to root out corruption and sought revenge against the established elite. Many of the insurgent leaders were trained in Libya, while others received their guidance from Liberia’s notorious warlord Charles Taylor. The insurgency raging in Liberia, which began two

²⁸⁷Reno, 1998, pp. 116–117.

years prior to that in Sierra Leone, was a catalyst for continued conflict, with a porous border making it easier for insurgents, weapons, and money to flow back and forth.

Crossing the border from neighboring Liberia, RUF insurgents attacked the eastern city of Kailahun, sending more than 100,000 refugees into Guinea. The main strategy of the insurgents was one of overarching terror, as they simply mutilated and raped civilians, looted homes, and burned entire villages to the ground. By 1992, the insurgents controlled the diamond mines in the Kono District. Sales from so-called conflict diamonds fueled the insurgency. The RUF used the money gained through its illicit activities to purchase AK-47s, AK-74 rifles, G-3 rifles, FN FAL (light automatic) rifles, and self-loading rifles. They were also supplied with machine guns, submachine guns, grenade launchers, mortars, and surface-to-air missiles.²⁸⁸

The government of President Joseph Saidu Momoh appeared inept in the face of such stark brutality, and a group of young military officers led a coup that brought Captain Valentine Strasser into command of the COIN force. Strasser formed the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC), which promised to defeat the insurgents and restore law and order to Freetown, the capital, and beyond.²⁸⁹ While the COIN force would enjoy some minor successes during the first phase of the insurgency—most notably, Operation Genesis—the insurgents won the majority of the skirmishes as the embattled COIN force saw hundreds of its soldiers defect to the RUF.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸Dena Montague, "The Business of War and the Prospects for Peace in Sierra Leone," *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Spring 2002.

²⁸⁹Lansana Gberie, *A Dirty War in West Africa: The RUF and the Destruction of Sierra Leone*, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2005, pp. 68–69.

²⁹⁰Gberie, 2005, pp. 80–81.

Phase II: “Conflict Diamonds and Executive Outcomes” (May 1995–May 2000)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas; COIN force and allies had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents and allies; external support to COIN force from strong state/military.

The years 1993 through 1995 were characterized by intermittent conflict, with neither side able to gain a major advantage in the fighting. In a move to stamp out the insurgents, the NPRC hired the South African mercenary firm Executive Outcomes (EO). EO entered the country with 150 soldiers and more sophisticated weaponry than the COIN force had been using, including helicopter gunships, and also used preassault mortar barrages and ground assault to effectively force the insurgents back into the countryside.²⁹¹ This phase of the conflict was a veritable free-for-all and featured various armed groups, diamond merchants, arms dealers, and “sobels,” or soldier-rebels.²⁹²

A three-way deal among the Sierra Leonean government, EO, and Branch Energy Ltd., a private-sector mining interest based in South Africa, allowed EO to operate in Kono and the Kangari Hills, where the diamond mines were located. As a mercenary force, EO eschewed traditional COIN practices, seeking first and foremost to solidify its access to the diamond fields; protecting civilians outside these areas was barely an afterthought. Another component of EO’s strategy was employing Kamajors, traditional hunters of the Mende ethnic group, as local militias to protect their communities.

EO was able to provide enough stability in Sierra Leone for the country to hold presidential and parliamentary elections in April 1996. The results brought the ascension to power of Tejan Kabbah and the Sierra Leonean People’s Party (SLPP), which negotiated the Abdijan

²⁹¹ Montague, 2002, p. 233.

²⁹² Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rainforest: War, Youth, and Resources in Sierra Leone*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 13–15.

Peace Accord with the RUF. The insurgents soon ignored the agreement and continued fighting, however. One year later, disgruntled Sierra Leonean army officers staged a coup that caused Kabbah to flee to Guinea, while Johnny Paul Koroma and his Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) took control of the government and the COIN force, even inviting insurgents from the RUF to join his junta. In February 1998, Nigerian-led ECOMOG troops entered Freetown and overthrew Koroma's junta, restoring Kabbah to power and overseeing the Lome Peace Accord in July 1999. Shortly thereafter, the UN established the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

A turning point in the conflict occurred in May 2000, when, after the departure of ECOMOG troops, nearly 500 UN peacekeepers were captured by the insurgents and robbed of their weapons. This embarrassing event not only called into question the integrity of the mission, but also nearly caused the UN to pull its troops out of the country altogether, signaling a possible victory for the insurgents after nearly 10 years of fighting.²⁹³ In a last-ditch effort to rescue the mission and restore some of its credibility, the United Kingdom deployed 1,200 troops to Freetown to evacuate UK and other European nationals, bolster the UNAMSIL force, and stabilize the situation in the country as a whole.²⁹⁴ With the British force in country to assist UNAMSIL, the COIN forces embarked on a campaign to conduct effective operations and wipe out the threat from the RUF while restoring the government to power.

Phase III: "A Return to Normalcy" (June 2000–May 2002)

Phase Outcome: COIN Win

Key Factors: COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises); COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management);

²⁹³Funmi Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: The Story of UNAMSIL*, Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008, p. 53.

²⁹⁴Olonisakin, 2008, p. 63.

COIN force avoided excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force.

The final phase of the insurgency is a clear demonstration that when the COIN force is able to improve coordination and begin to follow good COIN practices, victory is within reach. A change of leadership between late 2000 and early 2001 allowed the military component of UNAMSIL to systematically address coordination problems within the COIN force.²⁹⁵ In addition to securing better equipment and weapons, COIN forces focused on improving communication, both between contingents of troops and with the local population. Part of this approach involved deploying troops to conduct predeployment reconnaissance visits to the mission area in an effort to improve their contingent's knowledge of the terrain, establish rapport with the locals, and gain an overall understanding of the environment.²⁹⁶ Furthermore, the COIN force kept its promise to protect the citizens during elections, providing the security necessary for Sierra Leoneans to vote at the polls with little fear of being attacked. Approximately 47,000 excombatants turned in their weapons, making the use of force by the counterinsurgents largely unnecessary throughout the final phase of the insurgency and lending a sense of credibility to the nearly disgraced UNAMSIL mission.

Conventional Explanations

A major factor contributing to the success of the COIN force was an improvement in intelligence capabilities. At UNAMSIL headquarters in Freetown, the establishment of a military information cell vastly enhanced the force's ability to conduct threat and enemy assessments. Improving the COIN force's ability to respond to various situations also boosted its credibility, and the insurgents were exposed as predators on the population. With the pieces of the puzzle finally falling into place, the mission was ready to put into action its three-pronged strategy of providing security; beginning the disarmament, demobili-

²⁹⁵Olonisakin, 2008, p. 98.

²⁹⁶Olonisakin, 2008, p. 98.

zation, and reintegration process; and holding free and fair elections in an attempt to bring about a stable power-sharing government.

Some have called UNAMSIL the “model mission.” To be sure, the COIN force was not without its shortcomings. However, at its height, UNAMSIL had roughly 17,000 troops and a large civilian staff operating at a cost of \$700 million per year. Although it was not recognized as such at the time, adherence to strategic communication principles was a major factor in the mission’s success. Indeed, the COIN force was able to maintain credibility with the local population, achieve unity of effort, and keep consistency in its message. This was accomplished by coordinating a large-scale disarmament program, successfully organizing elections, and, above all, providing a secure environment for the population.²⁹⁷

Distinctive Characteristics

- RUF insurgents in Sierra Leone were aided extensively by Charles Taylor and NPFL insurgents operating across the border in Liberia. During various stages of the 11-year insurgency, the RUF and NPFL insurgents were barely distinguishable as they sought to capture Freetown.
- Natural resources—particularly diamonds—provided the insurgency with the funds necessary to resupply their forces with weapons, food, and fuel. Referring to the insurgency, Ibrahim Abdullah and Patrick Muana comment, “Here was a reserve army of fighting men who were attracted by the simplistic ‘emancipatory’ rhetoric of the RUF’s ill-defined ideas, and motivated by the acquisition of wealth through looting.”²⁹⁸
- Private military firms like EO proved to be highly effective in fighting the insurgents, as were the civil defense units known as Kamajor militia.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷Olonisakin, 2008, p. 111.

²⁹⁸Ibrahim Abdullah and Patrick Muana, “The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone,” in Christopher Clapham, ed., *African Guerrillas*, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1998, p. 178.

²⁹⁹Abdullah and Muana, 1998, p. 185.

Figure 16
Map of Sierra Leone



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-16

Table 16
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Sierra Leone

Factor	Phase I (1991–1995)	Phase II (1995–2000)	Phase III (2000–2002)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	1
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	1	1	1
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	1
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0	1
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	1
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0	1
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0	1
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	1
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	1	1	1
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0	1
Free and fair elections held	0	0	1
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	1
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0	1
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	0
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	0
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	1

Table 16—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1991–1995)	Phase II (1995–2000)	Phase III (2000–2002)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	1
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	1
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	1
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	1
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	1
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	1
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0	1
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0	1
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0	1
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	1
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	1	1	1
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	0	0	0
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	0	0
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	0	0
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0	1
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	1
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	1
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0	1
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	1
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	1
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	1
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	1	1	0

Table 16—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1991–1995)	Phase II (1995–2000)	Phase III (2000–2002)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	1
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	0	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	1
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	1	1
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	1	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	0	1	1
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	1	1
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	0	1	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	0	0
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustenance	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	1	1	0
Government/state was competent	0	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	1	1	1
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	0	0	1
Insurgent win	1	1	0
Mixed outcome	0	1	0

Algeria (GIA), 1992–2004

Case Outcome: COIN Win

Case Summary

The insurgency by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) was prompted by the Algerian government's decision to cancel an election that was expected to put an Islamic party in power. The GIA initiated an urban terrorist campaign that became increasingly violent and targeted toward civilians. While the military government in Algiers took brutal repressive actions against the insurgency, the GIA's attacks were viewed as even more violent and threatening. After a series of brutal civilian massacres, by 1998, the GIA lost much of its public support. The government then pursued a more effective COIN strategy, implementing an amnesty program, targeting the GIA hardliners, and then offering political concessions, which helped to defeat an already weakened and fragmented GIA.

Case Narrative

Phase I: "Canceled Elections Spark a Terrorist Campaign" (1992–1994)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: Free and fair elections *not* held; COIN or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by insurgents; in area of conflict, COIN force perceived as worse than insurgents.

The civil war in Algeria began soon after the military-backed regime in Algiers cancelled the country's first multiparty election in 1992 to prevent the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) from achieving a near-certain victory. This action led to the outbreak of widespread popular protests. The GIA, one of several radical FIS splinter factions to emerge in 1992, quickly became the dominant terrorist organization in the country. The group included a number of Afghan "returnees" (young Algerians who had fought in the war in Afghanistan) who sought to overthrow the secular Algerian government and replace it with a Muslim state ruled by sharia. To achieve its broad objectives, the GIA initiated a terrorist campaign in Algiers that included assassinating police, military

officials, and any individuals remotely affiliated with the military or the government.

The Algerian army responded with a crackdown on the FIS, and the FIS in turn began to attack government targets. The government allowed elections featuring progovernment and moderate religious-based parties, but these actions did not appease the Islamist activists. They continued to widen their attacks, leading the fighting to escalate into an Islamist-based insurgency. (Focusing on a military approach, the government put little effort into developing a strategic communication policy.)

Unprepared to combat the insurgency on its own, the Algerian government armed and trained local militias, often called “self-defense groups.” These government-sponsored groups were known to have committed deliberate and arbitrary killings with impunity. Thus, by “allowing these militias to take the law into their own hands has further eroded and undermined the rule of law.”³⁰⁰

While evidence of support from Islamists abroad is limited, the GIA appeared to develop a base of support within the Algerian diaspora community in Europe. In France and Belgium, in particular, the GIA engaged in gunrunning and fund-raising activities, recruiting fighters, and conducting limited public relation campaigns in support of their insurgency.³⁰¹

Phase II: “Massacres Reduce Support for Insurgency” (1995–1998)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: Insurgents delegitimized through civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior; important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced; important external support to insurgents significantly reduced.

³⁰⁰ Amnesty International, “Algeria: The Hidden Human Rights Crisis,” November 19, 1996.

³⁰¹ Brynjar Lia and Åshild Kjøl, *Islamist Insurgencies, Diasporic Support Networks, and Their Host States: The Case of the Algerian GIA in Europe 1993–2000*, Kjeller, Norway: Forsvarets Forsknings Institutt, Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, August 8, 2001.

The GIA engaged the government in escalating violence between 1995 and 1998. In February 1997, the leader of the GIA, Antar Zouabri, issued a “Grand Demarcation” that gave GIA fighters dispensation to kill any Algerian civilian providing support to the government and legitimized the seizure of a victim’s possessions and the abduction of rape victims. As a result of this demarcation, urban bombings and village massacres took place on a daily basis. The high point of the violence occurred during Ramadan of 1997–1998, when more than 3,000 civilian deaths were reported.

The government responded to this increase in violence by conducting retaliatory attacks on the rebel groups (both the GIA and others), which often resulted in the deaths of a number of insurgent leaders along with many civilian casualties. The Algerian government’s efforts were strengthened by military assistance from France, including combat helicopters and night-vision equipment.³⁰² The government also increased its efforts to arm civilian militia groups, which did much of its “dirty work” in rooting out suspected extremists, using tactics often as violent as those of their adversaries.³⁰³ These groups aided the government in its ongoing efforts to destroy the insurgency’s leadership by arresting all parties associated with the rebel movement and making them “disappear.” Thousands of people were known to have disappeared between 1997 and 1998.

More so than the government’s brutal antiterrorist policies, however, it was the GIA’s increasingly violent terrorist campaign that served to weaken the base of support for the insurgency. The GIA’s massacres served to antagonize and alienate much of the Algerian public. Six years of civil war took a particularly heavy toll on the middle and lower classes, which were important sources of Islamist support. And while many still distrusted the government, they became more dependent on its protection as the killing, lawlessness, and chaos increased.³⁰⁴

³⁰²Pat Smith, “Impoverishment Fuels Algeria’s Civil War,” *The Militant*, January 1995.

³⁰³ABC Newsworld, December 9, 1996, quoted in Project Ploughshares, “Algeria (1992—First Combat Deaths),” *Armed Conflicts Report*, January 2009a.

³⁰⁴Fawaz A. Gerges, “The Decline of Revolutionary Islam in Algeria and Egypt,” *Survival*, Vol. 41, No. 1, Spring 1999.

Zouabri's actions condoning the slaughter of civilians further weakened the GIA, causing a fissure in the organization and leading some members and supporters of the group to defect to the newly formed Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC).³⁰⁵ The GIA's decision to launch a number of armed operations in France in 1995 (presumably in response to French support for the Algerian military) also served to weaken the insurgency's support network in Europe because it led to government crackdowns abroad.³⁰⁶ Due to the weakening of the GIA's leadership and its support base, the Algerian government began to gain the upper hand in the conflict.³⁰⁷

Phase III: "Violence Declines with Amnesty Offer and Targeting of Hardliners" (1999–2004)

Phase Outcome: COIN Win

Key Factors: Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents; COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management); COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict.

Clashes between the government and the GIA continued in 1999 with the killing and disappearance of civilians. Nevertheless, the level of violence declined. (Between 1992 and 1998, there were an estimated 1,200 deaths each month. In 2001–2002, the number of deaths dropped to 125 per month.)³⁰⁸ The decrease in casualties reflected a weakening of the insurgency as much as it did improved COIN practices.

A combination of an amnesty program and aggressive military action enabled the Algerian government to undermine the GIA. In 1999, newly elected President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, taking advantage

³⁰⁵Michael Knights, "Algerian Operations Compress Islamist Insurgency," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, November 18, 2003.

³⁰⁶In the wake of the GIA bombings in 1995, French police spearheaded crackdowns on GIA support networks throughout Europe (Lia and Kjøk, 2001).

³⁰⁷"Algeria," in CIA, 2010.

³⁰⁸Knights, 2003.

of splits in the GIA leadership, offered limited amnesty to rebel combatants who had not engaged in murder, rape, or bombing campaigns. A significant number of rebels, particularly members of the FIS, accepted the offer. While the GIA rejected any form of negotiation with the government under its policy of “no truce, no dialogue, and no reconciliation,” the offer of amnesty reduced the overall number of insurgents and provided greater credibility and support for the Algerian government.

Once the deadline for amnesty passed, the COIN forces resumed their attacks on rebel strongholds, benefiting from more focused targets and better intelligence from a population that was weary of the GIA.³⁰⁹ In fact, some former members of the FIS actively collaborated with the Algerian army in its fight against the GIA.³¹⁰ As a result, the GIA became increasingly fragmented, and many members broke away to form the GSPC.³¹¹

Algeria’s COIN efforts were further improved by the reduced role of local militias and vigilante groups during this phase of the conflict. Instead, the government relied increasingly on human intelligence, provided by a wide network of “watchers” across the country, and on advanced intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance technology. These techniques likely contributed to the assassination of GIA leader Zouabri by the Algerian army in February 2002, while at the same time internal purges within the GIA leadership led to the deaths of other insurgent leaders.

Throughout 2002, attacks against military and civilian populations continued, albeit at a much lower level than at their peak in 1997–1998. The GIA remained active, but its attacks appeared to be more random, focusing on travelers and poor villagers. The government also continued to be accused of killing civilians. Still, as the war dragged on, the high death toll among civilians and the indiscriminate targeting of GIA attacks served to undermine the Islamic militants.

³⁰⁹Project Ploughshares, 2009a.

³¹⁰Gerges, 1999.

³¹¹Omar Ashour, “Islamist De-Radicalization in Algeria: Successes and Failures,” Middle East Institute Policy Brief, November 20, 2008.

Though the majority of the Algerian population supported the Islamic cause and the GIA at the beginning of the conflict, the militants' use of terror and murder resulted in disaffection among all but a small minority of the population by this time.³¹²

In 2003, the Algerian COIN campaign benefited from the U.S. "war on terrorism," and Algeria's campaign against Islamic rebel groups led the U.S. government to repeal its arms embargo against the country and begin to supply military equipment to Algiers.

Bouteflika was reelected in 2004 based on a promise to institute national reconciliation and another amnesty program for Islamist extremists who were prepared to lay down their weapons and join the political process. This political approach to normalization with Islamists proved effective when combined with a more aggressive military approach. Extensive antiterrorist operations by the Algerian National People's Army in 2004 resulted in the surrender or killing of many militants, including a number of senior rebel leaders.³¹³ By 2004, fewer than 600 rebels were believed to be active in the insurgency; all were members of the militant wing of the GSPC.³¹⁴ The GIA no longer constituted a serious threat to Algeria's internal security.³¹⁵

Conventional Explanations

The most common explanation for the Algerian government's success in defeating the GIA is that its harsh methods of repression against the insurgents—including the "disappearance" and torture of thousands—were effective, particularly when the GIA's brutal tactics and its indiscriminate killing of civilians left the insurgents with little public support. Essentially, repression worked because the insurgents were viewed as even more brutal than the government.

³¹²International Institute for Strategic Studies, "Algeria (AQ Islamic Maghreb/GSPC)," Armed Conflict Database, undated(a).

³¹³From March to June 2004, more than 500 Islamic militants surrendered to the authorities and voluntarily disarmed. Many of those who remained fled to remote camps in the coastal mountains or the Sahara.

³¹⁴Project Ploughshares, 2009a.

³¹⁵International Institute for Strategic Studies, undated(a).

More specifically, the adjustments that the Algerian government made in its COIN policies to differentiate between moderate Islamists and hard-core GIA members contributed to its success. In the late 1990s, the government offered limited amnesty to rebel combatants who had not engaged in murder, rape, or bombings, which enabled it to focus its military and intelligence efforts on the more radical insurgents. The combination of the government's offer of political compromise, combined with targeted police and military actions, is believed to have undermined the GIA.

Distinctive Characteristics

- Algeria's history of guerrilla warfare stemming from its brutal fight for independence against the French from 1954 to 1962 may have made a violent insurgency more likely to occur after the cancellation of elections in 1992.
- The Islamic militants were undermined by their increased alienation from the Algerian population. Though they previously enjoyed majority support among Algerians, the militants' use of terror and murder to keep civilian supporters in line resulted in disaffection among all but a small minority of the population.³¹⁶
- Despite the Algerian government's repressive measures against the GIA insurgency, it was not considered as ruthless in comparison and did not suffer as a significant a loss in credibility as the insurgency itself experienced.³¹⁷
- At the time that the GIA and the GSPC were under intense state repression, both groups also suffered from a lack of charismatic leadership and from very limited interactions with the outside world. As a result, there was continuous splintering and factionalism within these groups, and their membership moved toward radicalization, deradicalization, and even apolitical paths.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ International Institute for Strategic Studies, undated(a).

³¹⁷ *The Independent*, January 4, 2003, quoted in Project Ploughshares, 2009a.

³¹⁸ Ashour, 2008.

Figure 17
Map of Algeria



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-17

Table 17
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Algeria (GIA)

Factor	Phase I (1992-1994)	Phase II (1995-1998)	Phase III (1999-2004)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	0	1	1
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0	1
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	1	1
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	1	1	1
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	1	1	1
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	1	1
Free and fair elections held	0	0	1
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0	1
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	0	0	0
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	1

Table 17—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1992–1994)	Phase II (1995–1998)	Phase III (1999–2004)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	1
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	1
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	1
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0	1
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	1	1
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	1	1	1
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	0	0	0
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	1	1	1
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0	1
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	1	1
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	1	1
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0	1
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	1
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	1
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	1
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	1	0	0

Table 17—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1992–1994)	Phase II (1995–1998)	Phase III (1999–2004)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	0
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	1	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	0	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	1
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	1	1
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	1	1	1
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0	1
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	1	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	0	0
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	0	0	0
Government/state was competent	0	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0	0
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	0	1	1
Insurgent win	1	0	0
Mixed outcome	1	1	0

Croatia, 1992–1995

Case Outcome: COIN Win

Case Summary

This three-year conflict saw innumerable failed cease-fires and egregious human rights violations committed by both sides. After two-and-a-half years of on-again, off-again fighting, the decisive phase of the insurgency was realized as a result of two overarching factors. First, the Croatian military completely revamped itself from a second-rate fighting force into a formidable army. Second, and equally important, the insurgents were abandoned by Belgrade as Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic diverted his support elsewhere in the Balkans.

Case Narrative

Phase I: “Stalemate and Stalling” (January 1992–December 1994)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: External support to insurgents from strong state/military; insurgent force individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated; flow of cross-border insurgent support increased or remained roughly constant and present.

Plagued by a long history of factionalism and ethnic discord, Croatia was the site of one of several major conflicts during what has come to be known as “the Balkans Crisis.” A memorandum by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, partially published in 1986, advocated the territorial expansion of Serbia into a Greater Serbia and was accompanied by extreme nationalist rhetoric (“All Serbs in One State”) by Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic.³¹⁹ During the early stages of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Croatian Serbs were fearful of being relegated to minority status following promulgation of the 1990 Consti-

³¹⁹ Laura Silber and Allan Little, *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*, New York: Penguin, 1995, pp. 33–35.

tution of Republic of Croatia and the nationalistic policies of the head of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), Franjo Tudjman.³²⁰

After a year of fierce fighting between Croats and Serbs in Croatia, especially in Borovo Selo, Dubrovnik, and Vukovar, a UN-sponsored cease-fire (the 20th since fighting began) was implemented in January 1992. That same month, the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was dispatched to the country, which gained official recognition by the European Community on January 15.³²¹ Even prior to Croatia's official independence, Croatian Serbs had declared the Republic of Serbian Krajina, effectively partitioning Croatia in half.³²² This nascent state was forced to battle a burgeoning insurgency started by Croatian Serbs rebelling against the central government in Zagreb from the very moment of its independence.³²³ As long as the prospect of an autonomous Serbian Krajina remained a possibility, with the ultimate goal of linking with a "Greater Serbia," Milosevic vowed to keep supplies flowing in from Belgrade.

The small-scale fighting of 1992 gave way to more intense battles the following year, including Operation Maslenica and Operation Medak Pocket. Operation Maslenica in January 1993 saw Croatian forces go on the offensive in violation of the cease-fire.³²⁴ Fighting raged between the insurgent SVK's 7th North Dalmatian Corps troops, reinforced by the elite Serbian Volunteer Guard ("Arkan's Tigers") and Croatian army (Hrvatska Vojska, or HV) troops and special operations

³²⁰In particular, Serbs were reminded of World War II, when Hitler's invasion and puppet regime, the Ustashe (Croatian fascists), purged between 200,000 and 600,000 Serbs.

³²¹R. Craig Nation, *War in the Balkans, 1991–2002*, Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, August 2003, p. 124.

³²²The Republic of Serbian Krajina's army, the SVK, consisted of two forces—local and regional Serb territorial defense units and former Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) units.

³²³Mile Bjelajac and Ozren Zunec, *The War in Croatia, 1991–1995*, The Hague, Netherlands: The Center for History, Democracy, and Reconciliation, Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation, October 2007.

³²⁴Marcus Tanner, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997, p. 288.

units near the villages of Kasic, Paljuv, and Novigrad.³²⁵ In September 1993, COIN forces launched Operation Medak to prevent insurgent shelling of the town of Gospic-Medak, in addition to recapturing the Zadar airport and the Peruca hydroelectric power plant facility.³²⁶ Indiscriminate artillery barrages by the insurgents were met by COIN force air strikes, and the UN recorded more than 6,000 detonations during the weeklong battle. After UNPROFOR intervened to quell the fighting, UN troops discovered that retreating COIN forces had burned down 11 villages and murdered Serb civilians.³²⁷

To counter COIN force victories at Maslenica and Medak, the insurgents crafted a deterrent strategy that called for the use of long-range rockets (either a FROG or “Orkan” 262-mm rocket) to be fired at Croatia’s capital, Zagreb.³²⁸ For the majority of this first phase of the insurgency, the Serb insurgents proved to be the fiercer, more skilled fighters in the conflict. Not to be outdone, the HV undertook a comprehensive review of its doctrine, training, and force structure in an attempt to remedy many of the command-and-control issues plaguing the force. HV chief of staff General Janko Bobetko focused on four main areas: training the officer corps, prioritizing intelligence, developing a form of blitzkrieg, and reformulating doctrine and strategy.³²⁹ On this last point, it was stressed that COIN forces’ top priority to retake Serbian Krajina while ensuring that the human costs of the conflict were kept at an “acceptable” level and, if possible, to avoid drawing international opprobrium.³³⁰

³²⁵Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battle-grounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990–1995*, Vol. 1, Washington, D.C., May 2002, p. 268.

³²⁶Nation, 2003, pp. 125–126.

³²⁷Central Intelligence Agency, 2002, p. 269.

³²⁸Central Intelligence Agency, 2002, p. 271. Marcus Tanner puts the number of dead at 80 civilians, many of them elderly women (Tanner, 1997, p. 291).

³²⁹Central Intelligence Agency, 2002, pp. 270–273.

³³⁰Central Intelligence Agency, 2002, p. 273.

Phase II: “Greener Pastures Await” (January 1995–August 1995)

Phase Outcome: COIN Win

Key Factors: Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort; flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent; insurgents’ ability to replenish resources significantly diminished.

As 1994 came to a close, much of the fighting had spilled over the border into neighboring Bosnia, which was home to its own insurgency. But the intervening years had not gone to waste, and in 1995, the Croats were determined to prove that they could defeat the Serb insurgency once and for all and recapture Serbian Krajina. Two major operations would allow this to happen, Operation Flash in May 1995 and Operation Storm in August 1995.³³¹

Operation Flash, the penultimate major operation of the decisive phase, commenced on May 1, 1995, with the HV conducting artillery and air strikes on the 18th Corps of the SVK.³³² The goal of the operation was to retake the vital Belgrade-Zagreb highway as well as to regain control of Western Slavonia. In addition to artillery and air strikes, COIN forces utilized armored mechanized and infantry forces while HV and Croatian Special Police forces mopped up the remaining insurgents.³³³ The COIN force achieved its stated objectives, losing 60 troops in the process, compared to 400 insurgents. Indeed, the Croatian forces fighting in 1995 bore little resemblance to the army that first appeared on the battlefield several years earlier. According to Laura Silber and Allan Little, the military expertise exhibited by COIN forces in this battle “could only have been derived from their increasingly congenial relationship with the United States.”³³⁴

³³¹ In some of the literature, Operation Flash is referred to as Operation “Bljesak,” and Operation Storm is referred to as Operation “Oluja.”

³³² Bjelajac and Zunec, 2007, p. 23.

³³³ Central Intelligence Agency, 2002, p. 297.

³³⁴ Silber and Little, 1995, p. 357.

Operation Storm kicked off on August 2, 2005, under the direction of Bobetko's replacement, Corps General Zvonimir Cervenko. COIN forces coordinated air strikes and sabotage missions by ground forces against 40,000 insurgents and the entire SVK command-and-control infrastructure throughout the Republic of Serbian Krajina.³³⁵ The lightning-quick attack sent the insurgents fleeing, leaving behind Serb civilians to fend for themselves. While the COIN operation was successful in dislodging the SVK, the Croats committed horrible atrocities in the process, including the destruction and looting of Serbian homes and random shootings with automatic weapons of fleeing refugees. Mark Danner calls the actions of the HV during Operation Storm "the largest single instance of 'ethnic cleansing' of the Yugoslav war."³³⁶ Still, from a strictly military perspective, the operation was successful and received at least tacit approval, if not direct U.S. assistance. According to Mile Bjelajac and Ozren Zunec,

Retired U.S. military consultants provided tactical training and operational planning under the guise of "democracy training"—with the blessing of the Clinton administration. Indeed, there is evidence that U.S. assistance . . . may have included air strikes and psychological warfare operations.³³⁷

Conventional Explanations

When fighting first began in 1991–1992, the Serb insurgents were the better prepared, more skilled fighting force. The balance of power eventually changed, but the process of transforming the Croatian COIN force into a formidable opponent capable of delivering a knockout blow was a painstakingly slow one. Eventually, through training and resupply, the COIN forces were capable of launching organized attacks

³³⁵Central Intelligence Agency, 2002, p. 370; Mark Danner, "Operation Storm," *New York Review of Books*, October 22, 1998.

³³⁶Danner, 1998.

³³⁷James George Jatras, "NATO's Myths and Bogus Justifications for Intervention," in Ted Galen Carpenter, *NATO's Empty Victory: A Postmortem on the Balkan War*, Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 2000, pp. 26–27, quoted in Bjelajac and Zunec, 2007, p. 28.

with clearly defined objectives, even if these objectives were odious in nature. As Belgrade withdrew support from the insurgents in Croatia and began directing more resources and tangible support to the Serb insurgents fighting in Bosnia, Croatian Serb insurgents began looking for an escape route. This decision was solidified following Operation Flash and Operation Storm, which were militarily effective but had the dual effect of cleansing the Serbian population from pockets of the country, forcing massive numbers of refugees over the border into neighboring countries.

Distinctive Characteristics

- The insurgency in neighboring Bosnia contributed to insurgents exiting the fight in Croatia for “greener pastures.” Rather than accept outright defeat in battle, the insurgents streamed across the border to engage in a separate insurgency that they saw as having greater potential for achieving their goals (i.e., a Greater Serbia).
- Because an insurgency was occurring simultaneously in a neighboring country, what happened in one theater affected the other. This was especially true when considering the allocation of resources, personnel, and materiel by Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic.
- U.S. support in training Croat COIN forces proved decisive, as the oversight of the world’s most advanced military had positive results for Croat command and control, organization and effectiveness, and strategy, operations, and tactics.
- COIN forces achieved victory while engaging in many detrimental practices that usually cause counterinsurgents to lose. Nevertheless, the balance of positive factors to detrimental factors was tipped in favor of the positive factors.

Figure 18
Map of Croatia



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-18

Table 18
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Croatia

Factor	Phase I (1992–1994) Phase II (1995)	
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	0	1
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	1	1
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	0	0
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	0	0
Government a functional democracy	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	1
Free and fair elections held	0	1
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	1
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	1	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	1	1
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	1
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0

Table 18—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1992–1994)	Phase II (1995)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	1
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	1	1
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	0	0
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/ enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	1
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	1
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	1
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	1
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	1	1
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	1	1
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	0

Table 18—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1992–1994)	
	Phase II (1995)	
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	1	1
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	0	0
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	1
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	1
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	0	0
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	1	1
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	0	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	1	0
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	0	0
Government/state was competent	1	1
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	1
Government/COIN win	1	1
Insurgent win	0	0
Mixed outcome	1	0

Afghanistan (Post-Soviet), 1992–1996

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Case Summary

After the fall of the Najibullah regime in 1992, Afghanistan lacked a legitimate central government. Kabul was governed by a coalition of former mujahadeen who competed for power among themselves, leading the country to devolve into a state of warlordism. The Taliban rose to prominence among the mujahadeen groups in 1994 by establishing a devout and disciplined force that promised to restore order and security to the country. Taliban leaders received support from Pakistan and the war-weary population and were able to defeat what remained of the divided mujahadeen government, seize control of Kabul, and establish a unified yet brutal government.

Case Narrative

Phase I: “Devolving into Warlordism” (1992–1994)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: COIN force failed to create perception of security among population in areas it controlled or claimed to control; militias worked at cross-purposes with COIN force/government; insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior.

With the fall of the Soviet-supported Najibullah regime, Afghanistan was left without a legitimate government or functioning state apparatus. There was no clear successor to the regime or clear leader among the “victorious” mujahadeen. Little of the military and civilian administration remained in Kabul, as many of the supporters of the communist government switched sides to join the opposition at the end of the war.³³⁸ The mujahadeen groups themselves were highly factionalized. No longer sharing a common goal of jihad against the Soviets, they devolved into individual militia groups with differing and often com-

³³⁸One of the most notable of the “defectors” was General Rashid Dostum, the leader of the National Front, a militia formed by the government as part of its COIN effort. Once in charge of defending Kabul against the mujahadeen, he joined the opposition in 1992.

peting goals.³³⁹ Leaders of ethnic groups from various geographic locations with a range of external sponsors vied for power in Kabul and for influence throughout the country.

An interim government, negotiated among the seven dominant mujahadeen leaders, formed in Peshawar, Pakistan, in April 1992. It established a leadership council and rotating presidency, with appointments to the cabinet shared among the parties. The agreement did not disband the militia groups, however, and many members of the council remained opposed to the government. This government was paralyzed as the various members contended for power and maneuvered for advantage, and those who felt excluded reacted violently, shelling government offices and civilians in Kabul.

Kabul was the center of a political and military contest among militia groups and was thus subject to a significant increase in violence.³⁴⁰ Much of city was controlled by Tajik forces led by Burhanuddin Rabbani (who also held the position of president) and his military commander Ahmad Masud and by Uzbek forces from the north under General Rashid Dostum, who retained more organized and disciplined forces than the Pashtun mujahadeen groups. The dominance of the Tajiks and Uzbeks served to create dissention among members of the Pashtun majority, which had controlled the capital for the past 300 years.³⁴¹

The rest of the country became divided into fiefdoms controlled by local warlords. As Ahmed Rashid explains, by 1994, Afghanistan

was divided into warlord fiefdoms and all the warlords had fought, switched sides and fought again in a bewildering array of alliances, betrayals and bloodshed. The predominantly Tajik gov-

³³⁹ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002, p. 183.

³⁴⁰ Kabul had an estimated 25,000 civilian deaths, and much of the city and surrounding suburbs were destroyed. Moreover, the continued threat of bombing led more than 500,000 people (of an estimated population of 1.6 million) to leave the capital in the months following the fall of the city in April 1992 (Dorransoro, 2007).

³⁴¹ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001, p. 21.

ernment of President Burhanuddin Rabbani controlled Kabul, its environs and the north-east of the country, while three provinces in the west centering on Herat were controlled by Ismael Khan. In the east on the Pakistan border three Pashtun provinces were under the independent control of a council or Shura of Mujaheddin commanders based in Jalalabad. A small region to the south and east of Kabul was controlled by Gulbuddin Hikmetyar [a Pashtun and leader of the radical Islamic Party].

In the north, Uzbek warlord General Rashid Dostum held sway over six provinces and in January 1994 he had abandoned his alliance with the Rabbani government and joined with Hikmetyar to attack Kabul. In central Afghanistan Hazaras controlled the province of Bamiyan. Southern Afghanistan and Kandahar were divided up amongst dozens of ex-Mujaheddin warlords and bandits who plundered the population at will.³⁴²

The division between the state and the insurgents was difficult to discern during this period. Due to personal rivalries and shifting alliances, members of the government initiated much of the violence that racked the capital. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, for example, who was officially appointed prime minister and served in that capacity from 1993 to 1994 and again in 1996, launched rocket attacks against Kabul that killed thousands of civilians during the four-year period in an attempt to gain personal influence. General Dostum, who once allied with President Rabbani, also switched allegiances in 1994 and launched a siege on the city in an attempt to assert greater power.

Kabul was in a state of disorder, with several rival groups competed for power in an environment in which there was no effective state or overarching body that could provide security.³⁴³ The state apparatus was largely nonfunctional. There was neither a unified COIN strategy nor any particular attention to strategic communication. As Dorronsoró has pointed out “non-combatants were completely excluded from the political game [and] ethnic mobilization became more relevant” to

³⁴²Rashid, 2001, p. 21.

³⁴³Maley, 2002, p. 201.

the former mujahadeen as they competed for influence. There was little they could (or attempted) to do to appeal to the Afghan population at large, as they no longer were able to legitimize their fight in the name of jihad.³⁴⁴

Phase II: “Taliban Gain Strength” (1994–1996)

Phase Outcome: COIN Loss

Key Factors: In area of conflict, COIN force perceived as worse than insurgents; important external support to insurgents significantly increased or maintained; insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.

From 1993 to 1994, a group of Afghan Islamic clerics and students, mostly of rural, Pashtun origin, formed the Taliban movement. Many were former mujahadeen who had become disillusioned with the war among the mujahadeen groups and were strongly opposed to the Rab-bani government.³⁴⁵ With significant support from Pakistan, the Taliban established a highly disciplined military force and an effective strategy for gaining public support.

Under the leadership of Mullah Omar, the Taliban developed a reputation for its devout religious practices, and members presented themselves as a cleansing force that would rid the country of factionalism, corruption, and violence. The Taliban, more than any of the other mujahadeen groups, focused on developing an effective strategic communication campaign. By capitalizing on the frustration and war weariness of the population, Taliban leaders were able to develop a message that promoted “security” above all else, and the group was well received by much of the population.

The Taliban seized control of Kandahar in November 1994 and then advanced rapidly through southern and eastern Afghanistan, capturing nine out of 30 provinces. In September 1995, Taliban forces

³⁴⁴Dorronsoro, 2007.

³⁴⁵Kenneth Katzman, *Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, RL30588, May 22, 2009.

took control of Herat, thereby cutting off the land route connecting Afghanistan with Iran. They reached the gates of Kabul in February 1995 but found themselves engaged in a stalemated battle for 18 months around the capital. In September 1996, the Taliban launched an offensive against Jalalabad and, aided by the betrayal of several commanders, was able to win the city without even fighting. This and other victories near Kabul led Rabbani and Masud to withdraw their forces and much of their heavy weaponry to the Panjshir Valley. Taliban forces were then able to launch a surprise attack on Kabul, leading rival mujahadeen forces to evacuate the city without a fight.

The taking of Kabul by the Taliban was a major point of rupture in the war. In addition to halting the violence in the capital and much of the country, it brought about the stabilization of the country and the reconstruction of the government along traditional, religious lines. Taliban rule, despite a lack of international recognition, lasted until the U.S. intervention in 2001, at which time the country entered a new phase of fragmentation and civil war.

Conventional Explanations

The fall of the mujahadeen government to the Taliban can be explained as the failure of a “failed state.” Without an effective or legitimate government in Kabul, there was no way for the state or the COIN force to provide adequate security to the people or to even begin to deliver services to meet their needs. There was little difference between the COIN force and the insurgents, as both were composed of various competing militia groups and relied on looting for sustainment. Only when the Taliban received aid from Pakistan did it begin to stand out among the insurgent groups and gain popular support. Thus it became the more motivated and capable of the groups of fighters—both inside and outside the “government” in Kabul.

Distinctive Characteristics

- Far from a classic example of an insurgency with a distinct group of rebels fighting a government COIN force, Afghanistan was in a state of disorder in 1992—a situation in which various rival groups competed for power in an environment with no effective

state or overarching body that could provide a guarantee of security. The division between the state and the insurgents was difficult to discern.

- Afghanistan's neighbors (Pakistan, Iran, and Russia) continued to have an interest in the governance of the country after the Soviets' withdrawal, yet they supported different groups. They all opposed the rebuilding of the Afghan state by the coalition of mujahadeen but could not agree on a common course.³⁴⁶
- The Taliban was not a typical insurgent group. With its devout religious practice and military discipline, it quickly became the most influential of the competing militia groups in Afghanistan. This group of "scholars" was able to take over the country in two years by benefiting from extensive Pakistani assistance, the attrition of other mujahadeen groups, and the strong public desire for security.

Figure 19
Map of Afghanistan



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-19

³⁴⁶ Dorronsoro, 1994.

Table 19
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Afghanistan (Post-Soviet)

Factor	Phase I (1992–1994)	
	Phase II (1994–1996)	
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	1	0
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	1	0
Government a functional democracy	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0
Free and fair elections held	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0

Table 19—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1992–1994)	
	Phase II (1994–1996)	
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	0	0
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/ enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	0	0
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	1

Table 19—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1992–1994)	
	Phase II (1994–1996)	
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	1
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	0
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	0
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	0	0
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	0	0
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	1
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustenance	1	1
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	1	1
Government/state was competent	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	1	1
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	1
Government/COIN win	1	0
Insurgent win	0	1
Mixed outcome	1	0

Tajikistan, 1992–1997

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Case Summary

Less than a year after gaining independence from the Soviet Union, a mix of democrats, Tajik nationalists, and Islamists joined together to form the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) to challenge the communist-based government in Dushanbe. The UTO briefly gained control of the capital before being forced out by a group of former government leaders, aided by Russian and Uzbek forces, employing brutal methods and inflicting significant civilian casualties. The UTO then launched attacks from bases in Afghanistan and became more closely associated with the Islamic movement. The new government of Tajikistan did little to meet the needs of its populace and relied increasingly on Russian military support. While Tajik leader Emomali Rahmonov bowed to pressure to make some changes to his government and military leadership, they were not sufficient for the rebels, who continued to launch attacks. Only after the Taliban gained control of Afghanistan did Russia and Uzbekistan force the Tajik government to make greater concessions to the opposition, allowing for serious negotiations and the signing of the Peace and National Reconciliation Accord.

Case Narrative

Phase I: “Back-and-Forth Battle for the Capital” (1992)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: COIN force or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by insurgents; external professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government.

A civil war broke out in Tajikistan soon after the country declared its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Many communist-era apparatchiks who remained in power in the capital of Dushanbe struggled to resist calls for democratic reform during the first few months of their rule. In March 1992, antigovernment forces, which included a mix of democrats, Tajik nationalists, and Islamists, primarily from

the Pamiri and Gharimi clans, began demonstrations. These protests were countered by demonstrations by progovernment groups consisting of Russians and communist Tajiks, largely from the Kulyab clan, who opposed any further reforms or movement away from Russia or the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). As demonstrations continued, Tajik President Rakhmon Nabiev tried to create a national guard to defend his government and repress the opposition. When these efforts failed, he organized a private army. Leaders of the opposition responded by acquiring weapons and establishing bases in the southern provinces of Tajikistan. By May 1992, there was open fighting in the streets of Dushanbe.

Fighting escalated in the summer of 1992 as various armed groups vied for control in the capital at the same time that progovernment forces mounted attacks on rebel bases in southern Tajikistan. In September 1992, the tide turned toward the opposition. President Nabiev was forced to resign at gunpoint, and a coalition of opposition groups composed of secular democrats, nationalists, and Islamists from the Pamiri and Gharimi clans assumed control of the government.

The former communist government then launched a bloody counterattack with the support of Russia and Uzbekistan. Government forces engaged in widespread massacres, torture, looting, and ethnic cleansing, leading to more than 50,000 deaths. Control of Dushanbe went back and forth between the former government and the “opposition” over the course of the next few months.

By December, a coalition of former government leaders led by Emomali Rahmonov, a former Kulyab district communist party official, forced the opposition leaders out of the capital. The opposition, in turn, regrouped to form the UTO movement. The UTO settled in mountain areas north and east of the capital and established rear bases in Afghanistan from where it could launch attacks against the government.³⁴⁷

Large parts of the country subsequently remained under military control as commanders who were victorious in the war divided the

³⁴⁷Gregory Gleason, “The Politics of Counterinsurgency in Central Asia,” *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 49, No. 2, March–April 2002, p. 6.

country among themselves. Fighting continued as Tajikistan remained divided along regional and religious lines, and the actions of the COIN forces sparked greater interclan violence between Kulyabis and southern-based clans.³⁴⁸

Phase II: “Militias and Russians Versus the ‘Islamist’ Opposition” (1993–1995)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: COIN force failed to provide or ensure provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control; external professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government; militias worked at cross-purposes with COIN force/government.

Beginning in early 1993, the UTO launched powerful attacks against the government from Afghanistan and provincial areas outside Dushanbe and continued an assassination campaign against senior Russian and Tajik officials, thus maintaining a threat to the government’s stability.

Over the course of the next two years, however, the government (which consisted of a coalition of regional and clan groupings) was able to consolidate its power by relying on armed militias and benefiting from the role of the CIS collective peacekeeping force. The CIS forces, composed of Russian troops and nominal contingents from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, provided critical support for the government.³⁴⁹ The Russians eventually assumed primary responsibility for Tajik military operations and their military presence gradually transformed the country into a virtual protectorate.³⁵⁰

With the assistance of the Russian Motorized Rifle Division, the government was eventually able to take the offensive against the rebel

³⁴⁸Gleason, 2002, p. 6.

³⁴⁹International Crisis Group, *Tajikistan: An Uncertain Peace*, Asia Report No. 30, December 24, 2001, p. 24.

³⁵⁰Lena Jonson, *The Tajik War: A Challenge to Russian Policy*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1998, as quoted in Gleason, 2002, p. 6.

opposition, forcing many southern Tajiks to flee across the Afghan border. (In Afghanistan, they received aid and supplies from their ethnic cousins and some joined the forces of Ahmad Masud, the Tajik leader fighting in the Afghans' civil war.)³⁵¹

The government had less success in improving governance or delivering services. Nabiev showed “no interest whatever in running the state.”³⁵² As Olivier Roy explained, “the Kulabis [or Kulyabis] methodically set about plundering official positions and sources of wealth for the benefit of their faction. . . . This predatory attitude destroyed the economy and led to their fellow regionalist factions going into opposition.”³⁵³ Thus, the government did little to gain legitimacy among the population.

While the intensity of fighting decreased by 1995, rebel groups continued to control certain areas of the countryside, and urban areas were subject to continuous attacks and harassment. Hostage-taking, assassinations, and contract killings were commonplace. Moreover, the opposition became increasingly identified with the Islamists and supported by Iran. It appeared that the conflict would continue in a stalemate as the opposition forces continued their attacks and the government maintained limited control over its supporting militias (the members of which were more interested in making profits from the regional drug trade than in fighting to defend the government) and the “CIS intervention force” dominated by Russia.

Phase III: “Taliban Rule Next Door Creates Pressure for Peace” (1996–1997)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict; amnesty or reward program in place.

³⁵¹ James Ciment, ed., “Tajikistan: Civil War, 1990s,” in *Encyclopedia of Conflicts Since World War II*, Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe Reference, 1998b.

³⁵² Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: Geopolitics and the Birth of Nations*, New York: New York University Press, 2000, p. 141.

³⁵³ Roy, 2000, p. 141.

In 1996, opposition demonstrations increased and put greater pressure on the government to enact political reforms. Rahmonov bowed to pressure to make some changes to his government and the leadership in areas where fighting was taking place, but these changes were not sufficient for the rebels, who continued to launch attacks.

Only after the Taliban gained control in Afghanistan did Russia and Uzbekistan put pressure on the government to make greater concessions to the opposition. The rise of an Islamic state next door led both countries to develop a greater interest in building relations with the Tajiks in Afghanistan, the Taliban's main opponents, and to therefore take a more friendly approach to their allies in Tajikistan. Iran, which also felt threatened by the rise of the Taliban and the potential threat it posed to its Shi'a clients in Afghanistan, similarly pushed the Tajik opposition to make peace.

Finally, under significant international pressure, the government and the leaders of the UTO entered into discussions on reconciliation. In June 1997, they signed the Peace and National Reconciliation Accord that provided for the return of opposition supporters and refugees to Tajikistan, legalized political parties that made up the UTO, and called for the integration of the armed forces of both the government and the UTO. It also promised to grant the UTO 30 percent of government posts at the national and regional levels.³⁵⁴

Some outbreaks of violence occurred after the accord was signed, as neither leader had complete control of his troops, yet both sides were committed to the accord. Casualties eventually declined to a minimal level, and the peace process produced a coalition government that consisted of representatives of factions that had been mortal enemies only a short time before. Such an immediate resolution to violent conflict is rare and may not have succeeded if not for the ongoing threat of intervention from abroad.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴"Internal Affairs: Tajikistan," *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment*, July 30, 2008.

³⁵⁵Gleason, 2002, p. 6.

Conventional Explanations

The success of the Tajik insurgency may be partly explained by the government's strictly military approach to COIN and its failure to provide adequate governance or basic services to the population. Widespread massacres and ethnic cleansing by COIN forces and associated militias further reduced its chances of gaining popular support. Despite the heavy involvement of Russian forces, the Tajik government could not gain public support or control over an increasingly challenging insurgent group. However, the most significant factor in determining the outcome of the conflict is widely believed to be the changing political climate in the region after the Taliban gained control of Afghanistan, which put pressure on both the Tajik government and the insurgents to reach a political compromise.

Distinctive Characteristics

- The civil war was not only a conflict between a Moscow-backed government and an Islamist-led opposition coalition, but also a contest for power between the government and the clans and regional groups that had been excluded from power after independence. Many divisions among the population were also based on territorial and ethnic identities that pre-dated the Soviet period. Independence from the Soviet Union brought about a resurgence of local territorialism, which helped fuel the war and led to a bloody struggle among competing warlords.³⁵⁶
- Before the dissolution of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, Tajikistan had no army of its own. Thus, the Tajik government was largely dependent on the Russian military to support its COIN efforts. While Tajikistan was able to form a small army of its own by 1994, three-quarters of the officer corps were Russians. The country had no air force and relied exclusively on Russian air power. Russia eventually assumed primary responsibility for Tajik military operations, and its military presence transformed the country into what was referred to as a "Russian protectorate."³⁵⁷

³⁵⁶Gleason, 2002, p. 6.

³⁵⁷Gleason, 2002, quoting Jonson, 1998.

(In mid-1996, the preponderance of the estimated 16,500 troops guarding Tajikistan's borders belonged to Russia's Federal Border Service. Border troops received artillery and armor support from the 201st Division, whose strength was estimated as at least 12,000 troops in 1996.)³⁵⁸

- Among the former Soviet Central Asian republics, Tajikistan alone suffered complete state failure. In 1992, the central government had little authority. During the course of the civil war, large segments of the population had to depend on various militia commanders for their livelihood, security, and often their very existence.³⁵⁹ The void left by the crumbling civil authority was quickly filled by the most powerful commanders.³⁶⁰
- The war in Tajikistan was heavily influenced by events in Afghanistan. Ethnic Tajiks in Afghanistan aided the insurgent opposition and provided military assistance as well as training and support. Russian support for the government and Iranian support for the UTO were also motivated by developments in Afghanistan. Ultimately, events in Afghanistan determined the outcome of the insurgency, as the rise of the Taliban led to significant pressure from Russia, Iran, and Uzbekistan to broker a peace settlement.

³⁵⁸GlobalSecurity.org, "Operational Group of Russian Forces in Tajikistan," last updated April 22, 2006a.

³⁵⁹Kirill Nourzhanov, "Saviors of the Nation or Robber Barons? Warlord Politics in Tajikistan," *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 2, June 2005, p. 109.

³⁶⁰Nourzhanov, 2005, p. 17.

Figure 20
Map of Tajikistan



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-20

Table 20
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Tajikistan

Factor	Phase I (1992)	Phase II (1993–1995)	Phase III (1996–1997)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	0	0	0
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	0	0	0
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0	0
Free and fair elections held	0	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	0
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	0
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	1

Table 20—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1992)	Phase II (1993–1995)	Phase III (1996–1997)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	1
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	1	1	1
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	0	0	0
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	0	0	0
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	1	0	1
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	0	0
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0	1
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	1	1
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	0	0

Table 20—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1992)	Phase II (1993–1995)	Phase III (1996–1997)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	1	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	0
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	1	1	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	0	0
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	1
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	1	1	1
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	0	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	1	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	1	1	1
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	0	1	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	1	0	0
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	1	1	1
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	1	1	1
Government/state was competent	0	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	1	1	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	1	1	1
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	1	1	0
Insurgent win	0	0	1
Mixed outcome	1	1	1

Georgia/Abkhazia, 1992–1994

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Case Summary

Long a hotbed of unrest, the disputed Abkhaz region was one of many areas that erupted in violence following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The Georgia/Abkhazia border region became host to an insurgency after the kidnapping of Georgian government officials in 1992. Control of the capital, Sukhumi, switched hands several times, and the two-year conflict featured numerous failed cease-fires. Georgian COIN forces were defeated by Abkhazian insurgents in a conflict characterized by atrocities on both sides, which fits the general pattern of insurgency warfare in the post-Soviet Transcaucasus. The insurgent force was supplemented by volunteers from the Confederation of Peoples of the North Caucasus as well as Russian soldiers. In addition to fighting Abkhaz insurgents, Georgian COIN forces were simultaneously engaged in a civil war against Georgian rebels and a war in South Ossetia. Ultimately, Russian soldiers tipped the balance in favor of the insurgents.

Case Narrative

Phase I: “The Tipping Point” (May 1992–August 1992)

Phase Outcome: Favoring COIN

Key Factors: External support to COIN force from strong state/military; COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas; COIN force and allies had significant military equipment mismatch over insurgents.

Georgian claims of discrimination and concern over an Abkhaz-only National Guard led non-Abkhaz to boycott sessions of the Abkhazian parliament in May 1992.³⁶¹ The following month, ethnic Georgians

³⁶¹Our analysis focuses on the contemporary history of the region as it relates to the 1992–1994 war between Georgia and Abkhazia. Referring to the complicated history of the region, Paul B. Henze commented that “the ethnic complexity of the Caucasus makes areas such as the Balkans or Afghanistan look simple in comparison” (Paul B. Henze, *Conflict in the Cau-*

embarked on a campaign of civil disobedience that was followed by a strike in the capital, Sukhumi.³⁶² In July, the Abkhazian Supreme Soviet declared independence from Georgia.³⁶³ This veritable powder keg was then ignited after “Zviadist” insurgents kidnapped high-ranking Georgian officials and brought them to the Georgian-populated Gali Raion region of Abkhazia.³⁶⁴ Though it is still a point of contention, the Georgian National Guard ostensibly entered Abkhazia to retrieve the hostages. The Georgian government claimed that it notified Abkhaz leader Vladislav Ardzinba about the incursion, while the Abkhazians maintained that no such notice was ever received. Nonetheless, COIN force commander Tengiz Kitovani’s tank column encountered fire, and the conflict soon escalated into war.

During this phase, Ardzinba made a televised plea for the entire male population of Abkhazia to take up arms against the Georgians. Thousands of weapons were distributed to Abkhaz civilians.³⁶⁵ Even where no COIN forces were present, the insurgents harassed and terrorized Georgian civilians, who were not issued arms or subject to Ardzinba’s call to mobilize.³⁶⁶ COIN forces, too, were responsible for egregious acts of vandalism and intimidation. Reports surfaced that Georgian troops slaughtered Abkhaz civilians and destroyed cultural artifacts and monuments.³⁶⁷

casus, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, P-7830, 1993, p. 5). For a more detailed history of the region, see Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1994.

³⁶²Alexei Zverev, “Ethnic Conflicts in the Caucasus 1988–1994,” in Bruno Coppieters, ed., *Contested Borders in the Caucasus*, Brussels: Vubpress, 1996, p. 48.

³⁶³John M. Cotter, “Cultural Security Dilemmas and Ethnic Conflict in Georgia,” *Journal of Conflict Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Spring 1999.

³⁶⁴Zviadist insurgents are different from Abkhaz insurgents. Zviadists were ethnic Georgians and followers of Georgian nationalist Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who was deposed by the Georgian National Guard in the fall of 1991 and replaced with Eduard Shevardnadze (Zverev, 1996, p. 48).

³⁶⁵Svetlana Chervonnaya, *Conflict in the Caucasus: Georgia, Abkhazia and the Russian Shadow*, Ariane Chanturia, trans., Glastonbury, UK: Gothic Image, 1994, p. 119.

³⁶⁶Chervonnaya, 1994, p. 120.

³⁶⁷Zverev, 1996, p. 49.

Although a cease-fire was negotiated immediately (the following day), it was violated on August 18 when Kitovani's forces reentered Sukhumi, captured the parliament in an unsuccessful attempt to arrest Ardzinba, and burned it to the ground.³⁶⁸ The insurgents withdrew to Gudauta, a Russian base in western Abkhazia. During this phase of the conflict, the insurgents had a mere eight tanks and 30 armored cars, while the COIN force had 108 tanks, provided by the Russian army.³⁶⁹ The insurgents set up checkpoints, fortifications, and barricades along the highway from Sukhumi, and APCs arrived loaded with armaments and ammunition. Overall, although the insurgents were undisciplined and relied on looting for sustainment, they still proved more tenacious and capable than COIN forces had expected, despite the Georgians' qualitative and quantitative advantage in weaponry. This was most likely due to volunteers from the Confederation of Peoples of the North Caucasus and Russian troops, whose role would be more pronounced in the final phase of the conflict.³⁷⁰

Following the seizure of parliament, an eight-man military council was convened to manage the security policy of Abkhazia. The conflict quickly reached a stalemate, with COIN forces occupying Sukhumi and insurgents holding territory north of the Gumista River and in Tkvarcheli, southeast of the capital.³⁷¹ With neither side able to achieve its strategic objectives, the Russian government negotiated an agreement for both sides to cease fighting and troop movement by August 31, 1992.³⁷²

³⁶⁸Cotter, 1999.

³⁶⁹Zverev, 1996, p. 49.

³⁷⁰Christoph Zürcher, "Georgia's Time of Troubles, 1989–1993," in Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold, eds., *Statehood and Security: Georgia After the Rose Revolution*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005, p. 96.

³⁷¹Zverev, 1996, pp. 48–49.

³⁷²Evgeny M. Kozhokin, "Georgia-Abkhazia," in Jeremy R. Azrael and Emil A. Payin, eds., *U.S. and Russian Policymaking with Respect to the Use of Force*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, CF-129-CRES, 1996, p. 77.

Phase II: "Moscow Makes Its Move" (September 1992–May 1994)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents; important external support to insurgents significantly increased or maintained.

The failure of the COIN force to secure the mountain passes connecting Abkhazia to Russia meant that a range of volunteer fighters, including Chechens, Kabards, Circassians, and Adyghe (ethnically related to the Abkhaz), as well as Russian Transdnistrian guards fresh from the war in Moldova.³⁷³ These reinforcements proved to be decisive, as the insurgents recaptured Gagra in October 1992. Two months later, after COIN forces shot down a Russian helicopter that was evacuating refugees, Russian Reactionary Forces assisted the insurgents in battle.³⁷⁴

As the insurgency continued into 1993, Zviadist insurgents attacked COIN force positions while Russian planes bombarded Georgian-held Sukhumi.³⁷⁵ By May, Shevardnadze removed Kitovani and Jaba Ioseliani from the Defense Council and began talks on a cease-fire, mediated by the Russians. The conflict ebbed and flowed through peace talks, and in July 1993, an amphibious landing of Abkhaz insurgents allowed them to challenge COIN forces for control of the capital. In mid-September, insurgents broke the cease-fire in another push at Sukhumi with the help of volunteers from the Confederation of Peoples of the North Caucasus and Russian troops, who tipped the balance of the conflict in favor of the insurgents, at least from a military perspective.

COIN forces retreated but were intercepted by Zviadist insurgents who seized their weapons. The insurgency ended when Georgia accepted CIS membership in exchange for Russian help to defeat Zvia-

³⁷³Zverev, 1996, pp. 50–51.

³⁷⁴Cotter, 1999.

³⁷⁵Alexandros Petersen, "The 1992–1993 Georgia-Abkhazia War: A Forgotten Conflict," *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 4, Autumn 2008, p. 18.

dists in Western Georgia, demonstrating the complex political maneuvering involved in bringing the fighting to a temporary halt.

Conventional Explanations

In his discussion of tactics used by the two sides in the “Abkhazian War,” Alexei Zverev states that the COIN forces’ goal in the conflict was “to defeat the adversary’s regime by a war of attrition.”³⁷⁶ But on closer inspection, both the COIN forces and the insurgents used support strategies to win the conflict.

During the opening stages of the war, COIN forces employed the border-control approach when they deployed between 2,000 and 5,000 troops to Sukhumi and an additional 1,000 troops to Gagra in northwestern Abkhazia to seal the border with Russia.³⁷⁷ By attempting to seal the border (a goal it failed to achieve), the government in Tbilisi sought to demonstrate to the international community that it maintained control over its sovereign territory, in itself a form of legitimacy. The other objective of sealing the border was to prevent Russian and Chechen fighters from infiltrating the territory to aid the insurgents, as well as to deprive the insurgents of cross-border inputs, a classic corollary of the cost-benefit approach.

Although COIN forces did have some of the trappings of a basic COIN strategy, at the start of the insurgency in 1992 and even through 1993, they consisted of “little more than a cluster of paramilitary forces and other irregular troops.”³⁷⁸ As such, it should not come as a surprise that COIN forces mistreated prisoners of war and the non-Georgian population, committing acts of violence, robbery, and vandalism.³⁷⁹ In a very public display of disagreement between the govern-

³⁷⁶Zverev, 1996, p. 49.

³⁷⁷Oksana Antonenko, “Frozen Uncertainty: Russia and the Conflict over Abkhazia,” in Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold, eds., *Statehood and Security: Georgia After the Rose Revolution*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005, p. 212.

³⁷⁸Walker, Edward, “No War, No Peace in the Caucasus,” in Gary K. Bertsch, Cassidy Craft, Scott A. Jones, and Michael Beck, eds., *Crossroads and Conflict: Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 162.

³⁷⁹Chervonnaya, 1994, p. 134.

ment and the COIN force, Shevardnadze admitted that attacking the Abkhazian parliament had been unnecessary, and one of his top aides, Sergei Tarasenko, described Kitovani's battlefield actions as stupid and counterproductive.³⁸⁰

The insurgent forces also demonstrated an ability to implement strategies directed at delegitimizing the COIN force and government in Tbilisi. From the outset of the conflict, the insurgents sought to impose their will on the ethnic Georgian population through intimidation. Abkhaz and Chechen *boeviks* constructed barricades and set up checkpoints that became scenes of arbitrary violence, plundering, and marauding.³⁸¹ To remain flexible and to offset the COIN forces' advantage in numbers and weaponry, the insurgents organized into small, autonomous armed units.³⁸² The insurgents displayed a fairly adept understanding of the importance of propaganda, as evidenced by a speech delivered on Abkhazian radio and television to reassure the population, consolidate Abkhazian support, and preempt any international opprobrium: "I must say that 'the world' knows in what situation Abkhazia has been placed. 'The World' resolutely condemns this barbarous action."³⁸³

Distinctive Characteristics

- The conflict involved multiple sides, including insurgents, COIN forces, mercenaries, and external military forces. During the early to mid-1990s, Shamil Basayev and groups of Caucasian mujahadeen roamed the Transcaucasus region offering their services as guerrilla fighters to co-religionists all over the former Soviet Union.
- Moscow followed a strategy of "divide and rule" and successfully manipulated both parties to the conflict to achieve its ultimate

³⁸⁰Steven Erlanger, "As Georgia Chief, Shevardnadze Rides Whirlwind," *New York Times*, August 25, 1992.

³⁸¹Chervonnaya, 1994, pp. 122–124.

³⁸²Zverev, 1996, p. 49.

³⁸³Quoted in Chervonnaya, 1994, p. 118.

goal—restoration of Abkhaz autonomy and Georgian acquiescence to membership in the CIS.

- Insurgents employed classic COIN force strategies that the COIN force did not, including conducting PSYOP, employing militias, and setting up checkpoints, among others.
- COIN forces were fighting a civil war and an insurgency simultaneously.

Figure 21
Map of Georgia



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/I-21

Table 21
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Georgia/Abkhazia

Factor	Phase I (1992)	Phase II (1992–1994)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	1	1
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	0	0
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	1	1
Government a functional democracy	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	1	1
Free and fair elections held	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	1	1
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0

Table 21—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1992)	Phase II (1992–1994)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	1	1
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	0	0
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	0	0
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	0

Table 21—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1992)	Phase II (1992–1994)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	1	0
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	1
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	1	0
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	0
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	0
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustenance	1	1
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	1	1
Government/state was competent	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	1
Government/COIN win	1	0
Insurgent win	0	1
Mixed outcome	0	1

Nagorno-Karabakh, 1992–1994

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Case Summary

A more disciplined, better organized Karabakh Armenian insurgency defeated Azerbaijani COIN forces with the assistance of Russia, which provided weapons and troops to both sides in the conflict at various points. Political discord in Baku contributed significantly to the counterinsurgents' inability to muster an organized fighting force capable of defeating the insurgency. Moreover, the Armenians possessed superior fighting skills from their positions in the former Soviet Army.³⁸⁴

Case Narrative

Phase I: "Ancient Hatreds Boil Over" (January 1992–May 1992)

Phase Outcome: Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: Unity of effort/unity of command *not* maintained; COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics; insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.

In January 1992, the Supreme Soviet of the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast declared independence and the establishment of a "Nagorno-Karabakh Republic," free from rule by the government in Baku, which had ruled the region since 1923 under the auspices of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

The opening salvo of the insurgency commenced in January 1992, when Azerbaijani COIN forces launched an offensive spearheaded by several thousand soldiers backed by armored vehicles, as well as rocket and artillery fire.³⁸⁵ Armenian Karabakh insurgents staunchly defended Stepanakert, the capital, and were supported by troops from the 366th

³⁸⁴This case is sometimes referred to in the literature as "Nagorny-Karabagh," or simply "Qarabagh."

³⁸⁵Michael P. Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications*, Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998, p. 78.

CIS (formerly Soviet) Motor Rifle Regiment.³⁸⁶ COIN forces were beaten back and responded by indiscriminately shelling Stepanakert.

As the COIN force lost momentum, the insurgents won the first major battle of the conflict, which resulted in the capture of Khojaly, a town of symbolic and strategic significance. Khojaly was the second largest Azeri-held town and included an airstrip, critical for bringing in supplies and reinforcements. The insurgent assault was characterized by acts of mass intimidation and featured soldiers and armored vehicles from the 366th. Estimates of the civilian death toll vary from 485 to 1,000.³⁸⁷

The battle for Stepanakert (pop. 55,000) saw atrocities committed by both the insurgents and COIN forces. The use of Grad rocket launchers by both sides contributed significantly to egregious violence against civilians.³⁸⁸ Shusha, the cradle of Azerbaijani culture and the COIN forces' last strategic foothold in Nagorno-Karabakh, fell next to the insurgents and was both a strategic and a psychological blow.³⁸⁹ In Shusha, both Armenians and Azerbaijanis desecrated the cultural and religious icons of the other side, including monuments and statues. Following the capture of the city, the Karabakh Armenian population began looting and burning the houses of fleeing Azerbaijanis.

The loss of both Stepanakert and Shusha brought about another reshuffling of the government in Baku, and as Michael Croissant observes, "in the space of 24 hours from 14 to 15 May, the government changed hands twice, and the Karabakh Armenians capitalized on the disarray in Baku to press further gains on the battlefield."³⁹⁰ During

³⁸⁶Levon Chorbajian, *The Making of Nagorno-Karabagh: From Secession to Republic*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001, p. 134.

³⁸⁷See Thomas de Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War*, New York: New York University Press, 2003, pp. 170–172, and Croissant, 1998, p. 78, respectively.

³⁸⁸The Grad is a multiple-rocket launcher, from the Russian word for "hail." Intended for use against soldiers, up to 40 rockets can be loaded into tubes, usually in a grid mounted on the back of a truck, and fired simultaneously. The Grad launchers are notoriously inaccurate and were fired into cities with no aim or coordinates (De Waal, 2003, pp. 174–175).

³⁸⁹De Waal, 2003, p. 180.

³⁹⁰Croissant, 1998, p. 79.

this transition of authority, the insurgents captured Lachin, the strategically vital sliver of land connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia proper. With control of this piece of territory, the insurgents could more easily receive shipments of supplies, weapons, and other critical resources.³⁹¹

Phase II: “Back to the Battle” (June 1992–November 1993)³⁹²

Phase Outcome: COIN Loss

Key Factors: Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated; COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics; external support to insurgents from strong state/military.

One of the defining events of this phase was the acquisition of heavy weaponry by both sides at the end of May 1992. At a Tashkent meeting, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Azerbaijan divided a stockpile of Soviet weapons that included 220 tanks, 220 other armored vehicles, 285 artillery pieces, and 100 combat aircraft.³⁹³ This arsenal ensured that the insurgency would enter a more violent and deadly phase. Before the Tashkent Agreement, both sides had been relying primarily on rockets and small arms.

Unsatisfied with an even split, COIN forces bribed the Russians to acquire far more than the agreement stipulated, gaining a total of 286 tanks, 842 armored vehicles, and 386 artillery pieces.³⁹⁴ Not to be outdone, the insurgents countered by appealing directly to Russian president Boris Yeltsin, who in keeping with his desire to maintain a balance between the warring parties, supplied the insurgents with tanks, artillery, APCs, and small arms in order to even the playing field.

³⁹¹ Croissant, 1998, p. 80.

³⁹² In the Nagorno-Karabakh case, phase II, rather than the terminal phase, was the decisive phase of the insurgency.

³⁹³ De Waal, 2003, p. 197.

³⁹⁴ De Waal, 2003, p. 199.

Azerbaijan, still reeling from its dismal performance in the first five months of the conflict, responded by electing Abulfaz Elchibey, a pro-Turkish, anti-Russian, anti-Iranian politician who organized the disparate militias operating in Nagorno-Karabakh into a single, unified COIN force. Under Elchibey's guidance, COIN forces conducted a large-scale assault against the town of Mardakert in the summer of 1992 that featured 10,000 soldiers and 100 tanks and APCs backed by artillery and close air support.³⁹⁵ COIN forces were able to string together several victories, recapturing villages and towns throughout northern Nagorno-Karabakh. The use of heavy armor was a dramatic escalation in the conflict and led to the mass exodus of 40,000 Armenian Karabakhs as refugees.³⁹⁶ In an effort to stem the violence, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe's Minsk Group intervened but, just as Iran had several months before, failed to engineer a cessation of hostilities.³⁹⁷

In the winter of 1992, Russians closed their bases on Azerbaijani soil, but on the Armenian side, the Russian 7th Army remained.³⁹⁸ This proved to be an advantage for the insurgents, who shortly thereafter were able to establish an effective antiaircraft system.

As the fighting continued to rage, the Armenian Karabakhs took the offensive and by March 1993 had retaken most of northern Nagorno-Karabakh, including the Lachin corridor, and began pressing outside of the territory into the Kelbajar district of western Azerbaijan. The fighting in Kelbajar prompted massive refugee flows and was directly related to the decision from Baku to begin conscripting soldiers into the army.

³⁹⁵Croissant, 1998, p. 84.

³⁹⁶De Waal, 2003, pp. 194–195.

³⁹⁷The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe was formed in 1973 to facilitate dialogue between East and West on such issues as military security, economics, and human rights. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the group transitioned into a forum for conflict prevention and resolution. The Minsk Group consisted of core members of the conference and sought to mediate the dispute in Nagorno-Karabakh. It comprised the United States, France, Sweden, Turkey, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Belarus, and Russia (Croissant, 1998, p. 85).

³⁹⁸De Waal, 2003, p. 202.

Following the capture of Azerbaijani territory, Elchibey was ousted from power in a bloodless coup led by Heidar Aliyev and dissident army commander Suret Huseynov, both of whom were seen as pro-Moscow.³⁹⁹ Still, Armenian forces once again took advantage of the political turmoil in Baku by going on the offensive in June, attacking the Azerbaijani city of Agdam to the east of Nagorno-Karabakh. The insurgents followed this attack with assaults on the southwestern Azerbaijani towns of Fizuli and Jebrail, forcing 250,000 Azerbaijanis to flee their homes.

Phase III: “Too Little, Too Late: The COIN Winter Offensive”
(December 1993–May 1994)

Phase Outcome: Favoring COIN

Key Factors: External support to COIN from strong state/military; unity of effort/unity of command maintained.

The final phase of the insurgency was characterized by one last push by COIN forces to retake the southeast sector of Nagorno-Karabakh during the winter offensive of December 1993. Seeking to consolidate his forces, Aliyev subordinated the often independently acting field chiefs to a single commander and pardoned all deserters, ordering them to return to their units and fight. Furthermore, 150 military experts from Turkey, in addition to 200 advisers from Russia, helped train COIN forces in the months leading up to their winter assault. The offensive lasted two months, and though it was successful in regaining previously conquered territory, the Azerbaijanis lost an estimated 5,000 troops and 60 armored vehicles. Many of the COIN force casualties resulted from the “human wave” operations, which were common during the Iran-Iraq War of 1980–1988. Indeed, “deterrent detachments” were sent along to the battlefield to shoot any soldiers fleeing the battle.⁴⁰⁰ Commenting on the period between Decem-

³⁹⁹Svante E. Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*, Report No. 46, Uppsala, Sweden: Department of East European Studies, Uppsala University, April 1999, pp. 37–39.

⁴⁰⁰Croissant, 1998, p. 96.

ber 1993 and May 1994, Thomas de Waal observed that “the last phase of the Karabakh war was also the bloodiest.”⁴⁰¹

The intervention by the Minsk Group, followed shortly after by the assault on Kelbajar, brought an international dimension to what had previously been viewed as a regional matter. As one of several ongoing conflicts in the former Soviet Union during this period, the Nagorno-Karabakh insurgency stands out for its potential to draw several major powers—Russia, Iran, and Turkey—into a wider conflagration.

Conventional Explanation

In terms of skills, the scales were tipped from the beginning. Because of discrimination against Muslims in the Soviet army, Azerbaijanis were likely to have held positions as builders or cooks. Conversely, there were thousands of Armenians in the officer corps and with front-line training.⁴⁰² The conflict featured mercenaries on both sides, with hundreds of former Soviet soldiers, including Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians fighting as both insurgents and counterinsurgents.⁴⁰³ Furthermore, in a last unsuccessful attempt to turn the tide of the war, the Azerbaijanis enlisted a group of 1,000–2,500 Afghan mujahadeen fighters to bolster the COIN force.⁴⁰⁴ The Armenian Karabakhs received troops, money, and advice from Armenia, as well as substantial support from the Armenian diaspora in countries such as the United States, France, Argentina, and Lebanon.⁴⁰⁵

At least part of the reason for the sudden change in the fortune for the COIN forces was the fact that the troops engaged in the actual

⁴⁰¹De Waal, 2003, p. 235.

⁴⁰²De Waal, 2003, p. 163.

⁴⁰³De Waal, 2003, p. 200.

⁴⁰⁴Croissant, 1998, p. 94; de Waal, 2003, p. 236. Croissant puts the number of Afghan fighters at between 1,000 and 1,500, while de Waal cites that it was between 1,500 and 2,500. Interestingly, the notorious Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev is rumored to be among those Islamist mercenaries who flocked to Nagorno-Karabakh before returning home to Chechnya to lead Chechen rebels against the Russians from 1994 to 1996.

⁴⁰⁵David Rieff, “Nagorno-Karabakh: Case Study in Ethnic Strife,” *Foreign Affairs*, March–April 1997, pp. 122–126.

fighting were Russians from the 23rd Division of the 4th Army based in Ganja.⁴⁰⁶ Ironically, the insurgents were also bolstered by Russians fighting on their side, using attack helicopters and carrying out air strikes. In fact, it was a joint Armenian-Russian force that halted the COIN forces' advance.

Distinctive Characteristics

- The case of Nagorno-Karabakh is interesting because the insurgents were the more professional, better-trained and -equipped force, while the COIN forces were more of a rag-tag group of fighters. Because of their position in the Soviet military, the Armenian Karabakhs were more likely to be soldiers and officers instead of serving in support roles.
- Another striking feature of this insurgency is the geography of Nagorno-Karabakh. It is a tiny region populated by an ethnic Armenian majority and fully encompassed by the territory of Azerbaijan, with a narrow strip of land separating it from Armenia.
- Russian soldiers fought on both sides of the conflict, essentially serving as mercenaries by lending their services to the highest bidder or allying themselves with their ethnic counterparts.
- The decisive phase in the insurgency was the second phase, not the third and final one. After receiving training from Turkish advisers, the COIN force tightened command and control and went on the offensive. At this point, however, Moscow intervened and forced both sides to the negotiating table, with the outcome favoring the Armenian insurgents.

⁴⁰⁶De Waal, 2003, p. 195.

Figure 22
Map of Nagorno-Karabakh



RAND MG964/I-22

Table 22
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Nagorno-Karabakh

Factor	Phase I (1992)	Phase II (1992–1993)	Phase III (1993–1994)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	1	1	1
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	0	0	0
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	1	1	1
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	1	1	1
Free and fair elections held	0	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	0

Table 22—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1992)	Phase II (1992–1993)	Phase III (1993–1994)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0	1
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	1	1	1
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	1	1
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	1	1	0

Table 22—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1992)	Phase II (1992–1993)	Phase III (1993–1994)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	0	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	0	1
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	1	1	1
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	1	1	1
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	0	0	0
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	0	0	0
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	1	1	0
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustenance	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	0	0	0
Government/state was competent	0	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0	0
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	1	0
Government/COIN win	0	0	1
Insurgent win	1	1	0
Mixed outcome	0	1	0

Bosnia, 1992–1995

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Case Summary

Following Bosnia's independence after the breakup of Yugoslavia, Bosnian Serb insurgents battled both Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats for control of territory. COIN forces were underequipped and frequently fought with each other. The Srebrenica massacre and another large-scale slaughter of civilians in Markale prompted the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to intervene to end the fighting in the waning stages of the conflict, but Bosnian Serb insurgents secured a significant portion of territory and established the autonomous Republika Srpska, with close ties to Belgrade.

Case Narrative

Phase I: "Every Man for Himself" (March 1992–December 1992)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: Insurgents maintain or grow force size; COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics; insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.

In early March 1992, following similar votes in Slovenia and Croatia, Sarajevo held a referendum on independence. The vote was boycotted by Serbs but passed with 99.4 percent in favor of independence.⁴⁰⁷ The European Community and the United States recognized Bosnia as an independent nation shortly thereafter, and the seeds of conflict were sown. The Bosnian chapter of the Balkans War began in April 1992, with an astonishing 45 different paramilitary formations representing the three ethnic communities.⁴⁰⁸ In August, the insurgents announced the formation of their own autonomous region, the Republika Srpska,

⁴⁰⁷Even though the Serbs largely boycotted the vote, 63 percent of the population did go to the polls (Nation, 2003, p. 152).

⁴⁰⁸Nation, 2003.

under the leadership of Radovan Karadzic and the Serbian Democratic Party. Meanwhile, Alija Izetbegovic took hold of the reigns of power in Sarajevo in an attempt to preserve the territorial integrity of the state despite Croats and Serbs agitating for their own autonomous regions.

Bosnian Muslims formed the Patriotic League with approximately 35,000 troops at its disposal and in July 1992 merged this outfit with the territorial defense forces loyal to Sarajevo and the armed police units, forming the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina (ABH), the primary COIN force. The other component of the COIN force, the Croats, formed the Croat Defense Council (HVO) and attempted to work alongside the ABH, although collaboration was minimal. The HVO was about 20,000 strong with a supplemental force of 5,000 militiamen.⁴⁰⁹

At the outset of fighting, the insurgents included members of the former JNA, various volunteer militias, Bosnian Serb territorial defenses, and interior ministry elements. The most effective fighters, however, were elite special operations units ("Red Berets") from the Serbian State Security Service.⁴¹⁰ Overall, the insurgents were 100,000 strong and retained an arsenal of 400 heavy artillery pieces, 48 multiple-rocket launchers, 350 120-mm mortars, 250 APCs and infantry fighting vehicles, 120 fighter bombers, 500 tanks, and 80 light attack and observation helicopters.⁴¹¹ Meanwhile, the COIN forces were plagued by weapon shortages throughout the entire conflict. Supplementing the various insurgent factions listed here, the Serbian Democratic Party also provided a 60,000-strong militia, along with 15,000 armed police and paramilitary units from Serbia. Yet another actor, UNPROFOR, was added to the mix in the summer of 1992, although it failed to have a significant effect on events on the ground, especially during the first few months of its deployment.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁹Nation, 2003.

⁴¹⁰Central Intelligence Agency, 2002, p. 137.

⁴¹¹Nation, 2003.

⁴¹²Throughout much of the conflict, UNPROFOR was plagued by restrictive rules of engagement, inadequate intelligence and communication assets, and division at the command level.

The insurgents had the strategic advantage during the first phase of the war, primarily due to superior organization, a qualitative and quantitative advantage in weaponry, and control over the majority of territory in Bosnia.⁴¹³ The first phase of the insurgency was characterized largely by bloodshed and, at times, confusion over enemy and adversary. By the end of 1992, both sides had partaken in serious violations of cultural and religious monuments and artifacts, exacerbating the conflict and leading to a hardening of identities. Nearly 70 percent of Bosnia's architectural infrastructure had been destroyed, including more than 300 mosques, 150 Orthodox churches, and 50 Catholic churches.⁴¹⁴

Phase II: "Slaughter in Sarajevo" (January 1993–January 1994)

Phase Outcome: Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks; unity of effort/unity of command *not* maintained; COIN force failed to create perception of security among population in areas it controlled or claimed to control.

In April 1993, insurgents captured Banja Luka and purged the area of its Croat and Muslim population, allowing them to make it the focal point of their campaign in western Bosnia. The architect of this campaign of ethnic cleansing was the notorious Serb gangster/warlord "Arkan," who along with his ruthless but disciplined militias began massacring Muslims throughout the country. "The brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing that preceded military occupation made any claim to control the area fundamentally illegitimate," according to R. Craig Nation.⁴¹⁵

COIN forces made a staunch defense of the Bihac pocket in May and June, holding off the insurgents with 10,000 troops and six ABH brigades. In May 1993, General Ratko Mladic usurped control over the

⁴¹³Nation, 2003.

⁴¹⁴Nation, 2003.

⁴¹⁵Nation, 2003, p. 162.

Republika Srpska army and began directing artillery bombardments against Sarajevo, still the legitimate seat of government.⁴¹⁶ During this phase of the insurgency, the Serbs were able to defeat COIN forces in consecutive battles due to “greater military professionalism, more effective organization, and superior firepower.”⁴¹⁷ By the end of 1992, insurgents controlled 70 percent of Bosnian territory.⁴¹⁸

Another critical development during the second phase of the insurgency was the growing discord between Croats and Muslims, ostensibly fighting together for a common purpose. In reality, events on the ground proved much more complicated. Indeed, at various points, Croats were colluding with Serbs against Muslims. In April and October 1993, Croats slaughtered Muslims in Ahmici and Stupni Do, respectively. Still, the COIN force was not the only party to the conflict with morale issues. In September 1993, several insurgent units in Banja Luka mutinied in protest of inadequate treatment and an inchoate military agenda.⁴¹⁹

Phase III: “From Deadlock to Dayton” (February 1994–November 1995)
Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: External support to COIN from strong state/military; COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power; external professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government.

As the insurgency entered its final phase, the dynamics of a complicated war became even more complex. To the international community, and to the respective forces fighting against the Serbs on the ground, the Croatian and Bosnian conflicts could be viewed as two separate insur-

⁴¹⁶It should be noted that Mladic answered directly to Milosevic, which often put him at odds with Bosnian Serb President Radovan Karadzic on a host of issues, both political and military (Central Intelligence Agency, 2002, p. 142).

⁴¹⁷Nation, 2003, p. 162.

⁴¹⁸Nation, 2003.

⁴¹⁹Nation, 2003.

gencies. But to Milosevic and the leadership in Belgrade, these two wars were not viewed as entirely distinct.

Added to the amalgam of forces on the ground, UNPROFOR increased its troops from 1,500 to 23,000 and ultimately to 38,000 (with very strict rules of engagement, it should be noted), while NATO debated whether to become involved beyond the level of enforcing a no-fly zone. It was also at this point that Russia introduced peacekeepers into the fray.

On February 7, 1994, following the shelling of the Markale market in Sarajevo, the Atlantic Alliance imposed a ten-day ultimatum for the withdrawal of heavy weapons. A few weeks later, on February 27, NATO shot down four Yugoslav jet fighters in its first combat action since it was established in 1949.⁴²⁰ In March 1994, the Washington Agreement was signed, essentially solving the Croat-Muslim split in a last-ditch effort to forge a united front against the Bosnian Serb insurgents. In July, the newly formed Contact Group pushed for a 51-49 split between the Croat-Muslim federation and Bosnian Serbs.⁴²¹

While Croat COIN forces were making progress against Serb insurgents in neighboring Croatia, NATO continued to employ air strikes against Serb positions in Bosnia in an effort to enforce the Sarajevo exclusion zone. Following the July 1995 massacre of Muslims at Srebrenica, abetted in part by UNPROFOR troops, and the “marketplace massacre” in Sarajevo in August, NATO planned to launch Operation Deliberate Force to deter a repeat of the insurgent attacks on UN-sponsored safe areas.⁴²² Operation Deliberate Force lasted from August 30 to September 20, 1995, with a total of 3,515 sorties flown against 338 targets. The operation achieved its objectives, although the insurgents did successfully shoot down a low-flying French Air Force Mirage 2000 with a shoulder-fired surface-to-air missile on the first

⁴²⁰Nation, 2003.

⁴²¹The Contact Group consisted of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Russia and sought to establish a framework for peace negotiations.

⁴²²For further reading on the massacre at Srebrenica, see Edgar O’Ballance, *Civil War in Bosnia: 1992–94*, London: Macmillan, 1995, pp. 158–161.

day.⁴²³ In conjunction with NATO air attacks, COIN ground forces led by the HV, HVO, and ABH made headway against the insurgents with the “Maestral” offensive in western Bosnia, as well as Operations Hurricane in the Ozren Mountain area and Operation Sana 95 in Bosanski Petrovac and Kljuc.⁴²⁴

The insurgency in Bosnia culminated with the Dayton Peace Accords in December 1995.⁴²⁵ The division of Bosnia into two political-territorial divisions, the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, left the insurgents with their own territory and functioning government, with its capital in Banja Luka. To this day, Republika Srpska maintains close ties with Belgrade.

Conventional Explanations

Commenting on the nature of the insurgency, R. Craig Nation stated that it was “waged by three contending factions whose mutual relations shifted back and forth from hostility to cooperation depending upon the configuration of forces within individual battle areas.” He goes on to observe, “It was a primitive war, characterized by sieges, limited offensives, and purposeful atrocities.”⁴²⁶ Throughout the war, the ABH lacked access to armor, heavy artillery, aircraft, and communication assets—all factors that prevented it from ever becoming an effective combined arms force.⁴²⁷ The insurgents used militias to great effect, and the conflict ended only after NATO intervened militarily on the side of the government in Sarajevo.

Distinctive Characteristics

- While the Dayton Accords are often hailed as a major success, even a blueprint of archetypal diplomacy, the framework has left much to be desired. Indeed, Dayton did end the war in Bosnia,

⁴²³Central Intelligence Agency, 2002, pp. 377–379.

⁴²⁴Central Intelligence Agency, 2002, p. 395.

⁴²⁵Silber and Little, 1995, pp. 369–377.

⁴²⁶Nation, 2003, pp. 158–159.

⁴²⁷Nation, 2003, p. 156.

but it also created an extremely weak central government while allowing for highly autonomous entity-level governments.⁴²⁸

- There was a high degree of intra-COIN force discord, specifically between Muslims and Croats. Typically, the insurgents are the combatants with a fractured alliance made up of disparate entities, each vying for power. In Bosnia, the Bosnian Serbs were largely united, and even supplemented by Bosnian Croats fleeing Croatia and arriving in Bosnia to aid the insurgents.
- Militias featured prominently in this insurgency, but unlike in many other conflicts, the insurgent militias led by “Arkan” were extremely effective in blunting COIN advances. Still, for all of their military effectiveness and prowess in battle, these militias engaged in widespread atrocities and seemed to pursue an agenda of ethnic cleansing.

⁴²⁸James Dobbins, John G. McGinn, Keith Crane, Seth G. Jones, Rollie Lal, Andrew Rathmell, Rachel M. Swanger, and Anga R. Timilsina, *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-1753-RC, 2003, pp. 90–91.

Figure 23
Map of Bosnia



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-23

Table 23
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Bosnia

Factor	Phase I (1992)	Phase II (1993–1994)	Phase III (1994–1995)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	1	1	1
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	1	1	1
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	1	1	1
Free and fair elections held	1	1	1
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	0

Table 23—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1992)	Phase II (1993–1994)	Phase III (1994–1995)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	1	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	1	1	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	1	1	1
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	0	0	0
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	0	0	0
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	1	1
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	1	1	1

Table 23—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1992)	Phase II (1993–1994)	Phase III (1994–1995)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	0	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	0	1
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	1	1	1
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	0	0	0
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0	1
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	0	0	0
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	1	1	1
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustenance	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	1	1	1
Government/state was competent	0	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	1	1	1
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0	0
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	0	0	0
Insurgent win	1	1	1
Mixed outcome	1	0	1

Burundi, 1993–2003

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Case Summary

Burundi has long been plagued by ethnic conflict between the Tutsi minority, which maintained control of the government, and the majority Hutu population. In 1993, a series of ethnic massacres occurred after the country's first democratically elected Hutu president was assassinated. Subsequent instability led the Tutsi-dominated army to reassert control and reinstall a Tutsi-led government under Pierre Buyoya. The Buyoya regime implemented harsh COIN tactics, including widespread forcible resettlements, which served to reduce popular support for the government. Only after a decade of fighting, tens of thousands of deaths, and hundreds of thousands of displacements was a peace agreement finally reached with the Forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD, one of the two major Hutu insurgent groups).

Case Narrative

Phase I: "Assassinations and Ethnic Massacres" (1993–1995)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence; important external support to insurgents significantly increased or maintained.

The conflict in Burundi was deeply rooted in a history of ethnic tension and violence between the Hutu and the Tutsi. After Burundi's independence in 1962, the Tutsis held powerful government positions and controlled the country's military forces, while the Hutus, who constitute 85 percent of the population, claimed oppression by minority rule.⁴²⁹ The Tutsi-dominated military intervened in state affairs repeatedly to suppress challenges by the Hutu majority, and violence often involved massacres on a large scale (most notably in 1972 and

⁴²⁹International Institute for Strategic Studies, "Burundi (Palipehutu-FNL) Historical Background," Armed Conflict Database, 2006–2009.

1988).⁴³⁰ The two major insurgent groups in Burundi were the Hutu National Liberation Forces (FNL) and the FDD. However, the struggle for power in the country was not simply Hutu against Tutsi; there are also conflicts among parties of the same ethnic group. Moreover these conflicts were entangled in regional Hutu-Tutsi rivalries that expanded to neighboring countries of Rwanda, Tanzania, and the DRC, which provided military assistance and direct combat support for parties on both sides.⁴³¹

In July 1993, after a number of successive military coups, the first national democratic elections were held in Burundi, leading to the installation of its first Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye. Ndadaye's was a very short tenure: Within months, he was killed by Tutsi military officers in an abortive coup. The incident led to an outbreak of ethnic violence against the Tutsis that killed 30,000–50,000 people in a single week, followed by retaliatory repressive measures by the Tutsi-dominated army and the Tutsi intelligentsia, which resulted in the massacre of Hutus and the exodus of hundreds of thousands of refugees.⁴³²

After the fighting died down, a power-sharing arrangement was negotiated that allowed the Hutus to retain the presidency (under Cyprien Ntaryamira) and gave Tutsi parties 40 percent of the executive posts in the government. Yet, this compromise did not last long. In April 1994, Ntaryamira was killed when a plane he was sharing with Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana was shot down over Kigali. A new political agreement was reached under UN auspices in September 2004 that allowed Hutu candidate Sylvestre Ntibantunganya to become president and provided additional power to Tutsi parties in the government. The agreement was soon rejected by party members on

⁴³⁰In 1972, Hutu rebels attempted to establish their own people's republic. The Tutsi-led government responded by mobilizing Tutsi civilians via the radio to kill all Hutus, which led to the massacre of 100,000. The second cycle of violence began with the killings of two Tutsi villages by Hutu rebels and an attack along the Rwanda border. The government then responded by slaughtering thousands of Hutus. See Humanitarian Law Consultancy, *Burundi's Regroupment Policy: A Pilot-Study on Its Legality*, The Hague, Netherlands: The Hague Chamber of Commerce, June–July 1997, and Nugent, 2004, p. 456.

⁴³¹International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2006–2009.

⁴³²Nugent, 2004, p. 458.

both sides. Within months, the mainly Tutsi Union for National Progress (UPRONA) party withdrew from the parliament, and a number of Hutu leaders left the main opposition party to join radical militia groups and the National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD), which took up arms to challenge Tutsi domination of the state and its armed forces.

The conflict intensified in 1995 as Hutu guerrilla groups, strengthened by Rwandan recruits fleeing a newly installed Tutsi dominated-government in their own country, began to engage Burundi armed forces and attack civilian targets from bases in neighboring Tanzania and Zaire.⁴³³ The army fought back with the benefit of training and munitions it received from France, Egypt, Russia, China, North Korea, and the United States. Violence spread throughout the capital and the countryside, devolving into a full-scale civil war by mid-1996. Seeking to ease the fighting, a UN mediator secured Ntibantunganya's agreement to a regional intervention force to stop the war in June 1996. This decision only brought greater instability to the country, however, as it was perceived as a threat to the Burundi armed forces. This led the Tutsi military commanders to force the president to step down in a nonviolent coup.⁴³⁴

Phase II: "Regroupment Breeds Resentment" (1996–1998)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: COIN force or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents; COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control.

⁴³³Kathi Austin, "Light Weapons and Conflict in the Great Lakes Region of Africa," in Jeffrey Boutwell and Michael T. Klare, eds., *Light Weapons and Civil Conflict: Controlling the Tools of Violence*, Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999.

⁴³⁴International Institute for Strategic Studies, "Burundi: Political System and History," updated February 2005.

Following the coup, Major Pierre Buyoya, a Tutsi, declared himself president.⁴³⁵ He replaced the country's constitution, suspended the national assembly and banned all political parties, thus securing Tutsi rule.⁴³⁶ Buyoya's actions were condemned by the international community. In August 1996, Burundi's neighbors (except Zaire) imposed sanctions in a bid to force a return to democratic government and negotiations with rebel groups.⁴³⁷

The Burundian government continued to attempt to crush the Hutu rebellion during this period. In February 1996, it began a regroupment policy of forced population movement in areas where insecurity was believed to be high. Officially, the government declared that regroupment was necessary to protect innocent civilians from the rebels and the violence between the two sides and to deprive the rebels of a supply base by destroying their hideouts and preventing the recruitment of new rebels. Regroupment was declared to be a preventative measure that was both voluntary and temporary. Civilians were asked whether they wanted to regroup; if they refused, they were regarded as rebels and executed on the spot, however.⁴³⁸ An estimated total of 500,000 civilians were sent to regroupment camps during the course of the conflict

Regroupment camps were established in response to rebel attacks on civilian populations, but instead of providing safety to the population, they became breeding grounds for disease, death, and long-term resentment.⁴³⁹ Many camps were noted for severe violations of human

⁴³⁵Major Buyoya had previously come to power in 1987 by a coup but was forced under international pressure to organize elections in 1993 and lost (Humanitarian Law Consultancy, 1997).

⁴³⁶Buyoya offered something of a compromise by appointing a Hutu as prime minister and included several Hutus in his cabinet, yet he clearly consolidated his position by ruling in conjunction with the Tutsi-dominated military (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2005, 2006–2009).

⁴³⁷These efforts had some effect. The national assembly was restored in October 1996, and, after Buyoya disclosed that his government had held secret talks with the CNDD in Rome, sanctions were partially lifted in April 1997.

⁴³⁸Humanitarian Law Consultancy, 1997.

⁴³⁹GlobalSecurity.org, "Burundi Civil War," last updated July 8, 2007.

and humanitarian rights and were subject to raids by insurgents.⁴⁴⁰ They also served to bolster the recruiting efforts of rebel groups.⁴⁴¹ The Bujumbura region of the country, where the majority of the camps were located, became a noted stronghold of the FNL.⁴⁴²

Hutu rebel groups, particularly the FDD, gained strength not only from increased recruiting but also by allying themselves with DRC President Laurent Kabila in 1998. This alliance provided additional ammunition, equipment, and funding for the insurgents and compensated for some of their losses from the first Congo War, which had disrupted some of their main supply routes and closed many of FDD bases in the DRC.⁴⁴³

Peace negotiations between the government and the Hutu rebels were pursued at this time, but little progress was achieved. In June 1998, former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere mediated talks among the leaders of Burundi's major political parties but did not include the more important rebel groups. The Tutsi-led military reportedly had little interest in negotiating, and the FDD leaders had an incentive for continuing to fight as they were reportedly earning millions of dollars for their military assistance to Kabila's army.⁴⁴⁴

Phase III: "Negotiations for Peace" (1999–2003)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict; flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent.

⁴⁴⁰ Humanitarian Law Consultancy, 1997.

⁴⁴¹ International Crisis Group, *The Burundi Rebellion and Ceasefire Negotiations*, Africa Briefing No. 9, August 6, 2002b, p. 7.

⁴⁴² René Lemarchand, *The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa*, Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

⁴⁴³ International Crisis Group, 2002b.

⁴⁴⁴ International Crisis Group, 2000.

There was more progress toward a peace agreement in 1999 when Nelson Mandela was designated as mediator for the conflict. While Mandela still failed to bring the rebel groups to the table, he was able to negotiate an agreement among the political parties in August 2000 that allowed for a transitional multiparty government to be established with or without a cease-fire. Under intense regional and international pressure, Burundi's political leaders agreed a three-year transition government in which Hutus were to receive 60 percent of the positions and Buyoya would continue to serve as president for 18 months before stepping down in favor of a Hutu. Buyoya survived several coup attempts after the agreement was signed, and the transitional government remained functioning in 2002 despite the continuing intensification of the civil war, to the surprise of the international community.

President Buyoya pursued a dual policy of negotiation and offensive military action during a critical stage of the conflict in 2002. He advocated a willingness to meet with the rebels and listen to their military and political demands in an effort to show the international community that he was doing everything he could to reach a cease-fire. Yet at the same time, he ordered larger weapon systems, engaged foreign partners such as the RPA in Rwanda, and attacked rebel headquarters in an attempt to retain the support of the Burundi government and security forces.⁴⁴⁵

Conditions in the region were also changing at this time. Following the assassination of President Kabila in the DRC in early 2001, support for the FDD decreased. The conclusion of a peace agreement between Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, and the DRC, as well as a cease-fire with the rebels of that country, further reduced the level of fighting in the region and the availability of arms and funding for the Burundi rebels.

In December 2002, a cease-fire agreement was finally reached between the government and the FDD. It was not immediately imple-

⁴⁴⁵ Rebel headquarters were attacked to boost troop morale and convey to the soldiers the message that the army would be imposing its conditions on the rebels. See International Crisis Group, *Burundi After Six Months of Transition: Continuing the War or Winning the Peace*, Africa Report No. 46, May 24, 2002a, p. 10.

mented, however, and the two sides continued fighting into the first half of 2003. There was more progress later that year after the transfer of power when Hutu leader Domitien Ndayizeye took over the presidency from Buyoya and Alphonse-Marie Kadege, the Tutsi leader of UPRONA and a close ally of Buyoya's, became vice president. The FDD agreed to abandon its armed struggle and canton its fighters in exchange for four government ministries, 40 percent of command posts in the army, and a significant proportion of diplomatic and local government posts and then signed a comprehensive peace agreement. While the FNL did not enter into the negotiations and continued to fight, the majority of Hutu rebels abandon their military struggle, and the overall level of violence in Burundi declined significantly.⁴⁴⁶

Conventional Explanations

The violent insurgency against the Tutsi government in Burundi can be largely explained by the long history of ethnic tension between the majority Hutu population and the minority Tutsi government. Ethnic hatred drove the Hutu insurgency (and the support of neighboring Hutu populations) and made it difficult for the government to control the actions of its COIN forces or associated militias. The government's lack of legitimacy and its inability to meet the basic needs of its citizens also played a role in the conflict, as it clearly weakened its standing with the majority Hutu population. Moreover the government's forced resettlement policy and implantation of collective punishment (in the form of genocide) clearly served to increase resentment against the government and increased insurgent recruiting. Yet, ultimately, it was changing regional circumstances that reduced external support to the rebels. Regional and international pressure to achieve peace and the realization by the government that a power-sharing agreement was necessary to maintain Tutsi power led both sides to agree to a political compromise.

⁴⁴⁶International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2005.

Distinctive Characteristics

- A long history of ethnic conflict both within the country and in the region between the minority Tutsi population and majority Hutu population determined the nature of the conflict. While the Tutsis maintained a tradition of power and influence, the Hutus had a legacy of oppression and a history marred by ethnic massacres.
- The Tutsi government showed little concern for appealing to the population, which was majority Hutu. There is little evidence that the government sought to provide better services to the people, to improve governance, or to convey a consistent message to the people.
- Burundi experienced severe economic problems throughout the course of the conflict and had one of the lowest gross domestic products in the world (ranked 151st in 2002). Unlike many of its neighboring African countries, it also lacked significant expropriable crops.
- Neighboring countries in the region played a major role in the conflict in Burundi. The Hutu-Tutsi rivalries in Rwanda, Tanzania, and the DRC provided external support and direct combat support for both parties. Hutu insurgents were directly engaged in the war in the DRC, which enabled the FDD to develop a unique alliance with a foreign power. The outcome of the Rwandan genocide led to an influx of Hutu fighters into conflict, yet it also created greater international involvement in peace negotiations in Burundi in an effort to prevent another genocide from taking place. International political pressure ultimately played a major role in forcing a political settlement, as it forced both sides to the negotiating table and offered few options for the Tutsi-led government to succeed without offering political compromise.

Figure 24
Map of Burundi



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-24

Table 24
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Burundi

Factor	Phase I (1993–1995)	Phase II (1996–1998)	Phase III (1999–2003)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	0	0	0
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	1	1	1
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	0	0	0
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0	0
Free and fair elections held	1	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	1	1
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0	1
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	0

Table 24—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1993–1995)	Phase II (1996–1998)	Phase III (1999–2003)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	1
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	0	0	0
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	0	0	0
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	1	1	1
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	0	0

Table 24—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1993–1995)	Phase II (1996–1998)	Phase III (1999–2003)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	1	1	1
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	1	1	1
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	1	1	1
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0	1
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	1	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	0	0
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	1	1	1
Government/state was competent	0	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	1	1	1
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0	0
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	1	0	0
Insurgent win	0	1	1
Mixed outcome	1	1	1

Chechnya I, 1994–1996

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Case Summary

After failing to put down a rebellion by proxy in the breakaway Republic of Chechnya, Russian forces entered Grozny in December 1994. As the COIN force, the Russian army was plagued by a lack of training, severely disjointed command and control, and an unclear mission. Chechen insurgents, however, were highly motivated, familiar with the terrain, and able to marshal the resources necessary to exploit the Russians in asymmetric engagements. The conflict devolved into carnage, with widespread atrocities committed by both sides before a Russian withdrawal in 1996.

Case Narrative

Phase I: “Welcome to Hell” (December 1994–March 1995)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies); COIN force established and then expanded secure areas; COIN force adapted to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.

After three weeks of air and artillery barrages, Russian COIN forces entered Grozny on December 31, 2004. The largely conscripted army was told not to expect a fight, as the legacy of the mighty Red Army combined with a mere show of force would lead the insurgents to capitulate and surrender without so much as a shot being fired.⁴⁴⁷ As COIN forces descended on the headquarters of insurgent leader and former Soviet air force General Dzhokar Dudayev, the Chechens sprung an ambush and launched a full-scale attack against Russian tank columns and APCs. The insurgents spread throughout the urban battlefield

⁴⁴⁷ Apparently, the Russian political leadership believed that the rebels in Chechnya would acquiesce just as those in Czechoslovakia had done in 1968 after the Soviet army descended on the capital. To the Russians’ dismay, a Grozny winter proved to be far different from the “Prague Spring” several decades earlier.

of Grozny and organized into platoons of 15 to 25 men, armed with heavy-caliber machine guns and RPGs.⁴⁴⁸ The COIN force organized a 6,000-strong assault that was spearheaded by the 131st “Maikop” Brigade and the 81st Motorized Rifle Regiment.⁴⁴⁹ Four days into the fighting, the 131st had lost roughly 800 soldiers, 20 of 26 tanks, and 102 of 120 armored vehicles.⁴⁵⁰

During the opening stage of the conflict, Russian forces were further hampered by a breakdown in command and control and a failure to gather intelligence.⁴⁵¹ The Russian defense ministry, interior ministry, and the FSK (the domestic arm of the KGB) suffered from a complete dearth of coordination.⁴⁵² There was not even a joint headquarters in Moscow for the three agencies tasked with coordinating the war to communicate their actions. The Russians had no intelligence sources other than the Chechen opposition, which was seen as self-serving and unreliable.⁴⁵³

A change in leadership and reinforcements helped the COIN force rebound from its miserable early performance in the war. By February 1995, Russian forces reached 30,000, which included elite airborne, naval infantry, and *spetsnaz* troops.⁴⁵⁴ Other modifications included additional equipment and the use of remotely piloted reconnaissance vehicles, secure communication, and self-propelled antiair-

⁴⁴⁸Shultz and Dew, 2006, p. 124.

⁴⁴⁹Shultz and Dew, 2006, p. 103.

⁴⁵⁰Timothy L. Thomas, “The Battle of Grozny: Deadly Classroom for Urban Combat,” *Parameters*, Summer 1999, pp. 87–102.

⁴⁵¹Lester W. Grau details the outdated maps used by COIN forces in Chechnya in “Changing Russian Urban Tactics: The Aftermath of the Battle for Grozny,” *INSS Strategic Forum*, No. 38, July 1995.

⁴⁵²For a detailed account of the lack of coordination between the ministries of defense and interior and the resulting problems, see Gregory J. Celestan, *Wounded Bear: The Ongoing Russian Military Operation in Chechnya*, Ft. Leavenworth, Kan.: Foreign Military Studies Office Publications, August 1996.

⁴⁵³Carlotta Gall and Thomas de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, New York: New York University Press, 1998, p. 208.

⁴⁵⁴Olga Oliker, *Russia's Chechen Wars 1994–2000: Lessons from Urban Combat*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-1289-A, 2001, p. 23.

craft machine guns (ZSU 23-4 “Shilka” and 2S6) to counter Chechen snipers hiding in basements or on rooftops.

The first phase of the conflict ended with the Russian capture of Grozny, enabled by coordinated operations between armor and infantry units. This was followed by the sustained and indiscriminate bombing of the city, which forced the insurgents to flee to the countryside.⁴⁵⁵

Phase II: “On the Open Plains” (March 1995–August 1996)

Phase Outcome: Favoring COIN

Key Factors: Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase; COIN force established and then expanded secure areas; COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents; COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent command and control.

Determined not to cede an inch of ground, the insurgents vowed to fight the Russians in every town and village rather than immediately retreat into their mountain redoubt. Warfare on the central plains of Chechnya heavily favored the COIN forces, and the fighting taking on a more conventional nature than the urban combat in Grozny.

The COIN force, which by now had grown to 58,000, pushed fighters across the plains toward the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains. Russian air superiority was critical, and tank battalions could finally be effective. Outmanned and outgunned, the insurgents resorted to hit-and-run tactics and blended in with the civilian population.

Despite a change in command and the addition of much-needed reserves, the COIN force remained largely undisciplined and violated many of the tenets critical to successful COIN. First, Russian soldiers sold weapons to the Chechens.⁴⁵⁶ Second, officers and interior ministry troops served two-month tours, which was “a short-sighted policy that meant troops cared little about the long-term consequences of their behavior and rarely established any sort of relationship with

⁴⁵⁵ Shultz and Dew, 2006, p. 125.

⁴⁵⁶ Gall and de Waal, 1998, p. 240.

local residents.”⁴⁵⁷ Third, the Russians conducted “mop-up operations” (*zachistka*), characterized by looting, violence, and the detention of male civilians, many of whom were taken to filtration centers, facilities where suspected insurgents were detained, interrogated, and even tortured.⁴⁵⁸

Now that Grozny had been secured, the Russians set up a pro-Moscow government in the capital and continued their assault on the retreating insurgents. Bitter fighting raged in the town of Argun, 10 miles east of Grozny, and soon spread to Shali and Gudermes. One of the most egregious actions by the COIN force, in a conflict full of wanton violence, was the April 1995 massacre of a Chechen village called Samashki. In a frenzy of violence, homes were torched and civilians were shot to death at point-blank range. The Russian siege continued with the capture of Serzhen-Yurt and Chiri-Yurt, the last villages, respectively, on the central plains, followed by Shatoy and Veden, home of Shamil Basayev and a buffer to the mountain pass at the foothills of the Caucasus.

With their ammunition nearly depleted and Chechen morale at an all-time low, the insurgents retreated into the mountains and devised a plan to recapture the momentum from the Russians. As a demonstration of potency, the insurgents executed two large-scale hostage-taking operations at Budyonnovsk and Pervomayskoye, each of which drew prominent media attention and struck severe psychological blows to the Russian public.⁴⁵⁹

In March 1996, the insurgents staged a spectacular attack, reentering Grozny and laying siege to the city for three days. The incursion took the COIN force by surprise, and while estimates vary, between

⁴⁵⁷ Gall and de Waal, 1998, p. 241.

⁴⁵⁸ Shultz and Dew, 2006, p. 130. See also Robert Seely, *Russo-Chechen Conflict, 1800–2000*, London: Frank Cass, 2001, p. 284.

⁴⁵⁹ Robert M. Cassidy, *Russia in Afghanistan and Chechnya: Military Strategic Culture and the Paradoxes of Asymmetric Conflict*, Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, February 2003, pp. 31–32.

100 and 400 Russian soldiers were killed.⁴⁶⁰ One month later, in April 1996, the insurgents ambushed a Russian tank column in the mountains near Shatoy, overwhelming the convoy with RPGs and machine-gun fire and decimating the COIN forces.⁴⁶¹

Phase III: “Back to Grozny” (August 1996–November 1996)

Phase Outcome: COIN Loss

Key factors: COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics; insurgents maintained or grew force size; insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks.

The terminal phase of the conflict began in August 1996, when 1,500 Chechen fighters descended from the mountains to recapture the city of Grozny. The insurgents battled 12,000 Russian troops for control of the capital. The Chechens relied on mortars, machine guns, and snipers, while the Russians also employed mortars and snipers, along with tanks, jets, and helicopter gunships. After several days of fighting, insurgent reserves swelled their ranks to 3,000, which aided them in taking control of the city. Moreover, according to Gall and de Waal, the insurgents “had developed a stronger command system and better discipline.”⁴⁶² This reorganization of forces allowed the Chechens to achieve “strategic surprise.”⁴⁶³

The battle unfolded in an eerie replay of the New Year’s Eve conflagration. When the Russians sent in tanks and APCs to retrieve wounded soldiers, they were blown up by the insurgents. Overall, 500 Russian troops were killed, 1,407 were wounded, 182 were missing in action, and an unknown number of civilians were wounded or killed.⁴⁶⁴ Yeltsin put General Alexander Lebed in charge of bringing

⁴⁶⁰Sebastian Smith, *Allah’s Mountains: The Battle for Chechnya*, New York: I. B. Tauris, 1997, p. 218.

⁴⁶¹S. Smith, 1997, p. 218.

⁴⁶²Gall and de Waal, 1998, pp. 306–307.

⁴⁶³Shultz and Dew, 2006, p. 130.

⁴⁶⁴Gall and de Waal, 1998, p. 350.

the conflict to an end, and he eventually negotiated a cease-fire with the insurgent leadership. The last two brigades of Russian troops were ordered out in November 1996.

Conventional Explanations

Russia's overall COIN strategy for this campaign can clearly be identified as "crush them."⁴⁶⁵ By applying overwhelming force, Russian defense minister General Pavel Grachev believed it was possible to destroy the insurgency before it had an opportunity to metastasize and emerge into a formidable opponent. According to Robert Cassidy, "instead of adopting the preferred counterinsurgency approach of separating the guerrillas from the population by winning hearts and minds, the Russians in Chechnya tried to extirpate the population with artillery fires and technology."⁴⁶⁶ Sebastian Smith concurs, noting, "The sheer indiscriminate violence against civilians, especially by the air force, was doing the separatists' recruitment job."⁴⁶⁷

One of the more devastating tactics of the insurgents was to fire RPGs and antitank weapons at Russian tank columns maneuvering through the narrow streets of Grozny. By disabling the first and last tanks in the column, the Chechens effectively trapped the remaining vehicles, leaving the fleeing soldiers vulnerable to sniper fire. The depression and elevation of Russian tank guns prevented them from firing into basements or the upper floors of multistory buildings from which the Chechens were firing.⁴⁶⁸ The insurgents also used deception to their advantage, manipulating Russian radio transmissions, which led to an unusually high number of COIN force deaths due to fratricide.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁵For a discussion of "crush them," see James Clancy and Chuck Crosset, "Measuring Effectiveness in Irregular Warfare," *Parameters*, Summer 2007.

⁴⁶⁶Cassidy, 2003, p. 24.

⁴⁶⁷S. Smith, 1997, p. 171.

⁴⁶⁸Grau, 1995.

⁴⁶⁹Timothy Jackson, "David Slays Goliath: A Chechen Perspective on the War in Chechnya (1994–1996)," *Small Wars Journal*, undated.

Distinctive Characteristics

- There was a significant lack of preparation on the part of Russian COIN forces regarding the state of the military in the period immediately prior to invading Chechnya.⁴⁷⁰ The largely conscripted military was ill trained, underequipped, and suffered from low morale and an unclear sense of the mission throughout the COIN campaign.
- Chechen society itself—decentralized, divided into local village and clan units known as *teips*—was perfectly structured to wage a protracted insurgency.⁴⁷¹
- Despite facing a severe disadvantage in both weapons and troops, the insurgents fought fiercely and demonstrated an extremely high level of skill as guerrilla fighters. The Chechens were far from a rag-tag militia and proved to be an extremely formidable opponent for the COIN force.
- The Kremlin was embroiled in significant political scandals, and the government was in a constant state of upheaval. Furthermore, during this period, Moscow was attempting to deal with ongoing insurgencies in several of its former satellite states, including Moldova, Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia, Tajikistan, and Abkhazia, in addition to simmering conflicts in neighboring Ossetia, Ingushetia, and Dagestan.

⁴⁷⁰Raymond Finch quotes a source as saying, “From the moment Russia’s armed forces were created (1992), not a single regiment, brigade, or division-level tactical exercise involving combat fire had been conducted” (Raymond C. Finch, *Why the Russian Military Failed in Chechnya*, Ft. Leavenworth, Kan.: Foreign Military Studies Office, 1997, p. 3).

⁴⁷¹Thomas, 1999, pp. 87–102.

Figure 25
Map of Chechnya



RAND MG964/1-25

Table 25
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Chechnya I

Factor	Phase I (1994–1995)	Phase II (1995–1996)	Phase III (1996)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	0	0	0
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	1	1	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	0	0	0
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	0	0	0
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0	0
Free and fair elections held	0	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	1	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	1	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	0

Table 25—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1994–1995)	Phase II (1995–1996)	Phase III (1996)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	1	1	1
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	0	0	0
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/ enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	1	1
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	1	1	1
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	0	0	0
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	1	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	0	1

Table 25—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1994–1995)	Phase II (1995–1996)	Phase III (1996)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	1	1	1
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	0	0	0
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	1	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	0	0
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	1	1	1
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	1	1	1
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	1	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	1	1	1
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	1	1	1
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	1	1	1
Government/state was competent	0	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0	0
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	1	1	0
Insurgent win	0	0	1
Mixed outcome	1	0	1

Afghanistan (Taliban), 1996–2001

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Case Summary

The Taliban took power from an unstable mujahadeen government in Kabul in 1996 and consolidated control over much of the country over the course of the next two years (with the help of Pakistani and foreign jihadist fighters). It failed, however, to establish an effective administrative apparatus that could provide services to the population or gain popular support for the regime. Welcomed at first for imposing order after years of chaos and bloodshed, the Taliban alienated many Afghans and isolated itself from the international community with its brutal imposition of Islamic law. Ultimately, the Taliban's decision to host Osama bin Laden and to allow him to establish al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan led the Taliban to be driven from power by a U.S.-led coalition in November 2001.

Case Narrative

Phase I: "Taliban Control South but Fighting Continues in the North" (1996–1997)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase (in the southern part of the country); COIN force lacked sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas.

The Taliban came to power in 1996 by seizing Kabul from an unstable mujahadeen government led by Burhanuddin Rabbani. As a devout militia force, the Taliban pledged to bring order and stability to the country after years of civil war. The group was welcomed by much of the population and was able to establish a solid basis for its legitimacy. Capitalizing on the Afghans' desire for peace and security, the Taliban co-opted tribal leaders and expanded its influence throughout much of the country, particularly in Pashtun areas in southern Afghanistan.

The Taliban were less successful in consolidating its power over the northern provinces, however, and faced an ongoing military chal-

lenge. President Rabbani and militia leader General Ahmad Masud were able to quickly retool themselves as opposition leaders in an effort to wrest control from the Taliban. They joined forces with Uzbek General Rashid Dostum to form a powerful coalition of militia, known as the United Front or the Northern Alliance, which launched continuous attacks on the Taliban and civilians. As a result, the country remained in a state of civil war, aided by ongoing funding and arms provision by Russia and Iran on the side of the Northern Alliance and by Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia on the side of the Taliban.

From 1996 to 1997, the two sides were locked in conflict, both armed with heavy weaponry. In October 1996, the Northern Alliance was able to respond to Taliban air and artillery strikes north of Kabul by pushing forward with tanks, APCs, and heavy weapons and achieving a major victory, but were unable to retake Kabul. In 1997, the Taliban, aided by the defection of some of Dostum's forces, were able to wrest the town of Mazar-i-Sharif from the control of the Northern Alliance with little fighting. Yet the Taliban's strict stance against Shi'a Muslims in the city led to a confrontation with the Hazara militias, a renewal of intense fighting, and a humiliating defeat. Later in 1997, Masud's forces attempted another push toward the capital. After making gains north of Kabul, they once again met heavy resistance in the city and were unable to achieve victory, bringing the fighting to a standstill.

Phase II: "Gaining Military Control, Losing Popular Support" (1998–2000)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: COIN force *failed* to provide or ensure provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control; government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict.

In 1998, the Taliban achieved greater military success. It began a push into the Northern Alliance's territory, succeeding in retaking Mazar-i-Sharif on August 8, 1998. Upon taking control of the city, the Taliban began killing locals en masse; 4,000 to 5,000 civilians were executed, and many were more reported tortured. The Taliban then continued to

push north, making gains against the Northern Alliance. At one point in 1999, it controlled roughly 95 percent of the Afghan territory and had pushed the Northern Alliance out of range of Kabul entirely. Still, bombing attacks initiated by the Northern Alliance continued, and the Taliban was often unable to protect or serve Afghan civilians in the areas that it controlled.

The Islamic government that the Taliban created also lacked both the interest and aptitude for civil governance. This inhibited its ability to meet the social and economic needs of the population and reduced its legitimacy. Moreover, the Taliban's radical imposition of Islamic law and its brutal treatment of women and minorities alienated many Afghans and led to isolation from the international community.⁴⁷²

The Taliban became increasingly radicalized and grew closer in its relationship with al Qaeda in the late 1990s. Al Qaeda established a recognized base in the country, which, in turn, alienated a larger segment of the Afghan population and led to greater international isolation. The al Qaeda bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, in particular, made its presence in Afghanistan and its relationship with the Taliban a liability with the United States. The United States retaliated with cruise missile attacks on al Qaeda bases in Afghanistan and insisted that the Taliban hand over bin Laden. UN economic and military sanctions further damaged the Afghan economy and the international standing of the Taliban government.

Still, the Taliban was able to maintain law and order, and, with the continued support of Pakistan and foreign jihadist fighters, it also maintained a strong military hold on the country. Despite growing public frustration with the Taliban's harsh policies, the opposition was unable to galvanize enough support among those who rejected the Taliban to challenge the government.

In the Pashtun areas of Afghanistan where much of the population suffered greatly under the previous mujahadeen regime, the only alternative to the Taliban was a return to disorder and chaos. According to analysts at the time,

⁴⁷²Peter Tomsen, "A Chance for Peace in Afghanistan: The Taliban's Days Are Numbered," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 1, January–February 2000, p. 179.

the majority of Afghans south of Kabul would most probably agree that the Taliban, although not as popular today as when they came, are better for the people, their security and welfare, compared to what was there before them and that there is no real alternative but anarchy.⁴⁷³

The Northern Alliance leaders who led the anti-Taliban insurgents “failed to set up minimum state structures or a representative leadership” that included non-Pashtuns. “Their bickering, internal differences and leadership struggles” also caused the Northern Alliance to lose credibility with the Afghan public, and it failed to leverage negative public sentiment toward the Taliban.⁴⁷⁴

Phase III: “Al Qaeda Attacks Draw U.S. Intervention” (2001)

Phase Outcome: COIN Loss

Key Factor: External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents.

The armed struggle between the Taliban and mujahadeen militia groups would likely have continued for some time because neither side had an incentive to compromise and the Afghan population appeared to be largely inured to the long-term civil war. Failing to see a viable alternative, the Afghanistan may have remained embroiled in civil war had the actions of al Qaeda not dramatically changed the situation on the ground.

On September 9, 2001, General Masud was killed by a suicide bomber posing as a journalist, causing a severe blow to the leadership of the Northern Alliance. This attack was widely viewed as linked to al Qaeda. Two days later, the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the United States were hit by hijacked civilian airplanes—spectacular attacks that were directly attributed to Osama bin Laden. The United

⁴⁷³ Anders Fange, “Difficulties and Opportunities: Challenges of Aid to Afghanistan,” paper presented at the Stockholm Conference on Afghanistan, February 24, 1999, as quoted in Rashid, 2001, p. 213.

⁴⁷⁴ Rashid, 2001, p. 213.

States responded by warning the Taliban to turn over the leaders of al Qaeda, and by the end of September, President Bush approved covert aid to anti-Taliban groups and sought to isolate the Taliban from its sponsors (Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates).⁴⁷⁵

Then, on October 7, 2001, the United States launched attacks on the Taliban and al Qaeda positions in Afghanistan. By November, anti-Taliban forces led by General Dostum and other former mujahadeen leaders took Kabul. Kandahar then fell in 2001, signaling the end of the Taliban regime.⁴⁷⁶

Conventional Explanations

The COIN campaign undertaken by the Taliban is often noted for its lack of attention to governance and its failure to service the needs of the country's population. Disregarding these central COIN practices, the Taliban failed to gain strong support among the populace. Its harsh Islamic practices, particularly its treatment of women and minorities, also served to alienate the government from many Afghans as well as the international community. The insurgents failed to propose a better alternative, however. The history of chaos and bloodshed under the rule of the mujahadeen prior to the Taliban rule meant that the Afghan population did not turn against the government as might be expected. It was only the Taliban's relationship with al Qaeda and the subsequent attack by the U.S. coalition that abruptly ended Taliban rule.

Distinctive Characteristics

- Military actions by both the Taliban and the Northern Alliance militia often failed to have a clear political objective. Fighting served to give meaning and cohesion to the government and the insurgents, leaving little reason for compromise.⁴⁷⁷ Moreover, because the war was more destructive to the civilian population than to the combatants, the militias had little incentive to contain

⁴⁷⁵ Maley, 2002, p. 262.

⁴⁷⁶ International Crisis Group, "Conflict History: Afghanistan," January 2010.

⁴⁷⁷ Anthony Davis, "Afghanistan: Prospects for War and Peace in a Shattered Land," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, August 1, 2001.

their fighting. The public, which had been subdued and cowed by warlords after two decades of war, had little motivation to mobilize against them.⁴⁷⁸

- The protection and care of the civilian population was not a priority for either the Taliban or the Northern Alliance militia. “No warlord faction has ever felt itself responsible for the civilian population, but the Taliban are incapable of carrying out even the minimum of developmental work because they believe that Islam will take care of everyone.”⁴⁷⁹
- While the Taliban was accused of many atrocities, including ethnic cleansing against the Shi’a, Masud’s forces also committed large-scale atrocities prior to Taliban rule.⁴⁸⁰ Therefore, the population did not believe that it would there was a better alternative to the Taliban regime.
- The Taliban’s relationship with Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda clearly changed the nature of the conflict in Afghanistan. Had it not provoked the U.S.-led coalition’s attack on the country, Taliban rule may have continued for some time, and the outcome of the insurgency would have likely been much different.

⁴⁷⁸Ali A. Jalali, “Afghanistan: The Anatomy of an Ongoing Conflict,” *Parameters*, Spring 2001.

⁴⁷⁹Rashid, 2001, pp. 212–213.

⁴⁸⁰“Afghan Conflict to Escalate,” *Jane’s Intelligence Digest*, May 16, 2001.

Figure 26
Map of Afghanistan



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/I-26

Table 26
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Afghanistan (Taliban)

Factor	Phase I (1996–1997)	Phase II (1998–2000)	Phase III (2001)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	1	1	1
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	1	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	1	1	1
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	1	1	1
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	1	1	1
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0	0
Free and fair elections held	0	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	1	1	1
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	0

Table 26—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1996–1997)	Phase II (1998–2000)	Phase III (2001)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	1	1	1
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	1	1	1
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	1	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	0	0	0
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	1	1
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	1	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	0	1

Table 26—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1996–1997)	Phase II (1998–2000)	Phase III (2001)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	0	0	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	0	1
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	1	0
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	1	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	1	1	1
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	1
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	0	0	0
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	1	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	0	1	0
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	0	1
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	0	0	0
Government/state was competent	0	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	1	1
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	1	1	1
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	1	1	0
Insurgent win	0	0	1
Mixed outcome	1	1	0

Zaire (Anti-Mobutu), 1996–1997

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Case Summary

The eastern region of Zaire was destabilized by the civil war in neighboring Rwanda and the influx of Hutus across the border. The displaced Hutus threatened the native Tutsi population in Zaire and established a base for rebel attacks against the new Rwandan government. In response, local Tutsis and the Rwandan army launched a preemptive attack on the Hutu militia and the Zairian army. A national rebel group under the leadership of Laurent Kabila was then formed to lead the fight against Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko's regime. Kabila faced little resistance from Mobutu's poorly equipped army. Aided by the Rwandan, Ugandan, and Angolan armies, Kabila was able to take control of the capital within a matter of months.

Case Narrative

Phase I: "Rwanda Leads 'Local' Rebellion" (1996)

Phase Outcome: Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: COIN force or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents; external professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents; insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.

The genocide in Rwanda destabilized Zaire, leading to cycle of violence that sparked an insurgency against the Mobutu regime. In 1994, 1 million Rwandan Hutus, including the leaders from the defeated government who had perpetuated the genocide against the Tutsis, moved into refugee camps in the eastern region of Zaire. From these camps, the Hutu leaders launched attacks on the new Rwandan government across the border. They also began to attack local Tutsis and forced residents from their homes. When the Rwandan government appealed to Mobutu to stop the militia's actions, the national army instead joined the fight against the Tutsis in Zaire, thus increasing

their insecurity.⁴⁸¹ In November 1996, the government issued an order forcing Tutsis to leave Zaire on penalty of death.

In an apparent effort to prevent another ethnic massacre, Tutsis in eastern Zaire undertook a preemptive strike against the Zairian army and the Hutu militias. Rwandan forces quickly joined the attack, claiming to come to the aid of their fellow Tutsis. President Kagame of Rwanda later admitted, however, that Rwanda had planned and directed the so-called rebellion (presumably anticipating the opportunity for regime change).⁴⁸²

Rwandan forces were able to capture much of the Kivu region in eastern Zaire within a few weeks, attacking refugee camps and dispersing their largely Hutu inhabitants as they advanced. The Rwandans encountered little resistance from Mobutu's soldiers, who were both underpaid and unmotivated. Rather than pursue a full-scale military effort, which might have been perceived as an invasion by an outside force, the Rwandan leaders in Kigali sought to find a domestic rebel movement to serve as its proxy.

Most active opposition movements in Zaire were nonviolent. The Rwandan government therefore chose to ally itself with a former revolutionary from the 1960s, Laurent Kabila. Kabila maintained a small movement in South Kivu known as the People's Revolutionary Party. With Rwandan support, Kabila quickly established himself as the leader of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo (AFDL) and became the public face of the Zairian rebellion.

Phase II: "Mobutu's Army Fails to Fight" (1997)

Phase Outcome: COIN Loss

Key Factors: COIN force or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by insurgents; external professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents; important internal support to insurgents significantly increased or maintained.

⁴⁸¹Alroy Fonseca, *Four Million Dead: The Second Congolese War, 1998–2004*, April 18, 2004.

⁴⁸²Thomas Turner, *Congo Wars: Conflict, Myth and Reality*, London: Zed Books, 2007.

Benefiting from the assistance of the Rwandan and Ugandan armies, Kabila was able to advance across Zaire fairly quickly. By April 1997, the opposition forces took control of the provinces of Katanga and the Kasais. Mobutu's army retreated on all fronts. The only forces that actively engaged in fighting on behalf of his regime were the Hutus from the former Rwandan army (ex-FAR), the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), and some Serb mercenaries. Mobutu also received modest support from France.⁴⁸³ He failed to receive support from other members of the international community, however, despite his claims of being subjected to a foreign invasion.

More significantly, Mobutu received little support from his own citizens. After decades of corrupt and ineffective rule, the populace appeared dissatisfied with his government. Popular opinion declined further as a result of the ruthless actions of the Zairian army, which looted, raped, and killed civilians as it retreated from rebel attacks. Many residents of Zaire reportedly welcomed the advancing AFDL opposition forces and allowed their young men and boys to be recruited into its ranks.⁴⁸⁴

In May 1997, following failed peace talks, the opposition forces entered the capital of Kinshasa. Despite their disorderly approach, Kabila and his supporters were able to gain control of the country only eight months after the war began. Mobutu was exiled to Morocco, where he died a few months later. The success of the insurgency was widely attributed to outside forces. However, Rwanda, Uganda, and Angola (which joined the conflict in the spring) sought to downplay their military dominance and allowed Kabila to exercise strong personal influence on the alliance.⁴⁸⁵

Conventional Explanations

The defeat of the Mobutu regime may be explained by its failure to adhere to good COIN practices—specifically, in failing to provide

⁴⁸³Herbert Weiss, "War and Peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," *American Diplomacy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Summer 2000.

⁴⁸⁴Weiss, 2000.

⁴⁸⁵Weiss, 2000.

adequate security or basic services to its population in the area of conflict. Due to years of corrupt and inefficient rule, Zaire was nearly a failed state, with little capability for meeting the needs of its population. During the rebellion, Mobutu had little public support and in fact made little attempt to develop a stronger popular base.

The Zairian military was also very weak, ill equipped, and less motivated than the rebel forces that gained assistance from more professional armies. Unable to put sufficient boots on the ground and heavily reliant on local militias over which it had little control, Mobutu's army was put in a position in which it could not win.

Distinctive Characteristics

- The case of Zaire is unusual in that it was instigated from outside the country. While it was led by the local rebel group (the AFDL), the insurgents' leader, Laurent Kabila, was selected by the Rwandan government and was heavily supported by Rwandan, Ugandan, and Angolan forces.
- It is also unusual that, despite the role of outside forces in what could be defined as an invasion, there was little international support for the Zairian government. This was likely a result of poor regard for Mobutu's regime in the international community.
- The inability of Mobutu's army to provide any meaningful defense against the insurgency indicates that Zaire was failing as a state. After 31 years of corrupt rule, the government was unable to meet the needs of its citizens or defend itself.

Figure 27
Map of the Democratic Republic of the
Congo (formerly Zaire)



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.
RAND MG964/1-27

Table 27
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Zaire (Anti-Mobutu)

Factor	Phase I (1996)	Phase II (1997)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	0	0
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	0	0
Government a functional democracy	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0
Free and fair elections held	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	0	0
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0

Table 27—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1996)	Phase II (1997)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	0	0
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	0	0
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	1	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	1	1

Table 27—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1996)	Phase II (1997)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	0	0
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	0
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	1	1
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	0	0
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	0	0
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	1	1
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	1	1
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	1	1
Government/state was competent	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	1	1
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	1	1
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	1
Government/COIN win	0	0
Insurgent win	1	1
Mixed outcome	0	0

Kosovo, 1996–1999

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Case Summary

Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) insurgents battled Federal Republic of Yugoslavia COIN forces to a stalemate for most of the duration of this conflict. The Racak massacre carried out by COIN forces prompted NATO to intervene on the side of the insurgents in an attempt to prevent ethnic cleansing and defeat the Milosevic regime. NATO forces conducted a three-month air campaign while KLA insurgents fought Serbian troops on the ground, resulting in the capitulation of Milosevic's regime and the imposition of a UN-backed peacekeeping force.

Case Narrative

Phase I: "Everything Started with Kosovo and Everything Will Finish with Kosovo"⁴⁸⁶ (January 1996–March 1998)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies); COIN force or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents; COIN force *failed to* avoid excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force.

The seeds of conflict were sown in Kosovo in the wake of Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic's oppressive policies against Kosovar Albanians.⁴⁸⁷ In response, the Kosovars established a parallel society.⁴⁸⁸ The Serbs

⁴⁸⁶Quote from Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p. 289.

⁴⁸⁷A thorough account of the history of Kosovo is captured in Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History*, New York: HarperCollins, 1999.

⁴⁸⁸Milosevic consolidated power in 1989 and shortly thereafter began abolishing the limited autonomy of the Kosovars, officially enshrined by Tito in the 1974 constitution. Milosevic's fiery rhetoric in speeches began to translate into actions against Kosovar Albanians, and between June 1990 and August 1992, the Serbian parliament passed an average of 18 laws a month that were aimed at diminishing Kosovo's autonomy and marginalizing its Albanian

were labeled an occupying entity, and elections for a shadow provincial assembly were held in March 1998. Ibrahim Rugova, leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo, emerged as the leader of this shadow government following elections. Rugova opposed violent means to countering Serb oppression, while the burgeoning resistance movement known as the KLA began organizing for an armed insurgency in early 1998.

The formation of the KLA began in 1993, although the group did not launch its first attacks until three years later, in 1996. With a meager core of 150 insurgents, the KLA was responsible for a spate of shootings and bombings in Pristina, the capital, as well as in Vucitrn, Kosovska Mitrovica, Pec, Suva Reka, and Podujevo.⁴⁸⁹ The primary targets during this period were Serbian police stations, military barracks, post offices, and Kosovar Albanians who were determined to be collaborators with the enemy.⁴⁹⁰

In January 1997, the KLA claimed responsibility for the detonation of a car bomb as part of an assassination attempt on Radivoje Papovic, the rector of the Serbian-administered Pristina University. Two months later, a bomb attack wounded two Serbs and two Albanians near the university.⁴⁹¹ During this same period, the KLA was also issuing threats to Kosovar political leaders, warning them not to participate in any negotiations that would prematurely cede Kosovo's chance at independence.

The insurgents took great care to avoid civilian casualties, although they were not always successful in this regard. Still, the fact that it was a clearly articulated part of their strategy demonstrates the lengths to which the KLA went to craft an effective program of guerilla warfare. Besides being acutely aware of local and international opinion, the insurgents were also highly adaptive and flexible. Accord-

population. See Alan Lister, *Kosovo: Peace Support Operation or Counterinsurgency?* thesis, Quantico, Va.: U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, January 7, 2002, p. 11.

⁴⁸⁹Nation, 2003.

⁴⁹⁰Nation, 2003.

⁴⁹¹Tim Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000, p. 131.

ing to Henry H. Perritt, Jr., “As the KLA grew, its tactics changed from pure guerrilla engagements to positional conflict, adapted to take into account the KLA’s inferior numbers and weaponry.”⁴⁹² Toward the end of 1997, the insurgents began to establish no-go zones in places like Donji Prekaz and Drenica, areas that were off limits to COIN forces and could be used as training grounds for KLA fighters and recruits.

By the beginning of 1998, the KLA was estimated to have grown to nearly 500 fighters, tripling in size in just two years. The insurgents were organized into groups of three to five, operating in small, mobile cells throughout the country.⁴⁹³ Successful attacks on Serb forces, as well as Albanian nationalism, certainly contributed to the lore of the KLA, but the biggest recruitment boost came from COIN forces’ mis-handling of what came to be known as the Jashari massacre, which proved to be a watershed event in the first phase of the insurgency. During a shootout between KLA members and Serbian police, the police killed 58 Kosovars, including 18 women and ten children under the age of 16.⁴⁹⁴ The Jashari clan, leading Kosovar Albanian nationalists, were wiped out entirely and soon became martyrs for the KLA’s cause, symbols of Kosovar pride and Serbian brutality.

Phase II: “Operation Allied Force” (April 1998–June 1999)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics; external support to insurgents from strong state/military; external professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents.

Yugoslav COIN forces waged a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Albanian Kosovar population that began during the initial phase of the insurgency. By the end of the war, approximately 848,100 refu-

⁴⁹²Henry H. Perritt, Jr., *Kosovo Liberation Army: The Inside Story of an Insurgency*, Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2008, p. 70.

⁴⁹³Nation, 2003.

⁴⁹⁴Judah, 2000, p. 140.

gees (nearly 40 percent of the population) had fled over the borders into neighboring countries.⁴⁹⁵ The final and decisive phase of the conflict is essentially a story of NATO dominance, as the KLA would never have been able to defeat the Serbs without external assistance.

At the end of May 1998, the Declaration on Kosovo was issued at the NATO ministerial in Luxembourg and contained five separate components, mostly concerned with assisting Albania and Macedonia in mitigating spillover from the conflict.⁴⁹⁶ While perturbed, Milosevic was largely undeterred by what he viewed as toothless condemnations and resolutions proffered by the international community. Recognizing this, NATO sent 85 warplanes over Albania and Macedonia in Operation Determined Falcon, a coercive exercise that came to be known as the “Balkan Air Show.”⁴⁹⁷

Despite NATO’s show of force, COIN forces went on an offensive in the summer of 1998, attacking the KLA and Kosovar Albanian villages in the Drenica region, forcing thousands of civilians and fighters to flee into the surrounding hills. In June 1998, a Yugoslav army offensive using 40,000 troops, with tanks, helicopters, massive artillery, and mortar fire, nearly defeated the KLA altogether.⁴⁹⁸ Serbian COIN forces destroyed villages, executed prisoners, and terrorized the local population.

While NATO was deliberating what an appropriate approach to Kosovo would be—whether a limited air response or a phased air campaign would be more effective—Milosevic’s forces continued to wreak havoc in the province.⁴⁹⁹ At Racak, COIN forces killed 45 civilians, including two women and a 12-year-old boy. And although the actual

⁴⁹⁵Nation, 2003.

⁴⁹⁶Nation, 2003.

⁴⁹⁷GlobalSecurity.org, “Operation Determined Falcon,” last updated April 27, 2005b.

⁴⁹⁸Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO’s War to Save Kosovo*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000, pp. 113–114.

⁴⁹⁹A limited air response called for short-term, punishing retaliation directed at fixed targets, including headquarters, communication relays, and ammunition drops, while a phased air campaign consisted of a five-phase air operation moving from the suppression of Yugoslav air defenses through attacks directed against major force components. See Nation, 2003.

events remain disputed (as in the aftermath of most contingencies in the Balkans), the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, General Wesley Clark, deemed NATO's credibility to be "on the line" should the decision to use force be eschewed.⁵⁰⁰

Operation Allied Force was launched on March 23, 1999, following the breakdown of peace talks at Rambouillet.⁵⁰¹

NATO's military strategy was based on the unmitigated use of air power to suppress Serb defenses, isolate the Yugoslav 3rd Army inside the province, degrade its combat capacity, and coerce Belgrade into acceptance of the peace terms.⁵⁰² In fact, a 2002 RAND study concluded that sending ground forces into Kosovo was entirely jettisoned as an option by both senior NATO political authorities and U.S. political and senior military leaders by 1998.⁵⁰³

According to Clark, the purpose of the war was to "empower diplomacy."⁵⁰⁴ The human costs had become too high, and the refugees and internally displaced persons created the possibility for a large-scale humanitarian disaster. Many in the West argued that ethnic cleansing was pursued by the Serbs as a deliberate COIN strategy, although this too has been a point of contention—especially the oft-disputed existence of a policy known as Operation Horseshoe.⁵⁰⁵

Attacks were made against various targets, including bridges, refineries, industrial complexes, and the national energy grid. Despite

⁵⁰⁰Wesley K. Clark, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*, New York: PublicAffairs, 2001, p. 161.

⁵⁰¹Allied Force consisted of missions by 14 countries. Between March 24 and June 10, NATO pilots flew 38,000 sorties, including more than 14,000 strike missions. Strike operations were executed primarily by land-based aircraft, but also by naval carrier-based aviation, U.S. Marine Corps shore-based and sea-based aircraft, and cruise missile ships and submarines. See Nation, 2003.

⁵⁰²Nation, 2003.

⁵⁰³Bruce R. Nardulli, Walter L. Perry, Bruce R. Pirnie, John Gordon IV, and John G. McGinn, *Disjointed War: Military Operations in Kosovo, 1999*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-1406-A, 2002, p. 14.

⁵⁰⁴Clark, 2001, p. 121.

⁵⁰⁵For more on Operation Horseshoe, see Michael Ignatieff, *Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond*, New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000, p. 122.

NATO's overwhelming air superiority, units of the Serbian 3rd Army, including 40,000 soldiers and 300 tanks, dispersed throughout Kosovo during the day and hid, waging a campaign of guerrilla warfare against the KLA and Albanian Kosovar population while NATO dropped bombs from the sky. After 11 weeks of continued bombardment, Milosevic accepted NATO's conditions, and UN Security Council Resolution 1244 on June 10, 1999, brought the conflict to an end.

Conventional Explanations

By June 1999, NATO had successfully bombed Belgrade into submission. Relying in part on the testimony of Milosevic and other senior Serb officials who interacted with him, Stephen T. Hosmer concludes that, of all the interrelated factors that led Milosevic to settle when he did, it was NATO's cumulative air power that mattered most.⁵⁰⁶ But, as Benjamin Lambeth recognizes, it was not bombing alone that brought the conflict to an end: "Another likely factor behind Milosevic's capitulation was the fact that the sheer depravity of Serbia's conduct in Kosovo had stripped it of any remaining vestige of international support—including, in the end, from its principal backers in Moscow."⁵⁰⁷ Designating NATO, and in effect the KLA insurgents, as the winners of this conflict was not a difficult call. After the end of the war, it was apparent that Serbia had no formal control over any part of Kosovo's territory.⁵⁰⁸ Kosovo went from a de facto protectorate to under de jure control by ethnic Albanians (95 percent of the population) to an internationally recognized entity (as of February 2008).⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁶Stephen T. Hosmer, *The Conflict Over Kosovo: Why Milosevic Decided to Settle When He Did*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-1351-AF, 2001, p. 123.

⁵⁰⁷Benjamin S. Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-1365-AF, 2007, p. 69.

⁵⁰⁸Daalder and O'Hanlon, 2000, p. 198.

⁵⁰⁹For further reading on the U.S. role in reconstructing Kosovo following the war, see Dobbins et al., 2003, pp. 111–128.

Distinctive Characteristics

- The United States and NATO launched an attack against a sovereign state, suppressing a domestic insurgency without a clear international mandate.
- In one of the first tangible examples of post–Cold War Russo-American cooperation, the Russians lent support to NATO’s mission by contributing to U.S.-EU diplomacy and abandoning long-standing allies in the region.
- The combination of Milosevic’s oppressive policies, the passive resistance favored by Albanian Kosovar politician Ibrahim Rugova, and the international community’s focus on Croatia and Bosnia all contributed to the formation of the KLA.⁵¹⁰
- NATO eschewed sending ground troops into Kosovo, instead opting to bomb Serbian targets from the air. One of the most significant disagreements over strategy was between General Wesley Clark and Lieutenant General Michael Short of the U.S. Air Force. The crux of their disagreement was whether Serb forces in Kosovo would need to be engaged directly (Clark’s preference) or whether Belgrade was indeed Milosevic’s “center of gravity.”⁵¹¹
- On May 7, 1999, NATO strike aircraft hit the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, killing three and wounding 20. This incident brought relations between Washington and Beijing during Clinton’s presidency to a nadir, although NATO insisted that the strike was merely an accident.

⁵¹⁰ Nation, 2003.

⁵¹¹ Daalder and O’Hanlon, 2000, p. 198.

Figure 28
Map of Kosovo



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-28

Table 28
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Kosovo

Factor	Phase I (1996–1998)	
	Phase II (1998–1999)	
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	0	0
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	0	0
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	0	0
Government a functional democracy	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0
Free and fair elections held	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	1

Table 28—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1996–1998)	
	Phase II (1998–1999)	
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	1	1
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	0	0
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	0	0
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	1

Table 28—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1996–1998)	
	Phase II (1998–1999)	
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	0
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	0	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	1
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	1	0
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	1	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	1	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	1	1
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	1	1
Government/state was competent	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	1	1
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	1
Government/COIN win	1	0
Insurgent win	0	1
Mixed outcome	1	0

Nepal, 1997–2006

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Case Summary

A democracy since 1990, Nepal fell prey to problems common to nascent democracies: corruption, excessive interparty politicking, and general paralysis and ineffectiveness.⁵¹² This left the citizenry very open to the criticism offered by Maoist insurgents beginning in 1996. The insurgents' criticism of the state was further validated by the ineffective yet brutal COIN campaign launched by local police, which targeted both the insurgents and civilians. The one government institution with any kind of legitimacy, the monarchy, was shattered in a 2001 regicide. That same year, Nepal's army was unleashed on the insurgents for the first time and proved no more effective than the police had been. Largely a ceremonial force, though substantially better equipped than the police or insurgents, the army made no headway against the Maoists and could not provide security for itself, let alone the larger population. King Gyanendra's 2005 royalist seizure of the government cast much of Nepali civil society into opposition. The Maoist insurgents opportunistically joined with a prodemocracy coalition and secured a significant place for themselves in the new government after the combination of military and civil pressure forced the king to capitulate in 2006.

Case Narrative

Phase I: "Police Response Inadequate" (1996–2001)

Phase Outcome: Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: COIN force failed to create perception of security among population in areas it controlled or claimed to control; COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) lacked sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles; insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.

⁵¹²Thomas A. Marks, *Insurgency in Nepal*, Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, December 2003, p. 4.

Political disarray both led to and prevented the effective combating of the Maoist insurgency. Political groups in Nepal have a history of division and mistrust, and failure to put national interests ahead of party and parochial interests were the rule of the day from the onset of Nepal's democracy in 1990.⁵¹³ Corruption, inattentive and poor governance, and failure to live up to the hopes of the people left the Nepali citizenry open to the message of Maoist insurgents.⁵¹⁴ Even in the face of a growing insurgency, government bickering continued, and COIN policy never showed any unity or consensus; some in the opposition in government stood to benefit from a protracted fight, and sought to do so.⁵¹⁵

In the first phase of this case, the insurgency was treated as a law-and-order problem, and its resolution was assigned to the police. "An essentially unarmed 'watcher' force, two-thirds of whom carried nothing heavier than a patrol stick, the police were quite unprepared for the demands of counterinsurgency."⁵¹⁶ Complicating matters, the Royal Nepalese Army, which was not involved in the conflict until a state of emergency was declared in 2001, denied the police modern arms with which to combat the insurgents.⁵¹⁷

Though underprepared and undermanned, the police employed "encircle-and-kill" policies that in many places likely killed more innocent civilians than guerrillas.⁵¹⁸ "Police brutality clearly provided the long-lasting motive energy for the Maoist insurgency throughout the country."⁵¹⁹

⁵¹³ Integrated Regional Information Network, *Between Two Stones: Nepal's Decade of Conflict*, Nairobi, Kenya, December 2005, p. 5.

⁵¹⁴ IRIN, 2005, p. 5.

⁵¹⁵ "The People's War: Maoist Insurgency in Nepal," *The Voyagers*, October 4, 2002.

⁵¹⁶ Marks, 2003, p. 14.

⁵¹⁷ "The People's War: Maoist Insurgency in Nepal," 2002.

⁵¹⁸ Chitra K. Tiwari, "Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Internal Dimensions," Paper No. 187, Noida, India: South Asia Analysis Group, January 20, 2001.

⁵¹⁹ Deepak Thapa and Bandita Sijipati, *A Kingdom Under Siege: Nepal's Maoist Insurgency, 1996 to 2004*, London: Zed Books, 2004, p. 92.

For their part, the insurgents sought to purge representatives of the state from outlying villages and set up their own “people’s government” counterinstitutions.⁵²⁰ All elements of the state were attacked. Roads and bridges were cut; infrastructure, including power generation and electrical lines, was systematically destroyed. Large swaths of Nepal fell to the insurgents. “Such was the lack of national integration that, once the police presence was eliminated, the insurgents became the state.”⁵²¹ This wholly precluded the state from providing security or governance in these areas.

Phase II: “Army Involved with External Support” (2001–2004)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: COIN force failed to create perception of security among population in areas it controlled or claimed to control; insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.

The second phase brought several important changes in Nepal in 2001. First, the infamous Nepali regicide occurred in June, when Crown Prince Dipendra reportedly shot and killed his father (King Birendra), his mother (Queen Aishwarya), his brother, his sister, his father’s younger brother (Prince Dhirendra), and several aunts before turning the gun on himself.⁵²² Second, several months later, the new king, Gyanendra, approved a state of emergency, allowing Nepal’s army to join COIN operations for the first time.⁵²³

The Royal Nepalese Army was a largely ceremonial force, with much of its experience in service to UN peacekeeping missions.⁵²⁴ Though substantially better armed than the guerrillas (in part due

⁵²⁰Marks, 2003, pp. 13–15; Thapa and Sijipati, 2004, p. 107.

⁵²¹Marks, 2003, p. 15.

⁵²²GlobalSecurity.org, “Insurgency in Nepal 2001,” last updated July 21, 2006b.

⁵²³International Institute for Strategic Studies, “Nepal (CPN(M)),” Armed Conflict Database, 2008; GlobalSecurity.org, 2006b.

⁵²⁴GlobalSecurity.org, 2006b.

to international support following 9/11),⁵²⁵ the army found the motivated and experienced Maoists to be quite resilient opponents.⁵²⁶ The army received little help from the national government, however. After handing responsibility for the insurgency to the army, the government went back to business as usual.⁵²⁷

The army proved unable to defeat the insurgents militarily, but it was sufficiently strong in its fortified positions that the insurgents were unable to dislodge it.⁵²⁸ Indiscriminant violence from the forces of order continued to push villagers toward the insurgents. The army's compliance with human rights principles was even lower than that of the police: "The army, since it usually enters an area and then quickly leaves after its operation, has been less accountable and has had less regard for human life."⁵²⁹

Phase III: "Royalist Usurpation and Failure" (2005–2006)

Phase Outcome: COIN Loss

Key Factors: COIN force failed to create perception of security among population in areas it controlled or claimed to control; majority of citizens in area of conflict *did not* view government as legitimate.

On 1 February 2005, in a move not only destructive of democracy and human rights but likely to strengthen the Maoist insurgents and make Nepal's civil war even more intense, King Gyanendra sacked Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, took power directly and declared a state of emergency.⁵³⁰

⁵²⁵International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2008.

⁵²⁶Thapa and Sijipati, 2004, p. 136.

⁵²⁷Thapa and Sijipati, 2004, p. 127.

⁵²⁸International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2008.

⁵²⁹Thapa and Sijipati, 2004, p. 151.

⁵³⁰International Crisis Group, *Nepal's Royal Coup: Making a Bad Situation Worse*, Asia Report No. 91, February 9, 2005, p. i.

This move set in motion the chain of events that would ultimately lead to the loss of this COIN campaign. First, shocked international allies (including the United States, the United Kingdom, and India) suspended arms supplies.⁵³¹ Second, large parts of the army that could have been preserving the stalemate against the insurgents were instead pressed into duty as jailers for Nepal's democratic leadership and citizenry.⁵³² Third, the move galvanized popular opinion and promoted the assembly of a broad multiparty, pro-democracy, and antimonarchy alliance. Fourth, these events presented the opportunity for the Maoists to enter mainstream politics and join the prodemocracy alliance, which they did.⁵³³ The insurgents announced a unilateral cease-fire on behalf of the prodemocracy coalition, further bolstering the legitimacy of both.

Facing mounting internal and external pressure, King Gyanendra capitulated on April 21, 2006. The opposition alliance took over the government, implemented its transition plan, and held with elections. The Maoists disarmed and participated in both the elections and the new government.⁵³⁴

Conventional Explanations

The conventional explanation allows the same complaints that motivated the insurgency in the first place to explain the outcome. Specifically, democratic squabbles and ineffective government both created an opening for the insurgents and precluded effective organizing to resist them.⁵³⁵

Within that broader explanation, several factors are worth highlighting. First and foremost, legitimacy: The initial democratic government lost legitimacy and failed to govern effectively; both the police and the army lost legitimacy as they failed to make significant head-

⁵³¹International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2008.

⁵³²International Crisis Group, 2005, p. 15.

⁵³³IRIN, 2005, p. 3.

⁵³⁴IRIN, 2005, p. 5.

⁵³⁵"The People's War: Maoist Insurgency in Nepal," 2002.

way against the insurgents, while simultaneously failing to respect the human rights of Nepali citizens; and the king's widely condemned seizure of the government stole the last vestiges of legitimacy from the monarchy. Second, the strategy of the Maoist insurgents themselves: Certainly their effective isolation of remote villages from the state while provoking the COIN forces to commit atrocities, but mostly their sense of opportunity and decision to join mainstream politics and oppose the king's seizure of the state, served to win them considerable concessions and a real role in the new government.

Distinctive Characteristics

- Before the onset of the conflict, a decadelong prodemocracy campaign had delivered a nascent democracy of ineffective, squabbling, corrupt, and politicking bureaucrats. This both provided impetus for the initial insurgency and left a countering government with very little baseline legitimacy.⁵³⁶
- The one institution with a high level of traditional legitimacy in Nepal was the monarchy. This changed with the regicide in 2001 and completely fell through when the king dissolved the government and seized power in 2005.⁵³⁷
- The Royal Nepalese Army, despite its participation in UN peacekeeping missions, was a largely ceremonial force lacking the necessary competencies for COIN operations. Even with sophisticated military hardware from international supporters, the army was unable to effectively fight the insurgents in the mountains and jungles of Nepal.
- The Maoist insurgents were strategic opportunists. They elected to join the groundswell of mainstream opposition to King Gyanendra's seizure of the government, giving further legitimacy to their movement and winning a much better place for themselves in the new government.

⁵³⁶IRIN, 2005, p. 5.

⁵³⁷IRIN, 2005, p. 5.

Figure 29
Map of Nepal



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-29

Table 29
Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for Nepal

Factor	Phase I (1996–2001)	Phase II (2001–2004)	Phase III (2005–2006)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	0	0	0
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	1	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	1	0	0
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	0	0	1
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	1	1	0
Free and fair elections held	1	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	1	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	1	0

Table 29—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1996–2001)	Phase II (2001–2004)	Phase III (2005–2006)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	0	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	1	0	1
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	0	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	1	1	1
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	1	1	1
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	0	1	1
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	1	1	1
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	0	0	0
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	1	1
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	0	0	0
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	0	0

Table 29—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1996–2001)	Phase II (2001–2004)	Phase III (2005–2006)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	0	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	1	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	0	1	0
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	0	0	0
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	1	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	0	1	1
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	1	1
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	0	1	1
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	1	1	1
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	0	0	0
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	1	1	1
Government/state was competent	1	1	1
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	0	0	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	0	0	0
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	0	0	0
Insurgent win	1	1	1
Mixed outcome	0	1	0

Democratic Republic of the Congo (Anti-Kabila), 1998–2003

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Case Summary

The second Congolese war began in 1998 with the invasion of Rwandan and Ugandan forces seeking to overthrow DRC President Laurent Kabila, their former ally. Kabila countered the threat to his government by engaging Angolan, Zimbabwean, and Namibian forces and local militia groups in his defense. The war then devolved into a conflict of pillage and partition as the various regional forces battled for control of the country's resources. Efforts toward political compromise and international negotiation began in 2001 after the president was assassinated and replaced by his son, Joseph. Joseph Kabila eventually concluded a cease-fire agreement with the Uganda, Rwandan, and other foreign forces and to conclude a power-sharing deal with the major rebel groups, which greatly reduced the level of fighting by 2003.

Case Narrative

Phase I: "New Allies Turn Back the Rebels" (1998)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring COIN

Key Factors: External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents; external professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government.

The second war in the Congo began on August 2, 1998, with the mutiny of Congolese military units and the invasion of Rwandan and Ugandan forces in the eastern region of the DRC. Ostensibly, the war was initiated by the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), a rebel coalition that included native Tutsis in the Banyamulenge area of the DRC and national opposition leaders seeking to depose President Kabila on the grounds of "corruption, nepotism and failure to bring about demo-

cratic reforms and regional stability.”⁵³⁸ Most observers believed, however, that the insurgency was instigated by the Rwandan and Ugandan governments in their to establish a more reliable partner in the DRC after Kabila had expelled their forces from the region.⁵³⁹

The rebel forces sought to decapitate the Kabila regime by moving quickly to the capital of Kinshasa. Initially, they had some success. They were able to free thousands of former members of the Zairian army and cut off electricity to the capital. The RCD gained control of more than a third of the country, occupying much of the northeast. Its advance was soon impeded, however, by the intervention of Angolan, Zimbabwean, and Namibian forces, which unexpectedly deployed in support of Kabila. The involvement of these and other African nations enabled the government to maintain control over the western part of the DRC and prevent the rebels from taking over the country. The additional foreign forces also changed the nature of the war, turning it into a prolonged international conflict.⁵⁴⁰

Phase II: “Partition and Pillage” (1999–2000)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict; COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment; militias worked at cross-purposes with COIN force/government.

Over the course of the next five years, seven African countries became involved in the fighting in the DRC. Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia supported Kabila; Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi opposed him. The conflict became a war of “partition and pillage” as Kabila and the lead-

⁵³⁸Project Ploughshares, “Democratic Republic of Congo (Formerly Zaire) (1990—First Combat Deaths),” Armed Conflicts Report, January 2009b.

⁵³⁹The conflict was also widely believed to be rooted in unresolved tensions and ethnic differences among anti-Mobutu groups that surfaced in the DRC’s (Zaire’s) previous insurgency war of 1996–1997 (Turner, 2007, p. 6).

⁵⁴⁰Angola’s support for Kabila was particularly critical, as Angola effectively switched sides after allying itself with Rwanda and Uganda in the previous Congolese war against the Mobutu regime.

ers of the surrounding nations battled for control and resources. Each sought to divide the country and secure a portion of its rich diamond, gold, and mineral resources. Competition between parties became so intense, in fact, that the Rwandan and Ugandan armies began to attack each other, and Uganda created its own separate rebel group: the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC).

The war also involved a number of substate actors from throughout the region. Kabila allied himself with local militia groups, including the Mai Mai fighters, who were indigenous to the region, and foreign rebel groups with bases in the Congo, such as the Army for the Liberation of Rwanda and the FDD from Burundi. In addition, he rearmed the Interahamwe militias and former members of the Hutu Rwandan army who resided in the eastern DRC in an effort to defeat the rebels and their allies.

By 1999, the conflict widened further as interethnic clashes and fighting between factions of the main rebel coalition broke out and foreign forces in the conflict became more entrenched. The country became largely divided into areas of influence, with the north controlled and exploited by the Ugandan army and the MLC and the Kivu region under the control of the RCD and the Rwandan army.

By June, Kabila appeared to be faced with the threat of imminent military defeat. The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and allied troops failed to make headway against the rebels and their Rwandan and Ugandan patrons. Heavier-than-normal rains in early 1999 slowed the movement of the FARDC, while lighter RPA forces were able to continue a slow westward advance.⁵⁴¹

An attempt was made to reach a peace agreement in July 1999. Six of the countries fighting in the DRC signed the "Lusaka Accord" with the Kabila government and were later joined by the MLC and two RCD rebel groups. The accord provided for a cease-fire, the deployment of UN peacekeepers, and the disarming of "negative forces." It also called for a Congolese dialogue leading to the creation of a national government. The cease-fire proved ineffective, however. It was promptly broken by all parties, and fighting intensified.

⁵⁴¹International Crisis Group, 2000.

The FARDC and its allies launched a new wave of attacks against rebels in early August 2000. Five thousand people, mostly civilians, were killed. Rwanda and Uganda appeared to have the upper hand by December 2000, yet the war remained in a stalemate as each of the warring parties appeared to have an interest in maintaining its commercial interests and pursuing its own political agenda.⁵⁴²

Phase III: "Assassination and Peace Negotiations" (2001–2003)

Phase Outcome: Mixed, Favoring Insurgents

Key Factors: Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict; important external support to insurgents significantly reduced.

Conditions changed in early 2001 when Kabila was assassinated by one of his soldiers. Laurent Kabila's son Joseph, who assumed the presidency, had a greater interest in political compromise. He began international negotiations early on in his presidency and sought to reach a settlement. Conditions in the region also began to change as Burundi sought to conclude a power-sharing agreement with the FDD. It announced that it was willing to withdraw its forces from the DRC in return for an end to Kinshasa's support for the FDD.⁵⁴³

While fighting remained intense and thousands of people were killed in 2002, peace agreements were forged with Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda and attempted with the rebel groups. Under the cease-fire agreement, all foreign forces were to be withdrawn in return for more rigorous efforts to disarm the Hutu militias. Finally, at the end of the year, the RCD and MLC signed an agreement with the Joseph Kabila's

⁵⁴²Rwanda wanted to track down perpetrators of ethnic cleansing and safeguard its borders, Uganda wanted to control ethnic linkages, Angola wanted to halt the use of Congolese territory as a supply route and rear base, and Zimbabwe wanted to secure its role as a regional leader and retain the economic benefits that helped to support its regime (International Institute for Strategic Studies, "DRC: Historical Background," Armed Conflict Database, undated(b)).

⁵⁴³Integrated Regional Information Network, "Bujumbura to Withdraw Troops from the Congo," January 9, 2002, quoted in Fonseca, 2004.

regime that brought the rebel groups into an interim government in July 2003. Under the power-sharing deal, Kabila was to lead the transitional government. He would have four vice presidents representing the government, the two largest rebel groups, and the unarmed political opposition. The transitional government was to hold power for up to two-and-a-half years, after which time the country would hold democratic elections.⁵⁴⁴ (Two RCD factions supported the agreement, as it allowed in principle for the integration of their forces into the Congolese army. It even had support from some Mai Mai factions because it gave the militia a deputy ministerial position in the government.)⁵⁴⁵ The agreement brought an end to much of the fighting across the country. Yet, because the agreement did not include rival militias in the eastern DRC, the region continued to experience ethnic violence.⁵⁴⁶

Conventional Explanations

The conventional explanation for the Congolese conflict is that foreign forces that played the primary role in the outcome of the war. While Laurent Kabila's popularity increased after the invasion of Rwandan and Ugandan forces, it was the intervention of other foreign armies from the region that enabled the government to counter the threat to its power and led to years of competition over the country's expropriable resources. Joseph Kabila's willingness to engage in political negotiations with domestic rebel groups and to institute a power-sharing agreement helped bring an end to the conflict. Even more significant, however, were international peace agreements reached with neighboring Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda, which brought about a reduction in foreign forces in the country.

Distinctive Characteristics

- The Congolese war against Kabila was considered to be less a war of liberation by insurgents than an "invasion" by outside forces

⁵⁴⁴Eddy Isango, "President Signs New Constitution, Bringing Congo a Step Closer to Peace," Associated Press, April 5, 2003.

⁵⁴⁵Fonseca, 2004.

⁵⁴⁶Nugent, 2004, p. 464.

from Rwanda and Uganda. The RCD rebel movement, backed by the Rwandan and Ugandan governments, received little popular support. There was in fact a surge of support for Kabila's government at the onset of the war.⁵⁴⁷ (This was in sharp contrast to the first Congolese war against Mobutu in 1996.)

- The conflict quickly evolved into a regional conflict played out by neighboring nations, their leaders, and their own national insurgencies. Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi were engaged in the war against an alliance of Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia. They were also engaged in their own civil wars, fighting against their own rebel groups (the ex-FAR, ADF, FDD, and UNITA, among others). Some of these civil wars were partly fought on Congolese soil. Moreover, the conflict entangled the DRC's own local ethnic feuds between Hutus, Tutsis, and many other groups in the eastern part of the country. These overlapping conflicts complicated and often reinforced each other.⁵⁴⁸
- The existence of substantial quantities of expropriable resources (including diamonds, oil, uranium, gold, copper, coltan, and cobalt) served not only to provide the resources for Kabila to support the war, but also allowed the leaders of allied nations and militia groups to support their war efforts and enrich themselves. As a result, there was a strong disincentive for many of the parties to end the conflict.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁷ According to public opinion polling in Kinshasa, popular opinion of President Kabila as chief of state improved dramatically in 1998 (with 57 percent reporting a "good" opinion in April 1998 and 88 percent reporting "good" in September 1998, and the number reporting negative opinions falling from 21 percent to 5 percent, respectively, in those years). See Weiss, 2000.

⁵⁴⁸ International Crisis Group, 2000.

⁵⁴⁹ Fonseca, 2004.

Figure 30
Map of the Democratic Republic of the
Congo



SOURCE: CIA, 2010.

RAND MG964/1-30

Table 30**Factors Present or Absent, by Phase, for DRC (Anti-Kabila)**

Factor	Phase I (1998)	Phase II (1999–2000)	Phase III (2001–2003)
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	0	0	0
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	1	1	1
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	0	0	0
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	0	0	0
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	0	0	0
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	1	1	1
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	1	1	1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	1	1	1
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	0	0	0
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	1	1	1
Government a functional democracy	0	0	0
Government a partial or transitional democracy	0	0	0
Free and fair elections held	0	0	0
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	0	0	0
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	0	0	0
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	0	0	0
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	0	0	0
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	0	0	0
COIN force employed escalating repression	1	1	1
COIN force employed collective punishment	1	1	1
Amnesty or reward program in place	0	0	0

Table 30—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1998)	Phase II (1999–2000)	Phase III (2001–2003)
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	0	0	0
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	0	0	0
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	1	0	0
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	0	0	0
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	0	0	0
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	0	0	0
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained	0	0	0
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	0	0	0
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	0	0	1
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	1	0	0
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	1	0	0
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	0	0	0
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	1	1	1
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	1	1	1
Militias did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	0	0	0
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	1	0	0
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	1	1	1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	0	0	0
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	1	0	1
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	1
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	0	0	0
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	1	0	1
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	0	0	0
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	0	0	0
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	0	1	0

Table 30—Continued

Factor	Phase I (1998)	Phase II (1999–2000)	Phase III (2001–2003)
Insurgents demonstrated potency through attacks	1	1	1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	0	0	0
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/government	1	1	0
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	0	0	0
COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents	0	0	0
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	0	1	1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	0	0	0
External support to COIN force from strong state/military	1	1	1
External support to insurgents from strong state/military	1	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	1	1	1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	1	1	1
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) <i>lacked</i> sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	0	0	0
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	0	0	0
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	0	0	0
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	0	0	0
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas	0	0	0
Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	0	1	0
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	1	1	1
COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment	1	1	1
Government/state was competent	0	0	0
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	1	1	0
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	1	1	1
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	0	0	1
Government/COIN win	1	0	0
Insurgent win	0	1	1
Mixed outcome	1	1	1

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