

Insurgency Literature Review

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[Article 1](#) “**The Political Context behind Successful Revolutionary Movements—Three Case Studies: Vietnam (1955-1963), Algeria (1945-1962), and Nicaragua (1967-1979),**” by **Lieutenant Colonel Raymond A. Millen, U.S. Army, Strategic Studies Institute (U.S. Army War College), March 2008.** *Even though an insurgency can present a virulent threat to a government, there is no guarantee the insurgents will prevail. In fact, most fail. In Vietnam, Algeria, and Nicaragua it was government pathologies and their alienation of virtually every sector of society that were the major determinant of insurgent success. This fact can serve the United States regarding counterinsurgency approaches to client states beleaguered by revolutionary insurgents. The United States should remain vigilant to extremist groups which prey on failed states for a base of operations, but it should also consider the tremendous advantages even weak states have over insurgent threats. Foreknowledge of these advantages can help the United States gauge the level and type of assistance with confidence rather than the inclination for direct intervention.*

[Article 2](#) “**Nasty, Brutish, and Long: Northern Ireland Apart, Many New Civil Wars Drag on Because We Don’t Let Anyone Win,**” by **Monica Toft, Prospect, No. 157, 26 April 2009.** *Ending today’s civil wars is a paradoxically difficult task. Old civil wars tended to be about land, or money. Today, power and resources have given way to the ability to practice a faith, speak a language, and determine who is your neighbor. Identity-based civil wars—be it national, ethnic, or religious—are the worst of all. Governments no longer support military interventions as a credible means of securing negotiated settlements. Instead, they rely on good offices and bribes. This means that an increasing number of civil wars now reignite after a few years of troubled peace. As a result, the world’s new civil wars are nasty, brutish, and long. With the global recession deepening, they may come more quickly still.*

[Article 3](#) “**Forgotten Founder: The French Colonel Who Wrote the Book(s) on Counterinsurgency,**” by **Ann Marlowe, Weekly Standard, Vol. 15, No. 5, 19 October 2009.** *Who was David Galula? This question must have occurred to many readers of the 2006 U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual. “Of the many books that were influential in the writing of Field Manual 3-24,” say its coauthors, “perhaps none was as important as David Galula’s Counterinsurgency Warfare.” During the beginnings of counterinsurgency theory in the 1950s and 1960s, Galula was not a solitary visionary but the most articulate of a large number of military men who had been part of a nearly forgotten movement. Galula’s seminal works caution us that counterinsurgency is not nearly as easy as some popularizers of his ideas seem to believe, nor is it a one-size-fits-all solution for every conflict in the world. Military thought is shaped by intellectual fashion as much as any other field.*

[Article 4](#) “**How to Measure the War: Judging Success and Failure in Counterinsurgency,**” by **Jason Campbell, Michael E. O’Hanlon, and Jeremy Shapiro, Policy Review (Hoover Institution—at Stanford University), No. 157, October-November 2009.** *Determining progress in a counterinsurgency campaign is more an art than a science. The use of concrete numbers, while helpful, should not delude anyone into a belief that results of the work are particularly rigorous or reliable. In part this is because of the difficulty of gathering and*

interpreting such sensitive data in such dangerous circumstances. But more profoundly, measurement difficulties stem from the fact that counterinsurgencies are largely about achieving political effects. Political effects result from human perceptions within unique political communities. Understanding such perceptions is inherently a contextual and qualitative process, even if some quantification is useful and possible.

Article 5 “**Measures for Security in a Counterinsurgency,**” by **Jonathan J. Schroden**, **Journal of Strategic Studies**, Vol. 32, No. 5, October 2009. *Quantitative measures to gauge progress in a counterinsurgency in use today include the number of enemy, friendly, and civilian casualties, and the level of violence. While common, each of these has drawbacks. With this and the sparseness of the literature on this topic in mind, we argue for a series of improved measures. These include the ratio of who is initiating incidents, an historical analysis of incidents and related variables, and an analysis of insurgent target sets. These measures are presented using data for Al Anbar province, Iraq, along with a discussion of their advantages over more common metrics.*

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1. “The Political Context behind Successful Revolutionary Movements—Three Case Studies: Vietnam (1955-1963), Algeria (1945-1962), and Nicaragua (1967-1979),” by Lieutenant Colonel Raymond A. Millen, U.S. Army, Strategic Studies Institute (U.S. Army War College), March 2008. [KBTITheory, KBTIHistory, KBTSVietnam, KBTSAlgeria, KBTSNicaragua] When this paper was published Lieutenant Colonel Millen was serving as the Director of European Security Studies at the Strategic Studies Institute. He served in Kabul from July through November 2003 on the staff of the Office of Military Cooperation-Afghanistan, focusing on the Afghan National Army and the General Staff. From this paper available in full at <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?PubID=851> we quote from the summary, strategic insights section, and conclusions:

. . . Insurgent strategic approaches, as Bard O’Neill explains in [his 2005 book] Insurgency and Terrorism, are influenced by the physical and human environment, popular support, organization and unity, external support, and government response. Hence, the end of the Cold War did not signal the end of revolutionary warfare, as contemporary Islamic extremist organizations have demonstrated. Still, as O’Neill points out, **even though an insurgency can present a virulent threat to the government, there is no guarantee the insurgents will prevail. In fact, most fail.** This fact can serve the United States regarding counterinsurgency approaches to client states beleaguered by revolutionary insurgents.

Understandably, **the United States should remain vigilant** to extremist groups which prey on failed states for a base of operations, **but it should also consider the**

tremendous advantages even weak states have over insurgent threats. Foreknowledge of these advantages can help the United States gauge the level and type of assistance with confidence rather than the inclination for direct intervention.

[In Vietnam, Algeria, and Nicaragua regimes alienated virtually every sector of society]

In his [2001] book, **No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991**, Jeff Goodwin developed an excellent analytical framework for examining the **political context behind revolutionary movements and how dysfunctional governance provides the opportunity for these movements to flourish and sometimes succeed** in overthrowing the state. This framework can serve as an excellent reference for U.S. statesmen and government advisors when assessing the state of affairs of a state engaged in an insurgency.

Goodwin's political context analysis comprises **five government practices**: (1) **State sponsorship or protection of unpopular economic and social arrangements or cultural institutions**. (2) **Repression and/or exclusion of mobilized groups from state power or resources**. (3) **Indiscriminate, but not overwhelming, state violence against mobilized groups and oppositional political figures**. (4) **Weak policing capacities and infrastructural power**. And (5) **Corrupt and arbitrary personalistic rule that alienates, weakens, or divides counterrevolutionary elites**.

It must be stressed that **each of these government practices must exist for a revolutionary movement to have a chance**. Goodwin adds that **the political context is not the only factor that leads to revolutionary movements, but he contends it is the most important factor**. To add greater depth to Goodwin's framework, this monograph also examines **the competency of the insurgent leadership** in prosecuting its strategy.

This monograph also examines how governments can squander their advantages vis-à-vis insurgents using Goodwin's framework for the political context behind revolutionary wars. Accordingly, the author applies this framework to three case studies: **Vietnam (1955-1963), Algeria (1945-1962), and Nicaragua (1967-1979) to gain a greater appreciation of how government pathologies, and not insurgent strategy, are the major determinant of insurgent success**.

In each of these cases, the regimes alienated virtually every sector of society to such an extent that moderate opposition and eventually popular support fell into the orbit of extremist organizations out of desperation. The vast majority of the populace and political elites may have viewed the revolutionaries with suspicion or disdain, but fear of and debilitation by government practices left them no other political alternatives. In the end, **the regimes found themselves isolated, without the necessary domestic allies and resources to prevail**.

[Degree of competency by revolutionary leadership important factor in their success]

The political-military consequences of these insurgencies were profound. **With the exception of Nicaragua, the insurgencies devastated the political, social, and economic institutions of their host countries**.

- **In Vietnam, the unnecessary Viet Cong escalation to guerrilla war against the [Ngo Dinh] Diem regime in 1963 forced the United States to intervene**

incrementally, changing the nature and the spectrum of the conflict. In the end, **the Viet Cong were destroyed, forcing North Vietnam to shoulder the main burden.**

- **In Algeria**, by the time Charles de Gaulle assumed the presidency of France in 1958, **a return to the status quo ante was impossible due to the power bloc of the French colonialists. Breaking their power and putting the military back in its place eclipsed defeating the insurgency.**
- **Only in Nicaragua did the revolutionary movement prosecute a swift coup de main** against [the regime of Anastasio Somoza Debayle]. **Isolating the regime** through defections of government allies and severed relations from the United States and the international community **created the momentum needed to challenge the regime in a short, violent campaign. . . .**

The revolutionary movements and associated wars in South Vietnam, Algeria, and Nicaragua were fundamentally different in terms of their approach to overthrowing the established governments. Nonetheless, the political context behind the formation of the revolutionary movements provides the common thread. **What is remarkable is the degree to which all three governments contributed to the alienation of their societies, providing the opportunity for revolutionary movements to challenge the regime through the people.** Goodwin reminds us that **in ordinary circumstances, the citizenry would not seek such an association**, but when it sees no other way out of a predicament which the government has instigated, **it will join whoever provides greater security.**

The degree of competency displayed by the revolutionary leadership cannot be divorced from its ultimate success. If the leadership lacks the organizational and political skills to capitalize on or create government mistakes, the insurgency may collapse or just smolder for years. **In all three cases, the regimes fought back ruthlessly over a prolonged period.**

[Government negligence won't dissipate with infusion of large military, financial assistance]

Of the three revolutionary movements, the FSLN [Sandinista National Liberation Front] appears to have exercised the greatest political military acuity. It was able to isolate the Somoza regime and garner a popular movement, more through political subversion and propaganda than through a protracted war of violence. **The international isolation of the Somoza regime deprived the National Guard of its critical external military assistance needed for a prolonged struggle.** Certainly, the final months of armed conflict were costly for the FSLN, but without its stockpiles, the National Guard likely could not prevail militarily.

The Viet Cong leadership rashly and recklessly pursued armed conflict to such an extent that U.S. intervention became a certainty. **The historical record of the special plebiscite that ejected former emperor Bao-Dai and elected Diem regime suggests it was well on its way to self-destruction even without the NLF [National Liberation Front] needing to escalate the conflict to a guerrilla war.** This strategic error not only led to the destruction of the Viet Cong guerrillas and cadre in 1968, but also to the elimination of the NLF infrastructure and the peace treaty with North Vietnam by 1972.

That North Vietnam resorted to a conventional invasion of South Vietnam in 1975 attests to the degree of the NLF's defeat.

The Algerian FLN [National Liberation Front] leadership deserves neither grudging respect nor emulation. Its wanton brutality to civilians, both European and Algerian, alone deserves condemnation. **The war's descent into barbarity must be laid squarely on the FLN** regardless of the circumstances leading up to the conflict. **The FLN prosecuted an inferior strategy to the French, resulting in the elimination of its infrastructure and dispersion of its leadership.** Arguably, **the insurgency became a tertiary issue compared to the threat posed by the pied noir [European colonists] and the military to the authority of the French government.** De Gaulle's subsequent actions imply a change in priorities: first, to break the power of the pied noir; second, to put the military back in its place. De Gaulle's recognition of the FLN government in exchange for lucrative agreements became the unavoidable consequence of asserting government authority over these internal challenges. **Hence, the FLN assumed the reins of power by default and not by triumph.**

The three case studies reveal the substantive degree to which a government creates the conditions and the opportunities for an insurgency to flourish. As the United States considers rendering counterinsurgency assistance to a beleaguered state, it must debate the roots of the insurgency. **Government malpractice will not dissipate with the infusion of substantial military and financial assistance.** These are merely metaphorical pain killers for a chronically ill patient. In such cases, **the United States should not be drawn into a conflict for fear that the revolutionary government will pose a dire threat to U.S. national security.** If the new government does become a threat, then the United States can take concrete steps to deal with it. Otherwise, **the United States will find itself propping up dubious governments (as it practiced during the Cold War) in a replay of the zero-sum game.**

[Focus of complete COIN strategy: Renew ties between central government, local leaders]

If the United States decides to render counterinsurgency assistance, Goodwin's framework for government practices is a good tool for analyzing the client state's political system. Bard O'Neill warns that government advisors should understand the human milieu as part of their job preparation. **"A careful and unbiased assessment of demography, social structures and values, economic trends, the political culture, and the structure and performance of the political system" will assist the advisor in identifying the roots of the insurgency and policy obstacles.** He also warns **not to rely on the client government's understanding of its own people. If the government were attuned to the grievances of the people, there would be no insurgency.**

In the realm of security assistance, the government must address the immediate threat of the insurgency, which is a bottom-up approach. Building national security forces, as well as focusing on the national government and economic development, yields benefits in the long term, but they will not resolve the immediate insurgent threat. **Ignoring the burgeoning insurgency in the hope that national security forces, political reform, and economic benefits will trickle down and eventually smother the insurgency entails great risks and generally results in a protracted insurgency.**

The supreme task of the counterinsurgency effort is to gain positive control of the population by providing every population center with a permanent security force.

The front line in a counterinsurgency is where the people live. Whether the local authorities raise their own police and/or militia forces or rely on coalition cadres to do the same, such permanent security forces are the sine qua non for a counterinsurgency strategy. **Without this solid foundation, all other development and construction efforts will be for naught.**

The comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy focuses on renewing the ties between the central government and the local authorities. In light of the significant damage insurgencies inflict on local societies, **initiating immediate construction and development projects for villages and towns allows the local population to enjoy the benefits of the established government.**

The establishment of a United Nations reconstruction and development coordination center could serve to harmonize, coordinate, and monitor construction and development projects among the international organizations, nongovernment organizations, government organizations, provincial reconstruction teams, and various engineer units in country.

A national coordination center serves as a clearing center for legitimate organizations and prevents fraud, conflicts, redundancies, and waste, which inevitably result when separate organizations are left on their own.

[Information operations agency for international community, beleaguered state a necessity]

The United States must remain attentive to the messages it sends to the client government. Surfeiting the government with millions of dollars in aid and assistance, along with a large military contingent, not only feeds corruption and waste, it also cues the government that the United States will remain in the country indefinitely. In such cases, client states create a mutual dependence relationship with their patron states, feeding on the latter's fear of failure. Hence, when developing the right counterinsurgency balance, **the United States should err on the side of a minimum footprint because the opposite tack seems to retard government reforms and assumption of the counterinsurgency burden.**

Because it is initially weak, an insurgency relies a great deal on propaganda in order to increase recruitment, financing, and international assistance. Additionally, **propaganda serves to fetter the efforts of the government by using its existing laws, legal system, and political process as well as domestic and world opinion to insurgent advantage.** Insurgents have long regarded cities as the most effective venue for propaganda. Any event—whether a terrorist act, excessive use of government force, or demonstrations—which takes place in a city receives immediate and extensive (even overblown) media attention. The cold reality is **insurgents need only to ply some propaganda and sit back as a host of forces begin lambasting the government combating the insurgency.**

The United States must have an agency dedicated to information operations for the international community and the beleaguered state. Winning the war of ideas must be integral to the counterinsurgency strategy. **It is not a wise idea, however, for a U.S. administration to target the American people, including Congress, with information operations. It is much better to give the domestic audience a sober appraisal of the unfolding situation rather than try to bolster confidence with exuberant optimism.**

As the Johnson administration learned, such operations create a credibility gap and an inevitable backlash if a setback occurs (i.e., the 1968 Tet offensive). . . .

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2. “Nasty, Brutish, and Long: Northern Ireland Apart, Many New Civil Wars Drag on Because We Don’t Let Anyone Win,” by Monica Toft, Prospect, No. 157, 26 April 2009 (<http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/2009/04/nastybrutishandlong/>). [KBTKConflicts, KBTITheory, KBTSUlster] Monica Toft is an associate professor of public policy at Harvard University. *We quote:*

It’s a busy time for civil wars. The Sri Lankan army has pushed far into Tamil territory, seeking a decisive victory. The killings in Northern Ireland show how spoilers try to gain advantage over rivals in any political process. Then there is the threat that recently pacified civil wars, such as those in Iraq and Sudan, will come back, while the global recession may push new ones forward.

First, **the good news. If public opinion in Northern Ireland is a guide, the violence will fail.** The murders are widely perceived as criminal, while sympathy for the victims runs deep. **The same isn’t true, however, of Iraq or Sudan. In the latter, vital provisions of the 2005 peace deal have still not been implemented. In the former, a stable peace seems unlikely any time soon.** Most worryingly of all, **there’s every indication that Pakistan’s domestic disputes may slide into all-out civil war.**

[Identity-based civil wars the worst of all—require credible threat, promise of benefits]

More is known today about how such wars begin and end. Since 1940, the world has seen over 130 civil wars. Most have ended; only around a dozen rumble on, in countries such as Afghanistan, Burma, and Congo. But the manner in which they have ended has been transformed.

Before the end of the Cold War, more than 90 percent of civil wars ended in outright victory, either for the government or rebels—this is the kind of definitive conclusion the Sri Lankan government is hoping for. (Rebels won in roughly half of the wars.) But since the fall of the USSR, about half of all civil wars have been ended by negotiation. Northern Ireland’s 1998 Good Friday agreement is a good example.

This transition has occurred in part because the causes of civil wars have changed. **Old civil wars tended to be about land, or money. Today, power and resources have given way to the ability to practice a faith, speak a language, and determine who is your neighbor.**

So many identities are in play in civil conflicts that it makes generalization difficult—and therefore makes their study an unpopular choice for academics, who know that grand theories, rather than local knowledge, make for good careers. But in recent years politicians and academics have begun to accept a grim truth: that the 130-odd

civil wars since 1945, averaging roughly 22 per decade, have killed between 14 million and 33 million people (precise figures are hard to come by)—an average of 91,000 to 187,000 deaths each.

Such figures show that **civil wars are both more destructive and more difficult to stop than wars between countries fought over ideology or wealth. They also last longer and tend to get more complicated as they go on** (think of Congo or Colombia).

Identity-based civil wars, though, are the worst of all, not least because identity—be it **national, ethnic, or religious**—can act as a hair-trigger in starting civil wars, but also because **ending such conflicts requires a credible threat of harm and promise of benefit to the warring parties.**

[**World's new civil wars are nasty, brutish, and long if one side isn't helped to win quickly**]

This leads us into a peculiarly painful modern dilemma. We know that, traditionally, civil wars end when someone wins. We also know that **today's identity-based civil conflicts are especially deadly. But governments no longer support military interventions** as a credible means of securing negotiated settlements. Instead, **they rely on good offices and bribes. This means that an increasing number of civil wars now reignite after a few years of troubled peace.**

The seemingly more enlightened approach of negotiated settlement adopted since the 1990s is three times more likely to break down than an old-fashioned imposition of force. The Sudanese civil war is a case in point. Even years of painfully obvious brutality on the part of Khartoum have not been sufficient to prompt liberal democracies into making a credible threat of harm.

What will happen in Iraq, and perhaps in Pakistan, thus remains an open question. **Iraq is ripe for continued civil war. The United States is pushing a weak negotiated settlement but the Iraqi government is fragile and mistrusted on all sides.** The country's transition to stability will be rough—beset by divisions between Kurds, Sunni, and Shia, but also within each of these communities. Moreover, **each community occupies and dominates particular regions of the country; they are no longer intermixed, so each group has a base of operations.** Worst of all, **Iraq is poor, but has lots of oil—making it worth fighting over.**

Pakistan is a problem for different reasons. Civil wars typically happen during power transitions, especially in countries without a history of stable transfer of power. The Soviet Union in the late-1980s, the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, and Iraq after the first Gulf war show this pattern. **Pakistan is going through a similar transition—a domestic political crisis, but one simultaneously being played out on the international stage due to Pakistan's proximity to Afghanistan and Iran. Add to this the country's struggles with national pride and identity, not to mention its possession of a nuclear arsenal, and you have a recipe for trouble.**

Ending today's civil wars is therefore a paradoxically difficult task. **We aren't willing to step in to stop them, or help one side to win quickly. But we make securing peace more difficult because we rarely let one side win either.** As a result, **the world's new civil wars are nasty, brutish, and long.**

Against this backdrop, **Northern Ireland is likely to remain a rare success story.** As we have seen throughout history, **a new civil war is always round the corner.** **With the global recession deepening, they may come more quickly still.**

The foregoing is Article No. 2 (IL044A02) in the [Insurgency Literature Review \(ILR\)](#), No. 44, 9 November 2009, prepared by Interaction Systems Incorporated (isincreports@mindspring.com).

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3. “Forgotten Founder: The French Colonel Who Wrote the Book(s) on Counterinsurgency,” by Ann Marlowe, [Weekly Standard](#), Vol. 15, No. 5, 19 October 2009. [KBTITheory, KBTIHistory, KBTIManuals, KBTSAAlgeria] The author reports frequently from Afghanistan and is writing a book about David Galula and the origins of COIN theory. From http://www.theweeklystandard.com/Utilities/printer_preview.asp?idArticle=17054&R=1638335 DEB we quote:

Who was David Galula? This question must have occurred to many readers of the new U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual. In the near panic to understand the Iraq insurgency, FM 3-24 was downloaded 1.5 million times just in its first month after being posted on military Websites in 2006. **“Of the many books that were influential in the writing of Field Manual 3-24,”** say its coauthors, **“perhaps none was as important as David Galula’s Counterinsurgency Warfare.”** American officers about to deploy to Afghanistan and Iraq scrambled to find out who this Galula was, and why the FM 3-24 authors—General David Petraeus, Colonel Conrad Crane, and Lieutenant Colonel John Nagl—thought he was so important. **But almost no biographical information was available.**

[By 1965 there was ample published literature on counterinsurgency theory]

When I began to research Galula’s life, first casually and then with a biography in mind, I discovered that he’d been prominent enough in his short lifetime to earn an obituary in the New York Times (“David Galula, 48, French Army Aide”). He had attracted the support of one of the most powerful and celebrated advocates of counterinsurgency in his day, **General Edward Lansdale**, who wrote in 1962 that he hoped Galula would “write the book which he long ago promised me he would write, about Mao’s revolutionary warfare in practice.”

Then, as I learned more about the beginnings of counterinsurgency theory in the 1950s and 1960s, I realized that Galula was not a solitary visionary but the most articulate of a large number of military men who had been part of a nearly forgotten movement. While the stereotype is that Americans learned about the importance of counterinsurgency in Vietnam, but promptly forgot it afterwards, the reverse is closer to the truth.

There was an ample literature on counterinsurgency theory—COIN, in military parlance—by 1965. In fact, **a long stream of books in English on counterinsurgency began in 1958 with William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick’s bestselling novel, The Ugly American,** which urged the study of Mao and unconventional warfare. A favorite of then Senator John F. Kennedy, who had leapt on the COIN bandwagon and hoped to

reform the American military to fight new kinds of wars, The Ugly American contained a sympathetic character based on Lansdale.

In 1962, The Guerrilla and How to Fight Him, a compilation of articles from a special issue of the Marine Corps Gazette, was published with a forward from President Kennedy. In 1965, journalist Robert Taber published the left-slanted The War of the Flea. (The entire first printing of Taber was bought up by the American military and became required reading for Special Forces officers.)

The British general Sir Robert Thompson, well known as a counterinsurgency guru in Malaya in the 1950s, published Defeating Communist Insurgency in 1966. The recently deceased military historian Stephen Bowman has noted that, in 1963, “The Special Operations Research Office, under contract to the Army, published ‘A Counterinsurgency Bibliography’ which contained 965 different sources concerned with counterinsurgency.” . . .

[Counterinsurgency Warfare likely had a minor influence on U.S. thinking about Vietnam]

Galula wrote two books, more or less at the same time, in 1962-1963. The book referred to in FM 3-24 and taught in the war colleges today is Counterinsurgency Warfare, written when he was a research associate at Harvard’s Center for International Affairs. Almost completely theoretical, it aims to establish “the laws of counterrevolutionary warfare.” Published in 1964 by Praeger, which released perhaps a dozen other volumes on counterinsurgency around this time, it received a small flutter of attention.

Galula’s book was cited as “the ‘how-to’ book in the field—and the best of them all” by the French Indochina expert Bernard Fall in his 1964 Street without Joy. In February 1964, the New York Times gave Galula a brief review, along with Roger Trinquier’s Modern Warfare, but the reviewer praised the reactionary Trinquier and granted Galula only a grudging sentence. In May 1964, the American journalist Eric Larrabee mentioned Galula’s Counterinsurgency Warfare in a round-up article for Harper’s entitled “Books on Guerrilla Warfare—Fifteen Years Overdue.” In those days counterinsurgency (also called “revolutionary warfare” or “guerrilla warfare”) was a topic which an educated person might be expected to follow.

Galula’s other book, Pacification in Algeria, 1956-1958, arrived nearly stillborn, classified as “confidential” when it was written as a 1962 report for RAND. At the time, Algeria was in turmoil and some of the commanders he referred to were active in the OAS, the rightwing French terrorist organization, which may explain the classification. Just a few hundred copies seem to have been published, and the work couldn’t be cited in unclassified literature. The only citation of it which I have seen was in a formerly classified U.S. Agency for International Development study from 25 September 1967, located by the young French scholar Elie Tenenbaum. [ILR Note: See the end of this article for another ILR Note which reflects that Galula’s “other book” is available online from RAND.]

Counterinsurgency Warfare was never lost to the world. It likely had a minor influence on American thinking about Vietnam. Tenenbaum has also located a March 1968 proposal sent by Ambassador-at-large Henry Cabot Lodge to President Lyndon Johnson for replacing “search and destroy” missions in Vietnam by “house

by house” policing, “much as was done by General Massu in Algiers and which is set forth in Galula’s book Counterinsurgency Warfare.” As Tenenbaum notes, three months later Johnson relieved General William Westmoreland, replacing him with General Creighton Abrams, who put an end to the “search and destroy” operations Lodge criticized.

[Galula’s books: Rigorous, analytically sophisticated with large capacity for self-criticism]

Military intellectuals cited Counterinsurgency Warfare regularly in bibliographies in the 1980s and 1990s—that’s how the authors of FM 3-24 came to read it in their own student days—but it eventually went out of print, and was republished only through a complex chain of recent events in which the journalist/military historian Thomas Ricks played a major role.

Nor was COIN theory ever wholly forgotten. In his 1982 Duke master’s thesis, Stephen Bowman writes that the term “counterinsurgency,” when mentioned to an officer in the Army, “arouses little curiosity or excitement. But counterinsurgency is an accepted doctrinal mission of the U.S. Army.” Bowman would later teach at West Point and head the military history department at the Army War College. His brilliant thesis is cited by Andrew Krepinevich in The Army and Vietnam (1986), a masterly and influential indictment of the Army’s failure to use COIN. Yet while Krepinevich’s view has become accepted wisdom, Bowman’s more nuanced assessment has been ignored.

One reason may be that Krepinevich satisfied a need for the Army to beat up on itself after Vietnam. Recently, some military intellectuals have begun to challenge this picture, and the most outspoken is the head of the military history department at West Point, Colonel Gian Gentile. He and others have suggested that COIN was not appropriate for all phases of the Vietnam War, and, worse, the fashionable emphasis on COIN is producing just as stifling an intellectual conformity today as the preference for “massive retaliation” did in the 1950s.

This is the last thing Galula would have wanted. If there is anything to take away from his two books, it is the rigor, analytical sophistication, and capacity for self-criticism that he brought to his task. But rest assured, reading Galula is a pleasure, not a duty: He is a beautiful writer—in his second or third language, no less—and both his books are worth perusing.

[Galula’s practices a revelation to U.S. military intellectuals focused on Iraq, Afghanistan]

Counterinsurgency Warfare explains how insurgent movements work and the strategy for combating them; Pacification in Algeria is about day-to-day tactics and grand strategy and politics, and is probably of greater interest to the general reader. Though somewhat fragmentary, Pacification is almost novelistic in its detail, and the only book on counterinsurgency that rises to the level of tragedy. It suggests that counterinsurgency is a long, difficult, perilously personality-dependent slog—the very opposite of a simple formula. (Galula notes that the two officers who replaced him in his command at Djebel Aissa Mimoun in Algeria were quickly shot dead, as his predecessor had been.)

His strategy focused on providing security to the people, not on chasing the guerrillas who harassed them, and **his approach became known in military circles as “population-centric.”** On a tactical level, the innovation that recommended Galula to the American military was deliberately placing small numbers of soldiers among the people they were protecting while simultaneously using these troops to lead **public works projects**. Galula is probably the first person to write about how to do this, though not the first modern commander to practice it. (The Marines had worked with local security forces in villages in the Dominican Republic during 1916-1922 in a program that was copied successfully in Vietnam as “Combined Action Platoons,” or CAPs.)

To American military intellectuals, Galula’s practices were a revelation. In Iraq and Afghanistan, American troops had been living on large, highly protected forward operating bases [FOBs]. **They would patrol in the villages and cities where people lived, but vanish at night into the FOBs**—a practice General Petraeus has criticized as “commuting to work.” **The U.S. Army,** concerned with the progress of the counterinsurgency in Iraq, **embraced Galula’s “population-centric” insights wholeheartedly—and his radical tactics somewhat less wholeheartedly. . . .**

[Trajectory of Lieutenant Colonel David Galula’s life]

. . . **Little in Galula’s early life suggests that he would become a major military theoretician,** least of all in the English language. **He was born in 1919 to a prominent Jewish clan in Sfax, Tunisia,** the sixth of seven children and the only boy. . . . **In 1924 his father, Albert Galula, obtained French citizenship for himself and his children,** including David—something that was never automatic for Tunisians. After a business partnership with his brother-in-law went bankrupt, **Albert moved his family to Casablanca. . . . Galula graduated from Saint-Cyr in 1939 Once Casablanca was taken by the Allies in November 1942, Galula joined the Free French Army,** fighting under General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny in the re-capture of Elba in 1944, and then in Toulon, and on through Alsace-Lorraine to the Rhine. . . .

Starting in September 1945, he spent six months in Chongqing [in China] before moving to Beijing for language training. . . . At this time Galula would have been reading Chinese revolutionary warfare theory. Mao was not translated into French until 1950, so Galula is likely to have studied him in English. **A U.S. Marine captain, Samuel B. Griffith,** had translated Mao for the Marine Corps Gazette back in 1941; later Griffith, by then a retired brigadier general, **published a book of Mao’s writings, On Guerrilla Warfare, in 1962, as well as translating Mao’s great influence, Sun Tzu’s The Art of War.** A copy of this was among Galula’s books when he died in 1967: Galula and Griffith had met in northern China when Griffith commanded a Marine regiment at the end of World War II.

Galula was next posted to Thessalonika as an observer with the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, where he witnessed the end of the cruel, ruinous Greek civil war. Then he returned to Paris to do Deuxième Bureau work: The “second bureau” of the General Staff, although technically dissolved in 1940, is the informal term for France’s military intelligence service. . . . **In 1951, Galula [became] the naval and military attaché at the French consulate in Hong Kong. . . .**

. . . [The] **most influential contacts of his later career were General Lansdale, who wrote in a letter that he met Galula “around 1955,” and General Raoul Salan, commander in chief of French forces in Indochina during 1952-1953. . . . In 1956, Galula volunteered to fight in Algeria,** and he wrote his first “Notes on Pacification” in November of that year, three months after his arrival—a point when most American company commanders will tell you they are just starting to get the lay of the land in a new deployment.

[Galula’s books caution that COIN is not easy nor a one-size-fits-all solution for conflicts]

Galula, however, had two advantages our young commanders do not. The first was his experience in and around China observing Mao’s guerrilla tactics, emphasizing the need to win the allegiance of the population. The second factor was the openness of the French Army to innovation in colonial warfare. By the time of the Algerian war, **the French had powerful evangelists for what was called “revolutionary warfare” (*guerre révolutionnaire*).** All the major French thinkers on *guerre révolutionnaire* had fought in Indochina and learned from the French defeat, as the military historian Peter Paret has written, “that an inferior force could outpoint a modern army so long as it succeeded in gaining at least the tacit support of the population in the contested area.”

Galula’s operational zone in Algeria, Kabylia, was one of several experimental zones where French commanders tried out *guerre révolutionnaire* ideas; Galula was not the only innovator. But his success in Djebel Aissa Mimoun and in his second posting at Bourj Menaiel, where he was promoted to major, attracted the notice of higher commanders.

Still, imaginative officers like Galula had no ultimate impact on the war. The Galulas were in Algiers for the 1958 coup when General Salan and General Jacques Massu, the paratroop commander, **demanding the return of Charles de Gaulle to political power in France.** By the summer of 1959, Galula was working in French military intelligence in the Deuxième Bureau in Paris. He visited the United States in **1960 for six months of study at the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia.**

By 1961 Galula was back at the Deuxième Bureau working for President de Gaulle’s “crisis office” during a tumultuous time for Algeria. According to his widow, **Galula agreed with de Gaulle that Algerian independence “was not the right thing to do but it was the necessary thing,”** and Lansdale has written that Galula avoided “entanglement in right and left extremist activities.”

In 1962, however, he retired from the army. **His next stop was Harvard’s Center for International Affairs, where General William Westmoreland, then the West Point superintendent and later commander of U.S. forces in South Vietnam, helped him obtain a position as research associate. . . .**

[In] 1964, he went to work for a French manufacturer of long-range radar equipment, and in 1966 moved to London to begin work as a liaison officer for NATO’s Air Defense Ground Environment Consortium. **In the spring of 1967, Galula was having digestive problems,** which propelled him to the American Hospital in Paris; **there he was found to have inoperable lung cancer. . . . [On] 11 May 1967, at the age of 48, Lieutenant Colonel David Galula was dead. . . .**

The brief details of Galula’s life suggest the complexity of the intellectual influences on what is now called population-centric counterinsurgency theory, as well as the role of simple luck in determining which books and ideas in the marketplace exert influence, and when. Galula’s seminal works caution us that counterinsurgency is not nearly as easy as some popularizers of his ideas seem to believe, nor is it a one-size-fits-all solution for every conflict in the world. Military thought is shaped by intellectual fashion as much as any other field.

ILR Note: We treated Galula’s aforementioned “other book” in the lead article in ILR No. 6 (28 September 2006) with the following title: “Foreword to the New Edition,” by Bruce Hoffman—of *Pacification in Algeria, 1956-1958*, by David Galula, RAND Corporation, Monograph No. MG478-1, January 2006. This Galula study was originally published by RAND in 1963. The 2006 RAND edition (still available at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG478-1>) includes the original text and a foreword by Bruce Hoffman, a terrorism and insurgency specialist, and in 2006 head of RAND’s office in the Washington, D.C. area.

The foregoing is Article No. 3 (IL044A03) in the *Insurgency Literature Review (ILR)*, No. 44, 9 November 2009, prepared by Interaction Systems Incorporated (isinreports@mindspring.com).

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4. “How to Measure the War: Judging Success and Failure in Counterinsurgency,” by Jason Campbell, Michael E. O’Hanlon, and Jeremy Shapiro, *Policy Review (Hoover Institution— at Stanford University)*, No. 157, October-November 2009. [KBTWSummary, KBTITheory, KBTSIraq, KBTSAfghanGW] Jason Campbell and Jeremy Shapiro are the authors of the Brookings Institution’s Afghanistan Index. Campbell and Michael O’Hanlon author the Iraq Index there and are beginning a Pakistan Index this fall. We *quote* from this report available in full at <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/61323097.html>:

... **In conventional warfare, identifying the momentum of battle is a fairly straightforward undertaking.** Predicting ultimate outcomes is still very difficult, but determining who is “ahead” at a given moment is usually feasible. Movement of the front lines, attrition rates, industrial production of war materiel, and logistical sustainability of forces in the field provide fairly obvious standards by which to assess trends. **But counterinsurgency and stabilization operations—like the ones in Iraq and Afghanistan—are different, and more complex. They also appear to be the future of warfare. How do we measure progress in such situations?**

[Review of metrics applied in Iraq leaves three overall conclusions relevant to Afghanistan]

... **How to use metrics in the coming debate over whether the United States and its partners are succeeding in Afghanistan?** To answer this question, it is important to examine the historical record for Iraq, in part because of the familiarity many readers will have with that case, and in part because **the Iraq case illustrates the need for humility in applying metrics to any counterinsurgency. Such an examination yields three overall conclusions relevant to Afghanistan:**

- Unlike the case of Iraq, where trends in violence were the most important metrics for much of the war, Afghanistan presents a situation where the most important metrics are those that gauge progress in the capacity and viability of the government. Put differently, metrics are probably most important for evaluating efforts at state-building.
- Unfortunately, **this conclusion suggests that metrics will not be up to the job** of diagnosing clear and incontrovertible proof of progress or lack thereof in Afghanistan. **Figuring out which indices are most informative regarding the state-building task is hard; making reliable measurements for whatever indices are selected is even harder. Knowing how long it should reasonably take to expect progress is also very challenging**, though it is fair to say that patience will be required to assess the effectiveness of the new strategy (well into 2010 if not beyond).
- As such, **even more so than in Iraq, using metrics in Afghanistan is more art than science and is very sensitive to local context**. Quantitative data are very important as grist for debate, and for constraining debate within factual boundaries; they are generally not adequate to reach definitive judgments. **Even if measuring progress is an art, it will benefit (more than some forms of art) from a degree of precision and rigor**.

[Metrics have potentially greatest role in determining if actionable policies are succeeding]

A number of axioms have been developed over the decades to guide policymakers as they attempt counterinsurgency, stabilization, and nation-building missions. Several concepts have been so frequently voiced that they have developed almost iconic status, e.g.:

- **Counterinsurgency requires attention to three main areas of effort: security, economics, and politics.**
- **Successful counterinsurgency depends most critically on gaining the political allegiance of the local population.** Battlefield victories are primarily important to the degree that they build or sustain support among the population.
- **Successful counterinsurgency requires empowerment of legitimate, indigenous actors and cannot be achieved principally through the efforts of outsiders.**
- **Patience is required in counterinsurgency, as successful efforts typically take a decade or longer.**
- **Care and precision are required in the use of force in counterinsurgency, and as such policing functions are ultimately more appropriate than combat operations by soldiers.**

The problem with such a list of truisms is not so much that they are incorrect—in fact, they are probably all generally sound. Rather, **the challenge is in translating these**

principles into actionable policy in a given case, and in determining if efforts to do so are succeeding. It is here where metrics potentially have their greatest role. . . .

. . . [The post-invasion experience in Iraq] underscores important **limitations of metrics**: [a] **It is often difficult to know which metrics, in a given case, are most important for forecasting the overall direction** in which a country is headed. [b] **There is often a time lag between when problems begin to develop and when they are clearly visible and measurable.** [c] **Early in an operation it may be especially hard to assess trends**—in large part because the starting point, or baseline, for certain metrics can be hard to identify due to poor data. . . .

[Measurement difficulties result of COIN being largely about achieving political effects]

Determining progress in a counterinsurgency campaign is more an art than a science. **The use of concrete numbers, while helpful, should not delude anyone into a belief that results of the work are particularly rigorous or reliable.** In part this is because of the difficulty of gathering and interpreting such sensitive data in such dangerous circumstances.

There is in both Iraq and Afghanistan a very human tendency to emphasize that data which is readily at hand and assume it is the most telling information about overall trend lines. Thus, for example, while it is clear that economic development is crucial to progress in counterinsurgency, GDP growth is by no means an adequate representation of economic progress. Jobs, quality-of-life metrics such as water and sanitation and electricity availability, and health care are at least as important.

But more profoundly, measurement difficulties stem from the fact that counterinsurgencies are largely about achieving political effects. Political effects result from human perceptions within unique political communities. Understanding such perceptions is inherently a contextual and qualitative process, even if some quantification is useful and possible. Thus, for example, in Afghanistan, public opinion data remains stubbornly positive, even as security indicators turn downward, reflecting perhaps low expectations formed by decades of strife. But Iraq demonstrates that public opinion is also subject to very sudden shifts from discrete, highly visible events and is hard to restore once lost.

It also follows from the contextual nature of counterinsurgencies that we should expect the most useful measures of progress to vary between campaigns. The broadest conclusion about Iraq is that civilian fatality rates themselves were portending a failing mission by 2005-2006 and needed to be reversed for the mission to have any hope. **In Afghanistan, by contrast, weak and corrupt state institutions and a nonfunctioning national economy are probably the most important weaknesses.** Documenting progress in these areas, such as the quality of security forces and judicial systems, is also **a complex and ultimately largely subjective business.**

[Military, political leaders both have incentives to use and abuse quantitative measures]

Similarly, **one must beware worshipping trends while missing the forces that are building to reverse them.** For example, **the civilian fatality rate is a very important indicator in any war, but it often seems to be a lagging indicator of changes in momentum.** This means we can see civilian fatalities going up in the short term even as

progress is being made. That could be, for example, because new tactics lead to more fighting and thus increased fatalities for civilians as well as combatants. (It is also possible, as in Al Anbar province in 2005-2006, that increased brutality by insurgents against civilians can lead to a subsequent backlash against the insurgents.)

We also need to be aware of our own incentives in using and abusing quantitative measures.

Military leaders, who bear daily witness to the valor and sacrifice of their troops, **have an incentive to emphasize the positive in order to promote strong morale**. This is understandable and natural, even necessary, but it must be acknowledged so that battlefield commanders' assessments can be treated with a certain care and even skepticism at times.

Political leaders have an incentive to spin data to maintain public support for the war effort, sometimes for partisan reasons, sometimes out of a conviction that the only way a counterinsurgency can truly be lost is if domestic political support dissipates.

Some amount of message control is necessary and inevitable in any war effort, but in accepting this we must be careful not to spin ourselves.

[Metrics will be essential in differentiating progress from quagmire in Afghanistan]

Finally, **perhaps the biggest contribution that metrics can make to a counterinsurgency campaign is to establish a foundation for strategic patience—though not blind faith**. Counterinsurgency campaigns, especially successful ones, last on average over a decade.

For this reason, **political leaders rightly counsel patience. But skeptical publics rightly demand interim measures that can demonstrate that progress is being made**. Both points of view are legitimate, even if they are in tension.

On balance, however, **patience is required in Afghanistan, since the main task there is to build up institutions and Afghan government capacity—inherently difficult and slow enterprises. It may be possible to gauge local progress** in areas that first received increased resources. **It may also be possible to document greater government control** over key assets like the country's "ring road" relatively rapidly. **But positive nationwide trends will likely be slower to emerge.**

This means that positive results in Afghanistan, if they are achieved, will likely be slower in coming—perhaps not until late 2010 even if we are successful—and more difficult to discern than those in Iraq. In that case, trusted metrics will be essential to help both leaders and the public find the wisdom to differentiate progress from quagmire and to maintain strategic patience as slow improvement is being made.

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5. “Measures for Security in a Counterinsurgency,” by Jonathan J. Schroden, Journal of Strategic Studies, Vol. 32, No. 5, October 2009. [KBTWSummary, KBTITheory, KBTSIraq] Jonathan J. Schroden is affiliated with the Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria, Virginia. This paper is based in part on analyses performed by the author while deployed to the Al Anbar province of Iraq with Multi-National Force-West (MNF-W), from January to October 2007. From this item at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01402390903189394> we *quote* from the abstract and the conclusion:

Quantitative measures to gauge progress in a counterinsurgency in use today include the number of enemy, friendly, and civilian casualties, and the level of violence. While common, **each of these has drawbacks.** With this and the sparseness of the literature on this topic in mind, **we argue for a series of improved measures.**

These include the ratio of who is initiating incidents, an historical analysis of incidents and related variables, and an analysis of insurgent target sets. These measures are presented using data for Al Anbar province, Iraq, along with a discussion of their advantages over more common metrics.

[Many measures to gauge progress in conventional campaign have little utility in COIN]

In every endeavor, there is a desire to know whether progress is being made. This is especially true for endeavors involving conflict; military conflict being one example. **In conventional military conflicts, efforts to determine progress abound. Tactical examples** include a soldier following rounds put down range with his eye to ensure they are striking the target, or battle damage assessments following air and artillery strikes to determine if the target was destroyed. **Operational examples** include friendly and enemy body counts, orders of battle, and terrain held. All are key measures for determining whether a conventional campaign is going well, and can be used to inform discussions of strategic adjustment. **These examples, while reliant on data that are not always easy to obtain, are at least straightforward and their connection to progress in a conventional campaign is typically apparent.**

Unconventional military conflicts can be more complex than conventional ones. In a counterinsurgency, for example, the contest is for people and ideas as opposed to terrain and physical conquest. As David Galula says, an insurgent holds no terrain and refuses to fight for it.

The U.S. Army’s field manual on counterinsurgency explains that **in such a conflict, the tools of conventional campaigns**, such as the ability to execute operational maneuver or employ overwhelming firepower, **can be counterproductive and inhibit the accomplishment of campaign objectives.**

Since the tactics, operational design, and strategy for a successful counterinsurgency campaign differ significantly from a conventional one, **many of the measures used to gauge progress in a conventional campaign are of little utility in a counterinsurgency.** Furthermore, because of its complex nature, **devising measures that do gauge progress in a counterinsurgency can be difficult, though such efforts are as important for a counterinsurgency as for any military endeavor.**

With this in mind, we will present here a discussion of measuring progress in a counterinsurgency, with an emphasis on several measures for security developed by the author and the advantages these have over some more common security metrics. Such a discussion is important for several reasons.

- First, **while not a new topic, the literature is generally sparse in providing explicit details on how to measure progress in a counterinsurgency.**
- Second, **the most common metrics currently in use suffer from drawbacks, so it is worthwhile to extend the discussion beyond them.**
- Finally, **with the advent of effects-based planning and assessments in recent years, there is a growing demand by military commanders for more rigorous means of gauging progress in a campaign. The same can be said of the American people,** as the integration of the tenets of scientific research into the public consciousness has created a demand for more quantitative assurances of progress. . . .

[Three general advantages of gauging progress in COIN with new measures]

The means of measuring progress in a counterinsurgency campaign described here have several general advantages over many common metrics in use today.

- First and foremost is that they have **a direct relation to several key aspects of counterinsurgency operations:** removing the insurgent's advantage of initiative; developing local forces to fight and generate intelligence; and gaining the support of and securing the local population. **The same cannot be said about many other metrics currently in use.**
- Second, **our measures rely on a common and generally reliable source of data. Each of the analyses presented in this paper used the MNF-W Significant Events database as the primary source.** There was no need for gathering data like the number of troops or the number of patrols, or for sending data collectors out to ask polling questions. **Each of our measures was derived strictly from combat reports** that got filed as a matter of course anyway. This helped to reduce the overall level of effort required, but more importantly it **provided a high level of consistency in the data used to calculate the measures, which is not the case for some common metrics,** an example being civilian casualties Admittedly, **the same can be said of incident levels alone as a metric, since these also come directly from combat reports.**
- However, a third advantage of our measures is that they **facilitate a much greater level of understanding than can be obtained by looking at the number of incidents alone.** This is due to two factors. The first is that **our measures fuse information on the actions of all three actors in this type of campaign: insurgents, counterinsurgents, and the local populace.** The second is that **our measures contain additional layers of information beyond just the number of incidents.** As such, they paint a more comprehensive picture of the security situation and what may be causing changes in it.

[Still needed: More detailed discussion of useful metrics or means of gauging progress]

For these reasons, and the many others we have articulated in this paper, we feel that **the measures presented here represent an improved framework for gauging progress in a counterinsurgency**. In addition, **they have the added benefit of being useful from a strategic communications perspective**.

During our time in Al Anbar, for example, **there were a large number of VIPs, press, and others** who were briefed at various times on the security situation and how it was evolving. **While some of these people were satisfied with qualitative assessments from our intelligence and operations officers, many others were skeptics who demanded quantitative evidence** that those assessments were valid. In our experience, **the types of measures presented here can help placate such skeptics** by providing more rigor to the discussion than might otherwise be present.

With all that said, it is our sincere hope that at the very least this work will **stimulate a more detailed discussion, replete with data and examples, of other useful metrics or means of gauging progress in a counterinsurgency**. It is not an understatement to say that such an informed discussion might in the future save the lives of warriors and civilians alike.

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