

The ARMY Magazine Hooah Guide to



COIN COUNTERINSURGENCY

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A Short Course on a Big Mission:

U.S. involvement in counterinsurgency (COIN) operations and how the American character programmed itself for doing good in bad situations, along with an abbreviated version of the new *Field Manual 3-24 Counterinsurgency* and the startling shifts insurgency is making—dimensions of warfare heretofore unimaginable and still largely unfathomed.

The First Global Counterinsurgency—The Army's Counterinsurgency Test

The U.S. Army is engaged in counterinsurgency (COIN) operations on a scale previously unimaginable. Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan are massive counterinsurgency campaigns individually, but they are joined by U.S. Army elements fighting either direct counterinsurgency/counterterrorism operations or advising or supporting allies on nearly every continent and in some of the most uninviting corners of the world.

Only the Roman legions fought more simultaneous counterinsurgencies, and only from the view that most of Roman history can be classified as a constant counterinsurgency. The experienced British army has fought a higher total number of counterinsurgencies during its long military history—including opposing a singular revolution in its North American colonies.

This is the first global counterinsurgency campaign. The extent and focus resulted in the first complete overhaul of Army counterinsurgency doctrine in two decades, resulting in *Field Manual (FM) 3-24 Counterinsurgency*, which was published last December. The doctrine faced an immediate test under fire.

Within weeks, Gen. David H. Petraeus, architect of the new FM, arrived in Baghdad to take command of Multi-National Force-Iraq and the counterinsurgency campaign there. The Iraqi capital and much of the country was reeling under raging Sunni-Shia sectarian violence, and U.S. troops faced brutal insurgent attacks from both sects. There has never been a more complex counterinsurgency: insurgents represent at least eight major factions, which

at any time might be working with or against each other, but most are working against Coalition forces all of the time. Large portions of the host-nation government and security forces are split along sectarian lines, working against each other and, ultimately, against U.S. soldiers fighting and dying to help them. There has been a sharp spike in U.S. casualties which does not show signs of relenting soon and which leaders warned would be expected in a campaign with increased activity and exposure to protect the populace.

Elements of the new U.S. counterinsurgency plan are in place with deployment of additional U.S. Army combat brigades to Baghdad. U.S. soldiers have established dozens of

combat outposts and joint security stations to provide better security to the population under a major precept of counterinsurgency: protect the

people. Other U.S. soldiers have emplaced concentric rings of security on the outskirts of the city to replicate border security (a major counterinsurgency precept missing in Iraq) and stem the flow of outside support to the insurgents from Iran and Syria. Training and supervision of the Iraqi security forces has increased. Attempts to resuscitate anemic reconstruction programs have been started.

All the best practices of counterinsurgency are being employed by U.S. forces, but it remains to be seen whether best practices can overcome the worst natures of those who could benefit most.

And all the while, the U.S. domestic political clock ticks.



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History: COIN of the Realms—Prelude and Contemporary Practice

Thousands of what today can be termed insurgencies have occurred over the course of history, and everything from extermination to existentialism has been employed to stop them. Historical counterinsurgency (COIN) study lays out a smorgasbord of strategies and tactics, and COIN doctrines of today largely are adaptations and variations of meth-

handful of exceptions, great powers have a rotten record against insurgencies.

Because of glaring commonalities, history is a good predictor of failure at the national strategic level when a great power fights a protracted counterinsurgency on foreign soil against an insurgency that cannot be easily and quickly defeated and which doesn't implode or quit. One of two major things happens to the greater power: there is either a drastic change in national priority (a bigger threat looms), or in domestic politics (including public opinion or an emptying of the national treasury), leading to a determination that the counterinsurgency campaign is not worth the cost, commitment or pain.

Evaluation of any COIN campaign can only be done in retrospect. History is the grader. Preparation can only be done by studying COIN campaigns. History is the guide.

“Quotable”

“To ravage, to slaughter, to usurp under false titles, they call empire; and where they make a desert, they call it peace.”

—Contemporarily, the quotation is most often cited: “They make a wasteland and call it peace.” It was reported by Roman historian Tacitus and attributed to Calgacus, the chieftain of a Pict tribe, who said it in a rousing speech to his followers before a battle with the Romans. Calgacus lost 30,000 warriors in the battle and retreated. Good speech, however.

ods tried in the past and determined to be best practices. Yet even the worst practices can teach, while some of the best practices have failed. And even COIN campaigns deemed successful still have their warts.

There are basic types of COIN campaigns: conquest—removing vestiges of resistance after an invasion; rebellion—putting down an internal revolution without outside intervention; defense—preventing foreign conquest by an enemy that employs guerrilla warfare techniques; and a fourth general variation when a third party (country or countries) intervenes to help a nation put down rebellion or defend itself against an insurgency or guerrilla invasion.

History is not a good predictor of whether COIN tactics or field strategies will succeed because factors are wildly variable. Things that work to some extent for one place, time or people may not work when employed for others. Then again, they might. For soldiers fighting a counterinsurgency, the only thing they can do is look at what has or has not worked and adapt techniques to fit their circumstance.

Called by various names—revolution, guerrilla war, war of independence—the fact is that most of the noteworthy insurgencies that have occurred as far back as the American Revolutionary War onward have succeeded, most of them succeeding against the great powers of their times. With a

A Little Bit of Carrot, A Whole Lot of Stick

The Roman Empire fought most of what we call counterinsurgencies if only because the Romans did more conquering than anybody else, did it longer than anybody else and own most of Western history. The Romans had a simple policy: they didn't take guff off anybody.

Among myriad things they handed down to us is the term “Carthaginian peace,” which refers to a peace obtained by the utter destruction of an enemy. Rome tired of fighting the Carthaginians over a period of decades (the First, Second and Third Punic Wars) and invaded the capital city of Carthage (in what we know today as Tunisia), killing most inhabitants, selling the rest into slavery, tearing down every stone of every building and then sowing the soil with salt so nothing would grow. War over.

In conquest and subsequent rule, the Romans used fear (first) and a smattering of reward, with pretty much nothing in between. They only had

two speeds, but developed a fairly good counterinsurgency doctrine in everyday practice. They were not without subtleties. It was not all based on the sword, although that was the quickly employed fallback negotiation position.

The carrot approach appealed to the base frailties of human character: ambition, greed, jealousy, duplicity, treachery, revenge and the desire for power, wealth and comfort. These, of course, remain basic motivational factors, and still work in counterinsurgency.

The Romans used the carrot approach selectively; they made the ruling classes sell out, knowing that if the elites played ball, the low-borns would have to go along. Every crown and office was bestowed at the pleasure of Rome and could just as easily be revoked. If the elites turned on Rome, they could always be slaughtered and new elites promoted from the ranks who might better understand that they served themselves best by serving Rome well. Rome controlled the sword and the promotion list.

The Romans also understood tribalism and used it to their favor, keeping disjointed tribes split by playing on natural rivalries and setting one upon another with their backing. In this way, tribes were less likely to join together to present a larger threat to the legions, and favored tribes would do a lot of the heavy lifting by hacking apart their neighbors.

All this served Rome well for many centuries, until Romans became decadent, poorly led, impoverished and probably lead-poisoned by their own tableware and plumbing, and sealed their fate by splitting the empire until it was so weak that it could not repel motley bands of former insurgents turned into conquerors. It will serve us to remember the last COIN lessons of Rome: counterinsurgency methods, by themselves, sometimes are temporary fixes, and no matter what you do for the insurgents they will never love you for what they believe you did to them.

Staying in the Net

For small war information, discussion and links to a variety of resources, see the *Small Wars Journal* site at www.smallwarsjournal.com.

The U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute site is www.carlisle.army.mil/usacsl/divisions/pksoi/index.aspx.

The U.S. Marine Corps Small Wars Center of Excellence site is www.smallwars.quantico.usmc.mil/archive_reading.asp.

Note from Napoleon: There Are No Small Wars, Just Large Egos

The term "guerrilla" originated during Napoleon's Peninsular Campaign. In Spanish it means small war. For Napoleon, it meant a big headache. In his fight with England, holding Portugal, specifically its coastline, represented an area of strategic importance. The English had it; he wanted it. To get to Portugal, his armies would have to march through Spain. Spain was a nominal ally under his 1807 Continental System, but Napoleon considered the Spanish royals a pack of fools, at best, and not especially helpful in his fight for Portugal and the English armies there. (Face it, he wanted Spain, too, and especially the Spanish fleet.)

He deposed the Spanish royals, gave the crown to his brother and pretty much beat down the Spanish land forces. The Spanish didn't particularly love their king and queen, but they liked Napoleon's brother wearing the crown even less. Besides that, the French committed a lot of atrocities and stole everything they could. The topper, however, was that Napoleon tried to institute his view of a secular state on the very Catholic Spanish people. That was it. Priests and monks fired up the people, who formed guerrilla groups that so disrupted Napoleon's lines of communications through Spain that the French were fighting a two-front war: the English and Portuguese to the west and the guerrillas to their rear. It took so many troops and so much effort to nominally secure the lines of communications that it ate away at the main effort. This helped the English forces under Wellington (who, of course, Napoleon would meet again) to eventually push the French out and cause Napoleon to refer to the guerrillas as his "Spanish ulcer" until the end of his days.

Insurgency Made in the U.S.A and (Thankfully) Botched by the Redcoats

Measures taken by Britain to stomp out the American Colonial insurrection only inflamed it. We arguably ended up with a Bill of Rights because of the missteps of British counterinsurgency. Go down the list: the right to assemble peacefully; freedom of the press; freedom from unreasonable search and seizure; even the right not to have soldiers quartered in your home except by lawful means. These rights are ingrained now because British soldiers or mercenaries abused them.

The American Revolutionary War began with discontent that flickered into insurgency and flamed into revolution. We can call it the War of Independence because it was successful. Had the British prevailed, it would have been just another quashed rebellion. And it could well have been that.

The British had opportunities to stop it in its tracks, at least initially, by addressing the political and economic issues: taxes, trade barriers and representation. Had they taken steps to soothe the colonies on those issues, the revolution wouldn't have gotten out of the starting gate. Instead, they turned to the bayonet—a classic case of a military solution applied to a political problem.

Even in applying a military solution, the Redcoats had countless chances not to make things worse. With every step, however, they angered the colonists more.

At its height, fewer than half of the American colonials are estimated to have supported breaking with the mother country. Another 15 to 20 percent opposed it. The rest? Maybe they just wanted to be left alone or

were fence-sitters, waiting to see how things went. Had the British brought the neutrals to their side, however, the cause of the crown would have been in the majority.

The Revolutionary War generally carries a New England or at least a northern flavor—Lexington, Concord, Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Trenton, Saratoga—but militarists concede that the pivotal battles in the war's latter stage occurred in the South, specifically the Carolinas.

In the Carolinas, the war was ugly, and it was personal. What can be termed atrocities were carried out by both sides. In some parts, loyalists were thicker than ticks, and they fought openly against the rebellion. It was a civil war within a revolution down there. III

“Quotable”

“It is unfortunate that the efforts of mankind to recover the freedom of which they have been so long deprived, will be accompanied with violence, with errors, and even with crimes. But while we weep over the means, we must pray for the end.

“I hold it that a little rebellion, now and then, is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms are in the physical. ... It is medicine necessary for the sound health of government.

“We surely cannot deny to any nation that right whereon our own government is founded, that every one may govern itself according to whatever form it pleases and change these forms at its own will. ... The will of the nation is the only thing essential to be regarded.”

—Thomas Jefferson

feelings ran deep, and when the war was over, many loyalists—although they were afforded a de facto pardon and protection—chose (or were forced) to flee. Some 70,000 people from throughout the new states decamped, becoming what we think of as a contemporary phenomenon: political refugees.

General Orders 100: The Civil War's Counterinsurgency Contribution

As the Civil War raged, organized Confederate formations of partisans and raiders, primarily light cavalry, became a serious threat to Union forces by destroying supplies and railways and generally creating havoc behind Union lines. Lt. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, in Tennessee, and Col. John Singleton Mosby, in Virginia, were particularly adept and successful, and their exploits are much storied. Gen. Forrest was on the cavalry raider end of the spectrum and Col. Mosby on the partisan or guerrilla end, although one would probably get an argument from him on that point.

Mosby's Rangers (the 43rd Battalion of Virginia Cavalry, which was spawned and detached from the 1st Virginia Cavalry Regiment) operated from the northern environs of the Shenandoah Valley, and their sting was felt to the very outskirts of Washington, D.C. Mosby, who garnered the nickname the Gray Ghost, made headlines with his daring raids and ability to melt back into the Shenandoah. With only a few hundred men, Mosby pinned down whole divisions protecting the southwest approaches to the capital and guarding the strategically vital Baltimore & Ohio Railway lines running westward from Washington.

Finally, to root Mosby and other partisans from the valley, Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant sent Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan on a devastating campaign through the Shenandoah with the directive: "If you can possibly spare a division of cavalry, send them through Loudoun County [Va.] to destroy and carry off the crops, animals, [slaves], and all men under fifty years of age bearing arms. In this way you will get many of Mosby's men. All male prisoners under fifty can fairly be held as prisoners of war, not as citizen prisoners. If not already soldiers, they will be made so the moment the rebel army gets hold of them."

Sheridan's Shenandoah Campaign—the ferocity and destructiveness of which is reviled in

the valley to this day—was constantly harassed by Mosby. True to form, Mosby never formally surrendered at the end of the war. He merely disbanded his unit, dismissed his men and went home. He was pardoned in 1866.

The most violent, and one can say criminal, of the Civil War's irregulars were bands from Kansas and Missouri that focused on civilian targets—robbing and killing in the name of their supposed particular political views. To address all aspects of partisan warfare, and the conduct of

“Quotable”

“The military value of a partisan's work is not measured by the amount of property destroyed, or the number of men killed or captured, but by the number [of the enemy] he keeps watching.”

—Col. John Singleton Mosby

war in general, President Abraham Lincoln signed into effect Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field (General Orders Number 100) in April 1863, covering general aspects of the Army's responsibilities such as martial law and protection of citizens and responses to actions against it. That set of orders was the formal guidance for the U.S. Army through the end of the century and well beyond the Spanish-American War, particularly toward partisans, guerrillas and insurgents. The orders offered definitions for insurrection, civil war and rebellion in Articles 149, 150 and 151: "Insurrection is the rising of people in arms against their government, or a portion of it, or against one or more of its laws, or against an officer or officers of the government. It may be confined to mere armed resistance, or it may have greater ends in view. Civil war is war between two or more portions of a country or state, each contending for the mastery of the whole, and each claiming to be the legitimate government. The term is also sometimes applied to war of rebellion, when the rebel-

lious provinces or portions of the state are contiguous to those containing the seat of government. The term rebellion is applied to an insurrection of large extent, and is usually a war between the legitimate government of a country and portions of provinces of the same who seek to throw off their allegiance to it and set up a government of their own.”

The following articles from General Orders Number 100 address treatment of individual irregulars.

Article 81: Partisans are soldiers armed and wearing the uniform of their army, but belonging to a corps which acts detached from the main body for the purpose of making inroads into the territory occupied by the enemy. If captured, they are entitled to all the privileges of the prisoner of war.

Article 82: Men, or squads of men, who commit hostilities, whether by fighting, or inroads for destruction or plunder, or by raids of any kind, without commission, without being part and portion of the organized hostile army, and without sharing continuously in the war, but who do so with intermittent returns to their homes and avocations, or with the occasional assumption of the semblance of peaceful pursuits, divesting themselves of the character or appearance of soldiers—such men, or squads of men, are not public

enemies, and, therefore, if captured, are not entitled to the privileges of prisoners of war, but shall be treated summarily as highway robbers or pirates. **Article 83:** Scouts, or single soldiers, if disguised in the dress of the country or in the

Staying in the Net

The full text of General Orders No. 100 can be found at the Yale Law School site: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lieber.htm#sec4>. Signed by President Lincoln in April 1863, General Orders 100 were the only codified guidance for the U.S. Army's conduct in the field until well after the Spanish-American War and specifically addressed how the Army would view and treat partisans and guerrillas.

uniform of the army hostile to their own, employed in obtaining information, if found within or lurking about the lines of the captor, are treated as spies, and suffer death. **Article 84:** Armed prowlers, by whatever names they may be called, or persons of the enemy's territory, who steal within the lines of the hostile army for the purpose of robbing, killing or of destroying bridges, roads or canals, or of robbing or destroying the mail, or of cutting the telegraph wires, are not entitled to the privileges of the prisoner of war.

Article 85: War-rebels are persons within an occupied territory who rise in arms against the occupying or conquering army, or against the authorities established by the same. If captured, they may suffer death, whether they rise singly, in small or large bands, and whether called upon to do so by their own, but expelled, government or not. They are not prisoners of war; nor are they if discovered and secured before their conspiracy has matured to an actual rising or armed violence.

If Mules Were the Answer, What Was the Question?

Mobility was a problem in the rugged mountains of the Southwest as soldiers tried to track down the Apaches under Geronimo—a campaign closer to a counterinsurgency than others of the Indian Wars (which were largely wars of eradication) if only because the Apache tactically operated like guerrillas and were elusive. Geronimo's band hid and fought for more than a decade. At the pinnacle of the search for Geronimo, more than a quarter of the entire U.S. Army was engaged.

Wagons were the high-technology Army transportation asset of the day, and they proved to be a bit too high-tech for the mission. They could not traverse the mountains and narrow canyons, hampering the search. The relatively high-tech Army of the day needed a lot of supplies, and the Army decided to employ pack mules on a large scale in place of wagons. It was considered an innovative solution to the problem. The mule became an important transportation asset—its magnitude still noted, as the mule remains the mascot of West Point—and a large number of mules remained in Army service through World War II.

A War That Shaped U.S. Foreign Involvement and National Self-Image

The Spanish-American War embodied the American bluster of the time and created a national concept of benevolent foreign intervention—that we are the do-gooders in a bad-doing cosmos.

The war was an outlet for “American exceptionalism,” a term coined by Alexis de Tocqueville in his 1835 work *Democracy in America* and which was resurrected in the 1890s as a logical extension of Manifest Destiny, which had driven expansion across the continent. It served as justification for expansion outside North America. American exceptionalism is explained as a deep-seated national perception which holds that the United States is qualitatively above other countries because of its unique origins, national credo, historical evolution and distinctive political and religious institutions.

The rebirth of American exceptionalism happened to coincide with the peak of the 19th century missionary movement and the golden age of philanthropy as America’s great tycoons dedicated much of their fortunes (however acquired) to humanitarian endeavors. The resultant philosophical cocktail was a notion that what we owed most to the world was the opportunity and means to be more like us, manifested not by territorial acquisition but by benevolent enlightenment. The Spanish-American War was the spark sending that torch bravely and enthusiastically forward into the darkness imposed for centuries by Old World imperialism. Unprepared, confused and enthralled by the territorial riches dumped into our laps as a

result of the Spanish-American War, however, we could not resist acquisitions, and we rationalized that if it was done in an enlightened manner and temporary it was OK. It was, after all, an opportunity for downtrodden people to realize the ambition to reshape their lives in our reflection. We were astonished if they did not embrace that concept. We occasionally continue to be astonished because the do-good intentions of U.S. foreign involvement forged by the times and themes of the Spanish-American War remain part of our national character today. It should be conceded that many parts of the world really are better off for it, just as it should be that the world’s view may not reflect how we see ourselves. American exceptionalism remains peculiarly American.

The Spanish-American War’s Links To the Supreme Allied Do-Gooders

General of the Army Douglas MacArthur served as aide-de-camp to his father, Lt. Gen. Arthur MacArthur Jr., during his tenure as Governor General of the Philippines, gaining firsthand experience in the “benevolent assimilation” of the Philippine people. As a young officer, General of the Army George C. Marshall Jr. also served in the Philippines and gained similar experience.

It is interesting to note that as Supreme Allied Commander of Allied Powers in Japan nearly a half-century later, the ways in which MacArthur was able to personally shape post-World War II Japan may well have embraced the benevolent assimilation policies of the Philippines, albeit modernized and personalized and with authority both absolute and accepted by the Japanese people. And as Secretary of State, Marshall may have fashioned the struts of the Marshall Plan on similar attitudes, matured to fit the times and needs.

Modern Japan and Europe may—in theory and practice—most truly reflect the intent of American exceptionalism’s mores and its stamp on Spanish-American War policy.

And A War That Rewelded Fissures Remaining From the Civil War

The Spanish-American War began just 33 years after the end of the Civil War, and younger veterans of that war would then have been in their 50s. Many hard feelings from the war and Reconstruction remained fresh on both sides. For the first time, the Spanish-American War brought the whole nation together in single purpose against a common foe, and it is cited as the event that

truly unified America again. Leadership in Cuba reflected both sides in the Civil War. Maj. Gen. William Shafter, a Union brevet brigadier general at the end of the Civil War, commanded Fifth Corps during the invasion, and Maj. Gen. (of Volunteers) Joseph Wheeler, Gen. Shafter’s Cavalry commander, had been a lieutenant general in the Confederate army.

'Splendid Little War'—Nasty, National Will-Testing Counterinsurgency

It's ironic that the United States launched the Spanish-American War to end a brutal and ham-fisted counterinsurgency waged by Spain on Cuban guerrillas, innocent peasants and what Americans came to see as human dignity itself, and that the war ended with a long, harsh counterinsurgency conducted by the United States half a world away in the Philippines in a fight to maintain its own national dignity and purpose and to fulfill its promises.

Warts aside, the Philippine counterinsurgency was successful, and that is the only thing that matters. Counterinsurgency is a shifting minefield of ways to fail with no clear path. Stuck in the middle of it, it's as dangerous to go back as to go forward, and you certainly can't stand still. The Philippines was the one place that America made it clear across the minefield. It wasn't perfect, it wasn't pretty, but the whole trip was made.

The fight against the Philippine insurgency stands as the best American counterinsurgency campaign; weighed against the nearly 90 percent counterinsurgency failure rate for the rest of the 20th century, it was among the best ever waged. The Philippine campaign has more parallels and relevance to the ongoing counterinsurgency in Iraq than any other—far more than the oft-raised specter of Vietnam.

The Philippine campaign was a conventional military operation that looked like it was all done but for the flag waving when the bottom fell out. And the bottom fell out of the counterinsurgency operation once, too, when it looked like that was

going smoothly—right up until the time the insurgents made a big push to influence American domestic politics and U.S. policy toward fighting them. Many Americans came to oppose it (on anti-imperialism grounds); there was even an anti-imperialism presidential candidate (who lost).

In the field, the counterinsurgency operation largely was salvaged by a new general with an old playbook but a new plan. It even had a troop surge and was hamstrung to a degree when the

“Quotable”

“There are a hundred soldiers that have never seen a horse, a hundred horses that have never seen a soldier and a bunch of officers who have never seen either.”

—The assessment of his new command (an element of the 15th Cavalry) received by then-Capt. John J. Pershing, while awaiting debarkation on the Manila docks, given by an anonymous officer, who had sailed with it to the Philippines.

President wouldn't authorize more troops. It was costly in terms of American casualties and American treasure, and it lasted longer than anybody predicted.

The Philippine campaign unveiled a military and political hypersensitivity to U.S. domestic public opinion. Many of the problems it brought on were blamed on the press, and insurgents sought to use the American press.

Atrocities were committed by both sides. Insurgents sliced up American soldiers. U.S. soldiers executed insurgents outright, and some were reprimanded for it. There was American torture of prisoners—photographed. There were even Islamic insurgents in the southern islands.

That's the short version, but if you study the Philippine insurgency in detail, it's all there.

Recommended Reading

For an honest, unvarnished, detailed assessment of more than a century's worth of U.S. counterinsurgency operations, read the two-volume set by Andrew J. Birtle, published by the U.S. Army Center of Military History: *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1860-1941* and *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1942-1976*. Mr. Birtle's summaries, explanatory passages and other narratives present a clear and insightful history of the counterinsurgencies themselves not just the doctrine. Read them.

A Fledgling World Power Takes Wing and Gets Its Feathers Ruffled

The Philippine insurgency was widespread and vicious; however, the United States employed an extremely inventive and unprecedented counterinsurgency campaign, which leveraged a flexible, full spectrum mix of military power, civil assistance and economy building. It was a textbook counterinsurgency plan, although it really wasn't meant as a counterinsurgency plan: it actually was the benevolent assimilation plan for the preinsurgency Philippines, but it resulted in a great counterinsurgency campaign, too.

In executing that campaign, an obscure captain (demoted from brevet major and nearing retirement age) named John J. Pershing turned out to be a counterinsurgency genius, which propelled him from captain to instant brigadier general by presidential decree for his Philippine service. He had several tours in the Philippines, back-to-back tours as a captain and later as a brigadier general. In all instances, Pershing's philosophy was simple: respect them if you want them to respect you. He wasn't stingy with kinetic action when necessary, but his main weapon was leveraging his personal relations with Filipinos to avoid a fight.

The campaign was rough going, costly in money and lives: more than 4,300 American soldiers died from combat and disease, and more than \$400 million in 1900-dollars went toward it. And it caused a great deal of domestic political discord back home.

The insurgency started like this: the self-proclaimed president in exile, Emilio Aguinaldo, participated in a failed Philippine insurrection in 1896. Accepting amnesty and a cash payoff, Aguinaldo and many cohorts fled to Hong Kong, where he elbowed his way into notice by U.S. diplomats and Adm. George Dewey. Adm. Dewey and his fleet had been dispatched to Hong Kong by virtue of what can only be called a scheme by then-Undersecretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt, a highly charged proponent of the war with Spain, to wait in case (when, if Roosevelt had his way) the United States declared war on Spain. Adm. Dewey's orders were to sail to the Philippines and engage the Spanish Pacific fleet. Aguinaldo was deemed potentially useful enough to accompany him in the venture. Aguinaldo saw the Americans as allies in his cause with the idea that the United States would install him to lead the Philippines after the Span-

ish were defeated. The Americans didn't share his recollection of promises to that effect.

The Spanish fleet suffered a naval beat-down by Adm. George Dewey without the loss of a single American sailor in combat (one died of a heart attack), but Spanish ground forces remained entrenched ashore. Aguinaldo rejoined his movement and, encouraged by the Americans, led action to rout the Spanish army (which at that point just wanted to go home) from their rural garrisons.

Aguinaldo declared Philippine independence in June. The Filipino force, however, was not allowed to attack Spanish defenses of the capital city, Manila, and U.S. forces landed in August to take Manila after a perfunctory fight. The Spanish surrendered the capital—and symbolically the country—to Americans, not Filipinos. Aguinaldo was shut out, incensed and wary of the United States, for good reason as it turned out. The United States gained possession of the Philippines under terms of the December 10, 1898 treaty ending the Spanish-American War, paying Spain \$20 million to settle Philippine possession issues outright.

When the agreement was announced, Aguinaldo (and many Filipinos) were incensed. The erstwhile Philippine army attacked American forces less than two months later and were quickly defeated. Aguinaldo dropped the notion that he could take on the Americans with a conventional army and headed into the hills of northern Luzon to wage guerrilla war.

The United States had a total of 40,000 troops in the Philippines to put down the uprising in 1899, and at the height two years later, 74,000 soldiers were stationed in the Philippines. They faced an insurgent strength estimated at 80,000 to 100,000 with many more in support.

The counterinsurgency/benevolent assimilation plan was based on what we call civil action today. Educating the Philippine population was a key element, so schools were built. A Philippine Constabulary was organized and trained. Local governments (to a point) were established, overseen by American military officers who retained final say. Efforts were made to shore up the economic structure and get trade going. Regional administrative areas and the national government, however, were totally in American hands.

Countering guerrilla resistance to American authority really wasn't part of the initial plan, but the overall do-gooder foundation wasn't dropped because of the fighting. The genius of it was twofold: 1) It was largely locally based. Small units of American soldiers were stationed around the country in or near large villages to govern, keep the peace and get progress rolling, and long sweeping patrols were sent from them to control a larger area. 2) The plan was flexible. Commanders could use what worked. If civic action worked in a particular area, go with that. If outright fighting was necessary in another, do that. And a mix could be made anywhere between the two.

Pointing to the progressive elements of the campaign as the winning factors, however, would be wrong. The campaign was solidly on a footing of eliminating the insurgency and insurgents militarily. The Philippine counterinsurgency campaign was by and large what would today be called kinetic.

Warfare was brutal on both sides, and both sides were guilty of atrocities. American soldiers developed a method called the "water cure" to elicit information from prisoners, making them drink gallons of water and stepping or kneeling on their stomachs to force it out. There were other methods, and Filipinos did worse.

Within months, the insurgency seemed to settle down. In the run-up to the 1900 U.S. elec-

tions, however, Aguinaldo spurred his guerrillas to ever higher levels of activity in an effort to tip the American election by causing American public opinion (already a near toss-up in regard to continuing the Philippine counterinsurgency) to go toward the "anti-imperialism" candidate running against President McKinley.

McKinley was reelected and eventually assassinated, leaving the office to his young vice president, Teddy Roosevelt, who was less inclined to end the counterinsurgency than McKinley.

When Lt. Gen. Arthur MacArthur Jr. took overall command of the Philippines—with his son Douglas at his side as aide-de-camp—he revisited the Civil War General Orders 100 and employed its harsher options to punish suspected insurgents and primary supporters, for the first time going after the money sources within the Filipino aristocracy and intelligensia, which started shutting things down fairly quickly.

Aguinaldo was captured through a ruse. American soldiers pretended to be captives and were led into his camp, turning the table and capturing him. He signed a loyalty oath to American rule, effectively ending the Luzon-based insurrection.

The Islamic Moros on the southern island of Mindanao kept fighting long after the Luzon fighters folded.

The .45-caliber automatic Colt pistol round was developed specifically with the Moros in mind, when the .38-caliber issue cartridges of the day failed to stop fanatical (and possibly doped-up) Moro attackers.

Gen. Pershing returned to the Philippines and was sent to take command in Mindanao and stop the Moro insurrection. Combining a heavy dose of kinetic action with a light touch in dealing with the Moros, Pershing again excelled at counterinsurgency, and he is credited with closing the final chapter of the Philippine insurgency in 1913.

“Quotable”

“It should be the earnest and paramount aim of the military administration to win the confidence, respect and affection of the inhabitants of the Philippines by assuring them in every possible way that full measure of individual rights and liberties which is the heritage of a free people and by proving to them that the mission of the United States is one of benevolent assimilation, substituting the mild sway of justice and right for arbitrary rule. In the fulfillment of this high mission, supporting the temperate administration of affairs for the greatest good of the governed, there must be sedulously maintained the strong arm of authority, to repress disturbance and to overcome all obstacles to the bestowal of the blessings of good and stable government upon the people of the Philippine Islands under the flag of the United States.”

—President William McKinley, December 21, 1898 (11 days after the Philippines was ceded to the United States)

Chairman Mao—the Godfather of Modern Revolution

Mao Tse-tung (Mao Zedong in revised form) is the modern world's most successful revolutionary and most prodigious wholesaler of revolution on the planet. His strategies, tactics and idioms form the fissionable nucleus of most revolutions and insurgencies (communist or otherwise) conducted or attempted in the last half of the 20th century and today. His stratagems are often not applied fully or sequentially, but the pieces are there. To fight insurgency, it is wise to study insurgency under Mao—by understanding his methods, one can develop an eye for their tracks, a sense of their rhythms and a reasonable chance of thwarting, sidetracking or turning them against the insurgents.

The new *Field Manual (FM 3-24) Counterinsurgency* contains a good synopsis of Mao's masterworks.

A revolution or insurgency by nature is a protracted war or should become one, according to Mao. His theory of protracted war, or "people's war," employs a three-phased politico-military approach. The phases build on each other, and to move from one to another does not mean stopping activities of the previous phase. Also, if a phase is too strongly opposed or fails to some degree, that phase is curtailed and the previous phase is concentrated on until strong enough to move to the next phase again.

Phase I—Strategic Defense (Covert Action) When the government has a stronger correlation of forces, insurgents must concentrate on survival and building support. Activities include:

- Recruiting, organizing and training cadre members.
- Infiltrating key government organizations and civilian agencies.
- Establishing cellular intelligence operations and support networks.
- Soliciting and obtaining funds.
- Developing sources for external support.

In this phase, Mao states, overt action should be limited to politically motivated assassinations, and all actions should have a propaganda purpose aimed at gaining or cementing the people's support.

Phase II—Strategic Stalemate (Overt Action) When force correlations approach equilibrium, open guerrilla warfare becomes the most important activity. Insurgents undermine the people's support for their government by actions and messages and challenge government control by counteractions.

Mao states that active civil administration of areas or services begins during this phase.

Phase III—Strategic Counteroffensive (Conventional Action) When insurgents have superior strength, guerrilla forces move to conventional operations to destroy the government's military capability. It establishes an effective military organization, an effective means of assuming civil and economic administration and mobilizes the people, in turn providing the security structure to protect them from reprisal or attacks.

Mao states that this phase can only succeed if power has been shifted to the insurgents by the previous phases.

Mao also was keenly aware that the personal or group conduct of his troops would have a profound effect on the people whose support was necessary for success. He initiated an eight-point code of conduct for his troops.

- Speak politely.
- Pay fairly for goods and services.
- Return what is borrowed.
- Pay for damages caused.
- Do not hit or swear at people.
- Do not damage crops.
- Do not take liberties with women.
- Do not mistreat prisoners.

An Updated Approach to COIN Operations and History's Ticking Clock

A new Army counterinsurgency field manual (FM 3-24) was published in December 2006 through a joint effort by the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center and U.S. Marine Corps Office of the Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration.

Twenty years had passed since the U.S. Army last published a field manual dedicated solely to counterinsurgency (COIN), 25 years for the Marine Corps. Ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have made it imperative to provide Soldiers and Marines with updated principles and guidelines for COIN operations. The new FM was specifically designed to fill the doctrinal gap and covers the wide range of COIN operations.

The principal Army architect of FM 3-24 was then-Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus as commander of the Combined Arms Center. Soon after the manual's publication, Gen. Petraeus was appointed to four-star rank and command of Multi-National Force-Iraq and given the responsibility and opportunity to implement FM 3-24's principles to fight the insurgency in Iraq, which he consistently says requires a political solution over a singularly military one. Nevertheless, the United States' military contribution is sizable. It also can be expensive both in terms of lives lost and funding required.

American military presence in Iraq and direct participation in Iraq's counterinsurgency operation has moved to a level of heated debate and nearly dominates U.S. national domestic politics. Historically, this is a natural trend of COIN operations among participating world powers as their time involved in a particular COIN operation extends.

“Quotable”

“The mission of Multi-National Force-Iraq will be modified, making security of the population, particularly in Baghdad and in partnership with Iraqi forces, the focus of the military effort ... The way ahead will neither be quick nor easy, and there will undoubtedly be tough days.”

—Gen. David H. Petraeus, Commander, Multi-National Force-Iraq

This trend adds to overall COIN complexity. Also historically—throughout the centuries but especially in the 20th century—most COIN operations have been unsuccessful because the large supporting or participating power is faced with more pressing national security priorities or politically finds the conflict too costly and the commitment too long. In short, they give up and go home. A ticking COIN clock can almost be considered a given within a participating democracy. Rebels and insurgents know this and use it to their advantage, and people within a participating democracy should recognize it as the historic key strategic factor.

FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency—A Very Abbreviated Version

Insurgency and counterinsurgency (COIN) are complex warfare subsets and are the opposing sides of revolutionary or internal war, and both are included in the broad category of irregular warfare.

Insurgency is an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through subversive armed conflict—an organized, protracted politico-military struggle to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government,

occupying power or other political authority while strengthening insurgent control.

Counterinsurgency is the military, paramilitary, political, psychological and civic actions taken to defeat an insurgency.

Political power is the central issue for both insurgencies and counterinsurgencies. Each side aims to get the people to accept its governance or authority.

Long-term COIN success depends on the people taking charge of their own affairs

FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency (Cont'd)

and consenting to the government's rule. It requires the government to eliminate as many causes of the insurgency as possible, including eliminating extremist insurgents. COIN involves the application of the full range of national power: political, military, economic, social, information and infrastructure. Military power alone cannot succeed.

Insurgents are not restricted to conduct or tactics that are considered "fair" under the conventional notions of warfare, and several aspects favor the insurgents. Insurgency is a way for the weak to fight the strong.

Because insurgents generally initiate the conflict, they typically have the strategic advantage at the beginning of the conflict; political and military leaders, on the other hand, must first identify and accept that an insurgency exists and then mount a coordinated response. The time that it takes a government to prepare a response is time that the insurgents can use to disrupt the government and build their strength. The government's advantage generally lies in the amount of resources available to it, but that is counterbalanced by the need to maintain order and protect the population and critical resources. The government can be seen to be failing if it does not maintain a degree of order everywhere at all times, and insurgents can gain success by sowing chaos and disorder at times and places of their choosing. Maintaining security in an unstable environment requires vast resources, whereas a small number of motivated insurgents can use simple weapons and good security of their operations and overcome limited mobility to undermine security over a large area.

Successful COIN operations often require a high ratio of security forces to the population the government needs to protect. Thus protracted COIN operations are difficult to sustain and require a firm political will and substantial patience by the government, its people and countries providing support.

Revolutionary situations may result

from regime changes, external interventions or grievances carefully nurtured by unscrupulous leaders. Sometimes societies are most prone to unrest not when conditions are the worst, but when the situation begins to improve and people's expectations rise. (They also may have developed unrealistic expectations that cannot be met.) Resultant discontent can fuel unrest and insurgency, and influences of globalization and the international media can create a sense of relative deprivation and contribute to increased discontent.

The information environment is a critical dimension of insurgencies, and insurgents' attempt to shape it to their advantage through such means as suicide bombing attacks, which have little military value but high propaganda value by creating fear and uncertainty.

Insurgents also can distort truth, disseminate lies and make exorbitant promises, giving them the advantage (perhaps temporary and later exploitable) over a COIN operation that must stick to the truth and play straight with the people to preserve legitimacy.

To overcome insurgents' initial advantage, COIN forces undertake defensive and offensive actions to regain advantage and create a secure environment. Killing insurgents—while necessary, especially with respect to extremists—cannot defeat an insurgency by itself. The causes of the insurgency must also be addressed through application of stability operations, initially involving securing and controlling the local populace and providing essential services. As the level of security improves, military resources contribute to supporting government reforms and reconstruction.

Victory is achieved when the populace consents to the government's legitimacy and stops actively—and passively—supporting the insurgency.

In almost every case, counterinsurgencies face a population containing an active minority that supports the government and a relatively equal proportion that actively opposes

FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency (Cont'd)

it. Most people fall into the uncommitted, neutral or passive majority, which includes passive supporters of both sides. A passive populace may be all that is necessary for a well-supported insurgency to seize political power.

Information technology is a new and growing COIN aspect as insurgents can use the Internet to maintain links within their organizations and with supporting organizations regionally and worldwide. Today's insurgents often join organizations with common objectives but different motivations and no central controlling body, which makes identifying leaders difficult. Today's operational environment also includes a new kind of insurgency, one that seeks to impose revolutionary change worldwide. Al Qaeda, for example, seeks to transform the Islamic world and reorder its relationships with other regions and cultures. Defeating such enemies requires a global strategic response that addresses the array of linked resources and conflicts sustaining such movements while tactically addressing the local grievances that feed them.

Insurgents aim to force political change. Military action is a subordinate and a means to that end.

Each insurgency is unique but may share similarities with others. Examining an insurgency's specifics provides an accurate picture of the insurgents and the thinking behind their overall approach.

Identify:

- Root cause or causes of the insurgency.
- Extent and types of insurgents' internal and external support.

- Basis of their appeal to the target population.
- The insurgents' motivation and depth of commitment.
- Weapons and tactics.
- The operational environment that insurgents seek to initiate their campaign and strategy.

Also identify the insurgents' approaches. Are they:

- Conspiratorial, involving few leaders or a core cadre?
- Military focused?
- Urban (capable of sowing disorder, inciting sectarian violence, weakening the government or killing government officials, intimidating the population, police or military, or creating a backlash of government suppression that feeds their cause)?

Staying in the Net

The full text of FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency is available for download from several web sites, among them are:

The U.S. Army Doctrine and Training Publications web site

(choose FM 3-24 from the list):

www.army.mil/usapa/doctrine/Active_FM.html

The U.S. Army Combined Arms Center web site

(click on FM 3-24 near the bottom of the page):

leav-www.army.mil

or directly at

usacac.army.mil/cac/repository/materials/coin-fm3-24.pdf

The Government Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative

web site:

www.usgcoin.org/library/doctrine/COIN-FM3-24.pdf

The Army Knowledge Online web site

(for those authorized AKO access):

akocomm.us.army.mil/usapa/doctrine/Active_FM.html

FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency (Cont'd)

- Capable of conducting a protracted popular war?
- Identity focused—identifying with a specific cause, leader or group (which may be ethnic or religious)?
- A composite or coalition organization or cooperating with other groups?

The primary struggle in an internal war is to motivate and mobilize popular support among the people for political ends.

The general means to mobilize popular support are:

- Persuasion.
- Coercion.
- Reaction to abuses or policies.
- Apolitical motivations (such as money or some other economic advantage).
- Foreign support.

Identify areas of insurgent vulnerabilities that can be exploited. Among them are:

- A need for secrecy (which can limit their freedom of action).
- Inconsistency or flaws in their messages and countermessages that can be used, even to the extent of usurping their message and turning it on them.
- A need to establish fixed bases of operation.
- Reliance on external support, including the need for movement to and from other areas for training and the like.
- A need to obtain financial resources (their options to get it and your options to make it difficult to get).
- Internal divisions that can be exploited.
- The need to maintain momentum. (Can they capitalize on opportunities? If they have momentum, how can it be wrestled from or turned against them?)
- Informants within the insurgency. (Besides being intelligence gold mines, informants or deserters can be demoralizing.)

The primary objective of any COIN operation is to foster development of effective governance by a legitimate government. "Legiti-

mate" governments are considered as those primarily ruling by the consent of the governed.

Indicators of governmental legitimacy that can be used to analyze vulnerability to stability include:

- The ability to provide security for the populace (including protection from both internal and external threats).
- Selection of leaders at a frequency and in a manner considered just and fair by a substantial majority of the populace.
- A high level of popular participation in or support for political processes.
- A culturally acceptable level of corruption.
- A culturally acceptable level and rate of political, economic and social development.
- A high level of regime acceptance by major social institutions.

Governments scoring high in these categories probably have the support of a sufficient population majority.

The presence of the rule of law is a major factor in assuring voluntary acceptance of a government's authority and legitimacy.

Military action can address the symptoms of a loss of legitimacy, such as eliminating substantial numbers of insurgents; however, success in the form of a durable peace requires restoring legitimacy, and that requires the use of all instruments of national power (political, economic and military).

A COIN effort cannot achieve lasting success without the host-nation government achieving legitimacy.

Unity of effort is essential at every echelon of a COIN operation. Well-intentioned but uncoordinated actions can cancel each other or provide vulnerabilities for insurgents to exploit.

Successful conduct of COIN operations depends on thoroughly understanding the society and culture within which they are conducted because without an understanding of the environment, intelligence cannot be understood and properly applied.

FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency (Cont'd)

Each soldier or marine should:

- Understand organizational or key groups in the society.
- Understand relationships and tensions among groups.
- Understand values held by groups (including tribes) and their interests and motivations.
- Understand the means by which groups (including tribes) communicate.
- Understand the society's leadership system.
- Have a clear appreciation of the essential nature and nuances of the conflict.
- Understand the motivation, strengths

and weaknesses of the insurgents.

- Know the roles of other actors or agencies in the area of operations.

Intelligence drives operations. Without good intelligence, counterinsurgents are like blind boxers, wasting energy and flailing at unseen opponents and perhaps causing unintended harm. Effective operations are shaped by timely, specific and reliable intelligence that is gathered and analyzed at the lowest possible level and disseminated throughout the force.

Insurgents must be isolated from their cause and support. It is easier to separate an

Counterinsurgency Practices That Work and Those That Don't

Successful Practices

- Emphasize intelligence.
- Focus on the population, its needs and its security.
- Establish and expand secure areas.
- Isolate insurgents from the populace (population control).
- Conduct effective, pervasive and continuous information operations.
- Provide amnesty and rehabilitation for those willing to support the new government.
- Place host-nation police in the lead with military support as soon as the security situation permits.
- Expand and diversify the host-nation police force.
- Train military forces to conduct COIN operations.
- Embed quality advisers and special operations forces with the host-nation forces.
- Deny sanctuary to insurgents.
- Encourage strong political and military cooperation and information sharing.
- Protect key infrastructures.

Unsuccessful Practices

- Overemphasize killing and capturing the enemy rather than securing and engaging the populace.
- Conduct large-scale operations as the norm.
- Concentrate military forces in large bases for protection.
- Focus special operations forces primarily on raiding.
- Place low priority on assigning quality advisers to host-nation forces.
- Build and train host-nation security forces in the U.S. military's image.
- Ignore peacetime government processes, including legal procedures.
- Allow open borders, airspace and coastlines.

FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency (Cont'd)

insurgency from its resources and let it die than to kill every insurgent. Killing every insurgent is normally impossible, and attempting to do so can be counterproductive in some cases. It risks generating popular resentment, creating martyrs, motivating new recruits and producing cycles of revenge. Dynamic insurgencies can replace losses quickly; skillful counterinsurgencies must cut off the sources of recuperative power (recruitment, resupply and financing). Some sources can be reduced by redressing social, political and economic grievances that fuel the insurgency. Physical support can be cut off by population control or border security. International or legal action may be necessary to limit financial support.

Urban insurgents are especially difficult to isolate from their cause and sources of support. They may operate in small, compartmentalized cells that are usually independent or semi-independent. These cells often have their own support mechanisms and few, if any, ties to the population that counterinsurgents can track.

Use the appropriate level of force. Any use of force generates a series of reactions. There may be times when an overwhelming effort is necessary to destroy or intimidate an opponent and reassure the populace, but counterinsurgents should calculate carefully the type and amount of force to be applied and who wields it for any operation. An operation that kills five insurgents is counterproductive if collateral damage leads to the recruitment of 50 more insurgents. Learn and adapt. An effective COIN force is a learning organization. Insurgents constantly shift between military and political phases and tactics. Networked insurgencies constantly exchange information about counterinsurgents' vulnerabilities. Every unit needs to be able to make observations, draw and apply lessons, and assess results. Commanders must develop an effective system to circulate best practices throughout their commands.

Empower at the lowest levels. Mission command is the conduct of military operations through decentralized execution, based upon mission orders, for effective mission accomplishment. Successful mission command results from subordinate leaders at all echelons exercising disciplined initiative within the commander's intent, and mission command is ideally suited to the mosaic nature of COIN operations. Sometimes, the more you protect your force, the less secure you may be. If military forces remain in their compounds, they lose touch with the people, appear to be running scared and cede initiative to the insurgents. Aggressive saturation patrolling, ambushes and listening post operations must be conducted, and risk must be shared with the population. Sometimes, the more force that is used, the less effective it is because of collateral damage and the possibility of mistakes. The more successful the counterinsurgency is, the less force can be used and the more risk must be accepted. Sometimes doing nothing is the best reaction. Many insurgent attacks are designed to entice counterinsurgents to overreact.

Some of the best COIN weapons do not shoot. While security is essential for setting the stage for overall progress, lasting victory comes from a vibrant economy, political participation and restored hope. Particularly after security has been achieved, dollars and ballots will have more important effects than bombs and bullets. There is a time when "money is ammunition."

The host nation doing something tolerably is normally better than us doing it well. Where the United States is supporting a host nation, long-term success requires establishing viable host-nation leaders and institutions that can carry on without significant U.S. support. The longer that process takes, the more U.S. public support will wane, and the more the local populace will question the legitimacy of their own forces and government.

The Map of Vietnam Suggested a Replay of the Korean War And the Political Solution Was DOA—Early Decisions Set the Stage

First things first: Judging events by what we know about counterinsurgency now (myopic hindsight), and everything else aside, early miscalculations probably went far to derail U.S. efforts in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) long before U.S. combat formations were deployed to South Vietnam, and must be taken into account in the continuing debate about how well U.S. forces did or might have done in the counterinsurgency war.

Go back to 1955. The first miscalculation encompasses the short time that had passed since the Korean War and its effect on people looking at the map of North and South Vietnam.

Vietnam was segmented into a north and south along the 17th parallel in 1954 by the Geneva Treaty ending the First Indochina War in which the French forces, fighting to reinstate and retain pre-World War II French colonial dominion over Vietnam after Japanese occupation forces left, suffered defeat by the communist Viet Minh movement in the decisive Battle of Dien Bien Phu. The Viet Minh, which morphed into the Viet Cong during the “American War,” was an independence movement initiated in 1941 by communist-educated Ho Chi Minh to fight the French Vichy government and occupying Japanese forces. (The Vichy had allowed Japan to occupy Vietnam and set up a puppet emperor.)

In 1954, after the division, Ho headed the northern Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and a Republic of Vietnam was established in the south. Under the Geneva Treaty, it was supposed to be a temporary arrangement. The country was mandated to be reunited under one government and leader, the winner of supervised elections in 1956.

Enter America. The United States, having supported the French in Vietnam, stepped in to

support South Vietnam because U.S. policy at the time was to oppose all existing communist states and the establishment of any new communist state, anytime anywhere. That's not the misstep; it was the product of the Cold War times.

The mistakes are that in 1955, America started pouring money and military gear into building a South Vietnamese army. That army's organization and equipment was based line-for-line on the U.S. Army's combat capabilities. Why? The U.S. strategic assessment held that the biggest threat to South Vietnam was a direct attack by North Vietnamese and Chinese Communist allied forces across the 17th parallel. Why? The Korean War had ended only two years earlier; it was fresh on everybody's mind. Analysts took a look at the map of North and South Vietnam and foresaw an exact repeat of the Korean War with communist forces pouring into the south. So we arrive at factor one: The South Vietnamese army had less chance of fighting a successful counterinsurgency war against the ensuing Viet Cong threat because it was organized, equipped and trained initially to fight a second Korean War. Apparently, nobody with say-so thought the extremely successful Mao model strategy that soundly defeated the French would be used again—perhaps they didn't even know what the Mao model was. Factor two (now knowing that every insurgency is political): the United States refused to allow the treaty-imposed elections of 1956. The decreed political solution in Vietnam and the will of the Vietnamese was short-circuited because it was certain that Ho (a communist) would win in a landslide—an estimated 80 percent of the vote. And that wouldn't do. It would take two decades of fighting, but in 1975, Ho militarily imposed the political mandate he likely would have received in 1956.

As counterinsurgents today, we know that support reaching the 80th percentile is hard to flip, but that doesn't necessarily mean we would make—or could have made—a different decision, given the same circumstances and national policy.

“Quotable”

“Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and the success of liberty...”

—President John F. Kennedy, January 20, 1961

Vietnam's Times and Terms— The Specter in America's Attic

A palpable chill rises when terms from the Vietnam War are applied to any conflict, and certainly that happens today when Vietnam is used as a parallel to the war in Iraq. To Americans the Vietnam War remains a sensitive tooth that needs little touch to inflict wincing pain. Avoidance of terms from the Vietnam War extends to a number of specific counterinsurgency terms—*hearts and minds*, *strategic hamlets*, *Vietnamization*. The precepts, however, remain valid: respectively, winning the confidence and support of the people; establishing safe areas; and turning over security to host-nation forces. The concepts are a foundation of any counterinsurgency, but other terminology must be invented, and parallels must be avoided. That is unfortunate because a number of Vietnam counterinsurgency programs did work and held more promise. Of course, the debate will continue about whether the U.S. military emphasized and applied counterinsurgency to the extent necessary; however, there is a fact of war that should not be dodged: the enemy always has a say. The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong employed an overall strategy based on the Mao model of revolution. Using basic counterinsurgency analysis, by the time U.S. conventional forces were employed in large numbers, the enemy had already achieved momentum in Phase III of the Mao model—use of large organized conventional forces. The enemy's Phase III challenges had to be met directly, and many counterinsurgency tactics could not prevail if Phase III was not rolled back to Phases II or I. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the overarching counterinsurgency precept of controlling borders (to choke off outside support) was not achieved in Vietnam and significantly contributed to the enemy's success. Vietnam will always be a sensitive area of the American psyche, but that does not mean that counterinsurgency lessons cannot be carried for-

ward and reapplied. It does mean, however, that the U.S. military is often in the uncomfortable position of having to invent non-Vietnam-sounding terms to express them. And it is equally unfortunate that Vietnam terms are used to denigrate viable efforts.

Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) Pocket Card "Nine Rules" (September 1967)

Rules: The Vietnamese have paid a heavy price in suffering for their long fight against the communists. We military men are in Vietnam now because their government has asked us to help its soldiers and people in winning their struggle. The Viet Cong will attempt to turn the Vietnamese people against you. You can defeat them at every turn by the strength, understanding and generosity you display with the people. Here are nine simple rules:

- 1.) Remember we are guests here: We make no demands and seek no special treatment.
- 2.) Join with the people! Understand their life, use phrases from their language and honor their customs and laws.
- 3.) Treat women with politeness and respect.
- 4.) Make personal friends among the soldiers and common people.
- 5.) Always give the Vietnamese the right of way.
- 6.) Be alert to security and ready to react with your military skill.
- 7.) Don't attract attention by loud, rude or unusual behavior.
- 8.) Avoid separating yourself from the people by a display of wealth or privilege.
- 9.) Above all else you are members of the U.S. Military Forces on a difficult mission, responsible for all your official and personal actions. Reflect honor upon yourself and the United States of America.

(This conduct reminder card was handed out to U.S. soldiers in South Vietnam. Ironically, the "nine rules" resemble Mao Zedong's "eight points" of conduct—maybe because they were a good idea.)

The New Era of Insurgency: A Field Marshal's Baton Inside Every Laptop

This is no jazzed-up BS theory by some think-tank pointy head. It's here, now and scary: empowerment that gives any two-finger-typing disaffected depressive with a sleep disorder the ability to become an insurgency player and potential danger.

Information Age insurgency allows nations, stateless terrorists, radical religious movements and millions of wannabe insurgents, revolutionaries, subversives and *schadenfreudes* the means to plot and attack as detached squadrons with no command or support framework; by leveraging only inspiration and initiative they can multiply the cumulative effect through an ethereal collective—everywhere and nowhere at the same time, sleeper cells that never sleep.

It is the ultimate expression of insurgency (the weak lashing out against the strong), pitting individuals or clutches of conspirators armed with nothing more than a computer, Internet connection and a grudge against someone in the spectrum of possible enemies—ranging from the local grocer to a world power.

Al Qaeda is the poster terrorist organization of the phenomenon and serves as the easiest model to explain: how the organization began using this power, what it morphed into and how it gained momentum and the ability to shift, nurture and replenish itself; and then move into the realm of pure chaos energy, unseen and uncontrollable by al Qaeda itself. The recent plotters against Fort Dix, N.J., and John F. Kennedy Airport are products of this.

Oversimplified, it goes this way: Al Qaeda leaders used the Internet to communicate with each other and with members and sympathizers to collect and transfer funds and other resources. It further spread its message through web sites,

virtual chat rooms and message boards that sprang up, and used them to recruit, indoctrinate, train and propagandize against enemies. At this point, it was still a linear system in that information came from the top and was disseminated down. As this information began to be replicated and expounded upon, it began to spread outward (horizontally) to reach what eventually evolved into what was no longer a linear hierarchy or audience. Bolstered by the tangible events of 9/11, Afghanistan and Iraq—which enlarged the audience and legitimized the al Qaeda organization in a leadership role—the effort generated its own energy and gained a life of its own.

Think a thousand Super Balls bouncing around inside a shipping container, some hitting each other, some ricocheting into others, and upon that brief contact leaving some information, changing some, picking up some and gaining energy before speeding onward to collide with others. (If one did not know how to make a bomb from grocery store commodities, for example, the next did; if one didn't know a safe place to stay in Montreal, the next did; if one didn't know someone who wanted to be a suicide bomber, the next did.) It became an information development and sharing network, operating from tens of thousands of independent computers.

At this point, the al Qaeda hierarchy was no longer important except as figureheads, and a traditional organizational center of gravity

“Quotable”

“Fourth-generation warfare (4GW) uses all available networks—political, economic, social and military—to convince the enemy's political decision makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for perceived benefit. It is an evolved form of insurgency. Still rooted in the fundamental precept that superior political will, when properly employed, can defeat greater economic and military power, 4GW makes use of society's networks to carry on its fight. Unlike previous generations of warfare, it does not attempt to win by defeating the enemy's military forces. Instead, via the networks, it directly attacks the minds of the enemy decision makers to destroy the enemy's political will. Fourth-generation wars are lengthy—measured in decades rather than months or years.”

—Col. Thomas X. Hammes, USMC in *The Sling and the Stone*

ceased to exist because it started existing everywhere. Now, its importance is only through its inspiration (attack, destroy): an untold number of people in innumerable places take this inspiration and run with the ball, so to speak, unfunded and uncontrolled by and untethered from the original hierarchy—each using the extent of his imagination, talents, opportunities and assets and confederates he can gather to carry the mission forward and reporting to his own conscience.

In this type of insurgency, place, time and borders become irrelevant. Things such as military formations, political systems, territories or economies actually become impediments because if you have them, you have to defend them. They are baggage with which adversaries are not encumbered and do not want.

Conventional Insurgency: Easier to Do than Undo and a Trying Ordeal

T.E. (Thomas Edward) Lawrence's writings about his World War I experiences as an adviser to Arab tribes in guerrilla operations against Axis forces have stood the test of time as irregular warfare handbooks; however, the fact remains that they teach how to instigate and carry out an insurgency, not how to counter one. Certainly, Lawrence's prime contribution is providing constructive guidance on the best approaches a Westerner can take to assimilate into and advise a foreign force in general and an Arab irregular force in particular, and his works are directly applicable to advising a foreign force conducting counterinsurgency operations. In practical application, they teach advisers how to unwesternize without insulting their host force or themselves—the limitations, boundaries and possibilities of intercultural military associations—and they also note that British command saw guerrilla warfare as a powerful weapon and used it.

Among the United States' World War II Office of Strategic Services (OSS) multi-pronged missions was exporting sabotage, harassment, deception, delusion and fear to eat away at the enemy from behind its lines. The

The movement is something that attacks anywhere against anything, and the target might not be something tangible, like an atomic energy facility or bank building. The target might be something like the global economy, something that is everywhere and nowhere. Manipulation of or fear inserted into a specific economic segment, such as a commodity market, can affect and cost billions. To the enemy, that is damage inflicted, just as sure as if a brick-and-mortar target was destroyed. The process of globalization itself has created an untold number of targets and its own vulnerabilities.

All of this goes against the grain of traditional perceptions of an enemy force and traditional objectives.

It leads to dimensions of warfare heretofore unimaginable and still largely unfathomed.

Axis powers' strategy of conquest and subjection created their own perpetually open wounds, which could be picked at and inflamed, and gave the Allies an open field to teach, supply, encourage and instigate insurrection and guerrilla warfare. The enemy created the condition, and the OSS leveraged it in every theater of operations, realizing the power of insurgency, the relatively low cost of fueling it and the high cost and difficulty of defeating it.

The United States fostered partisan warfare again during the Korean War and in several instances during the Vietnam War, using guerrillas as a counterinsurgency force.

The West has applied insurgency well, but has been less effective at countering it, not because of a lack of tactical competency or lack of knowledge. Historic best practices are well documented and understood—simple to understand, but difficult to apply. Counterinsurgency today remains as it has always been: an expensive, time-consuming undertaking that requires patience, losses and continued commitment, and the lesson throughout the history of warfare remains that national will is the most fragile link.

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To Get a 'GO'

On Counterinsurgency Knowledge, You Need to Know:

History is the counterinsurgency (COIN) teacher:

Most of the best COIN practices and tactics employed today are adoptions from good COIN tactics of the past and even adaptations of poor ones well tweaked.

The godfather of revolution: Mao Tse-tung (Mao Zedong in revised form) is the modern world's most successful revolutionary. He developed a three-phased model of revolution that still stands as the foundation for most revolutions and insurgencies.

Insurgents have the edge: Because insurgents generally initiate the conflict, they typically have strategic advantage at the beginning of a conflict because political and military leaders must first identify and accept that an insurgency exists and mount a coordinated response. The time a government takes to prepare a response is time that insurgents can use to disrupt the government and build their strength. The government's advantage generally lies in the amount of resources available to it, but that is counterbalanced by the need to maintain order and protect the population and critical resources.

The aims are political: Insurgents aim to force political change. Military action is subordinate and a means to that end.

Government legitimacy is the goal: Military action can address symptoms of a loss of government legitimacy, but success in the form of a durable peace requires restoring legitimacy, and that requires the use of all instruments of national power (political, economic, military). A COIN effort cannot achieve lasting success without the host-nation government achieving legitimacy.

Use the appropriate level of force: Any use of force generates a series of reactions.

Some of the best COIN weapons do not shoot:

While security is essential for setting the stage for overall progress, lasting victory comes from a vibrant economy, political participation and restored hope.

STAYING IN THE NET

The ARMY Magazine Hooah Guide to Counterinsurgency is available in PDF format for download from the Association of the U.S. Army's web site. Direct your browser to www.usa.org and click the ARMY Magazine bar on the left side.