

S O P D



Inside this Issue:

Countering Insurgency

This month the Senior Officer Professional Digest focuses exclusively on the subject of counterinsurgency. The articles selected span a wide spectrum of this highly salient topic. The Australian Army has an impressive history of successful conduct of counter-insurgency warfare stretching back to the Boer War.

Our soldiers are facing insurgent enemies in Iraq and Afghanistan, while our troops in East Timor and the Solomon Islands are operating in very complex environments, where their conventional warfighting skills are not being tested. In particular, they are being confronted with situations where their linguistic and cultural skills are essential to the success of their mission. These have always been a fundamental prerequisite for success in such operations. Fortunately, our soldiers and junior leaders have demonstrated an instinctive appreciation of this aspect of complex and counterinsurgency operations. Indeed, among the armies of the West there is a growing recognition that the complex military operations of the twenty-first century will demand professional mastery of counterinsurgency techniques.

The consensus among our allies is that we are likely to face irregular and non-state adversaries almost as a matter of course. It is essential that military professionals stay abreast of evolving thought about the challenge of unconventional warfare. With that in mind the Land Warfare Studies Centre is pleased to provide this collation of contemporary perspectives on counterinsurgency. We also provide a link to an excellent monograph by Colonel John Blaxland for those who are seeking a more detailed treatment of this important topic.

LTCOL Malcolm McGregor
Director, Land Warfare Studies Centre

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The **Senior Officer Professional Digest** is a publication of the Land Warfare Studies Centre. Feedback regarding this publication is welcome and should be directed to the Director.



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'Countering Evolved Insurgent Networks'

COL Thomas X. Hammes, US Marine Corps (Retd)

Military Review, July–August 2006, pp. 18–26

<http://usacac.army.mil/CAC/milreview/English/JulAug06/Hammes.pdf>

Today's counterinsurgency warfare involves a competition between human networks — ours and theirs.

— Colonel Thomas X. Hammes (Retd)

In light of the ongoing debate about the conflict in Iraq, Colonel Hammes argues in this article that the fundamental difference between insurgency and counter-insurgency (COIN) is still not fully appreciated. He says: 'it took us almost 2 years to decide that we are dealing with an insurgency, and we are still arguing about its composition and goals.' The difference between the two operational tasks is important. Once the insurgency has rendered the indigenous government incapable of functioning, the counterinsurgent cannot simply restore that legitimacy by applying military force.

The basic characteristics of insurgency and counterinsurgency have not changed. However, new traits have emerged in recent conflicts that suggest both types of warfare are evolving. For example, the author identified four new traits from recent insurgent campaigns:

- insurgents tend to group themselves in loose human networks and coalitions;
- insurgency networks are evolving into various multidimensional organisations;
- they have developed the ability to fund themselves; and
- a wide variety of motivations exist behind the different network and coalition elements.

To deal with these new challenges, the counter-insurgent also needs to evolve. Hammes believes that the counterinsurgent requires the following four qualities: an international approach to security issues, the ability to counter *all* ideologies held by the various insurgent groups and individuals, to possess a sound knowledge of the country's culture and history, and a plan of action to deal with outsiders sympathetic to the insurgency.

The author's contention is that an insurgency must be treated as a military *and* a non-military problem: people are the cause, people

are the victims, and people are the solution. To do this, Hammes suggests six points for current counterinsurgents to consider:

- *Visualising the Insurgency*. In comparison to an organisational chart, mapping the human networks of both the insurgency and COIN provides a far more effective analytical tool, flexible enough to incorporate complex developments as they happen.
- *Security not Defensive*. The 'central element in any strategy must be the people. The counterinsurgent has to ensure an effective government to win their loyalty.
- *Command and Control*. The most often difficult step in COIN 'is to integrate a friendly-force command and execution structure.'
- *Speed versus Accuracy*. In COIN, accuracy takes precedence over speed.
- *Attacking the Network*. Effective offensive operations in a COIN are based on protecting the people—direct attacks against insurgent fighters are secondary; 'nevertheless, such action remains a necessary part of the overall campaign plan.' An attack should only take place if it supports the effort to provide security for the people.
- *Information Campaign*. An integral part of COIN is an effective, multi-target information campaign, which is based on truth, not rhetoric or spin.

To effectively execute COIN operations, as well as to provide security for the people, Hammes believes that visualising the human networks in the overall operation provides a more effective analytical tool for strategy formulation. He concludes that: 'Counterinsurgency is completely different from insurgency. Rather than focusing on fighting, strategy must focus on establishing good governance by strengthening key friendly nodes while weakening those of the enemy.'

“Twenty-Eight Articles”: Fundamentals of Company-level Counter-insurgency’

David Kilcullen

Military Review, Vol. 86, Issue, 3, May–June 2006, pp. 103–9

http://usacac.leavenworth.army.mil/CAC/milreview/English/MayJun06/webpdf/BoB_Insights_Reviews_Letters_MJ06.pdf

Dr David Kilcullen has taught counterinsurgency (COIN) tactics, performed key advisory positions in both military and non-military capacities, and he continues to serve as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Australian Army Reserve. From his extensive experience in counterinsurgency operations and policymaking, the author describes the twenty-eight tactical fundamentals that link theory with military doctrine and practice for the counterinsurgent. These are:

- *Preparation*. Know your turf; diagnose the problem; organise for intelligence; organise for interagency operations; travel light and harden your combat service support; find a political/cultural adviser; train the squad leaders—then trust them; rank is nothing, talent is everything; and have a game plan.
- *The Golden Hour (starting your tour)*. The most fundamental rule of COIN is to be there; don’t act rashly, get the facts first; prepare for handover from day one; build trusted networks; start easy; don’t try to crack the hardest nut first; seek early victories; practice deterrent patrolling; be prepared for setbacks; remember the global audience; engage the women, beware of the children; and take stock regularly.

- *Groundhog Day (while in ‘steady state’)*. Exploit a ‘single narrative’; local forces should mirror the enemy, not the Americans; practice armed civil affairs; small programs are best; fight the enemy’s strategy, not his forces; and build your own solution—only attack the enemy when he gets in the way.
- *Getting Short (drawing to a close)*. Keep your extraction plan a secret.

We all know that things go wrong. Here are four ‘what ifs’ to consider:

1. What if you get moved to a different area?
2. What if higher headquarters doesn’t ‘get’ counterinsurgency?
3. What if you have no resources?
4. What if the theatre situation shifts under your feet?

Dr Kilcullen concludes with the most important of all twenty-eight articles by emphasising ‘if you remember nothing else, remember this: ‘[W]hatever else you do, keep the initiative. In counterinsurgency, the initiative is everything.’

‘Cyber Mobilization: A Growing Counterinsurgency Campaign’

Timothy L. Thomas

Iosphere, Summer 2006

http://www.au.af.mil/info-ops/iosphere/iosphere_summer06_thomas.pdf

Insurgents cyber mobilize in two primary ways. First, they use the Internet to respond to unfolding events before Coalition forces have a chance or opportunity to respond... Second, the Internet is used to post influential information items...For example, a recent posting to a jihadi webpage announced a competition to design a new website for an Iraqi militant group. The motivating prize was a chance to fire remote controlled missiles at a US military base.

— Timothy L. Thomas

In this article, the author analyses how insurgents and counterinsurgents are using the Internet to further their respective

campaigns. Long before the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, adversaries and civil agitators used the Internet and mobile

phones to organise resistance rallies and mobilise support bases against the United States. Thomas believes that these cyber technologies 'have become key insurgency tools due to their ubiquity and mobilization potential.'

His analysis begins by examining insurgents' use of cyber technologies, from more known recent incidents involving insurgents who target disaffected Muslim emigrants. Today, the Internet has become such an important tool to insurgents that some extremist websites actually compete with global news agencies for media attention in Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2005, the *Washington Post* noted insurgents used the Internet as a weapon in several different ways, such as:

- 'to intertwine real-time war with electronic jihad;
- to immortalise suicide bombers;
- to taunt the US military;
- to release tactical details of operations many times each day;
- to publish a monthly Internet magazine; and
- to negotiate with bin Laden.'

Next, the author discusses how US and Coalition forces have orchestrated their efforts to counter the insurgents' cyber

attacks. The US military considers most of the aforementioned insurgent activities as information operations (IO). Initial IO in Iraq were ineffective because insurgents were able to interpret and use information much quicker than Coalition forces. The reasons for this are, first, unlike insurgents, counterinsurgents and IO operators were restricted by lengthy protocols. Second, initial US IO and public affairs efforts were focused on making the Iraqi environment conform to America's way of thinking, rather than US officials responding to events in Iraq as they happened.

Thomas warns that information warfare should not be confused with virtual warfare. The author recommends that:

[W]e must modify the term counterinsurgency as currently defined, to deal with this new issue [cyber mobilisation]... Counterinsurgency doctrine will be short-changed if it doesn't consider the virtual arena, and add that element to its definition... Fine-tuning our definitions, and enhancing our understanding of cyber mobilization, will hopefully make us more aware and adept at neutralizing this virtual arena of war.

'A better war in Iraq: Learning counterinsurgency and making up for lost time'

LTCOL John A. Nagl

Armed Forces Journal, August 2006, pp. 22–28

<http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2006/08/1931298/>

LTCOL Nagl is the author of *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (2002, 2005). He currently serves as Military Assistant to the US Deputy Secretary of Defense. The United States has learned crucial lessons from fighting insurgents in Iraq, but the author believes more needs to be done to exploit this knowledge. In this article he argues that these lessons should be captured and institutionalised to further improve America's chances for future success. Drawing upon the COIN principles described by French expert David Galula in his widely acclaimed "how-to" guide *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, Nagl emphasises that defeating 'an insurgency is not primarily a

military task', a mission that Galula estimated was '80 percent political and 20 percent military'.

Reviews, recommendations and changes have been implemented across the US Government to improve the COIN effort, but the author believes two important changes have yet to be fully realised: political outreach and Information Operations (IO). To defeat an insurgency, history shows that the counterinsurgent must remove those elements less ideologically prevalent. To date, the United States has failed across the board to adequately explain its reasons for fighting in Iraq or to identify what it aims to achieve. For these reasons, Nagl

recommends, 'a dedicated corps of public affairs professionals funded and equipped to speak to Muslims in their own languages', which would substantially aid IO and be more effective in winning the support of uncommitted Iraqis. In addition, Nagl suggests the following long-term investments:

- 'redouble efforts to provide sufficient interpreters for every US military patrol;
- improve manning, training and equipping of the advisory teams on the front lines of our efforts to improve Iraqi police and army battalions;
- reshape the intelligence effort in Iraq to provide sufficient properly trained and educated intelligence collectors and

analysts to understand and identify the insurgents; and

- create and employ an information agency to fight and win the war of ideas in Iraq and beyond.'

The author quotes British military historian and soldier, Sir Michael Howard, to conclude: 'In structuring and preparing an army for war, you can be clear that you will not get it precisely right, but the important thing to ensure is that it is not too far wrong, so that you can put it right quickly.' The COIN effort in Iraq is only three years into what could possibly be a ten-year—or longer—campaign. Nagl believes it is important not to falter: these lessons should be utilised to ensure future success.

'Modernizing U.S. Counterinsurgency Practice: Rethinking Risk and Developing a National Strategy'

Sarah Sewall

Military Review, September–October 2006, pp. 103–110

<http://usacac.leavenworth.army.mil/CAC/milreview/English/SepOct06/bob.pdf>

Following the recent review of COIN doctrine in the US Army, the author believes that two points were not adequately addressed by those who participated, and if left unresolved, pose a significant challenge to the success of future operations. The first point is a general need to accept greater physical risks to personnel in order to achieve desired objectives. The second 'is the need for an integrated government strategy in an era when the military is often both the first tool and last resort'. To do this Sewall recommends:

- breaking the conventional paradigm and preference for technological solutions; and
- institutional and cultural challenges: 'COIN, like the broader struggle against terrorism, ultimately requires Americans to think differently about conflict.'

The author argues that COIN requires greater levels of risk and it demands a different form of risk tolerance. Strategic success is directly linked to the public's short-term tolerance of casualties, a paradox reflected in the new COIN

manual, but one that is not yet widely understood or accepted. To support her assertion, Sewall provides four strategic values of risk tolerance:

- minimises civilian impact and backlash;
- facilitates integrated operations;
- shows American values; and
- demonstrates US resolve.

To improve governmental understanding of COIN—and to integrate military and non-military elements of COIN operations—Sewall argues that a national doctrine needs to be created. Although the new Army COIN manual accepts that there is a need for greater risk tolerance, gaining widespread acceptance will be far more difficult, and the unwillingness of Americans to accept risk is possibly placing severe limitations on its COIN efforts. 'Creating a common understanding of insurgency and the demands for defeating it remains a core challenge for the nation.'

'The hearts-and-minds myth: sorry, but winning means killing'

Ralph Peters

Armed Forces Journal, Vol. 144, No. 2, September 2006, pp. 34–45

<http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2006/09/1947271/>

Mastering the languages, cultural nuances, beliefs and taboos that prevail in a theatre of war, area of operations or tactical environment is vital to military success. It's much easier to kill people you understand.

— Ralph Peters

Ralph Peters, author of *Never Quit the Fight* (2001), argues that all attempts to counter the Iraq insurgency have failed because the United States 'failed to forge a long-term plan based on a long-term commitment.' He goes further by saying that US leaders—who he calls the 'Rumsfeld Pentagon'—are unwilling 'to recognize the nature of the various conflicts underway simultaneously in Iraq.'

Essentially, Peters believes that it is not possible to win the hearts and minds of the Islamic world because Arabs (he implies in general terms) 'are so battered psychologically that many need to blame' "others" (the West, Israel, etc). The Bush Administration and US military leaders have 'fallen into the politically correct trap that

sparing murderers at the expense of his victims.' He says that we 'weren't ready to kill enough of the right people. As a result our enemies have been able to spend more than three years killing the people we were meant to liberate.'

The author argues that the wrong historical examples are being studied, and in the meantime, too many men and women in uniform are dying. Various movements, which were the catalyst for armed conflicts throughout history, were only pacified by massive killing. Peters concludes that we 'need to grasp the basic truth that the path to winning the hearts and minds of the masses leads over the corpses of the violent minority.' To win the war the terrorists and fanatics must be killed.

'The Role of Perceptions and Political Reform in Counterinsurgency: The Case of Western Iraq, 2004–05'

Carter Malkasian

Small Wars and Insurgencies, Vol. 17, No. 3, September 2006, pp. 367–94

In this article the author draws upon his personal experience in western Iraq, where he spent eleven months between 2004 and 2005 as a civilian adviser to the Marine Expeditionary Force, analysing Marine counterinsurgency efforts. The article examines 'the role of insurgent perceptions on political reform in the war in Iraq' by focusing on the Al Anbar province. It does not aim 'to identify a recipe for success', but 'merely uses the case of western Iraq to show an inter-relationship between perceptions and political reform.'

The author begins by reviewing COIN literature that focuses on political reform and insurgent perceptions. The article then examines the process of political reform in western Iraq between 2004 and 2005. The third section

describes the common perception of Sunni insurgents that the United States lacked resolve, which insurgents believed increased the likelihood of their military success. Lastly, these arguments are summarised and then the author assesses their implication for the war in Iraq and the COIN effort in general.

Malkasian believes that the Coalition's slow progress during this period was caused by two dynamic factors: Sunni dissatisfaction with their share of political power and the insurgent perception that US forces would eventually withdraw from Iraq. He believes that the 'role of insurgent perceptions in counterinsurgency deserves greater emphasis' and that its connection with effective political reform has not been adequately explored.

'Organizing Intelligence for Counterinsurgency'

Kyle Teamey and LTCOL Jonathon Sweet

Military Review, September–October 2006, pp. 24–9

<http://usacac.leavenworth.army.mil/CAC/milreview/English/SepOct06/Teamey-Sweet.pdf>

The very essence of counterinsurgency is the collection of intelligence for the government.

— Lucian W. Pye

Kyle Teamey, a former Army captain in military intelligence, and LTCOL Jonathon Sweet, a tactical intelligence officer, both contributed to the recent review of the US Army's *Counterinsurgency Field Manual 3–24*. In this article, the authors provide a plan for adapting intelligence collection and analysis to a counterinsurgent environment from their own experience and research. First, it is important to understand that intelligence in counterinsurgency is different to other forms of warfare. Teamey and Sweet identify six differences:

- 'Intelligence in counterinsurgency is about people.
- Counterinsurgency is an intelligence war.
- Operations and intelligence must feed each other.
- All operations have an intelligence component.
- Insurgencies are local, vary greatly in time and space, and are mosaic-like.
- In a joint-combined environment, all echelons of the government must work at intelligence.'

In organising intelligence for COIN, the authors examine five aspects of this process. First, the challenges affronting the counter-insurgent must be understood and then sufficiently addressed through well-trained personnel with appropriate equipment.

Second, intelligence collection should be organised by the intelligence cell in-theatre and it should focus on people in a set area of operations. Third, intelligence analysis in COIN has more in common with law enforcement than conventional warfare. Therefore, additional analysts must be allocated to ensure tactical units have the information and support they need: 'The bottom-up flow of intelligence in counterinsurgency should shape prioritization of intelligence resources.' Fourth, the flow of intelligence and information should reflect the ability of insurgents to adapt rapidly to their environment. Last, to avoid 'stove-piping' of intelligence by different agencies, Teamey and Sweet recommend an *ad hoc* committee be established by the commanders at each echelon, 'similar to a joint interagency task force'.

'To be successful, counterinsurgent forces must be weighted with intelligence support.' The counterinsurgent must develop an understanding of the insurgency as soon as possible, bettering the chances of reducing the length and intensity of the conflict. The authors conclude that a 'better-organised, better-equipped and quicker intelligence system' would give US forces the advantage.

LWSC Recommended Further Reading:

Ashley Jackson, 'British Counter-insurgency in History: A Useful Precedent?' *British Army Review*, No. 139, Spring 2006, pp. 12–22.

Frank G. Hoffman, 'Complex Irregular Warfare: The Next Revolution in Military Affairs', *Orbis*, Vol. 50, No. 3, Summer 2006, pp. 395–411.

'Producing Victory: Rethinking Conventional Forces in COIN Operations'

LTCOL Douglas A. Ollivant, U.S. Army, and 1st LT Eric D. Chewing, U.S. Army Reserve
Military Review, July–August 2006, pp. 50–59

<http://usacac.army.mil/CAC/milreview/English/JulAug06/Ollivant-Chewing.pdf>

This article won first place in the *Military Review* COIN Writing Competition earlier this year. Essentially, the authors argue that the US Army should use the combined arms manoeuvre battalion as the basic tactical unit in future COIN operations. Ollivant and Chewing present their case by discussing why the manoeuvre battalion is the most qualified organisation to develop COIN doctrine, and then they identify what is needed to develop such a 'battalion-centric strategy.'

The authors' analysis begins by considering the lessons provided by David Galula in his book *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (1964), in which they identify many similarities between their own COIN experiences from Operation *Iraqi Freedom* and Galula's diverse experience of different insurgencies around the world. Galula's five lessons for COIN operations are:

- 'Successful COIN operations require assistance from the community.'
- A static unit with responsibility for a specific area of responsibility is preferable to a mobile unit moving from area to area.'
- No one approach can defeat an insurgency.'
- The principle of unity of command is even more important in COIN than it is in conventional warfare.'
- Effective COIN requires a grid of embedded units.'

The authors believe that the ongoing COIN operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are in violation of these basic principles. Various military branches work simultaneously along the same lines of operation, but they do not synchronise their efforts or effects. This is why the authors believe that at the 'local level, only the manoeuvre battalion can execute across the full spectrum of COIN tasks, harmonizing disparate units toward a common effect and capturing synergies that larger commands are unable to duplicate.' Thus, the reasons for the manoeuvre battalion's primacy are:

- In combat and security operations, the 'manoeuvre battalion alone is capable of providing sustained security operations within a given community... As Galula suggests, '[U]nits must be deployed where

the population actually lives and not on positions deemed to possess a military value.'

- '[W]hen the operational scale jumps from providing support to a host country to rebuilding its entire military, the conventional Army must get involved' in training local forces. 'As seen in Iraq and Vietnam, new local security forces fight better when accompanied by their U.S. counterparts.'
- 'The manoeuvre battalion plays a central role in the [local economic development] strategy... The counterinsurgent, the community, and aid agencies all benefit from local coordination of the economic, political and security dimensions of reconstruction.'
- 'The ultimate goal of COIN warfare is to 'build (or rebuild) a political machine from the population upward... The counterinsurgent is a political operative, offering responsibility and resources to those leaders who prove capable, allowing them to build a base of popular support.'
- 'The scale and scope of the manoeuvre battalion can generate tactical synergies that no other unit can duplicate during COIN operations.'

The alternatives are impractical or carry significant cause for concern. For example, the creation of units for the sole purpose of nation building, stability and reconstruction would divert resources from national defence and security capabilities. The authors' conclude:

The war in Iraq may now have moved beyond this possible solution... But when we fight the next counterinsurgency — by engaging along all lines of operations through a nationwide grid of locally embedded manoeuvre battalions — we can bring American strengths into play against the insurgents and demonstrate that we have learned and recovered from our stumbling start in Iraq.

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NEW Working Paper No. 131

Revisiting Counterinsurgency: A Manoeuvrist Response to the 'War on Terror' for the Australian Army

By COL John Blaxland

http://www.defence.gov.au/army/lwsc/Publications/WP/WP_131.pdf

This paper addresses an emerging awareness of counterinsurgency in the Australian context. This work also is cautionary; arguing that the Army and the wider Australian Defence Force (ADF) needs more careful thought on doctrine, appropriate training and associated operational ability. Reflecting on the Australian Army's heritage in the realm of counterinsurgency, it looks at emerging trends in public discourse on the 'war on terror' and examines how Australia's traditional allies are developing doctrine in reaction to those trends. With this understanding, recommendations are made for a response by the Australian Army.

The proposed response involves a concept of manoeuvre to address an information-era insurgency that is complex and global, with common threads, but distinctive local determinants. The argument made here is that the Australian Army is presented with a unique challenge best managed in a whole-of-government context and in a way that is culturally attuned, responsive to local nuances that motivate insurgents and terrorists, and designed to generate lasting effects. That response also presents considerable challenges for Australia's combat-arms focused land force, but capitalises on the Army's manoeuvrist disposition.

LWSC Working Paper Series

WP 128 Not-so friendly fire: an Australian taxonomy for fratricide by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Stevenson. This paper contends that, based on Australia's Vietnam experience, there are at least three different categories of fratricide. The first is accidental fratricide, which involves the active intent to kill the enemy but instead results in unforeseen and unintentional death or injury to friendly personnel. The second is military—industrial fratricide, which involves no enemy, but where the actions of friendly personnel result in death or injury to other friendly personnel. The third is calculated fratricide, which involves the active intent to kill the enemy or destroy their equipment or facilities but in a manner that consciously endangers friendly personnel. By seeing this problem as multidimensional, it is possible to demonstrate that, far from being an aberration, the infliction of fratricidal casualties by friendly fire is a constant and inevitable feature of military training and operations. As the Australian Army charts its course into the 21st century, it will have to relearn how it will deal with this thorny and enduring problem.

WP 127 The Transformation of Special Operations Forces in Contemporary Conflict: Strategy, Missions, Organisation and Tactics by Captain Malcolm Brailey. This paper is a study of the recent transformation in the employment and structure of Special Operations Forces. The author argues that these forces have moved from a marginal, albeit important, part of traditional conventional strategy towards being a central component of any government warfighting or national security response. The changes in Special Operations Forces may offer governments an increasingly viable and effective alternative to the conventional use of force by states.

Also available:

- 126** *A Model Pacific Solution? A Study of the Deployment of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands*
James Watson
- 125** *Network-Centric Warfare: the Problem of Social Order*
David Schmidtchen
- 124** *'Putting Your Young Men in the Mud': Change, Continuity and the Australian Infantry Battalion*
Alan Ryan
- 123** *The Prospects for Australian and Japanese Security Cooperation in a More Uncertain Asia-Pacific*
Mark Hoare