Lee Cicuta Live-Tweet reading the U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual

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This text was originally written as a twitter thread as I read the military's COIN manual in the midst of the George Floyd uprisings of 2020. The original thread is copied here in more-or-less its original form, so includes references to its location on social media and may seem more awkward to read in this format as a result. Dashes between sections indicate when a new post was started, in order to make it clearer when the thread is referencing a specific included photo of the manual. Emojis and some small parts of threads not pertinent to the subject (parts with lots of emojis, refences to my Patreon, information about when I was going to start the next part of the reading, etc.) have been removed for more readability.

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Introduction:

Posted about this elsewhere but it's vitally important and is one of the first topics in the intro. The overall goal of counterinsurgency is to separate the civilian population from the insurgents. The general population is the lifeblood of insurgency. (p. XXV)

Securing the Civilian

The field manual directs U.S. forces to make securing the civilian, rather than destroying the enemy, their top priority. The civilian population is the center of gravity—the deciding factor in the struggle. Therefore, civilians must be separated from insurgents to insulate them from insurgent pressure and to deny the insurgent "fish" the cover of the civilian "sea." By doing so, counterinsurgents can militarily isolate, weaken, and defeat the insurgents.

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Further down on this point they talk about how this means that they need to kill less civilians and avoid collateral damage, because it turns the civilian population more towards solidarity with insurgents. It also risks turning international approval from the occupying force.

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They seem bemoan this, saying "The costs of killing non-combatants finally register on the ledger." (p. XXVII) Which pretty much summarizes how much the U.S. military values human life, esp the lives of civilians in other countries.

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Since we can't just indiscriminately kill civilians anymore, what is an occupying force to do? Manual answers this like it's a shocking pronouncement: take on more risk. Use less force. Instead of just mowing people down whenever I guess.

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(p. XXIX) Two takes from the end of this subsection.

1) lol cry more

2) insurgent asymmetrical tactics are highly effective and so deeply frustrating to occupying forces that they can't help but whine about it in their tactical manuals

> Today's enemy insurgent's tactics and strategy have *forced* additional risk upon the American Soldier and Marine. It is unquestionably unfair, for the enemy is violating longstanding rules of war. It is ethically unsatisfying because the insurgent's asymmetrical tactics should not get a free pass. Yet the answer is unavoidable. During peace operations of the 1990s, force protection effectively became part of the mission, privileging the Soldier over the civilian. Because the civilian is fundamental to the COIN mission, force protection must now give way.

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Next subsection is called "Nonmilitary Capacity is the Exit Strategy": says U.S. civilian political leadership is an vital aspect in winning conflicts.

Also that that leadership has been entirely incompetent in regards to the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. Shocker.

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Apparently a critique of the new U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine is that "its restraint and political correctness threaten to emasculate American military power." (p. XXXIII)

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At least some degree of self-awareness here:

"Yet history provides plenty of reason to doubt counterinsurgency claims about a kinder and gentler counterinsurgency. During Vietnam, the U.S. spoke of winning hearts and minds even as it carpet bombed rural areas." (p. XXXIV)

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In the subsection titled "Nice Guys Finish Last" they write that counterinsurgents, when faced with how invisible insurgents can be, often prefer the brutal strategy of totally erasing distinctions between combatants and non-combatants.

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To this the author of the intro (Sarah Sewall, formerly served in the DoD) is basically like "I know it's really hard, but, like I said earlier, it's actually politically and militarily better to NOT indiscriminately raze entire villages to the ground." (me paraphrasing)

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Believes Americans have been shielded from the real costs of war in recent decades, and are now very resistant to sacrifice. "The American way of war has long been characterized by the substitution of firepower for manpower, which helps protect U.S combatants." (p. XXXVIII)

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Damn honestly surprised by the level of realness here. (p. XXXVIII)

Generally, we Americans are totally down with war we pay for so long as we don't have to deal with any of the dirty consequences ourselves.

As the Cold War evaporated, the United States stood unrivalled in its conventional superiority and high-tech, standoff weaponry. U.S. forces can now inflict enemy losses grossly disproportionate to their own. One hundred forty eight service members were killed during the first Iraq war. No American died during the air campaign for Kosovo. As U.S. combat deaths in the second Iraq war surpassed three thousand, the American public grew uneasy. Yet compared to Iraqi civilian or enemy deaths, or to the operation's ambition, the U.S. casualties are few. Modern U.S. wars can be hugely expensive in money, material, and their broader impact on the nation's foreign policy—but the direct human costs are comparatively low. We may not like to acknowledge this fact, but since Vietnam, Americans have enjoyed relative immunity from wars fought in their name.

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"Counterinsurgency favors peace over justice. Revolution destabilizes the status quo in the name of justice." (p. XXXIX)

Look. The enemy knows what the fucking score is. They know what they're fighting for: Order. It's long past time we figure out the same: Revolutionary Justice

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(p. X1)

What anarchists have been saying. Electoralism is just a meaningless release valve and will be gone in a fuckin snap if that's what the state requires to maintain its sovereignty.

They know it. You should too. This is the fight we're in.

Americans still want to believe that peace and justice can coexist without friction. Political legitimacy, through the U.S. lens, simply requires creating political space for an opposition to blow off steam. But what if legitimacy requires abandoning equal rights for all citizens, centralizing the economy, or eliminating due process? When responding to popular will produces uncivilized policies, those compromises can reflect poorly on the supporting counterinsurgent. That form of collateral damage can resonate more deeply within the American political system than civilian harm. This is yet another aspect of the true costs and risks of COIN.

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Alright, starting the official Introduction:

Starting off with a recognition that the U.S.'s extreme firepower capacity, most "enemies" do not try to meet U.S. forces directly or compete in those terms, but seek to exhaust "U.S. national will" (p.1i)

So, with insurrection.

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To combat what they recognize is a HUGE challenge to the U.S. military, the Intro recommends that members of the military get creative and seek to understand historical trends.

Let me hammer the point: insurgents pose a massive challenge to the biggest military on earth.

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Why I want to stress this point so much: it's easy to get overwhelmed by the militarized might of the State. But don't EVER forget that all that firepower hasn't won them a war in DECADES because insurgent tactics are devastatingly effective.

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Note especially the sentence "Thus, counterinsurgents often have to 'come from behind' when fighting an insurgency."

This is part of why we say that counterinsurgency tactics often happen AFTER an action (ex: trying to discredit people involved in direct action) (p. 1ii)

One common feature of insurgencies is that the government that is being targeted generally takes awhile to recognize that an insurgency is occurring. Insurgents take advantage of that time to build strength and gather support. Thus, counterinsurgents often have to "come from behind" when fighting an insurgency. Another common feature is that forces conducting COIN operations usually begin poorly. Western militaries too often neglect the study of insurgency. They falsely believe that armies trained to win large conventional wars are automatically prepared to win small, unconventional ones. In fact, some capabilities required for conventional success—for example, the ability to execute operational maneuver and employ massive firepower—may be of limited utility or even counterproductive in COIN operations. Nonetheless, conventional forces beginning COIN operations often try to use these capabilities to defeat insurgents; they almost always fail.

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"In COIN, the side that learns faster and adapts more rapidly— the better learning organization— usually wins." (p. 1ii)

This is why it is so important for us to be fluid ("be water") in our tactics. To not get entrenched in one way of acting. Essentially: be anarchistic.

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(p. 1iii) "Forces that learn COIN effectively have generally: proved open to soliciting and evaluating advice from the local people on a conflict zone"

Why we do NOT accept cop-collaborators in our movements. Regardless of their intentions, they are part of counterinsurgency.

> Just as there are historical principles underlying success in COIN, there are organizational traits shared by most successful learning organizations. Forces that learn COIN effectively have generally—
>
> - Developed COIN doctrine and practices locally.
> - Established local training centers during COIN operations.
> - Regularly challenged their assumptions, both formally and informally.
> - Learned about the broader world outside the military and requested outside assistance in understanding foreign political, cultural, social and other situations beyond their experience.
> - Promoted suggestions from the field.
> - Fostered open communication between senior officers and their subordinates.
> - Established rapid avenues of disseminating lessons learned.
> - Coordinated closely with governmental and nongovernmental partners at all command levels.
> - Proved open to soliciting and evaluating advice from the local people in the conflict zone.

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"Learning organizations defeat insurgencies; bureaucratic hierarchies do not." (p. 1iii)

"Effective insurgents rapidly adapt to changing circumstances. They cleverly use the tools of the global information revolution to magnify the effects of their actions." (p. 1iv)

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^^^ these two sentences have much to tell us. The entirety of the official Intro to this manual stresses the necessity of adaptability and learning. This is what the State is the WORST at. This is its fatal flaw. This is what we are BEST at. Exercise your ability to adapt.

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Chapter 1:

Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

This chapter is going to provide background info on insurgency (the first half of the chapter) and counterinsurgency (the second half).

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This chapter begins with a definition of warfare. Since this is the State's definition of warfare, I believe it's important for us all to be aware of any am including the full definition here: (p. 1)

many of the characteristics it has exhibited since ancient times. Warfare remains a violent clash of interests between organized groups characterized by the use of force. Achieving victory still depends on a group's ability to mobilize support for its political interests (often religiously or ethnically based) and to generate enough violence to achieve political consequences. Means to achieve these goals are not limited to conventional forces employed by nation-states.

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More important definitions to pay attention to:

Insurgency: "an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control." (p. 2)

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Counterinsurgency: "is military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency."

Something important to note from this is that counterinsurgency is innately about people in power maintaining their power.

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Manual goes on to emphasize that political power is THE central issue in insurgencies and counterinsurgencies. Insurgency is about the complete overthrow of existing authority, and the counterinsurgent's goal is to sustain that authority and reestablish its legitimacy.

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In goddamn writing. Their goal is to make sure people fall in line with the State's authority, and this often means "eliminating those extremists whose beliefs prevent them from ever reconciling with the government." (p. 2)

In our context, btw, this means all abolitionists.

1-4. Long-term success in COIN depends on the people taking charge of their own affairs and consenting to the government's rule. Achieving this condition requires the government to eliminate as many causes of the insurgency as feasible. ==This can include eliminating those extremists whose beliefs prevent them from ever reconciling with the government.==

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In case you were wondering "hmm I'm surprised we've gotten this far and they haven't mentioned protecting capitalism" worry no more!

The counterinsurgent's goal is to help a regime provide "security and rule of law" that allow for the "growth of economic activity" (p.2)

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The first subsection is titled "Aspects of Insurgency" and starts with the line: "Governments can be overthrown in a number of ways." And ngl reading that made me feel a bit tingly

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Insurgency is an internal war: inside states. not between states. Insurgents either seek to overthrow existing power and create new state power, or break from state control and form an autonomous entity.

They really reduced decades of ML v Anarchist discourse down to a sentence.

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They note that the exception to this idea of insurgency being an "internal war" is when indigenous populations rise up to expel colonial powers.

The State is including indigenous revolutionaries in its analysis and you best be doing so too.

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Btw, the State puts nonviolent protests in the same category as insurgent tactics: "Although insurgents frequently use nonviolent means like political mobilization and work stoppages (strikes), they do resort to conventional military operations when conditions seem right." (p. 4)

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^^^ this is VITAL for us to understand.

ANY form of resistance makes us an enemy combatant in the eyes of the State. You are not safe because you are nonviolent. You are not different from the "violent" protestors you try to distance yourself from.

Which side are you on?

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Lol god the amount of whining in this manual is cracking my shit up:

"The contest of internal war is not "fair": many of the "rules" favor insurgents. 😭 😭 😭 " (p.4, crying faces are my own interpretative addition but definitely really happened when this was written.)

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One of the biggest difficulties for the state in addressing insurgencies is to realize that it's actually happening.

Btw this is why the idea that cops were the ones setting fires in Minneapolis in early uprisings or (insert conspiracy theory here) is bullshit.

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Even though governments have superior resources, insurgencies find success by "sowing chaos and disorder anywhere" (p.4) and the state fails unless it's able to maintain order *everywhere*

Proof that riots are def not "exactly what the cops want"

Quite the opposite, actually.

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Riots, uprisings, looting, direct action, and resistance are all in direct opposition to what the state needs to project its power and sovereignty. Collective and destructive resistance ruptures its ability to maintain order.

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Which again, is why we say that spreading conspiracy theories about how "the state is actually behind X militant action" is an act of counterinsurgency.

The good/bad protestor dichotomy is how the state is attempting to keep us from resisting in a way it can't control.

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DAMN. Honestly check this whole section (p.4).

Takeaways: stay motivated, keep being creative with your tools, and OPSEC IS KEY.

We can outlast them.

> 1-10. For the reasons just mentioned, maintaining security in an unstable environment requires vast resources, whether host nation, U.S., or multinational. In contrast, a small number of highly motivated insurgents with simple weapons, good operations security, and even limited mobility can undermine security over a large area. Thus, successful COIN operations often require a high ratio of security forces to the protected population. (See paragraph 1-67.) For that reason, protracted COIN operations are hard to sustain. The effort requires a firm political will and substantial patience by the government, its people, and the countries providing support.

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COIN (Counterinsurgency) operations begin after insurgencies have already taken advantage of the initiative, so have to begin with offensive and defensive operations to regain control.

They write that killing insurgents is "necessary", but cannot by itself defeat an insurgency.

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Pay attention to that. This manual, the one that the militarized people occupying your city are using to guide their operations, sees killing insurgents as a necessity.

If you have been to any protest that has been met with police munitions, you are an insurgent to them.

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Counterinsurgents have to gain the initiative through what they call "stability operations, which seek to secure and control local populations.

Brings to mind all the bridges to downtown Chicago being raised to stop looting today.

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The manual then does a few-page recap on how insurgencies have evolved throughout history, which I'm not going to go into much detail about here, but it's understanding of the current conditions of insurgencies at the end of this subsection are enlightening:

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They write that interconnectedness and info technology are an important component of contemporary insurgencies. Using the internet, insurgents can link up with other groups locally, regionally, and internationally.

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More important, imo, is that they note that insurgents today most often "join loose organizations with common objectives but with different motivations and no central controlling body, which makes identifying leaders difficult." (p.8)

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My takeaway:

Horizontal, decentralized, leaderless movements are a far bigger threat to state sovereignty and order than ones with leaders or centralized demands. They desperately want someone to bargain with. Or failing that. Someone to kill whose loss will crumble the movement.

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Here they list what a counterinsurgent should examine/seek understanding of when building an analysis of an insurgency.

We have seen PPB examining all of these points here in Portland, from what we've been able to hear of their internal process.

kinds of opponents, some of whom may be at odds with one another. Examining the specific type of insurgency they face enables commanders and staffs to build a more accurate picture of the insurgents and the thinking behind their overall approach. Such an examination identifies the following:

- Root cause or causes of the insurgency.
- Extent to which the insurgency enjoys internal and external support.
- Basis (including the ideology and narrative) on which insurgents appeal to the target population.
- Insurgents' motivation and depth of commitment.
- Likely insurgent weapons and tactics.
- Operational environment in which insurgents seek to initiate and develop their campaign and strategy.

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In contrast, this is how they break up the different types of insurgent approaches: conspiratorial, military-focused, urban, protracted popular way, identity-focused, composite and coalition. (p.9)

Insurgent Approaches

1-25. Counterinsurgents have to determine not only their opponents' motivation but also the approach being used to advance the insurgency. This information is essential to developing effective programs that attack the insurgency's root causes. Analysis of the insurgents' approach shapes counterinsurgent military options. Insurgent approaches include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Conspiratorial.
- Military-focused.
- Urban.
- Protracted popular war.
- Identity-focused.
- Composite and coalition.

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Gonna try to sum up each their paragraphs on these types as succinctly as I can:

Conspiratorial: few leaders, military cadre, activist party seizing state power/exploiting a revolutionary situation. Small. Secretive. "Vanguards". Emerge only when success can be achieved quickly. The Bolsheviks are their example of this.

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Military-focused: aim to create revolutionary possibilities primarily through military force. Their ex: the focoist approach (revolution by way of guerrilla warfare) as popularized by Ché Guevara. The assertion that insurrection can create the conditions for state overthrow.

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Urban: approach based on protracted urban "terrorism" waged by small and independent cells. Attempts to accomplish the following: (check photo). Requires little to no popular support. Becoming more effective as societies become more urbanized. Their example: Irish Republican Army

- Sow disorder.
- Incite sectarian violence.
- Weaken the government.
- Intimidate the population.
- Kill government and opposition leaders.
- Fix and intimidate police and military forces, limiting their ability to respond to attacks.
- Create government repression.

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Protracted Popular War: "Protracted conflicts favor insurgents, and no approach makes better use of that asymmetry than the protracted popular war." (p.11) Their ex: The Chinese Communists after WWII

They go into far more depth on this one than any others, so I will too.

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They heavily cite Mao Zedong's Theory of Protracted War, which outlines a three phased and politico-military approach:

- **Strategic defensive**, when the government has a stronger correlation of forces and insurgents must concentrate on survival and building support.
- **Strategic stalemate**, when force correlations approach equilibrium and guerrilla warfare becomes the most important activity.
- **Strategic counteroffensive**, when insurgents have superior strength and military forces move to conventional operations to destroy the government's military capability.

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Phase 1 allows time to wear down superior enemy strength while establishing a base. This is when the insurgency prepares the populace to resist the occupying power. Propaganda, demonstrations, boycotts, sabotage, etc.

This is pretty clearly the phase we are in currently.

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Phase 2 is what they call a "strategic stalemate" and is the beginning of overt guerrilla warfare. While guerrillas operate in cells, the movement undermines the people's support of the government and expand the insurgents' areas of control.

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Phase 3, the strategic counteroffensive, is the point in which the insurgency becomes stronger than the established authority and tips the balance. This is also when the insurgency typically transitions to conventional warfare. If successful, it causes governmental collapse.

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They write that many subsequent insurgencies have added their own twists on this strategy: including rejecting the need to switch to conventional warfare.

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Their example: "the Algerian insurgents did not achieve much military success of any kind; instead, they garnered decisive popular support through superior organizational skills and astute propaganda that exploited French mistakes." (p.13)

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Back to the different approaches.

Identity-focused: mobilizes support based on common identity. Common in contemporary insurgencies and sometimes combined with other approaches. Sometimes, whole communities join the insurgent movement.

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Composite Approaches and Coalitions: Contemporary insurgents sometimes use different approaches and tactics at different times to take advantage of current conditions. Different insurgent forces from different approaches might form loose coalitions. Ex: insurgents in Iraq

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Today we're going to be finishing the first half of the Chapter 1: Insurgency and Counterinsurgency. This chapter is broken up into two parts:

Aspects of Insurgency and Aspects of Counterinsurgency

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In the primary struggle of an internal war (that characterizes insurgencies), is that of mobilizing people. Insurgents and counterinsurgents try to mobilize public support for their own cause, and discourage support for their enemy.

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The manual articulates that there are five means to mobilize support:

1) Persuasion

2) Coercion

3) Reaction to abuses

4) Foreign support

5) Apolitical motivations

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Breaking those five ways down:

Persuasion- "in times of turmoil, political, social, security, and economic benefits can often entice people to support one side or the other." Ideology and religion are also means of persuasion.

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Coercion- kidnapping or killing local leaders to discourage working with the enemy is an example of coercive force. Also, insurgents might offer themselves or their militias as protection for communities to show how the government fails to protect its people.

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Reaction to Abuses- "though firmness by security forces is often necessary to establish a secure environment, a government that exceeds accepted local norms and abuses its people or is tyrannical generates resistance to its rule." (p.16)

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^^^ how they phrase this is important. Every time I've read something about murdering/harming civilians in here they always make sure to say something along the lines of "murdering civilians is totally necessary and also really hard to not do... but people will be mad."

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They see abusing and killing people as a given, and have to apologize over and over again in their own manual for even daring to suggest that maybe abusing and killing people too much might make things worse.

This is what the militarized troops occupying our streets read.

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"Security force abuses and social upheaval caused by collateral damage from combat can be major escalating factors for insurgencies." (p.16)

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Foreign Support- not much in this section, just that foreign governments might provide expertise, international legitimacy, and funds that help start or intensify a conflict.

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Apolitical Motivations- these are people who aren't, in this manual's assessment anyway, driven by political motives. This can apparently include "criminals," "mercenaries," and "individuals inspired by the romanticized image of the revolutionary." (p.17)

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You would honestly have a hard time convincing me that any of these are truly apolitical categories, but it is very reflective of what the state views as legitimately political.

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End of this subsection: "True extremists are unlikely to be reconciled to any other outcome than the one they seek; therefore, they must be killed or captured." (p.17)

As I've said previously, in our context this is absolutely how the state views abolitionists.

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Those were the motivations, and now we're going to delve in to what the causes of mobilization are, from this manual's perspective.

These causes usually spring from unresolved contradictions that already exist within the state.

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They call politicizing someone a "bait and switch": "they attract supporters by appealing to local grievances; then they lure followers into the broader movement." (p.17)

They describe basic organizing in the most sinister way possible.

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"The idea cause attracts the most people while alienating the great and is one that counterinsurgents cannot co-opt." (p.18)

Remember that every time you see folks trying to change the message to something different than total abolition. The state cannot co-opt total abolition.

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Ah, an example of exactly what I just said: "Skillful counterinsurgents can deal a significant blow to an insurgency by appropriating its cause."

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Once mobilized, insurgencies require money, supplies, and weapons to strengthen and sustain their movement.

Weapons are especially important, and insurgents may either make them themselves, smuggle them in, or try to capture them from government forces.

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Insurgencies need financial support to supply themselves. Sometimes this comes in the form of foreign support, but often local and international supporters provide donations.

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According to this manual there are typically five elements of insurgency:

1) Movement leaders

2) Combatants

3) Political Cadre

4) Auxiliaries

5) Mass Base

The proportion each element takes up in the larger movement depends on the strategic approach the insurgency adopts.

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Movement leaders- provide strategic direction and exercise leadership through force of personality, revolutionary ideas, and charisma. They might also hold their position through religious, clan, or tribal authority.

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Combatants- do the actual fighting and provide security, protect and expand the movement as well as the networks that help sustain it.

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Political Cadre- the militants who typically form the political core of the insurgency. Typically designate themselves as a formal party to signify their political importance. Implement procedures provided by leaders.

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Auxiliaries- sympathizers who do not engage in combat but provide important services like running safe houses, storing supplies, acting as couriers, collecting intelligence, providing funding, providing documents to potential supporters.

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Mass Base- the supporting populace. Maintain their normal positions in society but also lead "clandestine" lives for the insurgent movement.

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They note that movements where there is no clear cadre/centralized leadership, it is difficult to define these roles as separate. People drift between combatant/auxiliary/follower status as needed.

The state sees leaderless movements as a higher threat to their sovereignty.

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If you haven't gathered why yet. It's because leaderless, decentralized movements are effective as fuck at being incredibly difficult for the state to understand, co-opt, or control.

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Each side of the internal conflict (insurgents and counterinsurgents) engage in a contest of resource mobilization and force deployment. They focus hard on the point that "No force level guarantees victory for either side." (p.22)

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Their "density recommendations" fall within a range of 20-25 counterinsurgents per every 1000 residents (another sign that they see the communities they occupy as being entirely made up of enemies).

But they say that no calculation on this front can be fully depended on.

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"COIN is manpower intensive because counterinsurgents must maintain widespread order and security"

"Auxiliaries might be co-opted by economic or political reforms, while fanatic combatants will most likely have to be killed or captured." (both on p.23)

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Takeaway: Counterinsurgent's ultimate goal is to funnel as much support away from the most militant elements of a movement so they can kill them or lock them away. This is why we must remain dedicated to standing in solidarity with one another.

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Insurgencies are often shaped by these six common dynamics (I'm starting to see a theme to their organization here lol):

1) Leadership

2) Objectives

3) Ideology and Narrative

4) Environment and Geography

5) External Support and Sanctuaries

6) Phasing and Timing

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Leadership: "successful insurgent leaders make their cause known to the people and gain popular support" (p.24) Their tasks are to break the people's confidence in the government and build their confidence in the movement.

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The level of centralization or decentralization of responsibility and authority is what drives the insurgencies structure and procedures. Centralized leadership often attempts to create a viable counterstate.

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They write that completely decentralized and loose network forms of insurgencies find it difficult to create a counterstate but are "very hard to destroy and can continue to sow disorder, even when degraded. It takes very little coordination to disrupt most states." (p.24)

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First off, I find it so funny that they seem totally unable to grasp that leaderless and decentralized movements might not actually want to create a counterstate. It's totally outside of their worldview here.

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Second, read that again: "It takes very little coordination to disrupt most states."

The state is not the omniscient, all-powerful entity they want you to believe they are and they know it! They only succeed by projecting an illusion of total sovereignty and power.

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It takes actually very little to disrupt that illusion, to reveal the contradictions, and bring the whole thing tumbling down.

Why else would they work so hard to make you feel helpless to change anything?

We can win. Keep up the good fight.

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"Identity-focused insurgencies can be defeated in some cases by co-opting the responsible traditional authority figure; in others the authority figures have to be discredited or eliminated. Accurately determining whether a leader can be co-opted is crucial." (p.24)

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This is why they've been desperately trying to find "leaders" in this movement to co-opt. That's why they've repeatedly tried to use people with marginalized identities to be their mouthpieces for white supremacy. Don't fall for it.

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Objectives: there are strategic, operational, and tactical objectives in insurgencies.

Strategic: the insurgent's end goal

Operational: objectives insurgents pursue to destroy state legitimacy and establish their end goal

Tactical: immediate aims of insurgent acts

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Ideology and Narrative: "Ideas are a motivating cavort in insurgent activities." (p.25)

Insurgents express their ideologies often through a narrative (or narratives) that serves to help other potential insurgents understand the conditions of the struggle.

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Environment and Geography: the environment and geography in which an internal conflict takes place has a massive effect on the conditions and structure of that conflict. Ex: Insurgencies in urban environments require a different kind of planning than rural environments.

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External Support and Sanctuaries: "external support can provide political, psychological, and material resources that might otherwise be limited or unavailable." (p.28) Insurgencies might turn to other countries or even just the internet to find this support.

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Virtual sanctuaries can be used to sway internal and external audiences in favor of supporting an insurgency and are playing a larger part in modern insurgencies.

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"Effective COIN operations work to eliminate all sanctuaries." (p.29)

Again, use these networks because they're an effective tool. But check your information and operational security regularly.

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Phasing and Timing: not all insurgencies follow a linear timeline through the different phases mentioned in Part 2 (check the beginning of this thread to find it). They can revert to previous phases, and almost entirely ignore others as it suits their context.

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"Networked organizations are difficult to destroy." (p.31)

Truly every time I see the phrase "_____ is/are difficult to destroy" in a state manual I get all warm and fuzzy inside.

"They tent to heal, adapt, and learn rapidly." (p.31)

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Ah, here they list off what they see as Insurgent Vulnerabilities. Pay attention and reflect carefully on these (p.31):

- Insurgents' need for secrecy.

- Inconsistencies in the mobilization message.

- Need to establish a base of operations.

- Reliance on External Support

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- Need to obtain financial resources.

- Internal divisions

- Need to maintain momentum

- Informants within the insurgency

Manual says Chapters 5 &6 will discuss how to exploit these vulnerabilities.

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Breaking down those weaknesses:

Secrecy- insurgencies have to start with a covert approach, but excessive secrecy can limit insurgent freedom of action, distort or reduce info about its goals, and restrict communication.

-

Mobilization and Message- "Effective counterinsurgents use information operations (IO) to exploit inconsistencies in the insurgent message [...] Counterinsurgents may also be able to "capture" and insurgency's cause and exploit it." (p.32)

-

Base of Operations- Insurgents also can have trouble finding bases of operations that are both secure and don't isolate them to the point of putting them out of touch with the populace.

-

External Support- Many insurgent movements rely porous borders between countries to allow for external support. The movement of insurgents or supplies across these borders/over distances can be vulnerable to attack.

-

Financial Weakness: all insurgencies require an aspect of financial support, but such support can be unreliable, and some funders may not be consistent with the movements core beliefs and reduce its popular appeal.

-

Internal Divisions- "Counterinsurgents remains alert for signs of divisions within an insurgent movement." (p.33)

"Offering amnesty or a seemingly generous compromise can also cause divisions within an insurgency and present opportunities to split or weaken it." (p.34)

-

Maintaining Momentum- Controlling the pace and timing and keeping momentum is vital to a successful insurgency. If insurgents lose their momentum, counterinsurgents can capitalize upon this and gain the advantage.

-

"Some insurgencies have failed to capitalize on their initial opportunities. Others have allowed counterinsurgents to dictate the pace of events and scope of activities." (p.34)

Why it is imperative to not allow counterinsurgents to dictate the tone, direction, or message.

-

Informants- "Nothing is more demoralizing to insurgents than realizing that people inside their movement or trusted supporters among the public are deserting or providing information to government authorities." (p.34)

-

Into the "Aspects of Counterinsurgency" section

Counterinsurgency (COIN) differs from peacekeeping operations in an absolutely key regard. In peacekeeping, the goal is an absence of violence. The counterinsurgent, however, views this absence as a potential mask over insurgent operations. They look on peace with suspicion.

-

(p.35) This whole paragraph is a pretty vital read imo. Counterinsurgents are at a disadvantage in that maintaining a state means projecting uniform and encompassing power, dominance, and control. They *have* to make most people believe in that power in order to keep it.

1-108. In almost every case, counterinsurgents face a populace containing an active minority supporting the government and an equally small militant faction opposing it. Success requires the government to be accepted as legitimate by most of that uncommitted middle, which also includes passive supporters of both sides. (See figure 1-2.) Because of the ease of sowing disorder, it is usually not enough for counterinsurgents to get 51 percent of popular support; a solid majority is often essential. However, a passive populace may be all that is necessary for a well-supported insurgency to seize political power.

-

"Legitimacy is the main objective." (p.37)

Counterinsurgents' objective is to enforce and strengthen the sovereignty of a state government so it can carry out its key objectives: regulating social relationships, extracting resources, and taking actions in the public's name.

-

They differentiate here between "illegitimate" and "legitimate" governments here. They write that "All governments rule through a combination of consent and coercion." (p.37) But "legitimate" governments rule are supposed to rule primarily with the consent of the governed.

-

"Illegitimate" governments rely mainly or entirely on coercion. According to the manual, in typical the liberal tradition, legitimate governments are inherently stable. Illegitimate governments are inherently unstable, police states, fragile, and poorly administered.

-

1-116. Six possible indicators of legitimacy that can be used to analyze threats to stability include the following:

- The ability to provide security for the populace (including protection from 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.

-

They believe that Unity is absolutely essential for counterinsurgent success. They write that having one COIN leader who has authority over all agencies involved in COIN is ideal, but at minimum there should be a unity of effort between all leaders involved.

-

This includes NGOs. While many resist involvement with military, they write here that some sort of liaison is absolutely needed so that every possibility for presenting shared actions and messages around the insurgency is taken advantage of.

Need that united propaganda.

-

Political factors are FAR more important to counterinsurgents than military favors. Military actions may draw the most attention (ex: feds kidnapping people in Portland) but COIN aim for a political victory above all else. They MUST establish state legitimacy to win.

-

"Military actions executed without properly assessing their political effects at best result in reduced effectiveness and at worst are counterproductive." (p.40)

Which is why most military officials were against deploying against the uprisings.

-

It was not because it was against their consciences. It was because they need to save their legitimacy for later (i.e. when these uprisings meet together with the total civil upheaval that the impending total economic ruin will cause).

-

For Counterinsurgents, it is vital to isolate insurgents from their cause and support. To be successful in this, COIN operations aim more towards separating insurgents from resources instead of just trying to kill every insurgent.

-

They write here that "clearly, killing or capturing insurgents will be necessary," (p.41) but that attempting to kill all of them risks generating popular resentment and creating martyrs that motivate the cause of the insurgency.

-

Instead, counterinsurgents aim to cut off the resources that allow dynamic insurgencies to continue to regenerate themselves.

Sometimes by actually redressing the social/political economic grievances that began the insurgency.

Sometimes by population control/border security.

-

Urban insurgents are especially difficult for COIN operations to separate from their cause and sources of support and are difficult to track because of the interrelated nature of their networks.

-

Successful COIN operations have to find a balance in their management of public information and expectations in fanning enthusiasm for their efforts while not making promises they cannot keep.

-

"Increasing the number of people who feel they have a stake in the success of the state and it's government is a key to successful COIN operations." (p.45)

In that, their aims are the same as ours. It's ultimately about showing people where their stake in the struggle is.

-

The state achieves this by obfuscation, by manipulation, by control, by fear, and by offering a select few power.

We achieve it by showing people the realities of how state power harms them, and by offering them solidarity in their efforts to get free with us.

-

In a surprising turnaround from their earlier writing on unity and the need for highly centralized leadership, the manual states that in fighting insurgencies "Local commanders have the best grasp of their situations." and "effective COIN operations are decentralized." (p.47)

-

I guess there's always a point, even for the state, where high centralization and bureaucracy gets so unwieldy and ridiculous that you have realize that you're going to need to empower the folks on the ground if you ever want to get anything done.

-

They go on to explore the various paradoxes of counterinsurgency operations, which I'll summarize as best I can.

-

"Sometimes, the more you protect your force, the less secure you may be." (p.48)

COIN success is gained by swaying the populace. If you establish a huge/visible force, they'll realize that you're actually just an occupying force in their communities and be alienated from you.

-

"Sometimes, the more force is used, the less effective it is." (p.48)

COIN operations need to use force to establish the legitimacy of the state, but using too much increases the level of collateral damage and mistakes and will turn the populace against you.

-

"The more successful the counterinsurgency is, the less force can be used and the more risk must be accepted." (p.48)

Corollary to previous paradox. As insurgent violence drops, counterinsurgent also has to roll back or else their violence will risk reviving the insurgent cause.

-

"Sometimes doing nothing is the best reaction." (p.49)

Overreacting to an insurgent action like "opening fire on a crowd" or, in our context, tear gassing entire neighborhoods after people threw water bottles at you, tends to create more enemies than it takes off the streets.

-

"Some of the best weapons for counterinsurgents do not shoot." (p.49)

Again, COIN victory is mostly political, not military. Establishing legitimacy through political means is more effective than just shooting a bunch of people.

-

This manual spends a ridiculous amount of time being like "I know this might seem controversial and shocking to you, and very likely will be hard to hear, and I'm SO sorry to say it but... killing people en masse is not as effective a strategy as we wish it was."

-

"The host nation doing something tolerably is normally better than us doing it well." (p.49)

If you're trying to apply this to the context of the US uprisings, replace host nation with host city/state. Better optics to let the local cops beat the fuck out of locals themselves.

-

"If a tactic works this week, it might not work next week; if it works in this province, it might not work in the next." (p.50)

Successful insurgencies are highly adaptive and often part of a widespread network of effective communication that adjust to COIN practices quickly.

-

The more effective a counterinsurgent tactic is, the more quickly an insurgency is likely to make that effective obsolete because of the greater need to counter it. COIN operations have to respond to this by constantly developing new tactics and practices.

-

"Tactical success guarantees nothing." (p.50)

Military actions rarely win over political ones.

A quote in this section that made me grin: "Insurgents that never defeat counterinsurgents in combat still may achieve their strategic objectives."

-

They end and summarize this chapter with the following chart titled "Successful and unsuccessful counterinsurgency operational practices." (p.51)

Which I think is worth giving a solid look over.

TABLE I-I **Successful and unsuccessful counterinsurgency operational practices**

Successful practices	Unsuccessful 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 Counterinsurgency operations. • Embed quality advisors and special forces with host-nation forces. • Deny sanctuary to insurgents. • Encourage strong political and military cooperation and information sharing. • Secure host-nation borders. • Protect key infrastructure.	• 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 forces primarily on raiding. • Place low priority on assigning quality advisors 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.

-

Chapter 2- Unity of Effort: Integrating Civilian and Military Activities

This chapter, as its title implies, is going to focus on how counterinsurgencies (COIN) combine military and civilian arenas to attempt to combat, suppress, and collapse insurgencies.

-

They begin by restating what seems to be a central thesis in this field guide: that military actions are necessary for successful counterinsurgencies, but can only be effective when "integrated into a comprehensive strategy employing all instruments of national power." (p.53)

-

This means that military might is an important tool to use against insurgencies, but for counterinsurgents to actually succeed in suppressing an insurgency, their victory HAS to be a political one.

-

For this to happen, COIN operations have to include and support civilian efforts against the insurgency. Unity and integration with local NGOs is crucial to success to the point of often being even more valuable than conventional military operations.

-

Counterinsurgencies need to gain, or regain, the populace's active, continued support for the State, and their acceptance of its sovereignty.

This means coordinating political, social, and economic programs to address the cause of the conflict and undermine the insurgency.

-

Insurgents succeed by disrupting state order and highlighting grievances that the state fails to address.

Counterinsurgents have to answer this by reasserting order and meeting the population's needs to keep them dependent on that order.

-

To defeat an insurgency, counterinsurgencies have to apply instruments of national power along multiple logical lines of operations (LLO) focused on the populace.

"Each line depends on the others. The interdependence is total: if one fails, the mission fails." (p.55)

-

Reading that line should leave no question as to how fragile counterinsurgencies really are. Disrupting one logical line of operations disrupts ALL others and crumbles the whole oppressive apparatus.

-

Logical lines of operations often require applying the capabilities of civilians organizations such as:

-U.S. gov agencies other than the DOD

-IGOs

-NGOs

-Private corporations

-Other organizations that have political, economic, or informational power

-

With military forces COIN's preferred method is to establish a unity of command: control of all gov organizations engaged in counterinsurgency under one leader.

This often cannot be achieved integrating with non-gov civilian orgs, so the next aim is establishing unity of effort.

Unity of effort is the goal for all involved in the counterinsurgency effort, military and civilian, to work uniformly to undermine the insurgency.

-

A LOT of this unity of effort is informal. Referred to as "Hand Shake Con" because NGOs and private organizations want to seem independent from military operations. COIN operatives pursue unity with these orgs by establishing liaisons, sharing info, and often manipulating indirectly.

-

The next section, and the majority of the rest of this relatively short chapter, is: Key Counterinsurgency Participants and their Likely Roles.

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Today we're going to finish Chapter 2- Unity of Effort: Integrating Civilian and Military Activities

This chapter, as its title implies, focuses on how counterinsurgencies (COIN) combine military and civilian arenas to attempt to combat, suppress, and collapse insurgencies.

-

We're starting today with a breakdown of the likely participants in counterinsurgency operations:

-U.S. military forces

-Multinational forces

-U.S. government agencies

-NGOs

-IGOs

-Multinational corporations and contractors

-Local leaders

-

U.S Military Forces are designed primarily for conventional warfare, but have other capabilities that are relevant to COIN operations, such as: human intelligence, military police, civil affairs, engineers, medical units, logistic support, legal affairs, and contractors.

-

They write in terms of "Host Nations" in this book, as those are the primary "enemies" this book is concerned with, but we can easily translate that to our current situations: host states, host cities, host communities, etc. Which I have been doing and will continue to do.

-

U.S. military forces help local forces conduct counterinsurgency (COIN) operations by providing advice, training, and helping to "find, disperse, capture, and defeat insurgent forces." (p.61)

-

Land combat forces are most valuable to long-term counterinsurgency success when they engage in "stability operations" which are essentially any operations that serve to establish, restore, or maintain law and order (State sovereignty) over a populace.

-

The U.S. Government prefers that U.S. military forces operate with other nations' forces (in our context, local police forces) and not alone, as other forces bring capacities that U.S. military forces might not have: like an understanding of the local culture and terrain.

-

Leaders of other U.S. government agencies collaborate and coordinate COIN operations, some of these key organizations are: the Department of State, CIA, Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, FBI, ICE, U.S. Coast Guard, and more.

-

Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) often maintain strict independence from governments and don't want to be seen associating with the military, so COIN operations have sometimes have difficulty in gaining support from and coordinating with NGOs.

-

However, NGOs are vital aspects of counterinsurgencies, as they often arrive before and remain after military forces and help create a lasting sense of stability for the State.

Counterinsurgents strive to build complementary and trusting relationships with NGOs.

-

IGOs (intergovernmental organizations) are organizations created by formal agreement between two or more governments. The most notable being the United Nations. Depending on the insurgency, any number of UN organizations may be present and working within COIN operations.

-

Multinational corporations and contractors are often present and active in areas of insurgencies and engage in economic and governance activities. Counterinsurgents should know which ones are present to "prevent fratricide and destruction of private property." (p.65)

-

Local leaders may be economic (ex: businessmen), theological (clerics, lay leaders), informational (newspapers, journalists), family based (elders, patriarchs), and more. COIN ops seek to identify the key local leaders to understand how they can fit in to COIN efforts.

-

In the key responsibilities in counterinsurgency, they have here made a distinction between the "Preferred Division of Labor" and the "Realistic Division of Labor"

-

The Preferred Division of Labor in COIN operations: civilians preform civilian tasks, those with most expertise applicable expertise should preform a task, and legitimate local authorities should receive special preference in preforming tasks.

-

However, the violence in the area of operations, according to this guide, affects civilian agencies' ability to operate effectively (riots effectively hinder capitalism's ability to function) and so this preferred division of labor is often unattainable.

-

The Realistic Division of Labor is when military commanders identifying people within their units who have the most expertise, and have them engage in the activities that would preferably be done by a civilian. The goal being to eventually transition power to civilians.

-

Chapter 3: Intelligence in Counterinsurgency

-

"Effective, accurate, and timely intelligence is essential to the conduct of any form of warfare. This maxim applies especially to counterinsurgency operations; the ultimate success or failure of the mission depends on the effectiveness of the intelligence effort." (p.80)

-

Section I: Intelligence Characteristics in Counterinsurgency

Begins by stating that Counterinsurgency (COIN) is intelligence-driven. The function of intelligence in COIN is to create an understanding of the conditions on the ground, especially in regards to the populace and insurgents.

-

Both counterinsurgents and insurgents need to have an effective intelligence capability in order to be successful. Both also attempt to create and maintain intelligence networks while neutralizing the other's intelligence capabilities.

-

Intelligence is about people. Counterinsurgents strive to gather insight into cultures, perceptions, values, beliefs, interests, decision-making processes of individuals and groups involved in the conflict, and this is the basis for their int. collection and analytical efforts.

-

Intelligence and operations feed each other: effective intelligence drives effective operations and effective operations produce information. All operations have an intelligence component, every soldier/cop collects information whenever they interact with the populace.

-

Section II: Predeployment Planning and Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield

"Intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) is the systematic, continuous process of analyzing the threat and environment in a specific geographic area." (p.80)

-

Intelligence preparation of the battlefield is accomplished in four steps:

1) Define the operational environment

2) Describe the effects of the operational environment

3) Evaluate the threat

4) Determine threat courses of action

-

Essentially, the goal of IPB is to develop an understanding of the conditions of the insurgency predeployment, so that counterinsurgents can create a plan for addressing the insurgency and prep their units before they start interacting with people on the ground.

-

Defining the operational environment in counterinsurgency requires understanding the composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences involved in the area of interest (where the insurgency is happening).

-

Possible influences:

-family, tribal, ethnic, religious, or other links that go beyond the area of operations

-communication links to other regions

-economic links to other regions

-media influence on local populace

-external financial, moral, logistical support for the enemy

-

I know this can be a bit dry to read about, but just consider this: these are the specific arenas counterinsurgents will try to learn everything they can about so they can use this information to exploit, split, weaken, and destroy insurgencies. Important for us to know.

-

Describing the effects of the influences within an insurgency is an important aspect of making sense of intelligence. This can include understanding civil considerations (people, history, local government), terrain analysis (complex terrain, infrastructure, communications)

-

More on civil considerations: counterinsurgents seek to understand how the local infrastructure, institutions, activities of local leaders, organizations, etc. can influence how the counterinsurgents can conduct themselves.

-

They go on to break down the six sociocultural factors they think should be analyzed:

-society

-social structure

-culture

-language

-power and authority

-interests

-

I'm going to summarize each of these as best I can, and also see how I think they're being applied to our current context (FYI, I'll likely be heavily relying on examples from Portland, as that's the context I'm most familiar with. Please QT these with your own examples!)

-

Society:

Defined as a population whose members are subject to the same political authority/have a common culture/share a sense of identity. No society is homogeneous, and each often have a dominant culture and a vast number of subcultures.

-

"A society is not easily created or destroyed, but it is possible to do so through genocide or war." (p.85) is a line that certainly doesn't feel great to read stated so matter-of-factly in a military manual but here we are.

-

Understanding the societies in the area of interest can allow counterinsurgents to achieve their objectives, but commanders also consider societies outside of the insurgency area whose actions, opinions, or political influence can effect the COIN mission.

-

So, looking to Portland, counterinsurgents are probably paying very close attention to the society here when they craft their intelligence, operations, and messaging: specifically the intense radical subculture that's surrounded by a largely very liberal populace and government.

-

This is probably why the general tactic, especially at the beginning of the protests here, was to allow the giant liberal marches to go on during the day largely untouched, then viciously attack the abolitionists that stayed out at night, and publicly create a divide between the two.

-

Social Structure:

Relations among groups of people within a system of groups. Tends to remain relatively consistent over time. Involves:

-arrangement of parts that constitute society

-organization of social positions

-distribution of people within those positions

-

They further break down their understanding of social structure into: Groups, Networks, Institutions, Organizations, Roles and Statuses, and Social Norms.

-

A Group is "two or more people regularly interacting on the basis or shared expectations of others' behavior and who have interrelated statuses and roles. A social structure includes a variety of groups. These groups may be racial, ethnic, religious, or tribal." (p.85)

-

"A race is a human group that defines itself or is defined by other groups as different by virtue of innate physical characteristics. Biologically, there is no such thing as race among human begins; race is a social category." (p.86)

-

They believe that understanding the composition of groups in an area of operations is vital for effective COIN operations, especially when insurgents organize around racial, ethnic, or religious identities.

-

Counterinsurgents try to collect intel on:

- formal relationships between groups

- informal relationships between groups

- divisions and cleavages between groups

- cross-cutting ties (ex: religious alignments that cut across ethnic differences) between groups

-

"These characteristics may suggest courses of action aimed at reinforcing or widening seams among insurgents or between insurgents in the population." (p.87)

Counterinsurgents will attempt to use group identities, whenever possible, to break apart potential for solidarity.

-

Networks can be an important aspect of a general social structure (covering a town, city, state, nation, etc.) and within a insurgent organization as well. Common networks are: elite networks, prison networks, worldwide ethnic/religious communities, neighborhood networks.

-

Organizations, according to this guide, have the following characteristics (p.87):

-bounded membership

-defined goals

-established operations

-fixed facilities or meeting places

-means of financial or logistical support

-

Additionally, they write that organizations can be generally grouped into these categories:

- Communicating organizations: have power to influence public's perceptions

- Religious organizations: regulate norms, restrain or empower activities, provide social support.

-

- Economic organizations: provide employment, help regulate/stabilize monetary flow, assist in development, create social networks

- Social organizations: provide support to the population, create social networks, influence ideologies

-

Counterinsurgents strive to understand what members of what groups belong to each organizations and how their activities might affect COIN and military operations.

-

"The next step is to determine how these organizations affect the local populace, whose interests they fulfill, and what role they play in influencing local populations." (p.88)

-

Roles and Statuses describes the way individuals in a society interact as members with social positions. Statuses can be achieved by meeting certain criteria or can be ascribed by birth. Every status comes with a cluster of expected behaviors known as roles.

-

An example of this differentiation:

If you have the status of being a man in the United States, some expected roles are often: enacting masculinity, being aggressive and tough, being a leader.

-

"Violation of a role prescribed by a given status [...] results in social disapproval. The standard of conduct for social roles is known as a social norm. A social norm is what people are expected to do or should do, rather than what people actually do." (p.88)

-

Social norms can be moral (like homicide prohibition) or customary (like prayer before a meal) and if a person's behavior doesn't conform to these norms, they might be sanctioned by the other people within the same social structure.

-

Counterinsurgents seek to understand the roles, statuses, and social norms within an area of operations so they can operate effectively in that area, esp in working to turn the populace away from solidarity with insurgents.

-

Once counterinsurgent analysts have mapped out the social structure within an area of operations, they move on to analyze the culture of the society as a whole and then of each major group within the society.

-

Social structure comprises the relationships within a society, but culture (ideas, norms, rituals, codes of behavior) provides meaning to individuals within the society:

"Social structure can be thought of as a skeleton, with culture being the muscle on the bones." (p.89)

-

Social structure and culture are mutually dependent and reinforcing, and changing one results in the change in the other.

-

Culture is a "web of meaning" shared by members of a society or group within a society. They further break it down as being (p.89):

- a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artificers that members of a society use to cope with their world and each other

-

- learned, through a process called enculturation

- shared by members of a society; there is no "culture of one"

- Patterned, meaning that people in a society live and think in ways forming definite, repeating patterns

-Changeable, through social interactions

-

- arbitrary, meaning that soldiers should make no assumptions regarding what a society considers right and wrong

- internalized, in the sense that it is habitual, taken for granted, and perceived as "natural" by people within the society

-

They also describe culture as an "operational code" for large groups of people that conditions actions and ideas: what to do and what not to do, how to do or not do it, and who to do it with or not do it with. It influences how people make judgements about right and wrong.

-

A culture often consists of: identities, beliefs, values, attitudes and perceptions, belief systems, and cultural forms.

-

"Each individual belongs to multiple groups, through birth, assimilation, or achievement. Each group to which individuals belong influences their beliefs, values, attitudes, and perceptions." (p.90)

-

They write that everyone, consciously or unconsciously, ranks their identities into primary or secondary identities. Primary identities are often national, racial, or religious. Secondary identities are more like hunter, social media influencer, cat lover, etc.

-

"Frequently, individuals' identities are in conflict; counterinsurgents can use these conflicts to influence key leaders' decisions." (p.90)

-

Besides various identities, they write that cultures are also made up of beliefs, values, attitudes and perceptions, belief systems, and cultural forms, all of which counterinsurgents should give serious attention to when intel mapping an area of interest.

-

Specifically, counterinsurgents seek to understand the beliefs, values, and practices of an area, so they can see which values that are being promoted by an insurgency correspond to other social groups in the area. COIN operations seek to exploit the spaces those values differ.

-

So if a population, say, largely supports the idea of racial justice/equality, but also largely believes that "peaceful" protest is the only way to show dissent and that property damage is inherently bad... COIN operations would focus heavily on the "violence" of the insurgents.

-

After mapping out the social structure and understanding the culture of an area, counterinsurgents then turn to understanding the dramatics of power and authority at play.

-

For every group in an area of operations, counterinsurgents seek to identify the type of power a group had, what it uses the power for, and how it acquires and maintains power. Power comes in four major forms:

Coercive force, social capital, economic resources, and authority.

-

Once they've mapped out the social structure, culture, and power dynamics (who holds formal and informal power and why), counterinsurgents can begin to consider ways to use this information to reduce public support for the insurgency.

-

Accomplishing this requires counterinsurgents to understand a population's interests: physical security, basic necessities, economic well-being, political participation, and social identity are the examples of interests they use here.

-

When a State fails to provide physical security for people, or even actively threatens it (say, like having a police force that brutalizes and murders people on the regular) a population is more likely to support an insurgency.

-

When a State fails to provide essential services for people, like food, water, clothing, shelter, and health care, a population is more likely to support an insurgency.

-

When a State fails to provide a stable economy for people, with stable jobs and an economic ability to adequately produce, distribute, and consume goods and services, a population is more likely to support an insurgency.

-

When a State fails to provide a people with political rights and the ability to meaningfully participate in politics, like having a president trying to suppress voters and another candidate who also ignores calls justice, a population is more likely to support an insurgency.

-

After evaluating these interests and whether or not they have been unsatisfied long enough to become grievances (they have), counterinsurgents finally turn to "evaluating the threat"

-

Evaluating the threat of an insurgency is apparently quite difficult! This is because "insurgent organizational structures are functionally based and continually adaptive." (p.100)

Once again, our strength is our creative adaptability. Rigid organizations just don't cut it.

-

Counterinsurgents require knowledge about shit that's really difficult for them to actually measure:

-insurgent goals

-grievances insurgents exploit

-means insurgents use to generate support

-organization of insurgent forces

-accurate locations of key insurgent leaders

-

The ability for insurgencies to generate and sustain popular support, or at least tolerance, has the greatest impact on the insurgency's longevity and effectiveness. This provides:

-safe havens

-freedom of movement

-logistic support

-financial support

-intelligence

-new recruits

-

You know what also makes insurgencies a threat? When insurgents provide "social services that the government neglects or cannot provide." (p.102)

This is why cops target and destroy mutual aid projects. Taking care of each other is inherently a threat to State sovereignty.

-

Developing support is critical to an insurgencies survival and growth, and as support grows, so does the insurgency's capabilities, and then those capabilities often help the insurgency gain even more support. Kind of like a snowball rolling down a snow-covered hill.

-

They write that there are four forms of popular support:

- active external

- passive external

- active internal

- passive internal

All these forms benefit an insurgency, but how much each form benefits varies on the specific circumstances of the insurgency.

-

Active external support: finance, logistics, training, fighters, and safe havens. Most often provided by a foreign government or other foreign nongovernmental organizations, like some charities.

-

Passive external support: when a foreign government supports an insurgency through inaction. Like not hampering activities of insurgents operating within its borders. Recognizing the legitimacy of the insurgency and denying the legitimacy of the host nation.

-

Active internal support is usually the most important, and can include:

-individuals/groups joining the insurgency

-providing logistic or financial support

-providing intelligence

-providing safe havens

-providing medical assistance

-providing transportation

-

I am so joyful to have seen all of these types of support in abundance. People showing up physically, donating to jail funds, relaying info from police scanners, letting protesters escape into their homes, street medics, people giving folks rides to safety

-

Passive internal support can also be beneficial in its own way. While passive supporters don't provide material support, they don't impede insurgent operations and also don't snitch on them to counterinsurgents.

-

Information and media activities are often an insurgency's main effort to win support. According to the guide, insurgents use information activities to accomplish the following: (p.107)

-undermine government legitimacy

-undermine counterinsurgent forces

-generate popular support

-

"To achieve these effects, insurgents broadcast their successes, counterinsurgent failures, government failures, and illegal or immoral actions by counterinsurgents or the government." (p.107)

-

On political activities: "Links between insurgents and political parties may be weak or easily broken by disputes between insurgents and politicians. In such cases, political parties may not be able to keep promises to end violent conflict." (p.108)

-

Essentially, Counterinsurgents want to understand the dynamics between insurgents and political parties as much as possible so they can develop their messaging appropriately.

-

"Insurgents are by nature an asymmetrical threat. They do not use [these] tactics because they are cowards afraid of a "fair fight"; insurgents use these tactics because they are the best means available to achieve the insurgency's goals." (p.109)

-

Whatever their public messaging may be, counterinsurgents know that insurgencies use asymmetric tactics because they are the most effective tactics available to succeed.

-

This is why it is VITAL to do all that is possible to not be drawn into direct, symmetrical conflicts. That is the arena that the State's counterinsurgents best have us beat. Asymmetrical tactics are the best tools we have in the fight for liberation.

-

Quote from Irish insurgents: "The force of England is entrenched and fortified. You must draw it out of position; break up its mass; break its trained line of match and maneuver, its equal step and serried array... nullify its tactic and strategy, as well as its discipline; decompose the science and system of war, and resolve them into their first elements." (p.109)

-

They write about how an insurgency's organizational structure depends on the effectiveness of targeting leaders. If it is hierarchical, removing the leaders may greatly degrade the insurgency's capabilities. If non-hierarchical, targeting leadership has little effect.

-

Counterinsurgents use intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations to develop an understanding of what they need to do to address the issues driving the insurgency.

Remember from previous readings: then "addressing" issues means some form of co-opting.

-

They list several factors that they find particularly important: (p.117)

- a focus on the local populace

- collection occurring at all echelons

- localized nature of insurgencies

- all Soldiers/Marines functioning as potential collectors

- insurgent use of complex terrain

-

The populace is where counterinsurgents gather the majority of their intelligence, and the more intelligence they have, the more effective their operations are.

If you needed another reason to never talk to cops.

-

Different types of intelligence gathering:

Human Intelligence (HUMINT): collection of information from people & associated documents and media sources to ID insurgent elements, intentions, composition, strength, disposition, tactics, equipment, personnel, and capabilities.

Signals Intelligence (SIGINT): seeks to determine enemy locations, intentions, capabilities, and moral. Helpful for confirming or denying HUMINT reports.

Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT): valuable for understanding the operational environment. More useful than any other intelligence gathering for understanding public attitude towards/support for insurgents and counterinsurgents.

Imagery Intelligence (IMINT): platforms used for surveillance of likely insurgent safe houses and other facilities. Aerial IMINT (ex: drones) platforms are used for detecting unusual personnel and supply movements.

Technical Intelligence: intelligence gathered on insurgent equipment and is used to understand their capabilities.

Measurement and Signatures Intelligence (MASINT): sensors that provide monitoring of "avenues of approach" and border regions. Also used to locate insurgent safe houses/cache sites.

Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT): exploitation and analysis of imagery to deceive, assess, and visually edict physical features/geographical activities. Used to identify smuggling routes and safe havens.

-

If you read all those and think "Gee, all that seems to be a lot of the tactics the border patrol uses to create our militarized border" you would be RIGHT. Border enforcement and control is an inherent part of counterinsurgency.

-

Target exploitation (TAREX) and document exploitation (DOCEX) are not intelligence disciplines themselves but are related to them.

-

"Documents and pocket litter, as well as information found in computers and cell phones, can provide critical information that analysts need to evaluate insurgent organizations, capabilities, and intentions." (p.125)

-

"Evidence needs to be enough to justify using operational resources to apprehend the individuals in question; however, it does not necessarily need to be enough to convict in a court of law." (p.125)

-

In case any of you are still living under the illusion that the State needs to have a solid case against you to target, kidnap, and imprison you.

They don't. You're not safe even if you've never broken the law. They only need to see you as a threat to their sovereignty.

-

Insurgents also have their own reconnaissance and surveillance techniques, and can usually do so while blending much more effectively into the populace without being easily identified.

-

Counterinsurgents seek to understand insurgent surveillance techniques and weaknesses in surveillance networks so they can detect signs of insurgent preparations and surprise insurgents by "neutralizing their early warning systems." (p.127)

-

Harkening back to our earlier reading, this is a good time to remember that insurgencies are learning competitions in which the most flexible and dynamic organization wins. Remaining stagnant in one way of operating is how counterinsurgents will eventually exploit you.

-

Overall, counterinsurgents have a really hard time doing effective intelligence analysis on insurgencies. This is because they have difficulty understanding the local perceptions and culture, they have to track hundred to thousands of people, and bc insurgencies are dynamic.

-

More to this point. They write that it "takes analysts months to understand the operational environment and the insurgency." (p.131) And the most productive ones generally have to have a year of focused study on just one aspect of the insurgency.

-

If you feel like an insurgency doesn't stand a chance against the might of the State, you only need to open up their own field guide to see that the complete opposite is actually the case. Insurgencies are supremely difficult to counter.

-

The only reason that we believe that insurgencies don't have a chance is because we've been under the influence of counterinsurgent messaging our entire lives. It's purposeful on their part because they cannot actually handle empowered insurgencies. It's empty propaganda.

-

We're going to be skipping Chapter Four: Designing Counterinsurgency Campaigns and Operations. It's short and pretty dry and mostly rehashes what we've already gone through.

So we're picking up at

Chapter Five: Executing Counterinsurgency Operations

-

For counterinsurgents to be successful they MUST establish or reestablish state legitimacy. That is their ultimate goal above all else, and effective counterinsurgents operate with that goal in mind.

-

COIN operations aim to stabilize and enforce the sovereignty of the State so that the public can be efficiently governed (controlled) and so that economic development may continue.

Always in the defense of capitalism.

-

They then use a medical analogy to illustrate three stages that counterinsurgent operations progress through: stop the bleeding, inpatient care—recovery, outpatient care-movement to self-sufficiency

-

In the first stage, counterinsurgents' goal is to "break the insurgents' initiative and momentum, and set the conditions for further engagement." (p.153)

-

"Counterinsurgents also begin shaping the information environment, including the expectations of the local populace." (p.153)

This is why we saw the State working hard to co-opt and direct the message in the beginning of the uprisings. Remember all those kneeling cops?

-

Stage two is when counterinsurgents are supposed to begin building the government's legitimacy and capacity through addressing the at least some of the grievances of the insurgents in order to take away their public support.

-

The third stage is when the insurgents have been effectively isolated, met the expectations of the population, and the State has gained or regained legitimacy.

-

Counterinsurgents have logical lines of operations (LLOs) that they use to synchronize their operations against insurgents. Each LLO is closely related to the others. Success in one reinforces success in others. And failure in one undermines the others too
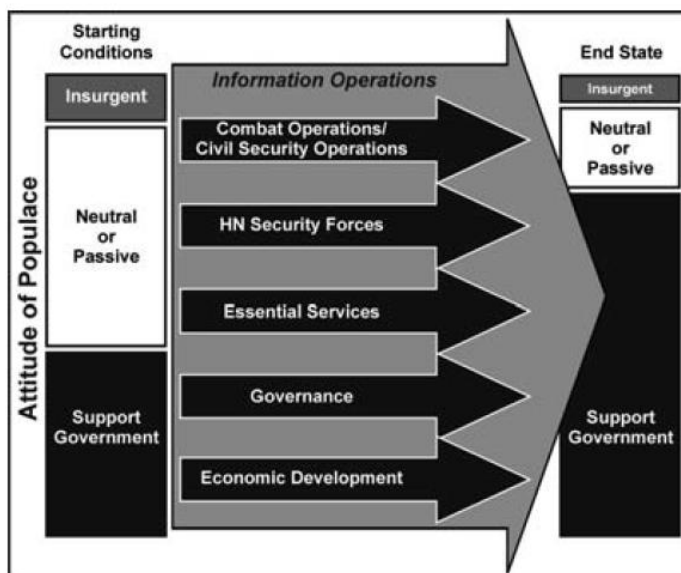

FIGURE 5-1. Example logical lines of operations for a counterinsurgency

-

Another clarifying and helpful graphic. These are all points we should pay attention to as well, because ignoring them is what allows counterinsurgents to undermine our movements.
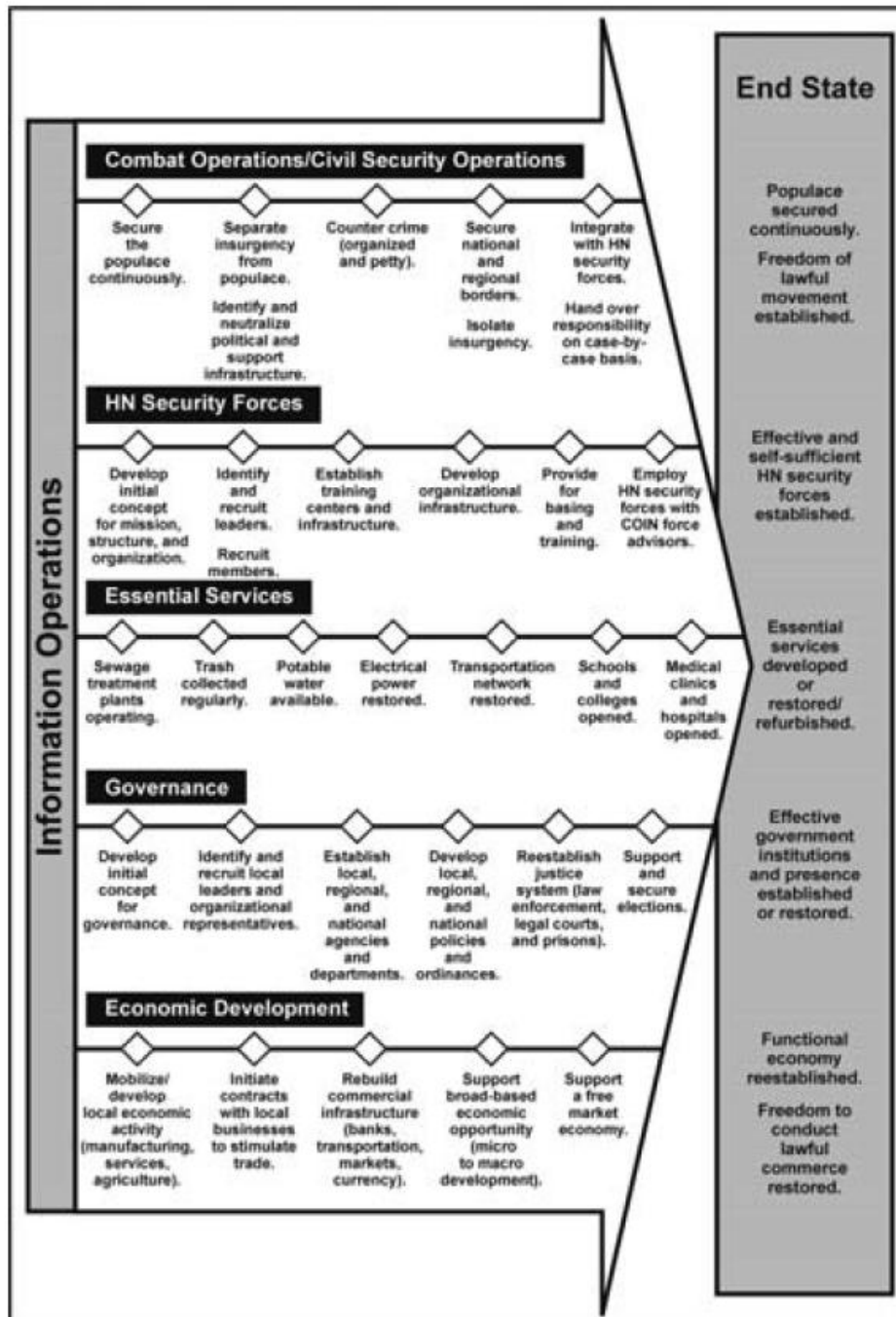

FIGURE 5-2. Example goals and objectives along logical lines of operations

-

They then into how to conduct information operations, which they claim can often be a, if not the, decisive line of operations. They identify all audiences (local, regional, and international), and various news cycles and reach out to them with the State's message.

-

They do their best to shape and then manage the local populace's expectations and develop consistent themes in their messages.

-

Another indicator about how clumsy the current State is at counterinsurgency rn: effective information operations should be based on policy/facts/deeds, not unsubstantiated claims/future plans/promises. Failure in these make excellent targets for insurgents to take advantage of.

-

Counterinsurgents also point out any faults or lies in insurgent propaganda to undermine them. Which is why it's so vital that we verify everything before we put it out there and stick to the truth at all times. The truth is on our side, and it strengthens us.

-

"Commanders should apply time, effort, and money to establish the proper combination of media outlets and communications to transmit the repetitive themes of [State] accomplishments and insurgent violence against the populace." (p.165)

DHS Director Decries "Violent Anarchists" Taking Over Portland

by Alex Zielinski • Jul 16, 2020 at 12:12 pm

-

When it comes to conducting combat/security operations, they recommend using them with as much restraint as possible, because it can backfire and turn public support against counterinsurgents.

-

"Measured combat operations are always required to address insurgents who cannot be co-opted into operating inside the rule of law." (p.167)

Your regular reminder that falling back into electoral politics is what counterinsurgents view as being successfully co-opted.

-

Counterinsurgents also view bolstering local security forces with equipment, training, increased numbers, and funding as an important line of operation. Gotta make sure the local cops can keep up that counterinsurgency after you've left!

-

Without a viable economy and employment opportunities, the public are more likely to support an insurgency. So counterinsurgents also aim to create economic stability and viability within the State.

-

Starting with the subsection "Counterinsurgency Approaches" of which there are apparently many, and examples of which they list three: Clear-hold-build, Combined Action, and Limited Support

-

Let's talk Clear-Hold-Build. The three objectives of this approach are as follows: (p.174)

-create a secure physical and psychological environment

-establish firm government control of the populace and area

-gain the populace's support

-

Essentially this approach is often used in specific, high-priority areas experiencing overt insurgent operations. I don't think any of the uprisings of this year quite fulfill these conditions (yet) but I bet we'll still find some COIN tactics here that have been used.

-

They measure popular support specifically by how much the local population participate and work with counterinsurgents and their programs. Don't talk to cops!

-

The primary tasks for the Clear-Hold-Build approach of counterinsurgents? Provide security to the local populace, eliminate insurgent presence, reinforce political primacy, enforce the rule of law, and rebuild local state institutions.

-

They write that "No population subjected to the intense organizational efforts of an insurgent organization can be won back until certain (pictured below) conditions are created:" (p.175)

- The counterinsurgent forces are clearly superior to forces available to the insurgents.
- Enough nonmilitary resources are available to effectively carry out all essential improvements needed to provide basic services and control the population.
- The insurgents are cleared from the area.
- The insurgent organizational infrastructure and its support have been neutralized or eliminated.
- A HN government presence is established to replace the insurgents' presence, and the local populace willingly supports this HN presence.

-

What I take from this is that if insurgents wanted to maintain a hold they had on an area, they would likely want to work and organize to make sure the above conditions are not/cannot be met.

-

The "Clear" step of this approach requires commanders to remove all insurgents and totally eliminate organized resistance in an area. They often do this with saturating an area with patrols, as well as carry out ambushes and raids.

-

They also stress that they can't just get rid of insurgents, but that it is vital to remove their infrastructure. As long as that infrastructure exists, insurgents can continue recruiting and undermining State sovereignty.

-

About the goal of their information operations (propaganda):

To the population, counterinsurgents want to send this message with their propaganda: only the State's security forces can keep them safe, and if they actively support the insurgency it will "prolong combat operations, creating a risk to themselves and their neighbors." (p.177)

-

To insurgents, counterinsurgents focus on "convincing them that they cannot win and that the most constructive alternatives are to surrender or cease their activities." (p.177)

-

The "Hold" part of the strategy is pretty much more of the same tactics in the "Clear" part, while also securing important counterinsurgent and State infrastructure.

-

In this stage they also seek to continuously secure the population and separate them from insurgents, strengthen local security forces (cops), establish State political apparatuses where insurgent ones were, and develop dependable intelligence gathering networks.

-

This is also when they do a "thorough population screening to identify and eliminate remaining insurgents and to identify any lingering insurgent support structures." (p.179) which is no fun for anyone so best not to let them get to this stage

-

In the "Build" stage of this approach, counterinsurgents focus on building up State capacity and infrastructure to control the population and assert sovereignty over their lives. This includes both "Population Control Measures" and "Increasing Popular Support"

-

Population control measures include: taking a census of who lives in an area, establishing curfews, establishing a pass system, limiting the length of time people can travel, limiting visitors from outside areas, and establishing checkpoints.

-

And they sell all of this control to the population by telling them that it's what's necessary to protect them from insurgents. They also make sure to add that there should be a system of punishment for any offenses related to these control measures.

-

As far as "Increasing Popular Support" goes, they suggest establishing reform programs as quickly as possible to get the population to acquiesce to reestablishing State power. They also use propaganda to tell them how much better their life will be under the State.

-

The Combined Action and Limited Support approaches have actually limited relevance to our current context, and are pretty short sections in the manual, so I'll just run through them briefly.

-

Combined Action approach: when U.S. and Host Nation troops join together in a single organization to engage in COIN operations. Usually where insurgent forces don't exist or have little resources. Seeks to establish a presence in mostly small towns out of which they operate.

-

Limited support approach: U.S. support is limited and mostly just works to help strengthen the powers of the Host Nation.

-

The rest of the chapter is mostly on how counterinsurgents assess their progress, and how they understand how to target their operations. For progress: they use their reading of public support as the most prominent indicator of success or failure.

-

Their targeting process includes: deciding which targets to engage, detecting those targets, delivering (whatever the operation wants to deliver), and assessing the effects of the operation. Here's the examples the have of different possible targets (p.193)

TABLE 5-8 **Examples of lethal and nonlethal targets**

Personality targets
Lethal
- Insurgent leaders to be captured or killed.

Nonlethal
- People like community leaders and those insurgents who should be engaged through outreach, negotiation, meetings, and other interaction.
- Corrupt host-nation leaders who may have to be replaced.

Area targets
Lethal
- Insurgent bases and logistic depots or caches.
- Smuggling routes.

Lethal and nonlethal mix
- Populated areas where insurgents commonly operate.
- Populated areas controlled by insurgents where the presence of U.S. or host-nation personnel providing security could undermine support to insurgents.

Nonlethal
- Populations potentially receptive to civil-military operations or information operations.

-

They write that learning and adapting are crucial for executing successful counterinsurgency operations, and that this is often very difficult for commanders because the complexity of insurgencies. They have to out-adapt insurgents, and adaptability is insurgents' strength.

-

Chapter Six is "Developing Host-Nation Security Forces"

For our internal U.S. context, folks, this means counterinsurgent practices to strengthen police, corrections personnel, and border guards. So this is bound to be a very relevant chapter for us.

-

Developing/Enhancing State security forces in places of insurgency is vital for success of counterinsurgents. They are trying to reassert the sovereignty of the State, and to do that they need enforcers of that sovereignty (cops) to have sustainable control over the population.

-

They recognize that local security forces are often cause of public dissatisfaction: "Security forces that abuse civilians do not win the populace's trust and confidence; they may even be a cause of the insurgency." (p.202)

-

Their mission to develop/enhance State security forces are arranged through these tasks:

-Assess

-Organize

-Build or rebuild facilities

-Train

-Equip

-Advise

-

Counterinsurgents first seek to assess the capacity of the security forces. Do they need complete reestablishment? Or just help increasing their capacity? They might lack a specific capacity, or they might just need temporary reinforcement.

-

Then, they work to ensure that security forces are well organized: have consistent internal doctrine, have effective management systems, and the needed amount of personnel.

-

Something I find quite interesting is that they explicitly state the importance of recruiting security forces from minority populations, because it builds legitimacy and serves to quiet the fears of groups regarding their relationship to the State.

-

"Effectively disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating former insurgents and their groups must be part of the overall COIN plan." (p.215)

-

"The primary frontline COIN force is often the police—not the military." (p.229)

If you didn't believe it before, there it is direct from the horse's mouth: police are essential agents of counterinsurgency.

-

It's VITAL that we understand this: "When police have daily contact with the local populace, they can collect information for counterinsurgents." (p.231) Don't talk to cops!

-

There must always be a formal link or liaison channel between the police and military, and while the end-goal is for there to be a clear distinction between them, the manual recognizes that their roles may blur during counterinsurgency operations.

-

Here's a list of essential skills that counterinsurgents want to make sure police have been trained in: (p.232)

- Weapons handling.
- Small-unit tactics.
- Special weapons employment.
- Convoy escort.
- Riot control.
- Traffic control.
- Prisoner and detainee handling and processing.
- Police intelligence.
- Criminal intelligence.
- Criminal handling.
- Stations management.

-

During counterinsurgency operations, police and military optimally seek to collaborate to: (p.233)

- Establish common operating procedures

- Conduct supporting information operations

- Preform combined planning

- Ensure command and control interoperability

-

Military forces also support police by carrying out counterinsurgency functions like: assisting in arrests, supporting police presence and patrols, providing logistical support, controlling crowds and civil unrest, securing key facilities, and providing advisors.

-

Chapter 7: Leadership and Ethics for Counterinsurgency.

-

As this manual as repeatedly said, insurgencies are political wars, and they are won by swaying the populace to support one side or another. I think we should know what counterinsurgents claim their ethical rules are, because when they don't follow them, we can point directly to that.

-

And that's what this chapter even says: breaches in these ethics can be used against counterinsurgents in the political conflict because insurgents will point them out to the general public to break down their support. So let's take note of these, and be ready to do just that.

-

Apparently they believe that a basic American, Army, and Marine Corp value is "respect for the sanctity of life." (p.238)

Yeah tell that to the Afghans we've been raining bombs on since 2001.

-

Under their basic leadership tenets, they write that it's important that COIN forces are well trained because, since they need to have the support rod the people, the populace needs to feel protected, not threatened, by counterinsurgent operations.

-

Counterinsurgent leaders are also, ideally, trained in how to engage in more decentralized operations. Decentralization is key in insurgent conflict because it allows for organizations to be dynamic, flexible, and good at learning.

-

Flexible, decentralized action is what wins insurgencies.

It's what's always won insurgencies. Even every revolution that people associate with state communists. It turns out, when you let people who understand their own specific environment and conditions call the shots, you get shit done. Even the U.S. Military knows that.

-

Effective counterinsurgents know "the people, topography, economy, history, and culture of their area of operations. They know every village, road, field, population group, tribal leader, and ancient governance within it." (p.239)

-

"[Counterinsurgency] is more than just killing insurgents; it includes the responsibility to serve as moral compass that extends beyond the COIN force and into the community." (p.239)

Murder and morality, never incongruent terms in the eyes of the U.S. Military
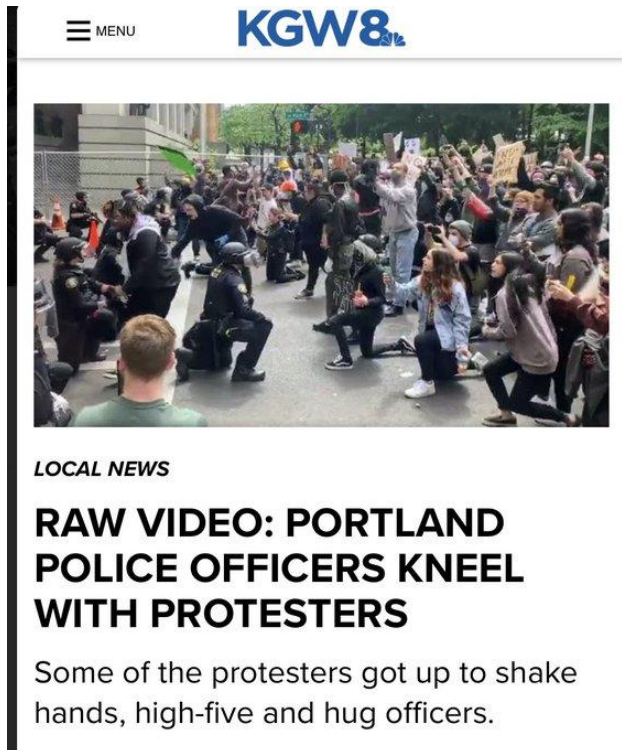
-

They write about maintaining public credibility: "All COIN force activity is wrapped in a blanket of truth." (p.240)

Which, beyond being completely absurd, should tell us how important it is for us to continuously point out the lies in the State/counterinsurgent narrative.

-

I found a strikingly direct example of a counterinsurgent tactic that was used by cops this summer, to great effect with liberals. Remember this?

LOCAL NEWS

RAW VIDEO: PORTLAND POLICE OFFICERS KNEEL WITH PROTESTERS

Some of the protesters got up to shake hands, high-five and hug officers.

-

Well, there's a short story on p.241 about a small counterinsurgent unit that was patrolling through Na-jaf, Iraq. Apparently, they were unexpectedly surrounded by angry Iraqis. What did the unit do? Took a knee. It defused the crowd's anger, and the unit was able to withdraw.

-

Our cops here did it in a different context, but for the same reasons: the goal is to distract/defuse public anger at occupying forces in our communities so they (the cops/soldiers) can continue about their business of brutalizing and killing us.

-

Successful counterinsurgent leaders also practice "self-examination, awareness, and focused corrective effort." (p.242)

Again and again and again: insurgencies are learning competitions, the side with the most people willing to learn and adapt in conflict is the side that wins.
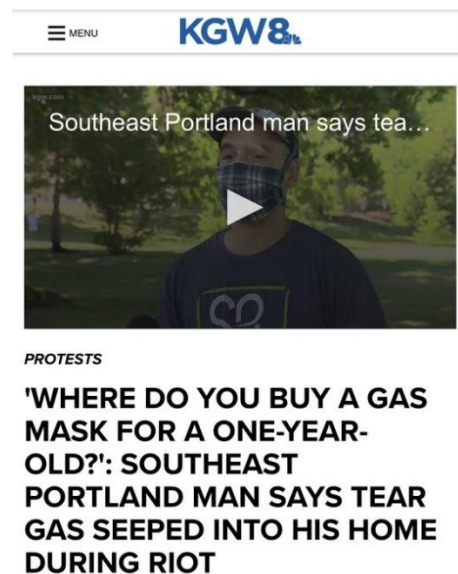
-

Alright now we're to the ethics section.

-

They write that even in combat conditions, counterinsurgents are not permitted to use force disproportionately or indiscriminately.

-

Successful counterinsurgents should understand restraint, and that use of force should be proportionate to the gain achieved, because using "excessive force to limit short-term risk alienates the local populace." (p.245)

PROTESTS

'WHERE DO YOU BUY A GAS MASK FOR A ONE-YEAR-OLD?': SOUTHEAST PORTLAND MAN SAYS TEAR GAS SEEPED INTO HIS HOME DURING RIOT

-

"One of the insurgents' most effective ways to undermine and erode political will is to portray their opposition as untrustworthy and illegitimate." (p.245)

-

Keep pointing out the brutality and illegitimacy of the state loudly and clearly and HONESTLY. Do your research. They give us enough legit ammo, we don't need to be making up conspiracy theories that backfire onto our own legitimacy.

-

Attacks on counterinsurgent legitimacy "work especially well when insurgents can portray their opposition as unethical by the oppositions own standards." (p.245)

-

"In counterinsurgencies, warfighting and policing are dynamically linked." And "The COIN environment frequently and rapidly shifts from warfighting to policing and back again." (p.246)

Police are now, and always been, counterinsurgents.

-

Establishing civil security requires that (p.247):

-insurgents are either defeated or transformed into a threat not capable of challenging State sovereignty

-institutions for law enforcement are functioning

-the institutions are accepted as credible in the eyes of the public

-

Successful counterinsurgents also aim to be proportional and discriminatory: by minimizing harm to non-combatants and assuming more risk onto themselves.

-

"The law of war principle of proportionality requires collateral damage to civilians and civilian property not be excessive in relation to the military advantage expected to be gained by executing the operation." (p.247)

-

Discrimination means that counterinsurgents have to differentiate between combatants and non-combatants. In practice this means counterinsurgents can't intend to harm non-combatants, BUT "proportionality permits them to act, knowing some non-combatants may be harmed." (p.248)

-

We're on to their declared ethics on detention and interrogation. Apparently U.S. ethics demands that no person in custody, "regardless of nationality or physical location, shall be subject to torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment." (p.249)

-

Counterinsurgents, according to their own ethics, have to do all in their power to distinguish between civilians and insurgents, and that treating a civilian like an insurgent is "a sure recipe for failure." (p.250)

-

They end the chapter summarizing that counterinsurgents must adhere to these ethics, and that those who don't must be transparently held accountable. "Lose Moral Legitimacy, Lose the War."

-

Chapter 8- Sustainment

-

This chapter is going to explore the difference between COIN logistics and conventional military operations and how counterinsurgents can leverage their available logistical assets to support their different lines of operations.

-

Here's a table they include to compare and contrast the differences between conventional military operations and counterinsurgency operations. (p.257)

TABLE 8-1 **Conventional and counterinsurgency operations contrasted**

	Conventional operations	Counterinsurgency operations
Mission	• Support combat unit missions. • Sustain and build combat power. • Support a mobile force with clear organization and structure. • Typically in direct support. • Logistic units and assets conduct only sustaining operations (focused on the force).	• Same as conventional operations plus support of logical lines of operations specific to counterinsurgency. • Support both a static force and mobile force. • Increased requirements for area support operations. • Logistic units and assets can be assigned as decisive and shaping operations (focused on the environment).
Enemy	• Enemy forces have supply trains and support echelons. • Friendly operational surprise (masking possible). • Difficult for enemy to perform pattern analysis. • Targeting logistic units is the enemy's shaping effort and considered a second front.	• Insurgents use nonstandard, covert supply methods that are difficult to template. • Limited operational surprise. • Easy for enemy to observe patterns in friendly logistic operations. • Insurgents place a high value on attacking logistic units and other less formidable, soft, high-payoff targets.
Terrain	• Fought in a definable area of operations. • Focus on destruction of enemy combat forces. • Few constraints. • Echeloned formations and discernable, hierarchical logistic organizations supporting well-defined, contiguous areas of operations. • Relatively secure lines of communications facilitate distribution operations from theater to corps to division to brigade.	• Operational environment poorly defined with multiple dimensions. • Support of the host nation population is the key objective. • Constrained time to achieve results, yet many counterinsurgency tasks are inherently time consuming. • Noncontiguous areas of operations and wide dispersion of units. • No front; everything is potentially close, yet far. • Need to maximize multiple lines of communications capacity/greater complexity. • Potentially decreased throughput capabilities. • Increased area support requirements. • Lines of communications vulnerable.
Troops and support available	• Uniformed personnel always suitable. • Contractor personnel suitable for secure areas only.	• Uniformed personnel usually suitable. • Suitability of contractor personnel judged case by case. • Task and location dependent; must be part of economic pluralism promotion plan.
Time available	• Tempo quicker. • Geared toward decisive major combat.	• Long-duration operations. • Continuity/logistics hand-off planning often required.
Civil considerations	• Secondary to considerations of how to defeat the enemy.	• May be the primary determinant of victory. • May figure prominently in logistic planning.

-

Counterinsurgents have their hands full. Not only do they need to make sure that their own people are supplied, but they need to protect their own and ALL potential supplies from insurgents.

-

They refer to Mao Zedong's doctrine for insurgency logistics, and how Chinese insurgents used their enemies supply trains as a valuable source of their own supply.

Lack of logistical capacity is not an insurmountable problem for insurgents.

It is one for counterinsurgents.

-

Logistic support during COIN focuses on these lines of operations:

-conduct combat/civil security operations

-train and employ local security forces

-establish/restore essential services

-support development of better governance

-support economic development

-

In counterinsurgency operations, every resupply mission is a combat operation. Supply trains are a great source of material if insurgents can capture them. To discourage attack, counterinsurgents do their best to project power to make their convoys seem like difficult targets.

-

Counterinsurgents organize their logistics with the intention of handing off their maintenance to the local government and security forces. This is because the presence of obvious COIN forces is something that insurgents can and do exploit in their propaganda.

-

Removing the obvious counterinsurgents "greatly assists the HN government in its struggle for legitimacy." (p.274)

Which is why Portland/Oregon politicians so grandly set themselves up in apparent opposition to the Feds when they came here. To bolster their own legitimacy.

-

This is why I think it's so important for us to continuously make clear that even local cops are occupying counterinsurgent forces in our communities, rather than just reducing COIN to being something Feds and the military do. We have to destabilize their public legitimacy.

-

In order to establish/reestablish State legitimacy, counterinsurgents HAVE to ensure there is a functioning judicial system. This means functioning courts, prosecutors, and prisons. Without them there is no State, after all.

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They write about logistical support that counterinsurgents get through contractors, and I think that this is a pretty important section to take note of. Contractors are important logistical supports to counterinsurgents, and they're also the most, imho, vulnerable to pressure.

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Logistical support contractors are not counterinsurgents, they're paid by them. Which means that if they feel like providing that support is going to cost them more than it will profit them, they're liable to back out of their support to counterinsurgents.

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Also, they obtain most of their materials, goods, and labor from local manufacturing and local populations. That's a lot of lines of operations vulnerable to pressure. Especially when that pressure comes from local people.

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Here's a list of examples they give of what goods/services contractors provide counterinsurgents: (p.280)

-construction, delivery, and installation of concrete security barriers for the defense of counterinsurgent bases and public buildings

-construction of security fencing

-public building construction and renovations

-sanitation services

-maintenance augmentation in motor pools

-road construction and repair

-trucking

-manual labor details (like grounds maintenance and sandbag filling)

-housekeeping (such as warehouses)

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If you're wondering what you can do to help support your local abolitionist efforts: mapping out, naming, locating, naming the contractors that supply police/feds/border control in your area is underrated and VASTLY important.

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A lot of that information can be found researching at home or taking a little drive or two. Protests are great and all but we waste a ridiculous amount of time and energy by not applying pressure strategically on vulnerable logistical lines.

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The State isn't the monolith most people think it is. The State functions because a lot of people, all with differing values and interests, show up to work every day.

Find out how to leverage some of those values and interests, and get some of those people to stop doing that work.

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Contractors are so vulnerable bc their interests (at least the financial ones) are clear and also FRAGILE. Most of them can keep making money if they don't contract with the state. Let's make it apparent that they won't keep making money if they DO contract with the State.