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**COUNTERINSURGENCY THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL
PRINCIPLES**

by

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September 2012

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COUNTERINSURGENCY THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that “coercive” counterinsurgency (COIN) has played a larger role historically than is currently recognized in today’s FM 3-24 doctrine, which reflects the popular view of COIN as emphasizing protection of the population. The extent to which the essence of COIN has been misunderstood and misinterpreted, undermining the coercive “gold standard” is a central concern. While there has been some recognition of the utility of coercive action against insurgents, ethical concerns about proportionality and the indiscriminate use of force have imposed constraints. Where the “gold standard” represents deliberate, strict coercion against the population, FM 3-24 emphasizes a far more limited coercive approach, one that may be to the detriment of COIN operations as understood in historical perspective.

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I. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON COIN DOCTRINE

A. INTRODUCTION

David Galula once wrote, “The profusion of variables in war has never discouraged the search for foolproof systems.”¹ At times, however, the *search* has not necessarily been properly executed through an accurate assessment of history and geopolitics. How the United States has conceptualized and developed its counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine offers a case-in-point.²

COIN lessons from the past were gleaned but not fully retained, mainly due to its “ill-fated association” with the Vietnam War.³ Instead, focus on conventional warfare via Air-Land Battle during the 1980s and ‘90s took precedence in strategic planning.⁴ Nearly a decade later, conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan created a *déjà vu* moment for the U.S.; insurgencies at first unwillingly acknowledged, but then embraced after a few years of denial. This time, there was an updated doctrine in 2006—one that arguably absorbed

¹ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2006), xxi.

² **Definitions:** COIN, as defined by FM 3-24 are “those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency.” United States Army, *FM-3-24, Counterinsurgency* (Ft. Leavenworth, KN: Training and Doctrine Command, 2006). Doctrine is simply defined by Andrew as a “common orientation, language and conceptual framework... [that] helps soldiers navigate the fog of war.” Andrew Birtle, U.S.-Army *Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860–1941* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing, November 1997), 5. This thesis also uses the term COIN with a broad-brush through history to also describe its other aliases like small war, overseas contingency, low intensity conflict LIC), revolutionary warfare, and people’s war.

³ David Ucko, “Counterinsurgency and its Discontents: Assessing the Value of a Divisive Concept” SWP Research Paper, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs* April 2006, 5–21. For additional context, Janine Davidson provides a brief synopsis on the United States’ history of COIN: “Throughout its entire 250-year history, coin, stability operations, and nation building have been far from an “irregular” occurrence. The U.S. has conducted such missions—on a large scale—about every 25 years since the Mexican War in the 1840’s... Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. has deployed every 18–24 months in response to complex crises of various size, with the average duration of these endeavors becoming increasingly protracted... *Repeatedly, after each painful episode, the military has sought to avoid having to do them again by forgetting its doctrine and failing to plan, leaving the next generation to re-learn on the fly*” [emphasis added]. See Janine Davidson, Dudes! Misrepresenting DoD’s Strategic Guidance Repeats Mistakes, Ignores Emerging Trends, and Leads to Failure.” *The Best Defense, Foreign Policy Magazine*, July 27, 2012.

⁴ Gian Gentile, “A (Slightly) Better War: A Narrative and Its Defects,” *World Affairs*, Summer 2008. This approach was arguably appropriate during the Cold War—where the military’s central mission was to counter the Soviet Union from prevailing in a decisive thrust across the Fulda Gap.

more public attention than any other previously published doctrine in U.S. history—emphasizing nation-building and population-centric COIN.⁵

Though this brought the military a long way back from its Vietnam amnesia, there have been concerns regarding the doctrine’s relevance and single-scoped approach to conducting 21st century COIN. Moreover, with more than a decade of grinding COIN warfare, economic austerity, and a strategic “rebalancing” toward the Asia-Pacific and the proposed concept of Air-Sea Battle, a new bout of COIN amnesia is potentially on the horizon, one that misrepresents or misinterprets history and thus has the potential to be ineffective.⁶

B. PROBLEM

The combat experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001 have challenged the U.S. politically, strategically, and doctrinally for over a decade. The debate has evolved over time, but is increasingly centering on whether or not the current doctrine, Field Manual (FM) 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*, has been effective, and if not, where deficiencies exist and how they can be addressed. Recent endeavors have been mandated to address the perceived shortfalls at the doctrinal level.

The U.S. Army (through its COIN Center at Ft. Leavenworth) is leading the effort to rewrite the COIN manual in order to resolve these issues. Beginning fall 2011, the project is scheduled to continue for over a year, with a tentative completion date of June

⁵ Among the critics of the doctrine’s nation-building construct is Andrew Birtle. He stated that “time and again, U.S. nation builders have seen transplanted American institutions wither in the infertile soils and inhospitable climates of foreign countries. Counterinsurgency and nation building theorists have all too often ignored this reality and have fallen into the culturally insensitive trap of trying to radically transform foreign societies—a task that is extremely difficult under the best of circumstances, if it is possible at all. Such a tack can also alienate the very country we are trying to help, as occurred often in Vietnam.” See Andrew Birtle, “Persuasion and Coercion in Counterinsurgency Warfare,” *Military Review* 88, no. 4 (2008): 52.

⁶ See Captain Philip Dupree and Colonel Jordan Thomas, “Air-Sea Battle: Clearing the Fog,” *Armed Forces Journal*, June 2012. On June 2, 2012, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta delivered a speech at the Shangri-La Security Dialogue conference in Singapore that outlined U.S. fore ‘rebalancing’—previously labeled a “pivot”—toward the Asia-Pacific, and the Air-Sea Battle concept. As described by Captain Philip Dupree and Colonel Jordan Thomas, “Air-Sea Battle seeks a better future—one that employs teamwork between air and naval forces to maintain U.S. superiority in the air, space and cyberspace, and at sea, at an acceptable cost, allowing the joint force to shape future A2/AD environments, deter other nations from threatening the global commons, and use all service and joint competencies to defeat a capable A2/AD adversary when necessary.”

2013.⁷ Specifically, the COIN Center is focused on producing a new field manual with an analytic framework dedicated to retaining historical lessons, while integrating the lessons garnered over the last ten years.⁸ As novel and necessary as this effort is for crafting and innovating U.S. COIN doctrine, there is substantiated risk that the historical accuracy may become diluted, or perhaps *further* diluted, than what FM 3-24 originally envisioned.

The primary concern of this project is assessing its incorporation and accurate portrayal of the origin of the current doctrine, the best practices from 20th century European experience (the alleged “gold standard”), and its consistency and value for U.S. warfare. Where integrating contemporary lessons is crucial to future doctrine, how the historical lessons are and are not retained are also an imperative. The research question of this thesis is: *Does the United States have an effective counterinsurgency doctrine that accurately reflects and retains historic experiences?*

C. HYPOTHESIS

Lessons from British and French small war campaigns from the 20th century (with certain overlap from the 19th) are sacrosanct to the debate on what COIN approach is most effective.⁹ For instance, lessons from Algeria and Malaya are considered, in large part, to be the holy grail of how to properly undertake COIN campaigns through “hearts

⁷ See United States Army, “AIWFC Army Irregular Warfare Fusion Cell,” SITREP (Ft. Leavenworth, KN: U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Center, July 18, 2011), 4. Also see January 20, 2012, iteration for draft timeline.

⁸ United States Army, “AIWFC Army Irregular Warfare Fusion Cell.” SITREP (Ft. Leavenworth, KN, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Center, August 23, 2011), 2–3. Also see United States Army. “Minutes from COIN Brownbag Webcast with LTC Paganini,” (Ft. Leavenworth, KN: United States Combined Arms Center, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Center, August 18, 2011). LTC Paganini also indicated “that the revised version of FM 3-24, when completed, must be applicable globally with the scope and relevance from platoon to division level. The revised version will have more application, less theory, and enduring tactics with procedures in the appendices.”

⁹ Prior and since the publication of FM 3-24, there has been a continuous debate among various camps in the military, think tank, and academic communities. The basic distinctions between these camps as follows: debate on whether to follow an enemy-centric or population centric approach; how COIN—regardless of approach—is affecting the organizational culture of the military to either the potential detriment of conventional force preparedness, or alternatively, loss of retention as had been the case post-Vietnam War; whether COIN can be a strategic concept, or is just a set of tactical means that must be guides by other strategic ends; and that the COIN doctrine has created, in the words of Bing West, “a culture of entitlement,” where As FM 3–24 states, “money is ammunition” and development projects have been meant to “buy loyalty and transform cultures. See Octavian Manea, Interview with Bing West in, “COIN—A Culture of Entitlement,” *Small Wars Journal*, December 20, 2011.

and minds” (HAM) and population protection.¹⁰ The pursuits of the scholars and practitioners in the mid-20th century—like Galula, Thompson, Trinquier, and Lacheroy—also went on to capture the central themes from crises that erupted at the end of World War II, where colonial powers were seriously challenged by their respective claims.¹¹ These cases and authors have come to collectively encompass 20th century best practices—the “gold standard” of COIN—that supposedly had significant influenced in the 2006 published doctrine.¹²

This thesis argues that despite their image, the above “gold standard” principles involve more coercion and strict control as “an integral and generic element in such conflicts,” as opposed to the softer, nation-building strategy interpreted as population-centric COIN.¹³ The supposed limited-force HAM models of the British, and softened pacification model by the French during the 20th century, were actually calculated campaigns that entailed considerable brutality and deprivation against insurgents and civilians alike. These coercive and intrusive strategies were crucial in the cases that are

¹⁰ Many contemporary experts on COIN have cited 20th century European COIN experiences as examples of where the United States should derive lessons. See Nagl, John. *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, (Chicago University Press, 2005); Robert M. Cassidy, “The British Army and Counterinsurgency: The salience of Military Culture.” *Military Review* 85 (May-June 2005): 53–59; John A. McConnell, “The British in Kenya (1952–1960): Analysis of a Successful Counterinsurgency Campaign,” thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2005.

¹¹ Galula captures these lessons in his seminal work, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*. (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2006). Another French authority on COIN, Roger Trinquier, describes the French Counterinsurgency experience in his book, *Modern Warfare*. He refers to “modern warfare” as an asymmetric environment where the “ideological power of a cause on which to base action” forces the counterinsurgent to create a concrete and powerful tangible, out of an intangible. Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2006).

¹² See United States Army, *FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency* (Ft. Leavenworth, KN, 2006), xxiv. As Sarah Sewall notes in her forward to FM 3–24, the authors premised the 2006 doctrine “on principles learned during British early period of imperial policing and relearned during responses to 20th century independence struggles in Malaya and Kenya. It [also] incorporates insights from French COIN guru David Galula. [The doctrine, therefore,] adopts a population-centered approach instead of one focused on the insurgents.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 54.

often labeled today as “successes.”¹⁴ The representation of these approaches lacks a clear understanding of the true nature of those past conflicts and underappreciates the amount of resources and time necessary to conduct a similarly executed campaign.

This thesis argues that the prevalence of coercion in COIN warfare has played a larger role historically than is currently recognized in today’s popular conceptualization of COIN. In fact, many of the revolutionary wars of the 20th century can be characterized just as brutal as any other.¹⁵ It further argues that *U.S. COIN doctrine does not adequately recognize and account for the importance of coercion in COIN warfare.*

This analysis is particularly prudent provided the current revision of U.S. doctrine. If doctrine is to be based on historical lessons, as FM 3-24 has been claimed to be, there must be doctrinal clarity on the overriding levels of force and means used to control populations that have ultimately played a significant role in successfully conducting COIN in the 20th century.

D. METHODOLOGY

Though factors such as political will, regime type, balance of power, technological innovation, and leadership are all important as to how, and under what circumstances, a state engages and prosecutes COIN, this thesis is only tangentially

¹⁴ Theories like those developed by General Raoul Salan and Colonel Charles Lacheroy in “*la guerre revolutionnaire*,” (providing the basis for the Doctrine of Revolutionary Warfare [DRW]), the Briggs Plan in Malaya during the early 1950s (where Sir Robert Thompson was directly involved).

Richard Stubbs, “From Search and Destroy to Hearts and Minds: The Evolution of British Strategy in Malaya 1948–60,” *In Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, eds. Malkasian and Marston (Osprey: Oxford. 2008), 118–119. The Briggs Plan—which marked the turning point in British strategy in Malaya and based on a study done by Michael Calvert, the former Chindit Brigade Commander—presented similar core principles as had Lacheroy: first, was the systematic resettlement of all the ethnic Chinese that were on the periphery of the jungle and isolated areas; second, strengthening of the administration; collaboration between civil-military offices; forth, roads to be built in the more isolated areas of the country for a permanent presence to be established; and lastly, the army would maintain full control of areas that had been cleared. Lyttelton’s six-point plan around 1952: first, is the need for a unified direction of civil-military efforts; second, police must be retrained and reorganized; counter-propaganda campaign; resettled areas must be granted a high level of protection; home-guard must be reorganized with proper representation of Malayan Chinese; sixth, the strain on the civil service needed correction.

¹⁵ Mao famously stated that power itself flows from the barrel of a gun; H.G. Summers solemnly declared that, “a war is a war is a war,” and British Major General Lloyd Wheaton wrote in 1900 that “You can’t put a rebellion down by throwing confetti and sprinkling perfumery.” Their collective message is clear on two points: first, the difference in conflict varies merely within context and scale, not the nature of power and war itself; second, that a state succeeds in large part by the barrel of a gun. See H.G. Summers Jr., “A War is a War is a War,” in *Low-Intensity Conflict*, ed. Loren B. Thompson (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books), 27–49. Also see Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America’s Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1979), 179.

concerned with such issues. Instead, the focus is on the formal and informal principles amassed as a result of the previous undertakings in 20th century COIN conflict.

Defining what constitutes coercion and persuasion is important for similarities and differences between the “gold standard” and current U.S. COIN doctrine. First, coercion has generally been defined as the *use of threats, deterrence or compellence to influence another’s behavior*.¹⁶ Operationally and tactically speaking, this constitutes applying kinetic and control techniques that cause the adversary to stop, change, or prevent certain actions. Coercion, then, is an exercise of power over another person through threat or actual punishments. Brute force or the “stick,” as originally defined by Schelling, is where the “coercer credibly threatens the opponent that if the action in question is not stopped, or a desired action is not taken, force will be used to *induce* compliance.”¹⁷ Invoking pain and hurt on the opponent in such cases continues until adequate compliance is achieved. Punishments can also be psycho-social, as with public shaming, or involve malign neglect, as in the denial of food.

In contrast, persuasion involves compelling desired behavior by offering some level of rewards. Positives incentive could include establishing social and political dialogue directly through the established construct, steady income, or development projects. These techniques have generally become known as “carrots,” rewards for exhibiting desired behavior. In practice, usually, the blending of coercive and persuasive measures through what can be described as carrots and sticks is essential.¹⁸

¹⁶ As described by Patrick Bratton, “When is Coercion Successful, and Why Can’t We Agree on it?” *Naval War College Review* 58, no. 3 (Summer 2005), 117. “This definition is a broad synthesis” throughout the literature. He cites a myriad of literature to support this assertion: Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1966), 2–6; Daniel Ellsberg, “The Theory and Practice of Blackmail,” in *Bargaining: Formal Theories of Negotiation*, ed. Oran Young (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1975), 344; Lawrence Freedman, “Strategic Coercion,” *Strategic Coercion: Cases and Concepts*, ed. Lawrence Freedman (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998), 15; and Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman, *The Dynamics of Coercion: American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1.

¹⁷ Ibid. Also see Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 79–80.

¹⁸ Andrew Birtle, “Persuasion and Coercion in Counterinsurgency Warfare,” *Military Review* 88, no. 4 (2008), 45–53. Birtle espoused that “history has shown that there is no simple formula for combining these two essential yet volatile ingredients. Rather, counterinsurgency warfare has proved to be more alchemy than science, with each situation requiring a different proportion of ingredients, depending upon the social, political, cultural, and military nature of the conflict.”

With these definitions in mind, this thesis explores the ‘consistency’ and ‘deviation’ of COIN doctrine through a comparative analysis of the alleged “gold standard” literature and U.S. COIN doctrine, FM 3-24. Cases from the 19th century are too far removed politically and strategically in that their focus on retaining active colonial power abroad does not correlate well with the U.S. experience. Though the respective European powers in 20th century were still imperial, their ultimate objectives were to transition security and authority to locals. The 21st century U.S. doctrine, which is premised behind the concept to assist a HN to foster its own security, and stability, represents a similar task. Moreover, given that “gold standard” cases have been described in the U.S. doctrine as areas where contemporary lessons and principles have been drawn, they offer the appropriate lens for discerning what shortfalls exist, and where those areas may be improved, or rethought. It appears that even though U.S. doctrine acknowledges the “gold standard,” however, the doctrine doesn’t accurately reflect the true nature of “gold standard” cases.

The following questions structure this analysis:

- 1) To what extent has the contemporary “gold standard” depiction of COIN—the experiences and theoretical frameworks found in the 20th century COIN literature—deviated from the methods actually used in the previous century?
- 2) Which of these principles have been captured in U.S. doctrine, and which have been omitted?
- 3) Can the U.S. achieve success following doctrine that distorts history?

E. ROADMAP

The first chapter offers a general overview of the relevance modern COIN doctrine garners in the 21st century. The chapter introduces the pertinent literature, core hypotheses, and the methodology to be applied in this study. The second chapter reviews historic writings and cases that allegedly reflect “gold standard” of COIN literature. How French counter-revolutionary warfare and British colonial police actions were carried out, and how closely these align with COIN doctrine attributed to them, have been gleaned; common principles and methods are extracted. The third chapter assesses the principles

listed in current U.S. doctrine. The forth chapter presents a comparative analysis between the “gold standard” and current U.S. doctrine, FM 3-24. The chapter will decipher the “consistency” and “deviation” that exists between the two sets of principles. The fifth chapter provides recommendations for how the doctrine or execution may need to be reconsidered or altered, as well as insights regarding future research to address unanswered questions revealed in the course of this research endeavor.

II. TARNISHED COIN? A REVIEW OF THE “GOLD STANDARD”

The challenges of managing their respective far flung empires in the 20th century helped drive the British and French toward two different approaches: “imperial policing,” using indirect means in order to maintain economic and cultural hegemony; and “counter-revolutionary war,” which sought to acquire a newfound political legitimacy for direct rule against the increasing threat from communist-based movements.¹⁹ This section outlines the principles distilled from these “gold standard” cases by those aforementioned core theorists and empirical cases that have been stated to have heavily influenced the current doctrine.²⁰

A. THE “GOLD STANDARD”: THEORY AND PRACTICE

1. David Galula, the Acclaimed Sage of COIN

David Galula is considered by many experts to be the preeminent scholar on COIN warfare. With combat experience spanning from conventional war in World War II, to the guerrilla wars in China, Greece, and Algeria, his credibility in the field is unchallenged. Contextually speaking, the timing of Galula’s writings was critical, considering the endeavor France had been undertaking to fully mobilize and address the challenges of countering revolutionary warfare in its territories.

¹⁹ Ibid., 240. The principle of minimum force was strengthened by changing attitudes in Britain towards violence: the Boer War, the Irish Troubles, and the massacre at Amritsar reflect this point. Ibid 26. Even as late as 1949 during the Palestine Conflict, for example, Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery complained about restrictions of the British Army’s freedom to use force. In 1969, other complaints were heard from officers who claimed that greater force would have prevented the situation in Ireland from deteriorating. The recurring problem is that these conclusions can only be drawn in hindsight.

²⁰ United States Army, FM-3-24. *Counterinsurgency*, 37-43. The FM describes the following areas as the historical principles as the context of its doctrine: “legitimacy as the main objective, where consent and coercion dictate how a government may be perceived; unity of effort where interagency and joint coordination is essential; political factors are primary and must guide the military approach; counterinsurgents must understand the environment; intelligence drives operations through timely, specific, and reliable intelligence, gathered and analyzed at the lowest possible level and disseminated throughout the force;” insurgents must be isolated from their cause and support; security under the rule of law is essential; and counterinsurgents must prepare for a long-term commitment.

In Galula's acclaimed book *Counterinsurgency: Theory and Practice*, he outlined three laws that encapsulate many of the tenants commonly found in 20th century COIN doctrine, as he viewed it:

- 1) Support of the population is as necessary for the counterinsurgent as it is the insurgent. To achieve this end, the counterinsurgent must seek out the "active minority for the cause" and "a neutral majority" to derail the momentum of the insurgency.
- 2) Support from a large portion of the population is conditional. In order to achieve this, the counterinsurgent must "demonstrate that he has the will, the means, and the ability to win."
- 3) Intensity of effort and vastness of means are essential.²¹

To operationalize these in a campaign, Galula breaks down the process into three segments: re-establish authority; isolate the population from the insurgent by physical means; and gather intelligence for the elimination of insurgent political cells.²² Galula asserts that contact with the population is a delicate matter, but must be affirmed through requests, and if necessary, orders. Any orders given must be backed by ability and willingness to enforce compliance escalating on scale and as needed.

Employment of force is critical to this endeavor. Galula explains that a grid of troops should be established to protect political teams, and mobile reserves must be positioned.²³ Due to practical resource constraints in terms of troop numbers and the ability to control vast supply lines, Galula asserts that certain desolate and sparsely populated areas should be modified into "forbidden zones"—a predetermined and

²¹ Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, 53. Though many implications of these laws go beyond pure military application (e.g., principles) and bleed into the political sphere (especially number 2, and to a certain extent, number 3), the laws provide a basis of focus and commitment.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 79. Galula believes mobile reserves must be in place at every territorial command, and constantly interact with the resident population. When not engaged in direct support of military units, they should work on civic-action endeavors.

sanctioned area where trespassers can be arrested or shot on sight.²⁴ As security increases, the static reserve forces should spread out to a point where “only a few men will be left to provide the core for self-defense units.”²⁵ Heavy installations should be prohibited; only construction of installations for what is “strictly necessary” should be allowed. In further isolating the population from the insurgency, careful control over the population should be established by conducting a thorough census, establishing curfews, imposing a strict pass system, and maintaining staunch border security.²⁶ Lastly, political resolve was very important to Galula, as he viewed politics as central to meet a successful end-state. He noted that supporting local elections and leaders to build on other operational and tactical gains was an imperative.

2. Roger Trinquier, Defining *Modern Warfare*²⁷

Roger Trinquier, like Galula, experienced some foundational events during World War II, and later in French Indochina (Vietnam), and Algeria. His overarching position was more Draconian than Galula’s, having once stated that the insurgent enemy should be fought with the mindset of “fighting fire with fire... Acting differently would have

²⁴ Ibid., 79. Galula warns that this is a last resort measure and should be done with careful planning and coordination from psychological to logistical preparation, so as to not antagonize the population and to offer economic and social incentives. Initially, resettlement should be conducted on a small scale in order to test the conditions associated with its execution. Also, see Douglas Porch, “French Imperial Warfare 1945–62” in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, eds. Malkasian and Marston (Osprey: Oxford, 2008), 107–107. As will be discussed throughout this chapter, resettlement and regrouping are fundamental strategies found in the “gold standard” theory and practice. For instance, the French took a page from Lacheroy and the 19th century principles that preceded him in 1955 Algeria where “free fire zones”—or “forbidden zones”—were created in order to help deteriorate the logistical support of the National Liberation Front (FLN), and provide the population access to basic needs in a secure environment (schools, clinics, etc.).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ David Galula, *Pacification in Algeria 1956–1958* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1963), 100. And David Galula, *Contre-insurrection* (New York: Praeger, 1964). The movement of the population in many areas in Algeria was strictly controlled through pass systems. As Galula described: “Nobody could leave the village for more than 24 hours without a pass; nobody could receive a stranger to the village without permission. The rules were announced to the population at a meeting... Passes and permissions were not refused unless we had some definite reason... The system inhibited the FLN agents in the village, and gave the inhabitants a valid alibi for refusing work as messengers or suppliers to the guerillas,” 174–175.

²⁷ Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, (New York: Praeger, 2006), 6. Trinquier defined “Modern Warfare” as an “interlocking system of actions—political, economic, psychological, and military—which aims at the overthrow of the established authority in a country and its replacement by another regime.” His book sought to describe how each element serves as a means to deal with such challenges.

been absurd.”²⁸ At the same time, however, he contended that during the early stages, the counterinsurgent must present a counter-cause to the insurgency. This can be executed through a set of reforms that are ideally mirrored off the population’s needs.²⁹

In terms of employing force, Trinquier had his own perspective on what Galula called “static forces.” He posited that other methods—such as stagnant military outposts, autonomous commando groups, isolated ambushes, and wide-range sweeps—rarely obtained the goals for which they were intended. He often used the term “static mission,” to emphasize the protracted nature of such operations. Even so, all zones under the counterinsurgents’ control should make conditions untenable for the insurgent to operate.³⁰ Finding the appropriate balance was as much an art as a science.

Stagnant outposts were of particular concern to Trinquier, believing they come “at great expense in areas to be pacified, [and] are in general not successful. Outposts serve as beacons to what COIN operatives are doing, and do not prevent the guerilla from subjecting the inhabitants to their will.”³¹ The only tangible benefits, states Trinquier, are that “they enable the forces to maintain open roads and protect supply convoys.”³² His observations are reflective of the French experience in Indochina in the late 1940s, where isolated French garrisons were especially vulnerable to attacks by guerrilla forces.³³

A high degree of control over the population was a very important issue for Trinquier. As a part of a regimented and effective administration network, he noted that bureaus should be established in order to oversee such efforts. Such organizations could

²⁸ LTN (ret.) Bertrand, Valeyre et Alexandre Guerin, “From Galula to Petraeus: The French legacy in U.S. Counterinsurgency Doctrine,” *Cahier de la recherche Doctrinale*, 22.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 54.

³¹ Ibid., 47. These reportedly were common feelings amongst commanders on the ground in Algeria. As expressed by famed French General Charles Nogues: “With your forces spread out as they are, you have lost all military value. Your posts are utterly useless, their strength is too small to allow any serious sortie against the guerillas.” Also see David Galula, *Pacification in Algeria 1956–1958*, 21.

³² Ibid.

³³ Douglas Porch, “French Imperial Warfare 1945–62.” *In Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*. Eds. Malkasian and Marston (Osprey: Oxford, 2008), 97. One of the more horrific examples was the treacherous withdrawal from a frontier garrison in Cao Bang that led to the demise of more than 4,800 French troops as a result of calculated ambushes and offensives by the Viet Minh. Once the French effort was reinvigorated with U.S. aid, General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny mounted a counteroffensive in 1951, where he established the “‘de Lattre line’—‘a ring of blockhouses and fortified positions to steel the delta against future offensives’ from by Viet Minh.

and should impose very strict control over food supplies, grazing of livestock, border security, as well as “all resources our adversaries can use” depending on the circumstance.³⁴ Additional emphasis on “systematic lockout of urban areas, the relocation of isolated rural communities, use of extra-legal police measures” and associated techniques were necessary.³⁵

At the same time, Trinquier believed that the best way to provide security and stability in a populated area was to arm the population (e.g., home guard or militia). He stated that “no one shall be able to avoid this service, and each person at any moment will be subject to the orders of his civil or military superiors to participate in protective measures.”³⁶ In essence, Trinquier viewed controlling zones in such a manner that essentially reestablished “the old system of medieval, fortified villages designed to protect the inhabitants from marauding bands.”³⁷

Intelligence collection—by nearly any means necessary—was encouraged by Trinquier. These efforts were to be organized with established interrogation services.³⁸ He made good use of such an intelligence apparatus, which focused on the strengths, weaknesses and strategy of the insurgency; this became very effective under a revitalized Special Branch.³⁹ At the same time, Trinquier was also aware of the intelligence limitations, stating that the counterinsurgent is significantly disadvantaged, whereas the indigenous insurgent harnesses propaganda in a way that the counterinsurgent cannot (by default, affecting the ability to collect intelligence): the “counterinsurgent is tied to his

³⁴ Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, 30.

³⁵ Octavian Manea, “Reflections on the French School of Counter-Rebellion: An Interview with Etienne de Durand.” *Small Wars Journal*, March 3, 2011.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 28. This could be a volatile option if certain benchmarks have not been met in adequately flushing-out the embedded insurgent infrastructure.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 28. Designated persons would be tasked to build organizations with minimum help from the authorities. An area was to be broken down into districts and sub-districts with assistants monitoring and administering from the lowest levels. Police forces and mobile *gendarmarie* forces were considered essential for the bottom-up creation of the intelligence organization.

³⁹ Richard Strubbs, “From Search and Destroy to Hearts and Minds: The Evolution of British Strategy in Malaya 1948–60. In *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*. Eds. Carter Malkasian and Daniel Marston (Osprey: Oxford, 2008), 124.

responsibilities and to his past,” while the insurgent is contrarily “not obliged to prove [anything]; he is judged by what he promises, not what he does.”⁴⁰

3. Charles Lacheroy and Doctrine de Guerre Revoultionnaire (DGR)

Charles Lacheroy was an extremely influential French military officer during the Algerian and Indochina Wars. In contrast with the previous two authors who wrote from their experiences in retrospect, Lacheroy was vocal in “French policy... leading conferences and lectures, contributing to doctrinal manuals, and advising day-to-day operations” having influence over the ongoing debates throughout the ‘50s and 60s.⁴¹ Lacheroy was also considered to be “the most totalitarian” of all the authors. It was Lacheroy who argued that countering revolutionary warfare is the business of all society. He noted, “In Indochina, as in China, as in Korea, as elsewhere, we note that the strongest seems defeated by the weakest.”⁴²

Lacheroy believed that there is an impetus to control both “bodies” and “souls.” As discussed in the DGR that he lobbied, “The French DGR School is fully aware that the control of “bodies” is a necessary precondition to that of the souls: rallying the population behind a given ideal is pointless if it is not tightly controlled.”⁴³ A broad and extensive IO campaign is, therefore, necessary in order to address the morale and ideological endeavor that would reorient the population away from the insurgency. Lacheroy believed that IO of this magnitude should be as potent as the communists’ approach. As control is established in this manner, so is the military response.⁴⁴

In terms of employing force, the DGR was specific as to underline “the uselessness of operations when the right conditions are not meant. These conditions varied, but were primarily focused on the need to have credible, actionable intelligence; force ratios that matched roughly 6 to 1; the ability to hold zones that have been cleared;

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Octavian Manea, “Reflections on the French School of Counter-Rebellion: An Interview with Etienne de Durand,” *Small Wars Journal*, March 3, 2011.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

and “a permanent presence of territorial forces,” ideally drawn from the locals.⁴⁵ Not having these conditions in place would “reveal the fecklessness of the counter-insurgent [sic],” and place the population at risk.⁴⁶

4. Practice versus Theory: Algeria

Though Algeria proved to be unsuccessful for the French, both Galula and Trinquier used their experiences in Algeria as a primary motivation behind their writings. The conflict had a significant impact upon their reflection on the subject of COIN, and how the U.S. would later view its own doctrine. Lacheroy and the DGR, on the other hand, continued to be studied broadly in France; even while Galula remained a relatively unknown player.

Looking at the case itself, there is much consistency in terms of the perceived need to control the population and isolate the insurgent from the population. Trinquier’s and Lacheroy’s assessments seem to be more in line with the realities that developed on-the-ground, where “there was more concern with control as opposed to consent.”⁴⁷ Galula’s writings, on the other hand, are in line with what Thomas Rid described as one “that connects the nineteenth century to the twenty-first.”⁴⁸ In reality, Galula describes a system that, in application, was more consistent with the early approach known as “oil-spot,” a concept originally spearheaded by Gallieni and Lyautey in the late 19th

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Thomas Rid, “The Nineteenth Century Origins of Counterinsurgency Doctrine.” *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 33, no. 5 (October 2010): abstract.

century.⁴⁹ This method was somewhere “between the British-American “hearts and minds” and French DGR school” that included a certain level of political resolve.⁵⁰

The modified “oil spot” method was aptly applied in many areas of Algeria by the mid-1950s; however, this in itself was a problem. A specific example was the French tactics in Djebel Aissa Mimoun, where Galula once served as a company commander. At that time, the population was not supportive of the French presence and sympathizers. As a consequence, the people faced wonton ambush and resettlement for lack of support and out-lashes towards ALN forces.⁵¹ Similar methods had been employed to neutralize more than half of the ALN forces in other areas earlier and throughout the conflict, while also

⁴⁹See Lyautey, *Du Role colonial de l'Armee*. Ibid 239. Also see “Winning Hearts and Minds: Historical Origins of the Concept and Its Current Implementation in Afghanistan.” *Cahier de la recherche Doctrinale*, 42. Gallieni described the guidelines to oil spot to his troops during the Madagascar campaign between 1897–1902: “Pacify and extensively occupy the territory according to the “oil spot” principle; always advance outwards; combine political and military actions in order to take control of the country; immediately established close contacts with the population, get familiar with their habits and their mindset, and meet their basic requirements in order to persuade them to accept new institutions.” See Alex Marshall, “Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency.” *Small Wars and Insurgencies*. 21: 2. He argues that the oil, or ink, spot strategy that Lyautey implemented did not blend well with the “ongoing cultural differences, and draconian French legal codes,” which acted as disincentives to the trading posts. Plus, the French needed to still deliver “measureable military effect.” 239. Regardless, Thomas Rid notes that Galula’s writings were “hardly innovative.” He notes that “French officers to this day are more likely to read Marshals Gallieni or Lyautey, whose operations succeeded, not an obscure company commander whose war was bitter defeat.” Thomas Rid, “The Nineteenth Century Origins of Counterinsurgency Doctrine.” *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 33, no. 5 (October 2010): abstract.

⁵⁰ Octavian Manea, Reflections on the French School of Counter-Rebellion: An Interview with Etienne de Durand,” *Small Wars Journal*, March 3, 2011.

⁵¹ Gregor Mathias, *Galula in Algeria: Counterinsurgency Practice versus Theory*, (Oxford: Praeger, 2011), 15. After enacting the resettlement, Oudiai, the local recruited leader, quickly “named an FLN chief in each village and hamlet, who in turn selected two lieutenants. Cells of the OPA identified suspects: people hostile to the movement, skeptics who lacked confidence in the future victory, people who refused to pay the FLN’s taxes.”

demoralizing their ranks and pitting their leadership against each other.⁵² Such tactics, however, were counterproductive in the long-run.

In many cases, resistance was met with a heavy hand where frivolous use of artillery, napalm, and aggressive resettlement procedures, resembling 19th century “scorched earth” policies, were implemented.⁵³ The French would openly fire upon livestock and enact other measures affecting the entire population, not just the insurgents. These coercive policies were applied irrespective of who was innocent and guilty. Indeed, the majority of those affected were innocent bystanders. These tactics were perceived as wholly unfair to those who were “only guilty of living in a certain place or looking a certain way.”⁵⁴ By 1957, “torture and the disappearances of dissidents and detainees in military custody” also had a significant impact that “kick-started a heretofore sluggish antiwar movement.”⁵⁵ As a result, the tide began to turn against the French politically, where erosion for the effort domestically affected the strategic aptitude of those on the ground.

Methods to gain the support of the population, like the 13-point plan outlined at that time first included the Dejbél Aïssa Mimoun were for naught and ineffective mostly because of the strict coercion applied.⁵⁶ Galula postulated:

⁵² Douglas Porch, “French Imperial Warfare 1945–62,” in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, eds. Malkasian and Marston (Osprey: Oxford, 2008). In Algeria, the Setif Rebellion in 1945 sent 20,000 Muslims to their demise in a campaign of French reprisals (known as the Setif and Guelma Massacre). As Porch explains, “the arbitrary brutality of French repression combined with the dislocations caused by French counterinsurgency tactics to transform a trickle of FLN sympathizers and recruits into a torrent.” Ill will as a result of the operations created an atmosphere for the insurgency to not only survive, but solidify under a singular cause, galvanizing their narrative and stature. As Porch explains, “French retribution proved swift and brutal... Depending on the source, between 2,000 and 12,000 Muslims were slaughtered.” As a result of these actions, Zighout Youcef, a mastermind militant, “succeeded beyond his wildest dreams in enlarging the gulf between Muslims and non-Muslims in Algeria.” The 1955 swarms against the French offers another example where tit-for-tat operations would persist until the onset of the Challe Offensive in 1959. Once again, swift and brutal retribution by the French—what would become known as the “Philippeville massacres” ensued but with little lasting effect. The French finally called a state of emergency—changing the dynamic on the ground from a civilian led strategy of appeasement to a centralized military effort with increased troops numbers increased as a result. In a last ditch effort in 1959, Challe initiated a “formidable offensive... able to synchronize aggressive ground and air attacks,” 103–109.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Gregor Mathias, *Galula in Algeria*, 15–19. The original formula—that the 13-point plan derived—was known as *il faut mouiller la population*, or “let’s soften them up.”

The theory that the population would join our side once it felt protected from the threat of rebel bands had proved wrong. The idea that we could forcibly implicate the population on our side had not worked. It was clear to me that the major stumbling block was the OPA [*Organisation Politico-Administrative*]. We would make no progress as long as we had not purged the villages of the insurgent political cell.⁵⁷

As was the case with the 19th century French concepts of “*quadrillage*” and “racial mapping,” as a part of the “oil spot” effort, Trinquier harped on these methods focusing not on dividing the insurgent movement, but on applying systematic population control.⁵⁸ Again, these were often more in line with coercive actions that were associated with preventative detention or torture. More benign persuasive measures, like those found in the 13-point plan, likely failed because of the indiscriminate violence that preceded or accompanied them. In other words, the sticks significantly outweighed the carrots.

As Galula warned, populations should not be asked to cooperate *en masse*.⁵⁹ Instead, the message should have been for the population to stay neutral, and if they decide to harbor and assist the insurgency, “more military operations [will commence] and thus inflict more destruction.”⁶⁰ This, along with properly surmising the resource requirements for a comprehensive “oil spot” strategy, could have been beneficial.

Lastly, and as both Trinquier and Galula noted in their own writings, the ability of the COIN forces to secure the sovereign borders of the conflicted state or governed area

⁵⁷ Ibid., 15–20. Mathias later commented that “instead of dismantling the OPA [in the first place], they tried to rally the people first allowing the FLN to infiltrate the GAD [*groupe d'autodéfense*] militias causing the failure of the joint operation.” The 13-point plan specifically covered the following: “(1) hiring men for public works directly benefiting their village; (2) hiring men for public works in the interests of the administration and the army; (3) hiring to work on strictly defensive installations (defense walls and watch towers); (4) paid requisition of muleteers for a night exercise; (5) requisitions of muleteers to convoy supplies; (6) unpaid requisition of muleteers to patrol across the villages; mules carried radio sets and batteries; (7) requisition of muleteers for a night exercise; (8) Kabyle keeping watch with soldiers in the post protecting the village; (9) Kabyle guides for night patrols; (10) Kabyle participation in armed night patrols; (11) weapons withdrawn after each sortie; (12) weapons left with Kabyles at night under a guard’s supervision; and (13) official distribution of weapons to the populace.”

⁵⁸ “Winning Hearts and Minds: Historical Origins of the Concept and Its Current Implementation in Afghanistan,” *Cahier de la recherche Doctrinale*, 43. Quadrillage, also known as “gridding tactics,” would be facilitated through “prolonged interaction between the population and the armed forces so long as offensive and defensive actions are properly supported by political, civil and military authorities.”

⁵⁹ Porch, Douglas. “French Imperial Warfare 1945–62,” 91.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 94. This was a problem for the French in Algeria; in practice, they not only failed to properly balance “carrots and sticks,” but “offer an ideology to counter successfully that of indigenous nationalism” as well.

is essential to denying outside sanctuary and support.⁶¹ This was perhaps the most successful component of French efforts in Algeria. Though the French took advantage of their upper-hand against the FLN in the mid-50s by controlling air and sea routes, they initially were ineffective in securing the borders between Morocco and Tunisia. By 1958, the French resolved the problem by creating the Morice Line—sealing-off both the Tunisian and Moroccan borders to the insurgents, severely inhibiting the free-flow of supply and sanctuary.⁶² This key lesson should have been applied to secure the borders around Indochina, where “Giap was able to muster significant Chinese support to acquire artillery and antiaircraft guns” in his successful offensive at Dien Bien Phu.⁶³

5. Sir Robert Thompson and Defeating Communist Insurgency

Sir Robert Grainger Ker Thompson was a British COIN scholar and practitioner. He worked closely with Sir Gerald Templar during the Malaya Emergency, and later appointed to the British Advisory Mission in Saigon (BRIAM in 1961). His writings reflect a nuanced interpretation of minimum force; a concept the British military were constantly evolving. He surmised that in order to operationalize efforts to undermine the insurgency and its infrastructure, the counterinsurgent must ‘win-over’ the population. In doing so, the COIN force must “clear, hold, and win...” an area.⁶⁴ Thompson outlined four specific areas of concentration for the COIN effort:

⁶¹ Galula, *Counterinsurgency Theory*, 23–24.

⁶² Austin Long, “On ‘Other War:’ Lessons from Five Decades of RAND COIN Research.” *National Defense Research Institute*, 2006. Also see Douglas Porch, “French Imperial Warfare 1945–62,” in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, eds. Malkasian and Marston (Osprey: Oxford. 2008), 106. The Morice Line “ran from the Sahara to the sea along the common frontier between Algeria and Tunisia was the more sophisticated of the French barriers, combining electrified fences, fields of anti-personnel and “jump” mines, radar-guided artillery, and constant air surveillance.” As a result, the inhabitants that resided by the borders were “regrouped,” by the French; dividend of these actions shifted the momentum. The failed attempt at breaching this line during the “Battle of the Frontiers” reveals the effectiveness of the Morice Line. As described by Porch, the “Battle of Frontiers” in 1958 left 22 every hundred capable to break through, “a staggering 78 percent casualty rate of killed, wounded, captured, and missing” resulted. Much of these were eventually intercepted by the mobile forces behind the lines.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 99

⁶⁴ The offensive tempo that Thompson would describe as the “clear” phase where operational defeat of the insurgent is critical. Colonel Fertig, during 1962 COIN symposium sponsored by RAND, substantiated the argument conveying that as long as the insurgency is able to disrupt measures toward political reform, and hinder the intelligence-gathering apparatus, the population will never feel secure regardless of promises and development policies; offensive measures must be taken to cripple that initiative.

- To have a clear political aim.
- To function within the law.
- To establish an overall plan in which all political, socio-economic and military responses are coordinated.
- To give the priority to the defeat of political subversion, and to secure its own base areas before conducting a military campaign.⁶⁵

Thompson notes that the approach requires various levels of implementation to be effective, to include: a constant offense against active insurgents; imposition of control measures that include the concepts of strategic hamlets and arming local militia, a COIN force able to compel the insurgents to shift to the defensive, and to lose the initiative with the population.⁶⁶

At the same time, Thompson warned against measures that were excessive. He was equally concerned with command and control and use of poorly trained forces—both British and indigenous. Though recognizing the value of small units, for example, he warned that autonomous, Special Forces-type units “can easily get out of control.”⁶⁷

Perhaps above all other areas, Thompson was most confident and interested in the value of isolating the population from the insurgency. Instead of arbitrary or planned brute force to coerce (as the French displayed in Algeria), methods that increasingly ran counter to the British minimum force concept, Thompson preferred the physical separation of insurgents from the local population vis-à-vis resettlement and regrouping of select segments of the population. Specifically, this was found in his concept of strategic hamlets.

There are three objectives to the strategic hamlet as described by Thompson. First, the centerpiece to the program is to protect the population; however, the most vital aspect is the “elimination within the hamlet of the insurgent underground organization,” as well as the infrastructure that sustains it.⁶⁸ Second, is to unite the people and engage them in

⁶⁵ Ian F.W. Beckett, “Robert Thompson and the British Advisory Mission to South Vietnam, 1961–1965.” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 8, no.3 (Winter 1997), 44.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 112–116.

⁶⁷ Ibid. Examples include Kitson’s pseudo-gangs, Orde Wingate’s special night squads, Britain’s “black and tans,” and the Kenya Police Reserve (to name a few).

⁶⁸ Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 124.

the government, thus encouraging a sense of national solidarity. Lastly, is the development of social, economic, and political fields of influence that create an entwined microcosm of community and solidarity amongst the inhabitants within a particular hamlet.⁶⁹ This latter stage is where the actual physical regrouping and relocation of the population is necessary, but should be based on conditions and executed with extreme discretion.⁷⁰

Thompson makes sure to note that strategic hamlets are not to be concentration camps. Instead, persons should be involved in fixing roads and other infrastructure that have been damaged, while strict control should be maintained over the movement of peoples and supplies. Templar saw these areas as an opportunity to introduce “social measures and development projects that were always coupled with a coercive dimension.”⁷¹ Though resettled areas may be barren at first, after years of development (the theory goes), opportunities would expand, and the access to amenities is possible in comparison to the previously remote location.⁷²

Thompson notes that there are still broader intelligence, political and information operation priorities that should focus on the contact points between the insurgent organization, working the villages, towns, and the population writ large. The government must have a clear political aim, and function within the confines of the law. Moreover, the government must also give priority to defeat political subversion, not just the guerillas. This is mostly a principle to be executed during the build-up phase of the insurgency. During “hot” insurgency, the government must secure the base areas first

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 122.

⁷¹ “Winning Hearts and Minds: Historical Origins of the Concept and Its Current Implementation in Afghanistan,” *Cahier de la recherche doctrinale*, 26.

⁷² Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 126–127. Planning is essential when resettling segments of the population into strategic hamlets: the amount of people to be moved (this should always be as few as possible based on location; the area should be one that can be well defended, as well as have secondary value of protecting railways or other critical infrastructure as possible; and access to natural resources and transportation hubs is critical. Any area that falls outside this scope—especially far, remote locations—should be avoided and not considered as an ample location for the hamlet. See pg 138 where hamlets were erected too fast and dispersed too far.

(as discussed previously) and work outward to generate support from the population.⁷³ Lastly, Thompson adds that at the operational level, psychological warfare should be carried out by military means, but should be considered to be an “internal political matter... a civilian responsibility, particularly with respect to planning and execution.” The tactics themselves should resonate with the populace and in balance with conditions.⁷⁴

6. The Malaya Emergency: Templar’s HAM in Practice

While Thompson sought to capture the lessons he learned from fighting communist insurgencies in Malaya and Vietnam, Sir Gerald Templer was a critical factor in shifting the strategy to one that was conducive—though not identical—to the principles outlined by Thompson. Prior to his taking command, measures were far removed from what Thompson would have considered best practices.

During the early phases in the Malayan Emergency, sweeps and heavy-handed action was the natural response for the officers; they had “trouble understanding the operational environment they now had to cope with... [while] troops were clearly unprepared for jungle warfare.”⁷⁵ For instance, Sir Henry Gurney didn’t see a problem with such coercive approaches, believing that “the Chinese are notoriously inclined to lean towards whichever side frightens them more at the moment.”⁷⁶ This policy, however, served against the best interests of the British, leading toward the near-total

⁷³ Ibid., 55–57.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ “Winning Hearts and Minds: Historical Origins of the Concept and Its Current Implementation in Afghanistan.” *Cahier de la recherche Doctrinale*. Pg 13. Also see translation of Leguay, Anthony. *Etat d’Urgence en Malaisie—Un exemple d’Adaptation a la Contre-Insurrection par les Forces Britanniques (1948–1960)*. *Cahier de la recherche doctrinale du CDEF*, 2010.

⁷⁶ Richard Stubbs, “From Search and Destroy to Hearts and Minds: The Evolution of British Strategy in Malaya 1948–60,” in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, Malkasian and Marston eds (Osprey: Oxford, 2008), 115. The original focus was on eradicating the insurgents as fast as possible, to include those who supported them. Like Challe, General C.H. Boucher used “sweeps” to extinguish of the most active insurgents. In his case, the success rate was extremely low, where as Trinquier warned, the enemy would often “melt quickly into the jungle, or catch the troops in ambush.”

alienation of the Chinese. As Stubbs explains, “The army appeared more at war with the Malaysian population, especially the Chinese community, than acting as its guardian and protector.”⁷⁷

Under Briggs’ and Lyttelton’s commands, such widespread collective punishment was reinforced as status quo. For instance, tough laws were emplaced in Malaya to “seize and deport all Chinese in a bad area,” as well as impose a “collective fine in an area that was uncooperative.”⁷⁸ In two separate cases as early as 1948, “entire villages were burned to the ground, and in many other instances, houses were destroyed.”⁷⁹ By late 1949, Bennett noted that:

Mass arrests, property destruction, and forced population movement, combined with loose controls on lethal force, created a coercive effect. The consequences of these policies were mounting civilian casualties, which the government allowed to continue because its intelligence assessments suggested they were militarily effective.⁸⁰

Templar would later introduce his HAM model in 1952 as what has been believed by many contemporaries to be a more effective means to enact government policy, while maintaining the welfare of the general public. Templar moved to change strategy from the Briggs and Lyttelton models in Malaya to introducing a policy that made the police servants of the people. As a result, the enforcement of law premised on the protection of members of the community, instead of imposing collective punishments, came to fruition.⁸¹ Though many of the laws were still harsh, they were more likely to be viewed as fair and non-discriminatory by the population as they applied to everyone. They included “imposing strict curfews, a mandatory death penalty for carrying arms, and life imprisonment for providing supplies, or other support for terrorists.”⁸²

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 116.

⁸⁰ Huw Bennett, “A ‘Very Salutory Effect’: The Counter-Terror Strategy in the Early Malaysian Emergency, June 1948 to December 1949.” *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 32, no. 3 (June 2009): 415–444.

⁸¹ This became known as Operation Service.

⁸² Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 53.

As Templar increased his intelligence capabilities with this effort, his approach advanced from sweeps (again, used frequently early in the conflict) to jungle warfare that focused on cutting the insurgents off from the population and supply. Despite these changes in approach, the strategy of the British was still clear in that the “central, omnipresent task... was to going to the jungle, to the enemy, and kill him by surprise as often and as quickly as possible.”⁸³ This “jungle bashing,” as well as the raids carried-out by Special Air Service (SAS) providing the infantry with “strategic depth,” were a critical metric for success in deriving the total number of kills for a unit.⁸⁴ The British *Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaysia* (ATOM) outlined in detail how such tactics should be prosecuted through regular practice of saturation patrolling, artillery, and air bombardments.⁸⁵

The hamlet program in Malaya insisted that there could be no movement in or out of the respective hamlet at night, and members of the population would not be allowed to leave with any food or supply at any time; food denial and control, conducted through surprise or otherwise were essential in keeping pressure on the Min Yuen.⁸⁶ Often, these mechanisms would generate strife within the insurgency, as well as increased helplessness that would lead to surrender. As described by McMichael:

⁸³ Scott R McMichael, “A Historical Perspective on Light Infantry,” *Combat Studies Institute*, Research Survey, no. 6. 1987, 101–110.

⁸⁴ Ibid. Ambushes were still a critical element to these actions; when good intelligence was provided, a “high proportion” of the ambushes were occurred on the “jungle fringe where the terrorists met with their food and information sources.” Also see “Winning Hearts and Minds: Historical Origins of the Concept and Its Current Implementation in Afghanistan,” *Cahier de la recherche Doctrinale*, 25.

⁸⁵ Ibid. Using this approach, units quietly deployed several patrols from squad to platoon strength into an area where the guerrillas were known or thought to be. Each platoon established a temporary base (24–48 hours) from which it pushed out smaller patrols in a systematic fashion to cover thoroughly and carefully a designated area. Once one area had been checked out, the platoon moved on to a new area, and the process was repeated... This saturation patrolling frequently produced contacts. Artillery was used to “fire on suspected enemy camps or previously abandoned camps to discourage their reuse and to force the terrorists to leave them if they were occupied.” Pg 99. Bombers were also used to harass the enemy, like during Operation Termite in 1954. Both had drawbacks, but were used nonetheless.

⁸⁶ McMichael, “A Historical Perspective on Light Infantry,” 118. As explained by McMichael, “Thus, when the civilians in an affected district awoke in the morning, they found every gate in the village fence guarded by police and soldiers.” Also see Stubbs, Richard. “From Search and Destroy to Hearts and Minds: The Evolution of British Strategy in Malaya 1948–60, in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, eds. Malkasian and Marston (Osprey: Oxford, 2008), 123. As Stubbs explains, central cooking areas were established and no uncooked food could ever leave the vicinity. By making all food perishable in that environment, food could not hold more than a few hours at a time.

The British routinely practiced basic food control measures such as licensing sellers and restaurateurs, restricting personal food stocks, and requiring buyers to show ration cards. However, when the decision was taken to mount a major anti-guerrilla operation, the British mounted a much more comprehensive food denial program. Food denial took many forms, but its aim was always to squeeze completely dry the daily trickle of supplies to the Communist terrorists in a particular area.⁸⁷

A major element to the effectiveness of Templar's plan resided in utilizing various resources and political attributes. At the height of the Malaya operations, "the Malayan government employed 40,000 soldiers, 45,000 police, and 1.5 million "Home Guard" were established to root out the insurgents and protect the population."⁸⁸ Such emphasis on local forces not only makes sense economically for the COIN force, but is also the only serious way security had a chance to be maintained.

Moreover, many of the post-Briggs resettlement programs still had significant coercive overtones (vis-à-vis "jungle bashing" and food controls). Harper argued that Templar used such methods and simply "Cleaned-up a conflict that had already been won by using repressive methods, notable the deportation of an estimated 16,000 "communists" to Nationalist China, where most were surely executed."⁸⁹ Other experts like Karl Hack, Gian Gentile, and Paul Dixon have also argued that it was actually the sheer, brute force, coupled with the stated deportations that actually broke the insurgency in Malaya, not solely the relative benevolence of Templar's HAM attempts with the

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Richard Miers, *Shoot to Kill* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), 32.

⁸⁹ Ibid. See Timothy N. Harper, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

population.⁹⁰ In other words, the standards and nature of HAM, even under Templar himself, reveal that there was always an essence of iron beneath the velvet glove.⁹¹

B. CHAPTER SUMMARY: THE “BEST PRACTICES” OF THE 20TH CENTURY “GOLD STANDARD”

The overarching principle in 20th century COIN appears to be that the population must be secured; how force is employed, and control imposed, is critical to that endeavor. Though the British and French had significantly different circumstances in their respective conflicts in terms of strategy and overall geopolitics, there are various practices that are consistent, and thus, encapsulate the “gold standard.”⁹²

- *The staging of military outposts near to the population* was central. The writings and examined cases support the notion that COIN forces should be in proximity to the population—whether locating grid or “static forces,” as Galula described them, to the location of the population, relocating the population to particular

⁹⁰ See Karl Hack, “The Malaysian Emergency as Counter-Insurgency Paradigm,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 3, 2 no. 3 (June 2009); Gian Gentile, *Les Mythes de la Contre-Insurrection et leurs Dangers: une vision critique internationale*, Winter 2009–2010; Paul Dixon, “Hearts and Minds? British Counterinsurgency from Malaysia to Iraq,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32, no. 3 (June 2009).

⁹¹ HAM in a majority of these campaigns ‘was at best a velvet glove operating in tandem of with the iron fist of the police state,’ as evident even from the UK’s own Internal Security Duties manual, which advocated such repressive measures as ‘punitive searches,’ ‘raids of a disturbing or alarming nature; collective fines, demolition of houses, the taking of hostages, and forces labor. In the words of one recent study ‘coercion was the reality—“hearts and minds” the myth.’⁹¹ Indeed, not much has changed for many contemporaries whom have studied these conflicts intimately. Karl Hack, one of the foremost experts on the Malaysian Emergency expands on these thoughts explaining that one cannot go “straight to a comprehensive approach for ‘winning hearts and minds’ and expect it to work, if you have not first broken-up the larger insurgent groups, disrupted their bases, and achieved a modicum of spatial dominance and security for the population.” Also see Alex Marshall, “Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 21, no. 2., 242. At the policy level, Birtle notes that “slogans such as “winning hearts and minds” can also lead to a misapprehension that counterinsurgencies are popularity contests. Sometimes unpopular actions such as the Army’s relocation of civilians during the Philippine War may be necessary. In the same way, worthy actions such as the liberation of a previously repressed class may fan the flames of resistance among a nation’s traditional elite, while promoting democratic reforms, as the United States did in Vietnam, can backfire by increasing instability.” See Andrew Birtle, “Persuasion and Coercion in Counterinsurgency Warfare,” *Military Review* 88, no. 4 (2008): 45–53.

⁹² Though there are standardized issues involving all COIN—and warfare in general –geographic and cultural factors are unique to each conflict. These are considered fundamental to conducting a COIN campaign and engaging the population. Location, size, configuration, international borders, climate, population, and economy are all elements that are critical to the geographic and cultural environment. See Douglas Porch, “The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN,” Naval Postgraduate School, 1. The terrain of these areas often played a major role as well. The treacherousness of the geography, and local disease and ailments, would cause more casualties for the Western power than the enemy forces themselves; superior firepower was a nominal element to victory, where large assets like artillery would create operational paralysis in remote and tumultuous terrain.

- sectors where forces are stationed (e.g., strategic hamlets), or a combination thereof. Both coercion through brute force and persuasion were key to success.
- Though *sweeps* were often found to be counterproductive to the overall mission, they were considered necessary to gain the initiative and fracture the momentum of the insurgency; creating space for other measures. This was consistent in both Algeria and Malaya. Moreover, *clearing operations and other offensive operations* were noted as necessary throughout the “gold standard” writings and cases in order to maintain pressure on subversive activity and erode the insurgent infrastructure and support. The difference resided in planning, value placed on intelligence driving the operation, and information operation (IO), or in that era, the propaganda campaign. Outcomes varied based on how effective these elements were applied.
 - *Commando groups*, like the SAS in Malaya, have been recognized as another important, but highly controversial, force in COIN. Though prevalent throughout the history of war, use of commandos (e.g. Special Forces) was considered to have just as much strategic risk as strategic advantage. Though commando groups varied in their approach and impact, the common lesson appears to be that the manner in which such forces react to situations and implement control measures has been a core component in how *control* itself can be gained or lost.
 - From one degree or another, the literature maintains that *strict control measures* must be imposed on a large segment of the population in order to isolate the insurgent, and are a critical element as respective COIN forces, local and foreign, takes root in country. During the implementation of these tactics, the respective authority must show that they are not only prepared, but determined, to be ruthless. Enforcing measures were meant to impact all inhabitants, directly or indirectly.⁹³ Of the examples studied, however, some approaches such as collective punishment, were on the whole counterproductive in the mid to long-term, whereas others, such as discriminate use of force and well-planned and

⁹³ Ibid., 144. For instance, if households were outside the perimeter of a hamlet, they should be persuaded, and if necessary compelled, to move within the designated borders.

coordinated strategic hamlet programs were generally constructive to the overall mission.⁹⁴ For example, the “forbidden zones” described by Galula, and put in place in Malaya were generally viewed as palatable since *all* parties were to be held accountable on an equal basis—no one group was targeted, marginalized, or punished as a whole for others’ actions. However, even with these more judicious policies, there were still violent excesses in the use of brute force “for purely arbitrary means,” such as preventative detention, summary execution, and torture.⁹⁵ This need not underappreciate that brute force in the short-term (discriminate or not) appeared to have created space for more benign coercive measures to be applied later, as was seen in Malaya and elsewhere.⁹⁶

- *The employment of disciplined police forces* was the most common preference in the literature for how to best wield force in an area of dissension. Such forces could be comprised of indigenous, foreign, or a combination of troops. Trinquier preferred arming the local population as a sound method to augment security. Home guard and constabulary units of this sort could be found in both Algeria and Malaya with minor nuances.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ See David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. 2005), 353. Between 1952 and 1958, the colonial courts executed roughly 1,090 suspected Mau Mau for violations ranging from murder to administering oaths to support Kikuyu. The concept of “villagization,” in which over a million Kenyans were locked into what is described as “little concentration camps” describe the deprivation and use of coercion in general.⁹⁴ Such excesses, as found during the inter-war period, were part of a tacitly accepted policy in the French campaign in Algeria, as well as in the British actions in Kenya. More blatant extremes took form in the later implementation of strategic hamlets in Kenya, known as “fortified villages.” There, more than 150,000 members of the Kikuyu ethnic group were placed in detention camps, many without facing trial. Northern Ireland provides another example where prescribed HAM lessons did not reflect the brutal methods actually applied.

⁹⁵ Trinquier had a particular view on torture, which differentiated between indiscriminate torture to instill fear and what he called harsh interrogations that should not discount the use of torture in order to garner useful information.

⁹⁶ The theme of brute force to judicious, persuasive coercion could be found in various other cases through time. Andrew Birtle actually captures this trend in Americans experience, and quotes Robert L. Bullard, who fought in America’s war in the Philippines late in the 19th century. As Birtle explains, Bullard “reminded his fellow officers that pacification “is not mere force, it is a judicious mixture of force and persuasion, of severity and moderation ... and this complexity is what makes pacification difficult.” Benevolent policies designed to win “the consent of the governed” were essential, he wrote. Repression alone was incompatible with the American character. Yet coercive and forceful measures were equally necessary, for “without them there is no pacification.” Although we may wish it otherwise, the fact of the matter, Bullard observed, was that “when peoples have really differed, persuasion has prevailed only when backed by adequate strength to enforce.” Bullard’s reminder does not make the counterinsurgency enigma any easier to solve, but we ignore it at our peril. See Andrew Birtle, “Persuasion and Coercion in Counterinsurgency Warfare.” *Military Review* 88, no. 4 (2008): 52–53. Also see Robert L. Bullard, “Military Pacification,” *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* 46 (January-February 1910): 4–5.

⁹⁷ Galula, *Pacification in Algeria 1956–1958*, 164.

- *Intelligence collection* was stressed as another important factor, in fact, a prerequisite of population control and necessary for effective kinetic operations writ large. One study specifically found that the tactical success and flow of information on the battlefield in Malaya “were inextricably linked.”⁹⁸ As explained by McMichael, “the more guerillas that [*sic who*] were killed by infantry, the more information came in [from the local population]. This increase in information subsequently led to more kills, and so on.”⁹⁹
- Cooperation from the population (*vis-à-vis* intelligence) was conditional, however, on *the confidence of the population that the security apparatus could protect them*. If confidence faltered—in other words performance—legitimacy lessened. As a consequence, the inclination to provide adequate and timely intelligence waned.
- *An information operation, or what the authors describe as propaganda*, was to be conducted during every phase mentioned above and directed toward all parties involved: COIN forces, the population, and the insurgents.¹⁰⁰

Thus, while indiscriminate violence through brute force is considered counterproductive to achieving COIN objectives, high levels of coercion were believed necessary for tactical purposes. In practice, uses of both discriminate and judicious indiscriminate violence proved effective. Historically, COIN was more violent in the “gold standard” despite many of the contemporary perceptions. The “gold standard” as written by past theorists contained more use of violence than today’s HAM, or population-centric, doctrine which was allegedly derived from these theorists’ writings. It

⁹⁸ Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 54.

⁹⁹ See Scott R. McMichael, “A Historical Perspective on Light Infantry,” *Combat Studies Institute*, Research Survey, no. 6., 1987.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid 76. The COIN force should be well indoctrinated and understand the limits of force, as the insurgent will work to exploit any excesses. In cases where there are excessive uses of force, punishment should be severe and even public if “it can serve to impress the population.” Other damages should be monetarily compensated without delay. Propaganda during mass operations is irrelevant other than informing the population that the destruction will cease once the enemy is destroyed. Propaganda is to play a role in outlining what steps must be taken to set conditions that will prevent similar situations from happening again.

appears that history and the writings of key COIN theorists are both misrepresented and misinterpreted. Recognizing this inconsistency is non-trivial.

III. U.S. COUNTERINSURGENCY DOCTRINE

This chapter captures FM 3-24's principles which are intended to be the enablers to implementing a successful COIN campaign. First, summary reviews of the operational approaches as outlined in FM 3-24 are provided. The remaining chapter sections discuss three main themes: employment of force, control over the population, and intelligence and information operations (propaganda as described in the previous chapter), which are all pertinent factors for understanding the level of coercion and control recommended in the current 2006 doctrine.

A. FM 3-24: OPERATIONAL APPROACHES¹⁰¹

As explained in the doctrine, the following approaches are to guide the entirety of COIN efforts. Gaining legitimacy in the eyes of the population is considered to be the means toward a long-term political end-state.¹⁰² Political objectives must drive military operations and all operations must be considered two ways: how they will increase the host-nation's (HN) legitimacy, and how they will achieve U.S. objectives.¹⁰³ These approaches can be "combined," depending on the environment, availability of resources, and political scope of the conflict. Taken individually, there are three examples that are described in the doctrine as effective operational approaches to establishing legitimacy: clear-hold-build, combined action, and limited support.

According to a recent Department of the Army memorandum on FM 3-24 revision, clear-hold-build is "the prevailing operational framework for counterinsurgency."¹⁰⁴ FM 3-24 states that this approach should be applied in a "specific,

¹⁰¹ United States Army. *FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency, Revision Issue Paper #3—Clear-Hold-Build*, Memorandum (Ft. Leavenworth, KN: Combined Arms Center, U.S. Counterinsurgency Center, January 20, 2012). The memo also clarifies—as a part of the revision—that concepts like "clear-hold-build" should not be viewed as an approach, but an "operational art," essentially placing more credibility behind its significance and emphasizing the need for proficiency.

¹⁰² United States Army, *FM 3-24*, xxv.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 469–591. A large part of the political dynamic is the economic development required. Country Teams and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are used to "extend the reach" of government. These multilateral teams are composed of various government agencies and international partners.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

high-value area experiencing overt insurgent operations” by establishing a secure physical and psychological environment, firm government control, and population support.¹⁰⁵ These require an abundance of resources—money, manpower, and time—for this approach to be effective. Such operations must expand from a “secured base” and create the following necessary conditions: COIN capabilities superior to the insurgent’s availability of non-military resources to carry-out essential improvements in the daily lives of the population, insurgents cleared from the area to be “held,” insurgent organization infrastructure neutralized; and HN presence established.

During the ‘clear’ phase, offensive operations commence where the insurgent should be isolated, killed or captured, and cut-off from external support. As the doctrine specifics, “these combat operations are only the beginning, not the end-state;” in other words, the actual removal of those visible insurgent forces does not negate the need to stamp-out insurgent infrastructure.¹⁰⁶ The latter should be done in a way that “minimizes the impact on the local population and is essentially a police action... and legal processes.”¹⁰⁷

Sustained pressure on the population should ideally be executed by HN forces, and should be conducted during the ‘hold’ phase to begin dismantling the insurgent infrastructure.¹⁰⁸ Static forces should be in place to deter and prevent a resurgence of insurgent presence, and IO should state that “security forces will remain for several years and will not leave.”¹⁰⁹ All operations should be focused on continuously securing the people, establishing a firm presence, recruiting and training local forces in security efforts, establishing an equitable political apparatus, and developing a network of intelligence agents.¹¹⁰ Certain control measures should also be implemented. During this stage, population screening, area surveys to determine resources and population needs,

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 683 5–59.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 685–87.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 708 5–62.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 728 5–65.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 691–692.

environmental improvements via reconstruction, and establishment of an integrated communication system with the HN should be conducted.

Lastly, the “build” phase is meant to wield support for the HN in its efforts to rebuild the infrastructure and capabilities in order for the population to establish a functional, stable, and economically and socially viable environment. Legitimizing is primarily derived from performance, although process is also important. In supporting the HN and working toward isolating the insurgency, the central area where the insurgency can be out-performed by the U.S.’ development; vis-à-vis nation-building.¹¹¹ To provide adequate protection when resources are available, the HN security forces must continually patrol, conduct “needs assessments,” and base those assessments on cultural sensitivities, in order to provide essential services and other improvements during this phase of operations.

Combined action is the second key operational approach comprising joint efforts where U.S. and HN troops are focused on a single objective. This approach is appropriate where there is not a large insurgent presence and where isolating or expelling an entrenched insurgent organization is not required. In application, combined action “attempts to achieve security and stability in a local area followed by offensive operations against insurgent forces [recently] denied access or support.”¹¹² This method would be most effective once an insurgent presence has already been weakened through effective clearing operations.

The last of the three central operational approaches presented in the doctrine has to do with limited support operations. According to the doctrine, this approach should be used in those cases where “U.S. support is limited, focused on peripheral missions like advising security forces, providing fire support or other logistical support for a sustainment of HN operations.” Presumably, this would entail more Special Forces and foreign indigenous defense (FID) missions.

¹¹¹ Ibid., The doctrine explains that “the state of the infrastructure determines the resources required for reconstruction.”

¹¹² Ibid., 184.

B. U.S. COIN PRINCIPLES: THE CRUX OF FM 3-24

1. Employment of Force

Securing the population is top priority in U.S. COIN. The doctrine is careful not to truncate itself into any specific methodology in terms of executing a particular mission; flexibility and adaptability to context is encouraged. Yet, the doctrine does outline specific guiding principles (as mentioned above) that act as a *template* for how a campaign should be conducted.

The doctrine also seeks to stimulate the officer, non-commissioned officer (NCO), and soldier, marine, airman and sailor through reading, and ultimately training, with a series of “paradoxes” in mind to frame how force *should* be employed. This is filtered down to the lowest tactical levels and intended to help the platoon and company commander, NCO, and lower-level military personnel in developing training regimens for how to best prosecute COIN. Some of the more applicable paradoxes are as follows:

- “Ultimate success in COIN is gained by protecting the population, not the COIN force.” Isolated garrisons dedicated to force protection are, thus, counterproductive, even as survival instinct says otherwise.
- “Sometimes, the more force is used, the less effective it is.” For instance, offensive operations alone can become powerful political and psychological successes for the insurgency, even as they eliminate insurgents.
- “The more successful the counterinsurgency is, the less force can be used and the more risk can be accepted.” Instead of wiping-out the insurgency by force when it is weak, the tide turns toward political concessions.
- “Sometimes doing nothing is the best reaction.” Again, force, whether offensive or defensive is secondary to gaining legitimacy in the long-run.

- “Some of the best weapons don’t shoot.” In other words, COIN operations are about more than killing the enemy. A carefully integrated agricultural plan, following this logic, could have just as much or more impact in a particular area than a sweep operation.¹¹³

Though the doctrine states that “COIN operations combine offensive, defense, and stability operations to achieve a stable environment,” for HN legitimacy to develop and grow, it is clear that the overarching message from each of these select paradoxes equate to two main points:¹¹⁴ first, offensive operations are no longer sufficient; and second, defense—defined as restoring public safety—is key in counterinsurgency.¹¹⁵ Combat operations must always be measured “to address insurgents that [*sic who*] cannot be co-opted into operating inside the rule of law,” while the doctrine confirms that certain operations (such as “conducting periodic sweeps”) through overwhelming force may be necessary to kill adversaries” perceived as fanatical.¹¹⁶

At the same time, the killing of noncombatants surpasses mere collateral damage as doing so tangibly undermines the counterinsurgent’s goals. Since COIN is “war among the people,” combat operations required to eliminate insurgents who cannot be co-opted will be necessary. The doctrine consistently balances this by stating “kindness and compassion can be as important as killing and capturing.”¹¹⁷ Yet, there is a double edged-sword in the sense that the population must be secured to gain legitimacy, securing them may mean killing insurgents, these insurgents may be (and will most likely be) family members of the population, all while collateral damage is mostly unacceptable. Even though there are some very fine lines to be drawn, the crux of minimum force in FM 3-24 is based on both “proportionality” and “discriminate use of force.”¹¹⁸ This is in

¹¹³ Ibid., 48–49.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 40 5–3.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., xvi.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 167.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

fact a redundancy from what is written in the formal laws of war that apply to war in general; the doctrine seems to add emphasis to these standards as an imperative in COIN more specifically.

Actual or perceived civilian deaths caused by COIN forces, or as a result of not adequately protecting the population from attack, can clearly generate anger among the population, a sense of injustice, frustration and active opposition, eventually eroding support for the U.S. and HN as legitimate security provider.¹¹⁹ Therefore, the imperative is not to kill one's way to victory. As Kilcullen explains, "violence against noncombatant civilians by security forces, whether intentional or accidental, is almost always entirely counterproductive."¹²⁰ Striking balance between killing the enemy, which "is, and always will be, a part of guerilla warfare," and protecting the noncombatant population remains a difficult task.¹²¹

Operationally speaking, the doctrine specifies that "battalion-sized and smaller-sized units [e.g., platoon] are most effective" in attempting to employ force in a discretionary way. Such forces must get as close to the population as possible in order to control and protect the people and glean as much intelligence as possible, while simultaneously maintaining fluidity of action.¹²² When feasible, HN forces should take the lead, or at least work in conjunction with U.S. forces, whenever possible. Borders must also be secured. Some offensive action is still important for overall success, such as "disrupting base areas and sanctuaries."¹²³

2. Control over the Population

Controlling the population is critical to isolating insurgents from their cause and support. As the doctrine states, "clearly, killing or capturing insurgents will be necessary... but killing every insurgent is normally impossible," thus making other

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2010), 4.

¹²² United States Army, *FM 3-24*, 5–57, 395–97.

¹²³ Ibid.

tactics necessary.¹²⁴ Suggestions for how to isolate the insurgents include: redress of social, political, and economic grievances; behavioral and mobility control of the population; and border security. Population control mechanisms may include conducting a census to understand and work with established societal relationships, creating identification cards, imposing curfews and pass systems, placing limits on travel and visitors, and establishing and properly maintaining checkpoints.¹²⁵ The benefits to be derived from implementing such restrictive measures should be relayed to the population through a carefully implemented IO campaign. There must also be space to “provide amnesty and rehabilitation for those willing to support the new government.”¹²⁶

Protecting and securing the population is in fact stated as the core consideration. The American experience supports this approach from the standpoint that “ultimate success...often depends on the interaction of soldiers with indigenous civilian populations.”¹²⁷ Writings on many of America’s early low intensity conflicts illustrate just how the U.S. actually dealt with foreign and domestic civilian populations.¹²⁸ Oftentimes, violence was employed widely, indiscriminately and with little regard for civilians, especially at the beginning of conflicts. More recently, however, greater care has been exercised as espoused in the doctrine and guidance provided by top field commanders like Generals David Petraeus, Stanley McChrystal, and John Allen. The ongoing question is if these standards have shifted too far away from discriminate coercion found in the “gold standard” best practices.

Lastly, security under the rule of law is considered essential for population control to work and be sustained. According to FM 3-24, “to establish legitimacy, commanders transition security activities from combat operations as quickly as possible.”¹²⁹ Moreover,

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 180.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹²⁸ For further reference on the American experience in small wars, see Birtle, Andrew. *U.S.-Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860–1941*. Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing, November 1997. Birtle, Andrew. *U.S.-Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942–1976*, Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 2006; Max Boot, *Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2003).

¹²⁹ Ibid.

“using a legal system established in line with local culture and practices to deal with such criminals enhances the host-nation government’s legitimacy.”¹³⁰ This is essential for implementation once control measures have been imposed, as the HN needs to “have an established system of punishments for various offenses” and needs to be consistent throughout the territory.¹³¹ Police who abide by the rule of law are the preferred force to field during this period, and should have a prominent presence both day and night.¹³²

3. Intelligence and Information Operations

FM 3-24 states that “COIN is an intelligence war.”¹³³ In all wars, intelligence drives operations; however, the counterinsurgent’s actions among the civil population are uniquely and invaluable important to acquiring consistent and accurate information. Use of informants and constant exploitation of tactical intelligence is crucial. This is done through a variety of steps ranging from intelligence at the front-end of operations, including intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) and tactical level intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) operations. Intelligence should be closely coordinated to properly act upon valuable, time-sensitive intelligence; collaboration is a very important component to this endeavor.

According to FM 3-24, information operations also play a key role in economizing force while limiting coercive actions. These are the umbrella over the multiple lines of operations that are constantly and simultaneously focused across a variety of military, political, and economic objectives, to include; combat operations, working with HN security forces, providing essential services, maintaining governance, and fostering economic development.¹³⁴

Persuasion through various psychological operations is essential to balancing the coercive offense-defense continuum as described in the doctrine. The doctrine emphasizes the importance of IO addressing specific concerns and informing the public

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid., 5–76, 799.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid., 163–1.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 156.

and managing perceptions. IO should not be used to commit to actions that cannot be completed. Working with the media is necessary to facilitate accurate and timely flow of information to the population.¹³⁵

IO has specific roles to play in the strategic approaches. In “clear-hold-build” there are two key audiences: the local population and the insurgents. For the population, the message should focus on gaining and maintaining their support, but also provide the understanding that actively supporting the insurgency will prolong combat operations, creating “risk to themselves and neighbors.”¹³⁶ The message to the insurgents should constantly remind them that their resistance is futile and that alternatives exist through surrender or cease fire. The IO effort should also reinforce the U.S. and HN’s resolve and commitment to the effort. The message during the “build” phase is to obtain the understanding or approval of security-force actions that affect the populous (e.g., control measures), establish intelligence sources that assist in the destruction of remaining insurgent infrastructure, and win over the neutral people.¹³⁷

C. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The following provides a summary of the principles extracted from the FM 3-24 doctrine relating to operational approaches and standards:

- *Securing and protecting the population is fundamental in gaining legitimacy.* Clearing areas of insurgent activity through combat operations, holding an area through limited control measures, and building physical and government infrastructure are essential for fostering stability, legitimacy for the host-nation, and de-legitimizing the efforts of the insurgency.¹³⁸ This is achieved through limited coercion and considerable persuasion.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 177

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Legitimacy for the HN and COIN forces transcends as a means to a long-term, stable political end-state. To achieve legitimacy, there must be an associated commitment at the onset (and enduring throughout) the mission in order to secure, and sustain, legitimacy from the population.

- *Offensive operations should be limited in scope*, and only executed as a broader, synchronized effort to “clear” an area. Killing of civilians should be avoided at all costs. The level of collateral damage must be assessed prior to conducting operations, so as to avoid creating an environment that is hostile to COIN efforts. HN forces should take the lead, or at least work in conjunction with U.S. forces, whenever possible.
- *Insurgents must be isolated from their cause and support*. Carefully coordinated control measures must be implemented. Recommended measures include: conducting a census; creating identification cards; establishing curfews, pass systems, and checkpoints; and placing limits on travel and visitors, including within regions, the country, and across international borders.
- Offensive operations and control measures are to be integrated through a *strict minimum force construct that are discriminate* in application and *proportional* to what is necessary to adequately address the given scope of the threat.
- *Intelligence drives all operations and must be carefully integrated* during pre-deployment procedures, on the ground between various assets, and facilitated through a rigorous analysis and dissemination. Information operations are essential in balancing the offense-defense continuum, and use of force with persuasion, as well as managing the relationships between COIN forces and the population.
- *Host-nation security forces are a core component* of COIN operations but should not be a mirror-image of the U.S. Considerable effort will be needed to develop their ability to provide reasonable levels of internal security with adherence to rule of law.

The first operational approach—“clear-hold-build”—is most consistent with the “gold standard;” has been optimized to be the core concept in both Iraq and Afghanistan; and has been singled out to continue and evolve in the forthcoming FM revision. The origins come directly from Thompson’s writings and emphasize the value of “clearing”

insurgent forces. Yet, the gravity of those clearing operations is carefully framed through a minimum and discriminate use of force that is proportional to the threat. Though this should provide the commander with a breadth of options, the stated 'paradoxes' appear to stymie and limit possibilities to wield force that is balanced with the persuasive aspects of the effort. According to the doctrine, the slightest increase in offensive force could derail previous or ongoing efforts to gain the trust of, and thoroughly protect, the population. Similarly, this also affects what mechanisms are used to implement population control.

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IV. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

This chapter compares and analyzes the “gold standard” with current U.S. principles. The first section offers some general observations that reinforce the broader theoretical distinctions between the “gold standard” principles and U.S. COIN doctrine. The second half deciphers what ‘consistency’ and ‘deviation’ exist between the two sets of principles within the confines of those drawn from findings of Chapter II and three cores themes discussed in Chapter III.

A. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

As will be discussed in more depth throughout this chapter, there are surprisingly no major deviations between the “gold standard” and U.S. doctrine in the level of destruction deemed necessary during the “clear” phase of operations—a concept directly extracted from Thompson’s writings. This is at odds with the original assumptions articulated in the hypotheses as outlined in Chapter I, which were that *U.S. COIN doctrine does not adequately recognize and account for the importance of coercion in COIN warfare*.¹³⁹ When it comes to conducting offensive operations, the doctrines are consistent, albeit with caveats.

Strict population controls, on the other hand, are more consistent with the original assumptions of coercion found to be effective in the “gold standard” experience compared to the limited methods found in FM 3-24. This deviation has more to do with civil rights than human rights, a distinction that Trevett describes as “conflated” in Western COIN thinking, where there are vague or absent designations between the two areas.¹⁴⁰ Much of this may have to do with the inherent democratic values in Western

¹³⁹ Though not entirely consistent with the breath of this research, Dr. Christopher Paul’s two-year research culminated in the 2010 RAND publication, *Victory has a Thousand Fathers*, which came to some interesting and noteworthy conclusions about FM 3-24. That concluded that of the cases studied between 1978 and 2008, “there were a remarkably strong correlation between the application of FM 3-24 principles and success in counterinsurgency.” Yet, the cases and writing reviewed in this research occurred *prior* to 1978, and are well cited as the foundation from which the doctrine supposedly replicated. Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill. *Victory has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in COIN*, RAND, National Defense Research Institute, 2010.

¹⁴⁰ Michael Trevett, *Isolating the Guerrilla* (Oklahoma: Tate Publishing, 2011), 29.

thinking that places an equally high premium on both types of rights. Aside from these noted distinctions, minor nuances were found within each section relevant to coercive actions, as will be discussed below.

The following represents the analysis of the core aforementioned distinctions, as framed in the previous chapters.

1. Destruction of Insurgents

As summarized below in Table I, the distinction between the “gold standard” and U.S. doctrine as to how force is employed is minimal. U.S. doctrine carefully states that insurgents must be killed and that clearing operations entail combat operations. This, in practice, is shared by nearly every theorist reviewed, and was executed to one degree or another in Algeria, Malaya, and most other conflicts of the 19th and 20th centuries. FM 3-24 actually replicated and adapted Thompson’s work into its operational approach of “clear-hold-build.” Though sugar-coated by the HAM connotations and idealistic notion of nation-building (note the “build” phase meant to support the host-nation and “paradoxes” overall), FM 3-24 is conflicted in balancing the utility of carefully planned sweep operations, and the need to kill enemy combatants who are steadfast in their efforts and reject a reconciliatory process, while maintaining a strict rules of engagement (ROE).

Table 1. Comparison between “Gold Standard and U.S. Doctrine with Respect to Destruction of Insurgents¹⁴¹

Consistency between Principles	Deviation between Principles
A. Acknowledge that insurgents should be destroyed or expunged during calculated phases of operations commonly stated as “clearing,” and in cases where capture or reconciliation is untenable. B. Sweeps are necessary through clearing operations. FM 3-24 borrows from (albeit, modifies) Thompson’s concept of clear-hold-build, and the 19th century “oil-spot” methodology of the French.	A. In U.S. doctrine, offensive operations should be limited in scope, and are only to be executed as a broader, synchronized effort to “clear” an area. The “gold standard” is inconsistent on this issue. B. There is a clear distinction with HN forces taking the lead in U.S. doctrine, as opposed to the “gold standard,” where the inclusion of indigenous forces was limited, or were often part of the problem in excessive use of force against insurgents. C. U.S. doctrine emphasizes that the killing of civilians should be avoided at all costs. The level of collateral damage must be assessed prior to conducting operations. This was rarely the case and was inconsistently stated in the “gold standard.”

Though there is general recognition in what counterinsurgency author and Vietnam veteran Boyd Bashore observed that “A counterinsurgency doctrine that does not recognize the primacy of the military forces in providing security is doomed to failure,” there seems to still be some philosophical issues between the “gold standard,” current U.S. doctrine, and presumably the forthcoming revision with respect to politically *acceptable* levels of violence military forces employ.¹⁴² Merom argues that a particular concern for modern democracies like the U.S., as well as HNs, is the disagreement

¹⁴¹ Ibid 75. In this phase, satisfactory results are reflected in the permanent expulsion or disbanding into another area as long as they are unable to regroup. The latter can only be satisfied if COIN forces are left in place.

¹⁴² Boyd T. Bashore, “The Parallel Hierarchies,” pt. 2, *Infantry* 58 (July–August 1968): 11.

between state and society over “expedient and moral issues that concern human life and dignity,” which can trump the requirements presented in the U.S. COIN doctrine and, at times, the “gold standard.”¹⁴³

This does not mean, however, that indiscriminant acts of violence are to be accepted or tolerated. Such methods constantly discredited the French in Algeria, as well as the U.S. in Vietnam. The world, in general, has advanced beyond such blanketed ethnocentrism and brutality. The U.S. has evolved in its thinking since its experience in Vietnam. For instance, the philosophy of Major General R.B. Mans in 1962 was indicative of the general position that the U.S. “will work them over with so much steel, that in six months [we] will see an end of it.”¹⁴⁴ Again, such comments offer punctuation to patterns of the past and are at odds with the restraint displayed in current doctrine.¹⁴⁵ This theme was echoed throughout the “gold standard.”

What is important to keep in mind, is that the “use of force and repression... or the ‘crush them’ approach works well in some *phases* of the insurgency” [emphasis added], while recognizing that this alone is not a means to an end.¹⁴⁶ Thomas Marks alludes to this point in his observation that “The civilian population is both a means and the battlefield... Violence can be seen as the ultimate enabler shaping the battlefield space for politics.”¹⁴⁷ George Kennan also warned not to rely too much on limited force models. In 1954 he observed that “even benevolence, when addressed to a foreign people, represents a form of intervention into their internal affairs, and always receives, at best, a divided reception.”¹⁴⁸ Alas, the effort to balance these nuances is difficult and must be accompanied with multiple lines of engagement outside of kinetic operations and beyond

¹⁴³ Ibid., 19.

¹⁴⁴ See Robert Osgood, *Limited War, the Challenge to American Strategy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 56. He also discussed America’s lack of experience in the selective use of force, arguing that the massive killings—of insurgents and civilians alike—undermined the American cause in Vietnam.

¹⁴⁶ United States Army. *Minutes from COIN Brownbag Webcast with Dr. Christopher Paul* (Ft. Leavenworth, KN: United States Combined Arms Center, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Center, September 29, 2011).

¹⁴⁷ United States Army. *Minutes from COIN Brownbag Webcast with Dr. Thomas Marks* (Ft. Leavenworth, KN: United States Combined Arms Center, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Center, March 7, 2012).

¹⁴⁸ See Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942–1976* (Washington, D.C.: CMH, 2006), 349.

the military sphere of affairs, while at the same time, not losing sight of the military's importance for reaching desired outcomes.

Beyond the philosophical analysis are the practical issues revealed in the “gold standard.” For instance, when there are clearing operations, there must be resources to support the initiative. The problem for the French was not in their ability to clear, but their inability to project the appropriate military resources—and political will—to act upon the gains they had made against the ALN during the Challe offensive and beyond. In fact, the political objective was compromised with de Gaulle's decision to implement a “self-determination policy, which significantly upset the disaffected *pieds noirs*” (French citizens who lived and occupied Algeria pre-independence) to a point where he had to redeploy French forces into major cities to control the upheaval.¹⁴⁹ The British, on the other hand, had significantly more resources in Malaya, per capita, than the U.S. has in either Iraq or Afghanistan in the 2000s.

2. Static Forces and Military Outposts

The lessons learned regarding isolated military outposts are reflected in both sets of principles as summarized in Table II below. Once again, at the practical level, there were manpower issues—both quantitatively and qualitatively in establishing and maintaining static forces and military outposts. The French had a difficult time properly manning posts in both Algeria and Vietnam. For example, Porch explains that “The French lacked the manpower to be strong everywhere, and a surge in one region came at

¹⁴⁹ Porch 109 and Merom 88. For instance, Massu was able to pacify Algiers of virtually all the FLN terror networks to include logistical support, fighters, bombers and leadership—essentially the entire infrastructure to operate. Yet, despite all of the tactical and operational gains “The FLN achieved its political objectives in full: It was recognized as the sole representative of the Algerians, Algeria was granted independence, and its national unity and territorial integrity were secured.” The French were forced to withdraw all “vestiges of institutions” and “civil presence.” Much of the issue had to do with imperialist aims where the “most powerful politicians in France were firmly committed to the idea of preserving French Algeria, if need be by every means necessary.”

the cost of operating another to Viet Mien attack.”¹⁵⁰ Nearly endless military means were required as a result; this was apparent to the French a century earlier.¹⁵¹

Table 2. Comparison between “Gold Standard” and U.S. Doctrine with Respect to Static Forces and Military Outposts.

Consistency between Principles	Deviation between Principles
A. Acknowledge the importance of static outposts. This is most clearly articulated in two core areas of overlap with U.S. doctrine: the “hold” phase as presented by Thompson and replicated in the U.S. doctrine, and the French “oil spot” strategy (again, originally a 19th century approach). B. Like Britain, the U.S. also uses foreign troops to augment, albeit in a different capacity via coalition forces. These forces have been essential when holding areas and deploying forces on a sustained basis and where local forces are too incompetent or poorly trained to “hold.”	A. Static forces for the “gold standard” in many cases differed from U.S. doctrine in three ways: first is the deployment and fielding of foreign and indigenous forces that were at the disposal of the COIN force. The British were especially known for this, vis-à-vis Gurka battalions. Second, settlement was a core component to supplementing additional, local resources and added to the demand for more from the homeland to protect the colonial population (e.g. Algeria).¹⁵² Lastly, at times, both the French and British relied on conscription to fill their rank. As a result, professionalism among the ranks suffered (this has not been an option for the U.S. since 1972). B. Even with those additional assets, the French lacked the capacity to properly integrate the “ink spot” method.

¹⁵⁰ Porch, 96–98. As of 1947, more troops were not an option for the French in Indochina while the government was in the midst of trying to reconstruct France after being “devastated by war, occupation, strikes, and inflation.” This would set the stage for the ‘Vietnamization’ to follow; unfortunately, the results were not lasting.

¹⁵¹ Octavian Manea, Reflections on the French School of Counter-Rebellion: An Interview with Etienne de Durand,” *Small Wars Journal*, March 3, 2011. As Durand explains, “Gallieni and Lyautey were acutely aware of the limited nature of the campaign they led. At no point were they under any illusion as to whether France would bear endless costs to extend French influence or sovereignty over distant colonial outposts.

¹⁵² Basil Williams, *The British Empire*. Home University Library of Modern Knowledge, no. 129 (Henry Holt and Company: New York. 1928), 169. Settlement was a core distinction in both 19th and 20th century COIN endeavors, as it was hallmark of colonial rule and a vital appendage to the respective Empire (declining or otherwise). As a result, much of the decisions, administration, and politics were entwined with the local settlers. This excerpt from Basil Williams’ history of the British Empire offers a case-in-point when describing the situation in South Africa: “The climate is well suited to Europeans and some ten thousand are now settled there. The Crown has vested in itself all the land in Kenya and, largely under pressure from local settlers, has made enormous grants to Europeans and regulated the native tribes to less adventurous reserves, while even there they have not found permanent possession. In addition, it has been the policy of the white settlers, which they have to a certain extent been able to persuade the local officials to enforce, to discourage the *Masai* and other natives from growing marketable produce on their reserves and to tax them at a relatively high rate, in order to induce them to supply the labor urgently needed for the proper cultivation of their own large estates [sic].”

The second overarching distinction is the degree of professionalism of the “static forces” intended to interact with the population. For the French in Algeria, much of the issue in abusing force had to do with blatant lack of discipline and professionalism. In theory, the French effort to increase its numbers in 1955 would be the necessary answer toward resolving the military and political situation on the ground. Yet, the *quality* of the force became the issue. The French force was largely a collection of conscripts, “scattered in isolated, morale-extinguishing posts...”¹⁵³ Britain, too, experienced problems of quantity and quality. In Britain, policing of empire was considered to be a “sub-war category” and [of] poor preparation.”¹⁵⁴ In contrast, the U.S. recognizes the need for professional soldiers to conduct COIN operations.

Thus, both the quality and quantity of forces (and associated resources) played a major role in shaping the “gold standard.” As explained by Douglas Macgregor, “military power is no longer based on the mass mobilization of manpower and resources of the entire nation-state. Conscript armed forces, the norm of the 19th and 20th centuries, are being replaced with professional military establishments” that are smaller, but technologically more lethal in scale.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, a force ration in U.S. doctrine continues to be an issue and has been devoid of the necessary requirements that “clear-hold-build” and “oil-spot” require, even as these strategies are recommended.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Douglas Porch, “French Imperial Warfare 1945–62,” in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, eds. Malkasian and Marston (Osprey: Oxford. 2008), 105. As Porch explains further: “Initially, all divisions were under strength and under officered. Detachments returned from Indochina exhausted and depleted. With veterans declining to re-enlist and soldiers deserting at high rates, units topped up with young, inexperienced recruits... Well-equipped professionals, with their distinctive uniforms repaid the envy of conscripts with disdain. Moreover, tactical ineptitude in general was reflective in the inability to shift from the day-to-day tactical priorities that were necessary to implement the Constantine Plan.”

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Octavian Manea, *Small Wars Inquiry*, comments by Douglas Macgregor, *Small Wars Journal*, May 10, 2011, 4.

¹⁵⁶ For further analysis, see United States Army, *FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency, Revision Issue Paper #2—Force Ratios*, Memorandum (Ft. Leavenworth, KN: Combined Arms Center, U.S. Counterinsurgency Center, January 20, 2012).

3. Insurgents Must be Isolated from the Population

Clearly, one of the biggest problems in both past and contemporary COIN is not in the realization that the population must be isolated from the insurgency, but *how* to deal with the cases where the population does not *want* to be secured and controlled. This has become an issue at various points in the recent Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns; however, this is not unique to these cases, and was addressed throughout the “gold standard” experience (as explained in Chapter 3).

Table 3. Comparison between “Gold Standard” and U.S. Doctrine with Respect to How Insurgents Must be Isolated from the Population

Consistency between Principles	Deviation between Principles
A. Isolating the insurgents from the population is an imperative. Best practices are those that follow the rule of law proportionality. B. Practices should take into account context, culture, and ethnic cleavages.	A. Many of the experiences outlined in the British “gold standard” included more coercive and extreme forms of resettlement, regroupment, and even deportation, which were often codified by law. While varied across conflicts, the more successful examples were carefully planned, resourced, and executed across the population. B. Even the 19th century “ink spot” method (that the U.S. doctrine very consistently uses in its own version) relied more upon racial profiling and was heavily dependent on resources.

In fact, population control is perhaps the key area where FM 3-24 deviates from the “gold standard” as summarized in the table above. Though there is recognition in both that control measures are necessary in order to secure the population, the methodology differs; this is specifically the case with regard to the issue of food controls, as well as resettlement. FM 3-24 does not recommend such coercive and punitive actions. While

there is overlap in the language of minimum force, the principles found throughout the “gold standard” was broader and perhaps stressed more in achieving certain outcomes in those colonial conflicts. This is quite different in U.S. doctrine. The prime examples reside with resettlement, strategic hamlets, and strict pass systems, which are absent from U.S. doctrine.

Essentially, the distinction in population controls and the use of coercion boils down to the difference between the “gold standard’s” strict coercion (like food control and relocation via strategic hamlets), and limited coercion (through census, surveys, and pass systems). Though both strict and limited coercion could be effective through discriminate and proportional force, FM 3-24 has truncated the options deviating from the “gold standard.”¹⁵⁷

Interestingly, the highly coercive actions found in the “gold standard’s” best practice are at times representative of the principle of strict proportional laws and restrictions imposed on the entire population as opposed to collective punishments and indiscriminate detention. Under such conditions, forbidden zones, food controls and other methods were sometimes accepted by the population as fair. U.S. doctrine provides similar flexibility in discussing the standards of “proportionality” and “discrimination of force.” However, whether on the lower end of coercion with curfews and census taking, or high-end with food controls and resettlement, both “gold standard” and U.S. doctrine reveal that a clear picture of the culture, ethnic diversity, and particular circumstances should have a significant impact on the decision of what methods are most applicable.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ This has been a practical problem for both the “gold standard” and U.S. doctrine with regard to resources. There are simply not enough forces to properly field, especially if the mandate is narrow and geography is vast (e.g., size variation between Malaya and that of Afghanistan or Algeria). Also, normative thought may provoke the impulse to associate this omittance as a result of democratic values alone. Yet, there is probably more credence to the fact that the U.S. attempted some of these methods unsuccessfully, in Vietnam. There are significant human rights norms and international referendums in place now that help deter from such extreme methods. Lastly, as was seen late and reluctantly in Iraq and Afghanistan, indigenous, HN, forces can help with the “boots on the ground issues.

¹⁵⁸ Mathias, *Galula in Algeria*, 29. Mathias describes the French experience with conducting a census as one that was rift with cultural controversies. He notes that though such “strategy seems coherent,” there were significant issues with “organizing its undertaking in a Muslim country where the collection of public records faced numerous cultural obstacles....” He cites examples like the lack of surnames, lack of recorded birthdates, rampant illiteracy, and photographs for women as cultural sacrilege as among the many hurdles. Such constraints are worth noting in all the various experiences with population controls used.

4. Importance of Intelligence

As noted in Table 4, intelligence methods are consistent between both the “gold standard” and U.S. doctrine emphasizing three main areas: intelligence is vital at the tactical levels, informers are critical, and local police forces are a critical element in intelligence. One area that seems deficient in U.S. doctrine is the conduits that are exploited (e.g., political intelligence) and the regular use of torture to elicit information, which was common in the British and French cases.

Table 4. Comparison between “Gold Standard” and U.S. Doctrine with Respect to Intelligence as an Imperative for Successful COIN Operations

Consistency between Principles	Deviation between Principles
A. Intelligence is the primary driver behind successful operations. B. Emphasizes that informants should be acquired, appropriate bureaucratic networks maintained, and that intelligence collection is local and should be broken down by district and sub-district levels.	A. Notwithstanding technological and organizational differences between historic and modern methods, there are three primary deviations found in the “gold standard:” its emphasis on political intelligence in terms of overtly and actively meddling in day-to-day political affairs, and the sporadic use of torture and other techniques that are less acceptable to today’s U.S and international law standards.

5. The Intrinsic and Extrinsic Political Realm

There has been an evolution of COIN approaches over time with regard to political aspirations, strategic ambitions, and international acceptance or rejection for certain behaviors. Where U.S. doctrine is mostly concerned with the support of a sovereign and HN in the context of promoting and sustaining global strategic stability, the European experiences in the 20th century initially were more about trying to sustain

centuries-old imperial power and patronage. This was seen throughout the British Empire, as well as the French in their dealing with Indochina (Vietnam) and the *piros* *nodem* in Algeria.¹⁵⁹

Table 5. Comparison between “Gold Standard” and U.S. Doctrine with Respect to Intrinsic and Extrinsic Political Dynamics

Consistency between Principles	Deviation between Principles
A. Political resolve is a core component in COIN. Without political resolve, there cannot be stability.	A. There is a core distinction that questions the feasibility of modern, U.S. COIN: while the U.S. subjects itself to the legitimacy and capabilities of the HN it is supporting, the European experience contrarily focused on setting the conditions for political resolve either through tampering with internal processes, disassociating political decision-making that was not aligned with their interests, or conceding to certain conditions that are not applicable to the U.S. HN model (e.g., agreeing to the independence of the state from colonial control as a means to reach a final end-state is not relevant under the U.S. model of assisting a sovereign HN as described in FM 3-24).

¹⁵⁹ Another less cited and appreciated case study on managing the political dynamics in COIN was the British in Borneo. As high commissioner, General Templar, in Malaya, had directed all civil and military activities. He headed both the civil government and the armed forces. In Borneo, Walker’s experience was much different. His powers were more circumscribed, since he did not represent the British Crown. Walker, instead of being in charge of the territory, provided only military assistance to the existing governments. The sultanate of Brunei was independent; thus, Walker always had to respond to the sultan as Brunei’s head of state. Moreover, because Sarawak and Sabah were administered separately, Walker had to deal with two separate administrations and police forces, each with their own chain of command. As a result, Walker was forced to rely more on cooperation and persuasion than had Templer. When Sarawak and Sabah joined Malaysia in 1965, Walker’s situation became even more complex, as he now had to serve a new master in Kuala Lumpur.

“Divide and conquer,” population controls through resettlement, and strategic administration through emigrated citizens, are absent in U.S., third-party COIN.

Even so, both the “gold standard” and U.S. doctrine emphasize the importance of a political resolution to conflict with the internal political environment playing a significant role.

6. Information Operations (IO)

Aside from semantics, there is quite a bit of overlap with regard to information operations as noted in the table below. Both sets of principles emphasize the importance of IO to influence three distinct actors: the enemy, the population, and the COIN force. U.S. doctrine focuses on some of the core lessons from the gold standard, such as, not committing to actions that could not be completed. Despite these similarities, the “gold standard” still reveals some key lessons and distinctions.

Some of the core differences reside in how information is disseminated today. Media exposure, and access to information more generally, is near limitless; something that was either narrow or nonexistent in the past. No doubt the exposure, breadth and access that populations (friendly, enemy, and neutral) have to information are unparalleled in the magnitude where public opinion and “battlefield feedback” is absorbed within modern society. Additionally, there is no single institution in the United States that focuses exclusively on IO as was the case pre-1999 under the U.S. Information Agency (USIA). Having such civilian oversight and responsibility was a central concern for Thompson in particular.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ Granted, Thompson was operating locally, and spoke from that position. Today, not much has changed at the operational level, however, the scope of modern, networked adversaries requires an equally global campaign. Even though the scope has changed under these conditions, the need for a separate entity that deals with the various levels of IO (especially global) is a strategic imperative in the 21st century.

Table 6. Comparison between “Gold Standard” and U.S. Doctrine with Respect to Information Operations.

Consistency between Principles	Deviation between Principles
A. The target audience for IO (propaganda) operations should focus on three actors: the enemy, the population, and the COIN force itself. B. The goal of IO is to help create and sustain the conditions that: a) deter the population from supporting the insurgency; and b) help foster and strengthen the political dynamics of the particular village, district, or province.	A. There is more emphasis in the U.S. doctrine with regard to media outlets on information flow. B. Thompson specifically felt that all IO should be an “internal political matter” and should primarily be a “civilian responsibility.” Though Thompson was specifically speaking about local operations, there is still much vitality in his point. Today, the U.S. is also concerned with the message at the global level, transcending various players across all regions of the world; still, Thompson’s underlying premise is still applicable. By using various government and civilian organizations, like that of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) for instance, IO matters have lacked the luster of what Thompson describes with an independent, civilian institution. This is especially the case since the disbanding of the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) that focused on such issues.

7. The Use of Indigenous Forces

The final and arguably most important element to sustaining a COIN endeavor is the aptitude, commitment, and sustainment of indigenous forces to maintain pressure on the insurgency and prevent its return. Here, the “gold standard” was mostly focused on using local police and militias (known as “Home Guard” among other things) who could maintain control (especially in following the strategic hamlet model). Yet, where the U.S.

tries avoiding the “gold standard’s” mishaps in supporting local forces that are under-trained and not properly supported by the government, it falters when it attempts to replicate HN forces in the image of U.S. forces. This becomes obvious when the Afghanistan Army—after a decade of mentorship and training—offers complaints about its musical band’s equipment as being substandard.¹⁶¹ HN forces cannot become dependent on the U.S. for their existence.

Table 7. Comparison between “Gold Standard” and U.S. Doctrine with Respect to the Use of Indigenous Forces

Consistency between Lists	Deviation between Lists
A. Acknowledge the importance of fielding local security forces. B. There is shared concern (mostly an afterthought in the European experience) in the importance of how the force will be compensated (e.g., salary and pensions). All note the importance of this both in terms of preventing corruption, maintaining a competent and disciplined force, and the eventual demobilization of excess forces. C. Indigenous forces would typically resemble the COIN force. Though this was more of the point in many (not all) of the European cases, and not supported by the U.S. doctrine per say, most cases show that the residual, local force has been left with the same tactics, ethos, and even organizational structure as modern, westernized militaries.	A. The “gold standard” hints at more compulsory service (e.g. Trinquier), which is not supported within the U.S. doctrine. Moreover, this is a broader political issue that resides with the HN; whether this is covered in U.S. doctrine or not is moot. B. The “gold standard” cases were mostly concerned with providing localized security to implement the strategy in the interests of the COIN power, not necessarily the HN. On the contrary, U.S. doctrine is concerned with building a HN force that can sustain itself, be loyal to its constitution, and provide security. Thus, where both doctrines are concerned with the establishment of local forces, the broader, strategic ambition is quite distinct for the U.S.

¹⁶¹ Dawn.com, “From M16s to boots, Afghan troops feel slighted.” Dawn.com (Pakistan), May 21, 2012, www.dawn.com.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

A. IMPLICATIONS

COIN is a category of warfare that has evolved on multiple levels, two of which have been examined here: first the overarching strategic motivation driving the effort, and second, broader shifts in societal and international norms and laws. Both reveal the crux of what differentiates U.S. COIN with the defined “gold standard.” At the same time, its essence is entrenched in what Douglas Porch describes as “the professionalization of European warfare in the nineteenth century, and the emergence of a coherent doctrine of subversion in the twentieth.”¹⁶²

As discussed in the previous chapters, the fundamentals behind FM 3-24 are rooted in the principles learned by the European imperial powers’ experiences from the 19th century; their efforts to retain legitimacy and control over what they considered to be their sovereign territories during the 20th; and eventual attempts to transition colonial assets to independence favorable to European interest. Where the U.S. experience most deviates from these cases is fighting as an outside foreign actor and striving to shape the regime type of the target nation. This approach presents a number of constraints that simply were not a concern during the British and French experiences of imperial policing and wars of independence. Accordingly, there are differences in fighting as outsiders that are not consistent with “gold standard” norms.¹⁶³

Yet, the liberal democratic virtue of human rights, combined with the demand for immediate results embedded in the psyche of a modern world accustomed to speedy

¹⁶² Porch, 4

¹⁶³ United States Army. *Minutes from COIN Brownbag Webcast with Dr. Christopher Paul (Defense Connect Online)*, Ft. Leavenworth, KN: United States Combined Arms Center, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Center, September 29, 2011. Also see Gregor Mathias, *Galula in Algeria: Counterinsurgency Practice versus Theory*, Oxford: Praeger, 2011, 7. He explains that the first few chapters of Galula’s *Counterinsurgency Warfare* “are based primarily on his Chinese experience and describe the general traits of revolutionary warfare, the victory conditions of insurrection, and insurgent doctrine. His conclusion emphasizes a Chinese geopolitical vision.” Steven Metz posited that “the Cold War/Maoist model of insurgency applied in situations where new segments of society were becoming politically aware or mobilized and thus made demands on the state which it could not fulfill. These demands were both tangible—infrastructure, security, education—and intangible (a sense of identity). See Octavian Manea, Interview with Steven Metz, “Pros and Cons on Galula Model,” *Small Wars Journal*, November 23, 2010.

results may have created an Achilles Heel for U.S. COIN, so much so that words like “centric” have been misleadingly attached to the importance of the population. This has created a misinterpretation of what COIN entailed in the past and a misunderstanding of concepts needed to successfully conduct COIN.¹⁶⁴

This is not to say that FM 3-24 is wholly misguided. As discussed in Chapter IV, this is quite the contrary. The doctrine is consistent with the “gold standard” in many areas and has provided a relatively solid starting point for the U.S. military and intelligence community to build their philosophical and organizational constructs to address COIN warfare. With that said, U.S. COIN is still inadequate in the fundamental areas that have brought the desired results in the past. FM 3-24 has been a formulaic document, not one that garners enough breadth to appreciate the tactics and methods necessary on a case-to-case basis. Moreover, the formula itself ignores much of the history from which it has been calculated. The elements of the doctrine that do capture lessons do so by misunderstanding or misinterpreting reality as discussed in Chapter IV.

Here, there must be a realistic understanding that many of the measures used in the past are no longer viable, and for that reason, the fundamental challenge is not necessarily military or political, but shifting morality.¹⁶⁵ Yet, this also necessitates as much of a commitment to not succumb to what Gil Merom describes as a tendency for democracies failing in small wars because “they find it extremely difficult to escalate the level of violence and brutality to that which can secure victory.”¹⁶⁶ Nor should we succumb to what Hack describes as the “temporal” and “spatial” fallacies that dilute the true essence and complexity of COIN from one moment of—time, region, province,

¹⁶⁴ United States Army, *Minutes from COIN Brownbag Webcast with Dr. Sean Kalic and Dr. Jon Mikolashek* (Ft. Leavenworth, KN: United States Combined Arms Center, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Center, August 18, 2011).

¹⁶⁵ See Martin Van Crevald, *The Changing Face of War: Lessons of Combat, from the Marne to Iraq* (Presidio Press: New York, 2007).

¹⁶⁶ Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars: State, Society, and the Failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15. There are three issues with regard to democracies fighting a COIN war: how to reconcile the brutal requirements of counterinsurgency warfare with an educated class, how to find a domestic trade-off between brutality and sacrifice, and preserving support without jeopardizing the democratic systems.

district, village, force, etc.—to another.¹⁶⁷ As Thomas Mockaitis noted, “doctrine is only as good as its application,” while the tactics incorporated in the doctrine are also not a sufficient solution to fixing complex political issues.¹⁶⁸

B. (CURRENT) STATUS OF FM 3-24 REVISION

Over the past year or so, there has been significant work dedicated to the FM 3-24 revision. Modifications range from definitional issues, force rations, and revisiting the original operational frameworks. In regard to the operational framework in particular, the forthcoming revision intends to consider “ink spot” to be a *technique* to clear-hold-build, with “more depth... to address how and when this operational art is applied,” and, “under what conditions of an insurgency.”¹⁶⁹ There is also discussion about adding language like “shape” and “transition” to better articulate the “clear-hold-build” construct for the operator (shape-clear-hold-build-transition). This will also encompass what is being described as “strata” to better contextualize “deliberate phases.”¹⁷⁰

Even though these are significant strides that reflect some of the primary issues with the theoretical and contextual imbalances suggested in the research, there still seems to be a lack of clarity on what control measures may help in these approaches. Time will tell whether the current doctrinal revision will maintain the existing deviation from the “gold standard,” or if lessons from the 20th century will be revisited and properly applied (with obvious caveats relating to human rights issues).

¹⁶⁷ Karl Hack, “Setting the Record Straight on Malayan Counterinsurgency Strategy,” interview by Octavian Manea, *Small Wars Journal*, February 11, 2011. He defines temporal fallacy as “policies abstracted from one defining moment [that] might be equally valid quantitatively [at] different phases.” Spatial fallacy is, therefore, the mistake in assuming that “different geographical regions will be in the same phase, so allowing a single strategy for country no matter how fractured or diverse.

¹⁶⁸ Octavian Manea, Interview with Thomas Mockaitis, in, “COIN—A Culture of Entitlement,” *Small Wars Journal*, December 20, 2011.

¹⁶⁹ United States Army. *FM 3–24, Counterinsurgency, Revision Issue Paper #3—Clear-Hold-Build*, Memorandum (Ft. Leavenworth, KN: Combined Arms Center, U.S. Counterinsurgency Center, January 20, 2012).

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.* The precise terminology has changed a few times through the revision process, where the word transition has, and has not, been used. A list of other published recommendations is as follows: that the U.S. Army redefine the operational art for conducting COIN using precise terminology, reducing confusion. That the COIN doctrine should use secure-control-support Alternative language such as “seize the initiative, retain the initiative, and exploit the initiative” has also been discussed and representative of what is found in ADP 3–0.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR POTENTIAL RESEARCH

The belief expressed by General David Petraeus in his 1987 dissertation that “what policymakers believe to have taken place in any particular case is what matters more than what actually occurred” is no longer sufficient when considering the application and ramifications of COIN in the 21st century. As has been discovered in this research, there are many valuable aspects to the doctrine that should be retained. At the same time, there is much that has been missing from what actually occurred historically. No doubt there are modern-day constraints to employing many of the approaches the French and British used in the 19th and 20th centuries. Below are recommendations for how to reframe the doctrine.

1. Forget “Hearts and Minds” (HAM)

HAM-centered doctrines are too simplistic and lead to a misunderstanding about the true nature of COIN.¹⁷¹ Though FM 3-24 only uses the HAM term once, the language is rife with its innuendo.¹⁷² The problem is that HAM does not accurately represent the cases from which U.S. doctrine is supposedly derived.

One important lesson to reinforce, however, is that cruelty undercuts legitimacy “charging the social battery of the insurgency.”¹⁷³ With that said, there are contextual, practical, and theoretical issues with HAM that must be addressed provided that it will continue to have an influence.

¹⁷¹ Austin Long, “On ‘Other War:’ Lessons from Five Decades of RAND COIN Research,” *National Defense Research Institute*, 2006. A 2006 RAND study associated HAM with modernization; this is essentially how the British brokered the theory for themselves. The pace of that development and modernization is fundamentally different in the contemporary era. As described by Austin Long: Scholars observed that, in which the developed nations adjusted over the course of decades and centuries were being experienced in the space of years by the developing countries. As the economic conditions underlying society began to shift, pressure built on traditional society. This, in turn, put pressure on nascent governments, many of which had only recently acquired independence from colonial empires, and on those empires that sought to retain their colonies. In many cases, governmental institutions could not keep pace with societal change, leading to disorder and instability.

¹⁷² The framework of the strategic approach (through “clear-hold-build”), as well as the proscribed paradoxes, deduce the same result: that in order to levy support and legitimacy from the population, their HAM must be attained through genuine, indirect efforts (e.g., nation-building) coupled with carefully applied force.

¹⁷³ Roger Beaumont, “Thinking the Unspeakable: On Cruelty in Small Wars,” *The Small Wars Journal* 1, issue 1 (1990): 63.

2. Human Rights vs. Civil Rights: Not Mutually Exclusive in COIN

Kalev Sepp wrote that “The security of people must be assured as a basic need, along with food, water, shelter, health care, and means of living. These are human rights....”¹⁷⁴ This is in-line with the 21st century imperatives found in FM 3-24, that maintain a strict standard with regard to *human rights*: they must never be abused.¹⁷⁵

Though true, this should not be conflated with civil rights. In COIN, and war in general for that matter, a certain amount of civil rights are expected to be lessened in order to reach political end-states such as security and stability. This is particularly the case with certain control measures implemented on the population. Even the more benign measures supported in both Sepp’s analysis and FM 3-24, such as curfews and mandatory ID cards, are not fully consistent with the modern practice in liberal democracies. In reality, COIN techniques used by the British and French in the classical, “gold standard” experience “dispensed with civil rights to varying degrees.”¹⁷⁶ Proven measures such as food controls and resettlement are no doubt more imposing than the latter, but do not necessarily infringe on the human rights issues stated by Sepp if properly planned, executed, and assessed. In fact, if done with care and correctly, they could better serve the population’s basic needs.¹⁷⁷

In war, there must be recognition that, at times, population controls, from benign curfews to strict food controls, in an occupation status are necessary for both the population’s security and the long-term stability of that particular state.

3. The Reality of Resettlement

Two of the most prominent principles that are reflective from the “gold standard” principles have been the importance of organized violence against the insurgency and the prominence of resettlement and regrouping. Both of these areas—especially the latter—

¹⁷⁴ Kalev Sepp, “Best Practices in Counterinsurgency,” *Military Review* (May-June, 2005).

¹⁷⁵ Michael Trevett, *Isolating the Guerrilla* (Oklahoma: Tate Publishing, 2011), 29.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ See Kalev Sepp, *Resettlement, Regroupment, Reconcentration: Deliberate Government Directed Population Relocation in Support of Counterinsurgency Operations* (Master’s Thesis, Ft. Leavenworth, KN Command and General Staff College, 1992).

are detached from our current doctrine. Many agree that this was the correct choice. Yet, there may be strategic value in reassessing the issue for the greater good.

4. Focus on Case Studies, but be Careful

More study of the history of COIN is needed at all levels of command. This can be done, and has increasingly been pushed through various reading lists commissioned from the highest levels of the military—from the Joint Chief, to Marine Commandant, and others. As Rid postulated: “many of today’s ideas are far less innovative and ‘revolutionary’ than often assumed. Indeed much can be learned by looking at the nineteenth century colonial campaigns.”¹⁷⁸ Yet, caution is also warranted. There is no silver bullet in studying COIN cases, nor should there be confusion in understanding the particular context of which the COIN effort took place before gleaning the actual value of its lessons.

Yet, there are some central principles. As explained by Kalic and Mikolashek, “the assimilation of historical lessons learned can provide the tools necessary to analyze, discuss, and interpret past events.”¹⁷⁹ Thus, advancing the study of cases within doctrine, and in conjunction with its guidance, can help commanders properly frame operations at every stage of the COIN conflict.

D. FINAL REMARKS

Even though COIN has come to the fore in military thinking since the publication of FM 3-24, the strategic stasis that has resulted in its suboptimal prosecution is a continuing concern. The ultimate unraveling could potentially be COIN warfare becoming the pariah in military thinking, where the utterance of the term once again

¹⁷⁸ Thomas Rid, “The Nineteenth Century Origins of Counterinsurgency Doctrine,” *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 33, no. 5 (October 2010): abstract.

¹⁷⁹ United States Army, *Minutes from COIN Brownbag Webcast with Dr. Sean Kalic and Dr. Jon Mikolashek* (Ft. Leavenworth, KN: United States Combined Arms Center, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Center, August 18, 2011).

becomes a taboo subject in the U.S. military.¹⁸⁰ Though there is little argument that COIN doctrine has influenced the military writ large, the jury is still out on whether this doctrine will be revamped or if the overall concept has become a failed panacea.¹⁸¹ At the same time, it would be well to heed the words of Robert E. Lee before the Battle of Fredericksburg, where he stated solemnly that: “It is well that war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it.”¹⁸² COIN doctrine defined by nation-building and the noble cause to fix societies downtrodden by war and oppression could be something that we regret becoming fond of. Porch warns that the United States has already entered a stage of neo-imperialism where the events of 9/11 have “jump-started the COIN renaissance.”¹⁸³

It could also very well become dangerous in the oversight that may exist over the stewards of national security—both civilian and military. Sewell’s forward to the COIN doctrine sheds light on some of those early concerns:

In truth, nothing prevents the field manual’s prescriptions from being ignored or even used to mask conduct that is counter to its precepts. This uncertainly merits skepticism even—especially—from the manuals strongest supporters. It also demands close attention from critical outsiders. They must monitor military actions in the field, insist that the precepts be followed, and support the associated institutional changes to make it possible for the military to fulfill the military’s promise.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Some, like David Ucko, believe that “it looks almost inevitable that the term “counterinsurgency” will fall out of use.” He offers a variety of reasons and explanations, to include: that it remains a “vague and divisive concept; and withdrawal from Afghanistan that will “remove the primary impetus for studying and preparing for counterinsurgency.” See David Ucko, “Counterinsurgency and its Discontents: Assessing the Value of a Divisive Concept,” SWP Research Paper, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs*, April 2006, 15.

¹⁸¹ See Thom Shanker, “Army Will Reshape Training, With Lessons from Special Forces,” May 2, 2012, www.nytimes.com. As explained in the article, “The Army is reshaping the way many soldiers are trained and deployed, with some conventional units to be placed officially under Special Operations...” Shanker goes on to explain that “The impending changes reflect an effort to institutionalize many of the successful tactics adopted ad hoc from Iraq and Afghanistan.” At the same time, fiscal austerity has also played a role in future investment. See Newsstand, “DoD Proposes Shrinking Ground Forces, Shunning Stability Ops,” *Insidedefense.com*, January 4, 2012. “The FY-13 budget request prepared in conjunction with the Obama administration’s new military strategy would shrink the Marine Corps to 182,000, permitting the service to spread the reduction over four years, in part by relying on funds from the overseas contingency account...Meanwhile, the FY-13 budget request aims to cut Army end strength from a force of 570,000 today to roughly 480,000 to 490,000 within the five-year budget plan.”

¹⁸² Originally quoted by Robert E. Lee at Fredericksburg on December 13, 1862. See Roy Blount, “Making Sense of Robert E. Lee,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, July 2003.

¹⁸³ Porch, Douglas. “The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 22, no. 2, 15.

¹⁸⁴ United States Army, *FM-3-24, Counterinsurgency*, xxxvi

While salient, learning, adaptation, and innovation must continue in order for U.S. COIN efforts to serve national interests, when needed. Andrew Birtle provides credence, and thoughtfulness on this point in regard to thinking comprehensively about COIN within the context of its true nature:

The great challenge is to find the right blend for a particular situation—a formulation that may well be different from that used at another time or place, even during the same conflict. Slogans like “politics are primary” are useful if they remind us that, in counterinsurgency as in all forms of war, military means must be subordinated to political ends, and that political and persuasive arts play a vital role in waging and resolving internal conflicts. They are less useful if they lead us into the mistaken belief that political considerations must trump military and security concerns at every turn, that coercion is necessarily antithetical to success, or that we must significantly rework a struggling society into one that is a mirror image of our own.¹⁸⁵

In this sense, COIN in the 21st century seems to correlate with Basil Williams’ description of the British Empire. Borrowing his concept and integrating it with COIN he may have said that: COIN is as abnormal and incongruous an entity as it is to define or describe in the widest terms. It has never been the same from conflict to conflict, from century to century—either from extent, to regime types, to terrain and culture. It is not, however, possible to understand its present form without deciphering the common principles that define its nature through time; it can only be understood as a result of its previous history. Thanks to this vitality, no complete description of COIN and its principles will be possible.¹⁸⁶ So far, the phenomenon remains resilient in its presence in human affairs. Its careful, honest study must continue.

¹⁸⁵ Andrew Birtle, “Persuasion and Coercion in Counterinsurgency Warfare,” *Military Review* 88, no. 4 (2008): 52.

¹⁸⁶ Basil Williams, *The British Empire*. Home University Library of Modern Knowledge, no. 129 (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1928). See the Prefatory Note.

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