Counterinsurgency Field Manual 3-24 and operations

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31 December 2009

Keywords

COIN

Militær doktrine

Stabiliseringsoperasjon

Militærteori

USA

Approved by

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English summary

The purpose of this report is fourfold. The first is to highlight the key tenets of *FM 3-24*. The idea that sets counterinsurgency apart from conventional military operations – that it is more important to secure the host nation population than to destroy the enemy – is counterintuitive to soldiers trained exclusively for conventional war. Its rationale therefore needs careful explanation.

Second, to identify what is new compared to previous counterinsurgency doctrines and theory. The *FM 3-24* incorporates the most recent lessons learned by US Army and Marine Corps, and is both a source for the newest ideas on counterinsurgency and a source of current US military thought. The report concludes that the doctrine is rooted in classical counterinsurgency theory, above all the works of French officer David Galula. The emphasis on cultural awareness and language skills is new in the context of counterinsurgency doctrine but not in its practice. During colonial wars local knowledge was too readily available and self-evidently important to be included in doctrine. It is novel that the operations often are conducted in ungoverned areas. This changes the role of military forces from being one party in a well-defined conflict with the insurgents to being a partial referee in a conflict between many actors.

The third purpose is to enhance understanding of the US as a military actor, particularly as part of coalitions in stability operations. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have fundamentally changed the US approach to international operations. From having the military most firmly entrenched in conventional warfare, the US military forces have in many areas become the leading practitioner of counterinsurgency. Cultural awareness and ability to lead comprehensive civil-military effort are now areas of strength for US military forces.

The final purpose is to prepare the ground for a discussion of strategic dilemmas in applying counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and Iraq. The key to successful counterinsurgency is to mobilize all available military, social, economic, cultural and political means for a joint objective. A comprehensive approach challenges civil-military unity of effort, both in developing and implementing an effective strategy.

Multinational Experiment (MNE)

Multinational Experiment is a multinational concept development and experimentation (CD & E) series which started in 2001 on the initiative of the United States. US Joint Forces Command (US JFCOM) is in lead of the overall planning, execution and analysis, in close collaboration with partner nations, as well as NATO ACT. The current phase, MNE 6, began in 2008 and is a two-year effort focusing on *The Irregular Challenge: A Comprehensive Approach to a Complex Problem.* Norway is a partner nation to MNE 6. The Norwegian effort is organized through collaboration between the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI), the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College (FSTS) on behalf of Innovation, Network Capabilities and Information Infrastructure Command (INI) and the Norwegian Ministry of Defence (FD).
This report is part of FFI's contribution to MNE.

Sammendrag

Denne rapporten har fire formål. Det første er simpelthen å gjengi hovedideene i *Counterinsurgency FM 3-24.* Det som fremfor alt annet skiller opprørsbekjempelse fra konvensjonelle militæroperasjoner – at det er viktigere å gi befolkningen sikkerhet enn å tilintetgjøre fienden – er fremmed for soldater som kun har trent for konvensjonell krig. De vil derfor ofte ha nytte av en grundig forklaring.

Det andre formålet er å finne ut hva som er nytt sammenlignet med tidligere opprørsbekjempel-sesdoktriner og teori. *FM 3-24* inneholder de nyeste lærdommer til den amerikanske hæren og marineinfanteriet. Derfor er den både en kilde til de nyeste ideene om opprørsbekjempelse og en kilde til det nyeste innen amerikansk militær tenkning. Rapporten konkluderer med at doktrinen bygger på klassisk opprørsbekjempelsesteori, med særlig vekt på den franske offiseren David Galulas arbeider. Den argumenterer for at vektleggingen av kulturforståelse og språkkunnskaper er nytt i doktrinesammenheng, men ikke i praksis. Årsaken er at i kolonikrigene var kunnskapene om lokale forhold så selvsagte at det ikke fant veien til doktrine. Nytt er derimot at operasjonene ofte finner sted i styringsløse områder. Det endrer ofte rollen til de militære styrkene fra å være den ene parten i en veldefinert konflikt med opprørerne i retning av å bli en *partisk dommer* i en konflikt mellom mange aktører.

Det tredje formålet er å forstå USA bedre som en militær aktør, særlig i koalisjoner i stabiliseringsoperasjoner. Krigene i Irak og Afghanistan har grunnleggende endret USAs opptreden i internasjonale operasjoner. Fra å være sterkest bundet til konvensjonell høyintensi-tetsstrid, har USAs militære styrker på mange områder blitt ledende innen opprørbekjempelses-praksis. Amerikanske styrker har blitt blant de beste på kulturkunnskap og evne til å lede helhetlig sivil-militær tilnærming.

Det fjerde formålet er å forberede en diskusjon av strategiske dilemmaer forbundet med opprørs-bekjempelse i Afghanistan og Irak. Nøkkelen til vellykket opprørsbekjempelse er at alle tilgjenge-lige militære, sosiale, økonomiske, kulturelle og politiske midler mobiliseres for å realisere et felles mål. En slik helhetlig tilnærming skaper særegne utfordringer for sivil-militær samarbeid i å utforme og iverksette en effektiv opprørsbekjempelsesstrategi.

Multinational Experiment (MNE)

Multinational Experiment er en flernasjonal konseptutviklings- og eksperimenteringsserie (CD & E) som ble innledet i 2001 etter initiativ fra USA. Joint Forces Command (US JFCOM) har hovedansvaret for planlegging, gjennomføring og analyser, i nært samarbeid med partner-nasjoner, samt NATO ACT. MNE 6 ble startet opp i 2008, med hovedtema *The Irregular Challenge: A Comprehensive Approach to a Complex Problem.* Norge er en partnernasjon i MNE 6. Den norske deltakelsen er organisert gjennom et samarbeid mellom Forsvarets forskningsinstitutt (FFI), Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt (NUPI) og Forsvarets stabsskole (FSTS) og blir gjennomført på vegne av Innovasjon, nettverkskapasiteter og informasjonsinfrastruktur (INI) og i øverste instans Forsvarsdepartementet (FD). Denne rapporten er en del av FFIs MNE-bidrag.

Contents

1   Background

This report analyses the *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*/*No. 3-24*/*Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) No. 3-33.5* (for the sake of brevity, hereafter *FM 3-24*).[1] When it was issued in December 2006, the US Army had not had a counterinsurgency manual published for 20 years and the USMC not for 25 years. Their need for a counterinsurgency doctrine obviously was created by the American military engagements in Afghanistan from 2001 and in Iraq from 2003. Indeed, as early as October 2004, as a response to demands from the field, a temporary counter-insurgency doctrine had hastily been produced.[2] *FM 3-24* replaced this document.

The purpose of this report is fourfold. The first purpose is simply to highlight the key tenets of *FM 3-24*. The idea that sets counterinsurgency apart from conventional military operations – that it is more important to secure the host nation population than to kill the enemy – is counter-intuitive to soldiers trained exclusively for conventional war. Its rationale therefore needs careful explanation. Moreover, successful application of counterinsurgency doctrine cannot readily be reduced to a few easy-to-remember slogans but needs incisive thought. Military doctrine does not tell soldiers what to do but how to think. Counterinsurgency is, it is argued, 'thinking man's war'. The counterinsurgency doctrine was never meant to be sufficient alone. The US Army's and Marine Corps' personnel are expected to study both old and new works on counterinsurgency. Reading lists throughout the US Army and Marine Corps have been edited to reflect this expectation. Prior to *FM 3-24*, in October 2006, the *Counterinsurgency Reader*, a collection of selected articles from *Military Review* were issued.[3] All the articles selected have been written after the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq began (September 2004 and onwards), and many address directly issues that emerged in these campaigns. In august 2008, an updated version – the *Counterinsurgency Reader II* – was published, reflecting the American military's fervent grappling with counterinsurgency issues during the last years.[4]

The second purpose is to identify what is new compared to previous counterinsurgency doctrines and theory. The US Army and Marine Corps have borne the brunt of the fighting in recent counterinsurgencies, and *FM 3-24* incorporates their most recent lessons learned. Therefore, *FM 3-24* is both a source for the newest ideas on counterinsurgency and a source of current US military thought. It has become the standard text on the topic. Instead of updating its own counterinsurgency doctrine from 1999, heavily influenced by the campaign in Northern Ireland, the British army turned to *FM 3-24* and only in 2009 produced an updated counterinsurgency doctrine. It has also informally become NATO's counterinsurgency doctrine. This report is the third publication devoted to *FM 3-24* in Norway alone, an indication of the interest in

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[1] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*: University of Chicago Press/Department of the Army (2006).
[2] *FMI 3-07.22 Counterinsurgency Operations*: Headquarter, Department of the Army (2004).
[3] *Military Review* October 2006, Special Edition.
http://usacac.leavenworth.army.mil/CAC/milreview/English/CAC-COINFILES/COINREADER_WEB.pdf
[4] *Military Review* August 2008, Special Edition.
http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/COINReaderII.pdf

understanding the counterinsurgency thinking of the dominant actor in the coalitions in Iraq and Afghanistan.[5]

The third purpose is to enhance understanding of the US as a military actor, particularly in coalitions in stability operations. Two aspects of international operations have steadily increased during the last twenty years: the degree of political reconstruction in the Host Nation and the mandate to use force. In counterinsurgency operations, if anything, both traits are even more pronounced compared to previous international operations. Today's challenge in coalition warfare is to master counterinsurgency. The military demands in counterinsurgency operations are such that the US almost is a necessary contributor, turning everyone else into a junior partner and giving them an intrinsic interest in understanding the US. Moreover, having an overall campaign plan in counterinsurgency is more important than in previous international operations that lent themselves more easily to a division of labor, functionally or geographically. For example, many expected the Obama administration to press hard for additional coalition troops in Afghanistan.[6] So far this has not happened. One reason might be that counterinsurgency campaigns are so demanding that allies have diminished in value for the US. If the value of their contribution diminishes, it has important ramifications for US allies. To understand US military thinking, then, becomes crucial both to understand how military constraints shapes her foreign policy, and US military forces will act as a coalition leader. The ways in which US forces operate have two salient characteristics highlighted in the report. First, the US military takes doctrine more seriously than most.[7] Second, the American way of war shapes how the US military act, but it has been modified in important ways by the experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan. To understand the US better, it is important to understand both where the US military came from and the pressures for it to change.

The fourth purpose is to prepare the ground for a discussion of strategic dilemmas in its application in Afghanistan and Iraq. Originally, this report was to include case studies of these two conflicts, but this led to questions about the origins of strategy in counterinsurgency that clearly was outside the topic at hand. However, the report relies on the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan to provide illustrations of key points. An understanding of counterinsurgency doctrine, however, does remain essential for understanding the events in these two conflicts. For

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[5] *Counterinsurgency*, Harald Håvoll, "Coin Revisited: Lessons of the Classical Literature on Counterinsurgency and Its Applicability to the Afghan Hybrid Insurgency," in *Security in Practice*, ed. Norwegian Institute of Foreign Affairs (Oslo: 2008), Olof Kronvall, *Finally Eating Soup with a Knife?: A Historical Perspective on the US Army's 2006 Counterinsurgency Doctrine* (Oslo: Institutt for forsvarsstudier, 2007) p. 294. See also Thomas Donnelly, "*The Cousins' Counterinsurgency Wars.*" RUSI Journal : Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies: Routledge (2009). Timo Noetzel and Benjamin Schreer, "*Missing Links: The Evolution of German Counter-Insurgency Thinking.*" RUSI Journal : Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies: Routledge (2009).

[6] Svein Melby,"NATO, amerikansk maktpolitikk og Norge." In *Vendepunkter i norsk utenrikspolitikk: Nye internasjonale vilkår etter den kalde krigen*, eds. Lange, Pharo and Østerud. Oslo: Unipub (2009a), p. 142, Svein Melby, "*Obama og amerikansk utenriks- og sikkerhetspolitikk.*" Files on Security and Defence, ed. Studies. Oslo (2009b), p. 42.

[7] Robert Egnell, *Complex Peace Operations and Civil-Military Relations: Winning the Peace*: Routledge (2009), p. 62ff.

example, the Obama administration's work with a so-called AfPak strategy is a search for an Afghan counterinsurgency strategy.[8]

FM 3-24 takes a general approach to counterinsurgency operations, eschewing a narrow focus on the current situation in Afghanistan and Iraq. It attempts to summarize the existing body of literature on counterinsurgency operations rather than revolutionize it. *FM 3-24* accepts the traditional view that the essential task of the counterinsurgent is to secure and protect the population to gain its support. A supportive population will provide the necessary information to identify and locate insurgents that will enable security forces to defeat the insurgency.

The long hiatus without a US counterinsurgency doctrine was no coincidence. Armies typically focus on their core mission: operations against other armies. Devoting too much time to counterinsurgency operations is generally perceived to harm the forces' ability to wage proper war. An anonymous senior US Army officer put it like this: "I'll be damned if I will permit the United States Army, it institutions, its doctrine, and its traditions to be destroyed just to win this lousy war [in Vietnam]."[9] Moreover, American strategic culture have been unusually hostile to counterinsurgency operations because of its reliance on material superiority, firepower and overwhelming use of force rather than maneuvering against the enemy.[10] Finally, the US military emerged from Vietnam determined never to fight insurgency again. The counterinsurgency challenges were solved by ignoring them. In 1980, when the Army War College commissioned review of the Vietnam War had concluded that massive military power was not the best way in low intensity conflicts, an alternative study was quickly published, arguing that the army had lost not because it had failed to fight unconventionally but because it was not conventional enough.[11]

The report is organized as follows. In the remains of section 1, the military and intellectual backgrounds of *FM 3-24* are set forth. In section 2, the definitions of the terms insurgency and counterinsurgency are explained. In section 3, the way in which insurgency has changed is discussed. After discussing various proposed ideas more cursorily, the report hones in on two somewhat related novelties that represent a particular strategic challenge: State failure leading to a bottom-up strategy for building security, and dealing with groups that question the viability of

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[8] Nathaniel C. Fick and John A. Nagl, "Counterinsurgency Field Manual: Afghanistan Edition " *Foreign Policy* January/February (2009), David Kilcullen, *The accidental guerrilla: fighting small wars in the midst of a big one*: Hurst & Company (2009), p. 39ff. Raymond Millen, "Aligning a Counterinsurgency Strategy for Afghanistan " *Small Wars Journal* (2009). Timo Noetzel and Benjamin Schreer, "Counter-what? Germany and CounterInsurgency in Afghanistan." *RUSI Journal: Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies* 153 1 (2008).

[9] John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*: University of Chicago Press (2005). Ironically, John A. Nagl himself has come under attack for the same reasons, this time in the context of Operation Iraqi Freedom. See Gian P. Gentile, "Misreading the Surge Threatens U.S. Army's Conventional Capabilities." *World Politics Review* (2008a).and Gian P. Gentile, "*Our COIN Doctrine Removes the Enemy from the Essence of War.*" Armed Forces Journal (2008b).

[10] Dima P. Adamsky, *American Strategic Culture and the US Revolution in Military Affairs*: Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies (2008), p. 34ff. Rupert Smith, *The utility of force: the art of war in the modern world*: Knopf (2007), p. 91–92.

[11] Egnell, *Complex Peace Operations and Civil-Military Relations: Winning the Peace* p. 44–45.

the state. In the final section, the strategic context of an operational doctrine such as *FM 3-24* is addressed.

1.1 The Starting Point

Counterinsurgency operations have been forced upon the US military by events on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq. Initially, they had to, wanted to, and were directed by the political leadership to rely on existing doctrine, leading to the so-called 'direct approach' to counterinsurgency, i.e. to use the firepower of one's forces in an attempt to annihilate the insurgents on the battle field.[12] In other words, the insurgents were treated as a conventional hostile force, to be dealt with in the conventional way, and there was no need for a counterinsurgency doctrine. Like the French in Indochina and Algeria, the British forces in Malaysia and the American forces in Vietnam before them, the US forces opted for the direct approach first. Interestingly, India, from a completely different point of departure nevertheless adheres to this pattern of trying conventional war first.[13]

The work with a counterinsurgency doctrine began because the approach was not working. It was not working for the two usual reasons: The insurgent disappeared when they faced superior forces instead of fighting and being defeated; and the heavy handed approach alienated the population, creating more recruits for the insurgents than their losses. To overcome skeptics of its counterinsurgency approach and organizational inertia, the *FM 3-24* linked counterinsurgency with familiar tasks. It anchored its prescriptions in existing US military doctrines when relevant, for example FM 6-0 *Mission Command*, noting that counterinsurgency operations are ideally suited to mission command due to their mosaic nature.[14]

More important for the status of *FM 3-24*, however, are recent developments in the US hierarchy of military doctrines. Since the publications of *FM 3-24*, the revision of *Field Manual 3-0 Operations* was released February 2008, one of the two doctrinal capstones of the Army (the other is *Field Manual 1 The Army*), elevated stability operations to "a core military mission … that shall be given priority comparable to combat operations."[15] As a consequence, full spectrum operations – simultaneous offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support operations – became the primary theme of *FM 3-0*. Stability operations are an element in all campaigns, albeit to a varying degree.[16]

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[12] Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* p. 26ff gives an excellent explanation of big war or direct approach.

[13] David P. Fidler,"The Indian Doctrine on Sub-Conventional Operations: Reflections from a U.S. Counterinsurgency Perspective." In *India and Counterinsurgency: Lessons Learned*, eds. Ganguly and Fidler. London: Routledge (2009).

[14] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 47.

[15] See http://www.army.mil/usapa/doctrine/Active_FM.html for a list of active US doctrines. For a brief summary of *FM 3-0 Operations*, see http://www.cfr.org/publication/15648/army_field_manual_for_operations_february_2008.html Both accessed 3 June 2008. William S. Wallace, "FM 3-0 Operations: The Army's Blueprint." *Military Review* 88 2 (2008).

[16]*Army Field Manual 3-0 Operations*: Headquarters Department of the Army (2008). http://fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-0.pdf Accessed August 12, 2009
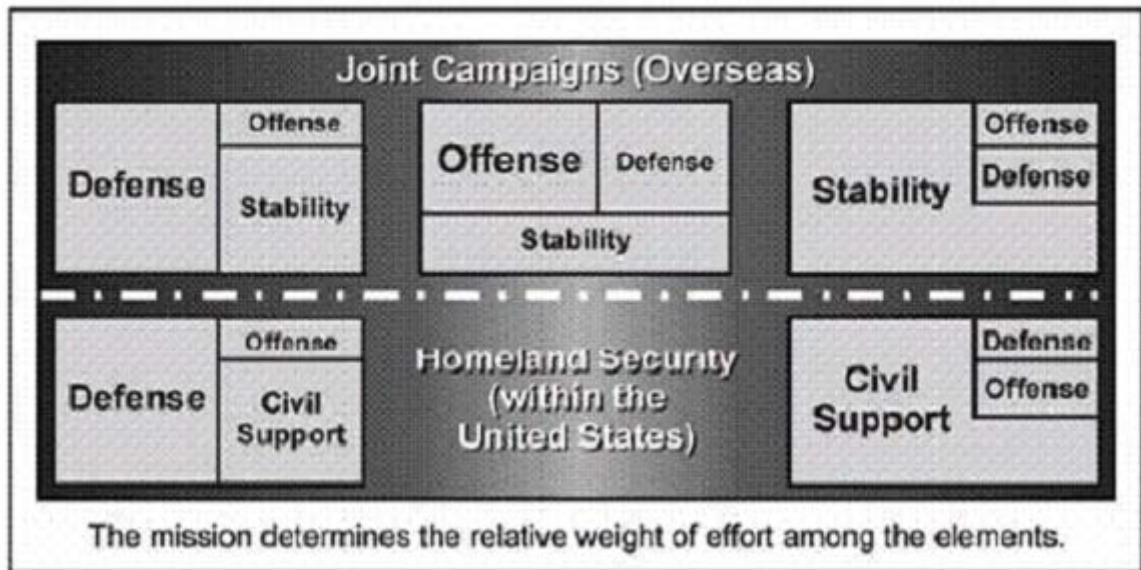
Table 1.1   Full spectrum operations – the Army's operational concept

Characteristically, this major shift in Army doctrine was anchored in existing doctrines. It was noted that the concept of full spectrum operations parting with the "either-or" view of combat was introduced in *FM 3-0* in its 2001 publications. The emergence of full spectrum operations became a key driver of change in capstone doctrine. Full spectrum operations were limited to stability and civil support operations was something the Army conducted in "other than war" operations. Today, the US Army forces may be asked to address the civil situation directly and continuously, combining tactical tasks directed at noncombatants with tactical tasks directed against the enemy in all types operations.[17] Practically, only the USAID have the personnel, expertise and culture for such planning. The State Department, for example, is not a 'doing' or operative organization.[18] However, assistance from the rest of the US government had no basis in doctrine. In January 2009, the *US. Government Counterinsurgency* Guidelines were issued to help the bureaucracies to work together, with allies and with non-governmental organizations.[19]

Moreover, at the other end of the US doctrine hierarchy, more specific doctrines have been released, building on and supplementing *FM 3-24*: *FM 3-24.2 Counterinsurgency Tactics*; *FM 3-07, Stability Operations*[20]; and *FM 3-28, Civil Support*.

FM 3-24 notes that counterinsurgency is eminently suited for maneuver warfare, especially mission command. The US Army's previous efforts to implement maneuver warfare had been at

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[17] *Army Field Manual 3-0 Operations*.

[18] Egnell, *Complex Peace Operations and Civil-Military Relations: Winning the Peace*, p. 50.

[19] "*U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide*." ed. Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. Washington D.C. (2009). Available at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf (Accessed 21. January 2010). The Guide was led by the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, the Department of State. It was co-signed by leaders of the Departments of State and Defense and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), but applicable to the whole of the U.S. Government.

[20] Field Manual 3-07 *Stability Operations* http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-07.pdf , Accessed October 20, 2008.

the corps level, i.e. several divisions acting together, and had never gone below the brigade level. Typically, the individual US soldier and his or her team have not been confronted with the mission control's need to maneuver in relations to the enemy's intentions and the demands of the situation at lowest levels. Traditionally, the US Army has focused inwards, on following procedures to be ready to provide and avoid fire.

Interestingly, the USMC, whose doctrines put the individual soldier at the center of its thinking, initially was more successful in carrying out stabilization operations than the US Army. In a counterinsurgency most operations take place at the small-unit level.[21] First, nearly all fighting occur at the small-unit level, rarely exceeding the company level and usually staying below that. Second, it is the individual squad, platoon and company and its soldiers who engage the civilian population. Stabilization can only be achieved by relating to the local population's feelings, attitudes and intentions. Each individual team and soldier need to be aware that their actions might influence the attitudes of the civilian population, and the sum of all these encounters decides whether the operation succeeds or fails. However, there are two important additions. First, operations with larger units do occur. Second, it is essential that the efforts of all the small units are part of a larger plan in order to defeat an insurgency.[22]

The FM 3-24 takes classic writing on counterinsurgency as its point of departure. The US military rediscovered David Galula, Roger Trinquier, Robert Thompson and Frank Kitson, based on French and British colonial experiences in Vietnam, Malaysia and Algeria.[23] Additionally, existing UK counterinsurgency doctrine was used a reference in the work with FM 3-24. Alexander Alderson, now [2009] leading the team updating the UK counterinsurgency doctrine, concludes that these 40–50 years old experiences are sound: "While insurgency remains a highly political form of warfare, its character, not its nature, has changed. (…) insurgency cannot change its nature any more than a cat can become a dog. But some cats are tigers, and this is the likely cause of the confusion regarding the nature and character of such conflict."[24]

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[21] Thomas P. Odom, Julius W. Gates, Jack Hardwick and Robert Ehrlich, "Transformation: Victory Rests with Small Units." *Military Review* 85 3 (2005).

[22] *Army Field Manual 3-0 Operations*, 2-58.

[23] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*: Praeger Security International (1964 [2006]-a). Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*: Frederick A. Praeger (1966). Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*: Praeger (2006). Frank Kitson, *Low intensity operations: subversion, insurgency, peace-keeping*: Faber (1971).

[24] Alexander Alderson, "US COIN Doctrine and Practice: An Ally's Perspective." *Parameters: US ArmyWar College Quarterly* XXXVII 4 (Winter 2007/08), p. 35. More specific attempts to apply the classics include Dale Kuehl, "Testing Galula in Ameriyah: The People are the Key." *Military Review* (2009). Trinquier's idea of Modern Warfare is embraced in David G. Fivecoat and Aaron T. Schwengler, "Revisiting Modern Warfare and Counterinsurgency in the Mada'in Qada." *Military Review* 88 6 (2008). David Galula's views on the importance of sanctuary throughout an insurgency are discussed in Alexander Alderson, "Iraq and its Borders." *RUSI Journal : Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies* 153 2 (2008). Amazingly, these evaluations are all positive. James R. Crider, "A View inside the Surge." *Military Review* March-April (2009). says that although Galula's ideas are behind chapter five on Operations in the FM 3-24, he employed Galula's framework as "indispensible" for operations during the surge in 2007–2008.

The *Counterinsurgency Reader* actually is surrounded by David Galula's ideas on both flanks. It begins with a lengthy quote by Galula – on Adapting to Insurgency Environments – preceding the preface, and ends with another long citation taken from him, this time on the importance of ideology and propaganda. In foreword by counterinsurgency expert John A. Nagl in the University of Chicago Press edition of *FM 3-24*'s Galula's book is recognized as the most influential in the writing of FM 3-24. Moreover, his view on the importance of counterinsurgency doctrine in achieving *unity of effort*, the key factor in achieving success, is endorsed:

> "If the individual members of the organizations were of the same mind, if every organization worked according to a standard pattern, the problems would be solved. Is this not precisely what a coherent, well understood, and accepted doctrine would tend to achieve?" [25]

In addition to stating the necessity of having a doctrine, the quote also underlines the crucial point that doctrine is written for practitioners. FM 3-24 was written for soldiers in the field and their commanders. Militarily, it spans the levels from corps to battalion to platoon to the individual soldier. However, as Galula forcefully points out, doctrine is needed to make sure that civilian and military organizations are able to coordinate to achieve a joint effort. A central tenet is that the military cannot win a counterinsurgency alone. They need to work closely together with civilian forces, both inside their own government and from NGO's. Thus, *unity of effort* is vital.

2 Counterinsurgency Defined

2.1 *The FM 3-24* Definition

The FM 3-24 gives the following definition of the key terms:

> "Insurgency and counterinsurgency are a complex subset of warfare. (…) insurgency is an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control. *Counterinsurgency* is military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological and civic action taken by a government to defeat insurgency. [26]

The field manual thus defines an insurgency as a battle between a government and insurgents *for the support of the civilian population*. The main characteristic of insurgency is that it is a battle for legitimacy among the population. [27] The approach is population-centered rather than insurgent-centered; the population is the center of gravity. This is so because the counterinsurgent is militarily dominant and can clear an area of insurgents, if he can find them. The problem is to keep an area clear of insurgents. This can only be done with the support of the population. Sympathy and approval are not enough.

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[25] John A. Nagl,"The Evolution and Importance of Army / Marine Corps Field Manual 3-24 Counterinsurgency." In The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press (2007), p. xix.

[26] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 1-2 in original.

[27] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* p. 4.

In David Galula's words "*In any situation, whatever the cause, there will be an active minority for the cause, a neutral majority, and an active minority against the cause.*"[28] *FM 3-24* refines the active minority that makes up the insurgency into five elements: Movement leaders, combatants (main regional or local forces), political cadre (the militants or the party), auxiliaries (active followers who provide services) and the mass base (the bulk of the membership). *FM 3-24* notes that in tribal- or clan-based societies these distinctions become blurred.[29] There is no clear cadre, and people drift between being combatants, auxiliaries and followers. The mass base may also have porous boundaries to the neutral majority. The strategic problem for the counterinsurgent is to find, organize and expand the supporting minority. In Iraq, armed with this insight, the Americans concluded that the insurgency had three levels: Hard-core Al-Qaida; people who simply trying to protect their neighborhoods; and criminals exploiting the lawlessness. Once they tried, the Americans found out that the two last groups were surprisingly easy to buy off.[30]

This definition of insurgency challenges the traditional war-fighting role or the direct approach in three fundamental ways. First, counterinsurgency differs from traditional combat in that it is asymmetrical. Traditional combat is largely the same experience for all parties. In an insurgency, on the other hand, the contestants fight very different wars, with different means, under very different rules. For example, the government cannot escape responsibility for maintaining law and order. If the security situation deteriorates, the legitimacy of the government suffers because providing security is what it is supposed to do. The insurgents, on the other hand, bear no responsibility for the well-being of the population. Indeed, the insurgents can gain legitimacy as a force to be reckoned with by demonstrating that the government cannot protect the population from it.

Second, counterinsurgency is a protracted struggle. In traditional combat, especially as conceived by the US Army prior to the invasion of Iraq, the emphasis was on *speed* to achieve rapid, decisive operations. H R McMaster has argued that the focus on the operational skills required hampered American efforts early.[31] The insurgents, on the other hand, usually have little military force but they do have time. It is enormously expensive to operate an army capable of performing modern high-intensity combat but relatively cheap to keep an insurgency going.

Last but not least, political power is the central issue: Both sides aim to get the people to accept its governance and authority as legitimate.[32] The US military has of course accepted the Clausewitzian idea that all wars are inherently political in the sense that they ought to serve some political objective. However, once those political objectives have been set by civilians, they tend to view the conflict in narrow military terms, emphasizing that political concerns should not infringe on military efficiency. Thus, in the conduct of combat operations, the US military usually

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[28] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, p. 53 emphasis in original.

[29] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 20–22.

[30] Thomas E. Ricks, *The gamble: General David Petraeus and the American military adventure in Iraq*: Penguin Press (2009), p. 223.

[31] Ricks, *The gamble: General David Petraeus and the American military adventure in Iraq*, p. 161.

[32] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 2.

were free to focus on defeating the enemy's military forces, and indeed saw this as an ideal.[33] During counterinsurgency operations, the US forces are now told to focus on winning the support of the population. Only with the people on their side, is it possible to get the intelligence to find the enemy. In order to win over the populace, military forces in counterinsurgency operations need to employ or take into consideration military, paramilitary, political, psychological, economic and civic means available. The new emphasis on political power has profound implication for how the US forces ought to operate that will be explored below.

2.2   Implications

2.2.1   The Primacy of Politics

Both David Galula and *FM 3-24* discuss Mao's General Chang Ting-chen's assertion that "Revolutionary war is 20 per cent military action and 80 percent political." Both by and large endorse that it captures the essence of counterinsurgency: The primacy of political considerations. The *FM 3-24* notes that in the initial phase when the military conduct operations to secure the population and kill insurgents, the military component has a larger role. However, military actions must at all times be guided and judged by their political effects. In the next phase, a political solution is necessary to dissolve the insurgency.[34]

FM 3-24 thus echoes Galula's assertion that the population's attitudes will primarily be determined by two factors: First, what party can deliver the population the most benefits. Security is pivotal because it is a prerequisite for enjoying all other goods. Second, the population's view of which side ultimately will prevail. The latter is behind the oft quoted assertion that the insurgents win if they do not lose. If the insurgent is perceived to have greater staying power than the government (or a foreign military force) the population will never rally to the support of the government, fearing ultimate retribution. Thus, offering the prospect of long-term security is a necessary condition for winning the population over.

2.2.2   Hearts and Minds

FM 3-24 tries to avoid the phrase "hearts and minds". Even though it is frequently used as shorthand for counterinsurgency operations, the phrase does not appear in text of the manual. The reader will encounter it only once, in Appendix A. The *FM 3-24's* definition clearly attempts to do away with the notion that the counterinsurgent needs to become popular among the population. Gordon McCormick, known for his seminal Diamond counterinsurgency model, for example, explicitly rejects the concept of "hearts and minds" as it tends to lead counterinsurgency strategy astray because one become preoccupied with being liked.

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[33] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*: Belknap (1957). Egnell, *Complex Peace Operations and Civil-Military Relations: Winning the Peace* discusses "hearts and minds" as a variable p. 16–31 and the US usage on p. 69-91.
[34] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 39–40. Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, p. 63.

The concept of hearts and minds is too well known to be entirely ignored when writing a counterinsurgency manual. Instead *FM 3-24* attempts to clarify its understanding of the concept:

> Once the unit settles into the AO, its next task is to build trusted networks. This is the true meaning of the phrase "hearts and minds," which comprises two separate components. "Hearts" means persuading people that their best interests are served by COIN success. "Minds" means convincing them that the force can protect them and that resisting it is pointless. Note that neither concerns whether people like Soldiers and Marines. Calculated self-interest, not emotion, is what counts.[35]

What is needed is that people come to see that their interests – whatever they might be – are best served by siding with the counterinsurgents. This is not how the term "hearts" usually is understood. Let us reformulate this understanding of "hearts and minds" in terms of rational-choice theory. Rational-choice explains social behavior in terms of goals and opportunities – by what the actor can do and by what the actor wants to do. Both the actor's preferences and beliefs about which actions are feasible, and the payoffs associated with each action, are necessary for a satisfactory explanation of action. Payoffs are inherently subjective, for explanatory purposes it is what the actor values that matters. A rational actor chooses the course of action in the feasible set of actions, he or she believes will lead to his or hers subjectively highest payoffs. Preferences are defined as an actor's subjective ranking of *outcomes*, not the ranking of strategies. Thus, it is perfectly possible to change strategy and thereby behavior, while retaining one's preferences.[36] The implication is that a counterinsurgent must distinguish between attitudinal support (preferences) and behavioral support (actions). In turn, loosening the connection between preferences and actions further complicates the identification of the supporters of the counterinsurgent force. [37]

Thus, the phrase "persuading people that their best interest is served by siding with the counterinsurgent" has two meanings, with different implications for the prospect of counterinsurgent success. First, it could mean that people realize that their original, unaltered preferences are best served by the success of the counterinsurgent. Second, it might mean that people alter their preferences, so that they now see their self-interest best served by the success of the counterinsurgent. *Preference change* involves changes in the outcomes one prefers. It is of course also a possible explanation for a change in strategy. The difference matters because changing what people value is harder than changing their perceptions of how they may best pursue what they already value.

How do we explain the Sunni switch in allegiance in al Anbar from al-Qaida in Mesopotamia (AQM) [38] to USMC? Two features appear paradoxical. First, contrary to what you might expect

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[35] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 218.
[36] Jon Elster,"Introduction." In Rational Choice, ed. Elster. Oxford: Basil Blackwell (1986). Jon Elster, *Sour grapes: studies in the subversion of rationality*: Cambridge University Press (1983), p. 1–15.
[37] Stathis N Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* Cambridge University Press (2006), p. 87, 92–97.
[38] This movement is often referred to as al Qaida in Iraq (AQI). I prefer the term AQM for two reasons. First, it is closer to what this movement calls itself: *al Qaida in the Lands of the Two Rivers*, as

from a nationalist insurgency fighting foreign invasion, the Sunnis clearly favoured an alliance with invaders rather than the Shia-dominated Iraqi government. Second, why would the switch first take place in al Anbar province, where the Sunnis had fought the hardest against the American forces: In 2005, 323 of a total 846 US fatalities occurred in al-Anbar province; in 2006 356 of 822; in 2007 161 of 905; and in 2008, 26 of 284.[39] From being the most violent of Iraq's thirteen provinces, it became less than average violent. During the same period, Iraq as a whole became a far less violent place.

The switch appears logical when it is viewed as caused by a change in Sunni beliefs about what is feasible and not as a change in Sunni preferences. Sunni leaders wanted security, power and money. First they tried to obtain it by fighting the Americans alongside the AQM. If the Americans could be evicted from Iraq and the Shias removed from power in Baghad, the Sunnis would once again control the resources of the Iraqi state. However, when the AQM became a local competitor for resources, its violence a threat to the stability of their neighborhoods, and an instigator of conflict with the Shias, the alliance no longer was the most effective way to obtain security, power and money.

Joining the US forces patron network rather than the Iraqi government protected the local power base of Sunni leaders. The Americans had no interest in challenging the autonomy of local Sunni rule in al Anbar, whereas the Shia-dominated government in Baghdad would never accept areas outside its control. The Sunnis became willing to seek at least temporary accommodation with the Americans. The change occurred first in al Anbar province as the most intense fighting had taken place there, the security problems were the most severe. [40] Therefore, the most troubled province, al Anbar, with the strongest animosity against the Americans, was the first to turn to the Americans.

A related somewhat counter-intuitive logic has been noticed by David Galula. He contends that counterinsurgency operations are never entirely doomed for the counterinsurgent. If the campaign is going badly for the counterinsurgent, the population will, at some point, experience such acute security concerns that it becomes the central issue. Mere survival may become people's pivotal concern. If matters just become bad enough, the struggle to survive from day to day may make the relative merit and popularity of the contending causes a secondary issue. In such a situation, even an unpopular government, with limited ability to deliver security, may get a second chance. Generally speaking, the abovementioned 80 per cent political action formula is sooner or later modified by security concerns or the desire for peace.[41]

Mesopotamia is Greek for the "Land between the Rivers [i.e. Euphrat and Tigris]. Second, avoiding 'Iraq' suggests ideological objectives beyond the Iraqi state and territory.

[39] http://icasualties.org/Iraq/index.aspx , accessed 3 July, 2009.

[40] Fred Kaplan, "*Welcome to the Quagmire: The Next President May Be Stuck with More Problems in Iraq than Bush Ever Faced.*" Slate (2008).

[41] Another idea taken from David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, p. 79.

2.2.3   Political Objectives

Determining the counterinsurgent's political objectives is a real challenge. Whose task is it? In the traditional war-fighting model, or the big war model, the civilian leadership, ultimately the President as commander-in-chief, determines the political objectives of the war. The US military of course remains under civilian control also during counterinsurgency operations, and the civilian leadership sets the overarching political objectives. However, given the nature of these conflicts, responsibility for devising the immediate political objective on the ground tends to be pushed down the chain of command.

The first reason for this is that overarching objectives like 'create stability' or 'put down the insurgency' need to be translated into practical and operational objectives in the area of operations. Military units are sometimes alone there, or the ones that know best what actually can be achieved. The second reason is that the ambitious goals set by the civilian leadership early in these conflicts, such as promoting democracy, democratic values, education and equal opportunities for women and political and religious tolerance all appear to have been put on the backburner in Iraq and Afghanistan. The coalition forces are in real trouble and ambitions have, at least informally, been scaled down to what is achievable in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The minimum requirements are local stability that adds up to some form of government able to maintain a viable state. Again, the troops on the ground know best what actually is achievable. They are in the best position to promote local stability, and thus they are tasked with devising the practical solutions, and that will often include some immediate political objectives. In short, the Huntingtonian model for managing civil-military relations comes under stress.

The pivotal role of political concerns also explains the need to go beyond military needs. *FM 3-24* strongly advocates that counterinsurgency operations are conducted along multiple lines of operations (LLOs), creating a comprehensive approach to the insurgency. In turn, the comprehensive approach leads to two new challenges for the role of US forces in counterinsurgency: Who will lead and make sure that each effort within the comprehensive approach advances the same goals; and what is the role of the US military in performing civilian tasks in counterinsurgency?

2.3   The Unity of Effort

The need for a comprehensive civil and military approach in counterinsurgency creates a new coordination challenge to ensure unity of effort. The organizing imperative is focusing on what needs to be done, not on who is doing it. Thus, commanders are asked to work achieve unity of effort among all elements of the force, including NGOs and other US government branches.[42]

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[42] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 57.

2.3.1 The Unity of Command

In US military doctrine, the way to ensure unity of effort – that the operation contributes to the overall objectives of the campaign and ultimately to the strategic objectives of the nation – is the *unity of command. FM 3-24* is also the *Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5*. The manual has integrated Army and Marine Corps doctrines into a joint publication of an identical doctrine. It has sought to unify Army and Marine Corps approaches – another tension evident in Iraq.[43]

Overcoming the institutional barrier between the Army and the Marine Corps is telling of the significance attached to the unity of effort in counterinsurgency. In addition to the determination to avoid defeat in Iraq, there were three facilitating factors: Shared development and use of best practices; shared understanding of counterinsurgency at the leadership level; and that each service had its own model campaign as a source of learning and inspiration. First, the concept of 'best practice' was important in disseminating the same counterinsurgency ideas in both services.[44] One of the best practices is of course "single, fully empowered executive" who ideally is dynamic/charismatic (sic!).[45] Second, the shared understanding of the conduct of counter-insurgency between General Petraeus as Commander of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth and General James Mattis, his counterpart in writing the doctrine at the Marine Corps Combat Development Command. They had drawn similar conclusions from their experiences in Iraq. Third, their respective services each had an Iraq model campaign. For the Army, then Col H R McMaster's campaign in Tal Afar became a model for best practices and source of inspiration for the Baghdad security plan. For the Marine Corps, then Col Lt Dale Alford's campaign in Qaim played a similar role.[46]

Moreover, *FM 3-24* prescribes unity of command for all military forces, both US *and* allied troops involved in an operation, as the preferred doctrinal method to achieve unity of effort also in counterinsurgency. Moreover, it notes that "the US. Government prefers that US. military forces operate with other nations' forces, allied or Host Nation forces, and not alone."[47] It warns that their rules of engagement, home-country policies and sensitivities, may create differences even when the mission and objectives appear similar.[48] In the autumn of 2008, the willingness to place the American forces in Operation Enduring Freedom under the command of the same general who led the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, demonstrated how seriously this doctrinal requirement is taken by US authorities.

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[43] Steven Metz, "*Learning from Iraq: Counterinsurgency in American Strategy*." Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College (January 2007), p. 65.

[44] See, above all Kalev I. Sepp, "Best Practices in Counterinsurgency." *Military Review* 85 3 (2005). David Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-level Counterinsurgency." *Military Review* May-June 2006.

[45] Sepp, "Best Practices in Counterinsurgency.", p. 10–11.

[46] Austin Long, "The Anbar Awakening." *Survival* 50 (2008), p. 78–79. Ricks, *The gamble: General David Petraeus and the American military adventure in Iraq*, p. 60–62.

[47] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 62.

[48] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 62.

However, a comprehensive approach necessitates involving other organizations. *FM 3-24* states that civilians ought to perform civilian tasks, when possible, for four reasons. First, tasks like teaching children and building roads are, after all, done better by those who have it as a profession. Second, delegating tasks to civilians relieve military forces, leaving them free to carry out other tasks. Both in Iraq and Afghanistan too few international troops have been a chronic problem. Third, an international force should also avoid being drawn into running civil government functions in a foreign country.[49] The strategic objective is to make the Host Nation government capable to govern by itself. Fourth, local legitimacy might be negatively affected if local institutions are not perceived as independent and capable without foreign assistance.[50]

This preferred or ideal division of labor is often unattainable in counterinsurgency operations, primarily for two reasons. First, local government may not have the capability to perform the task. There may even be no local government structures at all. The US and the international force may be the only ones that possess readily available capabilities to meet the local population's fundamental needs. Indeed, in such a situation, *FM 3-24* notes that the law of war requires forces to assist people in the area of operations. Second, the environment may be so violent that it is difficult for civilians to operate effectively. The more violent the insurgency, the more likely it is that civilian tasks may have to be undertaken by military forces.

2.3.2   Unity of Command and Civilian Leadership

David Galula advocates *unity of command* also including civilian authorities in counter-insurgency. What is more, the political primacy of counterinsurgency operations would mean that "giving the soldier authority over the civilian would thus contradict one of the major characteristics of this type of war."[51] For the US forces in Afghanistan and Iraq that would entail, subordination to, say, the US ambassador the in Kabul and Bagdad, respectively. On this issue, however, *FM 3-24* for once does not follow Galula. Instead, it notes that *ideally there would be unity of command* over all US government agencies involved in a counterinsurgency operation by a single leader. [52] In the discussion of the *US country team* as the primary interagency coordinating structure, however, it is made clear that the US military is on the outside: "The Foreign Service Act assigns the chief of mission to a foreign country responsibility for the direction, coordination, and supervision of all government executive branch employees in that country, *except for service members and employees under the command of a U.S. area military commander*."[53]

At the Host Nation level, the suggested structure for achieving unity of effort (at least *US* unity of effort) is the Country Team. It is headed by the US Chief of Mission, usually the Ambassador, and he is responsible for coordinating all government executive branches, represented by the

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[49] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 68.

[50] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 59.

[51] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, p. 63. The importance of civilian leadership was also emphasized in British thinking, Egnell, *Complex Peace Operations and Civil-Military Relations: Winning the Peace*, p. 101–102.

[52] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 56.

[53] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 70–71, emphasis added.

senior member of each department or agency present, *except those under the command of a U.S. area military commander.*[54] In areas where other US agencies are not present, the military forces often represent the country team. It is thus of paramount importance that the military at all levels have internalized the operation's guiding political aims, and is able to act without consulting with civilians. *FM 3-24* thus explicitly warns against subordinating the US military to civilian control.

2.3.3   Unity of Effort through Liaison Mechanisms

The guiding principle remains *unity of effort*. FM 3-24 recommends that "military commanders work to achieve unity of effort through liaison with leaders of a wide variety of nonmilitary agencies, both the leading US (the US Ambassador and staff) and senior Host Nation representatives."[55] Generally speaking *broad lateral liaison* is seen as the key to achieve unity of effort. *FM 3-24* advocates that broad lateral liaison should be mirrored in making similar connections throughout the chain of command. It suggests and discusses three concrete mechanisms to organize liaison effectively: Joint Interagency Coordination Groups (JIACGs), Country Teams and Civil-Military Coordination Centers (CMOC). The JIACG coordinates at the highest level, between the Department of Defense and other US. agencies, providing the bridge between the combatant commander and interagency organizations.[56]

At the local level, a well-established mechanism for establishing civilian oversight and assistance are so-called civil-military operations centers (CMOCs). These are flexible mechanisms. CMOCs can be established at all levels of command, and are designed to achieve on-site coordination. This is an ad-hoc mechanism: its size, composition and command depend on the situation. The CMOC itself should not be a command and control mechanism. Its management may be assigned to multinational commander or shared by a civilian and military commander.[57] The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan are an example of an organization that is run by one type of CMOC. They may include local host nation agencies.

The only exception to liaison as the chief coordination mechanism for unity of effort is contractors who are paid to support U.S. military or civilian agencies. Here the principle of unity of command should apply. Military commanders should have the ability to influence their performance so they behave as an extension of the organization for which they work.[58]

In conclusion, a clear understanding of the desired strategic end state should infuse all efforts in a counterinsurgency operation. In addition, *FM 3-24* recommends widespread lateral liaison – with representatives of the Host Nation, of own civilian government and with NGOs – to achieve unity of effort. Similar connections need to take place throughout the chain of command.

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[54] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p.71, emphasis added.

[55] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p.56.

[56] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p.70.

[57] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p.75.

[58] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 65.

2.3.4   Unity of Effort in Iraq during the Surge 2007–2008

The practical arrangements undertaken in Iraq demonstrate one interpretation of unity of effort in the FM 3-24 by the US military. General Petraeus was determined to adhere to the FM 3-24 when he took command in Iraq on February 10, 2007. He got the Joint Strategic Assessment Team (JSAT) led by then Col H R McMaster to start work on a plan for the counterinsurgency campaign. In the meantime, Petraeus found himself a commander's office in the Republican Guard palace,

> "...which was reached via a marble staircase to the second floor at one end of the palace. The door opened into a reception room decorated with flags, a wide-screen television, couches, and a globe made of semiprecious stones. To the left was Petraeus' suite, and to the right was the ambassador's suite. This configuration of office space was intended to foster coordination and communication between the top military and civilian officials in Iraq, which had been sorely lacking in the first year of the war and thereafter had improved somewhat. One of the guiding principles Petraeus brought with him to Iraq was that the mission's success would depend on the synergy between the military and civil effort. Chapter two of the counter-insurgency manual was devoted to "unity of effort" for that very reason. Achieving it would a top priority when Ambassador Crocker arrived in late March."[59]

In early April 2007 the Joint Strategic Assessment Team completed its study. Remarkably, in addition to its policy recommendations, it proposed to move beyond unity of effort by formally fusing the embassy staff and Petraeus' Multinational Force Iraq (MNF-I) command to create *unity of command*. However, Petraeus decided against joining the two organizations at the top. Instead, he advanced the unity of command in the lower echelons. First, the military advisory teams assigned to each Iraqi battalion were placed under the operational control of the US brigade in the area of operations. Second, the new Baghdad provincial reconstruction teams were also embedded at the brigade headquarters, reporting to the brigade commander.[60] Thus, at lower levels, the subordination of civilians under military command created unity of command, moving beyond the extensive liaison described in *FM 3-24*.

In sum, the military assumed a dominant position in the US efforts to stabilize Iraq. The commander of MNF-1 arrived in Iraq before the US ambassador. The stabilization plan was first developed by the military. The military assumed integrated civilian elements in the military advisory teams and the provincial reconstructions teams into the military command structure. At the top, the US military never ceded control of any party of its organization to civilians. On the other hand, Petraeus attached considerable importance to consultation and informal coordination with his US civil counterpart. The embassy also had a say on the campaign plan finally adopted out of the proposal from JSAT. For example, due to the embassy's intervention, the suggested purge of officials with sectarian dispositions was much less comprehensive and confrontational than originally envisaged.[61]

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[59] Linda Robinson, *Tell me how this ends: General David Petraeus and the search for a way out of Iraq*: PublicAffairs (2008), p. 110.

[60] Robinson, *Tell me how this ends: General David Petraeus and the search for a way out of Iraq* p. 116.

[61] Robinson, *Tell me how this ends: General David Petraeus and the search for a way out of Iraq*, p. 117.

2.4 Learning and Adapting

Counterinsurgency doctrine cannot and does not provide a blueprint for action in concrete situations. Therefore, *the role of doctrine is to provide guidance on how to think, not what to think.* Every insurgency is different. Moreover, insurgency will assume different forms in different areas, and will evolve over time. The reasons for rebelling and the objectives they seek vary, as do the insurgents' sources of legitimacy. The strength of the government is different, some are weak and some strong. In some societies the populace relates to each other through kinship and patronage, and in others they do not, leading to differences in what might work and what might not work well. However, insurgencies also share some properties. The purpose of the counterinsurgency doctrine is to sensitize military decision makers to the central issues, the range of possible answers and the dilemmas involved. Therefore, section 3 discusses potential new trends. Even so, within the broader trends, each individual insurgency will have unique properties.

In an insurgency, like in all wars, there are thinking intelligent enemies. The enemy's ability to adapt may be even more critical due to the political considerations in operational tactics. The insurgents will learn and improve. Contemporary insurgents are networked for adaptation. Successful tactics with improvised explosive devices in Iraq soon appear in Afghanistan. The true unifying theme of *FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5* involves *learning and adapting.* There are at least two levels here. First, the larger question of how to structure the military to facilitate learning: creating a military that is a learning institution. One important tool is to institutionalize doctrinal development.[62] The second level is how to operate the deployed forces according to doctrine in an optimal way. In sum, a military organization need be fit for purpose and optimally adapted when deployed in order to succeed in a counterinsurgency operation.

2.5 How to fight: The Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency

More specifically, the US military has needed to change the way in which they fight wars. Some of the most important changes are presented as a series of *paradoxes.*[63] A paradox is usually a seemingly contradictory statement or one opposed to common sense that reveals itself, on closer inspection, to actually be true. The interesting point is that these statements are so odd compared with ordinary US doctrines that they warrant the use of the term 'paradox.' *FM 3-24* is a *radical* doctrine, requiring fundamental changes in how US forces operate.

The exposition of the paradoxes will – when appropriate – cover the following points: (1) State and explain the paradox; (2) Render the alternative formulations that were considered, if any; (3) Provide an example in order to demonstrate how it might work; (4) Present the challenges of the paradox.

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[62] Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, p. 6–8, 213ff.

[63] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 48–51.

2.5.1　Sometimes, the More You Protect, the Less Secure You May Be

The paradox is that in order to protect the population, it might be necessary to expose your forces to risk. The counterinsurgent forces cannot be confined to the barracks (or a strategic hill) but need to share the risks of the population in order to protect them. Contact is also necessary to obtain information from them.[64] If the population is not effectively protected, the insurgency may make gains and become a more grave threat to the counterinsurgency forces. The activities that involve accepting some risk, but might be necessary to protect the populace, include running foot patrols, having listening posts and carrying out ambushes. Furthermore, in Iraq changes in the deployment pattern was inspired by the paradox. The deployment in Combat Outposts (COPs) rather than Forward Operation Bases (FOBs) has been attributed directly to the publication of *FM 3-24* doctrine. It involved a switch from drive-by-coin by larger units to deploying US troops in smaller units permanently in Iraqi neighborhoods.[65]

The *FM 3-24* contains a vignette on Provisional Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in 2005 in Afghanistan, as an example of civil-military cooperation. In many ways it was. The PRTs had a clear objective to win the hearts and minds of the local population. It had funding and was ordered to mainly work along three logical lines of operations (LLOs): security sector reform (build a police force), build local governance and execute reconstruction and development.

Ironically, one of these PRTs may serve as a model example of how force protection yielding short term security may lead to insecurity in the long term.[66] Joel Hafvenstein depicts the US PRT in Lashkargah in 2005 employing the force protection inherent in traditional doctrine in a counterinsurgency operation. Hafvenstein worked on an Alternative Income Project, an USAID project trying to get cash quickly into the hands of Afghanistan run by the private company Chemonics, complementing the PRT's own building of infrastructure like schools, bridges and wells. The Alternative Income Project was important because it yielded the immediate result of putting cash in the hands of people.[67] The PRT itself had no comparable short-term activity along this LLO.

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[64] David Galula, *Pacification in Algeria 1956–1958*: RAND Corporation (1964 [2006]-b), p. 90–98 stresses the need for information.

[65] The heated exchanges between Gian P. Gentile and Peter Mansoor have at least clarified that the switch in Iraq occurred in early 2007: Gentile, "Misreading the Surge Threatens U.S. Army's Conventional Capabilities." Peter R Mansoor, "*Misreading the History of the Iraq War*." Small Wars Journal (2008). Dale Kuehl, "*Inside the Surge: 1-5 Cavalry in Ameriyah* " Small Wars Journal (2008). Shawn Brimley, "*Mediating Between Crusaders and Conservatives*." Small Wars Journal (2008). See also Robinson, *Tell me how this ends: General David Petraeus and the search for a way out of Iraq*, p. 218. The concept of FOBs is attributed to David Galula.

[66] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 72–73. See also Joel Hafvenstein, *Opium Season: A Year on the Afghan Frontier*: The Lyons Press (2007), p. 65–66. David Axe, "For British Forces in Iraq, Protection Means Loss of Effectiveness." *World Politics Review* (2008).

[67] Hafvenstein, *Opium Season: A Year on the Afghan Frontier* p. 206–207. Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into chaos: the U.S. and the disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*: Penguin (2009), p. 323. For the military context in Helmand in 2005, see Tom Coghlan,"The Taliban in Helmand: An Oral History." In Decoding the New Taliban: Insights from the Afghan Field, ed. Giustozzi. London: Hurst (2009).

The hundred or so troops from the Iowa National Guard spent most of their time at the base. It had walls and a barbed-wire moat and was protected by the Afghan police (or really local warlord Abdul Rahman's Afghan gunmen). On a daily base, it was isolated from the surrounding Afghan communities, bringing local leaders inside the base for consultations. The troops only left their base in full body armour in Humvees with gun turrets. To venture outside base, they had to have security clearance several days in advance. The fact that they had to ride their Humvees restricted their movements. For example, they could not go to most of the Babaji area, immediately north of Lashakargah because the roads were too narrow and poor for their broad Humvees.[68] Not only that, the forces also had restricted movement in the remaining area of operations because they had to get back to base on a certain time in the afternoon, well before dark.

Early on in Hafvenstein's project – 21 December 2004 – he experienced that six of its engineers had been carjacked in Babaji. Although the engineers were returned to safety, albeit without the car, the project had suspended all work in Babaji until the local elders provided information about the whereabouts of the car. The Colonel in charge at the PRT wanted the project to commence work there anyway to win the population over, arguing that all of Helmand was safe. Since the troops in his PRT could not go there, he was eager that the Alternative Income Project worked on one of the PRTs lines of operations by providing work and reconstruction. After half a year, the project agreed to return to Babaji in May 2005. There was no security presence from the soldiers at the PRT, and when the local guards that had been assigned to them left to take part in a shootout between local commanders, all but one guardsman left. One of their teams were ambushed soon thereafter, setting in motion the chain of events that led the staff to seek refuge inside the PRT, and the closing down of the project. The population in the area was left alone most of the time, too, and some of them, like in Babaji, all the time. On 29 March 2005, their escort left the paymaster of Hafvenstein's project in neighbouring Bolan province, east of the town of Lashkargah and South of the Babaji area.[69]

In sum, the PRTs emphasis on force protection led to failure along all three LLO's: It prevented it from providing effective security to reconstruction and development, allowing the attack that shut down the Alternative Income Project; its use of local gunmen to guard its perimeter cemented the existing security structures instead of providing security sector reform; and the police role given to the warlord controlling the gunmen stopped all building of local governance. This was a clear case of a force protection policy that resulted in a worsening of security: The Taliban came back with such force that they were able to mount an attack on the PRT in the summer of 2006, now manned by a British force ten times larger than the original one from Iowa.

What are the challenges? First, the risks to your own troops obviously still need to be weighed against the need to protect the population. For example, the 1st Battalion of the 26th Regiment took such losses in Ameriya in Eastern Baghdad during 2007 that unit had to be withdrawn.[70]

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[68] Hafvenstein, *Opium Season: A Year on the Afghan Frontier*, p. 206–208.
[69] Hafvenstein, *Opium Season: A Year on the Afghan Frontier*, p. 232.
[70] Robinson, *Tell me how this ends: General David Petraeus and the search for a way out of Iraq*, p. 229.

Second, the need to establish a permanent presence throughout the area of operations put demands on manpower beyond what is available.

2.5.2 Sometimes, the More Force Used, the Less Effective It Is

The American way of war emphasizes the use of *firepower* to *destroy* the enemy to achieve *total* victory. This is the mindset that the US Army brought to Iraq, and it heavily influenced operations in the beginning.[71] *The FM 3-24* breaks with this tradition as it does not always recommend the use of maximum force. As Olof Kronvall has demonstrated, using force for purely military effect was so strongly rooted in US military thinking that it lingered on in the temporary 2004 doctrine when it, after arguing for the "appropriate balance" [in the use of force] stated that "Nevertheless, US forces always retain the right to use necessary and proportional force for individual and unit self-defense in response to a hostile act or demonstrated hostile intent." Such statements were removed from *FM 3-24*, which wholeheartedly embraces the principle of measured force. Indeed, it seems to prefer err on the side of caution in its application of the principle of measured force.[72]

The FM 3-24 notes that any use of force produces unforeseen effects, citing collateral damage, risk of playing into insurgent propaganda of brutality, and undermining the rule of law as examples of undesirable unintended effects. Thus, sometimes, the more force is used, the less effective it is. The contrast between the principle of measured force adopted in *FM 3-24* and the emphasis of maximum firepower to destroy the enemy is stark.

However, in the September 21 2006 draft, this paradox read "the more force used, the less effective it is." After an article by Ralph Peters that criticized the draft for ignoring that religious zealots and ethnic supremacists were not reconcilable and that killing them was usually necessary, Petraeus superiors advocated that the language of the paradoxes was made less categorical. Petraeus, who personally went over the draft "with a fine-tooth comb" added the qualifier 'sometimes' over the writer Dr Conrad Crane's strenuous objections.[73] In Peters' words "With a skin-them-alive-and-gut-them critique already written, I was assured that corrective action is being taken to produce a more sensible final document."[74]

Peters, however, was only somewhat appeased: "The Sept. 21 draft was a jumble of platitudes and a prescription for continued failure", Peters maintained, but he now believed "that the rewriting and editing of the document resulted in a useful manual that begins to come to grips with the actual challenges facing us." Peters concludes that "The great truth missing in FM 3-24 is that military solutions traditionally have been the only effective tools in defeating

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[71] See Tore Nyhamar, *Amerikansk militærteknologi og forholdet til Europa*: FFI/Report (2003/02410), p. 24–29 for an analysis of the impact of American military doctrines on military action in the immediate aftermath of the invasion in 2003.

[72] Olof Kronvall, *Finally eating soup with a knife? A historical perspective on the US Army's 2006 counterinsurgency doctrine*: Institutt for forsvarsstudier (2007), p. 41–42.

[73] Robinson, *Tell me how this ends: General David Petraeus and the search for a way out of Iraq*, p. 79.

[74] Ralph Peters, "Killing with kindness: Political correctness infiltrates the Army " *Armed Forces Journal* December (2006).

insurgencies.[75] According to John A. Nagl "the final version was sharper than the initial draft, finding a balance between the discriminate targeting of irreconcilable insurgents and the persuasion of less committed enemies to give up the fight..." [76]

There are three challenges in interpreting the principle of measured force. First, it is far from clear how much force is appropriate in any given situation.[77] What is clear is that *FM 3-24* places the responsibility far down in the chain of command, potentially at the platoon or even team level. Second, US forces do retain the right to self-defense, but under what circumstances it may be exercised is another matter of interpretation. For example, a report by Human Rights Watch draws attention to the fact that NATO and the United States have differing rules of engagement governing the use of airstrikes. NATO requires an "overwhelming" threat while the United States allows "anticipatory self-defense." [78]

The US August 21 (2008) attack in Azizabad, near the western city of Herat is a case in point. A ground patrol by US Special Forces and Afghan army troops came under heavy fire from the village as it led a midnight raid on the compound of a suspect Taliban commander. Patrol members called in an airstrike when they were unable to repulse the gunfire.

Besides the factual issue of how many were killed, there are two other issues buried here. The first is that *FM 3-24* – learning how to think but not what to think – cannot resolve the issue how much force to use in a given situation. It is simply unclear what *FM 3-24* wants a commander to do in a given situation: "Do not always shoot" is in itself not a clear guideline. Second, *FM 3-24* does suggest that insurgents, particularly ideologically committed spoilers should be pursued aggressively and indeed captured.

Third, when chasing the insurgents using small forces, one inevitably walks into the occasional trap. A senior European military officer stated that when the US forces did not coordinate with ISAF, "they tend to end up doing these operations with too little strength on their own, and their only alternative is to call in air power." The doctrine does not and cannot specify the amount of foresight a commander ought to exercise in order to avoid situations in which the doctrine allows him to use force, but where the use of force hurts the strategic objectives of the operation.

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[75] Ralph Peters, "Progress and peril: New counterinsurgency manual cheats on the history exam." *Armed Forces Journal* February (2007b). And Ralph Peters, "Dishonest doctrine: A selective use of history taints the COIN manual." *Armed Forces Journal* December (2007a).

[76] Nagl,"The Evolution and Importance of Army / Marine Corps Field Manual 3-24 Counterinsurgency." p. xvii. Celestino Perez, "The Embedded Morality in FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency." *Military Review* May–June (2009).

[77] Two papers that using amount medium force is most effective are Kersti Larsdotter, "*The Use of Force in Peace Operations*." Annual Convention of the International Studies Association. New York, USA (2009), Andrea Lopez, "*To Kill or Not to Kill: The Use of Force in Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*." ISA's 50th annual convention New York, NY, USA (2009).

[78] Candace Ronday and Karen DeYoung, "U.S. Team to Reinvestigate." The Washington Post (2008)., http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/09/08/AR2008090800633.html (Accessed 15 September 2008)

2.5.3 The More Successful the Counterinsurgency Is, the Less Force Can Be Used and the More Risk Must Be Accepted

As *FM 3-24* notes, it is a corollary of the previous paradox, covering the case when the counterinsurgency is going well. It does have, though, a particularly paradoxical flavor because it associates success with increased risk-taking. Usually, risk-taking is the result of problems or failure. Otherwise, the points of the previous point apply.

2.5.4 Sometimes Doing Nothing Is the Best Reaction

Since the counterinsurgency is a battle for the support of the civilian population, the insurgents may carry out particularly norm transgressing actions to get the counterinsurgent to overreact or use to excessive force that alienate the population, for example opening fire on a crowd in which the insurgents are hiding. Traditionally, US military doctrines put great premium on going on the offensive to gain the initiative. They want to force the enemy to react to their actions rather than vice versa. The paradox directly challenges the idea that US forces always ought to emphasize power projecting capability and willingness to use force. In counterinsurgency operations, US forces need to balance the need to use force to enhance their reputation for possessing overwhelming, usable force against the need to avoid alienating the population.

For example, in April 2004 insurgents captured and mutilated 4 US contractors in Fallujah. In the judgment of British Brigadier-General Nigel Alwyn-Smith "this act was almost certainly a come-on, designed to invoke a disproportionate response, thereby further polarising the situation and driving a wedge between the domestic population and the Coalition forces. It succeeded." After a measured American first response, the Iraqi airwaves were filled with images of the mutilated bodies. It appears that the White House or Donald Rumsfeld decided that this was a challenge to American power and prestige. The subsequent American attack on Fallujah aimed at total destruction of the enemy. However, the US Marines encountered stiff resistance and was fought to a standstill. The insurgent success in standing up to the US military made Fallujah a rallying point for the insurgents. The Marines had not developed a plan for what to do when the city was taken. The result was the farcical handing over to the Fallujah Brigade that soon became indistinguishable from the insurgency. It dealt a further blow to American prestige. In June, Fallujah was back in insurgent hands. First Fallujah, as it became known after a new battle for the town later, became an important recruiting tool for the insurgency.[79]

2.5.5 Some of the Best Weapons for Counterinsurgents Do Not Shoot

This is another corollary of the political primacy of counterinsurgency. In a battle for the population, economic recovery, social and political progress must go hand in hand with improved security. The paradox is a reminder that military forces need to consider what they can contribute to nonmilitary missions.

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[79] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: the American military adventure in Iraq*: Penguin Press (2006), p. 330ff. Ali A. Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq. Winning the War, Losing the Peace*: Yale University Press (2007), p. 275–279.

US military commanders have been in fact given a weapon that does not shoot – the Commander's Emergency Response Programme (CERP). It was created to provide money to disburse quickly to urgent humanitarian, relief, reconstruction or political projects in their geographic areas of responsibility. The CERP funds were explicitly created to give commanders a tool (money) so they could react quickly and with ease to local needs.[80]

In Iraq, it was CERP money that enabled brigade commanders to act swiftly when Sunnis came forward volunteering to fight Al-Qaida in the Anbar province. It was CERP money that was used on the tactical level in Baghdad; first in Ameriya and then in Adhamiya to pay Iraqis who were willing to throw Al-Qaida out of their district, but did not necessarily want to join the national Iraqi army.[81] In Afghanistan, CERP funding enabled commanders to build high-impact and high-visibility projects infrastructure and roads. Indeed, sometimes the financial targeting's real objective was to bolster local leaders' prestige, help them build credibility, and, above all, attract them to the coalition forces. [82]

CERP money was meant to provide a quick and flexible tool. During the second battle for Fallujah, in November 2004, Marines actually rebuilt while fighting by hiring Iraqis to repair damages as they occurred. Civil affairs team followed the battle teams to provide immediate compensation for battle damage.[83] In Iraq, CERP money were targeted to short-term, labor-intensive projects, to best counter recruiting unemployed military-aged males. For larger projects, taking the longer view, civilian agencies were appropriate. Typically, CERP money must try to avoid supporting businesses.

An episode from The Alternative Income Project described in 2.3.2 above, illustrates the power that effective aid may have. The project was the only attempt at reconstruction in Helmand in 2004-2005 that yielded immediate results, and it was clearly valued at the popular level. Hafvenstein and the Afghan engineers got talking on security and one engineer exclaimed that "Our best security is if the people support us." Another engineer Akbar then told the group of his meeting with a village elder:

> I asked him if anyone had talked about attacking the Americans. He said "no".
> "Well that's nice."
>
> Then I asked him what he would do if anyone started talking about an attack. He said, and here Akbar raised his voice with considerable conviction, "I would *kill* them. What has anyone else done for us? The Americans can stay."[84]

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[80] Leonard J. DeFrancisci, "Money as a Force Multiplier in COIN." *Military Review* May-June (2008), p. 23.

[81] Robinson, *Tell me how this ends: General David Petraeus and the search for a way out of Iraq*, p, 241, 209 and 273, respectively.

[82] Patrick Donahue and Michael Fenzel, "Combating a Modern Insurgency: Combined Task Force Devil in Afghanistan." *Military Review* March-April (2008), p. 110–114.

[83] Leonard J. DeFrancisci, "Money as a Force Multiplier in COIN." Ibid. May–June, p. 25–26.

[84] Hafvenstein, *Opium Season: A Year on the Afghan Frontier*, p. 222.

2.5.6 The Host Nation Doing Something Tolerably Is Normally Better than Us Doing It Well

The main argument for this is staying power. One cannot win against the insurgency without outlasting it. Total domination is a moot point if the population knows that one day the international force will be gone, and they will be alone with the insurgents. The host government, on the other hand, will stay on. The goal for the intervening force is to create conditions that allow it to withdraw. Therefore, transfer of the necessary skills to govern successfully, without creating dependency, is the key.

Again the Alternative Income Project provides an illustration. The project was concerned both with transfer of skills and with avoiding donor dependency. Desperately short of engineers, the project tapped into men with practical experience in maintaining the *karezes* and tried to improve upon their skills. When the project stumbled across a suitable young man, he was sent on a course in mapmaking, and given three assistants to pass on his skill (and get more work done). Avoiding erosion of the voluntary communal *hasher* system, the traditional way to maintain the *karezes* was a concern. Ongoing local maintenance on the *karezes* meant that the project was reluctant to start work. It wanted to avoid undermining local initiative.[85]

2.5.7 If a Tactic Works this Week, It Might Not Work Next Week; If It Works in This Province, It Might Not work in the Next

Counterinsurgency operations are learning competitions. Competent insurgents are constantly adapting, forcing the counterinsurgent's forces to adapt to be successful and to avoid casualties. All military operations of course face a thinking enemy.

The US forces and al-Qaida mutual adaptations in urban tactics may illustrate the point. In April 2004, during the so-called first battle of Fallujah, the US Marines tried to rely on Iraqi forces for urban warfare with mixed results. Some Iraqi forces, for example the second battalion of the new Iraqi army, simply refused to fight.[86] Others like the hastily assembled auxiliaries in the 'Fallujah Brigade' participated in taking the city, only to drift back to the insurgent side and fuse with insurgents, local police and imams to impose a form of Islamic rule in Fallujah.[87]

Understandably unhappy with the outcome, on November 7 2004, the US Marines tried to retake the city alone. It has become known as the second battle of Fallujah. Approximately half of the al-Qaida fighters fled the city and the other half stayed in the city to fight to the death. After sixteen days of fighting, Fallujah was back in American hands.[88] Although the fighting was a huge political gain for the insurgents, the second battle of Fallujah had established the supremacy of the US forces in battle in Iraq. The insurgents never again directly challenged the firepower of US forces. Instead, in a pattern frequently repeated all over Iraq, when US forces assembled to take a city, the insurgents and AQ fighters fled and took refuge outside it, only to return when the

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[85] Hafvenstein, *Opium Season: A Year on the Afghan Frontier*, p. 275.
[86] Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq. Winning the War, Losing the Peace*, p. 276.
[87] Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq. Winning the War, Losing the Peace*, p. 278–279.
[88] Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq. Winning the War, Losing the Peace*, p. 338–339.

Americans had left. Then Col McMaster's operation in Tal Afar in 2005 was the first time US forces found effective countermeasures against the insurgents urban operational pattern. In Tal Afar, the US Army first surrounded the city to prevent the al-Qaida fighters to escape to safe areas outside the city.[89] Operation *Fardh-al-Qanoon* in Bagdad in 2007 copied the successful Tal Afar operation, only in a larger scale.

2.5.8 Tactical Success Guarantees Nothing

The paradox is a reminder that military actions in themselves can only be successful in counter-insurgency when linked to operational, strategic and Host Nation political objectives. It is the familiar warning against too much emphasis on success in kinetic operations and number of enemies killed. However, it also warns that even model counterinsurgency operations can be derailed if there is no strategic and political plan.

There are many poignant examples of tactical success leaving few lasting results in Iraq. One involves Gen Petraeus command of the 101 Airborne Division in 2003–2004 in and around Mosul. The area hosted some 110,000 former Iraqi soldiers and 20,000 Kurdish militiamen ready to fight them. As a Baathist stronghold and a primary source of officer recruitment since Ottoman times, it was overflowed with enemies to the US occupation.[90] However, Petraeus waged what was generally considered an effective counterinsurgency campaign.[91] First, he avoided the post-invasion vacuum that left the population unprotected and allowed the insurgency to regroup.[92] Second, he admonished the troops of 101 Airborne to always consider the impact of their actions on mission success, also when force protection was a concern. Third, The 101 Airborne undertook extensive reconstruction and public works in Mosul. David Petraeus alleged favorite saying that "money is ammunition" stems from this period. Not only was he instrumental in getting CPA authority Paul Bremer to create the Commander's Emergency Reconstruction Programme (CERP) with captured Iraqi money, the 101 Airborne alone spent one third of the $100 million used during the first six months.[93]

> "the 101st Airborne Division had 4 engineer battalions (including, for a period, even a well-drilling detachment), an engineer group headquarters, 2 civil affairs battalions, 9 infantry battalions, 4 artillery battalions (most of which were "out of battery" end performed reconstruction tasks), a sizable logistical support command (generally about 6 battalions, including transportation, fuel storage, supply, maintenance, food service, movement control, warehousing, end even water purification units), a military police battalion (with attached police and corrections training detachments), a signal battalion, an air defense battalion (which helped train Iraqi forces), a field hospital, a number of contracting officers and officers authorized to carry large sums of

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[89] Thomas R. Mockaitis, *Iraq and the challenge of counterinsurgency*: Praeger (2008), p. 130. Bing West, "Counterinsurgency Lessons from Iraq." *Military Review* March-April (2009), p. 9. For an insider's view of the campaign, see Travis Patriquin, "Using Occam's Razor to Connect the Dots: The Ba'ath Party and the Insurgency in Tal Afar." *Military Review* 1 January-February (2007).

[90] Larry Diamond, *Squandered victory: the American occupation and bungled effort to bring democracy to Iraq*: Times Books (2005), p. 233.

[91] Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra 2: the inside story of the invasion and occupation of Iraq*: Pantheon Books (2006), p. 453–454.

[92] Ricks, *Fiasco: the American Military Adventure in Iraq*, p. 227–228.

[93] Fred Kaplan, "*More Dinars, Please We've Spent Saddam's Stash, Now Let's Have at Rummy's Slush Fund*." Slate (2003), http://www.slate.com/id/2091857/ (accessed January 11, 2010).

money, an air traffic control element, some 9 aviation battalions (with approximately 250 helicopters), a number of chaplain teams, and more than 25 military lawyers."[94]

In February 2004, after a serious debate, the 101st was replaced in Mosul by a Stryker brigade unit roughly one quarter its size. The decision was made at the corps level, but with Petraeus' approval. Moreover, the reconstruction was discontinued. The following summer, most of the Sunni Arab Provincial Council members walked out in the ensuing selection of the new governor, leaving Kurdish members in charge of a predominantly Sunni Arab province. Later that year, the largely Sunni police collapsed under insurgent attacks launched at the same time when Coalition Forces attacked Fallujah for the second time in November 2004. The US offensive in Fallujah worsened the security situation in all of Iraq, in Mosul it also led to a large influx of fleeing insurgents.[95]

Consequently, after November 2004 the city of Mosul suffered tremendously due to deteriorated security conditions (including military actions as well as threats and killing of innocent civilians by terrorists and criminals), unprecedented violence levels (especially on ethnic bases), and continuous destruction of the main infrastructures of the city. After 4 years of this, on May 10, 2008 a military offensive was launched by US-backed Iraqi Army Forces in the hope of bringing back stability and security to the city. However, the city remains one of the most troubled in Iraq.

Tom Ricks wrote that "Mosul was quiet while he [Petraeus] was there, and likely would have remained so had his successor had as many troops as he had - - - and as much understanding of counterinsurgency techniques". According to Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor "Petraeus did it right and won over Mosul."[96] The basic problem was that the 101 Airborne could only make tactical gains without a political Iraqi or Kurdish Mosul plan building on the security gains.[97]

2.5.9   Many Important Decisions Are Not Made by Generals

The paradox is a reminder that the strategic corporals and strategic lieutenants may make the decisions that determine how the populace will view the intervention force. The challenge is clear when viewed in the context of the other counterinsurgency paradoxes: There is often no clear advice about which action to undertake. Instead, counterinsurgency doctrine offers advice about what concerns a good decision need to address. When a car is speeding towards a check-point, a junior officer has to make a split-second decision about whether to shoot or not, giving both the need to protect his soldiers and the admonition to use measured force it place. In counterinsurgency, junior officers make decisions that have life-or-death as well as strategic consequences.

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[94] David H. Petraeus, "Learning counterinsurgency: observations from soldiering in Iraq." *Military Review* January–February (2006).

[95] Robinson, *Tell me how this ends: General David Petraeus and the search for a way out of Iraq*, p. 72.

[96] Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra 2: the inside story of the invasion and occupation of Iraq*, p. 453.

[97] Metz, "*Learning from Iraq: Counterinsurgency in American Strategy*." http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA459931&Location=U459932&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf (accessed January 11, 2010).

In order to appreciate the challenge for the US military, les us consider their starting point. The US Army traditionally operated in large units. Infantry division operations were the norm in training.[98] Moreover, the preference for firepower over maneuver warfare meant a centralized army with relatively little initiative from the lower echelons. The emphasis on maneuver warfare has ameliorated but not removed this tendency. The USMC, on the other hand, has traditionally operated in smaller units, which tends to push the responsibility for important decisions down the chain of command.

More senior officers have to give them appropriate training and instructions before deployment, and to attempt to shape the situations so give their junior officers maximum time when such decisions have to be made.

2.5.10   Concluding

The paradoxes demonstrate that counterinsurgency is indeed a 'thinking man's war'. They do not tell the troops what to do, but attempt to teach how to think. The factors that should be considered decision making are listed or can be deduced, but not what the decision ought to be.

3   What Is New in *FM 3-24*?

In October 2004, the Army released an interim counterinsurgency manual, produced very rapidly in response to requests from the field in Iraq. It relied heavily on Vietnam-style insurgency as a conceptual template. In contrast, *FM 3-24* from December 2006 seeks to incorporate recent lessons about changes in insurgency, especially from Iraq and to some extent from Afghanistan. The view of counterinsurgency as a population-centered, political form of warfare is retained, but *FM 3-24* notes that the contemporary environment has changed. *FM 3-24* distinguishes between historical principles of counterinsurgency, derived from past insurgencies and contemporary imperatives of counterinsurgency, based on recent experiences:[99]

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[98] Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, p. 50.
[99] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 36–47.

Historical Principles	Contemporary Imperatives
Legitimacy is the main objective	Manage information and expectations
Political factors are primary	Use the appropriate level of force
Unity of effort is essential	Learn and adapt
Counterinsurgent must understand the environment	Empower the lowest level
Intelligence drives operations	Support the host nation
Insurgents must be isolated from their cause and support	
Security under the law is essential	
Counterinsurgent should prepare for long-term commitment	

Table 3.1   Historical and Contemporary Principles and Imperatives

This dichotomy is not necessarily helpful. The 'contemporary imperatives' are certainly imperative but hardly new. First, it seems that the some novelties are merely derived from the old principles. For example, if legitimacy is the main objective and political factors are primary, the need to manage information and expectations follows. Moreover, the need to use the appropriate level of force is of course rooted in political considerations. Second, it is remarkably easy to demonstrate that the classics do address the contemporary imperatives. In his foreword for David Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, he points out that "Galula devotes more than three times as much attention to information operations as to traditional kinetic warfare."[100] Indeed he does. For example, concerning the need to manage information and expectations, John Nagl writes:

> "The counterinsurgent must also decide when to publicize his program. If he does it too early, it could be taken for a sign of weakness, raise the insurgent's demands, even encourage the population into supporting the insurgent in the hope of more concessions; and as the war lasts, the impact of the program would blur. If the announcement is unduly delayed, the task of winning over the population would become more difficult. Appreciating the right time is a matter of judgment based on circumstances, and no solution can be suggested in advance."[101]

Concerning the appropriate level of force, Galula writes:

> "It is not enough for the government to set political goals, to determine how much military force is applicable, to enter into alliances or break them; politics becomes an active instrument of operations. And so intricate is the interplay between the political and the military actions that they cannot be tidily separated; on the contrary, every move has to be weighed with regard to its political effects, and vice versa." [102]

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[100] John A. Nagl, "Forword." In *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (2006a), p. X.
[101] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, p. 72.
[102] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, p.5.

Concerning the need for learning and adaption, he states:

> "...reality will always differ from theory. Mistakes are bound to happen, but it would be inexcusable not to learn from them. This is why the first area selected must be considered a test area. The value of the operations conducted there lies just as much in what they teach as in their intrinsic results. (...) All this cannot be left to chance and personal initiative; it must be organized carefully and deliberately."[103]

Concerning the empowerment of the lowest level, Galula, if anything, upends *FM 3-24*:

> "The subdivision should be carried out down to the lowest level of the "basic unit of counterinsurgency warfare": the largest unit whose leader is in direct and continuous contact with the population. This is the most important unit in the counterinsurgency operations, the level where most of the practical problems arise, where the war is won or lost. The size varies from case to case, and in each case with the situation: the basic unit may a battalion or a company, initially, a squad or even a rural policeman at the end of the process."[104]

Finally, on the necessity of supporting the host nation to achieve victory, he is adamant. If no local government exists, it must be created: In his description of counterinsurgent operations, step seven out of eight states that "As the work proceeds in the area, tested local leaders will finally appear in each village and town. They will eventually have to be grouped and organized within a national counterinsurgent party."[105]

But if the contemporary imperatives are only more critical than ever, and not new, what is? John A. Nagl highlights *logical lines of operations* (LLOs) and *operational design* as new *doctrinal* constructs in the US army. However, the former is an elaboration of the old counterinsurgency idea that you need to integrate military and civilian measures in the campaign to be successful. The term 'operational design' is borrowed from the USMC, but substantively it appears to provide a tool to deal with insurgencies that have become more complex "identifying the unique array of enemies and problems". (Mattox 2007)[106] We shall return to this.

3.1 Evolving Sanctuaries

One novelty noted by *FM 3-24* is that the term *sanctuary* is evolving. Traditionally safe insurgent sanctuaries were located in geographically remote, physically inaccessible areas. This kind of sanctuary still exists (for example in Afghanistan and in Pakistan's tribal areas)[107], but in addition there are now virtual sanctuaries in the Internet, global financial systems and media creating new opportunities for the insurgents. On the other hand, modern weapons systems and target acquisition have made the traditional sanctuaries in remote areas more vulnerable. The US military is capable of taking out targets in tribal areas in Pakistan and in Yemen. Insurgents now

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[103] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, p. 73.

[104] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, p. 78.

[105] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, p. 92.

[106] John A. Nagl,"Introduction." In *Counterinsurgency Field Manual 3-24*: Department of the Army (2006b), p. XVII.

[107] Laila Bokhari, *Waziristan: impact on the Taliban insurgency and the stability of Pakistan*: FFI/Report (2006/02894). Jørgen W. Eriksen and Tormod Heier, "Winter as the Number One Enemy? Lessons Learned from North Afghanistan." *RUSI Journal: Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies* 154 5 (2009).

often find it easier to hide in networks in an urban environment. This makes it even more important for the counterinsurgent to penetrate such social networks.[108]

3.2 The Politics of Ungoverned Places

It has been suggested that a novelty of contemporary counterinsurgency operations is that conflict on the ground is initiated by the counterinsurgent, not the insurgent.[109] After all, US-led forces went to Iraq and Afghanistan, toppling the host nation government. Then an insurgency began, directed against the foreign forces and the new, domestic rulers.

FM 3-24, however, concentrates on methods for early detection of a beginning insurgency. The reason, presumably, is that from a practitioner's point of view, primarily concerned with the tactical level, it is a moot point who initiated the hostilities on the ground. Whether the conflict began with the invasion or when the insurgency began to challenge invasion forces, leaves the counterinsurgent with essentially the same task.

However, *FM 3-24* does mention the challenge posed when a victorious, conquering force needs temporarily to take over the administration of a territory as conventional hostilities wind down. The transition from warfighting to administration needs to run smoothly in order to prevent the development of an insurgency. Defeating the forces of the host nation and creating security and order for the population are two different tasks, creating conflicting roles that military leaders prefer to avoid. However, the security needs of the population can only be ignored at your peril, as the US forces have learned the hard way in Iraq.

It obviously matters if the counterinsurgent's government is weak and illegitimate rather than strong and legitimate. Whether it was weak to begin with or destroyed during the invasion, leaves the counterinsurgent with the same challenges to prevail in a given situation.

3.3 Counterinsurgency for Revolutionary Change

More writings have been devoted to a closely related topic: The counterinsurgent may bring revolutionary change rather than fighting for the status quo on behalf of the existing government. Afghanistan has been troubled by instability at least since the 1950s, leaving no viable status quo available. The desirability of introducing some form of democracy and moving towards respect of human rights involve huge changes in the make-up of Afghanistan's traditional social structure. Moreover, both Afghanistan's social fabric and political system was destroyed in wars during and following the Soviet invasion in 1979-89. Returning to the old ways, although in many ways in principle desirable, was never fully an option in Afghanistan in 2001. Regime change was unavoidable in Iraq, minimally a change of personnel removing Saddam Hussein and his closest advisers, would follow. Since Saddam Hussein's rule in many ways was personal, involving widespread use of patronage, the regime *had* to change. However, to what extent the US should attempt to change the nature of Iraqi politics was not obvious, and has been hotly debated. The

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[108] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 29. Alderson, "Iraq and its Borders."

[109] David Kilcullen, "Counterinsurgency Redux." *Survival* 48 Winter (2006–2007), p. 3.

disbanding of the Iraqi Army and the purge of Baath members are examples of controversial issues that modern counterinsurgents have to grapple with. In conclusion, counterinsurgency for revolutionary changes implies that counterinsurgency has become harder to do, but offer no clear implications on how to proceed.

However, one unavoidable change in the environment for counterinsurgency operations relevant to doctrine remains. Counterinsurgency operations now often have to be carried out in failed states or states close to state failure. The Iraqi state collapsed in the aftermath of the invasion. The Afghani state – historically never fully in control of its territory – collapsed in the fighting following the Soviet invasion during 1979-1989. The Taliban movement's success in gaining power in large parts of Afghanistan in 1996 rested upon the desperate wish for order of any kind that arose in the violent chaos of those stateless and lawless years.

The changes in society and politics faced by a modern counterinsurgent have made his task more difficult. More issues have to be decided upon – regardless of whether the counterinsurgent wants to deal with them not, they often end up at their plate anyway. We shall return to some of them. When modern counterinsurgencies take place in areas in which state failure is prevalent some of these issues are unavoidable, blurring the line between tactical and strategic level decisions.

Moreover, varying degrees of state failure affects the nature of the insurgency in profound ways. Let us turn the attention to these new trends.

3.4   An Array of Problems and Enemies

Counterinsurgents today commonly face a complex, shifting array of actors with differing motivations and approaches. In addition to the traditional parties of insurgent and counterinsurgent, insurgencies tend to be nested in complex conflicts which involve what can be called third forces, i.e. armed militia groups that are highly influential on the outcome of the conflict. Moreover, so-called fourth forces – unarmed groups which affect the outcome – may take part. Foremost among these are the international media, but domestic religious leaders may also be decisive. For example, the real power brokers in Iraq were the country's religious leaders, and the CPA only belatedly recognized this fact.[110]

The novelty is not a complex environment with multiple actors. The FNL, the North Vietnamese army and Chinese forces all took part in the Vietnam War. In Vietnam, the Tet-offensive was reported in the media and strengthened the domestic US anti-war movement (both fourth forces). Indeed, the US defeat has been attributed to the media. In Algeria, the French Army twice suppressed the insurgency militarily, in 1958 and 1960, only to loose the battle for political legitimacy waged in Paris.[111] However, both in Algeria and Vietnam, even though there were

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[110] Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq. Winning the War, Losing the Peace*, p. 168–169, Diamond, *Squandered victory: the American occupation and bungled effort to bring democracy to Iraq*, p. 44, 52, 295, Ricks, *Fiasco: the American military adventure in Iraq*, p. 254.

[111] Galula, *Pacification in Algeria 1956-1958*, p. 1. Alastair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954–62*: The New York Review (1977 [2006]).

several parties and two arenas – one in the area of conflict and another at the home front of the intervener – there was but one conflict as parties lined up on one of two sides.

The nesting of insurgency within complex conflicts associated with state weakness or failure has altered the dynamics of contemporary insurgency: It has been compared to a violent and competitive market rather than war in the traditional sense where clear and discrete combatants seek strategic victory. Now counterinsurgent forces are asked to be warfighters, stabilizers, and transformers simultaneously, for extended periods of times in the face of sustained resistance.[112] Previously, multiple roles only occurred during the short transitional period while large scale fighting is winding down and before political reconstruction had run its course.

In Afghanistan and Iraq there is more than one conflict. It is of course *state failure* that allows militia groups and fourth forces to assume this role. State failure also affects (and is caused by) the preferences of the population. Lt Col Ross Brown was struck by the extent to which the Iraqis viewed the world through the lens of individual self-interest, relegating community or country interest less important.

> "I also had the sense that they didn't care much what kind of government they'd ultimately have, whether it would be a democracy, theocracy, or autocracy. The people's priority was to ensure that their basic needs were satisfied, and the government or group that could best do that would gain their favor. Throughout my year in Iraq, I used this premise of "satisfying basic needs" to allocate funds and prioritize projects. In the end, Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" was a very applicable tool"[113]

Afghanistan and Iraq, the areas that provide the experience of counterinsurgency operations that went into the writing of *FM 3-24,* have checkered experiences of effective state capacity. In Afghanistan there has never been any effective central power. For example, there has only been urban police. Building a police force is to introduce a wholly new concept to rural Afghanistan. Even in the more centralized Iraqi state, there were areas outside Baghdad's control prior to the American invasion: Saddam Hussein had lost control over the Kurdish area and also over the city of Fallujah that has seen so much fighting after 2003.

However, the insurgents and the regime remain important actors. Both Iraq and Afghanistan have acquired elected governments during the conflict to represent the Host Nation, and the coalition forces are nominally fighting on their behalf, while training their troops and police forces. When General Petraeus arrived in Iraq in January 2007, armed with new *the FM 3-24*, he was shocked to see the havoc that "the torn social fabric" and sectarian violence of modern insurgency had done to Baghdad since he had left only in September 2005. "I had this unbelievable sinking feeling."[114] He gave an outside group named the Joint Strategic Assessment Team (JSAT) three months to revise the existing campaign plan. The group was head by then Col H. R. McMaster,

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[112] Steven Metz, "*Rethinking Insurgency.*" International Strategic Institute (June 2007), p. 17.

[113] Ross A. Brown, "Commander's Assessment: South Baghdad." *Military Review* January–February (2007).

[114] Robinson, *Tell me how this ends: General David Petraeus and the search for a way out of Iraq*, p. 88.

commander of the counterinsurgency operation in Tal Afar in 2004-05, and included people who had participated in drafting or critiquing *FM 3-24*, such as David Kilcullen.[115]

Departing from the US government, the JSAT labeled the conflict in Iraq a communal struggle, a *low-grade civil war*. The implication was that the Iraqi government was a party to the conflict.[116] After consultation with a few senior officials including some from the US embassy, General Peatreus' conclusion was to adopt a less confrontational approach than recommended by JSAT, but the Iraqi government has remained a party to the conflict in American thinking since. One practical consequence was how far the US should go in its pressure to root sectarian actors out of the government. This issue has been subject to ongoing debate, and became the main bone of contention as a prelude to Barack Obama's take-over. In modern, complex conflicts, the counterinsurgent force does not necessarily unambiguously support a Host Nation government embroiled in civil war. Being a *partial referee* is a new role for the counterinsurgent.

3.5   Cultural Awareness and Language Skills

Beatrice Heuser suggests that *FM 3-24*'s emphasis on cultural awareness and language skills is the vanguard of the cultural turn in counterinsurgency doctrine. In her view, David Galula and Roger Trinquier "take on a technical-organizational approach in the extreme."[117] She seems to think that the British counterinsurgency approach does an even better job with culture, but that *FM 3-24* nevertheless is a radical shift towards more emphasis on cultural skills. In her view, *FM 3-24* identifies a new key to success that only anthropologists can unlock. Unfortunately, she considers Galula's short, condensed work on counterinsurgency theory and does not look at the detailed and highly contextual account of his efforts in two areas of Algeria in 1956–58. [118]

Cultural awareness and knowledge have always been important in counterinsurgency. The very definition of counterinsurgency as a competition for legitimacy between insurgents and counter-insurgents makes it paramount to understand the local environment, including its culture. Cultural awareness is always instrumental to be politically effective. In the insurgencies in Malaysia, Vietnam and Algeria, the political issues were primarily national and economic independence from colonialism, bringing a political struggle against national communism to the forefront. In today's insurgencies, the political issues are defined by ethno-political or religious grievances. Culture is not merely of instrumental value, but may the very issue at stake between insurgent and counterinsurgent.

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[115] Robinson, *Tell me how this ends: General David Petraeus and the search for a way out of Iraq*, p. 98–99.

[116] Robinson, *Tell me how this ends: General David Petraeus and the search for a way out of Iraq*, p. 114.

[117] Beatrice Heuser, "*The Cultural Revolution in Counter-Insurgency.*" Journal of Strategic Studies: Routledge (2007), p. 155.

[118] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*. Galula, *Pacification in Algeria 1956–1958*, respectively.

Moreover, the so-called classic counterinsurgency theory grew out of colonial wars, or in the case of Galula, also the Chinese civil war. In these conflicts, the counterinsurgent readily had access to the local culture and language skills, and there was no need to put the obvious into doctrine. "The [British] soldier in the colonies was more than a soldier. He was also part of the administration of the colony and therefore a colonizer and settler."[119] Galula, for example, was born in Tunisia and grew up in Casablanca, Algeria. He clearly saw himself as a modernizer of Algerian society: liberating women, improving hygiene, spreading literacy and so on. He equally clearly held Western ways superior and made no effort to hide his contempt for the local backwardness and Islam:

> "One may wonder then why it took so long, more than a year, to spread all over the territory. The fact may be attributable to the incompetence and inexperience of the leaders: the Arabs' notorious inability to organize (I sound no doubt terribly colonialist, but it's a fact, as witness the small Israeli Army and the huge Arab manpower all around it); their tendency to bicker among themselves; the FNL's ignorance of insurgent warfare except in its crudest form. (...) "Thank God we are not dealing with the Viets here!" was the most common remark among French soldiers who had fought in Indochina."[120]

The *Kabyles* are an aboriginal group that had settled before the Arab conquest of North Africa in the 700s. Less influenced by Islam and more democratic, the "Kabyles have a primitive yet definitive talent for organizing, which put them far above Arabs in this respect."[121] Galula distinguished between colonial peoples, and he was more of a cultural supremacist than a racist. Interestingly, he generally viewed all religions as negative influence on society, especially on the ability to organize. To avoid religion holding back social and economic development, Galula, firmly believed that the French way to keep religion and state separate should be emulated:

> "Besides, while church and state were separated in France, the French government had continued subsidizing the Islamic Church in Algeria, and, although this still was official policy, there was a growing feeling both among the educated Moslems and among us that Islam was the real obstacle that had prevented the Algerian masses from moving into the 20th century. When the French arrived in Algeria in 1830, they found a local Jewish community in the same state of under-development as the large Moslem majority. Both groups were given the same opportunities yet only the Jews took advantage of it, and to such an extent that in two generations they became completely assimilated in terms of education and consequently in terms of social and economic advancement. Why should we continue to promote Islam? If the villagers wanted to repair their shabby existing mosque, they would have to do it on their own expense."[122]

Typically, Galula sees Islam as a regressive influence. Before the Arab invasion, the Kabyles were Christians, and, in Galula's view, are culturally more advanced because they had remained less influenced by Islam than the Arabs. If people only would modernize, adopting secular western culture, there were no limits to how far they could go. As individuals he readily accepted and respected people, an attitude that greatly helped his efforts to work with the population to provide security and stability in his area of operation.

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[119] Egnell, *Complex Peace Operations and Civil-Military Relations: Winning the Peace*, p. 97.
[120] Galula, *Pacification in Algeria 1956–1958*, p. 18.
[121] Galula, *Pacification in Algeria 1956–1958*, p. 28.
[122] Galula, *Pacification in Algeria 1956–1958*, p. 160–161.

On the other hand, in his account of his time in Algeria – unlike the more barren outline of his theory – betrays his emphasis on understanding local culture. Moreover, he aggressively employed a *harka,* a local self-defense force, when he could, to further bolster local knowledge. In their own villages, the *harkis* patrolled with Galula's soldiers, took part in ambushes, stood guard and controlled the population because they could spot any stranger. Integrated in his company, they served as scouts: "being Kabyle farmers themselves and well acquainted with the local habits and customs, they knew a civilian who had no business sitting on top of a ridge and enjoying the scenery."[123] Outside his normal Area of Operations, the *harkis* served as undercover scouts under his one Moslem sergeant.

Ironically, the only time Galula did receive cultural expert assistance, he was unhappy with the quality of the advice. The new *communes* in Kabylia – the lowest level in a municipal reform in 1957 – were the work of a young French anthropologist well acquainted with the area and the Kabyles. He had drawn four communes in his area of operations, without consulting with Galula or anyone else, in such a way "large tracts of farm land owned by the people of one *commune* was included in another, and hamlets traditionally related to a village in a commune A were now part of commune B. We also seriously doubted the possibility that four such small *commune*s, each poor in economic and human resources, could operate efficiently. Only one adult Kabyle, cousin Oudiai, was literate in my *sous-quartier* [area of operations] and he was now in jail."(Galula 1964 [2006]-b)[124] He had come to know his area of operation better than the anthropologist.

In conclusion, *FM 3-24* devotes more attention to knowing local culture and languages because in America's present wars, the counterinsurgent cannot take for granted that cultural awareness and language skills are at hand like they were in the colonial wars half a century ago. Interestingly, the new Indian counterinsurgency doctrine or *Doctrine on Sub-Conventional Operations* also largely ignores detailed cultural analysis and simply notes the importance to aquire "detailed knowledge of the area of operations, its people, their customs, traditions, language and religious beliefs."[125] The Indian and the US doctrines are very similar, but the Indian does not describe it in detail because the Indian military believe that it already knows the relevant cultural context.[126]

However, what if culture, identity and language are more than a prerequisite for understanding and addressing the local political conflicts effectively? What if the political conflict is about which identity – culturally or linguistically defined – the state should encompass. Which criteria do *FM 3-24* offers, if any, to judge whether Iraq and Afghanistan are viable as states?

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[123] Galula, *Pacification in Algeria 1956-1958*, p. 171.

[124] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* p. 145.

[125] Quoted in Fidler,"The Indian Doctrine on Sub-Conventional Operations: Reflections from a U.S. Counterinsurgency Perspective."

[126] Fidler,"The Indian Doctrine on Sub-Conventional Operations: Reflections from a U.S. Counterinsurgency Perspective."

3.6 When Is the Bottom All There Is? Subnational Identities and Society

As an operational and tactical doctrine, *FM 3-24* is predisposed to take the area and its people as given. Nevertheless, since this has become a pivotal issue both in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is important to have a closer look at what it has to say about how to deal with insurgents rejecting the very idea of the country the counterinsurgent is trying to stabilize. Note that it is not an omission or flaw in the *FM 3-24* not to contain a recipe for determining the optimal political entity for the Host Nation. Under what circumstance a country must be divided is a strategic decision outside counterinsurgency doctrine. It is the responsibility of the political leadership the armed forces are serving. In counterinsurgency doctrine, subnational identities that question the legitimacy of the state are obstacles to overcome by the counterinsurgent.

The FM 3-24's main intellectual sources of inspiration take the political entity for given. The French and British counterinsurgency experiences were set in a colonial context, removing the question whether the area of operations was a viable political entity. For example, David Galula drew on his experiences in Vietnam, China, Greece and Algeria. In China and Greece, the government faced a communist insurgency in a battle about the form of government. In Vietnam and Algeria one issue was whether the territory should continue to be ruled from Paris or become independent. In conclusion, in none of the cases were dividing the territory seriously considered.

The American political tradition predisposes US decision-makers to see society as malleable. The US as a country is founded on a political idea, and anyone who supports and identifies with that idea is an American. By inference, Americans are predisposed to think that the same is the case elsewhere, making how to make the people support the government, the issue at hand. The idea that the "people" has such a strong cultural component that the political entity should be adjusted instead, do not correspond with American tradition.

But what does the Counterinsurgency say about who the people are? The people are described as one of the *civil considerations* – manmade infrastructure, civilian institutions, and attitudes and activities of the civil populations, and organizations within an area of operations – that influence the conduct of military operations.[127] All are important, but since counterinsurgency is about winning legitimacy among the people, the civil population is particularly important. The people, in turn, should be evaluated by analyzing six sociocultural factors:

1. Society
2. Social structure
3. Culture
4. Language
5. Power and authority
6. Interests

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[127] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 84.

The *FM 3-24* simply says that:

> "a *society* can be defined as a population whose members are subject to the same political authority, occupy a common territory, have a common culture, and share a sense of identity. A society is not easily created or destroyed, but it is possible to do so through genocide or war".[128]

Having prejudged the issue, as it must, whether the population do have a common culture and share a sense of identity, it hedges it bets somewhat by saying that society may change. Interestingly it then notes that no "society is homogenous. A society usually has a dominant culture, but can also have a number of secondary cultures".[129] Culture is one of the two components of society. The other is *social structure*. Each society is thus composed of both social structure and culture. Social structure is the relations among groups of persons within a system of groups that persist over time. These groups of persons may be racial, ethnic, religious or tribal or kinship-based. Social structure involves the way these groups are arranged into society, how they organize social positions, and how people are distributed within those positions.

Ethnicity is a particularly important way that people form groups. The *FM 3-24* defines an ethnic group as "a human community who's learned culture practices, language, history, ancestry or religion distinguish themselves from others."[130] Kurds are given as an example of an ethnic group. As we can see, ethnic groups share several characteristics of society: They have a common culture and they share a sense of identity. Furthermore, they may occupy a common territory or at least have a geographical centre of gravity, like the Kurds do.

The *FM 3-24* does not mention the possibility that ethnic groups may aspire to be a society by developing their own political authority. To do so would mean to leave the operational and tactical levels, and move into the political-strategic level. In the US tradition, civilian control of the military means civilian primacy in political-strategic decisions. The fact that a counterinsurgency campaign may run into such issues, underlines the political nature of counterinsurgency and the need for effective civil-military relations.[131]

4   *FM 3-24*: A Moon without a Planet to Orbit?

An operational and tactical doctrine such as *FM 3-24* needs political objectives to become part of a coherent strategy. Doctrines only focus on how, national policy focuses on what. The questions why one undertakes a counterinsurgency campaign and what is supposed to achieve, are necessary to have a strategy. Without a strategy, the doctrine is, in Sarah Sewall's word, "a moon without a planet to orbit."[132]

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[128] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 85.

[129] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 85.

[130] *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 86.

[131] Ricks, *The gamble: General David Petraeus and the American military adventure in Iraq*, p. 133–135, 139. Egnell, *Complex Peace Operations and Civil-Military Relations: Winning the Peace*, p. 4ff.

[132] Sarah Sewall,"Introduction to the University of Chicago Press Edition: A Radical Field Manual." In *Counterinsurgency* (2007), p. XLI.

Generally speaking, military doctrines, such as *FM 3-24,* are components of national security policy. Ideally, they address how military means contribute to national security by answering what military means ought to be employed, and how they should be employed. In other words, doctrine gives guidelines for the use and development of military forces.[133] The US military's ideal is that the political leaders set the political objectives. The military is then left alone to find out how to reach the objectives. They adhere to Samuel Huntington's ideal of *objective control –* civilian control through deciding on what to do, while the military are free to develop professional excellence without civilian distractions.[134] *FM 3-24* clearly adheres to the ideal of linking up with existing strategic objectives, decided at the political level. It is a military doctrine on counterinsurgency whose explicit purpose is to contribute to national security policy.[135]

The model of objective control has been severely criticized for distorting and simplifying civil-military relations. The military have been faulted for introducing a tacit, underlying assumption that there can be no professional military 'necessities' that contradict strategic or political goals. The insistence on tying military professionalism to "the management of violence" results in the operational level intruding on strategy.[136] On their side, the politicians have been faulted for wishful thinking in setting policy goals, disregarding what is possible. For a number of reasons, it has been argued, the ideal of separation of civil and military leadership hampers the formulation of successful strategy. Developing sound strategy requires more interaction between civilian and military personnel than the objective control model allows. The ultimate objective of the use of force is, Clausewitz insisted, the achievement of political goals.[137] The following is an analysis of the additional issues that a successful counterinsurgency strategy needs to address, leaving general questions of the optimal organization of civil-military relations for strategy aside.

The question of how the United States now tries to prepare its military to do counterinsurgency operations was discussed in section 1.1. It concluded that a new definition of stability operations as a core mission on par with combat operations and the emphasis on full-spectrum operations, meant that a legitimate effort was underway. The question of how to find a sound strategy for each counterinsurgency campaign is the question the FM 3-24 tries to answer. The objective of counterinsurgency operations is to create Host Nation legitimacy and support. This immediately triggers the concept of 'winning hearts and minds.' This may be grossly misleading. Counterinsurgency is war. It is war waged to create Host Nation legitimacy and support.

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[133] Barry R. Posen, *The sources of military doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the world wars*: Cornell University Press (1984), p. 13–14.

[134] Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, p. 83ff.

[135] "The purpose of the America's ground for ces is to fight and win the Nations's wars." *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, p. 34–35.

[136] Hew Strachan, "Making strategy: Civil-Military relations after Iraq." *Survival* 48 (2006), p. 60, 66–67. Rolf Hobson, *RMA og Transformation: En historisk-kritisk analyse av to sentrale begreper i nyere vestlig forsvarspolitikk*: Institutt for forsvarsstudier (2008), p. 33ff.

[137] Eliot A. Cohen,"The Unequal Dialogue: The Theory and Reality of Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force." In Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security, eds. Feaver and Kohn. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press (2001), p. 448. Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme command: soldiers, statesmen, and leadership in wartime*: Free Press (2002).

Counterinsurgency is comprehensive war because it needs to closely and continuously integrate political and military efforts.

Counterinsurgency is hard to do. In March 2007, General Petraeus quietly moved away from the goal of turning Iraq into a democracy that would transform the Middle East or turning the country into a dependable US ally. The previous four years had taught the US military that such goals were unattainable. On the ground in Iraq, the goal was getting to a more peaceful Iraq that would not explode into a regional war or implode into civil war. Petraeus decided to treat the government of Iraq as a party to the conflict rather than as an ally. Emma Sky, Odierno's political adviser on Iraq, summarized their informal discussions: "It is a failed state with ungoverned spaces in which the government is part of the problem."[138] Petraeus believed that stability could only be achieved by lowering American ambitions, and conditional US support for the Iraqi government, moving somewhat towards an arbiter role.[139]

The way in which this occurred is of considerable interest in understanding the development of counterinsurgency strategy. The first point is that the part of lowered ambitions that were explicitly acknowledged, came about in informal civil-military exchanges between General Petraeus and President Bush, instigated and driven by the former. The similarity to the integrated approach to the development of strategy is striking.[140] Indeed, it is what Morris Janowitz calls *unanticipated militarism,* brought about by "..lack of effective traditions for controlling the military establishment, as well as from a failure of civilian leaders to act relevantly and consistently."[141] It occurred during Petraeus weekly briefings of the President and personal memos to the President. As violence in Iraq abated, Petraeus began to worry that the President might succumb to premature triumphalism, advising him instead to say that "We are putting the hurt on al-Qaida, but they are not finished."[142]

Second, the lowered ambitions were partially informal:

> This new sobriety was the intellectual context for the reduction in the goals of the war. This is a controversial point, because that shrinkage has never been announced or even acknowledged. But it was put into practice every day as a smaller, narrower set of aims.[143]

Since in counterinsurgency wars, the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of operation are more interdependent than in typical conventional operations it is possible that strategic changes

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[138] Ricks, *The gamble: General David Petraeus and the American military adventure in Iraq*, p. 155–156.

[139] The best general account of the decision to become an arbiter to the conflict rather than simply pro-government is Robinson, *Tell me how this ends: General David Petraeus and the search for a way out of Iraq*, p. 114. For illuminating episodes of how the arbiter role worked in practice, see Ricks, *Fiasco: the American military adventure in Iraq*, p. 142, 156.

[140] Morris Janowitz, *The professional soldier: a social and political portrait*: Free Press of Glencoe (1960), p. 12, 343.

[141] Janowitz, *The professional soldier: a social and political portrait*, p. 14.

[142] Ricks, *The gamble: General David Petraeus and the American military adventure in Iraq*, p. 226.

[143] Ricks, *The gamble: General David Petraeus and the American military adventure in Iraq*, p. 164.

mainly are expressed at the tactical or operational level.[144] For example, on May 29 2007, Col Lt Kuhl was contacted by a group of Iraqis who said that they were going to attack AQM, who had declared Ameriya their capital. Kuehl asked for permission from his brigade commander Col Burton to support an illegal group of armed men, undoubtedly most of which had been insurgents. They decided to go the mosque and here Kuehl met a man called Abu Abid for the first time. Kuehl and Burton would support his group's efforts to take back Ameriya from AQM in the coming months.

On June 8, the operations officer of 1-5 Battalion Major Daniels was invited to join General Petraeus on morning run, and told to continue the operations. "Do not let our army stop you," he was told. Daniels told Petraeus that they had captured more AQM in the last week than in their period combined. [145] It meant that militia groups outside the government were acceptable to the Americans. The US military had adopted a strategy in which lowering of violence had become the primary objective. The point is that during counterinsurgency operations, operational decisions to support groups such as the one led by Abu Abid, becomes strategy.

In conclusion, a counterinsurgency doctrine like *FM 3-24* needs a political strategy to work. If the political leaders fail to provide one, there are two possibilities, both undesirable. The first is that counterinsurgency operations do indeed become a moon without a planet to orbit. If that happens, the operations will fail, drifting aimlessly like a moon without a planet to orbit. The second is that someone else than the political leaders step up to provide the strategy. Arguably, this is what happened in Iraq in early 2007. This is what Janowitz called *unanticipated militarism* – military leaders stepping up when civilians fail to act relevantly.[146] For obvious reasons, this is undesirable, too.

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[144] A Radical Field Manual, forword by Sarah Sewall in *Counterinsurgency Army Field Manual 3-24*, and Sarah Sewall, "*Modernizing U.S. Counterinsurgency Practice: Rethinking Risk and Developing a National Strategy.*" Military Review (2006), p. 104.

[145] Robinson, *Tell me how this ends: General David Petraeus and the search for a way out of Iraq*, p. 238–239.

[146] Janowitz, *The professional soldier: a social and political portrait*, p. 14.

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