The Army's Role in Counterinsurgency and Insurgency

Stephen T. Hosmer

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Stephen T. Hosmer

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PREFACE

While Vice Chief of Staff, United States Army, General Maxwell Thurman asked The RAND Corporation Arroyo Center to examine the Army's capabilities and doctrine for Third World conflicts and to recommend improvements where appropriate. This report documents one response to that request. The findings of the study were briefed to General Thurman and the staff of the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), which he then commanded, in January 1989, and to the Arroyo Center Policy Committee in April 1989. The research for the study, begun in 1988, was conducted under the "Army Doctrine and Policy for Third World Conflicts" project in the Arroyo Center's Policy and Strategy Program. The views expressed in the report are the author's alone and are not necessarily endorsed by the United States Army.

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SUMMARY

Even if the Soviet Union stops supporting so-called wars of national liberation, insurgency will almost certainly remain a ubiquitous form of conflict in the Third World. Insurgency may threaten important U.S. national security interests by

- Jeopardizing the stability and economic development of friendly countries
- Producing hostile regimes that provide bases for other hostile powers and insurgents
- Endangering U.S. citizens and facilities
- Generating refugees who flee to the United States
- Facilitating illegal narcotics trafficking.

Some contingencies—e.g., a direct U.S. ground combat intervention to counter narcotics trafficking or aggression in Latin America, the defense of U.S. installations against insurgent attacks, or the rescue of an important ally on the verge of catastrophic defeat—may require U.S. Army units to engage in counterinsurgency combat. To prepare for such contingencies, however unlikely, the Army might provide specific counterinsurgency training to the light infantry and other units that would engage in counterinsurgency operations. In any intervention, the Army should give immediate priority to upgrading indigenous counterinsurgency capabilities.

The most frequent Army tasks in counterinsurgency conflicts, however, will continue to be the provision of training, advisory, materiel, and other noncombat support to indigenous Third World forces. And because ground forces are the crucial military element in counterinsurgency, the Army has reason both to take the leading role in the U.S. counterinsurgency assistance effort and to maximize its capabilities to advise, train, and equip indigenous ground forces.

The Army also needs to maximize the effectiveness of its influence and support so as to be able to deal with the problems that frequently arise in working with Third World states confronting insurgency threats. Experience shows that indigenous government and military establishments often deviate from sound counterinsurgency practices and thus fail to suppress an insurgency.

The Army might consider three basic initiatives to enhance the effectiveness of its counterinsurgency-support capabilities:

- Build and maintain a small cadre of counterinsurgency experts to advise and train indigenous forces and to design and manage U.S. security assistance programs.
- In cooperation with other services, create a counterinsurgency institute to train U.S. and foreign military and civilian personnel in counterinsurgency.
- Ensure effective U.S. arms and equipment transfers to countries facing insurgent threats.

Counterinsurgency requires different skills, training, and background from other special operations missions. In addition to foreign area and language competence, counterinsurgency specialists should have expertise in both the nonmilitary and military components of counterinsurgency, including its political, economic, psychological, organizational, and intelligence aspects.

To foster the recruitment, training, and appropriate utilization of counterinsurgency experts, the Army could create both a functional area for counterinsurgency and a viable career ladder for those assigned to this career field. To build the cadre of counterinsurgency experts—at most, a few hundred—the Army might select individuals who, through on-the-job performance in the field, demonstrate a natural aptitude for working with indigenous forces.

Building on the counterinsurgency training the Army and Air Force now offer, the proposed counterinsurgency institute could provide an extensive basic course (say, 10 to 12 weeks long) covering the military, political, economic, and psychological aspects of counterinsurgency warfare. It might also offer advanced and specialized courses on counterinsurgency planning, pacification and rural development, intelligence, suppression of narcotics trafficking, and the strategy and tactics of specific insurgent groups.

Among other contributions, the institute could enhance the quality and credibility of U.S. counterinsurgency advice and training, prepare U.S. military forces for Third World contingencies, orient and motivate foreign leaders to pursue sound counterinsurgency practices, and facilitate the coordination of the counterinsurgency efforts of both the United States and Third World nations by exposing civilian and military personnel to the same basic training and doctrine.

To influence the content and terms of arms transfer programs, the Army might place its counterinsurgency experts on embassy country teams and at various other key positions in the U.S. security assistance complex. Such programs should be designed specifically to encourage the host nation's military forces to follow sound counterinsurgency policies and practices.

At the minimum, the Army should avoid weapon transfers that might lead indigenous forces to adopt counterproductive battlefield habits or ineffective war-fighting strategies. In addition, counterinsurgency support operations should maximize the indigenous government's and military's self-reliance.

The United States also needs to be able to support resistance movements that confront externally imposed and other hostile regimes in the Third World. Such support can raise and extend the costs of aggression and can help deter future attacks.

If called on to support friendly insurgencies, the Army will need personnel to design U.S. assistance programs for such resistance movements and to advise and train insurgents. To increase its capabilities for such support, the Army might develop a few specialists with expertise in insurgency operations.

Protracted insurgency warfare in the Third World requires skill and training that differ in some important respects from those needed for guerrilla operations behind the lines in conventional conflicts. In addition to knowing the military strategy and tactics of insurgency, Army insurgency specialists should also master the political and other dimensions of protracted insurgency, including the techniques for organizing clandestine support networks in urban and rural areas.

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I would like to thank George K. Tanham, who participated in this study, for his numerous ideas and other contributions. I would also like to thank Robert W. Komer, W. James Eddins, and Susanna W. Purnell for their contributions to the study; Alexander Alexiev and Paul Henze for their thoughtful comments and suggestions; and Erma Packman for her editorial assistance.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The United States Army, along with the other U.S. military services, protects and advances U.S. national security interests in the Third World. To carry out this mission, the Army must maintain capabilities to achieve such important operational objectives as:

- The deterrence and, if need be, the defeat of state-sponsored attacks on U.S. allies and other interests
- The countering of insurgent threats to allied governments and U.S. facilities and forces
- The assistance of friendly insurgent movements to effectively oppose regimes hostile to the United States
- The suppression of illegal narcotics trafficking[1]
- The defense and rescue of imperiled U.S. citizens abroad
- The restoration of peace in countries riven by internal upheaval.

This study focuses on the capabilities required for two of these operational objectives—the countering of insurgent threats to allied governments and other U.S. interests and the assisting of friendly insurgent movements to effectively oppose hostile regimes—the achievement of which has at times eluded the United States. These objectives are closely related in that they require U.S. advisory and training personnel with broadly similar skills and backgrounds, though each objective also requires some unique expertise.

Moreover, many of the capabilities required for effective counterinsurgency would also serve the suppression of illegal narcotics trafficking in foreign countries. Similarly, the political-military training and skills needed for counterinsurgency operations would probably apply to other politically sensitive operations as well, for example, the possible future interposition of U.S. forces to restore peace in a strife-torn country.

In the course of preparing this study, the author reviewed government and nongovernment publications dealing with the efficacy of U.S.

[1]In the pursuit of this operational objective, U.S. personnel and forces may be called upon to assist indigenous governments and forces to deny and disrupt the growing, processing, and transportation of illegal narcotics and to dismantle drug trafficking organizations in foreign countries, as well as to interdict the transport of illegal drugs into the United States. See *National Drug Control Strategy*, The White House, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1989, pp. 60–79.

support for counterinsurgency and insurgency. Interviews with U.S. personnel who had participated in the advising, training, and equipping of counterinsurgency forces in Central America and Southeast Asia provided further valuable insights. Robert W. Komer and George K. Tanham, RAND colleagues who had played key roles in the U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in South Vietnam and Thailand during the 1960s, offered particularly incisive analysis.

The author also obtained information relating to the current status and focus of Army and Air Force counterinsurgency training from on-site visits to the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and the U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, Hurlburt Field, Florida. He also reviewed present and past U.S. military doctrine for counterinsurgency and insurgency, including various drafts (the most recent dated August 4, 1989) of FM 100-20/AFM 2-XY, "Military Operations in Low-Intensity Conflict," the forthcoming joint Army/Air Force doctrine.

Section II of this study examines why insurgency is likely to continue to be a frequent form of conflict. It then describes the threat of insurgency to important U.S. interests in the Third World, particularly with respect to the fostering of illicit narcotics trafficking.

Section III explores the potential for U.S. Army noncombat support to Third World countries fighting insurgency. It also describes the impediments to effective U.S. influence and assistance and relates these impediments to the need for the Army to maximize the effectiveness of its security assistance support. The section concludes with recommendations for increasing the efficacy of U.S. Army advisory, training, and materiel assistance and for improving U.S. military doctrine for noncombat counterinsurgency support.

Section IV outlines the potential situations that might lead to U.S. Army involvement in counterinsurgency combat. It then suggests how the Army might improve its capabilities and doctrine for such combat.

Section V treats the Army's role in support of friendly insurgency, explaining why the United States should maintain a capability to support resistance movements in the Third World, even though it may rarely use such a capability. Finally, it suggests how the Army might increase its capabilities to support friendly insurgency, given the significant differences between protracted insurgent warfare and other forms of conflict.

II. INSURGENT THREATS AND U.S. INTERESTS

INSURGENCY AS A FREQUENT FORM OF FUTURE CONFLICT

Even if "new thinking" and political upheaval lead the Soviet Union and the other members of the Warsaw Pact to stop supporting so-called wars of national liberation, insurgency will almost certainly continue as a ubiquitous form of future conflict.[1] While Soviet and East European financing, training, and arms transfers have contributed to the growth and eventual success of a few insurgent movements—such as the Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, or MPLA)—many insurgencies arise, survive, and even prosper without such backing.[2]

Because insurgents practice a comparatively inexpensive style of warfare, they can often sustain their operations with little or no external assistance. The 20,000-man New People's Army (NPA) insurgency in the Philippines, for example, apparently has received no external support other than that provided by overseas fund-raisers.[3] Some movements rely on criminal activity, such as banditry, kidnapping, illegal taxation, or narcotics trafficking, to generate the money needed to buy arms and other supplies.[4] The largest insurgent group now

[1]Despite "new political thinking" in Soviet foreign policy, however, the Soviets may not terminate support to all of the "national liberation" movements that they have directly or indirectly helped to underwrite in the past. For example, in March 1989, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoliy Adamashin stated that the USSR would continue to "render assistance to the liberation struggle of the people of South Africa" and supply arms to the African National Congress (ANC). See Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Daily Report, *Soviet Union* (FBIS-SOV-89-062A), April 3, 1989, p. 15.

[2]For a discussion of Soviet and East European support to the MPLA and other "liberation" movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, see Stephen T. Hosmer and Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Policy and Practice Toward Third World Conflicts*, Lexington Books, D. C. Heath and Company, Lexington, Mass., 1983.

[3]See United States Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1988*, Washington, D.C., March 1989, p. 81.

[4]The insurgents in El Salvador bankrolled their operations in the 1970s largely from kidnappings; in 1978–1980 they collected some $40 million to $50 million in ransom from foreign businesses alone. During the 1970s, the Montonero insurgents in Argentina also used kidnapping and extortion extensively to generate funds for their movement. The Montoneros reportedly netted some $66 million in ransom from one kidnapping alone. See Susanna W. Purnell and Eleanor S. Wainstein, *The Problems of U.S. Businesses Operating Abroad in Terrorist Environments*, The RAND Corporation, R-2842-DOC, November 1981, pp. 6 and 58.

operating in Colombia, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—or FARC) is thought to obtain as much as 80 percent of its funds from illegal narcotics-related activities.[5]

Moreover, when an insurgent movement requires external training, weapons, or logistic support, it can sometimes find at least one state—perhaps Cuba, Vietnam, Libya, or Iran—willing to provide direct or indirect covert assistance.[6] Cuba, for example, has at one time or another trained and otherwise supported would-be insurgents from nearly every country in Latin America. Indeed, Cuba has given such support even when the fomenting of insurgency clearly contravened a prevailing Soviet policy against the incitement of armed violence in Latin America.[7]

The material and human conditions that foster the growth of insurgency are likely to persist in some areas of the Third World for the foreseeable future. Such conditions commonly arise when (1) aspiring indigenous leaders, often radicalized while attending local universities, are committed to using armed violence to gain their political objectives; (2) neglected rural and urban populations, including ethnic and religious minorities, are sufficiently disaffected or isolated from the government to succumb to insurgent proselytizing or insurgent intimidation; and (3) an ineffective and unresponsive government lacks the legitimacy and/or civil-military instruments to preserve internal security.

These conditions, in one form or another, have all contributed to the growth of insurgencies, such as those now going on in El Salvador, Peru, and the Philippines.[8] And as the Philippine experience with the Huks in the 1950s and now with the NPA in the 1980s demonstrates, insurgency—like a weed in a garden—can reemerge where it once had been suppressed if the conditions conducive to its growth recur.

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[5]See U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *U.S. Narcotics Control Programs in Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, and Mexico: An Update*, 101st Cong., 1st sess., U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., February 1989, p. 23.

[6]However, insurgents may find such external support more difficult to come by in the future if states such as Cuba, Vietnam, and Iran decide to moderate their international behavior so as to secure access to U.S. trade, investment, and technology.

[7]See Department of State, *Cuba's Renewed Support for Violence in Latin America*, Special Report No. 90, Washington, D.C., December 14, 1981, pp. 2–12.

[8]For a discussion of the conditions that led to the rise of the insurgency in the Philippines, El Salvador, and Peru, see William Chapman, *Inside the Philippine Revolution*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 1987; Max G. Manwaring and Court Prisk (eds.), *El Salvador at War: An Oral History*, National Defense University Press, Washington, D.C., 1988; and Gordon H. McCormick, *The Shining Path and the Future of Peru*, The RAND Corporation, R-3781-DOS/OSD, March 1990.

Finally, insurgency will continue to prevail as a form of conflict because protective terrain and sanctuary will hinder its eradication. Such movements can survive for decades when they can operate in densely covered, mountainous, or other protective terrain and/or have access to cross-border sanctuary areas where they can establish secure rear bases and seek refuge when being pursued.[9]

POTENTIAL DANGER OF INSURGENCY TO U.S. INTERESTS

Insurgency can jeopardize the political stability and economic development of U.S. allies. As the U.S. experience with El Salvador demonstrated, insurgency can significantly increase the costs to the United States of preserving the security of such threatened states.

Insurgency also can endanger U.S. citizens, facilities (including military bases), and business operations in foreign lands. American nationals and property are often specifically targeted for kidnapping or attack by insurgents as a means to extort money or to politically embarrass and wage economic warfare against the local government.[10] As the conflicts in Central America showed, insurgencies can also generate significant numbers of refugees, some of whom emigrate to the United States.[11]

If successful, insurgency can produce hostile regimes that may provide military bases to other potentially hostile powers and/or foment and aid insurgency in neighboring states. The Sandinista support of the insurgency in El Salvador is but one example of how a revolutionary takeover of one country can provide a base for insurgent operations against another.[12]

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[9]Thanks to the remote and difficult terrain and the comparative safety provided by the proximity of the Thai border, the Communist Party of Malaya guerrillas continued to operate in the far north of Malaysia for 41 years, agreeing only in November 1989 to finally end their insurgency. See Mervin Nambiar, "Malaysian Rebellion Ends After 41 Years," *Washington Times*, November 14, 1989, p. A12.

[10]See Purnell and Wainstein, *The Problems of U.S. Businesses Operating Abroad in Terrorist Environments*, pp. 5–7.

[11]Sociologists estimate that almost one million Salvadorans already live in the United States illegally and an estimated 500,000 have fled to Central American countries. See Douglas Farah, "Salvadorans Lining Up to Get Out," *Washington Post*, December 18, 1989, p. A16.

[12]The growth of insurgency in southern Africa during the past two decades is another clear example of this phenomenon. The People's Republic of the Congo provided the secure rear base for Soviet and Cuban training and logistic support to the MPLA insurgents in Angola. After the MPLA seized power, Angola became the key rear base for operations of the Cuban- and Soviet-supported South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia. See Stephen T. Hosmer, "How Successful Has the Soviet Union

Illegal narcotics trafficking has become for the United States an increasingly serious consequence of insurgency in Latin America and Asia. Insurgency can facilitate illegal narcotics trafficking in the following four ways.

- First, insurgents may directly engage in the growing, processing, and/or transportation of narcotics, using the proceeds of their drug operations to purchase arms and supplies.

Insurgents are directly and widely involved in drug trafficking in Southeast and Southern Asia and in Latin America. In Burma, the world's largest producer of illicit opium, various dissident ethnic groups control the prime poppy-growing areas, as well as the production and transportation of heroin.[13] These narcotics operations underwrite the Burmese dissidents' continuing military struggle against the Rangoon government, a struggle that costs that government the loss of about 100 troops each month.[14] The Tamil "Tiger" insurgents in Sri Lanka reportedly generate much of the money for their arms and other supply purchases by operating an extensive courier network that smuggles heroin into Western Europe.[15]

In Colombia, income from narcotics operations has allowed the FARC to double in size to some 5000 armed combatants during the past few years. The FARC insurgents have penetrated all segments of the cocaine trade except the distribution system.[16]

Been in Third World Protracted Conflict?" in *Guerrilla Warfare and Counter-Insurgency*, Richard H. Shultz et al. (eds.), Lexington Books, Lexington, Mass., 1989, p. 68.

[13]See U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *U.S. Narcotics Control Programs Overseas: An Assessment*, 89th Cong., 1st sess., U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., February 22, 1985, pp. 8–9, and statement and testimony of Ann B. Wrobleski, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of International Narcotics Matters, Department of State, in U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Narcotics Review in Southeast/Southwest Asia, the Middle East, and Africa*, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., March 15, 1988, pp. 7 and 16.

[14]The Wa, a dissident ethnic group that until recently was allied with the Burmese Communist Party, is estimated to have an armed force of some 20,000 to 25,000 fighters. The troop strength of the Shan United Army—which operates in the so-called Golden Triangle area, where Laos, Burma, and Thailand meet—is estimated to be between 2500 and 5000. Khun Sa, commander of the Shan United Army, and reputedly the world's largest drug dealer, controls an estimated 80 percent of all Golden Triangle heroin. See William H. Overholt, "Burma: The Wrong Enemy," *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1989–1990, pp. 180–185; Jonathan Sikes, "Golden Triangle's Big Heroin Harvests About to Flood U.S.," *Washington Times*, April 18, 1989, p. A9; and statement and testimony of Ann B. Wrobleski, p. 16.

[15]As many as 1000 Tamil couriers may be involved in this smuggling operation. See Robert C. Oberst, "Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers," *Conflict*, Vol. 8, No. 2/3, 1988, pp. 195–196.

[16]U.S. Congress, *U.S. Narcotics Control Programs in Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, and Mexico: An Update*, pp. 6–7.

- Second, insurgents may cooperate with narcotics traffickers by protecting and/or sanctioning the growing, processing, and/or transport of narcotics in areas where the insurgents exercise control or maintain a military presence.

In return for their service, the insurgents exact a tax from the growers and/or the traffickers. Even though certain insurgent groups and drug traffickers in Latin America sometimes fight one another, they also cooperate when it suits their mutual interest.[17] In Peru, for example, the communist Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) insurgents control the upper Huallaga valley, thought to be the source of almost half of the cocaine consumed in the United States.[18] The Shining Path may derive as much as $30 million a year from taxes on coca sales, transport fees, and other drug-related extortion in the valley.[19]

- Third, insurgency may deter indigenous leaders from committing military resources to counter narcotics operations.

The Peruvian military commander responsible for the security of the Huallaga valley, for example, has declined to mount operations to interdict the coca trade on grounds that this would alienate the local population and create greater popular support for the Shining Path insurgents.[20]

- Fourth, insurgency may so disrupt a country's economy and government as to give the local population both the incentive and the opportunity to grow and traffic in narcotics.

In Afghanistan, the hardship created by the continuing conflict between the resistance and the Kabul regime, along with the absence of governmental control in the countryside, has resulted in a sizable increase in opium production. As one U.S. official put it, "people in a

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[17]"In some cases, traffickers and insurgents [in Colombia] cooperate with each other; in others, they are engaged in pitched battles. In still others, some members of the Colombian military may temporarily form alliances with traffickers to attack guerrillas, while in others the military directly attack both groups. Most of the arms flowing into Colombia are believed to be imported by the traffickers, either for their own use or for the insurgents." See U.S. Congress, *U.S. Narcotics Control Programs in Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, and Mexico: An Update*, p. 24. The above-mentioned cooperation between the Colombian military and the narcotics traffickers presumably stopped after Colombian President Virgilio Barco declared all-out war on the drug dealers on August 20, 1989.

[18]See Jane Brooke, "Peru's Guerrillas Become a Threat to the Capital," *New York Times*, June 12, 1989, p. A12.

[19]U.S. Congress, *U.S. Narcotics Control Programs in Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, and Mexico: An Update*, pp. 6–7.

[20]See Gustavo Gorriti, "Anti-Drug Efforts Take New Direction in Peru," *Dallas Morning News*, September 25, 1989, p. 1.

war-torn country turn to something that is easy to grow, is guaranteed to provide income, [and] is always a negotiable currency."[21]

These considerations, plus the fact that drug traffickers often possess well-armed private armies of their own, point up the important counterinsurgency dimension of the narcotics control problem.[22] While narcotics traffickers and insurgents usually seek different ultimate objectives—the traffickers may want only a permissive government, whereas the insurgents usually want to become the government—they often share tactics and other attributes.

Both insurgents and traffickers, for example, rely on mobility to preserve their forces and organizations. Both are prepared to promptly abandon any base or other fixed position when confronted with superior government forces. For security, both rely on sympathizers or paid agents among the local population and inside the government to warn of impending government operations. Both employ assassinations, bombings, and other terrorist attacks to neutralize their opponents and intimidate government officials and the population. Both, though the insurgents to a much greater extent than the traffickers, also attempt to develop political support among the population at large.

Thus, even when drug traffickers are not involved with insurgents or insurgency, one finds significant commonalities between the capabilities and approaches needed to counter an insurgency and those needed to suppress illegal narcotics production by Third World drug cartels or other traffickers. Both require an integrated political, economic, and military strategy, good intelligence and counterintelligence, and highly mobile forces adept at small-unit operations. Therefore, the upgrading of the counterinsurgency capabilities of indigenous forces in narcotic-producing countries can contribute to suppressing illegal drug trafficking.

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[21]See statement and testimony of Ann B. Wrobleski, p. 32. Lebanon, another strife-torn country, has also become a major production source and transit point for illegal narcotics.

[22]Some of the army and national police forces directly involved in the drug war in Colombia are reported to be less well trained and equipped than the private armies of the drug barons. See Bernard E. Trainor, "Pentagon," *The New York Times*, September 8, 1989, p. A12.

III. U.S. ARMY NONCOMBAT SUPPORT TO THIRD WORLD FORCES FIGHTING INSURGENCY

While certain contingencies may require U.S. Army units to engage in counterinsurgency combat, the principal Army counterinsurgency mission will remain the provision of noncombat support to Third World forces. Moreover, the timelier and more effective the U.S. noncombat support to a friendly country fighting an insurgency is, the less likely will be the need for a U.S. combat intervention.

Most frequently, noncombat support will be limited to advising, training, and equipping indigenous army and other security forces confronting insurgent threats. However, U.S. security assistance to some threatened Third World states may also involve the Army in other support operations. To fill critical gaps in indigenous capabilities, U.S. Army personnel may be called upon, for example, to support indigenous logistic, communication, medical, maintenance, engineering, psychological, and intelligence operations. The Army also may be directed to conduct exercises and to show force in a region so as to deter external intervention in an insurgency.[1]

IMPORTANCE OF INDIGENOUS GROUND FORCES

The ground forces of a country threatened by insurgency hold the military key to combating that threat. The U.S. Army, as the counterpart of the indigenous ground forces, therefore must assume the leading role in U.S. counterinsurgency security assistance. Indeed, so vital is the potential contribution of ground forces to a counterinsurgency campaign that the Army should seek to maximize its own capabilities to advise and train indigenous forces and to ensure their proper equipping.

The outcome of insurgent conflicts often depends on the political reliability, behavior, and capabilities of the defending government's ground forces. In fact, the defending government's army frequently constitutes the ultimate barrier to an insurgent takeover. History shows that insurgents can rarely, if ever, prevail against well-led, indigenous counterinsurgent forces that are adequately supplied and serve a

[1]The Army has provided all of these types of support to Salvadoran government forces during the present insurgency in El Salvador.

government that has a modicum of popular support.[2] As an insurgency wanes, government ground forces must root out the remaining insurgents from their base areas to achieve a decisive victory.

The importance of the sometimes neglected nonmilitary components of counterinsurgency—that is, the economic, political, and psychological dimensions—should not be allowed to obscure the continuing centrality of the military component. Indeed, some insurgencies involve considerable fighting over a sustained period and produce tens of thousands of government and guerrilla casualties.[3]

In addition to their direct combat role, ground forces enable the key nonmilitary components of counterinsurgency to come into play. Ground troops safeguard elections, protect the country's economic and communication infrastructure, and provide the security for local pacification campaigns. In many Third World nations, the army often constitutes the best-organized government entity in the country and the only one that has a permanent presence in most rural areas. In addition, the Army usually has better communication and transportation assets than other government agencies have.

As a result, army personnel often must help to plan, organize, and conduct the government's development and other counterinsurgency-related programs in insurgent-contested areas. Moreover, the behavior of the ground forces toward the population often shapes the attitude of the populace toward the government. In short, without the active support, cooperation, and good behavior of the indigenous army and other ground forces, the government's nonmilitary counterinsurgency programs would prove either impossible or ineffective.

Finally, Third World armies often possess influence far beyond their purely military charter. They may be the final arbiters of their country's foreign and domestic policies. Where the local army does not itself hold power, it frequently can determine who does. Moreover, the army can mount a coup or engage in other extralegal practices that will undermine indigenous domestic backing, as well as U.S. support, for its country's counterinsurgency war effort.

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[2]See Stephen T. Hosmer, *Constraints on U.S. Strategy in Third World Conflict*, Crane Russak & Co., New York, 1988, p. 143.

[3]During the Algerian conflict, French forces suffered more than 80,000 casualties, including over 10,000 killed in action. French estimates put the number of Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) combatants killed by security forces at over 140,000. See Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954–1962*, Viking Press, New York, 1977, p. 538. From 1965 to 1972, when fighting in South Vietnam was partly insurgent warfare and partly conventional combat, over one million North and South Vietnamese are estimated to have been killed in combat. See Thomas C. Thayer, *War Without Fronts: The American Experience in Vietnam*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colo., 1985, p. 104. Government, guerrilla, and civilian casualties in El Salvador probably number 70,000 killed since 1979. In terms of deaths to total population, El Salvador's cumulative death rate has been higher than those of the United States in World Wars I and II.

IMPEDIMENTS TO EFFECTIVE U.S. INFLUENCE AND ASSISTANCE

The Army should also maximize the effectiveness of its influence and support to deal with the difficulties that the United States may encounter in helping Third World friends and allies to confront insurgent threats. Third World governments and military establishments sometimes adopt policies and practices that contravene sound counterinsurgency, or fail to implement the political-military reforms and other measures needed to decisively suppress an insurgent movement.

Among the most frequent and egregious examples of such counterproductive behavior are the indigenous government's and military's *failure* to:

- Appoint competent and appropriately motivated civilian and military officials to prosecute the counterinsurgency campaign.
- Operate legally and/or redress the fundamental political, economic, and social grievances that generate support for the insurgents.
- Create a cohesive and effective civil-military organization to manage counterinsurgency operations at all levels and in accordance with an agreed counterinsurgency master plan.
- Establish local self-defense organizations and other programs designed to protect and divide the population from the insurgents.
- Field military, police, and other security forces that are motivated and able to defend and befriend the population and to pursue the insurgents to their final defeat.

In addition, a threatened indigenous government may also fail to:

- Build an intelligence system capable of locating insurgent forces and compromising insurgent operations and sympathizers.
- Institute psychological warfare and other programs to induce insurgent desertions, defections, and surrenders.

Experience shows that because they deviate in one or more of these respects from sound counterinsurgency policies and practices, Third World governments and military establishments often fail to stamp out insurgencies. Even if a government is able to deny the insurgents outright victory in the near term, the persistence of such counterproductive behavior is likely to protract a conflict needlessly, increase the costs of the insurgency to both the defending government and its external supporters, and permit the insurgents to remain in the field as a potential threat to the government's long-term survival.

The propensity for indigenous leaders to eschew sound counterinsurgency policies and practices and to ignore U.S. advice frequently stems from one or more of the following factors: differing threat perceptions; overriding interests; differing traditions; nationalist sensitivities; insufficient experience in counterinsurgency; government weakness; and shortcomings in U.S. assistance practices.

Differing Threat Perceptions

Third World civilian and military leaders sometimes reject sound counterinsurgency practice and U.S. advice because they are less concerned than U.S. officials about the consequences of the failure to defeat an insurgency expeditiously and decisively. Hence, the indigenous leaders see no reason to adopt the otherwise unpalatable political, economic, and other reforms that would hasten or complete the suppression of the insurgency or to accept the increased casualties that would likely result from more aggressive military operations in the insurgents' base areas.

In the case of the Vietnam conflict, the South Vietnamese leadership often manifested a lack of urgency to fight the war. Their erroneous belief that the United States would rescue their country if the military situation deteriorated beyond a certain point contributed to their reluctance.[4] More recently, observers have noted a similar lack of urgency on the part of some Salvadoran military and civilian leaders about the need to expeditiously defeat the insurgency in El Salvador.[5] The Salvadoran Army, for example, has manifested a reluctance to

[4]According to Bui Diem, a senior adviser to President Thieu, "There was no sense of purpose or direction among the high officials of the [South Vietnamese] government and strangely enough, in a country so pressed by the requirements of war, not a single member of the government, including the President himself, had any sense of urgency about the situation." See Stephen T. Hosmer, Konrad Kellen, and Brian M. Jenkins, *The Fall of South Vietnam: Statements by Vietnamese Military and Civilian Leaders*, Crane Russak Co., New York, 1980, p. 61. Complacency also permeated the lower levels of the Vietnamese command structure. A U.S. Army history describes the experience of one senior adviser to a South Vietnamese infantry regiment as follows: "Only by constantly nagging and cajoling their counterparts were the advisers able to make the South Vietnamese carry out their assigned tasks. The Vietnamese, [according to the adviser], 'can't or they won't plan in advance,' and their entire approach to the war was lackadaisical. It had taken ten months of work, for example, to persuade his counterpart to conduct night operations. 'If we had Vietnamese that were as concerned about their plight as we are,' [the adviser] concluded, 'our efforts to help them—the advisory duty—wouldn't have been any problem at all.'" See Jeffrey J. Clarke, *Advice and Support: The Final Years, The U.S. Army in Vietnam*, Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington, D.C., 1988, p. 322.

[5]General Fred F. Woerner, a senior U.S. commander closely associated with the conflict in El Salvador, said in November 1986 that he found "El Salvador still seriously lacking in total national commitment to the war. There is still too much of the military

mount systematic and pervasive small-unit patrols, ambushes, and night operations that would progressively exhaust insurgent forces; they have also failed to "move permanently into areas where the guerrillas live and fight them there."[6]

Overriding Interests

Differing threat perceptions obviously produce differing priorities. Thus, while the United States may put top priority on defeating an insurgency in a Third World nation, that nation's civilian and military leaders may place higher priority on keeping political power, amassing personal wealth, and enjoying life in the capital city.[7]

Indigenous civilian and military leaders may also cling to pernicious habits—regarding, say, inappropriate command and other counterinsurgency-related personnel appointments—because of overriding professional and personal obligations. Such obligations may relate to political patronage and allegiances, involvement in corruption, or loyalty to military academy classmates. In El Salvador, for example, an officer's promotions and assignments frequently depend more on his military academy class—or *tanda*—than on his skills or performance on the battlefield. According to some U.S. observers, this personnel practice has all too often led to the placement of poor officers in key counterinsurgency positions.[8]

American advisers in South Vietnam had to work with an indigenous officer corps produced by an institutionalized military patronage system in which promotions and appointments were based more on favoritism and loyalty than on merit. As a result,

> many South Vietnamese officers whom Americans considered incompetent occupied important command and staff positions for years on

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effort, not exclusively, but still too much. Until there is a better balance between the military and the other elements of national power, they will not achieve the internal consolidation necessary to declare peace and make peace prevail. I believe they will achieve this. I just wish they were on a damn faster timetable than they appear to be." See Manwaring and Prisk, *El Salvador at War*, p. 455.

[6]See James Le Moyne, "El Salvador's Forgotten War," *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1989, p. 123, and A. J. Bacevich, James D. Hallums, Richard H. White, and Thomas F. Young, *American Military Policy in Small Wars: The Case of El Salvador*, Pergamon-Brassey's, Washington, D.C., 1988, pp. 37–38.

[7]The author is indebted to George K. Tanham for pointing out how widely the priorities of host-nation leaders may diverge from those of a U.S. country team. Tanham recalls that during his tenure as the special assistant for counterinsurgency at the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand, from 1968 to 1970, American officials seemed more interested than Thai officials in the counterinsurgency effort in Thailand.

[8]See Bacevich et al., *American Military Policy in Small Wars*, pp. 26–27.

end, and it was such men who frustrated American field advisers and often set the tone for the rest of the South Vietnamese army.[9]

Differing Traditions

Indigenous leaders may hesitate to accept U.S. advice that conflicts with established traditions and customs. For example, because Salvadoran military tradition lacked the concept of a noncommissioned leader of troops, the United States had difficulty in inducing the Salvadoran military to introduce noncommissioned officers (NCOs) into their force structure.[10] Similarly, U.S. efforts to encourage the assignment of more competent indigenous officers to combat units in the field has run counter, in some instances, to a host-nation military tradition that attaches greater prestige and importance to headquarters staff assignments.[11]

Nationalist Sensitivities

Resentment of U.S. "dominance" or concern about the political consequences of appearing to knuckle under to the United States may also lead indigenous military and civilian leaders to resist U.S. advice. Indeed, some Third World officials make the explicit point that while they welcome U.S. materiel assistance, they have no need for U.S. advisers, advice, or criticism.[12] One implication of such nationalist sensitivities has been the fact that indigenously designed counterinsurgency plans (even if imperfect) have usually had a greater chance of being implemented than U.S.-designed plans.

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[9]See Clarke, *The Final Years*, pp. 21 and 502.

[10]While a rank structure for NCOs was introduced in the El Salvador Armed Forces (ESAF) at the behest of U.S. advisers, the Salvadoran military are still not fully committed to the NCO concept. Indeed, "many observers suspect Salvadoran leaders of supporting the idea only to the extent needed to placate their American counterparts." Bacevich et al., *American Military Policy in Small Wars*, pp. 27–28.

[11]The South Vietnamese officer corps coveted headquarters service because promotion was faster than in field service, which often denoted "a lack of recognition." This lessened the field officer's incentive to risk his life in combat. See G. C. Hickey, *The American Military Advisor and His Foreign Counterpart: The Case of Vietnam*, The RAND Corporation, RM-4482-ARPA, March 1965, pp. x and 16.

[12]For example, the commander of the Philippine National Capital Region Defense Command, Brigadier General Ramon Montano, responded to one retired U.S. officer's criticism of Philippine counterinsurgency operations by calling on the Philippine military "to ignore the United States' counterinsurgency strategy," declaring that "there was no reason to follow the American method in fighting communist guerrillas." See Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Daily Report, *East Asia* (FBIS-EAS-87-240A), December 15, 1987, p. 53.

Insufficient Prior Orientation Toward Counterinsurgency

Assisting Third World military establishments to develop forces and tactics tailored to counterinsurgency warfare can also prove difficult if the indigenous military have had little or no prior orientation in this style of conflict. As a general rule, Third World military institutions are not trained, structured, or equipped for counterinsurgent conflict. Most of the leaders of such institutions focus on preparing for conventional war with their immediate neighbors, who are often historic enemies.

Because of concern about such conventional conflicts and the desire to possess the weapon inventories of a modern state, Third World military leaders often want or acquire heavy, sophisticated weapons and equipment that are unsuitable for counterinsurgency conflict. For example, even though Peru has faced a virulent threat from the Shining Path and other insurgent movements for many years, the Peruvian military leaders have tended to neglect this internal threat as they continued to prepare for a possible two-front conventional war with Chile and Ecuador. One manifestation of this conventional bent was the Peruvian military's purchase of a radar system for Peru's northern and southern borders, "at a time when their soldiers do not have adequate basic equipment."[13]

Governmental Weakness

In some instances, the indigenous government may see itself as too weak to follow U.S. counterinsurgency advice. Government leaders, for example, may believe that they lack the clout to successfully effect personnel changes in a military high command that possesses the power to mount a coup d'état. Or, the government may hesitate to institute political, economic, or social reforms that important interest groups are likely to oppose.

Shortcomings in U.S. Assistance Practices

On occasion, shortcomings in U.S. assistance practices—such as inappropriate advice or weapon transfers—may contribute to unsound counterinsurgency practices on the part of indigenous forces. At times, U.S. advice may go unheeded because the United States lacks leverage, either because it provides the host country too little military or

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[13]See U.S. Congress, *U.S. Narcotics Control Programs in Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, and Mexico: An Update*, p. 11.

economic assistance or because it fails to effectively use what leverage it has.[14]

Finally, U.S. advice may be ignored because U.S. advisers lack credibility. Indigenous commanders may believe that U.S. advisers lack sufficient expertise about the local situation or about counterinsurgency warfare. In the Vietnam conflict, many of the Vietnamese military counterparts whom the United States sought to advise had far more experience in counterinsurgency warfare than did their U.S. advisers.[15]

IMPROVING THE EFFICACY OF U.S. ARMY NONCOMBAT SUPPORT

Impediments such as those discussed above help to explain why the United States has had only modest success in working with some countries confronting insurgent threats. Persuading Third World governments and military establishments to follow sound counterinsurgency practices is clearly no easy task. Indeed, the U.S. country team may have to focus the full weight of U.S. economic and security assistance to achieve certain reforms, and even such aid may fail to induce some indigenous leaders to adopt the political, economic, and military measures needed to decisively defeat an insurgent challenge.

Given the inherent difficulties, the United States must attempt to maximize the influence and effectiveness of its security assistance. To counter the propensity of Third World leaders to deviate from sound counterinsurgency practices, the Army might increase the efficacy of its advisory, training, and other noncombat assistance by developing counterinsurgency experts, creating a counterinsurgency institute, and ensuring effective arms transfers.

Develop and Maintain Counterinsurgency Experts

The Army could increase the credibility and effectiveness of U.S. security advice and other assistance to threatened Third World nations by developing and maintaining a small cadre of counterinsurgency experts. This cadre of experts—which might number at most a few

[14]The United States, for example, failed to employ the potential leverage it had with the South Vietnamese military to secure needed reforms in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN).

[15]"Most Vietnamese tended to be wary of the younger advisers who normally had little military and no combat experience, while in some cases, the Vietnamese battalion commanders might have ten to twenty years of fighting under their belts and had seen many advisers come and go on their one-year tours." See Clarke, *The Final Years*, pp. 62–63. Also see Hickey, *The American Military Advisor*, p. 43.

hundred officers and NCOs—would provide the highly trained and experienced personnel needed to fill key counterinsurgency-related positions. They could, for example,

- Design and manage U.S. security assistance programs for countries facing insurgent threats.
- Advise and train Third World military and other security forces in counterinsurgency warfare.
- Lead, advise, and train U.S. combat and noncombat units likely to be committed to insurgent conflicts.
- Staff counterinsurgency-related positions in the Department of Defense, other government agencies, and the military commands.
- Teach counterinsurgency warfare at U.S. military institutes, schools, and colleges.

The Army does not now have officers and NCOs whose training and career have focused primarily on counterinsurgency conflict. For the Special Forces personnel who do most of the Army advisory, training, and staff work related to counterinsurgency, this is just one of several important potential missions for which they must try to maintain a competence.[16] Among other tasks, Special Forces personnel must be prepared to mount time-urgent operations to rescue imperiled U.S. citizens in foreign areas; execute defensive, punitive, and preemptive strikes against terrorist or other hostile states; and conduct behind-the-lines unconventional warfare and other special operations to support U.S. forces engaged in large-scale conventional conflict.[17]

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[16]Special Operations Forces must maintain a competence for four major missions: (1) foreign internal defense, which includes counterinsurgency, antiterrorist and other operations to assist another government to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency; (2) unconventional warfare, which includes guerrilla warfare, evasion and escape, subversion, sabotage, and other operations conducted in enemy-held, enemy-controlled, or politically sensitive territory; (3) Special Forces reconnaissance, which includes obtaining, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy, as well as securing data on the characteristics of a particular area; and (4) direct actions, which include counterterrorist, deception, rescue, and other operations in hostile or denied areas.

[17]Because a major portion of Special Forces assets is committed to general war and other large-scale contingencies, the Special Forces available for other missions, including counterinsurgency, have been stretched thin. According to General James Lindsay, commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command, the 7th Special Forces Group, which is committed to Latin America, is "spread very, very thin . . . part of the problem is the allocation of forces. [Special Operations Forces] are now allocated based on general war, so we have one active and two reserve special forces groups focused on Europe while we have only two battalions of the 7th Group focused on Latin America. Clearly, there needs to be some adjustments made there." See Jim Pat Mills, "The Army's Drug War," *Army Times*, October 2, 1989, p. 14.

The skills and training needed to conduct these other demanding special operations missions differ in important respects from the skills, background, and training needed to help Third World countries counter insurgent threats. For example, even though guerrilla-style unconventional warfare operations behind enemy lines involve some skills that are similar to those required for counterinsurgency support operations—such as a foreign language competency and a proficiency in small-unit operations—counterinsurgency is by no means, as some would have it, the reverse of unconventional operations in support of conventional warfare. Aside from having objectives that differ radically from those of behind-the-lines guerrilla operations, counterinsurgency support operations are far more complex in scope and character and are more politically constrained than are unconventional warfare operations.

For maximal effectiveness, counterinsurgency support operations require trainers and advisers with a combination of skills and experience.[18] Because the U.S. adviser's Third World counterpart may have an important voice, if not an active role, in the design and conduct of his country's civil counterinsurgency programs, the U.S. adviser should have competence in the nonmilitary, as well as the military, aspects of counterinsurgency. Thus, in addition to knowing the military strategy and tactics of counterinsurgency, U.S. advisers and nontechnical trainers should also understand the critically important political, economic, intelligence, organizational, and psychological dimensions of counterinsurgency warfare.

In particular, the U.S. military personnel who are to assist with the design of U.S. counterinsurgency assistance programs need this broad expertise. The military and nonmilitary components of any U.S. assistance program must be addressed in tandem so that U.S. resources and influence can focus on inducing the host government to adopt sound counterinsurgency policies and practices. The design of effective U.S. security and economic assistance programs will require U.S. counterinsurgency experts to accurately gauge the potential magnitude of particular insurgent threats in light of existing host government strengths and weaknesses.

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[18]In the past, the Army, along with the other U.S. services, has failed to comprehend the amount of experience and specialized area, language, and military expertise needed for effective advisory and training missions in the Third World. For example, even during the Vietnam conflict, when the number of U.S. military advisers in South Vietnam numbered as many as 14,000 at any one time, "the selection, training and placement of the advisers themselves received relatively little attention." According to a recent Army history of the advisory effort, the "preparation for advisory duty was minimal" and the "six-week military advisory course at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, remained weak." See Clarke, *The Final Years*, pp. 61 and 510.

Counterinsurgency experts should also possess the personality, language skills, area training, and local background that will permit them to operate effectively in the Third World countries to which they are assigned. In particular, U.S. advisers and trainers must have the empathy and other personality attributes needed to establish a close rapport with their counterparts. They must know the host country well enough to tailor U.S. counterinsurgency advice and other assistance to existing political, social, and economic conditions and to the military traditions, capabilities, and battlefield propensities of the indigenous security forces.[19]

The Army currently lacks both a dedicated cadre of counterinsurgency specialists and a program to produce such experts. While the Army's foreign area officer (FAO) program provides useful foreign area and language training for personnel who may later serve as advisers, security assistance officers, and attaches in Third World countries, FAO training does not normally encompass counterinsurgency. Although the Special Forces personnel who serve as advisers and trainers often qualify in languages and receive extensive grounding in small-unit operations and some exposure to psychological operations (PSYOPs), because of their diverse mission responsibilities, most receive little in-depth training in the various political-military dimensions of counterinsurgency warfare. For example, the 23-week basic Special Forces officer training course at Fort Bragg devotes only 12 hours to cultural area study, foreign internal defense, security assistance, and mobile training teams.[20]

Members of security assistance organizations (SAOs) and temporary mobile training teams (MTTs) assigned to Third World countries confronting active or latent insurgent threats may, if they are not Special Forces personnel, have no prior counterinsurgency or area training at all. While the absence of a counterinsurgency and area background presents no problem in certain technical assistance tasks—for example, in training indigenous forces in helicopter maintenance—it becomes a disability when U.S. advice and training extend beyond purely technical matters. The disability particularly affects the SAOs, whose personnel often have an opportunity to help shape U.S. security assistance

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[19]For a discussion of the attributes of effective U.S. advisers in Vietnam, see Hickey, *The American Military Advisor*, pp. 8–53.

[20]An additional 9 hours are devoted to psychological operations and civil affairs. See United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, *Program of Instruction for Special Forces Detachment Officer Qualification*, 2E-18A, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, August 1987.

programs and influence the development of indigenous military capabilities.[21]

To foster the recruitment, retention, and appropriate utilization of counterinsurgency experts, the Army might create a functional area for counterinsurgency and establish a viable career progression scheme for those assigned to this career field.[22] The initial training for the potential counterinsurgency experts might combine elements of the area and language training provided in the FAO program with the intensive counterinsurgency training that could be offered at the proposed counterinsurgency institute, discussed in the immediately following subsection.[23]

The cadre of counterinsurgency experts could be built slowly, allowing the Army to select individuals whose performance in the field demonstrates a thorough grasp of the military and nonmilitary dimensions of counterinsurgency, as well as an aptitude for working with indigenous forces.[24] To attract outstanding candidates to this specialty, the Army could assure such experts an opportunity for promotion at least equal to that of their peers in more traditional command assignments.

The Army could also institute assignment policies to ensure that these experts are used effectively. The effective use of experts would require concerted effort to guarantee that counterinsurgency specialists not only receive assignments consistent with their specialty, but also

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[21]One explanation for the lack of counterinsurgency training accorded some SAO personnel is the fact that the Army and the other services have tended in the past to look upon the functions of the SAOs as primarily administrative and managerial. Indeed, the new Army/Air Force counterinsurgency doctrine states that "the training and advisory functions of SAOs are secondary to security assistance management functions." However, the doctrine also emphasizes the important planning function of the SAOs and states that "the scope and importance of these functions demand that personnel assigned to an SAO possess a full range of planning, management, and advisory skills." See FM 100-20, draft of August 4, 1989, pp. 2-36 and 2-37.

[22]Counterinsurgency appears to satisfy the definition of a functional area: "A grouping of officers by career field other than arm, service, or branch that possesses an interrelated grouping of tasks or skills which usually requires significant education, training, and experience." Officers may serve repetitive and progressive assignments within a functional area, and an officer may not be assigned or designated into more than one functional area. See U.S. Department of the Army, "Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Utilization," DA Pamphlet 600-3, April 30, 1986.

[23]Arrangements might be made for some trainees to attend the counterrevolutionary warfare portion of the British Army Staff College course at Camberley, England.

[24]A counterinsurgency functional area with a few hundred positions authorized worldwide should be quite viable. Several existing functional areas (FAs) have total authorized strength of only a few hundred positions: FA 46 (Public Affairs), FA 50 (Force Development), and FA 52 (Nuclear Weapons). The total number of authorized positions for the functional area Foreign Area Officer (FA 48) is somewhat larger, but still under 1000. Information provided by Officers' Distribution Division, U.S. Army Personnel Command.

assignments in which they can most effectively influence how the United States and its Third World allies cope with insurgent threats.

To promote continuity and develop U.S.-host country personal relationships, the Army should consider multiple and longer tours to the same country. The frequent rotation of advisory personnel obstructed the U.S. advisory effort in Vietnam, and this turbulent practice continues up to the present day in the U.S. advisory and training efforts in such countries as El Salvador.[25]

Create a Counterinsurgency Institute

As another means to increase the quality and effectiveness of U.S. counterinsurgency training, the Army, in cooperation with other military services, could establish an institute to train U.S. and foreign nationals in counterinsurgency warfare. The institute's student body—which might number several hundred a year at the outset—could include U.S. military and civilian personnel—for example, State Department, Agency for International Development (AID), and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officials—involved in assisting countries facing insurgent threats; officers and NCOs from U.S. combat units likely to deploy to insurgent conflicts; foreign military and civilian personnel from countries confronting insurgencies, and Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) personnel combating drug trafficking.

The Air Force, at Hurlburt Field, and the Army, at Fort Bragg, now offer U.S. personnel some counterinsurgency and related training. The Army also trains military personnel from Latin America in counterinsurgency at the School of the Americas, at Fort Benning. However, excluding training in small-unit tactics and the like, most of the specific counterinsurgency instruction in these courses lasts about 60 hours or less and therefore provides only a limited orientation to this complex style of warfare.[26]

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[25]As one Salvadoran former colonel put it: "Unfortunately the Americans don't know us. When an American begins to get to know the country, he leaves. The American trainers aren't going to teach us anything." See excerpts of El Salvador *News-Gazette* interview with Col. Sigifredo Ochoa Perez, reprinted in *The Wall Street Journal*, July 17, 1987, p. 19.

[26]The limited time devoted to such training holds for both the discrete courses on counterinsurgency and internal defense and development (IDAD) and the counterinsurgency/IDAD portions of the various courses on officer qualification, officer refresher, command and general staff, psychological operations, and civil affairs that are offered at these training institutions. See USAF Special Operations School, *Catalog for Fiscal Year 1988*, Hurlburt Field, Florida; U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, *Program of Instruction for Special Forces Detachment Officer Qualification*, 2E-18A, and *Precis of Courses and Schedule of Classes FY 88*, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and School of the Americas, United States Army, *1989 Course Catalog*, Fort

Building on the curricula developed for these existing courses, a new institute devoted to counterinsurgency could provide a more extensive basic course—lasting, say, 10 to 12 weeks—on the military, political, economic, organizational, and psychological aspects of counterinsurgency. The institute might also offer advanced and specialized courses on counterinsurgency planning, pacification and rural development, psychological warfare, intelligence, suppression of narcotics trafficking, and the strategy and tactics of specific insurgent groups. The training would draw heavily on the lessons learned from case studies of previous unsuccessful as well as successful counterinsurgency campaigns. The institute's mix of civilian and military faculty might include U.S. Army counterinsurgency experts and foreign nationals who have demonstrated a proficiency in one or more aspects of counterinsurgency warfare.

The institute might also provide appropriate country and cross-cultural orientation for U.S. personnel assigned abroad. Attendance at the institute would be made mandatory for U.S. military and civilian personnel permanently assigned to advise, train, and provide other counterinsurgency-related support to Third World governments facing insurgent threats.

The institute could contribute importantly to enhancing the effectiveness of both U.S. and Third World government counterinsurgency operations. Among other contributions, the institute could:

- Increase the quality and credibility of U.S. counterinsurgency advice and training. The establishment of the institute as a separate entity would manifest the U.S. interest and expertise in counterinsurgency and thereby enhance the prestige of U.S. advisers and trainers.
- Prepare officers and NCOs from U.S. combat units for counterinsurgency warfare and other politically sensitive military interventions in the Third World.
- Train and motivate Third World military leaders to pursue effective counterinsurgency policies and practices. As a permanent facility, the institute could train successive generations of Third World military leaders from the same countries and thereby cultivate sound counterinsurgency doctrine in those military establishments. If necessary to ensure attendance, the United States should prepare to subsidize the training of personnel from Third World countries at the institute.

Benning, Georgia. The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School is planning to offer a four- to six-week course on foreign internal defense and internal defense and development in October 1990 to both U.S. and foreign national officers.

- Coordinate and integrate U.S. and host-government counterinsurgency efforts by exposing U.S. and foreign civilian and military officials to the same political, military, economic, and informational strategy and tactics for countering insurgency. As would be the case with U.S. military personnel, Third World ground, naval, and air force officers would be trained together so as to instill a unified counterinsurgency doctrine among the services and encourage combined arms cooperation.
- Foster closer professional relations between U.S. and foreign civilian and military personnel.

Finally, the U.S. alumni of the institute might create an influential and continuing base of support within the U.S. military services and civilian agencies for maintaining the expertise and training capabilities needed to cope with insurgent threats. The creation of a counterinsurgency constituency would itself constitute an important contribution, given the past weak institutional interest within the U.S. government for the maintenance of such capabilities.

Ensure Effective Arms Transfers

Weapon and other equipment transfers often provide the United States with a potential opportunity to influence the organization, training, and conduct of Third World military forces fighting insurgents. The United States can exert such influence through the types and quantities of weapons that it provides and through the U.S. advisory and training efforts that often accompany such arms transfers. In cases where the host government and military depend heavily on U.S. security assistance, such as El Salvador, the United States may possess significant potential leverage to promote sound counterinsurgency policies and practices. Indeed, the United States may be able to make the reform of the indigenous military a condition for its materiel support.

In the past, U.S. military and civilian officials have sometimes failed to exploit the potential leverage inherent in U.S. arms transfers and other support to effect needed changes in indigenous forces. Despite South Vietnam's total dependence on U.S. assistance, the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) did not use this dependence to force a much-needed overhaul of the ARVN training and personnel systems or to secure the removal of manifestly incompetent ARVN leaders from command positions. As one recently published military history put it: "MACV's use of this potential leverage never went beyond dictating the size and composition of the South Vietnamese military establishment."[27]

[27]See Clarke, *The Final Years*, pp. 511–522.

In addition to failing to use its leverage effectively, the United States has also at times agreed to provide its Third World friends and allies with weapons and other military equipment that were inappropriate or even counterproductive to sound counterinsurgency. For example, Third World states fighting insurgency sometimes successfully pressure the United States to provide them with heavier and more sophisticated weapons, which they covet for reasons of prestige, or as a hedge against a future conventional conflict with their neighbors.

To help avoid such pitfalls in the future, the United States should adopt policies and procedures to ensure that U.S. arms transfers to states combating insurgent threats befit that style of warfare. In addition, the United States should attempt to exploit the potential leverage provided by its security assistance to secure needed reforms in the indigenous military forces and government counterinsurgency operations.

As a critical first step, the Army could place the proposed counterinsurgency experts on embassy country teams (as members of SAOs or as attaches) and at various other key positions in the U.S. security assistance hierarchy so that they could influence the content and terms of arms transfer programs. As noted above, many Army and other military personnel who man U.S. security assistance organizations in Third World countries have no extensive training or background in counterinsurgency.

These Army experts, along with other embassy country team members, should attempt to design and utilize U.S. security assistance programs to encourage the host nation's military forces and government to follow sound counterinsurgency policies and practices. The embassy country team, for example, might attempt to explicitly use U.S. equipment transfers to promote needed restructuring, retraining, and leadership changes in particular indigenous units.

The need to minimize and carefully regulate the transfer of weapons that might cause high civilian casualties or extensive collateral damage stands out among the fundamental considerations that should shape the design of U.S. security assistance programs. Obviously, excessive casualties and damage would both undermine indigenous support for the local government and alienate U.S. domestic opinion.

Less obvious, but equally important, is the need to avoid the transfer of weapons that may lead indigenous forces to adopt counterproductive battlefield habits or ineffective war-fighting strategies. For example, some U.S. Army observers believe that the United States erred in providing Salvadoran units with heavy indirect-fire and recoilless weapons that reduced the tactical mobility of the Salvadoran soldier, who was often less mobile on the ground than his insurgent

enemy.[28] Furthermore, the provision of indirect-fire and recoilless weapons encouraged Salvadoran government forces to attempt to engage the guerrillas at standoff distances, rather than closing with them on the ground.

Similarly, too many helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft can lead indigenous forces to depend excessively on aerial mobility and firepower. The overreliance on such assets might discourage the types of aggressive, small-unit ground operations needed in counterinsurgency. As one former U.S. adviser put it, "a successful counterinsurgency campaign requires troops saturating the countryside and searching out the guerrillas on the ground rather than flying over the people they are pledged to protect."[29]

Finally, the United States should also avoid the transfer of weapons and equipment that will deplete the indigenous government's limited skilled manpower or scarce financial resources. To the extent possible, the Army should provide only arms and other equipment that the recipient government can afford, operate, and maintain. The U.S. Army, therefore, should try to maintain sufficient stocks of equipment that is suitable for counterinsurgency conflict for arms transfers to Third World states. According to a 1988 Defense Department study, however, much U.S. standard military materiel is altogether too expensive and complex for America's Third World friends and allies.[30]

To fill the requirements of such countries, the United States may have to rehabilitate obsolete systems or adopt approaches that are now constrained or prohibited by congressional legislation. For example, U.S. law now prohibits the use of security assistance funds to support the offshore procurement of equipment, or to underwrite the development of designs expressly for Third World use. The Army should urge the modification of such legislative restrictions and support other security assistance reforms—such as reduced earmarking—that would make it easier for the United States to support Third World states facing insurgent threats.[31]

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[28]Bacevich et al., *American Military Policy in Small Wars*, pp. 29–30.

[29]Colonel John D. Waghelstein, "El Salvador: Observation and Experiences in Counterinsurgency," individual study project, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., January 1985, p. 47.

[30]See U.S. Department of Defense, *Discriminate Deterrence*, report of the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., January 1988, p. 20.

[31]These and other suggestions for the reform of U.S. security assistance appear in publications of the Regional Conflict Working Group of the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, U.S. Department of Defense; see *Commitment to Freedom: Security Assistance as a U.S. Policy Instrument in the Third World*, May 1988, and *Supporting U.S. Strategy for Third World Conflict*, June 1988, pp. 27–32. Also see National Defense

DOCTRINE FOR NONCOMBAT SUPPORT

American counterinsurgency support operations should have the fundamental objective of maximizing the self-reliance of the indigenous government and military. Current U.S. military doctrine fails to emphasize this important objective.[32] In fact, at times it has been completely ignored in U.S. counterinsurgency assistance practices.

Insurgents often achieve victory against an externally supported regime by prolonging the conflict until the outside government providing the assistance reduces its support below the level that will keep its client in power. Even if the U.S. public and Congress initially favor U.S. noncombat support to a Third World government, that support may later be cut back or terminated because of a change either in the U.S. political climate or in the indigenous government's political composition or human rights behavior.[33]

In the case of the Vietnam conflict, the withdrawal of U.S. forces and the congressionally mandated cutbacks in U.S. materiel assistance had a devastating effect on South Vietnamese capabilities and morale.

University, Institute for National Strategic Studies, *Security Assistance Workshop: Panel Reports*, Washington, D.C., March 1988.

[32]The draft of FM 100-20, August 4, 1989, properly warns against the dangers of "Americanizing" a conflict and thereby undermining the legitimacy of a government. It also states that the "burden of carrying on the conflict must remain with the [indigenous] government" and that "governments receiving U.S. assistance are responsible for developing and executing their own programs to defeat insurgency." It does not, however, make the promotion of host-government self-reliance a priority U.S. objective. It simply argues that "U.S. policy requires that commitments to support . . . a government should be sufficient and sustained until the United States achieves its policy objectives." Appendix A of FM 100-20 posits a general need for greater host-government self-reliance when it sets forth as one of the conditions for U.S. security assistance the requirement that threatened nations "assume increasingly greater responsibility for their own defense; for fundamental, related decisions; and for necessary resources. . . . [W]hen the United States provides security assistance to a host nation, a primary concern is the host nation's ability to plan and manage its defense resources by and for itself. Host-nation military organizations may never develop this ability if they continue to request help when they no longer need it; that is, in areas where they have already achieved self-sufficiency." See pp. 2-28–2-29, A-25–A-26.

[33]For example, the U.S. Congress has conditioned continued U.S. support to El Salvador on the Salvadoran government's continued willingness to negotiate an equitable political settlement; demonstrated progress in ending the activities of death squads; establishing an effective judicial system; and implementing the land reform program. Congress also expects Salvadoran military and security forces to "comply with applicable rules of international law and with Presidential directives pertaining to the protection of civilians during combat operations," including the Presidential directive relating to aerial fire support. See U.S. Congress, Senate, *H.R. 3743, In the Senate of the United States* (an act making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1990, and for other purposes), 101st Cong., 1st sess., November 20, 1989, pp. 98–99. Also see U.S. Congress, House, *Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Appropriations Bill, 1990*, Report 101-165, 101st Cong., 1st sess., July 18, 1989, pp. 44–48.

The South Vietnamese had become so dependent on U.S. support—even in such nonmateriel areas as military planning and command—that they were unable to function effectively when the communists launched their final offensive in spring 1975.[34]

While the United States has avoided a combat role in El Salvador and has purposely limited the functions and numbers of U.S. military personnel serving there, that country continues to depend heavily on U.S. support. After ten years and over $3.5 billion of U.S. military and economic assistance, the Salvadoran government's regular forces—which have tripled in size to over 55,000 men—remain far from decisively defeating the communist insurgents. American assistance amounts to over 50 percent of El Salvador's annual budget and pays for all of its weapons, munitions, and other military equipment. Should the United States suddenly terminate or significantly reduce this military and economic assistance while the present insurgent forces remained in the field, the Salvadoran government might ultimately collapse and its forces face defeat.[35]

To avoid or minimize client dependence, the United States should encourage and assist threatened states to adopt force postures, counterinsurgency strategies, and styles of warfare that they can eventually sustain over the long term, even if the United States reduces or terminates its aid. For example, to reduce the financial burden on poor Third World states of large standing armies, the United States could use its security assistance to encourage indigenous governments to rely more than they now do on civil defense militia and other less expensive local security forces.[36]

In addition to neutralizing the insurgents' strategy of protracted warfare and reducing the government's vulnerability to a cutoff of external support, the promotion of client self-reliance also serves to strengthen the nationalist credentials of the government and to undermine the inevitable insurgent claims that any U.S.-assisted government is a puppet of the United States.[37] Self-reliance might also promote local initiative and commitment, as indigenous forces are more likely to execute plans, policies, and programs which they deem to be of their own making rather than of U.S. design.

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[34]See Hosmer et al., *The Fall of South Vietnam*, pp. 38–45, 83–94.

[35]See Bacevich et al., *American Military Policy in Small Wars*, p. 46.

[36]The 1967–1972 pacification program in South Vietnam, which relied largely on regional and popular forces for security, "proved far more cost-effective than most other parts of the allied war effort, entailing only a modest fraction of the costs of the Vietnam war." See Robert W. Komer, *Bureaucracy at War: U.S. Performance in the Vietnam Conflict*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colo., 1986, p. 121.

[37]This point is stressed in the draft of FM 100-20, August 4, 1989, which states that the "focus of U.S. efforts" in counterinsurgency must be to build the "legitimacy [of the] entity we are attempting to assist . . . not destroy it." (pp. 2–29)

IV. U.S. ARMY COMBAT INVOLVEMENT IN FIGHTING INSURGENCY

POSSIBILITIES OF U.S. COMBAT INVOLVEMENT

The still-strong aftertaste of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, now reinforced by the sobering Soviet experience in Afghanistan, will make U.S. civilian and military decisionmakers extremely reluctant to commit U.S. combat forces to another insurgent conflict. Decisionmakers recognize that even if the American public and Congress were initially to support such an involvement—itself a dubious proposition, given prevailing opinion—such support could evaporate rapidly if U.S. casualties began to mount and the U.S. intervention stretched out.

Despite this strong predisposition against committing U.S. combat forces to insurgent conflicts, at least four potential circumstances might draw the Army and other U.S. military forces into counterinsurgency combat:

- First, an unintended consequence of other U.S. military operations.

Any sustained U.S. ground intervention in a hostile Third World country could force Army units to cope with a continued insurgent-style resistance after the conventional fighting ended. For example, had the United States invaded Nicaragua during the 1980s—say, in response to a Sandinista military intervention in El Salvador or Honduras—U.S. Army troops would probably have become involved in extensive counterinsurgency warfare. According to a well-placed Sandinista military defector, the Sandinistas had planned to respond with widespread guerrilla warfare in the event of any such U.S. intervention.[1] In that event, U.S. forces would have had to cope with Sandinista insurgent operations in both urban and rural areas until Nicaraguan forces friendly to the United States could be recruited, organized, and trained to take over the fighting.

- Second, the need to defend important U.S. overseas bases and facilities.

[1]Edward Gonzalez, unpublished summary of RAND interview with Major Robert Miranda Bengoechia, April 1988. Prior to his defection to the United States in October 1987, Miranda was chief of the secretariat of the Nicaraguan Ministry of Defense.

The Philippine government, for example, might request U.S. help with the forward defense of Clark Air Base or Subic Naval Station, should Philippine forces be unable on their own to handle attacks on these bases by the New People's Army insurgents.[2]

- Third, a request from another government for help in suppressing insurgent and drug-cartel narcotics trafficking.

Inasmuch as the U.S. public now ranks illegal drugs as the single most important issue facing the nation, public and congressional support might permit a U.S. combat involvement.[3] However, any such deployment of U.S. combat forces would require a formal request from the host government, which would be unlikely to issue such a request, given Latin American sensitivities about U.S. military interventions. It would also require a determination on the part of U.S. decisionmakers that U.S. combat forces were both needed and likely to prove effective in stemming the drug trafficking.[4]

- Finally, a request to rescue a friendly government—say, the Philippine—from catastrophic defeat by insurgent forces.

Even if the Executive and Congress agreed that important U.S. interests were at stake, a combat intervention under this circumstance seems unlikely. The previously mentioned antipathy of the American public to U.S. combat involvements in insurgent conflicts would be difficult to overcome. Furthermore, measures short of U.S. combat intervention should be able to contain such insurgent threats. Prior to sending troops, the United States would almost certainly attempt to shore up the threatened government with increased U.S. economic and

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[2]Armed American servicemen already conduct joint patrols with local Philippine police in Angeles City outside Clark Air Base to protect the numerous Americans living off-base. See "Officials on Need for U.S. Security Patrols," Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Daily Report, *East Asia* (FBIS-EAS-87-219), November 13, 1987, p. 37. Also see Bob Drogin, "Fear Stalks U.S. Bases in Philippines After Killings," *Los Angeles Times*, September 28, 1989, p. 15.

[3]According to a *Wall Street Journal*/NBC News poll, some 43 percent of Americans say "drugs are the nation's single most important issue; the next most frequently cited concern, the budget deficit, was named by only 6 percent." See Michel McQueen and David Shribman, "Battle Against Drugs Is Chief Issue Facing Nation, Americans Say," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 22, 1989, pp. A1 and A14.

[4]According to the September 26, 1989, congressional testimony of William J. Bennett, director of national drug control policy, any deployment of U.S. combat troops to Latin America would require a request from another government, a "high" burden of proof that the troops were needed, a clear statement of their combat mission, and a willingness on the part of the public and Congress to send them, conditions that Bennett said he did not "see in the cards in the foreseeable future." Mark Matthews and Richard H. P. Sia, "Top officials acknowledge risk of U.S. casualties in Latin drug war," *Baltimore Sun*, September 27, 1989, p. 1.

noncombat military assistance. If greater U.S. support failed to stem the insurgent threat, U.S. decisionmakers might conclude that a U.S. combat intervention was unlikely to produce a favorable outcome.

TRAINING FOR COUNTERINSURGENCY COMBAT

To prepare for possible combat contingencies, the Army could provide counterinsurgency training to the light infantry and other Army units most likely to undertake counterinsurgency combat operations. Training would involve only a few selected units (for example, the 7th Infantry and 82nd Airborne divisions), rather than the entire Army. Counterinsurgency is not now a specific training topic for such units, although a significant portion of their training—for example, instruction in small unit operations—relates directly to counterinsurgency combat. Furthermore, the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, conducts no counterinsurgency training exercises for these or other units.[5]

The Army might consider making counterinsurgency a specific training topic to expose units to some of the field tactics and political-military requirements of counterinsurgency warfare. Units could, for example, be indoctrinated in such matters as the need to minimize the use of violence in such conflicts and the importance of winning over the population so as to acquire intelligence and to deny the insurgents the support essential to their continued operations. Such counterinsurgency training could also help to prepare U.S. units for other politically sensitive contingencies, such as a possible future intervention to stabilize a Third World country on the pattern of the U.S. intervention in 1965 in the Dominican Republic.

DOCTRINE FOR COMBAT INVOLVEMENT

No matter how well U.S. ground forces may prepare for and perform in counterinsurgency combat, the ultimate success of any U.S. intervention undoubtedly will rest on the Army's capabilities to advise, train, and equip indigenous forces. Indeed, in designing doctrine for possible future U.S. combat involvements, the Army should assume that U.S. public opinion will probably not allow U.S. forces the time to defeat an insurgency. Experience shows that insurgencies that have well-established infrastructures and base areas and can operate in

[5]Information provided by HQ DA ODCSOPS, Operations Readiness and Mobilization Directorate, Special Operations Policy and Forces Division.

protective terrain cannot be quickly defeated. Because American forces are unlikely to stay the course in protracted conflict, the indigenous forces will eventually have to win the war.

In any intervention, U.S. forces should give immediate priority to indigenous counterinsurgency capabilities.[6] In situations where no friendly indigenous counterinsurgency force existed prior to the U.S. intervention—such as might have been the case in the Nicaragua contingency posited above—the United States would have to try to create such forces as quickly as possible. In situations where indigenous counterinsurgency forces already existed—such as would be the case in the Philippines—the United States would have to give priority to correcting the training, leadership, and other weaknesses that had necessitated the U.S. intervention. In short, the local equivalent of "Vietnamization" would have to begin immediately.

Indigenous forces should be encouraged to do the fighting whenever and wherever possible, lest they come to depend on the U.S. forces to carry their combat burden.[7] The United States must avoid practices such as occurred in Vietnam, where U.S. forces assumed the leading combat role while Vietnamese forces hung back, content to see the Americans assume an increasingly greater share of the fighting.

Indeed, to maintain U.S. domestic support for the intervention, the United States should make a concerted effort to hold down U.S. casual-

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[6]The draft of FM 100-20, August 4, 1989 (pp. 2-46), does not address, except by implication, the need for the United States to give immediate priority to the formation or upgrading of indigenous counterinsurgency forces in the event of a U.S. combat intervention. The manual implies the need for such action by stating that the commitment of U.S. combat forces "must be sharply limited in scope and duration. . . . When the United States employs combat forces they are normally assigned missions which support the security component of the IDAD strategy. This allows the host nation to establish a secure base for mobilization and balanced development programs and to form and train effective security forces."

[7]The prescript that indigenous forces be encouraged to do the fighting whenever and wherever possible seems to accord with the FM 100-20 dicta that "U.S. combat operations in support of host nation counterinsurgency efforts should be strategically defensive" and that the "responsibility for the counterinsurgency program must remain with the host nation government if its legitimacy is to survive." Indeed, FM 100-20 (pp. 2-45–2-47) suggests that one possible role for U.S. forces would be to secure "key facilities and installations, thus freeing host-nation forces to reassume complete responsibility for combat operations." However, the manual also suggests that U.S. combat forces might play a less passive role and conduct offensive operations similar to those conducted by U.S. forces in Vietnam: specifically, "strike operations to disrupt and destroy insurgent combat formations . . . [to] prevent the insurgents from undertaking actions against government controlled areas...[and] to interdict external support of the insurgents" and "security screens in support of host nation consolidation operations to expand the government's mobilization base." According to FM 100-20, the "continued success in consolidation operations will enable the host nation to resume conduct of the military aspects of its counterinsurgency campaign and allow U.S. combat forces to withdraw."

ties.[8] American doctrine should emphasize the need to design and pursue strategies for U.S. counterinsurgency combat involvements that will retain the support of the U.S. public.[9] The Army must assume that any large-scale and protracted U.S. combat involvement in the Third World will almost certainly become a subject of domestic controversy and will be conducted under the relentless klieg lights of U.S. television and the probing of the press. Because the insurgents will probably attempt to win their war politically in Washington, as well as militarily in the field, U.S. and host-nation forces must take care to avoid war-fighting policies and practices that might needlessly undermine U.S. domestic support for the intervention.

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[8]For an analysis of the effect of U.S. combat casualties on U.S. public opinion, see John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents and Public Opinion*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1973, pp. 51–62.

[9]FM 100-20 does not directly address the need to pursue war-fighting strategies that will retain public support for the U.S. involvement. However, it advocates excellent principles to reduce the risks of alienating both indigenous and U.S. domestic support for the counterinsurgency effort: the need to "act lawfully," provide "humane treatment" to civilian noncombatants and insurgents in military custody, and to use force in a "discreet and judicious" manner. FM 100-20 also stresses the notion that "host nation, not U.S., forces should conduct neutralization programs, particularly coercive measures such as PRC [populace and resource control]." See pp. 2-18–2-19, 2-32–2-33, and 2-47.

V. U.S. ARMY ROLE IN SUPPORT OF FRIENDLY INSURGENCY

The U.S. Army may also be called on to assist friendly insurgency. The United States requires the capability to support resistance movements that confront externally imposed and other hostile regimes in the Third World. Such a capability can provide U.S. decisionmakers with an additional option for countering aggression when a direct military response is militarily and/or politically infeasible or appears unjustified in terms of the U.S. national interests.

By providing resistance movements with weapons, training, and advice, the United States may help to compel the withdrawal of foreign expeditionary forces (for example, the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan, the Vietnamese from Cambodia, and the Cubans from Angola) and eventually unseat regimes brought to power by their intervention. Furthermore, by demonstrating the capability and willingness to raise and extend the costs of aggression, the United States may help to deter future attacks. Would-be aggressor states—no matter what their political complexion—may hesitate to invade militarily weak neighbors if invasion is likely to involve their occupation forces in a protracted struggle with an externally supported resistance movement.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SUPPORTING FRIENDLY INSURGENCY

If called upon to support friendly insurgencies, the Army will need personnel who can design appropriate assistance programs for such movements and who can advise and train insurgents.[1] To enhance its capabilities for such support, the Army could develop specialists who are expert at the unique task of organizing and supporting protracted insurgencies in Third World regions.

Protracted insurgent warfare differs in several important respects from the type of guerrilla or unconventional warfare for which U.S. Army Special Forces have trained so as to support U.S. and allied

[1]While the support of resistance movements has traditionally been largely a CIA responsibility, the President has the flexibility to have such "Special Activities" managed by any government department. For example, he could "assign the task of supporting the insurgents to a military command, under cognizance of the commander in chief of the U.S. combatant command in whose region the insurgency is located." See *Discriminate Deterrence*, pp. 16–17.

operations in a conventional conflict, such as a NATO/Warsaw Pact conflict in Europe.[2] Behind-the-lines guerrilla operations designed to support U.S. conventional forces necessarily must aim to achieve an immediate and tangible military payoff. In such operations, guerrilla units must be able to attack enemy lines of communication (LOCs), bases, and forces as promptly as possible in support of the ongoing battle.[3]

In protracted insurgent warfare, organizational and political operations receive the initial focus. High-profile military operations are often purposely avoided until the insurgents can first mobilize a political base among the population and establish clandestine support structures in rural and urban areas. The insurgents need a strong clandestine infrastructure and political base among the population if they are to acquire the recruits, logistic support, and intelligence needed to sustain protracted warfare.

Similarly, the types of political-military skills and experience needed to support protracted insurgency also differ in certain respects from the skills and experience needed to advise, train, and equip indigenous forces for counterinsurgency conflict. Whereas counterinsurgency support operations are conducted overtly and aim to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of the threatened government, insurgency support operations are conducted covertly and aim to isolate and undermine the existing government.

PREPARING U.S. ARMY SPECIALISTS AS ADVISERS AND TRAINERS

Because protracted insurgent warfare is unique in these and other respects, the Army needs at least a few advisers and trainers who

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[2]The Special Forces Detachment Officer Qualification course devotes 24 hours of instruction to unconventional warfare per se, including some 9 hours on the underground, guerrilla organization, guerrilla warfare, and the recruiting of resistance forces. See *Program of Instruction for Special Forces Detachment Officer Qualification*, pp. 53–57. The Air Force also offers a five-day course on unconventional warfare for selected military and civilian personnel at Hurlburt Field. See USAF Special Operations School, *Catalogue for Fiscal Year 1988*, pp. 65–69.

[3]For an account of the precedence given to the sabotage and other immediate tactical battle-support operations of the European resistance movements in World War II, see Bradley F. Smith, *The Shadow Warriors: O.S.S. and the Origins of the C.I.A.*, Basic Books, Inc., New York, 1983, pp. 290–307. The U.S. guerrilla operations behind communist lines during the Korean war were also designed to produce an immediate military payoff: The guerrillas' tasks were to tie down enemy troops, disrupt the enemy rear, inflict maximum casualties, capture prisoners, destroy supplies, and interdict lines of communication. See Colonel Rod Paschall, *A Study in Command and Control: Special Operations in Korea, 1951–1953*, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., June 1988, pp. 32–33.

specialize in this form of conflict. In addition to knowing the military strategy and tactics of insurgency warfare, these Army specialists should also master the political, psychological, economic, and intelligence dimensions of protracted insurgency, including the techniques for organizing rural and urban clandestine support networks.[4] American advisers should also prepare to help insurgent movements to switch from guerrilla-type operations to more conventional forms of warfare when the transition becomes necessary to secure final victory.[5]

The Army should maintain the expertise to assist friendly insurgent movements even though such expertise may be used infrequently. As the author noted earlier, the United States on past occasions has regretted allowing its insurgency assets to atrophy.[6] The U.S. effort to assist the contras in Nicaragua was obviously handicapped by a lack of expertise on how to effectively organize and prosecute an insurgency.[7] The absence of professional expertise led to errors that proved politically and militarily costly to the contra program.[8] The United States adopted a distorted concept of insurgency that overemphasized the military operations of the contras and ignored their political organization

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[4]One of the more difficult political problems that U.S. advisers may encounter is the internal rivalries and factionalism that sometimes plague a resistance movement. In such instances, the United States may have to condition its materiel and training support on the willingness of the rival insurgent factions to adopt a unified political-military strategy and coordinate their operations.

[5]As the recent experience in Afghanistan demonstrates, resistance movements may have to acquire greater firepower and move to a higher form of warfare if they are to capture cities and decisively defeat forces equipped with helicopter gunships, tanks, artillery, and other heavy weapons. As a former North Vietnamese minister of defense put it: "The general law of a long revolutionary war is usually to go through three stages: defensive, equilibrium, and offensive." To accomplish this transition, the war must be upgraded "gradually to regular war, from guerrilla warfare to mobile warfare, combined with partial entrenchment warfare." See General Vo Nguyen Giap, *People's War People's Army*, Praeger, New York, 1962, pp. 101, 103–104, 107.

[6]See Hosmer, *Constraints on U.S. Strategy in Third World Conflict*, p. 152.

[7]According to one U.S. official who helped manage the contra program, "When we started up the program, you couldn't find five guys who knew what they were doing in terms of organizing a resistance operation." See David Ignatius and David Rogers, "Why the Covert War in Nicaragua Evolved and Hasn't Succeeded," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 5, 1985, pp. 1 and 24. Some contras charge that their movement was crippled in part "by micromanagement from gringos who didn't understand their struggle." See Glenn Garven, "Bitter Contras Recall Days of Hope and U.S. Support," *Washington Times*, October 17, 1988, p. A10.

[8]Among the politically damaging errors were the aborted CIA operation to mine Cortino, the Nicaraguan oil port, and the preparation of an insurgency manual by a U.S. contract employee that advised the resistance to "neutralize" prominent Sandinistas and to hire professional criminals to create "martyrs." See Glenn Garven, "In 1980, Nicaraguans Armed with a 'Crazy and Foolish Idea,'" *Washington Times*, October 18, 1988, p. A8.

and the development of their support base in Nicaragua.[9] The United States erred particularly in structuring the contras as a conventional raiding force that depended heavily on outside aerial resupply.

The Army can also support friendly insurgent movements by maintaining the capability to project forces to defend the states that may provide the insurgents with sanctuary. Insurgents frequently utilize friendly countries bordering their area of operations as secure rear bases in which to train, rest, and recuperate their forces, and as transit points for arms and other materiel resupply. Such sanctuary may be possible because would-be aggressors perceive the United States to have the capability and will to rapidly come to the defense of the sanctuary state in the event that it is attacked.[10]

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[9]See James Le Moyne, "Before the Latest Contra Setback, U.S., in Review, Found the Outlook Poor," *The New York Times*, December 15, 1986, p. A14. According to Arturo Cruz, Jr., a former member of the contras, the Americans supporting the contra resistance were "seeking victory before the war had truly commenced." Whereas the Americans believed that "victory was possible within a year," Cruz argues that to succeed a revolution needs time to develop "both internal and international support." The Americans, however, believing that the U.S. political system could not sustain a protracted commitment, "were reluctant to draft a long-term strategy." See Arturo Cruz, Jr., *Memoirs of a Counter-Revolutionary*, Doubleday, New York, 1989, p. 151. For another critical account of the evolution of the contra movement and the U.S. role, see Christopher Dickey, *With the Contras*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1985.

[10]Concerns about provoking an unwanted U.S. combat involvement doubtless helped deter Sandinista, Vietnamese, and Soviet leaders from mounting full-scale attacks against the insurgent bases in Honduras, Thailand, and Pakistan that were supporting insurgent operations in Nicaragua, Cambodia, and Afghanistan.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

To increase the effectiveness of its counterinsurgency-support capabilities, the Army might undertake three basic initiatives:

1. Build and maintain a small cadre of counterinsurgency experts to advise and train indigenous forces and to design and manage U.S. security assistance programs.
   - To foster the recruitment, training, and appropriate utilization of counterinsurgency experts, create both a functional area for counterinsurgency and a viable career ladder for those assigned to this career field.
   - To build the cadre of counterinsurgency experts—at most, a few hundred—select individuals who, through on-the-job performance in the field, demonstrate a natural aptitude for working with indigenous forces.
2. In cooperation with other services, create a counterinsurgency institute to train U.S. and foreign military and civilian personnel in counterinsurgency.
   - Provide an extensive basic course (say, 10 to 12 weeks long) on the military, political, economic, and psychological aspects of counterinsurgency warfare.
   - Offer advanced and specialized courses on counterinsurgency planning, pacification and rural development, intelligence, suppression of narcotics trafficking, and the strategy and tactics of specific insurgent groups.
3. Ensure effective U.S. arms and equipment transfers to countries facing insurgent threats.
   - Place counterinsurgency experts on embassy country teams and at various other key positions in the U.S. security assistance complex so that they can influence the content and terms of arms transfer programs.
   - Use the leverage of security assistance to encourage the host nation's military forces to follow sound counterinsurgency policies and practices.
   - Avoid weapon transfers that might lead indigenous forces to adopt counterproductive battlefield habits or ineffective war-fighting strategies.
   - Maximize the indigenous government's and military's self-reliance.

To meet contingencies that could involve U.S. forces in counterinsurgency combat, the Army might

1. Provide specific counterinsurgency training to the light infantry and other units that would engage in counterinsurgency operations.
2. Prepare to give immediate priority in any intervention to upgrading indigenous counterinsurgency capabilities.

To increase its capabilities to support friendly insurgencies, the Army might

1. Develop and retain a few specialists with expertise in insurgency operations.
2. Train insurgency specialists in the political and other dimensions of protracted insurgency, including the techniques for organizing clandestine support networks in urban and rural areas.

RAND/R-3947-A