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## From GALULA to PETRAEUS

### THE FRENCH LEGACY IN THE US COUNTERINSURGENCY DOCTRINE



**CDEF** Centre de Doctrine  
d'Emploi des Forces  
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et Retour d'Expérience





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Couverture : portrait stylisé de David Galula (en haut à gauche) et Roger Trinquier (en bas à droite).

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# INTRODUCTION

Today, General David Howell Petraeus is the highest ranking officer and military North-American thinker who has taken an interest in reconsidering the doctrinal bases of the counter-subversive war to revitalize them and to draw a doctrine out of them. Thus you will hear of “PETRAEUS’ doctrine”. However the Anglo-Saxons would prefer the word “counterinsurgency” (“COunter INsurgency), abbreviated in COIN by the Americans.

US strategists are seeing their troops stuck in in Afghanistan and in Iraq, for lack of appropriate options so as to quell insurgencies that Al-Qaeda’s international terrorists by the way intent to couple with global Jihad. These US thinkers rediscovered, thanks to General Petraeus, theories of revolutionary wars and counter-subversive combat. This kind of combat, elaborated by former colonial countries which were struggling against nationalist and communist insurgencies was no longer taught in Western military academies. Counterinsurgency had become an outdated concept or at least a very peripheral one, as regards military action strictly speaking.

During the past decades, concealment that surrounded the counterinsurgency doctrine within the US ruling class could be explained by the trauma caused by the “dirty war” in Viet Nam. Despite the abundance of the involved political and military means, the US Armed Forces were not more successful than the French at the end of their Law and Order operations in 1954 in Indochina and in 1962 in Algeria. Worse than that, a wide audience compared counter-subversive warfare to a systematic recourse to the scorched earth policy<sup>1</sup>, to institutionalized lie and torture. On these theaters, conventional armed forces achieved tactical successes which however could not be exploited and did not lead to the expected political victories. Moreover, for internal repression purposes during the seventies and the eighties, hijacking of some basic COIN lessons learned by Latin American dictatorships, speeded its discredit up.

At the beginning of the 2000s, this essentially coercive “tough” version of COIN was taught in a more or less accepted way by some well established intellectuals in Washington. Comparing Al-Qaeda’s Salafi Jihadism to absolute evil, accomplice of enemy regimes, America at war against terror decided to strike a decisive blow. From the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001 and Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, the Bush Administration endeavored to punish terrorists and crack down on incipient insurgencies with bombings, special operations and resort to the most violent processes of COIN. Accounts disclosing detention camps in Guantanamo (a North American enclave in Cuba) and Bagram (Air Force base, North of Kabul), revealing abuses committed by US guards in the Iraqi Abu Ghraib prison deeply shook Western public opinions and enhanced an anti-Western feeling throughout the Arab World.

Since 2006, the phrase “Global war on terror” assimilated to the action of the Bush administration after September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, turns out to be less and less relevant to experts who were used to numerous other aspects of **COIN. This does not come down to the setting up of coercive techniques or of a permanent emergency system.**

<sup>1</sup> Here the “scorched earth policy” refers to operations which intent to cut logistic flows to insurgents in gaps between stabilized areas, especially by destroying and displacing supplies and populations. It means to ruin or confiscate crops and to gather rural populations inside fortified camps to control and protect them.

The advocates of a more “human terrain” inclusive strategy prefer the concept of “protracted war” or “global counterinsurgency” against Jihadism<sup>2</sup> rather than the simplistic view of “War on terror”.

In the US, the reputation enjoyed by the French specialist David Galula and the interest aroused by his Australian continuator David Kilcullen show **an actual renewed attention for a comprehensive variant of counterinsurgency encompassing cultural, political, economic and social factors**. US General David Petraeus has strongly supported the adaptation of this idea to the Iraqi and Afghan theaters.

These concepts, fostered by common references developed by the three “Davids” in opposition to the “Goliath” of bureaucracy and conformism, enable us to outline the particulars of asymmetric conflicts compared to conventional warfare. In those conflicts, victory is gained thanks to a successful combination of crackdown and seduction, and not only by a coercion of forces.

Lately accepted and just before its adaptation to Iraq then to Afghanistan, the thesis which conveyed the already classic David Galula’s theory, inherits from Marshals Gallieni (1849-1916) and Lyautey (1854 -1934). It should however be reassessed in the light of the dual phenomenon of globalization and Information Revolution.

Debates caused trouble among Western societies and their national representations called for consent or rejection of the deployment of military contingents in Afghanistan or in Iraq. These confrontations of ideas show how much the warlike COIN aspects always generate some fears of drifting or being bogged down. Aversion to blood in conjunction with a too strong belief in the military-technological superiority still deter the Americans and to a large extent, the Westerners, from looking for a close-in commitment among populations, against enemies (insurgents, terrorists) highly motivated and “moving through the people like a fish moves through water”, as in the Maoist fable. These hesitations are as many psychological obstacles to the application of proven methods of counterinsurgency.

This study aims first at identifying concepts and thinkers who were the theorists and the inspirers of counterinsurgency, to be specific French Officers Trinquier and Galula. Then it intends to show the relationship between these precursors and their intellectual heirs. Finally, it also studies the main aspects of the new US counterinsurgency doctrine which was the result of this reflection and the obstacles hindering its successful completion.

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<sup>2</sup> The phrase “global counterinsurgency” became more and more popular thanks to Bruce Hoffman, a researcher specialized in irregular conflicts at Georgetown University. Bruce Hoffman was previously with RAND Corporation the think-tank which is the most involved in doctrine related issues, since the sixties).

# PART ONE

## FRENCH REFLECTIONS ABOUT COUNTERINSURGENCY

### Chapter I - ROGER TRINQUIER AND DAVID GALULA, TWO FRENCH COUNTERINSURGENCY PRACTITIONERS

#### 1.1 - “Modern warfare” according to Roger Trinquier

Trinquier’s thinking lies within the scope of the Cold War. **According to him, subversion and terrorism are weapons used by the USSR to conquer territories without risking a total war. The purpose is to establish regimes that obey orders, while controlling the population and no longer the territory.** Against such weapons, conventional armed forces and ordinary laws of democracies are powerless. They should be adapted. On the one hand, the armed forces have to learn to fight against terrorist organizations serving subversion. On the other hand, ordinary laws should be postponed and replaced by martial law<sup>3</sup>. Finally the armed forces should benefit from the use of extended powers to fight terrorism, since they are responsible for the defense of the Nation against this new threat. Such measures should only be occasional and over a limited period of time. However the necessary time to put an end to an insurgency rest on a very subjective assessment and leaves the way open for imposing a dictatorship<sup>4</sup>.

The establishment of exceptional legislation aims at neutralizing the insurgents’ psychological action, and identifying the enemy within the country. Doing so will both allow to strike the enemy (with bans and arrests) and to leave the field open for continued operations. Quadrillage<sup>5</sup> and cordoning-off operations, as for them, aim at restoring order and civil peace. Once the latter being re-established, those exceptional measures should be lifted.

3 Trinquier mainly indicates control and ban measures. These should apply to the media and to the political parties, subsidized by the enemy nation (the USSR), or criticizing the action of the armed forces.

4 Trinquier himself acknowledges the risks inherent to this method, the needs of a control, (without being specific about its type), just as the difficulty to tell subversion from political opposition, legitimate in a democracy.

5 Translator’s note : Quadrillage (Gridding) is a more or less dense arrangement, laid out in sectors relying upon a network of outposts linked together by the principal lines of communication.

The measures stated in “*Modern Warfare*” are essentially coercive. Social action is only useful for relieving civilian populations which have suffered a lot from conflicts. **This stems from the concept of insurgency being considered as a basically exogenous phenomenon.** For Trinquier, subversion fundamentally originates from the action of a third country. **Internal factors** (like lack of stability of the institutions or existence of internal conflicts) contribute to subversion but do not bring it about. Carrying out political reforms in order to dissociate the population from the insurgents is not mentioned in the doctrine, insofar as the population, for the main part of it, only supports insurgency under compulsion. **Re-establish security is sufficient to restore loyalty of the populations to the established government. Trinquier did not bring up the political aspect in *Modern warfare*<sup>6</sup>.**

### - A military reflection : the three phases of an anti-subversive operation



Setting up the population control.  
Soldiers conduct a census of inhabitants and number buildings.

Trinquier’s book, *Modern Warfare*, bears the stamp of his experience in Algeria, and to a lesser extent, in Indochina. Subsequently his references in term of rebellion model are limited.

However his field experience leads him to propose a method to overcome the political/ military apparatus of insurgency which controls the populations in a given sector. It breaks down into three distinct phases aiming at successively<sup>7</sup> dealing with town centers, inhabited rural areas and guerillas’ safe havens. The context of implementation of this process is greatly inspired by the Algerian model (territorial districts, physical features of the terrain and enemy organization chart).

### - Phase 1: Handling of urban sectors

Ideally, this phase should take place soon after the insurgents have triggered the hostilities. At this stage, disrupted by terrorism, the police forces have moved back to key points (cities, crossroads and main roads that must be held at all costs to prevent the country from being completely paralyzed). Therefore the first action has to take place in these areas. Reinforced by the army, the police forces will cordon-off the cities. In practical terms, it means making them impenetrable (with fortifications, if necessary), thus only allowing a few easy -to- control exits. Concentration of the population enables a relatively small force to control it.

Once the city has been isolated from outside, the police forces divide the city (into districts, sub-districts, groups of houses and families) to conduct a census and then control the inhabitants. Chiefs are designated for every subset and every inhabitant is given identification documents. In the same way, movements of people and reception of foreigners are reported. Finally, food rationing is established, as well as a control over movements of goods, in order to prevent the guerilla forces to get fresh supplies in town. This control of the populace aims at associating them to their own defense, prevents insurgents from returning in cleared areas, and make troops available for the next phases of the anti-subversive fight.

<sup>6</sup> Even if the political factor is relatively skipped in the doctrine, it seems to have been taken into account during the Algeria War. In 1959, the proposal made by General de Gaulle to the Algerians to declare themselves in favor of complete integration into the French Republic, autonomy or independence, contributed to split up the insurgency and enabled the implementation of an indoctrination campaign which led to bloody purges within the FLN.

<sup>7</sup> Trinquier recommends the greatest large-scale operation, but remains fully aware of the fact that availability of the committed troop strength determines the size of the area to be handled.

When the city is cordoned-off, the police forces also proceed to a general interrogation. It enables the identification of the subordinate elements in the subversive organization, to finally go up to the leaders. The population knows the rank and file of the organization (mainly the fund collectors), but only denounce them when it is convinced that there will be no reprisals. In this way, roundups and mass interrogations ensure the informants' security, because the insurgent cannot identify the one who denounced him. Thus, while rapidly tracing the network, it becomes possible to dismantle the political apparatus used by the insurgents to control the populations.

Once the city is under control, the enemy combat apparatus is destroyed and the organization of the populations is functional, moving on to next phase becomes possible: quelling insurgency in inhabited rural areas.

*- Phase 2: Handling of inhabited rural areas*

Urban zones enable the insurgency to get fresh supplies and be talked about while perpetrating spectacular attacks that are echoed through the media. However the inhabited rural areas are of the utmost importance for the guerilla. **This is where it maneuvers, where fresh supplies are forwarded to the rebel safe havens and where the guerilla collects information from the populace about the movements of troops.** The destruction of the insurgent organization in this area represents a considerable blow to the enemy but still remains an issue due to a scattered population.

First, the police forces implement in the villages the same measures than in the cities (cordoning-off, control of populations and movements, general interrogation and breaking up of the insurgent organization). However they also proceed with assembling the population within the fortified villages before protecting and controlling it. Finally the armed forces make sure that the insurgency cannot resupply in the countryside (by destroying buildings and moving food stocks to the cities, where they will be protected and controlled).



Combing inhabited rural areas.  
Soldiers arrest or assemble the population in unassigned areas.

Once the rural areas emptied of inhabitants, the armed forces proceed with wiping out the military organization of the insurgency. Units are split into a static component (in charge of cordoning-off and *quadrillage*) and a mobile one (basically static units which could rapidly be called up and deployed on demand). Cordoning-off consists of a tight network of ambushes<sup>8</sup> and should cover a large area. The same goes for *quadrillage*. Initially concentrated in order never to be outnumbered by a rebel band, the troops gradually break up (as the guerilla weakens) while the number of ambushes will increase and the strength of each will diminish. The operation only ends once the inhabited rural areas have been cleared of the insurgents.

<sup>8</sup> To maximize the chances of engaging armed bands, the ambushes should be set by night or at daybreak, when the guerillas attempt to join the refuge areas or to resupply.

- Phase 3: Annihilation of the guerilla in the refuge areas

The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase aims at destroying the refuge areas of the guerilla to definitely crush the insurgency. Because of the strength of the enemy in these areas, a sufficient number of elite forces should be available. The course of action is almost the same as the one used in phase 2. However, as refuge areas being quite difficult to access for regular forces<sup>9</sup>, the use of rotary- and fixed-wing aircraft is essential<sup>10</sup>.



Infantrymen carrying out a heliborne operation

If the available strength is sufficient, these three phases can be performed at the same time but they are more likely to be successive. Actually, a sizeable strength should be available on the ground to maintain a “visible defense disposition<sup>11</sup>” before the population is organized and capable of ensuring its own protection with a minimum of external help. However, each pacified area enables troops to be available for the next operation. Thus the situation is theoretically supposed to improve as time goes by.

## 1.2 - “Counterinsurgency: Theory and practice” by David Galula

Galula’s book differs from Trinquier’s. *Counterinsurgency warfare: Theory and practice endeavors to conduct a reflection on the nature, strong points, weaknesses of the insurgent and its opponent through different scenarios.* Thus Galula identifies the prerequisites for a successful insurgency as follows.

**Cause of the insurgent:** the insurgent must draw his claims from the (existing or perceived) problems of the country. Moreover these claims should allow him to rally a maximum of discontented persons. Then the cause may vary and its importance may diminish as fight steps up.

**Weak political regime:** these weaknesses give opportunities to the insurgency. Internal problems which favor dissension and erosion of national consensus, more or less strong will of the government to bring the insurgency under control (influenced by the institutions stability) and its lack of know-how, as far as counter-subversive combat is concerned, are factors that weaken the power. The level of control of the population and the running of the government apparatus (strength, efficiency and loyalty of the police, the armed forces, and the civilian agencies) also lessen the chances of emerging victorious of a subversive warfare.

**Crisis situation:** while weakening the government, a crisis, whatever its nature is (endogenous or exogenous, accidental or deliberate), may launch a violent insurgency, insofar as it opens a potentially unique window of opportunity for the insurgency.

<sup>9</sup> For Trinquier, guerilla’s safe havens should compel the regular forces not to use their heavy equipment and to fight on foot, thus considerably reducing its superiority over the guerillas

<sup>10</sup> For more information, Alexandre KINNEN, *ALAT et stabilisation, le cas de l’Algérie*, Cahier de la recherche doctrinale, [www.cdef.terre.defense.gouv.fr](http://www.cdef.terre.defense.gouv.fr), 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Hold key points and big population centers in order to avoid an in-depth settlement of the guerilla.

**Outside support:** the length of an existing border and support coming from the outside affect the insurgency likelihood to be successful. This support may be moral, political, but also material, technical, even military (direct intervention).

**Geographical and economic conditions:** physical (terrain, climate) and human (distribution of the population) geography, as well as the economic structure (agrarian or industrial) influence the outcome of the subversive warfare.

Then Galula analyzes the two strategic patterns for insurgency to seize power.

**The orthodox pattern is essentially based on the Chinese example:** After having established a political party gathering the reliable supports of the insurgency, the latter should turn the party into the leader of a united front rallied around a mobilizing cause, without merging with another force. After a long lasting work of infiltration and indoctrination of the masses, the insurgent leaps to the armed fight. Then comes a movement warfare, as well as an annihilation campaign which ends the build-up of the insurgency and seals its victory by a power takeover. **Because it starts with a legalist step, that type of insurgency is only possible in a country where the political opposition is tolerated.**

**The “bourgeois-nationalist” pattern is closer to the Algerian example** where the infiltration and indoctrination step is replaced by a terrorist step (blind terrorism first then more precisely aimed at killing State officials). Once the population has been isolated from the government, conditions are ripe for the insurgent to mobilize the population and then to organize the guerilla and follow the orthodox pattern.

**Galula advocates cleaning up the country from the insurgents, area by area<sup>12</sup>** by proceeding step by step as follows:

**1<sup>st</sup> step:**

**First, destruction and dispersion of the bulk of the insurgents’ forces** are achieved through operations involving an important concentration of forces in the area to be dealt with. After the initial offensive shock, the point is to prevent the insurgents from gathering and forcing them to fight. During this military phase, many damages are caused to the native population. Therefore victims of collateral damages should immediately receive compensation in order not to antagonize all the inhabitants of the considered area. The armed forces should make sure of the support, or at least of the populace neutrality.

**2<sup>nd</sup> step:**

**Deployment of static units** in sufficient numbers to secure the recovered ground aims at opposing an insurgent comeback in strength, while mobile units continue to track them. The population should be forced to decide where its loyalties lie, be involved in the return to order with realization of civil volunteer work (restored infrastructures that can also benefit future military operations) or civic actions. Regrouping the population to make the political/ administrative area of action coincide with the military area of operations may sometimes reveal counter-productive. Selection of officers and non-commissioned officers who will be bound to deal with the inhabitants turns out to be crucial at this step.

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<sup>12</sup> Colombian counter-rebellion doctrine, or "integral (comprehensive) action" is a clear illustration of the adaptation of Galula's thinking to the current situation. For more details: LTC. CARIO, "L'action intégrale ou la récupération sociale du territoire en Colombie", Cahier de la recherche doctrinale, [www.cdef.terre.defense.gouv.fr](http://www.cdef.terre.defense.gouv.fr), 2008.

**3<sup>rd</sup> step:**

**Establishment of contacts with the populace**, whose movement control will be checked before looking for its active support, entails strengthening of the authority and gathering enough intelligence to ascertain the loyalty of one another. The population should be isolated from the guerilla. To justify working with the counterinsurgents, civilians must be subjected to a compulsory census, as well as curfews and requisitioning (under the risk of being prosecuted), as many alibis which can be opposed to the insurgents' requests. The population should feel protected by the increasing number of patrols. At this stage, operational communication works at full capacity to win hearts and minds.

**4<sup>th</sup> step:**

**Eradication of the insurgent political organization** takes place during the next step. Thanks to intelligence collected, the "purge" should be quick and precise in order not to prompt sympathy with insurgents arrested during the police operations. Leniency with the repentant insurgents is recommended so as to encourage other defections and relieve the legal and prison apparatus which otherwise could be saturated.

**5<sup>th</sup> step:**

**Free elections** will enable the people to elect **provisional local authorities**. This is the most constructive part of counterinsurgency operations: an active involvement is expected from the native population, as much for fighting against the still active insurgents, as for setting up institutions likely to fulfill its needs. One should let leaders (preferably young) emerge from the population. On this occasion, women are called to emancipation. The guerilla cannot claim to have a hold on the population's fate any more, since from now on it freely rules itself.

**6<sup>th</sup> step:**

**Testing the local leaders** is done by giving them concrete and positive tasks, like running the local government, managing projects in the social and economic fields, levying a self-defense unit, or collecting intelligence. Lukewarm and incompetent individuals should be put aside. Confirmed leaders should be protected from possible insurgents' reprisals without turning into paternalism. These budding leaders should receive logistical and financial support essential to the accomplishment of their local mission.

**7<sup>th</sup> step:**

**Selected leaders have to be gathered within a same party at local or national scale.** The point is either to make them join an already existing movement or create a new party inside which they will complete their political training. The dissatisfaction of the population's expectations, even the imperative cause upon which the insurgency relied to raise up the country, have no more *raison d'être* if the representatives discuss together and decide measures required by the situation.

**8<sup>th</sup> step:**

**Winning over or definitive reduction of the last guerillas** are achieved during the final military step which ends up counterinsurgency. The hard core of the insurgents should be rendered harmless with the resolute support of the population through annihilation or negotiation (the “Peace of the Brave”). Neglecting this step involves the risk of seeing the insurgency’s revival in the short term, as the remnants were hardened by the ordeals they went through.



Left, French leaflet encouraging the civilian Algerian population to denounce FLN members.

Right, British leaflet distributed in Malaya, encouraging the insurgents to rally the military bases by taking advantage of night in following their lights.

Source: private collection

## Chapter II - From TRINQUIER to GALULA, between mutual contribution and contradictions.

### 2.1 - Significant core differences



Andreï Jdanov, Leader of the Kominform which replaced the Komintern after World War II. This organization was responsible for coordinating the actions of the different national communist parties.

The main difference between the two authors lies in their analysis of the insurgency origins and of the means needed in order to defeat the insurgents.

#### 2.1.1 – Origins of the insurgency:

- For Roger Trinquier, the origin of subversion is essentially **exogenous**. Endogenous factors (weakness of institutions, socioeconomic disparities, and ethnic tensions) simply make things easier for the insurgents. A conventional war against the West being too risky, the USSR and its satellites resort to subversive warfare to seize whole countries by establishing governments on their service. **Therefore subversion is likely to occur anywhere, more particularly in the democratic countries which have not established appropriate mechanisms for prevention.** In order to swing the opinion of a country in favor of the Soviet camp, the insurgents resort to terror.
- For David Galula, **endogenous factors are predominant and determine the emergence of the insurgency.** Foreign support greatly affects its likelihood of success, although without being essential to its start. Nevertheless, in the context of the Cold War, Galula acknowledges **that insurgencies may be used by the Soviets to oust the Westerners from the Third World and to settle themselves for a long time.** The insurgents take advantage of existing internal problems (marginalization of a part of the population, poverty) so as to rally as many discontented people as possible around a cause that has been chosen for that purpose and which they support.

#### 2.1.2 – Means of struggle:

##### 2.1.2.1 – Measures for a successful counterinsurgency:

- For Trinquier, faced with this modern warfare, the answer mainly consists in **strengthening surveillance measures to identify and as soon as possible, to neutralize the subversive agents. Overall changes designed to divide the insurgents are not mentioned.** The organization of the population that Trinquier thinks of follows a strict hierarchical principle. **Representatives are not envisaged, but leaders** who make sure that the population takes its defense in its own hands. The State enjoys in principle legitimacy, only threatened by insecurity generated by insurgents. There is only a need to restore security, including by the use strict measures (urban control and assembly re grouping within fortified villages), that, however, are not likely to reverse the population's opinion since it is relieved to be rid of the insurgents.

- For Galula, **there should be a political answer to a political conflict**<sup>13</sup>. Measures to be taken to quell an insurgency are both of a security (destruction of the rebellion, control of the populations) and political nature (to facilitate the emergence of local leaders, satisfy a claim that is legitimate in the eyes of the major part of the population). Galula considers restoring security as a prerequisite for any reform, however he advises against appropriate measures to alienate the population, such as forced movement.

#### 2.1.2.2 – Role of the army in counter subversive warfare:

- For Trinquier, the essential role of the army is **the defense of the homeland**. Subversion is a weapon used by a foreign super-power, **it falls in the army's scope to fight it**. Trinquier logically recommends that extended powers be granted to the armed forces for the duration of troubles, even if psychological opposing action accordingly accuses the government to be of dictatorial nature.

- For Galula, the armed forces are **a tool among many others in the hands of the political power**. It is essential that the latter remains in charge of the counterinsurgency warfare. Even if it is unable to cope with an extreme situation and has to resort to the armed forces to exert extended powers<sup>14</sup>, **the appearances of civil control should be absolutely maintained** so as to avoid giving arguments to the adverse propaganda.



Source: appetes.au.9.RCP.free.fr

Parade of 9<sup>th</sup> RCP in Philippeville, Algeria, 1961.

#### 2.1.2.3 – Action on the public opinion:

The two authors consider this issue but do not rate it similarly.

- For Trinquier, **this issue is paramount**. Psychological action is essential for the insurgent, insofar as it prevents an **insufficiently motivated opponent from setting up the appropriate methods to defeat the insurgency**<sup>15</sup>. Consequently, support of public opinion appears as paramount to win an asymmetric warfare.
- Galula is much more interested in the population on the theater of operations than in the opinion of the «rear».

#### 2.1.2.4 – Description of the territorial organization of the insurgents:

The two classification methods that follow are different but not incompatible.

- Trinquier considers population centers, inhabited rural areas and rebel safe havens. If this classification can match up with Galula's (white areas being towns, pink areas being inhabited rural areas and red areas being the refuge areas), it can also be superposed on it.
- Galula refers to white, pink, and red areas, the color corresponding to the insurgency level of force in a given area (a white area is an area where the insurgent is not active, whereas he is very active in red areas) which confines him to the strategic level. **Actually, a red zone may certainly include towns, inhabited rural areas, and swamps or inaccessible mountains used as refuge areas.**

<sup>13</sup> This is the answer to this conflict where the conquest of power is at stake.

<sup>14</sup> In this case, a situation where the authority is either unable to carry out its functions, or completely infiltrated.

<sup>15</sup> For instance by organizing a press campaign which denounces the use of military power and the enforcement of martial law to fight insurgency.

## 2.2 - Obvious convergences

The comparison of *Counterinsurgency, theory and practice* with *Modern warfare* points out some convergences at different levels. David Galula and Roger Trinquier show similar conclusions as far as insurgents' methods and staff's recruitment are concerned.

Nature and characteristics of "revolutionary war": Insurgency aims at the conquest of power (in other words control of population, territory and resources) with non-conventional means (different from a conventional military offensive established by the confrontation of two armies), while most of the time breaking the law<sup>16</sup>. The insurgent straightaway denies **the government's laws, which he disputes, as well as those outlining the armed conflicts**. He relies on some **hand-picked leaders** usually recruited in students' circles. At first the balance of power does not work in his favor, but he can count on its **fluidity**, i.e. his ability to merge into the population to hide. But he also uses this ability to place his action within the legal framework and thus beyond criticism, at least in countries where political pluralism is tolerated. It enables him to **keep the initiative**, while choosing when and where to trigger the violent insurgency phase (terrorism and guerilla). On account of the important chaos provoked at low cost, insurgency is very attractive for ambitious individuals, as well as for countries attempting to strike their opponents without risking a devastating open-war.

Factors of a successful insurgency: Even if the head of the insurgency is in exile, **the population that the insurgent wishes to rally should be able to identify with him**.

Contact leaders (political officer, fund collectors, etc.) should be recruited within the population. Moreover, insurgency relies on the nation existing problems and internal tensions to recruit partisans<sup>17</sup>. Besides the more the population is scattered, the more the authorities are able to control it. At last, existence of border zones (especially with a neighbor country in favor of the insurgency) is an important asset to the success of the guerilla.

The insurgency doctrine: to a certain extent, formed from a team of organized and disciplined **hand-picked leaders**, the insurgency acts, spurred on by this **active minority**. However, it must protect its ideological integrity from the potential deviance of the too popular field commanders. These should be brought to their senses or eliminated. The insurgency party should mobilize masses, thanks to a powerful ideology, or more often **under pressure**<sup>18</sup>. Once the apparatus of the party and its **political/ military organization for control of the populations** is set up, the build-up of insurgency may start:

- **A preliminary phase of terrorism** aims at introducing the insurgent to the population, then cutting the population from the government by targeting its usual links (low-ranking civil servants and local worthies)<sup>19</sup>.
- **A guerilla phase** should enable the insurgency to set up its refuge areas. These should be established in hard-to-access and mountainous areas, where it straightaway enjoys popular support. As far as possible, these **refuge areas should be close of an international border**, in order to enable a third country to bring its material support.

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16 Insofar as the insurgent claims that he wants to overthrow the current political regime, the latter takes measures for its own defense.

17 An insurgent supported by an excellent propaganda system can generate a fake issue. Galula quotes China as an example where communists denounced forcible seizure of land by the landlords as responsible for retardation. Factually based, the major part of the land was gathered in small farms owned by the peasants. Thus they could still be legitimate in the eyes of the peasants despite the disappearance of the real issue of which they were perfectly able to take advantage (Japanese occupation).

18 This is particularly true after the beginning of insurgency, when the civil war focuses the society's attention on it and forces civilians to side with one of the two camps.

19 However, Trinquier acknowledges that the Viet-Minh did not go through this phase of spectacular attempts. As far as he is concerned, Galula makes clear that this method is a variant enabling to spare time. But it is more risky because it may lead to a fierce reaction of the authorities and then alienate the population.

- **A movement warfare phase** coincides with the build-up of the insurgency. Then the insurgency takes shape as a regular force. It launches attacks against the government's army, without being able to smash it.
- **A last phase during which the insurgency smashes the government's military forces** and seizes power.

Measures prior to triggering violent insurgency:

Before sparking off the violent phase of insurgency, it is possible to take appropriate measures so as to prevent it from breaking up or to reduce its chances of success.

**These measures are to be taken by the civil power. They are not part of those described within the framework of the counterinsurgency campaign.** Among these measures are included:

- strengthening of the political apparatus and government hold over the population,
- adaptation of the judicial system to the requirements of countersubversive warfare
- putting in detention leaders of subversive movements,
- infiltration of subversive movements to anticipate their actions, and possibly make them implode.

These measures are sometimes difficult to implement especially when emergency is not clear for the public opinion, and when the peacetime legislative process considerably slows down or completely stops the action of authorities or the adaptation of judicial standards.

The "hot" revolutionary war:

At the beginning of hostilities, the authorities are usually disorganized and confused by the methods used by the insurgents. **Fluidity of the guerilla within the populations actually prevents any effective conventional response.** At the same time, stealth of the insurgents prevents the governmental forces from using their own methods. Actually it is quite difficult to lay an ambush for the enemy, when not knowing where he is. **As far as the public order forces are concerned, this asymmetry should be offset, by the intelligence superiority, which requires the population's support.** To this end, it is necessary to rely on an active minority favorable to the legal authorities. It emerges once this minority knows that it will not be targeted by the insurgents. With a snow ball effect, the whole population should in the end give its support to the authorities, including former insurgents that have rallied and gained leniency of the public order forces.

In parallel, **there could not be any effective counterinsurgency without establishing a state of emergency adapted to the threat handling.**



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Participation of the armed forces in countersubversive warfare:

**The participation of armed forces to the counterinsurgency, as a reinforcement of public order forces, is essential, despite the advantage that the insurgent propaganda can take from it<sup>20</sup>.** The army must defeat the insurgents' military apparatus, then the political/ military apparatus which controls the populations in order to bring back security. Throughout the operations, **it should adapt its strength and its courses of action to the missions.**

<sup>20</sup> Insurgents may increase their legitimacy while denouncing the fascist nature of a government which uses the armed forces against its own citizens.

- Forces dedicated to counterinsurgency should consist of reserve and static units that can be rapidly mobilized or deployable on request.
- Due to the requirements of counterinsurgency, **some units should be re-rolled. Personnel operating heavy equipment are mainly concerned.** Actually the environment in which the insurgents operate (inhabited areas and hilly terrain) is not fit for heavy equipment and devastating firepower. Thus, artillery crews or other crewmembers are better employed as infantrymen than in their initial military occupational specialty.

### 2.3 - Thoughts more complementing than conflicting

The main difference between the two authors lies in the fact that Trinquier immediately places himself within a specific battlefield framework and neglects the strategic analysis. Insurgency is systematically described as the party of foreign countries, which rules the population by terror and exclusively acts for the benefit of the Soviet camp. He does not consider the possibility of an insurgency which is well established as it brandishes claims legitimate in the eyes of local populations. **Therefore he focuses on measures of control of the populations that aim at restoring security.**

David Galula, without disregarding Trinquier's scenario, puts it in perspective by comparing it to other possibilities. **He analyzes the insurgent phenomenon** (in which geographic and human environment does it happen? what external and internal factors affect the two opposing parties? etc.). This enables the selection of appropriate measures and means to deploy in order to obtain the desired end-effect<sup>21</sup>.

Galula's contribution is reflected in **the analysis of the characteristics of insurgency and the factors favoring its success.** It falls within the scope of a **strategic vision of the insurgent phenomenon.**

- First of all, Galula endeavors to characterize the background of subversion in order to identify elements increasing its likelihood of victory. He is particularly interested in the cause of the insurgent (has it a mobilization capacity?), in the political regime (does it have the available means to nip the rebellion in the bud or is it weakened or powerless?), as well as in the geographic, economic and climatic conditions.
- Then he is interested in the **nature** and the **strategy** of insurgency. If, as Trinquier does, he thinks that the essential of insurgencies falls in line with the Marxist ideology, he admits **that the process of takeover may vary.** He distinguishes an **orthodox pattern** (i.e. Maoist which counts on a long indoctrination task of peasant masses, occasional alliances and progressive build-up) and a "bourgeois-nationalist" pattern (which includes terrorism playing for time). Depending on conditions and strategy of the insurgent, certain steps may disappear: thus this one can manage to seize power without armed struggle, with a mere infiltration and thanks to a patient propaganda work, concluded with a coup, if necessary<sup>22</sup>.

After having identified the characteristics of the insurgent, Galula is interested in the methods to use in order to defeat him. Therefore he proposes an eight-step pattern, bearing in mind that this is not definitive: **If the order in which the measures should be established does not change, the measures themselves may vary, even disappear, depending on the situation**<sup>23</sup>. Besides Galula includes political elements in his pattern:

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21 For example, it can range from granting independence (to deny his cause to the insurgent) to an attrition strategy (to make the conflict last until the population is weary of the war and only wishes a return to peace, whatever the price is).

22 The Prague coup (1948) is a good example. However Galula acknowledges that going through the armed struggle is most likely to happen. On the one hand, the current government does not get discouraged with no reaction. On the other hand, the hardships of the armed struggle enable the Party to become hardened, structured and to focus the society's attention on friends and enemies (which will be neutralized once the power is seized.)

23 For instance, step1 will not be the same, according to whether there is a confrontation with an incipient guerilla or an almost regular force, Hezbollah type.

- Designation, generally with free elections of local leaders who are reliable and legitimate in the eyes of the population, so as to stabilize the situation on a long-term basis.
- Methods of coordination between civil and military players of the counterinsurgency.

At last, the typology establishing areas that are affected by insurgency (white, pink, red) is more appropriate to the strategic echelon than the tactical one.

Roger Trinquier puts himself in a given strategic framework, the one of an insurgency triggered from outside the country. **Saving himself a thorough analysis at strategic level, his thinking remains however very rich at tactical level.**

**Trinquier puts himself first, in a given situation**, i.e. Algeria from 1954 to 1961, which he generalizes. According to him, insurgencies are characterized by an insurgent on a foreign power's orders, which controls the population using terror. In this situation, only security has to be restored while destroying the insurgent political/ military apparatus. Once security has been restored, there is no need to conduct a large-scale political reform because legitimacy of the current government is not questioned at first.

**Trinquier is wrong when he generalizes the Algerian pattern and considers that the opponent has no real basis in the population.** However, he advocates **certain methods which can perfectly fit in the process described by Galula:**

- Trinquier's methods for population control can be adopted. Actually steps 3 and 4 described by Galula should entail the establishment of imposed and sometimes drastic measures aiming at controlling and protecting the population.
- *Quadrillage* methods aiming at destruction of military forces of the insurgency, as well as certain recommendations (adequate distribution between static and mobile units, air mobility, and equipment) can fit in the destruction steps of the insurgent political/ military apparatus as described by Galula.

# PART TWO

## FRENCH THINKING REVISITED

### Chapter I - THINKING INFLUENTIAL ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

#### 1.1 - A very famous doctrine within the military community

**Mobilization of masses is at the root of irregular conflicts, whatever their forms are:** guerilla (military tactics of sporadic harassment attacks), insurgency (upheaval aiming at overthrowing a regime), terrorism (peak of violent political action). The eight Galula's steps, the twenty-eight David Kilcullen's articles and the fourteen David Petraeus' observations aim at providing the counterinsurgents with the best pieces of advice to win this type of asymmetric warfare, in which insurgents fight with them for the population support. These authors draw on the same sources having force of reference among Anglo-American readers.

In the eyes of US specialists of irregular conflicts, David Galula's book is a classic of its kind whose importance is rediscovered. His book *Counterinsurgency Warfare, Theory and Practice* has been republished by Hailer Publishing in 2005. David Kilcullen and David Petraeus are always keen to quote him in their respective contributions that are read by military HQ staff. Ahmed S. Hashim, in his book *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq (2006)*, praises "David Galula, the much under-appreciated French counterinsurgency theorist, whose writings are making a comeback"<sup>24</sup>. **Some even see him as the "Counterinsurgency Clausewitz".**

Despite this posthumous glory, Lieutenant Colonel Galula is hardly known by his compatriots. In company with Maurice Prestat, Lucien Poirier, Jacques Hogard, André Souyris, Jean Némó, Charles Lacheroy et Roger Trinquier, he belongs to the "French school" of counterinsurgency, the doctrine of which became very popular in the US during the sixties. Roger Trinquier, the most media-oriented among these theorists, was convinced that in "modern warfare", the law of armed conflicts was an out of date concept and that there was no reason to be reluctant to use methods employed by the enemy ("to fight fire with fire").

This thinking, inspired by the Indochina War, was used during the Algeria War, leading to tactical successes but also to blameful abuses which could not stop a frustrating political deadlock, as bitterly experienced by the US in Viet Nam. Two years after the independence of Algeria, David Galula's recommendations, as regards counterinsurgency (understood as a democratic contribution) were directed in a very different way from the ones de facto advocated by Trinquier and favoring the establishment of a permanent State of emergency<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> "David Galula, the much under-appreciated French counter-insurgency theorist, whose writings are making a comeback"». Ahmed S. Hashim, Strategic Studies Professor at the US Naval War College, was assigned, as an adviser to US Command –Iraq bet. Nov 2003 and Sept 2005. He drew up an uncompromising assessment of the strategy that had been implemented for three years. He then joined General Petraeus' team in 2007.

<sup>25</sup> The books "Pacification in Algeria, 1956-1958", by David Galula and "Modern Warfare", by Roger Trinquier, were both republished in the US in 2006, the first one with a foreword written by Bruce Hoffman, the second one prefaced by the neoconservative Eliot Cohen, supported by the RAND Corporation.

Decolonization bad memories, combined with the fact that David Galula already wrote his theses in the US, directly in English. This certainly explains why this theorist, who was much-appreciated in the US, sank into oblivion in France. However David Galula's relevant thinking did not escape the scrutiny of Gérard Chaliand, a specialist of asymmetric warfare. He quotes him in the commented bibliography coming with the first edition of *Stratégies de la guérilla* (1979), mentions it in *L'Amérique en guerre : Irak-Afghanistan* (2007), and grants him, as well as Kilcullen and Petraeus, the place he deserves in *Les guerres irrégulières. Guérillas et terrorismes (XX<sup>ème</sup> - XXI<sup>ème</sup> siècles)* (2008).

Key ideas of David Galula, the "classic", David Kilcullen, the "new McNamara"<sup>26</sup> co-opted by Washington circles, and David Petraeus, the "last chance general", are so much appreciated by the American strategic community. The reason is that they shake the conservative preconceptions up and they were designed by pragmatic and original minds. Nothing in their thinking denotes obsession of the international plot which would be responsible for insurgencies.

Since 2005, the RAND Corporation, a *think tank* which is traditionally close to the Establishment and to the Defense circles, has been contributing to rediscover David Galula's ideas. It appeals for their personal development through new talents. But after 2006, thanks to Military Review, the Fort Leavenworth Combined Arms Center journal, the principles of COIN (*revisited by these army officers who know writing as well as fighting*<sup>27</sup>) became more and more popular.

## 1.2 - A coherent doctrine, obvious references

Where Galula, Kilcullen and Petraeus address guerilla or insurgency, others, before them, referred to "small wars"<sup>28</sup>, "low-intensity operations"<sup>29</sup>, "revolutionary war"<sup>30</sup>, or "modern war", which all conflict with inter-state and conventional wars<sup>31</sup>.

In order to better grasp the phenomenon, these theoreticians had access to doctrinal texts of Mao Zedong, Ernesto Che Guevara and Vo Nguyen Giap, strategists of "protracted people's war". David Galula had a direct experience of the Chinese Civil War (1927-1949), in Greece (1945-1950), in Indochina (1948-1954) and in Malaya (1948-1960), before taking part in the pacification of Algeria (1954-1962). David Kilcullen gave counterinsurgency a lot of thoughts based on Indonesian cases showing differing outcomes (Defeat of the Darul Islam insurgency in Java, victory of Timor's Independence Movement). He served in peace enforcement operations in area of tension (Cyprus and Bougainville) and trained commandos (South Asia, UK, Middle East). He and David Petraeus studied the old ways of US commitments in Viet Nam (1965-1975), in Afghanistan (since 2001) and Iraq (since 2003).

25 Like brilliant and controversial Robert Strange McNamara (Secretary of Defense of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, President of the World Bank from 1969 to 1981), inventor of the *flexible response* doctrine which revamped the nuclear US strategy, David Kilcullen, with his senior position as a "Chief Strategist in the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism" to Hank Crumpton, sets the tone and arouses debate.

27 David Galula's work has been translated and is also available in French ("Contre-insurrection, théorie et pratique" – Editions Economica).

28 *Small Wars, Their Principles and Practice* (1896, republished in 1996) is the title of the book by British Major General Charles E. Caldwell, who took part in Afghan Wars and Boer War (end of 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century). The expression small war appeared in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the term guerilla especially applying to the Spanish resistance against the Grand Army troops.

29 *Low-intensity Operations, Subversion, Insurgency and Peace Keeping* (1971) is the title of the book by British Major General Frank Kitson, who really experienced asymmetric warfare in Malaya (privileged textbook case of British and American people), in Kenya, Cyprus, Oman and Aden.

30 *Revolutionary War in World Strategy* (1945-1969), published in 1970, is one of the three essential books by Robert Thomson, a British officer who participated in defeating the Communist insurgency in Malaya. Conspicuous theorist, specialist of the Maoist Revolutionary War, he was the Viet Nam adviser to Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon, as regards insurgency.

31 Kilcullen's 28 articles are an assumed tribute paid to the 27 articles by T.E. Lawrence (also known as Lawrence of Arabia), which he published in 1917 in the Arab Bulletin and which condenses his experience of guerilla by the side of the Arabs fighting against the Ottoman Empire. Also see at [www.cdef.terre.defense.gouv.fr](http://www.cdef.terre.defense.gouv.fr) the doctrinal research sheet T.E. Lawrence and the mind of an insurgent by LTC Jérôme CARIO, Dec. 2006.

As regards terrorism, this other kind of asymmetric warfare - especially the one of Islamic inspiration - , a same conceptualization effort exists, that was revived in the US after the September 11 terrorist attacks. In 2006, the *Combating Terrorism Center* (CTC) of West Point Military Academy sought expertise from academics to draw up a mapping of the Jihadist Party (*Militant Ideology Atlas*) and to fuel the debate of its internal journal, *The CTC Sentinel*. As far as he is concerned, David Kilcullen acknowledges his intellectual debt toward Eric Hoffer, author of *The true believer* (a survey on fanaticism), Philip Selznick, author of *The Organizational Weapon: A Study of Bolshevik Strategy and Tactics* (about subversion), Olivier Roy, author of *Globalized Islam* (translation of *L'Islam mondialisé*, on the new identity of Fundamentalist Muslims) and Marc Sageman, author of *Understanding Terror Networks* (an essay on profiling Islamic terrorists).

At last, regarding the number of required references, David Kilcullen admits that he shares the fascination of his audience for two cinematographic pieces that tragically illustrate the ups and downs of irregular conflicts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: *La bataille d'Alger* (*The Battle of Algiers*, 1966, right under, left), controversial movie by Italian director Gillo Pontecorvo<sup>32</sup>, and *Black Hawk Down* ( 2002), right under, right), movie by Ridley Scott, which depicts how two helicopter crews and their rescuers got trapped by Somali militia in Mogadishu in 1993.



The Battle of Algiers

Source: Wikipedia



Black Hawk Down

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<sup>32</sup> Shot by Gillo Pontecorvo in 1965 with Yacef Saadi playing his own part, *The Battle of Algiers* was banned in France for a long time. This movie denounced the use of torture during control operations in the Kasbah of Algiers conducted by French paratroopers in 1957, while implying that its use had become the rule. Designed as a plea against torture, this movie paradoxically ended up being shown in counterinsurgency training centers in Iran and in Latin America, some of them teaching torture.

## Chapter II - THE NEW COUNTERINSURGENCY THINKERS

### 2.1 - David Kilcullen, «COIN» at company level

As an Australian officer, David Kilcullen took an active interest in the counterinsurgency issue in the nineties<sup>33</sup>. His work on several insurgencies in Southeast Asia drew attention of the Australian government on him. Then Paul Wolfowitz called upon him for his expertise. **Supporter of the concept of “protracted war”, he brings together in a 28-article *vade mecum* counterinsurgency’s fundamentals at company level. These recommendations, issued in *Military Review* (May-June 2006) are marked by the legacy of Galula’s thinking. They internalize the fact that the population is the center of gravity of an asymmetric warfare.** Kilcullen links up with Galula’s thinking while emphasizing the importance of human terrain and a comprehensive approach of counterinsurgency.

1. **“Know your turf”**. The company commander has to know physical and human geography and history of the area of operations as well. He has to take advantage of observations and whenever possible of a briefing by the unit that has been previously deployed. It is rare but very useful. In any case, nothing will replace a strong personal knowledge of the area of operations. This knowledge should be shared among platoon leaders and NCOs, otherwise there is a risk of failure.
2. **“Diagnose the problem”**. Insurgency warfare is fundamentally a competition between regular forces and insurgents to achieve mobilization of the population in support of one side or another. To do so, regular forces should get the maximum knowledge of the insurgents. Who are they? What motivates them? How they mobilize their support? etc. The initial diagnosis should be collectively worked out with subordinates. They should also bear in mind that much of their success comes from errors by security forces or government. Due to increased reactivity required by that type of conflict, subordinates must be able to quickly make the right decisions and therefore know the commander’s intent.
3. **“Organize for intelligence”**. The smartest company elements should be assigned to the company intelligence section instead of the rifle squads. The company commander loses firepower but saves human lives. Intelligence and operations are complementary. On the one hand, intelligence first comes from operations and not from headquarters (for that reason, having available linguists instead of intelligence advisers is often useful). On the other hand, **killing the insurgent is easy, finding him is much more complex and nearly impossible without help of intelligence.**
4. **“Organize for interagency operations”**. Success of **counterinsurgency operations implies** collaboration with different actors (governmental, non-governmental, national or transnational) whom the company commander does not necessarily control. **Stabilization and development agencies finally restore conditions for a return to normality.** Therefore it is necessary to increase awareness of some elements while putting them in contact with such agencies. At last, it should be kept in mind that civilian find arms and body armor intimidating, whereas **cultural differences hamper communication.** This makes contact more difficult to establish. It is necessary to learn how to talk to locals without scaring or offending them.
5. **“Travel light and harden your combat service support (CSS)”**. It is necessary to **beat the insurgent to the draw**, which implies to lighten the weapon and equipment load. But we also need to count on heavy support if needed. At the same time, **Combat Service Support should be hardened because it represents an obvious target for insurgents.**

33 See bibliography

6. **“Find a political/cultural adviser”**. The latter should be multilingual and navigate the intricacies of local politics. He should stand out. Moreover the company commander or his intelligence adviser should not be tasked with this job. Intelligence adviser has to understand the environment, the POLAD’s job is to help shape it.
7. **“Train the squad leaders, and then trust them”**. Battles are won or lost in moments. Squad leaders, properly briefed, should be able to make the grade.
8. **“Rank is nothing, talent is everything”**. A few good men led by a competent officer will succeed where hundreds of well-armed soldiers under a mediocre leader will fail.
9. **“Have a game plan”**. During the final planning phase, there should be a mental picture of the way the game will develop. At that point, the company commander should identify basic stages in his operation (establishment of dominance, building of local networks, and marginalization of the enemy) through which he will achieve his objectives. In case of setbacks hampering the development of the plan, the company commander should be able to restart from the previous phase. As for initial diagnosis, the tactical plan should be simple, adaptable and known to everyone.



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10. **“Be there”**. Movements on foot through each village, night and day, enable friendly troops to hold sway over the area, to intervene in case of an incident and to live closer to the population, better than residing in a remote and secure base. Troops should move on foot while keeping in touch with the populations. They should not drive around in over protected vehicles, since it ruins the inhabitants’ confidence. To develop his network, the commander should appear unmasked.

11. **“Avoid knee-jerk responses to first impressions”**. But in case of an incident, wait until the facts are confirmed. Then you can remain respected by the locals. Trust the pieces

of advice from a right-hand man who is hand-picked within the population will help to keep one’s head.

12. **“Prepare for handover from day one”**. Even if it is tedious, the company commander should keep a log which will help his successor to carry on with the mission while maintaining a collective memory of the operations within the unit.
13. **“Build trusted networks”**. **You must win hearts** (persuade the population that its best interest is served by the success of government forces) **and minds** (convincing that regular forces are the most powerful, the more able to ensure security and that any resistance is pointless). **It does not matter to be liked or not. What matters is to persuade the population that its interest lies in cooperation.** Once networks have been established, they grow and cut off the insurgent from the population. In order to win hearts and minds, it is necessary to clearly identify the needs of the population to answer them, and to make contact with the whole community of the main actors in the area of operation.

14. **“Start easy”**. It is necessary to work on the outward relationships of a locality, the confidence of which has been won, in order to obtain as positive results in the neighboring villages with whom this locality trades.
15. **“Seek early victories”**. Achieving even a small victory enables to seize the initiative and should have priority. But instead of winning a skirmish over an elusive enemy, it will be better to satisfy an old demand (political, administrative or economic) of the local population. Resolving a long-standing issue enables the commander to keep the initiative and rally long-lasting support.
16. **“Practice deterrent patrolling”**. This deters the enemy from attacking and reassures the populace. This could be the occasion to deploy, everywhere in the area, squads that the insurgent will consider as insignificant targets. Mixed civil-military teams (*blue-green*) could even be created. Generally speaking, one- to two-thirds of the company should be on patrol at any time, day or night.
17. **“Be prepared for setbacks”**. In counterinsurgency, there is nothing unusual about getting the wrong target, making mistakes and having to drop back to the previous phase of the plan. Some platoons will do well while others do badly, therefore freedom to adjust the posture should be given to subordinate leaders.
18. **“Remember the global audience”**. The international media report every move of each involved unit. Thus the company commander should befriend the journalists. The media are an asset for insurgent as for counterinsurgent if they know how to use them. The latter will use it to send his message and enrich his knowledge of the area of operations while being next to field journalists.
19. **“Engage the women, beware of the children”**. Most insurgents fighters are men, but in traditional societies (especially Muslim), women are hugely influential in forming the social networks that should be rallied to the cause of counterinsurgency. Fraternizing with children may turn out to be very dangerous. They come close to the convoys without arousing suspicion and could be either punished or used by the insurgents.
20. **“Take stock regularly”**. Statistics on the effectiveness of military action (like detail account of the enemy losses) should be available. However, this only makes sense if it is combined with a set of indicators which gives the company commander metrics on percentage of engagements initiated by insurgents, quality of tip-offs on insurgent activity that originates from the population, longevity of friendly local leaders in position of authority, and volume of economic activity. Trends which will result from it will help to track counterinsurgency progress in the sector.
21. **“Exploit a «single narrative»”**. The company commander can make up a story that gives meaning to his presence and action. He may use traditional leaders or media-individuals to broadcast it. The justifying narrative may be worked out at higher echelon or even combined with local traditions. The workable elements will be refined, so as they cannot be used by the enemy cause. Setting-off of the achievements will owe a lot to the already built-up network.



A child shows a picture representing a body desecration in Abu Ghraib.

22. **“Local security forces (army, police) should mirror the enemy pattern, not the model of the major counterinsurgency unit”**. After high-level clearance, the company commander will take an interest in supporting and training well-led and controlled auxiliary forces, thus enabling him to harass the enemy while reinforcing self-defense spirit within the population of his sector.
23. **“Practice armed civil affairs”**. Counterinsurgency is “an armed social work”. Provide protection, identify needs one by one, improve social conditions, mobilize the population and build networks. This phase takes place in partnership with the other involved agencies and local administration leaders. Security of their volunteers and local officials should be ensured while creating a permissive operating environment.
24. **“Small is beautiful”**. Large-scale projects that could be allegedly transplanted from one area to another while showing unawareness of local conditions should be ousted by cheap and sustainable programs.
25. **“Fight the enemy’s strategy, not his forces”**. When insurgents in desperate straits try by spikes of offensive to recapture the undermined popularity with the population, a deadly confrontation should be avoided, since there is a risk of losing the advantages obtained from the mobilization of the population and opposing the benefits of pacification to the enemy maneuvers.
26. **“Build your own solution, only attack the enemy when he gets in the way”**. The approach that the company commander favored early in the campaign was much more aimed at displacing the enemy from his environment, thus depriving him of its support within the population, than seeking for open confrontation. **Here comes the moment when it could be appropriate** to negotiate the rallying of insurgents in the name of a reconciliation policy that is supported by the population. A defection is better than a surrender, a surrender is better than a capture, and a capture is better than a kill.
27. **“Keep your extraction plan secret”**. It enables to persuade the locals to remain loyal since they will not feel abandoned. By the same token, not setting a fixed extraction date demoralizes the insurgent who understands that he will have to keep on fighting forever.
28. **“Whatever else you do, keep the initiative”**. The enemy should be kept in a reactive position.

## 2.2 - David Petraeus, «the Last Chance General» put to the test in Iraq

David Petraeus participated in “*Operation Iraqi Freedom*” when commanding the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, then he was entrusted with the responsibility for the Mosul region. Successful in the stabilization of this area while earning respect from the local elites, he then oversees the drafting of Field Manual FM 3-24 at the US Army Combined Arms Center. As of 2006, he refines his stabilization strategy in 14 observations. Like Kilcullen, Petraeus insists on the importance of **winning support of the population through coercive (restoring security) and non-coercive means (building links and social networks with the civil population throughout the theater of operations).**

1. **“Do not try to do much with your own hands”** is a principle handed down from Lawrence of Arabia. In the context of Iraq, 2006, especially since the country recovered its full sovereignty (June 2004) and proceeded to general elections (30 January 2005), it enables empowerment of the Iraqis with US assistance. The country has considerable human capital with an educated middle class, a number of budding entrepreneurs, military staff, and many talented leaders who know the situation and should be trusted.
2. **“Act quickly because every Army of liberation has a half-life”** beyond which it turns into an Army of occupation. A race against the clock has started right away. Iraqi people are impatient to see achievement of their expectations, without being more indebted to foreigners for the potential dangers of their condition. It is up to Americans to compensate the damage done by military operations (without forgetting collateral damage), to restore basic services as quickly as possible (water and power supply) and to start the rebuilding process.
3. **“Money is ammunition”**. In fact, it can be more important than real ammunition when reconstruction of a country is at stake. However, it is necessary to quickly and effectively put it to use with the help of qualified organizations. Funds of *Commander’s Emergency Reconstruction Program* (CERP) have been used for numerous small development projects in Iraq during Spring and Summer 2003. Ratified and consolidated in Fall 2003, the concept has migrated to Afghanistan. A concept like CERP must be given reasonable flexibility in how the money is spent in order to address emerging needs. In 2005, “train and equip” missions for the Iraqi Security Forces were funded this way.
4. **“Increasing the number of stakeholders is critical to success”** of counterinsurgency. The more the Iraqis, including Sunni Arab leaders, will feel they have a stake in the success of new Iraq, the more the US Armed Forces will be reinforced in their stabilization mission. The 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division served as an example in the area of Mosul.
5. **“Analyze costs and benefits of operations before each operation”** protects from disappointment. Nothing could be more regrettable than nourishing the enemy’s cause with inappropriate actions. Elimination without indirect unfortunate consequences of Saddam Hussein’s sons (Uday and Qusay) or enemy’s arrests conducted in Mosul, were successful because these operations had been properly assessed and prepared.
6. **“Intelligence is the key to success”**. There are neither “cordon and knock” nor counterinsurgency operations that are successful without accurate human intelligence, the gathering, cross-checking and interpretation of which are always difficult.
7. **“Everyone must do nation-building”**. Civil Affairs personnel are often not enough when undertaking nation-building. It is proper to assign them, and local leaders as well, correspondents coming from

different branches or services (Engineer Battalion, Corps Support Group, Signal Battalion, Military Police Battalion, Fire support Element, Surgeon and his team, Staff Judge Advocate, Chaplain and his team). Thus, the assigned elements of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division could achieve the rebuilding work of the University of Mosul.

8. **“The need to help building institutions, not just units”**, should be recognized at all levels. This observation is directly linked to the issue encountered by US Central Command when rebuilding the Iraqi Security Forces (Armed forces and Police). Without ministries to lead them, training organizations to select and train them, money to pay them, it was unlikely that new units be operational. US Military Assistance did it.
9. **“Cultural awareness is a force multiplier”**, as one works on the environment. Terrain is more often human than geographic. Common sense as much as operational needs force the idea of understanding a society, its history, religion, culture, before pretending to intervene in order to reinforce the political and economic institutions that are fought by the insurgents. People are more likely to cooperate if they feel that those who have power over them try to adapt themselves to their culture. In the US armed forces, those who were the most successful in winning population favor, are precisely those who learned, on the job, to integrate elements of Iraqi culture and master some basic knowledge of Arabic language.
10. **“Success in a counterinsurgency requires more than just military operations to win”**. The objective is to establish a political environment that helps reduce support of the populations for the insurgents and undermine the ideology of whatever they may espouse. This is of greater importance in certain Sunni Arab regions which still provide sanctuaries to the insurgents. Within this framework, it requires to concentrate efforts as well on economy, education, public services as on regional environment. The campaign plan developed with the US Embassy in Baghdad already drew its inspiration from the need of a political action.
11. **“Ultimate success depends on local leaders”**. Leaders at the national level should be invited to disarm their militias, to work together, to pursue initiatives able to satisfy demands from those who still feel left out. Leaders in the Ministries should be encouraged to uprightness and good governance. Leaders at the province level should resist temptations to pursue winner-take-all politics. Leaders in the Security Forces should stay out of politics and oppose their neutrality to political, ethnic or tribal loyalties.
12. **“The company commander should never forget the strategic lieutenants and strategic corporals”**. It is essential that junior leaders be briefed before deployment. Once deployed, it is advisable to minimize the cases in which they would have to make arbitrary decisions extremely quickly. A badly kept guard of checkpoints often presents that kind of risk (risk of untimely opening fire to stop a vehicle that seems suspect.).
13. **“There is no substitute for flexible adaptable leaders”**. In Iraq, young leaders who had little or no training demonstrated enormous initiative, determination and courage.
14. **“A leader’s most important task is to set the right tone”**. If he does not boost the political part of counterinsurgency at his own level, subordinates will not feel committed enough. Thus subordinate leaders of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division were not convinced by the need of giving up the strictly military approach. In a context where mistakes, frustrations and losses pile up one after another, the Company Commander should ensure that appropriate action is taken to remind his subordinates of ethical principles which go with the rules of engagement. Nothing is more destructive than mistreatment inflicted to populace and detainees.

# PART THREE

## NEW THINKING INSPIRED

### FROM THE PAST

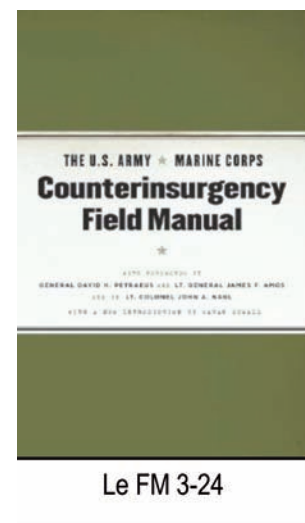
#### Chapter I - NECESSARY AWARENESS

##### 1.1 - Genesis of a new doctrine: from FM 3-24 to the «surge» in Iraq

During the months he spent as Commanding General of U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, General Petraeus played a key role in working out an ambitious counterinsurgency manual. A joint (U.S. Army and U.S. Marines) publication has been issued on December 15, 2006, shortly before the review of strategy that officially started on September 25, 2006, and ended up with the “Surge” in 2007, endorsed by President Bush and implemented by General Petraeus in Iraq.

The Counterinsurgency Manual was given a double registration: FM 3-24 for U.S. Army and MCWP 3-33.5 for U.S. Marines. **It consists of 220 pages and eight chapters full of historical analyzes, practical recommendations, typologies of engagement, “line of operations”, as well as planning methods to be implemented in a COIN situation. “The primary audience for FM 3-24 is senior officers and commanders at brigade level and above”.**

From the introduction, the document underlines that *“efficient insurgents rapidly adapt to changing circumstances. They cleverly use the tools provided by the global information revolution to magnify the effects of their actions. However by focusing their efforts on security and support of the local populace, and through a concerted effort to take into account the lessons learned, the Army and Marine Corps can defeat their insurgent enemies”.*



Besides US Army *Lieutenant-General* David Petraeus and USMC *Lieutenant-General* James Amos, FM 3-24 drafting has gathered, under the authority of General Peter Pace (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff), plus some of the smartest and innovative US officers of their generation, like Colonel H.R. McMaster<sup>34</sup>, commanding the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment in Iraq (whose successful counterinsurgency operation at Tall Afar in 2005 is considered as a textbook case), Colonel Peter R. Mansoor, Director

<sup>34</sup> In 1997, Colonel McMaster already published his thesis called *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Lies that Led to Vietnam* – (Harper Collins Editions) in which the conclusions he drew from the Vietnamese fiasco are very close David Petraeus's ones.

of the (*United States Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Center*) in Fort Leavenworth (who fought militias of Mahdi army in Karbala in 2004), or Colonel Thomas Greenwood, Director of USMC Command and Staff College, who supervised the training of Iraqi Security Forces in Anbar). Together they form the “Petraeus’ Guys” group.

In 2007, these same officers, against outgoing generals’ advice (George Casey Jr. and John Abizaid), helped out with the elaboration of Baghdad Security Plan, needed by General Petraeus to achieve his “Last Chance” mission.

**This plan, widely inspired by counterinsurgency’s doctrine, aimed at denying the rebel factions access to the area of Baghdad and to restore a semblance of order through *quadrillage*, cordon-off and ID check missions.**

Better, General Petraeus used Baghdad Security Plan as a political lever to obtain from the US Congress the deployment of additional forces (30,000 soldiers) which he claimed to achieve his comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy. This had no other objective than contribute to reassuring the populace and temporarily strengthen the capacities of the Iraqi government and army, while concentrating all means on the fight against Al Qaeda terrorists. Drawing a difference between “reconcilable” Jihadists (Islam-nationalist militias) and Al Qaeda “irreconcilable”, **General Petraeus assumed full responsibility for the Sunni rebels return policy, although these rebels “had American blood on their hands”<sup>35</sup>.**

His constructive opportunism approach bore fruit (drop in the number of security incidents). **Known as “Surge”, this counterinsurgency strategy can be described as delaying, inasmuch as it lies within a clearly defined perspective of “Iraqization of the war”, in other words, of national reconciliation and unavoidable handover of sovereignty.** Being realistic, General Petraeus never thought of a possible military “victory” in Iraq. He endeavored not to lose, considering as satisfactory the emergence of “*Iraq in peace with itself and its neighbors, rehabilitated into national community, freed from pressure of foreign Jihadists and endowed with a representative government, accountable to its fellow citizens*”.

## 1.2 - Basic principles of the U.S. Counterinsurgency doctrine

Counterinsurgency (COIN) includes offense, defense, and stability components. **It implies that soldiers and marines know “how to fight as well as how to build”.** Respective proportions between defense, attack, and stability, as well as time and necessary resources depend upon the situation and the mission. Most of the time, COIN faces an active minority opposed to the government, which try to rally a very wide majority of undecided people and neutralize the minority that remained loyal to the government. **To win, the latter should assert its legitimacy to this majority.**

### 1.2.1 Historical principles for Counterinsurgency:

Legitimacy, primary objective: The primary objective of COIN is to foster development of effective governance by a legitimate government in the eyes of the population, the landslide majority of which should obey with consent and not under coercion. There are different sources of legitimacy: democratic,

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<sup>35</sup> Extract from General Petraeus’s lecture to the *Collège Interarmées de Défense CID* (French equivalent to the US Command and General Staff College) on September 25, 2008.

religious or simply the ability to ensure a minimum security. **FM 3-24 emphasizes six indicators of legitimacy:**

- the ability to provide security for the populace.
- a selection of leaders at a frequency and in a manner considered just and fair by a substantial majority of the populace.
- a high level of popular participation in or support for political processes.
- a culturally acceptable level of corruption.
- a culturally acceptable level and rate of political, economic, and social development.
- a high level of regime acceptance by major social institutions.

The Commander should first diagnose what the population understands by a legitimate and fair government. **Vision of legitimacy may effectively vary from one culture to another.** The presence of the rule of law (defined as government compliance with preexisting and impersonal law rules) is a major asset to guarantee a solid and deep legitimacy since **coercive action cannot be sufficient to restore legitimacy. Using all instruments of national power is required.**

Unity of effort is essential: Unified command is rarely possible today, especially since some of the key players, in a way or another involved in counterinsurgency and stabilization, claim their independence and thus refuse to appear as linked to law and order forces (particularly NGOs and IGOs<sup>36</sup>). However, the aim is to **synchronize messages and share objectives** among the actors of stabilization, whatever their origin is (national, international, state-led, or not).

Political factors are primary: **Thus military operations should be designed while keeping in mind their political effects.** It implies that political and diplomatic leaders actively participate in the conduct (from design to execution) of operations.

Counterinsurgency forces must understand the environment: Soldiers and marines must understand society and culture within which operations are being conducted (like organization of social, ethnic, or cultural groups and their interconnections, ideologies and values that structure them and the local political system). As a general rule, insurgents which US forces should face have a good knowledge of physical and human terrain. So as to offset this decisive advantage, COIN forces have to clearly ascertain the conflict, its nature and its causes, as well as an understanding of the motivation, strengths, and weaknesses of the insurgents. Knowledge of the other actors in the area of operations and mastering the country's language are also essential. **Above all, there should be a clear understanding of the enemy and its environment.**

Intelligence drives operations: Without relevant intelligence, conventional forces unnecessarily waste time and resources in useless and even counterproductive operations since they cause collateral damage. On the contrary, with good intelligence, units can conduct well-planned operations and neutralize the insurgents without useless losses. In **COIN, local intelligence produces the main part of information** and applies to all the actors involved in stabilization, and not only the armed forces. **A loop develops where operations produce intelligence that drives subsequent operations.** Finally, it is necessary to **disseminate intelligence down to the lowest levels.**

Insurgents must be isolated from their cause and support: It is usually easier and less risky to separate an insurgency from its resources and let it die than to chase and kill every insurgent, one by one (their closest relatives and friends may crave for revenge). The main asset of the insurgency hinges on its

<sup>36</sup> NGOs and IGOs which put their neutrality in the foreground.

ability to replace losses quickly. **Therefore counterinsurgents must cut off the sources of that recuperative power by separating insurgents from their support with political** (meet a widespread claim), **coercive** (control of the population or the borders) **and legislative** (stop financial flows to the insurgents) **measures**. Eventually, the populace assists the government more actively, makes insurgency illegitimate and enables a permanent victory.

Security under the rule of law is essential: Restoration of security for the population enables to quell disorder and implement permanent reforms to defeat insurgency. This **is the cornerstone of any COIN effort**. It is important that the insurgents be seen as criminals in the eyes of the major part of citizens. To achieve this, **as soon as possible security responsibility must be transferred to civil authorities and national forces (police and army)**. **In parallel, we should ensure that the law considering the insurgents as criminals is in line with local society's values**. It reinforces legitimacy of the local government. Security forces should avoid being involved in illegitimate actions (unjustified or excessive use of force). This is counterproductive and weakens the government. Any human rights abuses quickly become known throughout the local populace and eventually around the world. **It is also important to keep material records of all activities that may be required sometime later in a court of justice or used to counter the insurgent propaganda**.

Counterinsurgents should prepare for a long-term commitment: Insurgencies are protracted by nature. Fighting the insurgents is time and means consuming. The population, center of gravity of the conflict, only sides with the government when it is convinced that the latter has the capability and the will to win. Sometimes U.S. support is crucial to build public faith in the host nation government's viability, whatever happens. **The populace must be convinced that casualties will not affect U.S. steadfastness to defeat insurgency**. U.S. forces should also be prepared for a protracted COIN effort, which requires **establishing headquarters and support structures designed for long-term operations**. Finally, even if foreign forces are called for withdrawal as soon as possible, support of the United States for host nation institutions should remain for a long time. At the strategic level, military leaders should ensure that neither the message nor the actions of the force will undermine public confidence in the stability operations.

### *1.2.2 Contemporary principles of Counterinsurgency:*

Manage information and expectations: With a skillful management of information, counterinsurgents may create a realistic set of expectations among the populace and push forward a steady progress toward their satisfaction. Such progress helps the Force not to be perceived as an army of occupation. Generate realistic expectations is crucial, since the population is starting to over-expect from the U.S. because of "the man on the moon syndrome"<sup>37</sup>. A disappointed population may turn against the Force, whereas it will show enthusiasm for the Force if living conditions are improving according to its expectations. Finally, counterinsurgents should send a consistent message and avoid any double language that will show up in the end.

Use the appropriate level of force: **Any use of force generates a series of reactions** within the population (reciprocal action). A violent operation which causes important collateral damage is counterproductive if it kills five insurgents while it generates the recruitment of fifty more. Force continuum procedures, a.k.a. "*escalation of force*" in place within U.S. Armed Forces consist in using lesser means of force

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<sup>37</sup> Local populations have a trend to believe that a country which performed the remarkable achievement of sending a man on the moon could very quickly improve their conditions of life while restoring basic services and infrastructures. Each delay will be considered as an obvious sign of bad will.

without endangering Soldiers and Marines. **At last, use of force will be more easily accepted if it is applied by national forces rather than foreign troops.**

Learn and adapt: Insurgents constantly shift courses of actions, forcing regular forces to a permanent adaptation. **Units must be able to observe, learn and evolve through their own experience.** Commanders should ensure that their guidelines designed to that effect are actually implemented and that best COIN practices circulate between units.

Empower the lowest levels: Counterinsurgency operations require subordinate leaders to react quickly and appropriately because there is often not enough time to request a senior's order. **The commander should empower his subordinates to make decisions regarding the execution of the plan. They should be kept in the loop within the commander's intent and final objective so as to act in an appropriate manner.**

Support the Host Nation government: The long-term goal of a counterinsurgency campaign is to leave a government stable and capable to stand by itself. **Therefore local leaders should endorse responsibilities.** Foreign armies must transfer the management of security to national forces, as soon as possible, although without jeopardizing the country's stability.



### 1.3 - U.S. doctrine to the test of terrain

As a Commander-In-Chief of the Coalition Forces in Iraq, General Petraeus was responsible for implementing the doctrine he contributed himself to express. The following 25 articles, from *Military Review* September-October 2008 issue, are the main ideas that should drive commanding officers in Iraq.

1. **Secure and serve the population.** *The Iraqi people are the decisive "terrain." Together with our Iraqi partners, work to provide the people security, to give them respect, to gain their support, and to facilitate establishment of local governance, restoration of basic services, and revival of local economies.*
2. **Live among the people.** *You can't commute to this fight. Position Joint Security Stations, Combat Outposts, and Patrol Bases in the neighborhoods we intend to secure. Living among the people is essential to securing them and defeating the insurgents.*
3. **Hold areas that have been secured.** *Once we clear an area, we must retain it. Develop the plan for holding an area before starting to clear it. The people need to know that we and our Iraqi partners will not abandon them. When reducing forces, gradually thin our presence rather than handing off or withdrawing completely. Ensure situational awareness even after transfer of responsibility to Iraqi forces.*

4. **Pursue the enemy relentlessly.** Identify and pursue Al-Qaeda in Iraq and other extremist elements tenaciously. Do not let them retain support areas or sanctuaries. Force the enemy to respond to us. Deny the enemy the ability to plan and conduct deliberate operations.
5. **Employ all assets to isolate and defeat the terrorists and insurgents.** Counter-terrorist forces alone cannot defeat Al-Qaeda and the other extremists. Success requires a comprehensive approach that employs all forces and all means at our disposal—non-kinetic as well as kinetic. Employ Coalition and Iraqi conventional and special operations forces, Sons of Iraq, and all other available non-military multipliers in accordance with the attached “Anaconda Strategy.”
6. **Generate unity of effort.** Coordinate operations and initiatives with our embassy and interagency partners, our Iraqi counterparts, local governmental leaders, and non-governmental organizations to ensure all are working to achieve a common purpose.
7. **Promote reconciliation.** We cannot kill our way out of this endeavor. We and our Iraqi partners must identify and separate the “irreconcilables” from the “reconcilables” through thorough intelligence work, population control measures, information operations, kinetic operations, and political initiatives. We must strive to make the reconcilables part of the solution, even as we identify, pursue, and kill, capture, or drive out the irreconcilables.
8. **Defeat the network, not just the attack.** Focus to the “left” of the explosion. Employ intelligence assets to identify the network behind an attack, and go after its leaders, explosives experts, financiers, suppliers, and operators.
9. **Foster Iraqi legitimacy.** Encourage Iraqi leadership and initiative; recognize that their success is our success. Partner in all that we do and support local involvement in security, governance, economic revival, and provision of basic services. Find the right balance between Coalition Forces leading and the Iraqis exercising their leadership and initiative, and encourage the latter. Legitimacy of Iraqi actions in the eyes of the Iraqi people is essential to overall success.
10. **Punch above your weight class.** Strive to be “bigger than you actually are.” Partner in operations with Iraqi units and police, and employ “Sons of Iraq,” contractors, and local Iraqis to perform routine tasks in and around Forward Operating Bases, Patrol Bases, and Joint Security Stations, thereby freeing up our troopers to focus on tasks “outside the wire.”
11. **Employ money as a weapon system.** Money can be “ammunition” as the security situation improves. Use a targeting board process to ensure the greatest effect for each “round” expended and to ensure that each engagement using money contributes to the achievement of the unit’s overall objectives. Ensure contracting activities support the security effort, **employing locals** wherever possible. Employ a “matching fund” concept when feasible in order to ensure Iraqi involvement and commitment.
12. **Fight for intelligence.** A nuanced understanding of the situation is everything. Analyze the intelligence that is gathered, share it, and fight for more. Every patrol should have tasks designed to augment understanding of the area of operations and the enemy. Operate on a “need to share” rather than a “need to know” basis. Disseminate intelligence as soon as possible to all who can benefit from it.

- 13. Walk.** Move mounted, work dismounted. Stop by, don't drive by. Patrol on foot and engage the population. Situational awareness can only be gained by interacting with the people face-to-face, not separated by ballistic glass.
- 14. Understand the neighborhood.** Map the human terrain and study it in detail. Understand the local culture and history. Learn about the tribes, formal and informal leaders, governmental structures, religious elements, and local security forces. Understand how local systems and structures—including governance, provision of basic services, maintenance of infrastructure, and economic elements—are supposed to function and how they really function.
- 15. Build relationships.** Relationships are a critical component of counterinsurgency operations. Together with our Iraqi counterparts, strive to establish productive links with local leaders, tribal sheikhs, governmental officials, religious leaders, and interagency partners.
- 16. Look for Sustainable Solutions.** Build mechanisms by which the Iraqi Security Forces, Iraqi community leaders, and local Iraqis under the control of governmental institutions can continue to secure local areas and sustain governance and economic gains in their communities as the Coalition Force presence is reduced. Figure out the Iraqi systems and help Iraqis make them work.
- 17. Maintain continuity and tempo through transitions.** Start to build the information you'll provide to your successors on the day you take over. Allow those who will follow you to "virtually look over your shoulder" while they're still at home station by giving them access to your daily updates and other items on SIPRNET. Deploy planners and intelligence analysts ahead of time. Encourage extra time on the ground during transition periods, and strive to maintain operational tempo and local relationships to avoid giving the enemy respite.
- 18. Manage expectations.** Be cautious and measured in announcing progress. Note what has been accomplished, but also acknowledge what still needs to be done. Avoid premature declarations of success. Ensure our troopers and our partners are aware of our assessments and recognize that any counterinsurgency operation has innumerable challenges that enemies get a vote, and that progress is likely to be slow.
- 19. Be first with the truth.** Get accurate information of significant activities to the chain of command, to Iraqi leaders, and to the press as soon as is possible. Beat the insurgents, extremists, and criminals to the headlines, and pre-empt rumors. Integrity is critical to this fight. Don't put lipstick on pigs. Acknowledge setbacks and failures, and then state what we've learned and how we'll respond. Hold the press (and ourselves) accountable for accuracy, characterization, and context. Avoid spin and let facts speak for themselves. Challenge enemy disinformation. Turn our enemies' bankrupt messages, extremist ideologies, oppressive practices, and indiscriminate violence against them.
- 20. Fight the information war relentlessly.** Realize that we are in a struggle for legitimacy that will be won or lost in the perception of the Iraqi people. Every action taken by the enemy and our forces has implications in the public arena. Develop and sustain a narrative that works and continually drive the themes home through all forms of media.
- 21. Live our values.** Do not hesitate to kill or capture the enemy, **but stay true to the values we hold dear.** Living our values distinguishes us from our enemies. There is no tougher endeavor than the one in which we are engaged. It is often brutal, physically demanding, and frustrating. All of us experience moments of anger; but we can neither give in to dark impulses nor tolerate unacceptable actions by others.

- 22. Exercise initiative.** *In the absence of guidance or orders, determine what they should be and execute aggressively. Higher level leaders will provide a broad vision and paint “white lines on the road,” but it will be up to those at tactical levels to turn “big ideas” into specific actions.*
- 23. Empower subordinates.** *Resource to enable decentralized action. Push assets and authorities down to those who most need them and can actually use them. **Flatten reporting chains.** Identify the level to which you would naturally plan and resource, and go one further—generally looking three levels down, vice the two levels down that is traditional in major combat operations.*
- 24. Prepare for and exploit opportunities.** *“Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity” (Seneca the Younger). Develop concepts (such as that of “reconcilables” and “irreconcilables”) in anticipation of possible opportunities, and be prepared to take risk as necessary to take advantage of them.*
- 25. Learn and adapt.** *Continually assess the situation and adjust tactics, policies, and programs as required. Share good ideas. Avoid mental or physical complacency. Never forget that what works in an area today may not work there tomorrow, and that what works in one area may not work in another. Strive to ensure that our units are learning organizations. **In counterinsurgency, the side that learns and adapts the fastest gains important advantages.***

## CHAPTER II - BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW AMERICAN THINKING

U.S. Pentagon and CIA strategists, who reread Galula, recycled conventional theories with David Kilcullen and approved a new Counterinsurgency manual spurred on by General Petraeus, had available a corpus of doctrine since the beginning of 2007. This corpus was reformulated, operational and ready to be implemented. From June 2007 onwards, Operation Phantom Thunder demonstrates how counterinsurgency precepts that were resumed by General Petraeus are implemented in Iraq. During these maneuvers, the Coalition flushed out Al Qaeda from its bases of operations in the outskirts of Baghdad while relying on intelligence collected from rallied Sunni factions.

### 2.1 - Essential correlation between civil and military actions

**First obvious fact, military action is not enough to win a revolutionary war<sup>38</sup>.** The insurgency party relies on frustrations of communities or entire regions to force the latter (by physical constraint or ideological pressure) to get involved in armed struggle and seize power over all or part of the territory. Be it native or coming from outside to help the challenged regime, Counterinsurgency's only concern, is to restore order by destroying bands of guerillas and isolating them from the population. **This principle is written in black and white in the new U.S. Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM 3-24).**



**To persuade the population that the government is unable to assume its role of protector, insurgents or terrorists conduct symbolic attacks against civilian and military representatives** (as is the case of armed groups in Afghanistan). They will go as far as turning communities against one another (as is the case of Sunni and Shia groups in Iraq), if they consider it is relevant to trigger a civil war.

Against these subversive activities, **the population should be considered as the goal** (the ultimate beneficiary), and not **the target of peace enforcement operations**. In that sense, to paraphrase Karl von Clausewitz, **“Irregular warfare is regarded only as the continuation of politics by the same means”**.

As it has been attempted in Vietnam<sup>39</sup>, **counterinsurgency warfare can be conducted by specialized units**. In his conventional scheme, presented in 1964, David Galula first recommends that the insurgent forces be flushed out and then that static units be deployed in contact with the populations to protect them and control the recaptured terrain.

<sup>38</sup> On top of the politico-religious Al Qaeda's project (defense of Darul Islam, overthrow of hated Arab regimes, peripheral strategy of confrontation with the West), revolutionary motivations came along. They were similar in many respects to subversive speeches of anarchy or ethical globalization partisan groups.

<sup>39</sup> Between 1968 and 1972 in Vietnam, despite their final defeat, the U.S. manage to conduct at least two points of a counterinsurgency policy: physical liquidation of an important part of the National Liberation Front leaders, during a very harsh Operation Phoenix (Cordon and search operation, village by village, in “rotten” areas) and economic development of urban classes. They were all the more likely to the Communists' takeover of the country that they might lose their new status.

Galula implements the “Oil Spot” principle, already used in the French colonies by Marshals-to-be Gallieni and Lyautey<sup>40</sup>. Later he advocates the destruction of political cells and their replacement by a political structure stemming from free elections. These elections should bring to power leaders that must be put to the test before entrusting them with building of political parties that are legitimate to the population, and strive for stabilization of the concerned country.

Cordon-off an area, conduct police operations and deprive insurgency of its leaders is not sufficient to be successful. **Without mobilizing the populations, the counterinsurgency initiative is doomed to fail.** Support of the population is always conditional; it is obtained by an active minority’s drive effect and the concentration of many efforts and means. That is what the main “laws” of David Galula’s doctrine are.

**Psychological action backed up by propaganda and political intelligence plays a key role in the conquest of popular support.** Troops in operations must be tactful as well as firm. It would be unrealistic to believe, especially if they come from a foreign country, in their ability to win the hearts of the civil populations. At least, thanks to their daily behavior, the understanding of local customs, their BOLO (“Be on the look-out”) attitude, their real commitment in building infrastructures, they will be highly considered. **As Machiavel used to say, “Hatred is gained as much by good works as by evil”.**

As his predecessor David Galula, David Kilcullen notices that, in Islamic Land, **counterinsurgents would be well advised to win the hearts of women in search of emancipation, not of youngsters.**

David Kilcullen is the one who the best described what the expression “Win hearts and minds” really meant: **“Win minds” means that the populations are sure to be protected; “win hearts” means that fulfillment of their expectations lies in the actual success of counterinsurgents.**

## 2.2 - Asymmetric war, a protracted warfare

Triggering insurgency and guerilla activities by the insurgents determines the asymmetric nature that immediately characterizes the confrontation with local leaders. **This asymmetry extends the conflict by boosting its own process.**

According to the conventional U.S. doctrine, the insurgent actually forces his courses of action and reaction on the counterinsurgent. **Compared with the resources (political, administrative, economic and military) available to sovereign apparatus, the legitimacy of which he challenges, the insurgent only uses a modest initial capital.** His strength, weaponry, and financial means are poor. **He puts all his hope in the appealing cause he champions, in favorable geographical surroundings where he will operate, and in potential supports from outside** (hence the importance of having a safe haven available).

The current regime, the occupying power or the player that really controls the terrain, keeps the prerogatives of power which is considered abroad as sovereign in case of a state. It is however under an obligation to maintain law and order, or at least to maintain the *status quo*. Its initial capital is high, but its commitments are expensive (in terms of budget, field deployment, if only to protect each trouble spot-, as in terms of image).

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38 Gallieni (1849-1916) pacified and organized Madagascar (1896-1905). Lyautey (1854-1934), a former member of his Staff in Tonkin and Madagascar (1894-1897), created the French Protectorate of Morocco (1912-1925).

**The insurgent, fluid, mobile, elusive<sup>41</sup>, is judged from what he promises. The Counterinsurgent, relying on a heavy, bureaucratic and rigid apparatus, is judged from what he does.** Their long-term struggle to attract and mobilize the population results from this asymmetry. If, as believes British General Sir Rupert Smith<sup>42</sup>, War in today's World takes place "among local populations", the public opinions of all the involved actors represent its center of gravity.

Counterinsurgent's superiority in equipment can be offset by the determination of the terrorist or the insurgent, for whom time is running. Insurgency and counterinsurgency observe phases of preparation, armed intervention, delaying actions, awareness-raising of masses, political investment, etc. The outcome of the conflict is driven by the appropriate sequence. Revolutionary war will remain unconventional until the end. Partisans of insurgency will find interest in the deterioration of the situation and in the progressive de-legitimization of power that are unavoidable in the long run.

On the contrary, supporters of the government aim at achieving a quick psychological success, which halts the spiral of dispute of the State legitimacy and prevents the insurgency to rally. If counterinsurgents cut corners instead of keeping up with the doctrine or if they forget to implement some of its basics, they are doomed to fail.

Iraq and Afghanistan are good examples of these assertions. In 2003, *Operation Iraqi Freedom* was decided with the conviction that war will be short and transition easy. Series of errors (lack of preparation of post-war years, arrogant refusal of Donald Rumsfeld to increase the number of troops, well-known weakness in intelligence, cultural lack of knowledge about the terrain, serious shortage in rebuilding, scandals of sexual abuses in Abu Ghraib Prison<sup>43</sup>), led to a serious deterioration of the situation. At that time, the political side was forgotten.

Similarly, two years after the coalition intervention in Afghanistan, the formation of civil-military teams (*Provincial Reconstruction Teams*, PRTs<sup>44</sup>) was supposed to coordinate infrastructure refurbishment and economy restart with combat operations. But the rebuilding projects developed by lead nations with disparate means, mandates and "caveats" (restrictions decided by a country regarding the use of its military forces), took a long time before becoming visible to the populations<sup>45</sup>.

Also in Afghanistan, the Musa Qala agreement, signed at the end of September 2006 between the British and tribal leaders from the province of Helmand, was to be compared with a political aspect of counterinsurgency: rely on local leaders to prevent Taliban insurgents from coming back. This agreement caused an outcome opposite to the one desired. The **districts that the British troops evacuated were immediately recaptured or claimed by the enemy. The British went too far, too fast.** Moreover, they made President Hamid Karzai's central government angry by attempting separate negotiations with Taliban insurgents<sup>46</sup>.

**The time factor eventually changes an intervention force into an occupation force and a weak guerilla warfare into a strong movement.**

41 Guerillas avoid direct confrontation and usually prefer "hit and run" actions.

42 Author of *The Utility of Force. The Art of War in the Modern World* (2005).

43 Charging statement made by Gérard Chaliand in *America at War (opus cit)*.

44 In essence, quite similar to the "Sections Administratives Spéciales" in the Algeria War.

45 In 2007, 7,000 men of 24 PRTs were responsible for solving problems of 20 Million country people...

46 The British did not provide political and economic incentives so as to beforehand separate tribal leaders from the Taliban movement's influence. Moreover, the signature of this agreement had psychological destabilizing impact on the reputation of the Karzai regime (by arousing identical claims from other provinces, also pressurized by the propaganda of fundamentalist armed groups).

## 2.3 - Forces and minds adaptation capacity, a decisive asset

**There is hardly a conflict in which initiative and adaptation capacity is more essential than in an irregular warfare.** Frenchman Galula, Australian Kilcullen and American Petraeus all know that it is essential to understand the special nature of war which leads to the posture of insurgent. Ideally speaking, the U.S. counterinsurgent will receive a theoretical training at Fort Leavenworth Center, as before him, his predecessors in Vietnam were trained at the Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg. **In practical terms, the company commander should adapt himself to the terrain, find advisers and get his subordinates briefed.**

In conclusion of his book “l’Amérique en guerre Irak-Afghanistan”, Gérard Chaliand mentioned that *“there is a need for smart military and political leaders, briefed, adaptable, able to make decisions, motivated special troops, the tour of duty of which is long enough to become acquainted with environment, local culture, and to know that this particular terrain will never be forgotten, for better or for worse. Nobody does that job with draftees or even with occasional enlisted personnel”*.

**As David Galula noticed in 1964, counterinsurgent must be prepared to perform a large number of jobs that are beyond the scope of the military scope, since the politico-humanitarian phase of the peace process has started.** Therefore the selection of staff who will be assigned to oversee civil-military tasks performed in liaison with the population should be one of the major commander’s reasons for concern. He actually keeps control of planning, coordination and actions to undertake. When things go wrong, the company commander and his subordinates should be capable to react quickly, even if it means reassessing the sequences of their action plan. General Petraeus is insistent about empowering local motivated leaders with a multitude of tasks<sup>47</sup>.

Notwithstanding the capabilities of light infantry (mobility, fast execution of the mission, foresight capacity thanks to intense intelligence operations), David Kilcullen fears that this branch is not really appropriate to the COIN current requirements. **He argues for the formation of a force combining operational and intelligence capability, as it was the case with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), precursor of the CIA, between 1942 and 1945.**

From one end of the counterinsurgency process to the other, it is required not to alienate the populations. **For soldiers under stress, police operations mean a very tricky situation for which they are not prepared.** It is essential to always respect privacy and traditions of the inhabitants when trying to get the upper hand on them, and ensure that the detained insurgents will be humanely treated. In Afghanistan and in Iraq, U.S. blunders (torture in Abu Ghraib, brutalities during combing operations and collateral damage) have durably undermined the reputation of U.S. forces, revealing serious issues related to ethics and general attitude.

**In the U.S., the Departments of the Army and Marine Corps started to move forward with these issues.** U.S. officers and NCOs, still too few of them, who are as capable to win “hearts and minds” as securing an unstable area, could eventually deserve more credit for that. The main lesson that General Petraeus learned from his position as Commander of 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division in the North of Iraq between

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<sup>47</sup> While including such back-up troops, which he calls “Sons of Iraq”, General Petraeus simply implements a recommendation of Lawrence of Arabia, dated 1917.

2003 and 2004, is that **the Commander-In-Chief should personally generate the impetus for change and convince his subordinates to deviate from a strictly military approach.** While in Fallujah, the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division made repeated blunders and brutal actions, its paratroopers were encouraged to bring Operation “Democracy 101” to a successful conclusion in Mosul.

**The new U.S. Counterinsurgency Field Manual should help those who were not convinced by David Kilcullen’s articles, to “create links” and invest in “social capital”.** This concept (*social capital*) is explicitly defined at the end of FM 3-24. It is openly borrowed from the French philosopher and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu<sup>48</sup>. It is not the first time minds diverging from American standards are referred to, so as to prompt an intellectual revolution: David Galula yesterday, David Kilcullen and Pierre Bourdieu today. General Petraeus and his peers, accused by some intellectuals of drawing on “European” concepts, deserve all the more credit for their involvement in current discussions.

“Learn and adapt”, this is the main recommendation of the U.S. General, at the end of his command phase in Iraq. He repeats this recommendation before every audience, whereas explaining his view of COIN, he proposes an updated version of his 14 observations made in 2006.

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48 According to Pierre Bourdieu, "Social capital " is one of the four forms of power in the society, the other being coercion, economic domination and authority. An individual has a social capital if he achieves his goals by activating social networks. Identify and co-opt an individual or a group of individuals able to mobilize such a power is precisely the mission of counterinsurgent in operations.

## CONCLUSION

### **A necessary adaptation:**

When rediscovering the French counterinsurgency thinking in general and Galula's work in particular, General Petraeus enabled the emergence of a U.S. doctrine that was put to the test in Iraq. However, this is not a simple re-using. **Actually, Galula's thinking, deeply influenced by the Cold War context, has been adapted to the current environment, taking into account the present realities.**

### *The new paradigm of "glocalism"*

The end of the Cold War did not mean the "end of History" and the permanent peace which some thinkers dreamt about. Civil wars and insurgencies are still raging throughout the Third World (Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan) in which no-go areas are as many safe havens for the insurgents. **Moreover, the nature of actors has changed.** Al Qaeda Jihadist Fundamentalism replaced Marxism of the Communist Block and **some insurgencies are characterized by the "Glocalism"<sup>49</sup>**. In Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Chechnya, **transnational actors** (Islamic networks financed by some sponsors from the Gulf) **are moving closer to localized insurgencies so as to establish an interdependence relationship**. These transnational actors bring funds, weapons, volunteers and an international reputation to local insurgents. In return, actions and successes of these increase the prestige of transnational networks. This marks a break between insurgents of the sixties and implacable Jihadist elements of today's insurgencies. The first were very dependent upon support of the human environment where they operated, the second are a lot more autonomous since they depend on actors who are outside the theater. These new players with **ex-territorialized<sup>50</sup> identity may thus keep on fighting by urban terrorism instead of guerilla warfare, even if isolated from the population.**

### *Necessity of a coalition*

The United States can no longer face alone the proliferation of insurgent activities. **Depreciation of their legitimacy and overstretched military capabilities oblige them to set up international coalitions.** However, the United States should, from now on, do more to rally support than to declare "Whoever is not with us is against us". They all the more need Western Allies than they face personnel shortage. Besides, **France and the United Kingdom are more aware of the need for a joint civil-military action because of their colonial past.** Finally, proliferation of non-state players involved in counterinsurgency (NGOs, U.N., international agencies, media, local players, etc) makes fanciful any idea of unified command. **It is necessary to achieve unity of effort or of intent inside widened coalitions encompassing a variety of players. In the same way, it is important not to exclusively rely on a minority, as their goals may be incompatible with the interests of other players<sup>51</sup>.**

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49 An amalgamation of global and local

50 Jihadists refer to "umma" or worldwide Muslim community and to the fantasized Golden Age of Caliphate which gathers it under the same government.

51 To be specific, only relying on separatist expectations of the Kurd minority in Iraq has proved inefficient.

### *The Internet and the information revolution*

Modern counterinsurgency warfare has to take the Internet and Information Technology (IT) into account. Actually, Jihadists networks learned how to melt into the Internet. **They are moving to a “virtual hinterland” their communications, their training, education and indoctrination processes, as well as their financial transactions and operation planning. In doing so, they hide from governments and counterinsurgents. Today, Jihadists movements have electronic refuges that counterinsurgency can hardly identify and fight.**

Regarding the operations media environment, counterinsurgents’ degree of readiness has improved. This value has been included in strategic thinking and practices have changed since the Vietnam War. **Today, embedding journalists in combat units demonstrates that the media factor is taken into account by the Armed Forces.** However, IT development also affects the media. It particularly allows to by-pass censure, as shown by Abu Ghraib scandal (suspected photos were taken by digital cameras). Circumventing also occurs with the increase in the number of information<sup>52</sup>sources.

Insurgents have become masters in the art of using the Internet in order to be in the limelight throughout the world. The G.I. confined in his FOB generally uses the Internet to keep in touch with his closest relatives whereas he neglects to establish some contacts with the local population. Conversely, the insurgent has a tendency to publish on the Web videos relating attacks against the Coalition troops or press releases intended for a wide audience. **Whereas regular forces are withdrawing farther and farther into themselves, insurgents use IT to increase their international fame<sup>53</sup>.** In doing so, they sow confusion in national public opinions and are recognized by the population without having to perform, from village to village, the tedious indoctrination work that was needed in the past.

Unlike insurgents of the sixties which had the initiative of the conflict and aimed at seizing power, Jihadists in Afghanistan and Iraq prospered in the aftermath of military interventions in these countries. They do not intend to overthrow the political establishment in the near future. Often richer than the population among which they move, decentralized and rival, these Jihadists movements stay alive with the help of foreign sponsors, by their communication and the chaos they generate .

### **Cultural brakes:**

In the United States, beyond the elements that prompt to adapt counterinsurgency doctrines that were developed during the Cold War, there are still several cultural brakes on the implementation of major counterinsurgency principles. These barriers relate to North-American military culture that advocates eradication of the insurgent, as well as the U.S. own values.

### *Counterinsurgency in the collective imagination*

Counterinsurgency has a very negative connotation. The concept of counterinsurgency warfare to which the current COIN refers, is inseparable from the worst abuses in the Western collective imagination. Sometimes linked with the ”Dirty Wars” in Vietnam and Algeria (implicitly with the torture issue), sometimes

52 According to Kilcullen, whereas in 1966 a Vietnamese had a potential access to ten sources of information, half of which being under government control, an Afghan has today access to 25 different media, 5 of them being more or less under government control.

53 Jihadists rapidly understood interest of the media. Whereas they tried to limit as much as possible action of the journalists in 2001, the Taliban asked, in 2008, a Paris Match team to interview them.

with colonization and condescending paternalism. It is blamed by some thinkers who consider that only a coercive approach can produce results when dealing with “retarded” populations that are reluctant to the lights of Western civilization<sup>54</sup>. Moreover, counterinsurgency also seems very risky. **After the failure in Vietnam, the United States turned this practice on the USSR and became supporters of anticommunist insurgencies or “freedom fighters” in the Third World.**



Huynh Cong (Nick)

A Vietnamese little girl burnt from napalm is running away from her village. This picture went round the world and is the symbol of the war in Vietnam.

### *The Concept of “Axis of evil”*

Inspired by some intellectual circles around the first Bush’s administration, this idea highly reduced U.S. effectiveness efforts to defeat the insurgents in Iraq and in Afghanistan. **Facing some difficulties, this doctrine was abandoned in favor of a more pragmatic approach<sup>55</sup>.**

The concept of “Axis of evil” actually rules out any possibility to negotiate with the opponent, that, from then on can only be annihilated. This Manichean view has caused many blunders. In Afghanistan, the selected line of conduct was to consider the Taliban and international

Jihadists as a homogeneous whole. This strengthened the links between them, whereas it would have been much more efficient to split them up. In Iraq, the De-Baathification policy conducted by Paul Bremer encouraged Sunni Arabs (among them, former government and security services staff) to side with the insurgents. On the contrary, General Petraeus policy aimed at separating these “reconcilable” elements from the hard core of the insurgents, through a national reconciliation and a rallying policy.

### *Technology illusion*

1991 Gulf War established the “revolution in military affairs” as the new dogma of the U.S. military community. U.S. congressmen, lured by the “zero death” and “clean war” concept, have turned to the technological solutions of the military-industrial complex to conduct war with a low cost in human lives and thus politically acceptable **Technological war has logically been put forward since the beginning of “War on terror”.** However, **limits of technology in comparison with asymmetry rapidly showed up.** The impressive U.S. war apparatus did not generate in the enemy ranks shock and terror at the expected level. However, it caused a lot of collateral damages and reversal of a part of the population in favor of the insurgents. Moreover, asymmetric enemy circumvents the assets of modern weapons (capacity of detection and long-range targeting) while favoring movements to contact. **Thus, it thwarts the U.S. approach of “All-In-Technology”.**

54 Edward N. Luttwak, Dean end: Counterinsurgency as a military malpractice, Harper’s Magazine, February 2007.

55 See annex 2 : evolution of the U.S. strategic concepts.

### Lack of will or the “zero death” imperative

Since he cannot defeat a conventional army during a pitched battle, the insurgent should wear out his opponent’s will to make him withdraw. To this end, he should trust his own capability of inflicting durable losses on the enemy, while hoping that the cumulated dead and wounded will finally exhaust the counterinsurgent. Jihadist fighters understood well the advantage they could take from loathing for blood expressed by Western public opinions. Therefore they first targeted contingents of the “weakest links” of the Coalition and hope to force these governments to withdraw their forces. However, none of these countries has still proceeded to a complete withdrawal from Afghanistan. Moreover, deeply shaken by the Sept 11 (2001) terrorist attacks, U.S. opinion is much more prepared today than in the past to accept losses and to make a sustainable war effort.



Coffins of U.S. soldiers fallen in Iraq.

Even if, up to now, continuous losses have not caused a withdrawal from Iraq or Afghanistan, blunders weaken support of the public opinion to counterinsurgency operations. Collateral damage both increases resentment from the local populations and deeply disrupts Western public opinions, as illustrated by sexual abuses in Abu Ghraib or macabre photos of German soldiers in Afghanistan. **On the look-out for scoops, the Western press is subsequently much more inclined to report abuses by Western troops than their definitely less spectacular achievements.** As an extremely exhausting conflict, irregular warfare always entails a series of abuses committed by “on edge” soldiers. Actually, according to General Petraeus, irregular warfare is a “Thinking man’s warfare” and requires a good knowledge of human terrain, which explains the importance of a stronger cultural awareness.



However, this obstacle is less meaningful for states like Russia, Indonesia, and Turkey for which the weight of national and international public opinion is of lesser importance. **Consequently, they have much broader latitude to use methods that are far more violent and deadly than those Western armed forces currently comply with.**

However such methods are not viable in the long run. Today, U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, are locked up in their over-protected *compounds* and little trained for contact with populations. They are more likely to achieve a successful counterinsurgency campaign through a closer commitment and compliance with COIN

fundamentals. **Just like yesterday, today’s key to success in an asymmetric conflict lies in the political determination to bring such war to its end, in the forces capability to adapt and in their attitude, and also in the faith in victory and in the cause legitimacy.**

# APPENDIX

## APPENDIX 1 - Counterinsurgency imaginative thinkers

### ➤ Colonel Roger Trinquier

Born in 1908 in the French Alps, Roger Trinquier becomes a reserve cadet officer. After he left the French Army's reserve officers' school, he serves his two years of military service as a platoon leader from *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* (Senegalese Rifles) in Fréjus. He then enters the Active duty Officers' School of Saint Maixent and graduates as a second lieutenant in 1933. Assigned to the 4<sup>th</sup> Senegalese Tirailleurs Regiment, he finally embarks for Indochina. After having participated in the Indochina War, he only returns in 1955.



His Indo-Chinese experience makes him aware of what he later will call “Modern warfare” or “Revolutionary Warfare“. After an assignment to the staff of Lieutenant General Gilles, commander of the airborne troops, he is sent to Algeria in August 1956. **He participates in the Battle of Algiers** with Major General Massu, commander of the 10<sup>th</sup> Parachute Division. Besides, he establishes the D.P.U. *Dispositif de Protection Urbaine* (**Urban Protection Plan**). Member of the Committee for Public Safety in Algiers, from May 13 to June 11, 1958, he resigns and returns to his regiment in the southern Kabylia district where he captures Major Si Azzedine, a senior FLN leader. He participates in the Challe Plan in the Oran province and Ouarsenis Mountain during the second half of the year 1959, and then rejoins the Constantine Department in July, the same year. He is recalled to France in 1960, and dies in an accident in 1985.

**Trinquier's major work still is *Modern Warfare***, in which he explains his view of countersubversive warfare. Fully aware of the importance of population and intelligence in asymmetric conflicts, **unlike Galula, Trinquier remains influenced in his thinking by the Algeria War, and advocates an essentially coercive and law-and-order counterinsurgency approach.**

### ➤ Lieutenant Colonel David Galula

Born in 1919 in Tunisia and raised in Morocco, David Galula obtains his *baccalauréat* in Casablanca and graduates from Saint-Cyr in 1940. During World War II, he serves with the French Colonial troops in North Africa, Italy, France and Germany. In 1945, Galula departs for China, to work as an assistant military attaché at the French embassy in Beijing. **Between 1945 and 1948, he witnesses the combats opposing Maoists to Kuomintang, and becomes familiar with the revolutionary warfare concepts, under their various forms of political terror and guerilla warfare.**



**As an observer within the United Nations Special Commission on the Balkans, he witnesses the throes of the Civil War that breaks out between Communists and Greek Royalists.**

**His next assignment as a military attaché at the French embassy in Hong Kong grants him the opportunity to take interest in the issues raised by the three Communist-oriented insurgencies that shook Southeast Asia at the beginning of the fifties:** In Indochina (against the French colonial presence), in Malaya (against the British), and in the Philippines (revolt of the Huks peasants against President Magsaysay).

In February 1956, David Galula returns to France and requests an assignment to Algeria. Then captain, he is assigned to the Kabylia District and leads the 3<sup>rd</sup> Company of the 45<sup>th</sup> Colonial Infantry Battalion. He participates in the pacification operations against the FLN (*Front de Libération Nationale*), and despite frustrations, keeps on giving deep thought on the subject. From 16 to 20 April 1962, invited to a symposium convened by the RAND Corporation, he impresses his American audience so much that he is invited to put his experience down in writing. Out of it, he draws material for “Pacification in Algeria, 1956-1958”, published in English by Praeger in 1963.

This text is used as a model for his masterpiece “Counterinsurgency Warfare, Theory and Practice”, published by Greenwood Press as soon as the following year (1964) with the support of the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. He there defines the gist of the revolutionary warfare, the requirements for a successful insurgency and the eight-step political/ military doctrine, which he considers as the best answer for it. Shortly after, he is transferred to the Army’s Reserve and dies in 1967.

## ➤ Lieutenant Colonel David Kilcullen



Born in 1967, the son of two left-leaning academics, David Kilcullen joins as a cadet the Australian Military Academy of Duntroon. **Then captain, he takes interest in the Indonesian Darul-Islam and in its dismantling<sup>56</sup>** on the occasion of a language immersion course in Java in 1993: he chooses it as the dissertation subject of his doctorate in political anthropology at the University of New South Wales in 2001. He participates in the latter as an infantry company commander in a United Nations intervention force which backs up the independence of Timor in 2002.

**In 2004, he is tasked by the Australian Government with the specific mission of studying Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda leaders’ public statements. He finds out that their propaganda derives from some grievances of the U.S. policy against views expressed by alter-globalists and environmentalists** (as for example the veto of the Bush Administration for Global Warming), which ally their call for mobilization with a “global strategy” of information. He takes interest in the past and in the motives of the hijackers involved in the Sept 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. **He is convinced that some elements of de-socialization (and re-socialization) linked to the psychological weakness and the social network (family, friends, associations) represent much more powerful motives for terrorists’ criminal actions than the only support to Salafism’ principles.**

<sup>56</sup> Movement of radicalized ulemas, precursor of Jemaah Islamiyah. Its insurgency, less covered by the Media than the Malay or Indonesian communists, was defeated between 1948 and 1962.

The very same year, Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense in the Bush Administration<sup>57</sup>, spots him for his imaginative ideas and asks for his support to write the section devoted to irregular warfare in the Pentagon July-2005 Edition of the Quadrennial Defense Review.

Unlike the approach (based on a large force-projection, superior by its strike capacity and technological advance), which prevailed with Donald Rumsfeld's team (who resigned in November 2006), he seizes the opportunity to impose the notions of "protracted war" and "unconventional warfare". In that kind of confrontation, it is of the utmost importance that the armed forces forge ties with the population.

In 2005 in Vermont, during a lecture on Defense, there is a decisive encounter with Henry Crumpton (who was the clandestine CIA operations coordinator in Afghanistan in 2001, before being the coordinator for counter-terrorism in Condoleezza Rice's team). Crumpton obtains him a "Chief Strategist" position in the State Department, from where he has the opportunity to give fresh impetus to counter-terrorism and counterinsurgency thinking.

As of 2005, in a striking article published in the *Journal of Strategic Studies*, David Kilcullen takes up the concept of "Global Counterinsurgency", which he intends to substitute for "War on Terror". Concerned with adaptation to the realities of terrain, he intends for young officers who are sent to the front in Afghanistan or Iraq, a 28-article handbook (*Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency*). The latter receive one sample via e-mail and they read it avidly. Kilcullen himself is invited by U.S. Headquarters to visit both theaters. As a seconded reserve officer, he becomes Senior Counterinsurgency Advisor to the U.S. High Command in Baghdad.

### ➤ General David Howell Petraeus

Born on November 7, 1952, in New York State, David Howell Petraeus was the son of a Dutch merchant marine captain, whose family had emigrated from the Netherlands to the United States during the initial phase of World War II.

In 1970, Petraeus then went on to the West Point U.S. Military Academy. He earned the General George C. Marshall Award as the top graduate of the U.S. Army *Command and General Staff College* Class of 1983 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. **In 1987, David Petraeus brilliantly earns a Ph.D. degree in International Relations from Princeton University with a doctoral dissertation on the U.S. Army lessons learned in Vietnam.**



Later, he served in Bosnia as the NATO Stabilization Force Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations. Outstanding sportsman and parachutist, he goes through two serious accidents in 1991 (wounded by an M16-bullet during a training exercise) and in 2000 (on the occasion of a high-altitude jump). He pursues his career in senior-level schooling: he is assigned as Deputy-Commander for Combined Arms of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), before serving as the Commander of the *Command and General Staff College*, where he previously excelled.

<sup>57</sup> Former U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia between 1986 and 1989, Paul Wolfowitz is especially qualified to appreciate David Kilcullen's work on Javanese Islamic insurgency.

In 2003, David Petraeus participates in Operation Iraqi Freedom when commanding the famous 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (until February 2004). He leads his division through fierce fighting south of Baghdad and seizes the Shia areas of Najaf, Karbala and Hilla.

**He is assigned as Commander-In Chief of the North area and succeeds in stabilizing the area of Mosul, earning respect of the Sunni, Shia, and Kurd elites.**

He subsequently returns to Iraq between April and May 2004 so as to assess the Iraqi Security Forces before serving as the first commander of the *Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq*, then of the *NATO Training Mission* in charge of training the new Iraqi armed forces. **Convinced of the necessity to combine political/ administrative and military actions, he outlines an innovative counterinsurgency doctrine, which he endeavors to have implemented by his units, under the generic term of “Democracy 101”.**

In October 2005, the man the U.S. Press called the “anti-Rambo” or the “Repairman”, and the Neoconservatives criticize for his “Appeasement strategy”, is appointed as Commander of U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. **There he oversees the drafting of a Counterinsurgency manual that is common to the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marines and includes David Galula’s major ideas.**

On January 1st, 2006, the “Military Review” issues a 14-Observation article about the lessons learned by General Petraeus from Iraq (*Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq*), which represents a key milestone in the taking into account of this doctrine in the US. In February 2007, President George W. Bush appoints David Petraeus, “a pre-eminent, resolute and visionary soldier”, as Commander-In-Chief of the U.S. troops in Iraq. Right away, Lieutenant General Petraeus asks Australian Reserve Officer David Kilcullen to advise him about countersubversive struggle. **As of June 2007, “Surge strategy” and appropriate COIN enable General Petraeus to contain insurgency and to rally some Sunni Arab militias.**

## APPENDIX 2 - Reorientation of U.S. strategic concepts, from 2001 to 2008, further to lessons learned from Afghanistan and Iraq

### 1. ERADICATION OF EVIL BY FORCE (2001)

U.S. strategists tackle challenges of the second millennium with two concepts inherited from the first Gulf War (1991). The conflict had been pictured as a sophisticated warfare of a new kind: “Revolution in Military Affairs” (which was in the core of the *Quadrennial Defense Review 1997*) and “transformation of forces” (based on an idea supported by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and presented in the *Quadrennial Defense Review 2001*). **Emphasis is put on destruction power, reduction of human fallibility, mitigating response time, electronic supervision of the battlefield, etc.** After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Operation *Enduring Freedom*, triggered against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan aims at eradicating evil by “*shock and awe*”.

### 2. GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR (2002 - 2003)

In his State of the Union Address on January 29, 2002, George W. Bush stigmatizes Iran, Iraq and North Korea as the “axis of evil”. The “National Security Strategy” (NSS), in September 2002, is the first official document which considers “Global War On Terror” (GWOT) as a worldwide issue. **According to the Bush Administration, NSS emphasizes the idea that threat emerges from the conjunction of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and “failing” States:** “*America is now less threatened by conquering states than by failing ones*”. In spring 2003, U.S. and international public opinions are conditioned to the outlook of Iraq invasion. The United States Army always banks on its striking power. The Bush Administration has the ambitious project to redesign the Middle East.

### 3. FIRST QUESTIONING (2003 - 2005)

The concepts of “Transformation” and “Global War On Terror” become obsolete because of the slide of Afghanistan and Iraq into crisis. In 2004, within the Department of State, the *National Security Presidential Directive 44* creates the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, which is rapidly crippled by inertia and lack of means. On November 28, 2005, the Department of Defense adopts Directive 3000.05 on “Military support for Stability, Security, Transition and Reconstruction”, which confirms the evolution since 2003: stabilization missions become the top-priority combat missions. **Amongst these questions, the RAND Corporation initiates revival of the counterinsurgency theories in the U.S.**

#### 4. PROTRACTED WAR (2005)

The third *Quadrennial Defense Review* or *QDR 2005*, is made public at the beginning of 2006. David Kilcullen was responsible for drafting the part dedicated to irregular conflicts. It lies within the strategic framework of a “protracted war” which replaces the GWOT concept. Supporters of “protracted war” are local people, like in Afghanistan (the U.S. actually pulling out from Europe). The *Quadrennial Defense Review 2005* plans to strengthen joint capabilities so as to enable the United States to simultaneously conduct two protracted wars on two different theaters of operations. **Funds are re-allocated to adapt to counterinsurgency, fighting against terrorist networks** (a 33-percent increase in HUMINT- and in PSYOPS- personnel strength) **and nation building**. Defense of the U.S. homeland, ban on acquisition or use of weapons of mass destruction, but also influence on choices of countries which have to make strategic decisions are top-priorities.

#### 5. RETURN OF POLITICS AND DIPLOMACY (EARLY 2006)

On January 18, 2006, in front of students of the School of Foreign Office at Georgetown University, Condoleezza Rice launches the concept of “transformational diplomacy”, which aims at reorganizing U.S. diplomacy in order to enable the latter to redesign the international system. The goal is to transform the failing, vulnerable or divided states into democratic, or at least, well governed states. Here is the link with the current Pentagon doctrine changes.

#### 6. GLOBAL COUNTERINSURGENCY DOCTRINE (LATE 2006 – EARLY 2007)

The lessons learned from the Afghan and Iraqi experiences are part of the Headquarters’ daily job. In Fall 2006, preceded by consultations with U.S. officers who distinguished themselves in Iraq, a strategy reorientation is adopted. The group conclusions, still undisclosed, are presented to President Bush on December 13, 2006. They will lead to the new Baghdad Security Plan. David Petraeus, who experienced the countersubversive warfare methods, has taken a decisive part in this exercise, as well as in the publication of the new Counterinsurgency Field Manual, common to the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marines, namely *FM 3-24*. Jihadism is considered as a global insurgency. Cornerstone of the strategy reorientation, the new “Global Counterinsurgency” doctrine put forward, becomes the new operational doctrine in 2007. David Petraeus, appointed as Commander-In-Chief of the U.S. troops in Iraq, is responsible for implementing the basic principles of this doctrine through the “Surge”. **In 2008, the “Petraeus Doctrine” becomes a reference for the military think tank. Its inspirer assumes command of the United States Central Command, from October 31, 2008.**

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