

# Population Control in Insurgencies: Tips for the Taliban

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Population Control in Insurgencies: Tips for the Taliban

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## ABSTRACT

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Population Control in Insurgencies: Tips for the Taliban

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This research examines the historical use of population control techniques by insurgents, and how the Taliban can profit from such lessons of the past. A greater understanding of the complex relationship that exists between insurgents and populations is intrinsically valuable, and by analyzing the ways in which the Taliban can improve their strategic outlook, it becomes possible to devise ways to counter such improvements. A discussion on insurgency theory and literature gives way to a comparative case study analysis. The histories and usages of population control by the Malayan Races Liberation Army, al-Qaeda in Iraq, and Hezbollah are analyzed, and from their various successes and failures are derived a series of recommendations for the Taliban on how best to incorporate population control into their own strategy. Though the Taliban have suffered recent setbacks at the hands of coalition forces, a patient and well executed strategy of population control can likely ensure their eventual success.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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*For the “Desert Yetis” of 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, Alpha Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 505<sup>th</sup> Parachute  
Infantry Regiment, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division.*

*Si vis pacem, para bellum.*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AQ – al-Qaeda

AQI – al-Qaeda in Iraq

COIN – Counterinsurgency

CPA – Coalition Provisional Authority

DIME – Diplomatic, Information, Military, Economic

FARC – Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia

FLN – National Liberation Front (Algeria)

FM – Field Manual

GIRoA – Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

IED – Improvised Explosive Device

IRA – Irish Republican Army

ISAF – International Security Assistance Force

ISI – Inter-Services Intelligence

LTTE – Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

MPAJA – Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Association

MRLA – Malayan Races Liberation Army

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NVA – North Vietnamese Army

PIRA – Provisional Irish Republican Army

VC – Viet Cong

## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

The Afghan Taliban<sup>1</sup> have been fighting an insurgency in Afghanistan for the last decade against Afghan Government (GIROA), U.S., and NATO forces, and show no signs giving up anytime soon. Classical insurgency theories state that as insurgents, the Taliban should consider the Afghan people the decisive terrain, and should seek to exert control over them; the people are the prize, so to speak. There is no blueprint for insurgents however, on how best to secure that prize. Deciding what balance to strike between coercive and persuasive population control techniques is a delicate act, fraught with long term consequences for the group. Coercive methods can be effective in the short term, but can drain resources and if clumsily applied can turn the population away from the insurgents. Persuasive measures of control may be less likely to turn the population away, but are difficult to implement if certain conditions are not met and may be ineffective in securing the population's exclusive support. Striking the right balance, that is, implementing the most effective type of control at the correct time and place, may easily be the decisive factor in the Taliban's eventual success or failure.

Those who are now commonly referred to as insurgents have been known by many other names throughout history: guerrillas; rebels; revolutionaries; insurrectionists; partisans, etc. They are heroes to some, villains to others; recalled fondly in some instances, with revulsion in others. Whatever one's view is of insurgencies, it is clear they are strikingly different than conventional forms of warfare. Conventional warfare is

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<sup>1</sup> There are a number of different organizations colloquially referred to as "Taliban." For the purposes of this paper, when a group is referred to simply as the "Taliban", it should be understood to mean the Afghan Taliban organization nominally headed by Mullah Omar and under the direction of the Quetta Shura.

typically fought over fixed physical terrain, with the opposing sides having static and well defined geographic and logistical strong points to defend. In its simplest form, conventional warfare requires the taking of an enemy's territory and the destruction of its forces.<sup>2</sup> In an insurgency however, one side is usually, at least on paper, vastly superior militarily to the other. Insurgents rarely mass their forces or maintain fixed bases, at least not until the end stages of a campaign, if at all. What has become clear over time is that a seemingly weak group of insurgents can offset a powerful opponent's military and technological superiority with the right strategies.

Insurgencies have been a mainstay of international conflict throughout history, and indeed are the most common form of warfare. An analysis of the Correlates of War data shows that over the last 200 years, less than 20% of conflicts were conventional interstate wars.<sup>3</sup> Over last century in particular, the salience of insurgent warfare seems to have increased. The first half of the century saw many small independence movements rising up against the great powers of the world during the period of decolonization, while the latter half saw guerrilla movements flourishing during and after the Cold War. Anarchists, leftists, ethno-separatists, and nationalists all used their ideologies for mobilizing people to take up arms. While technological advancements have heightened the asymmetry between the weak and the strong, horizontal weapons proliferation has made powerful weapons and explosives available to the masses. All of these factors – geopolitical, ideological, and technological - have contributed to the many 20<sup>th</sup> century insurgencies.

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<sup>2</sup> (Galula, 2006, p. 50)

<sup>3</sup> (Kilcullen, Counterinsurgency, 2010, pp. ix-x); See also, (Sarkees, 2000)

All of the insurgent violence over the 20<sup>th</sup> century seems to have been no fluke. Over the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the world has found itself awash with insurgent movements. From old conflicts in places as varied as India, Colombia, and the Philippines, to newer conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, one needs not travel far to find the nearest insurgency. There is every reason to think that insurgencies will continue to shape international events for many years to come. Their large presence on the world stage and unique nature compared to other forms of warfare, suggests a great need for continued and in-depth academic research into insurgencies.

In particular, more research is needed on the interplay between populations and insurgents. Much of the current research focuses on counterinsurgents and the population, while comparatively little attention is paid towards studying insurgent relationships with populations. It is understandable why this might be the case. Nation-states are the primary international actors, perhaps predisposing researchers to focus on them at the expense of research on sub-state actors. Also, much of the research into insurgencies is funded by and for state governments often interested in what steps they as counterinsurgents should take. It would be a mistake however, to further neglect the growing need for research into the relations between insurgents and populations; a mistake this thesis hopes to correct.

The purposes of this paper are two-fold: first, to describe what steps the Taliban could take in order to best control the Afghan population and maximize their chances at long term success; and second, to uncover in more general terms insurgent best practices when it comes to their interactions with civilian populations. The “Tips for the Taliban”

portion of this paper's title is meant to be taken somewhat tongue in cheek, and is in no way intended to be a show of support for that movement or any other insurgency organization in the Afghanistan area of operations. Though the paper does highlight actions the Taliban could take in order to increase their likelihood of success, the purpose of doing so is, in a peculiar sort of way, to assist counterinsurgents operating there to better their own strategy. In any game or competition, knowing what steps one's opponent needs to take in order to stand the best chance of success is a tremendous advantage. With such knowledge, one can design one's own moves to limit or negate completely any potential threat from what would otherwise be the opponent's best chance at victory. Thus, a solid understanding of what the Afghan Taliban have done and could do will not only help coalition forces construct a strategy that will limit or negate their attempts at controlling the population, but will also assist in understanding what outcomes may be reasonably expected.

In order to better understand the context surrounding actions the Taliban have taken to control the Afghan population, and in what areas they could improve, this paper conducts a review of the literature on insurgencies and population control, and analyzes three historical case studies. The case study organizations are: the Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA) from 1948-1960; al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) from 2004-2007; and Hezbollah from 1985-present. Each of these organizations employed population control measures in very different ways, and population control played a major role in determining the level of success or failure for each group.

Developing better strategies for the Taliban leads directly into the second purpose of this paper: highlighting and developing general insurgent best practices concerning their interactions with and control of populations. Not all insurgencies are created equal. In the grand normative sense, some insurgencies are virtuous, some evil, or at least shades thereof. For those insurgencies which are on the “good” side of the ethical spectrum, say those the purpose of which is to liberate an oppressed people, it is desirable in general for there to be elucidated best practices.

Regardless of the ethical nature of a particular insurgency, lending support to guerrillas has long been a much used and useful foreign policy tool. Though the U.S. government is currently concerned with defeating insurgencies, undoubtedly at some point they will have a renewed interest in supporting them. It is a tool that has been used successfully in Cuba, Angola, Tibet, the Philippines, Afghanistan, and Nicaragua by the U.S., and in many more countries by other states. The foreign policy objectives that have been and could be realized through supporting insurgencies are too great to place the practice on the backburner indefinitely. The current political mood in the U.S., which is unfavorable to large foreign expenditures or military expeditions, makes the act of supporting third party insurgents primed for a comeback as a low cost, low commitment option. When that time comes, it is important for there to be fresh research into the factors that contribute most to insurgent success, chief among them being the insurgents’ ability to exert control over a population.

Understanding population control requires answering a number of questions. When should an organization rely on persuasive measures of control? When should they

employ coercion? What are the possible consequences of an organization's decisions vis-à-vis population control? What steps might lead to a group being unable to exert control? Subsequent chapters of this paper attempt to answer these and other questions regarding the relationship between insurgents and the people. In chapter two of this paper, the relevant literature on insurgencies is reviewed. The literature review covers certain definitional aspects of insurgency as well as the development of insurgency strategies over time, and has sub-sections devoted specifically to the literature on insurgent and counterinsurgent population control measures. Chapter three describes and defends the methodological approach used for analysis. Justifications for the selected case studies are offered, as are explanations for why certain insurgencies were not selected for analysis. Chapters four and five contain case study analyses for the MRLA, AQI, and Hezbollah. The final chapter, chapter six, discusses the Afghan Taliban, what population control measures they have employed, and what steps they could take to improve their control of the population. This chapter also discusses what prospects they have for success and likely outcomes in the conflict.

## CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY

### Introduction

This chapter contains a review of the prominent literature on insurgency, and can be sub-divided into four sections. The first section discusses several definitional aspects related to insurgency and population control. The next section reviews influential theorists on insurgency in general, covering their conceptions of the nature of insurgency and ideas on how best to prosecute a successful insurgent campaign. The third section reviews the relevant literature specifically on population control: why insurgents need to control the population, and how best they can so do. It covers strategic concerns regarding population control while also discussing the various tactical approaches advocated by influential insurgency theorists and practitioners over time. The fourth and final section includes a discussion on population control strategies in counterinsurgency (COIN) campaigns. Insurgencies do not occur in a vacuum. Insurgents compete with the counterinsurgents for the population, and thus it is important to at least have a cursory understanding of the steps both sides take in said competition.

### The Terms of Discussion

Before launching into lengthy analysis of insurgencies, it is crucial to have an understanding of the terms of discussion. “Insurgency”, and various associated terms, can mean a variety of things. Some of those meanings may be appropriate and in line with this paper’s conception of insurgency; others may be different than what this paper intends, leading to possible confusion.



There is no single accepted definition of insurgency. David Galula defines it as “a protracted struggle conducted methodically, step-by-step, in order to attain specific intermediate objectives leading finally to the overthrow of the existing order.”<sup>4</sup> Strangely, considering the emphasis Galula placed on the political nature of insurgency throughout the rest of his work, his definition leaves out any mention of insurgencies being inherently political. Stathis Kalyvas describes insurgents as those who “hover just below the military horizon, hiding and relying on harassment and surprise, stealth and raid...” often fighting wars of attrition and “seeking to win by not losing, inflicting incessant pain on incumbents.”<sup>5</sup> Kalyvas’ description reflects the tactical approach taken by some insurgents, but other groups may use different tactics. As groups grow in power, their tactics trend less towards quick hit-and-run strikes, and more closely approximate conventional tactics. Kalyvas’ definition also leaves out any mention of against whom insurgents fight or what their motivations and ultimate goals may be.

U.S. Department of Defense joint doctrine defines insurgency as “the organized use of subversion and violence by a group or movement that seeks to overthrow or force change of a governing authority.”<sup>6</sup> This definition is better, and aptly combines some conception of insurgent goals and means, but still leaves a little to be desired. The U.S. Army/Marine counterinsurgency field manual, FM 3-24, slightly tweaks the DOD version, reformulating the definition for insurgency as “an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established

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<sup>4</sup> (Galula, 2006, p. 2)

<sup>5</sup> (Kalyvas, 2006, p. 67)

<sup>6</sup> (Department of Defense, 2011, p. 178)

government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing political control.”<sup>7</sup>

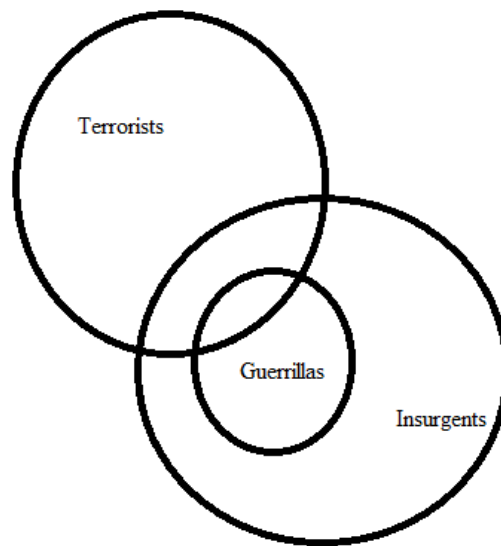
The definition found in FM 3-24 is the one to which this paper defers. It incorporates the essential aspects of insurgency: the political nature of the struggle; that insurgencies are not always conducted against a constituted government, but can include a variety of authorities; that the purpose may not be to completely overthrow the governing authority, and may be simply to weaken their legitimacy; and finally, is the only definition to make mention of control, perhaps the single most important factor in insurgencies. While the FM 3-24 definition is strong on its own, it is helpful to also keep in mind Kalyvas’ description of insurgent tactics as employing speed, deception, and violence of action to make up for their relative weaknesses. The FM 3-24 definition of insurgency, informed with Kalyvas’ description of insurgent tactics and an understanding that such tactics may grow progressively more conventional as the insurgents increase in power, provides a well rounded starting point which can form the basis of a discussion on insurgency.

Even with a clear definition in hand, variations in tactics can cause confusion over the proper classification of violent sub state actors. Specifically, confusion can arise over the terms “terrorist”, “guerrilla”, and “insurgent.” Insurgents are those pursuing an insurgency, and can do so through fighting or other means. Though “insurgent” and “guerrilla” are often used interchangeably, guerrillas are insurgents engaged in the military struggle, as opposed to political cadre or auxiliaries, and typically employ hit-

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<sup>7</sup> (Department of Defense, 2006, p. 13)

and-run tactics, sabotage, and other quick, highly mobile tactics.<sup>8</sup> Terrorism is a tactic employed by terrorists that favors the use or threatened use of violence to produce fear in a wider audience. When terrorists act as part of an organized struggle to overthrow or delegitimize a government or constituted authority, they are insurgents.<sup>9</sup> When terrorism is used to achieve different ends, then those terrorists are not insurgents. In short, not all insurgents are guerrillas or terrorists, but all guerrillas are insurgents, and some terrorists are also insurgents (for a visual representation, see figure 1).



*Figure 1.* –Insurgents, Guerrillas, and Terrorists<sup>10</sup>

The importance of control in insurgency, and its central role to this paper, begs the question of what control is and how it can be achieved. DOD joint doctrine provides a

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<sup>8</sup> (Department of Military Instruction)

<sup>9</sup> (Department of Military Instruction)

<sup>10</sup> (Department of Military Instruction)

more than sufficient response defining control as “physical or psychological pressures exerted with the intent to assure that an agent or group will respond as directed.”<sup>11</sup>

Kalyvas somewhat disaggregates the concepts of control and collaboration from one another, though acknowledging that they can be self-reinforcing.<sup>12</sup> He describes collaboration as being attitudinal or behavioral, and can result from pre-war preferences, coercion, economics, or revenge, among other motivations.<sup>13</sup> That description of collaboration is accurate, but it is a mistake to separate collaboration from control. Control without collaboration is not really control at all. Rather, collaboration should be seen as the logical outcome of successful control. That collaboration may be of varying degrees, active or passive, and may result from a population agreeing ideologically with insurgents or merely seeking to ensure their own security, but to disassociate the two is like trying to disassociate exhalation from the respiratory process; one is the necessary consequence of the successful other. At times, collaboration might be gained with relatively little effort, such as when the population’s preferences align with those of the insurgent organization, while in other instances it takes a campaign of violence and threats to prompt collaboration, but in either case collaboration is still a consequence of control. It is the population “respond(ing) as directed” as described in the DOD’s definition of control.

Of the many ways in which insurgent organizations may exert control over a population, they can be grouped into three broad categories: brute force; coercion; and

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<sup>11</sup> (Department of Defense, 2011, p. 80)

<sup>12</sup> (Kalyvas, 2006, pp. 111-113)

<sup>13</sup> (Kalyvas, 2006, pp. 92-100)

persuasion. This model is adapted from one offered by Johnson, et al in their RAND publication “Conventional Coercion Across the Spectrum of Operations.”<sup>14</sup> In the article, the brute force/persuasion/coercion model is used to discuss different methods state militaries have available in their interactions with other states. The model transitions smoothly to insurgents however, as both cases involve actors with violent means at their disposal trying to achieve political goals. The biggest difference lies in the type of actor on the receiving end of the brute force, persuasion, or coercion. The original model concerned itself with state on state actions, while its application within this paper regards insurgent on civilian actions. The change is one of scope, and does not deviate from the original model’s intent.

Of the three aspects of the model, brute force is the most direct. In security studies parlance, brute force is the application of violence without regard to enemy values or intentions.<sup>15</sup> It is not concerned with deterring or compelling behavior, nor is brute force employed for the purpose of changing the beliefs of a target population. Rather, “it seeks to eliminate altogether the target’s ability or opportunity to do anything other than what the attacker demands, or else it simply seizes or eliminates the subject of the dispute.”<sup>16</sup> In addition to being the most direct, brute force is also the measure of control least used by insurgents. Such application of force is usually outside the capability of insurgents and if attempted by an actor not fully capable of employing brute force, it can turn the population away, running counter to insurgents’ long term aspirations.

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<sup>14</sup> (Johnson, Mueller, & Taft, 2002)

<sup>15</sup> (Schelling, 2008, p. 3)

<sup>16</sup> (Johnson, Mueller, & Taft, 2002, pp. 8-9)

In contrast, coercion relies on the limited use or threat of force to change the target's behavior. Coercion can be defined as "the use of threatened force, including the limited use of actual force to back up the threat, to induce an adversary to behave differently than it otherwise would."<sup>17</sup> The difference between coercion and brute force is one of intention; violence perpetrated to affect behavior or manipulate available choices is coercive in nature. Coercion can either take the form of compellence or deterrence; compellence consisting of coercing a target to take certain desirable actions, and deterrence consisting of coercing a target to refrain from taking certain undesirable actions.<sup>18</sup> Generally speaking, coercion succeeds "when the anticipated suffering associated with the threat exceeds the anticipated benefits gained by defiance."<sup>19</sup> Notice coercion does not seek to change the values held by a target, it merely seeks to change the expected costs associated with certain actions.

Persuasion is the third and final broad category of control measures. In contrast to coercion, persuasion attempts to change the very values held by target audiences. Whereas coercion uses actual or threatened negative sanctions to alter the cost analysis, persuasion relies on positive inducements to alter belief structure. These acts of persuasion range in complexity from offering economic incentives to engaging in sustained political indoctrination (for a visual summarization of the means of control, see figure 2).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> (Byman, Waxman, & Larson, 1999, p. 10)

<sup>18</sup> (Byman, Waxman, & Larson, 1999, pp. 10-13); See also, (Johnson, Mueller, & Taft, 2002, pp. 7-15); (Art, 1980, pp. 6-8)

<sup>19</sup> (Byman, Waxman, & Larson, 1999, p. 15)

<sup>20</sup> (Johnson, Mueller, & Taft, 2002, p. 8); See also, (Kalyvas, 2006, pp. 92-110)

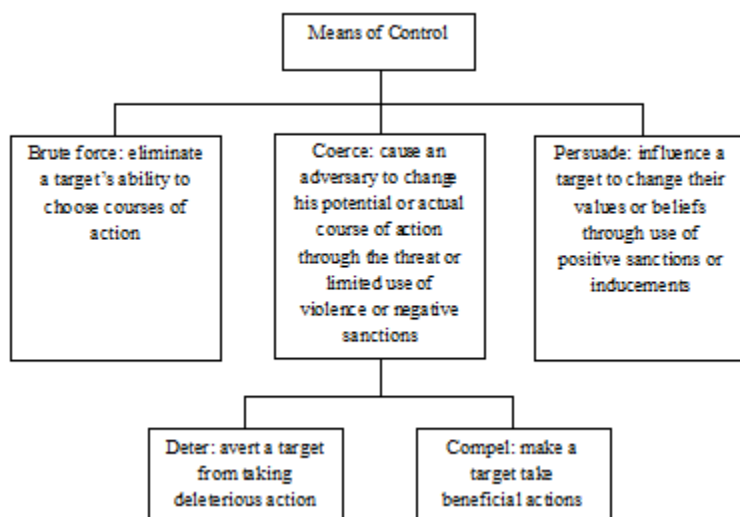


Figure 2. –Means of Control<sup>21</sup>

### Insurgency

No literature review on war strategy would be complete without a discussion of Clausewitz, and it is with him this section begins. Carl von Clausewitz was a Prussian army officer, serving during the Napoleonic revolution in military strategy. War in pre-Napoleonic Europe was rigid and characterized by large armies doing the bidding of their sovereigns on the fields of battle.<sup>22</sup> Rarely did such wars affect everyday life for the populations of the nations involved. Napoleon's genius was to mobilize the entire French nation for war. By tapping into nationalist sentiment, Napoleon was able to field armies with far more motivation to fight than possessed by opposing armies.<sup>23</sup> For years, Napoleon's armies were the scourge of Europe.

<sup>21</sup> This table is adopted from a similar table found in (Johnson, Mueller, & Taft, 2002, p. 8)

<sup>22</sup> (Nagl, 2005, p. 16)

<sup>23</sup> (Nagl, 2005, p. 17)

This was the environment in which Clausewitz wrote his well known treatise *On War* (*Von Kriege*). The book looked into the factors that made Napoleon so successful and dissected the various key components of Napoleonic warfare. Though Clausewitz did touch briefly on Napoleon's troubled encounters with guerrilla warfare in Spain and Russia, his primary contributions to the insurgency literature stem first from his ideas regarding the subordination of military strategy to political ends, and second from his theories regarding the relationship between the people, the government, and the military. These ideas were foundational for later insurgency theorists and practitioners.

Regarding the primacy of politics, Clausewitz wrote that the nature of war is more than simply fighting and destroying an opponent's forces, for:

...war is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means...for the political view is the object, War is the means, and the means must always include the object in our conception.<sup>24</sup>

Clausewitz goes on to describe the importance of recognizing the very nature of the conflict in which one is involved:

Now, the first, the grandest, and most decisive act of judgment which the Statesman and General exercises is rightly to understand in this respect the War in which he engages, not to take it for something, or to wish to make

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<sup>24</sup> (von Clausewitz, 2007, p. 18)



of it something, which by the nature of its relations it is impossible for it to be.<sup>25</sup>

In discussing the characteristics of war, Clausewitz describes a perfect trinity comprised of emotions, probabilities, and reason, which he likens respectively to the people, the army, and the government.<sup>26</sup> The people play a different role in conflict than the army or government, but their importance is of equal weight. As Napoleon taught, using the whole of Europe as his classroom, a belligerent who inflames the passions of an entire nation is far more difficult to defeat than one with limited popular support.

Though Clausewitz intended for conventional armies to take heed of his theories on the nature and characteristics of war, they bear a great relevance for insurgents. If politics can be understood as dealing with decision making, the distribution of power, and relations among groups of people, then saying insurgencies are political in nature is a gross understatement. An insurgent military success which hurts the political effort is no success at all. Clausewitz gave intellectual grounding to what guerrilla leaders had known for centuries: political considerations trump short term military gains; wars vary, with insurgencies by nature being different than conventional conflicts; and finally, *Ceteris Paribus*, popular support will tip a war in one's favor.

Unlike Clausewitz, who, regardless of the applications of his work, was himself mostly interested in better understanding and explaining conventional warfare, this next influential theorist was explicitly trying to help insurgents. T.E. Lawrence, better known as Lawrence of Arabia, was, like so many of his successors, an insurgency practitioner in

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<sup>25</sup> (von Clausewitz, 2007, p. 19)

<sup>26</sup> (von Clausewitz, 2007, pp. 19-20)

addition to a theorist. Lawrence was a British army officer assigned to the Middle East during World War One, and was intimately familiar with Arab culture. At that time, much of the Arab world fell under Ottoman rule, and Arabia had become one of the fronts in which Allied Powers were engaged with the Central Powers. One strategy pursued by the British was to instigate an Arab revolt against the Ottomans, an effort that Lawrence famously spearheaded and later recorded in his memoir *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.

Several of Lawrence's insights are particularly instructive given his position as a British officer supporting an Arab insurgency. As mentioned in this paper's introductory chapter, one of the purposes of this thesis is to better inform the use of supporting insurgencies as a foreign policy tool. Lawrence stands alone among the theorists discussed in having done just that. Others were insurgent leaders themselves or, like Clausewitz, wrote based on observations. Lawrence was the only one who wrote based on experience as a third party actor supporting insurgents. One of the prime lessons derived from this experience can be found in the following oft quoted passage from Lawrence:

Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not to win it for them.<sup>27</sup>

What Lawrence knew was that though the British could have played a more active military role, doing so would have exacted a steep political price. Arabs revolting against

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<sup>27</sup> (Lawrence, Twenty-Seven Articles, 1917)

Ottoman rule were more easily mobilized by their fellow Arabs than by another foreign power, even if the Arabs were less tactically proficient than their British counterparts. Arab insurgents were more familiar with local customs and tribal politics, and thus were better positioned to coerce or persuade their fellow Arabs into joining the rebellion. Lawrence accordingly advised the Arab rebels to enlist and maintain the support of the numerous Arab tribes in their areas of operation. This was accomplished not with an eye towards securing the majority's active support, but rather in the hopes of gaining the active support of a small minority and while also gaining the sympathies of a passive majority, and was done mainly using persuasion.<sup>28</sup>

Too heavy a British role risked more than negating the rebel advantages of understanding and being close to the population. Had the British insisted on assuming the lead role, the rebellion would have been hamstrung by the U.K.'s ability or willingness to dedicate forces towards the effort. With Arabs in the lead, the rebellion was allowed to grow at a natural rate and not be subject to artificial constraints, all while the British could maintain an advisory role. Insurgency cannot be micromanaged, especially by outsiders. Better to take a step back, accept some short term sub-optimal outcomes, but achieve a better overall strategic environment.

Another lesson from Lawrence's experience in supporting an insurgency is the importance of resisting the urge to make insurgent forces mirror modern conventional armies.<sup>29</sup> This "non-mirroring" concept is descended from Clausewitz, whom Lawrence

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<sup>28</sup> (Asprey, 1994, pp. 179-191)

<sup>29</sup> (Asprey, 1994, pp. 187-189)

reportedly admired.<sup>30</sup> The general idea is that a commander must understand the very nature of his war and not try to make it into something it is not. Lawrence could have tried to turn the Arabs into a regularly constituted fighting force, but to do so would have ignored the strategic nature of the conflict.

What Lawrence so easily grasped was that the nature of the rebellion and the Arab goal of expelling the Turks from Arabia did not necessitate pitched battles and the holding of land.<sup>31</sup> Such actions would likely have resulted in large Arab casualties by presenting the Ottomans with easy targets against which to counterattack, sapping the ability of the rebels to control the population. Big Arab losses would have lowered the anticipated benefits of siding with the rebels, making it easier for the Ottomans to deter defection and compel obedience. Knowing that the Arabs should not meet the Ottomans in open battle or defend physical terrain, it would have been foolish to model the Arab forces after the British army, designed with those types of operations in mind. Better for the Arabs to be “vapor”-like, “...intangible, without front or back, drifting about like a gas.”<sup>32</sup> In other words, strike quickly, and then dissipate. As for the targets of their quick strikes, Lawrence advised that the Arabs pick resources before manpower.<sup>33</sup> A conventional army can always replace soldiers. Resources however, are more difficult to come by. Better to conduct hit-and-run attacks on the long logistical lines and lines of communication needed to sustain an army, than to attack the actual army.

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<sup>30</sup> (Asprey, 1994, p. 184)

<sup>31</sup> (Asprey, 1994, p. 184)

<sup>32</sup> (Lawrence, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 1929)

<sup>33</sup> (Asprey, 1994, p. 185)

The next major insurgency theorist covered in this chapter, Mao Tse-tung, also favored the type of quick strike guerrilla attacks favored by Lawrence, but only to a point. Mao, a Chinese communist, had extensive revolutionary experience fighting against Japanese invaders and the Chinese nationalist Kuomintang. From this bevy of experience, Mao developed a three stage strategy for protracted warfare. As Mao saw it, powerful conventional armies hold the advantage in quickly decided wars, but that advantage disappears as the conflicts endure. Longer conflicts put great strain on conventional army's resources as well as their domestic political support, whilst giving guerrillas more time to mobilize, train, acquire weapons, and gain support.<sup>34</sup> E.L. Katzenbach summed up Mao with the following: "the basic premise of his theory is that political mobilization may be substituted for industrial mobilization with a successful military outcome."<sup>35</sup> If guerrillas relinquish physical space, they can provide themselves more time, which itself can be used to persuade or coerce the people into supporting the fight.<sup>36</sup>

The first and second stages of Mao's theory of protracted warfare are reminiscent of Lawrence's strategies during the Arab rebellion. In the first stage, guerrillas set about consolidating bases in geographically isolated or hard to reach areas in which heavy political indoctrination of recruits and the locals takes place; the effect is to create a "protective belt of sympathizers."<sup>37</sup> Military operations during this period are more the exception than the rule, as it is desirable to have solidified bases before tipping one's

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<sup>34</sup> (Taber, 2002, pp. 43-46)

<sup>35</sup> (Katzenbach, 1990, p. 13)

<sup>36</sup> (Katzenbach, 1990, p. 14)

<sup>37</sup> (Tse-tung, 2005, pp. 20-21)

hand to government forces. This is not dissimilar to Lawrence's advice during the Arab rebellion for the rebels to build up bases of support amidst the population. These bases serve as sources of recruits, supplies, and intelligence, allowing the insurgents progressively greater freedom of movement.<sup>38</sup>

Mao's second phase also bears a striking resemblance to the quick hit-and-run tactics favored by the Arabs. In this phase, guerrillas aggressively attack weak enemy outposts and patrols, kill political rivals, and conduct wide-ranging acts of sabotage.<sup>39</sup> Through using enemy forces as *de facto* resupply points, gaining arms, food, communication equipment, and other needed supplies, the guerrillas are able to broaden the areas under their influence and in which they can launch attacks.<sup>40</sup> The difficulty for counterinsurgent forces is that the more troops they dispatch to quash the guerrillas, the more targets the guerrillas are presented with and the stronger they can become.<sup>41</sup>

The third phase of Mao's theory of protracted warfare takes a departure from Lawrence. To enter this phase, Mao envisioned insurgent forces having enough strength to mount conventional attacks on their enemies, the purpose of which, besides the killing of enemy forces, would be to further weaken their enemy's strategic position while strengthening their own.<sup>42</sup> Hit-and-run tactics are no longer the favored means of attack at this stage, having given way to large pitched battles. This progression into conventional

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<sup>38</sup> (Tse-tung, 2005, pp. 20-21)

<sup>39</sup> (Tse-tung, 2005, p. 21)

<sup>40</sup> (Tse-tung, 2005, p. 21)

<sup>41</sup> (Taber, 2002, p. 48)

<sup>42</sup> (Tse-tung, 2005, p. 21)

warfare has been observed in many insurgencies, including those in China, Vietnam, Cuba, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

Mao's model for guerrilla warfare has been used in conflicts all over the globe. Part of its durability is due to the ease with which it adapts to changes in the insurgent's strategic outlook. Mao prescribes no set timetable for progression from one phase to another. Guerrillas should advance to the next phase when they are of sufficient strength and have made the requisite political progress, and not a moment before, no matter how long it takes. Should guerrillas enter a phase too soon, or find they can no longer maintain the types of operations required by a certain phase, Mao allows for regression to an earlier phase. If there are regional disparities in the strategic outlook, an organization could even be involved in phase three operations in one area while engaged in phase one or two operations in others. There is no need for phase homogeneity across an entire theater of war so long as each regional situation is dictated by and responsive to the political and military realities on the ground.<sup>43</sup>

Mao placed great importance on the peasants' role in revolutionary warfare. The bases which underpin Mao's entire three phase strategy are ideally located in rural areas, and within them guerrillas rely upon the peasantry for much of their needs. Likewise, controversial revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara also placed great importance on the role of the peasantry in waging successful guerrilla campaigns. Che gained notoriety for his role fighting alongside the Castro brothers during the Cuban revolution and his subsequent failed attempts to foment rebellion in the Congo and Bolivia. Though sharing

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<sup>43</sup> (Tse-tung, 2005)

in Mao's beliefs regarding the importance of mobilizing the peasantry, Che disagreed with Mao over how best to elicit the support of the peasants. As already discussed, Mao preferred using persuasion and political indoctrination to build up bases among the peasants and create his "protective belt of sympathizers." Only once firmly entrenched with the peasantry does Maoist protracted war allow for aggressive attacks against opposing forces.

In contrast, Che believed that:

Objective conditions for the struggle are provided by the people's hunger, their reaction to that hunger, the terror unleashed to crush the people's reaction and the wave of hatred that the repression creates. The rest of the Americas lacked the subjective conditions, the most important of which is the consciousness of the possibility of victory against the imperialist powers and their internal allies through violent struggle. These conditions were created through armed struggle...<sup>44</sup>

In short, Che did not seek to completely change the values of the people; rather he sought to employ violence in order to make them cognizant of their dissatisfaction with the status quo and to compel them to act. Where Mao initially relied heavily on persuasion, Che represents the middle ground, employing both persuasion and coercion. Che advocated the employment of roving bands of fighters to inspire and compel the population. These guerrilla vanguards would travel the countryside engaging those who opposed the revolution, and in so doing hopefully mobilize more peasants to join the

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<sup>44</sup> (Guevara, Cuba: Historical Exception or Vanguard in the Anticolonial Struggle?, 1961)



revolution.<sup>45</sup> As the bands of fighters grow in strength, new bands were spun off and sent to operate in other regions.<sup>46</sup> Che's strategy for guerrilla warfare was later termed the Foco<sup>47</sup> method, and though influential, did not meet with much success outside of Cuba.

In a departure from Mao's and Che's peasant-centric strategies, Carlos Marighella, best known for his work *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*, favored a more traditional Marxist strategy of initiating revolution among the urban dwelling working class proletariat. Rather than starting rurally and eventually working one's way into villages and cities, Marighella preferred the opposite: starting with urban warfare in order to create the necessary operational space for a rural revolution to eventually occur. In fact, Marighella saw urban guerrilla warfare as a necessary prerequisite to a successful rural campaign, stating:

These are the conditions, harmful to the dictatorship, which permit the guerrillas to open rural warfare in the middle of an uncontrollable urban rebellion... Beginning with the city and the support of the people, the rural guerrilla war develops rapidly, establishing its infrastructure carefully while the urban area continues the rebellion.<sup>48</sup>

A key characteristic of Marighella's strategy is its overall aggressiveness and violence. If Mao is on the persuasion end of the spectrum and Che in the middle, Marighella is decidedly on the coercion end. In some ways, Marighella advocated a similar strategy as Che, in that both relied on action to mobilize the population, rather

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<sup>45</sup> (Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 2001, pp. 50-62)

<sup>46</sup> (Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 2001, p. 57)

<sup>47</sup> Or focoist/focolist.

<sup>48</sup> (Marighella, 1969)

than relying on a mobilized population in order to act. In this regard, they followed in the footsteps of the early anarchist terrorists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century like Johann Most or Mikhail Bakunin, the latter of which is known to have said, "...from this very moment we must spread our principles, not with words but with deeds, for this is the most popular, the most potent, and the most irresistible form of propaganda."<sup>49</sup> Compare, for instance, Marighella's strategy to that of Mao. The entire first phase of Maoist protracted warfare calls for only occasionally attacking government forces: wait for the enemy to send out its forces; weigh the danger; and attack if the conditions are favorable or, if they are not, shift elsewhere.<sup>50</sup> In contrast, Marighella advised guerrillas to take a much more aggressive stance when it came to confronting government forces, going so far as to say "The urban guerrilla's reason for existence, the basic condition in which he acts and survives, is to shoot."<sup>51</sup> This urban guerrilla strategy called for frequent assaults, raids, kidnappings, sabotage, and terrorism. Marighella was careful to caution insurgents not to conduct such attacks without prior proper planning, but assuming the proper precautions were taken, such attacks were to be the norm. If propaganda of the deed alone was not enough to compel the masses into action, Marighella believed that the subsequent government use of repression and brute force which he saw as an inevitable response to the violence, should put them over the top.<sup>52</sup>

Amidst the intensifying violence and revolutions of the post-war era propagated by the Marighellas, Ho Chi Minhs, and Gerry Adams of the world, one observer stood

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<sup>49</sup> (Bakunin, 1870)

<sup>50</sup> (Tse-tung, 2005, p. 103)

<sup>51</sup> (Marighella, 1969)

<sup>52</sup> (Marighella, 1969)

above the rest in his ability to understand the driving forces behind such conflicts. Unlike many of the theorists already discussed, David Galula was not an insurgent himself. He was a French military officer with extensive experience in COIN, and used his observations as the basis for his bedrock contribution to COIN literature, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*. Though Galula's primary intent was to identify counterinsurgent best practices, and his contributions in that area will be covered later in this chapter, he also wrote at length about the nature and conduct of insurgencies.

One of Galula's more important contributions comes from his analysis of the importance of causes for insurgents. An appealing cause, or reason for action, is necessary to get an insurgency off and running, especially in the early stages when the insurgents are too weak to effectively employ coercion.<sup>53</sup> Causes can be political, social, or economic in nature, and can even be artificial so long as they are able to rally the target population.<sup>54</sup>

Certain causes are more desirable and likely to benefit a revolutionary movement than others. Galula advised that insurgents steer clear of causes which can be co-opted by counterinsurgent forces, as happened in Malaya.<sup>55</sup> There, the insurgents were fighting for independence from the UK. The British responded not only with promises of

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<sup>53</sup> (Galula, 2006, pp. 11-12)

<sup>54</sup> (Galula, 2006, pp. 14-15)

<sup>55</sup> (Galula, 2006, p. 13)

independence, but then made those promises conditional on peace and ethnic cooperation, further disincentivizing supporting the insurgency.<sup>56</sup>

Galula also cautioned that a cause should be lasting, at least “until the insurgent movement is well on its feet.”<sup>57</sup> A good cause can rally the population to support the insurgents, at least in the beginning of the conflict, though once the conflict reaches a certain stage of development the importance of a cause falls into the background. As a conflict drags on, the ability of one actor or another to provide security becomes a stronger indicator of whom the population will support. The prospect of continued violence pushes people to overlook ideological disagreements with insurgents if supporting that group can ensure their security. What insurgents do, rather than what they say, takes on a bigger role in mobilizing support, the longer the conflict continues. Insurgents can even switch causes as the strategic situation changes or becomes clearer. If a new cause seems more persuasive, Galula advised opportunistic insurgents to remain open to changing causes, though they must be careful not to alienate their core group of supporters or appear disingenuous.<sup>58</sup>

Galula also stressed the importance for insurgents to seek widely appealing causes.<sup>59</sup> With causes being most important for gaining support in the beginning stages of an insurgency, adopting one which has limited popular appeal or turns off many potential supporters can stop an insurgency before it even begins. Insurgents can take many different paths to try and gain support for their cause beyond relying on propaganda of

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<sup>56</sup> (Mauzy, 1993, p. 108)

<sup>57</sup> (Galula, 2006, p. 13)

<sup>58</sup> (Galula, 2006, p. 16)

<sup>59</sup> (Galula, 2006, p. 13)

the deed. T.E. Lawrence's Arab rebels went from tribe to tribe to make their case and drum up support. Mao preferred building bases in remote areas and indoctrinating the locals with communist propaganda. Historically, insurgents have also made their causes known with the use of pamphlets, radio broadcasts, and word of mouth. These methods were tried and true because, for the most part, insurgents have always been located in relatively close proximity to their potential supporters. In fact, up to this point, co-location with supporters seemed to be a necessary condition for success. The late 20<sup>th</sup> century communications revolution has turned this notion on its head, and ushered in a new evolutionary period for insurgencies.

The group which has most aggressively taken advantage of the communication revolution is Al-Qaeda (AQ). Whereas historically, insurgencies are state or sometimes region specific, AQ wages what many consider a global insurgency. They have active cells in dozens of countries, which are employed against western nations in general and the United States specifically, whom they feel exert an undue and harmful influence across the Islamic world, and against leaders of Islamic countries whom AQ believes to be acting in an un-Islamic fashion. AQ also acts as an umbrella organization of sorts for national level guerrilla groups to whom they also contribute their own fighters in the struggle against "apostate" rulers of Muslim lands. Because AQ wages war on multiple fronts, local and global, they have a widely dispersed base of support. AQ relies on a mix of traditional persuasive and coercive tactics for their local audience, especially the violent urban guerrilla approach favored by Carlos Marighella. Along with the traditional

approaches to population control however, AQ blends in newer tactics utilizing modern communications technology to persuade the global *Ummah* to follow their lead.

AQ has become quite sophisticated at using internet and mass media tools to rally supporters and spread their message. The group maintains a heavy presence on internet chat rooms and message boards. They distribute videos and even produce rap songs targeting disaffected Western youths.<sup>60</sup> AQ's anti-Western message is also often spread by the West itself, through the press. Through the use of such widely available communiqués, AQ attempts to instill feelings of rage in all Muslims, and inspire supporters to attack Western interests.<sup>61</sup> Echoing Marighella, AQ hopes for an overly aggressive Western response that will overextend and bankrupt the West whilst pushing more Muslims into supporting AQ.<sup>62</sup>

Some might argue that AQ is not an insurgency organization at all, and instead should be classified as a terrorist organization. They do have a predilection for employing terrorist tactics, and though many of their goals are political in nature, they also pursue social and religious change through their attacks. An argument could also be made that AQ heralds a new stage in insurgency, with modern characteristics, such as global, as opposed to local or regional, designs, multiple, only tangentially related causes, and the ability to operate successfully with a widely dispersed base of support. Scholars will continue to debate the merits of each side, and this paper does not pretend that it can put the matter to rest. In the meantime however, this paper does consider AQ an insurgency

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<sup>60</sup> (Rawnsley, 2011)

<sup>61</sup> (Shultz, 2008, pp. 49-54)

<sup>62</sup> (bin Laden, Full Transcript of bin Laden Video, 2004); See also, (Zabel, 2007, pp. 5-7)

organization, albeit one which also engages at times in non-insurgency related terrorist attacks. The reasoning is simple: nowhere in the definition of insurgency does it state that the insurgents have to be local actors. Typically, local actors have the most interest in overthrowing or delegitimizing the existing political order, but this does not always have to be the case. As a transnational organization, AQ may have more difficulty prosecuting successful insurgencies on the local level, as they are not entrenched within local social networks. But to categorize them as something other than insurgents simply because of their transnational nature seems faulty; they simply operate on a larger scale than the proto-typical insurgent.

Whether AQ does indeed signify a new stage in the evolution of insurgencies or is merely an aberration, they are clearly standing on the shoulders of the giants who came before them. Like most insurgents, AQ uses a mix of coercion and persuasion to build support and exert control. The fact that AQ is not as entrenched with the local social networks as a typical insurgent organization may explain their preference for coercion and their attempts to embed themselves within local organizations. Even given AQ's unique nature and the constraints within which they operate, Mao would have instantly recognized AQ's overall strategy, though the specific means AQ has at their disposal have evolved since Mao's time.

To paraphrase James Carville, the recurring theme from much of this chapter's first section could be restated simply as "It's the population, stupid." Populations play a critical role in all modern warfare, but perhaps not more so than during an insurgency. Insurgents are fighting for political change and/or dominance. Through controlling the

people, insurgents gain supplies, manpower, intelligence, sanctuary, and more. There is no single method insurgents must use to establish that control. Some groups find it useful to persuade supporters to their side, or to use positive inducements like the promise of security or political representation. Other insurgents find it prudent to use violence or the threat of violence to alter behavior, and thrive by causing insecurity. The following section of this chapter examines the different means by which control is exerted, and explores the mechanisms governing the use of control measures in insurgencies.

#### Population Control in Insurgency

*“The only territory you want to hold is the six inches between the ears of the campesino.”*

- Colonel John Waghelstein<sup>63</sup>

*“When you have them by the balls, their hearts and minds will follow.”*

- Chuck Colson, advisor to Richard Nixon<sup>64</sup>

Recalling the definition for insurgency provided earlier, insurgents fight in order to overthrow or delegitimize the existing political order. Prominent insurgency theorists and practitioners have stressed time and time again that control over the population is an essential ingredient to successfully pulling off such endeavors. Control over the population is a zero sum game. The greater control insurgents possess over the population, the less control the government possesses, and the more damage is done to the government’s legitimacy.

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<sup>63</sup> (Siegel & Hackel, 1988, p. 119)

<sup>64</sup> (Chang, 1992, p. 403)



Legitimacy is crucial in an insurgency. Insurgents try to detract from that of the government and enhance their own. States, in the Weberian sense, are made distinct by their claims on the “monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force.”<sup>65</sup> The very act of initiating an insurgency detracts from a state’s legitimacy by disrupting that monopoly on force. It puts a state from a condition of having one legitimate, sovereign entity, to having multiple sovereignties, each competing to further its legitimacy as the rightful sovereign. Charles Tilly identified three components of multiple sovereignty: the government; the contender/challenger; and the polity.<sup>66</sup> As the contenders employ force and take part in other actions typically reserved for governing authorities, their claims to legitimacy rise and coalitions between challengers and the polity grow.<sup>67</sup>

In addition to whittling away at the government’s legitimacy and ability to extend its writ, there are a number of other benefits stemming from population control that make it such a necessary component of insurgent success. To start with, the very act of insurgents exerting control over a population leads to a greater level of collaboration, as Stathis Kalyvas argues in his book *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*.<sup>68</sup> In effect, insurgent control over an area sets off a cascade of conformity to insurgent expectations of behavior among the population. The population in an area over which insurgents are sovereign has more incentive to cooperate with insurgents than the population in an area contested by insurgent and government forces. That cooperation helps the insurgents hide from COIN forces and obtain necessities such as supplies, manpower, and intelligence.

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<sup>65</sup> (Weber, 1918)

<sup>66</sup> (Tilly, 1973, p. 437)

<sup>67</sup> (Tilly, 1973, p. 443)

<sup>68</sup> (Kalyvas, 2006, pp. 111-132)

An insurgent organization cut off from the population may struggle to maintain itself as a fully resourced fighting force.

While it may come as no surprise that “people’s political views would be highly contingent on the power arrayed around them,”<sup>69</sup> Kalyvas goes on to highlight a number of mechanisms by which control fosters collaboration. They are:<sup>70</sup>

- Coercion: This is perhaps the most obvious way in which control leads to collaboration. Once in control, insurgents can more effectively employ violence, which in turns raises the costs of non-compliance. The people then collaborate because they want to survive.
- Shielding: The more sovereignty insurgents have in a given area, the more they are able to protect the population from other sources of coercion. Just as coercion increases the cost of defection *from* the insurgents, shielding lowers the cost of defection *to* the insurgents.
- Mechanical Ascription: In areas under insurgent control, it becomes natural for youths to grow up and join the insurgency. As the population becomes socialized to insurgent norms, and with a dearth of other available options, people view collaborating with the insurgency as the “natural course of action”, which in turn leads to greater support from the families of those have joined the fighting.
- Credibility of rule: When dealing in matters of life or death, no one wants to side with the underdog. Successfully establishing control over a population

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<sup>69</sup> (Finnegan, 1999, p. 50)

<sup>70</sup> (Kalyvas, 2006, pp. 125-132)

increases insurgent legitimacy and lends credibility to the possibility of their ultimate victory. People are more likely to collaborate with who they believe will win.

- Provision of benefits: Just as having control makes it easier for insurgents to use coercion, it also makes it easier for them to use persuasion. Insurgents will often trade benefits for loyalty, such as by redistributing land or lowering rents.
- Monitoring: Once control is established, insurgents develop local administrative bureaucracies, which mirror those of the state. Such governing structures are important for taking a census and tracking the people's movements, and allow insurgents to gather more and better intelligence from the population.
- Self-reinforcing by-products: Control also spawns collaboration through the population fearing that COIN forces already believe them to be collaborators. For instance, the inhabitants of an insurgent controlled village may be suspected of collaborating, regardless of their true sympathies or behaviors. Rather than suffer reprisal at the hands of COIN forces for their suspected insurgent support, those villagers may decide that they are better off actually collaborating with the insurgents.

Accepting the proposition that control over the population is desirable for insurgents, and having already discussed why that is, the question remains: what are the various ways in which insurgents can establish control? Brute force, coercive, and

persuasive means of control have been briefly discussed, but alone are insufficiently broad categories. Control measures can also be divided along elemental lines, so-named for their similarity to the elements of national power, the acronym for which is DIME (Diplomatic, Information, Military, Economic). Traditionally, DIME represents the various ways in which a sovereign nation may exert power.<sup>71</sup> However, the acronym can also be applied to the different ways in which insurgents exert control over populations. Only a slightly modified understanding of DIME is needed when applying the concept to insurgents. Whereas interacting states exert diplomatic power at the systemic level, in exerting control over a population, insurgents use employ local or national political power. Aside from substituting “political” for “diplomatic,” transitioning from DIME pertaining to the elements of national power, to pertaining to elements of insurgent control is fairly smooth.

Each element of power represents a conceptual category through which insurgents can exert control over a population.<sup>72</sup> It should be noted that within each element, insurgents can apply different means of control. That is to say, an organization can employ political measures of control that are coercive or persuasive. What means they choose differ based on their goals, preexisting relationship with the population, and situational reality of their particular conflict.<sup>73</sup> Whether employing persuasive or coercive means, all the elements of control are intertwined. For example, success in employing

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<sup>71</sup> (Department of Defense, 2011, p. 170)

<sup>72</sup> (Department of Defense, 2006, p. 105)

<sup>73</sup> For example, Kalyvas posits that as a conflict drags on, persuasive means will give way to coercion as instability increases and the provision of positive inducements becomes less effective than the threat of negative sanctions (Kalyvas, 2006, pp. 114-115).

economic elements of control can help an organization establish or maintain political control.

To repeat, political elements fill the role for insurgents that “diplomatic” elements fill for nation states. There are a number of political actions insurgents can take, both coercive and persuasive. Political means of control are especially important for insurgents, given the highly political nature of the conflict in which they fight. As discussed in the beginning of this section, insurgents try to delegitimize the constituted government and show that they themselves are a legitimate ruling authority. Persuasive political actions are meant to convince the population that the insurgents can govern in a manner that bests, or at least rivals, that of the actual government. In Kalyvas’ words, their use is to increase the belief amongst the population in the credibility of insurgent rule. A convincing way of doing so is for an insurgent group to establish a shadow, or parallel, government. Shadow governments are frequently used by insurgents to impose order, and can include the creation of legal codes and functioning judiciaries, as well as more mundane but socially relevant functions such as school systems and medical clinics. Such political maneuvers can also be aimed at empowering long disenfranchised segments of the population, in the hopes of persuading them that a brighter future is to be found with the insurgents.

There can also be coercive means employed along with the use of political elements of population control. At times, shadow governments channel violence to modify the population’s behavior, such as when the judiciary hands out harsh punishments designed to ensure conformity to the organization’s particular belief set.

Similarly to counterinsurgents, insurgents often take a census of the population in order to better monitor and limit people's movements, and employ police to ferret out those betraying the organization and scare the rest into submission.

The interconnectedness between all the elements of control is most evident for the informational elements. Propaganda plays a major role in most insurgencies. Well constructed information operations effectively influence civilians to alter their behavior. Much of what is used for propaganda however, are coercive or persuasive actions falling along the other three elements of control. For instance, coercive information operations may consist in distributing videos of government sympathizers being executed in the hopes of deterring future collaboration with counterinsurgents. Examples of persuasive informational control measures include spreading the word of reconstruction aid insurgents have given to civilians affected by the conflict, or the establishment of political committees for population indoctrination.

Though many information operations are tied into the other elements of control, it is possible for them to be independent of the other elements. Persuasive propaganda can focus on the enemy's failures, or can even be completely made up. Insurgents have no obligation to be honest, as long as their efforts are likely to gain the insurgents control over the population. Insurgents may issue a religious fatwa or attempt to stir nationalist sentiment in order to rally the masses. Coercive informational measures of control not directly tied to other elements of control include the use of "night letters": secretly distributed notices meant to threaten and intimidate their targets.

Whether information operations are conducted in concert or independent of the other elements of control, they do tend to share a few features. First, they are audience driven; that is, propaganda is created and distributed with a certain audience in mind, and properly constructed propaganda is made to reflect the needs and particularities of the widest amount of people from that specific population. Second, much like in electoral political campaigns, successful information operations typically focus on a select few themes to really reinforce the message the insurgents are attempting to spread.<sup>74</sup>

While informational control measures are deeply intertwined with the other three elements, and thus can be difficult to distinguish, military elements of control are the easiest to distinguish. The most basic military control measures include the prototypical who's who of violent actions: assaults; killings; kidnappings; car bombings; etc. Arson and location bombings are effective at discouraging civilians from frequenting businesses or schools which fail to toe the insurgent's line. IED emplacement, in addition to their military use against counterinsurgents, allows insurgents to alter the population's traveling habits. Terrorist attacks, an insurgent favorite, produce deeply coercive psychological effects.

Coercion may be the most common mean through which military control measures are used, but persuasive and even brute force means are not totally excluded. An example of insurgents employing military elements of control persuasively is the use or promise of insurgent forces to safeguard segments of the population. Though brute

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<sup>74</sup> (Department of Defense, 2006, p. 110)

force means of control are not typically employed by insurgents, some instances of ethnic cleansing may fall under such a categorization.<sup>75</sup>

The fourth and final element of control available to insurgents, economic measures, can be particularly effective given the impoverished living conditions of many states facing insurgencies. A common insurgent strategy is to destabilize the economy and create unemployment through threats or targeted attacks on economic infrastructure, with a goal turning popular dissatisfaction with the state of the economy into support for the insurgency.<sup>76</sup> Insurgents operating in areas with large agriculture industries have been known to dictate what it is farmers can grow. This is especially prevalent in high drug-producing regions. Insurgents in Afghanistan or Colombia, to name two quick examples, have been known to compel farmers to grow illegal drugs, which they then sell internationally to fund the conflict. Essential services are at times held hostage by insurgents, who may burn crops, blockade food shipments, or disrupt power grids in order to coerce changes in the population's behavior. The LTTE, for example, cut off water supplies to thousands of Tamils suspected of benefitting from government development work.<sup>77</sup>

Not all economic control measures are coercive; it is an element that lends itself particularly well to persuasion. Because insurgencies often occur in underdeveloped or

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<sup>75</sup> Whether ethnic cleansing falls under coercion or brute force is a matter of intent. If the insurgents aim is to drive away every member of a particular religious or ethnic group, then it is brute force. If their goal is to cleanse a handful of villages in order to convince the remaining members of the cleansed group to leave the area or otherwise alter their behavior, then they are employing coercive means of control.

<sup>76</sup> (Department of Defense, 2006, p. 119)

<sup>77</sup> (Asian Tribune, 2006); See also, (Daily News, 2006)



poverty-stricken nations, the people there can be highly receptive to receiving development aid or economic assistance. Similarly to how insurgent organizations may prevent civilians from receiving essential services as a coercive economic control measure, insurgents will also provide such services when seeking to persuade the population. Insurgents may offer welfare payments, food and water, economic assistance, and even reconstruction aid. In short, the provisioning of any type of financial aid or essential services in the hopes of persuading the population to support the insurgents falls under this category (for examples of insurgent means and elements of control, see table 1).

Table 1 – Examples of Insurgent Means and Elements of Control

	<b>Brute Force</b>	<b>Coercion</b>	<b>Persuasion</b>
<b>Political</b>	n/a	Use of secret police, authoritarian governance, and repressive judicial penalties.	Imposition of rule of law, provision of education, empower disenfranchised.
<b>Informational</b>	n/a	Use of “night letters”, threaten segments of the population, distribute videos of insurgent attacks.	Highlight Government Failures, engage in political indoctrination, spread word of insurgent aid distribution.
<b>Military</b>	Conduct genocide, (some) ethnic cleansing	Use of bombings, kidnappings, arson, checkpoints, terrorist attacks.	Safeguard population from government forces.
<b>Economic</b>	n/a	Destabilize economy, enforce economic blockade, forcibly collect taxes.	Provide social services or aid, engage in reconstruction.

There is an unavoidable degree of overlap among the four elements of control; firm distinctions cannot always be established. The act of taxing populations could arguably

fall under both political and economic measures of control. Likewise, withholding basic goods like water from a population could be viewed as an economic sanction or as a military act. Such overlap is inevitable. This is not this intended to be an all-encompassing list of population control measures. Rather, the purpose is to analyze some of the broader paths population control can take, for instance coercion vs. persuasion, or economic vs. political. Different methods of control are employed in every insurgency, and as insurgents adapt they create new ones. A complete catalogue of every way in which populations may be controlled on a tactical level is impossible.

The U.S. Army/Marine Counterinsurgency Field Manual, FM 3-24, takes a slightly different approach to insurgent population control measures than has been laid out thus far. In it are identified five different means by which insurgents can mobilize support: persuasion; coercion; reaction to abuses; foreign support; and apolitical motivations.<sup>78</sup> According to FM 3-24, persuasion relies on an organization enticing supporters and positively gaining their support; a not altogether dissimilar definition than found elsewhere in this paper. Examples of persuasion in FM 3-24 include the promise and provision of social services, or the use of ethnic or religious ties to build a sense of community between insurgents and the population.<sup>79</sup> The manual speaks of direct coercion, in the form of killing or kidnapping, or indirect coercion like attacks designed to whittle away the government's legitimacy.<sup>80</sup> The third mobilization method identified in FM 3-24 refers to the insurgent strategy of trying to provoke excessive responses from

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<sup>78</sup> (Department of Defense, 2006, pp. 20-21)

<sup>79</sup> (Department of Defense, 2006, p. 21)

<sup>80</sup> (Department of Defense, 2006, p. 21)

counterinsurgent forces in the hopes that the response creates cleavages between the population and the government.<sup>81</sup> Foreign support can also serve to mobilize supporters of an insurgent cause, a notable example being support given to the Mujahedeen during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.<sup>82</sup> Finally, FM3-24 discusses segments of the population supporting the insurgency for reasons detached from politics, such as economic or criminal opportunities.<sup>83</sup>

Upon close inspection, the categorization offered by FM 3-24 leaves something to be desired. The effects that foreign support for an insurgent group may have are discussed below, and while an astute observation, are mostly outside of the scope of this paper's treatment on population control measures. The manual's identification of coercion and persuasion as means of mobilization is spot on. However, breaking reaction to abuses and apolitical motivations into separate categories was a mistake. Both should be categorized under persuasive means of gaining support. The former, reaction to abuses, relies on insurgents wooing the population through providing leadership opposed to the abuses. It is a similar tale for apolitical motivations. It is irrelevant if insurgents entice the population with political benefits, economic benefits, or with the opportunity to commit crimes. The underlying structure is still the organization using positive inducements to gain supporters.

As important as population control is during an insurgency for its role in promoting collaboration and helping insurgents maintain steady sources of supplies and

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<sup>81</sup> (Department of Defense, 2006, p. 21)

<sup>82</sup> (Department of Defense, 2006, p. 21)

<sup>83</sup> (Department of Defense, 2006, p. 21)

manpower, it is possible that there are mitigating factors that may lessen the importance of population control for insurgents. Upon first consideration, it would seem reasonable to consider pre-conflict attitudinal disposition of the population as one such mitigating factor. The thought here is that if a population begins with a preference for a particular insurgent group, control would not be a necessary condition to ensure collaboration. However, Kalyvas finds that attitudinal preferences may be a poor indicator of behavior, especially once the inherent violence and insecurity of an insurgency are factored in.<sup>84</sup> It is also reasonable to assume that if a group has shifted their allegiance from the government to a challenger sovereign, that they could easily shift their support elsewhere, either back to the government or to another challenger. Thus, even when the attitudes of the polity are favorable to the insurgents, it is still of the highest importance for the group to employ effective control measures.

Another factor to consider is that outside support or funding may change a group's need to exert control over a population. If a main impetus for controlling the population is to secure resources and supplies, then finding another way of securing resources and supplies logically lessens the need exert control over the population. For example, insurgent organizations receiving ample state or diaspora support, or engaging in international smuggling, have less of a need to control the population. Those groups may still choose to employ population control measures, perhaps as insurance in case their other source of support dries up. At the very least, receiving support from outside the population may change the type of population control an insurgent group employs, as

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<sup>84</sup> (Kalyvas, 2006, pp. 92-110)

they may then have the flexibility to employ more persuasive means rather than resorting to coercion.

As has been discussed, control is important to insurgents for promoting collaboration, and assists them in securing steady supplies and manpower. However, control plays another major role in insurgencies. The level of control insurgents are able to exert affects much more than how much civilians collaborate, it also plays a major role in determining what control strategy insurgents employ. Adapted from Kalyvas' work on civil wars, when insurgents have little to no sovereignty in an area they will employ either no violence or indiscriminate violence, but usually the former.<sup>85</sup> When violence is used in situations of no control, it tends to be indiscriminate because there is limited access to intelligence with which to develop target lists. More often, violence in such situations is avoided because indiscriminate violence can counterproductively push the population into supporting the government.

A lack of control resulting in zero violence is especially true when the insurgency is in its infancy. At that stage, there is a strong disincentive to use coercion. The government likely is unaware that a challenger to their sovereignty exists.<sup>86</sup> Premature use of coercion can draw the government's attention at a time when the insurgents are at their weakest. It is preferable for the insurgents to employ persuasive control measures so as to develop the protective band of sympathizers Mao was so fond of.

As the conflict develops, level of control possessed continues to shape the types of control exerted. When sovereignty in an area is contested, Kalyvas finds that violence

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<sup>85</sup> (Kalyvas, 2006, pp. 195-209)

<sup>86</sup> (Galula, 2006, pp. 5-6)

levels increase but that violence tends to be selective.<sup>87</sup> Increased competition over the population leads to the increased use of coercion, while greater flows of information allow for the violence to be selective, maximizing its effectiveness in discouraging defection. These situations of contested sovereignty are ideal for coercive control measures. Aid projects and shadow governments are impractical, as they would leave insurgents vulnerable to counterinsurgent forces. Meanwhile, coercion is ideal for halting the flow of information to counterinsurgents and making the population too fearful to cooperate with the government.

Finally, when insurgents have complete control over an area, Kalyvas finds they will use coercion sparingly.<sup>88</sup> Civilian defection carries a higher cost in areas under complete insurgent control, and so little violence is needed to ensure compliance. Free from government interference, insurgents are able to implement a full complement of persuasive control measures, such as indoctrination, aid projects, and shadow governments.<sup>89</sup> Thus, control over the population not only helps determine the victor in an insurgency, but it shapes the ways in which they achieve victory.

Kalyvas' findings regarding insurgent level of control determining the type of control exerted draw an interesting parallel to Mao's three stages of guerrilla warfare. In the first stage, Mao advises insurgents to lay low and build support, which is consistent with Kalyvas' findings that when insurgents are yet to establish control they are unlikely to employ coercion. Mao's second stage calls for guerrillas to carefully employ typical

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<sup>87</sup> (Kalyvas, 2006, pp. 195-209)

<sup>88</sup> (Kalyvas, 2006, pp. 195-209)

<sup>89</sup> (Taber, 2002, p. 49)

hit-and-run tactics, syncing with Kalyvas' findings that during periods of contested control insurgents are likely to employ higher levels of selective violence. Finally, Mao's third stage, when insurgents are at their most powerful, coincides with Kalyvas' findings that insurgents will use violence selectively and sparingly.

It seems, therefore, that whether insurgents are at the vapor-like stage or are able to act more overtly has major repercussions regarding population control. As insurgents grow in power and are better able to exert control, they have less of a need to remain vapor-like, and can afford to draw attention to themselves by employing coercion. When they progress from guerrilla to the conventional, insurgents are then able to more closely approximate a style of control resembling that of a state, and have less of a need to employ extensive violence against the people.

Recalling back to the very beginning of this chapter, it is perhaps more clear now why Kalyvas' definition of insurgency had to be rejected. As a refresher, his definition focused on the stealthy, quick-striking nature of insurgents. That description is accurate only for insurgents at a certain stage. As an organization grows in strength, they no longer rely solely on guerrilla strikes, and will display military tactics and control measures more closely resembling the governments they fight against. This evolutionary process is important to keep in mind during the case studies and subsequent analysis.

To this point in the chapter, the reader should have an understanding of basic insurgency strategy and of the importance and dynamics of population control. This is only half the equation though. Insurgents compete with counterinsurgents for control of

the population. Thus knowing what actions counterinsurgents take to control populations only deepens the understanding of the relationship between populations and insurgents.

### Population Control in COIN

COIN is defined as those “military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency.”<sup>90</sup> A rather simple definition, but COIN is no simple task. To begin with, counterinsurgents are usually the last ones to know they are involved in a conflict.<sup>91</sup> Insurgents are able to take whatever time necessary to build up their strength and begin mobilizing.

Counterinsurgents are largely in the dark until the insurgents feel they are strong enough to announce their presence. Even after fog of war lifts, insurgents still own the initiative in the opening stages of the conflict.<sup>92</sup>

Counterinsurgents cannot simply use the same tactics employed by insurgents.<sup>93</sup> Though they are both involved in a competition for the people, the two have different goals and means, and the population holds them to different levels of accountability. Nor can counterinsurgents rely upon conventional warfare strategies and tactics of taking land and destroying enemy forces.<sup>94</sup> Whereas insurgents attempt to create instability and decrease the legitimacy of the government, counterinsurgents must try to achieve “the permanent isolation of the insurgent from the population, isolation not enforced upon the

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<sup>90</sup> (Department of Defense, 2006, p. 13)

<sup>91</sup> (Galula, 2006, pp. 43-44)

<sup>92</sup> (Department of Defense, 2006, p. 14)

<sup>93</sup> (Galula, 2006, pp. 51-52)

<sup>94</sup> (Galula, 2006, p. 50)



population but maintained by and with the population.”<sup>95</sup> Like insurgents, this goal requires counterinsurgents to employ many population control measures.

At the first sign that trouble may be brewing, but before the severity of the situation is clear, counterinsurgents often rely on typical coercive law enforcement tactics, including arrests and declaring certain political parties illegal.<sup>96</sup> Without clear indications that a full-blown insurgency is imminent, governments, especially democratic ones, have little justification for measures above and beyond normal law enforcement. Once the insurgency presents itself as dangerous, the range of population control measures available to counterinsurgents increases considerably.

Recall that the counterinsurgent’s goal is create space between insurgents and the population; to isolate the insurgents physically, militarily, politically, and emotionally. In the opening salvos of a COIN campaign, while the insurgents still possess the initiative and before the population can be won over politically, this isolation is most easily enforced through physical controls over the population and their movements. Forced relocation into camps is perhaps the most dramatic such measure of control, the purpose of which is to move populations, especially highly dispersed populations, at risk for supporting insurgents into a concentrated area where their movements can be watched and limited. Lesser measures have included erecting walls or barriers around populations, establishing curfews to limit movements, and using economic blockades to limit the population’s access to certain goods and materials. Stationing troops within population

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<sup>95</sup> (Galula, 2006, p. 54)

<sup>96</sup> (Galula, 2006, pp. 44-45)

centers, especially an indigenous home guard familiar with the people and customs, can also be an effective tool for maintaining control of the people.

An important, if not obvious, precursor to effectively controlling populations is to know as much information as possible about the makeup and habits of the population one is supposed to control. In order to know who belongs in certain areas and whose presence should raise red flags, Galula stressed the importance of taking a census of and issuing ID cards to the population as soon as possible.<sup>97</sup> Modern day technology has added the use of biometric information to a counterinsurgent's toolbox. Counterinsurgents can use fingerprints, iris scans, and facial recognition technology to ensure that people are who they claim and to track their movements.<sup>98</sup> U.S. COIN adviser David Kilcullen suggests that military officers find a political-cultural adviser in tune with local politics to assist in quickly diagnosing what it is that motivates the local population.<sup>99</sup>

Like insurgents, counterinsurgents have persuasive means at their disposal as well, often taking the form of nation building. Kilcullen goes so far as to refer to counterinsurgency as "armed social work."<sup>100</sup> In particular, bureaucratic and administrative reforms assist in population control, by increasing the governance capacity of the host nation and making them more amenable to popular support.<sup>101</sup> Such projects seek to raise the costs of defection to the insurgents' side, therefore compelling the people to continue supporting the counterinsurgents. A further incentive for

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<sup>97</sup> (Galula, 2006, p. 82)

<sup>98</sup> (Shachtman, 2010)

<sup>99</sup> (Kilcullen, Counterinsurgency, 2010, pp. 31-33)

<sup>100</sup> (Kilcullen, Counterinsurgency, 2010, p. 43)

<sup>101</sup> (Olsen, 2010)

counterinsurgents to engage in nation building is that it gives them a chance to reshape the politics and administrative structure of a country or locale in such a manner as to displace the insurgents.<sup>102</sup>

Broadly speaking, counterinsurgents can also pursue a strategy of disaggregation to separate the insurgents and the population, as suggested by Kilcullen.<sup>103</sup> Kilcullen believes that counterinsurgents often mistakenly treat insurgents and populations living in the vicinity of insurgents as one entity. Doing so counterproductively encourages cooperation between the two groups, when counterinsurgents should instead be seeking to encourage cleavages. If a population has no preference towards the insurgents, treating them as rebels could push them into the insurgent camp. Even with populations that do favor the insurgents, a policy of disaggregation can be useful in weeding out the moderates from the hard-liners.

Though this paper focuses on insurgent use of population control measures, discussing counterinsurgent efforts to control populations is necessary to maximize the analytical benefits of the case studies found later in this paper. In the end, the goal for both insurgents and counterinsurgents is to win over the population's hearts minds<sup>104</sup> and they share a need to establish control. Understanding both sides of the competition for the

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<sup>102</sup> (Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, 2010, pp. 43-44)

<sup>103</sup> (Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*, 2009)

<sup>104</sup> Contrary to its colloquial usage, a hearts and minds campaign is not concerned with getting the population to like the counterinsurgents. Rather, "hearts" is defined as "persuading people that their best interest are served by COIN success" and winning over their "minds" means convincing the population "that the force can protect them and that resisting it is pointless." In both cases, "calculated self-interest, not emotion, is what counts." (Department of Defense, 2006, p. 191)

population jointly adds to the understanding of each singularly. With this understanding in hand, all that is needed before proceeding to the case studies is a discussion justifying the methodological approach and case study selection of this paper.

### CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

The research method of choice for this paper is case study analysis. There are a number of methodologies with which to study war and conflict, each with its advantages and disadvantages. While current trends in political science may favor quantitative analysis, the depth and richness of explanation offered by using qualitative case study analysis cannot be matched when exploring the relationships between actors in an insurgency.

Insurgencies in general are a particularly difficult form of conflict for quantification. The U.S. military is currently at odds with itself over exactly what metrics they should use to gauge progress in counterinsurgency. Many variables are not easily quantifiable; the subject of this paper, methods of insurgent population control, included. How for instance, should one go about assigning numeric values to a particular insurgent group's ability to control the population that takes into account the many different ways in which control can be exerted over a population in a way that is not simply assigning numbers to a qualitative judgment?

Even if one is able to quantify the variables of interest in ways that accurately reflect their relationships, finding data to plug into the formulas is complicated. The nature of insurgencies makes this so. Many insurgencies occur in underdeveloped parts of the world, lacking in the strong bureaucracy needed to produce reliable population data. For obvious reasons, insurgents tend not to be forthcoming with detailed explanations of their use of population control. Even identifying insurgents from the population at large

can be fraught with difficulty, worsening the likelihood of being able to keep track of their actions with the precision necessary for quantitative analysis.

This is not to say using quantitative methodologies to analyze insurgencies is impossible, or even that it is never preferable. Given the right variables and data, it can be an effective tool to further understanding of complicated topics such as insurgencies. An appropriately constructed model allows for the inclusion of data from many more insurgencies than could be covered qualitatively. Rather, the point is that quantifying the variables of interest to this paper is exceedingly difficult, the data hard to come by, and, when all is said and done, the final analysis using quantitative methodologies may not be as helpful as one provided by qualitative methodologies. Attempting to analyze these variables through quantitative methods would require the use of a model that is either too complicated to be useful, or too simple to accurately reflect the realities of an insurgency.

On the other hand, case studies can be a very useful method for exploring the means of control that insurgents use on populations. It can be analytically beneficial to identify a few key insurgent organizations and draw from their experiences general lessons for other insurgents. Insurgencies are very fluid and complex environments. Case studies allow for the type of contextual, nuanced analysis that quantification may miss. The depth of knowledge necessary for qualitative analysis increases the validity of inferences, while also placing researchers in a perfect position to recognize other potentially interesting variables.<sup>105</sup> One will not get the same breadth possible with

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<sup>105</sup> (Brady, Collier, & Seawright, 2004, pp. 12-13)

quantitative analysis, but the depth of analysis can be a worthwhile trade-off.<sup>106</sup> The comparative approach is ideal for focusing on the most relevant data and isolating what effect different combinations of independent variables have the dependent variable.<sup>107</sup> By selecting cases with similar independent variables and different dependent variables, it is possible to see how variation in the independent variables results in changes to the dependent variable. For population control, this means focusing on insurgents' ability to exert control and other factors of the conflict as independent variables, and their corresponding impact on the dependent variable, or the conflict's outcome. This approach is ideal for pinpointing what has historically succeeded and failed, and what lessons current and future insurgents should draw from those successes and failures.

The roles population control plays in insurgencies are too complicated for comparison to any single conflict. Accordingly, this paper draws lessons from three case studies. In selecting case studies, it was crucial not to only select cases in which insurgencies had succeeded and then analyze their application of population control. Such an attempt leaves out an entire class of insurgencies. Conclusions made about the relationship between population control and insurgent success could be non-existent or reversed in a sample that includes failed insurgencies.<sup>108</sup> In order to avoid selection bias possibly contaminating this paper's conclusions, both successful and failed insurgencies were used as case studies.

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<sup>106</sup> (Brady, Collier, & Seawright, 2004, p. 12)

<sup>107</sup> (Ragin, 1989, pp. 14-15)

<sup>108</sup> (Geddes, 1990)

To capture the variation in outcome that differences in population control can create, selected cases include both successful and failed attempts at control. Analyzing case studies in which insurgents were successful thanks to sound employment of population control measures only uncovers part of the whole story. After all, failure can be a greater teacher than success. In order to uncover the widest variety of lessons on population control possible, it was also necessary to look into insurgencies in which insurgents failed to exert control over the population and observe what effects it had on the conflict's outcome. As such, while one case study analyzes an insurgent organization which thrived on successful implementation of population control measures, the remaining two case studies analyze organizations which were unsuccessful at controlling their respective civilian populations.

There are of course many other factors besides population control that can play a role in an insurgent organization's overall success or failure. Geography, outside support, international geopolitics, or sloppy tactics can all swing the outcome of a conflict. However, because the argument of this paper is that population control is, at a minimum, one of the more important factors in determining success or failure, and thus this paper seeks to highlight lessons specifically on effective population control measures, case studies were sought in which population control, or the lack thereof, played a decisive role and from which important lessons regarding population control may be drawn.

The first organization selected as a case study is the MRLA: a Malayan, communist, anti-colonial organization known primarily for their role in the Malayan Emergency. The MRLA provides an example of an organization which tried to control



the population, but was unable to capitalize on a handful of early successes and ultimately lost the competition for controlling the population overwhelmingly to COIN forces. As will be shown in the case study, even though the MRLA employed a traditional Maoist strategy calling for use of population control measures, they were outmaneuvered at every turn by COIN forces and failed to effectively exert control over the Malayan population.

Though the MRLA was selected because of the role population control played in the outcome of the Malayan Emergency, the vast similarities between the MRLA, the Afghan Taliban, and their respective environments, make the selection particularly relevant. Among other similarities, both organizations operated in countries where approximately four/fifths of the population lived in rural areas.<sup>109</sup> The terrains of both Malaya and Afghanistan are a similar mix of plains and mountains.<sup>110</sup> The two countries also had similarly diverse ethnic populations with low literacy rates of 31% and 36% for Malaya and Afghanistan respectively.<sup>111</sup> The economies of both countries were dominated by agriculture, with industry and services contributing towards only a tiny fraction of the labor force.<sup>112</sup> Finally, the MRLA and the Taliban both had to contend with their respective indigenous governments as well as the counterinsurgent forces of a major international power.

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<sup>109</sup> (United Nations, 2002, p. 121); See also, (Hirschman, *Ethnic and Social Stratification in Pennisular Malaya*, 1975, p. 13)

<sup>110</sup> (CIA, 2011)

<sup>111</sup> (Hirschman, *Ethnic and Social Stratification in Pennisular Malaya*, 1975, p. 9); See also, (CIA, 2002); (United Nations, 1955, p. 458)

<sup>112</sup> (CIA, 2002); See also, (United Nations, 1955, pp. 538-540)

The second case study organization, AQI, does not share as much in common with the Taliban; however, its lessons on population control are just as valuable. AQI operated in the chaos that followed the U.S. occupation of Iraq in 2003, and like the MRLA, failed at exerting control over the population. Unlike the MRLA, whose failure could be largely attributed to an extremely sound COIN strategy, AQI's failure was more directly a result of their own ineptitude. Whereas the MRLA lost the competition for the population because of COIN actions, AQI lost because of their own actions. The organization caused a large amount of death and destruction, but their indiscriminate attacks alienated all sides and led to their increasing irrelevance.

Finally, Hezbollah is a case study organization selected for their extreme prowess in developing and employing population control measures. Hezbollah has been so successful in fact, that they were able to claim victory over the most powerful regional military force, and have grown from a band of guerilla fighters to one of the most important political groups in Lebanon. Hezbollah's extensive use of population control measures has allowed the organization to survive and thrive over the years.

Each of the organizations chosen as a case study is somewhat of a hyperbole. Though population control is important in any insurgency, the role in which it plays in these three particular insurgencies is towards the extreme. This is intentional. Selecting such clear-cut cases is ideal for isolating factors affecting the employment of population control measures, understanding the role such measures play in insurgencies, and for drawing lessons most relevant to population control.

In settling on the three case studies insurgencies, it was necessary to pass on a number of other organizations. The culling process began by excluding from consideration any insurgents from the pre-modern period; those operating during or prior to World War Two. The need for population control applied to pre-modern insurgencies all the same as to contemporary ones. Hence the need to cover theories developed prior to the era of modern warfare in the literature review. For the purpose of comparison to the Afghan Taliban however, the differences in capabilities is too glaring to ignore. Advances in communications, military technology, and the ways in which insurgents can implement population control measures, make drawing lessons from pre-modern insurgents inadvisable. Restricting the case studies to insurgencies from the modern era only allows not only for more lessons to be drawn out, but ensures those lessons are of greater relevance.

Of all the modern era insurgencies, arguments could be made for many of their inclusion, as most would have brought something of value to this paper. Yet, for subsequently outlined reasons, when interested in understanding the effects of different approaches to population control by insurgent organizations, none provide as much analytic value as the MRLA, AQI, and Hezbollah. The various insurgent organizations which warranted serious consideration and for which compelling arguments for inclusion could be made, but which were ultimately not selected, are: Viet Cong (VC); National Liberation Front – Algeria (FLN); the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE); the Irish Republican Army (IRA); and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia

(FARC). Additionally, various groups from insurgencies in Kashmir and the Occupied Palestinian Territories were considered, as were anti-Soviet Afghan Mujahedeen fighters.

The VC, Afghan Mujahedeen, and a number of Kashmiri insurgent organizations each received substantial support from, and had close ties with, an outside source, to the point where their very need to rely on population control changed. Certainly these three groups still employed some population control measures, but the level of third party coordination resulted in population control being pursued almost as an afterthought or merely as a complement to other strategies. Each enjoyed sanctuary in neighboring territory, freeing them from the need to operate solely amongst the people: the VC in Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam; and the Afghan Mujahedeen and Kashmiri groups finding sanctuary within Pakistan's borders. The VC even operated in conjunction with the North Vietnamese Army (NVA), at times appearing to be the guerrilla arm of the NVA rather than a fully independent insurgent organization. Similarly, the Afghan Mujahedeen's independence from the wishes of Pakistan and America was questionable, and Kashmiri groups often seem like mere extensions of Pakistan's ISI.

Contrast this with Hezbollah, which, though they too received substantial support from an outside entity, made population control the main thrust of their strategy for victory, followed their own plans, and set their own goals. AQI as well received a heavy amount of foreign backing, and the group's membership was dominated by non-Iraqis, yet like Hezbollah, they set their own agenda. If AQI could be said to be a puppet, they would be AQ's puppet, who itself is waging what some consider a global insurgency. This leaves the group distinct from the VC, Mujahedeen, and Kashmiri groups which

often seemed to be pawns in the toolbox of nations, and were far more servile to their benefactors than Hezbollah to its. The VC, Afghan Mujahedeen, and Kashmiri groups can offer a number of lessons for insurgents on how to pursue victory using means other than population control, such as limiting the need to control the population by finding outside support or sanctuary, but cannot match the depth or breadth of population control lessons that can be gleamed from studying the MRLA, AQI, and Hezbollah.

Also notable for Kashmiri groups is the seemingly built in control over the Kashmiri population that exists. It is hard to imagine groups needing to put too much effort to mobilize the population against Indian rule; Kashmiris are strongly predisposed against their inclusion into the Indian state. This argument can only be taken so far. After all, Kashmiri insurgents still have to compete for the population against each other, have to counter Indian coercion, and, with a few wrong moves, could easily alienate moderate Kashmiris. This line of reasoning might be better suited for Palestinian organizations. They too must still employ population control measures. But because their constituent population is unlikely to begin support Israel any time soon, Palestinian groups do not have to employ the full range of population control measures available to them, thus they would be a poor selection for case study analysis. Considering population control as a competition between insurgents and counterinsurgents, Kashmiri and Palestinian groups have the competition handicapped in their favor. Again, there are lessons to be had here for insurgents regarding the desirability of operating amidst populations with favorable dispositions. However, those same lessons and more can be learned by analyzing organizations which do not operate solely among welcoming populations. In order to

draw the broadest lessons on population control as possible, and lessons more applicable to the Taliban, which itself operates amidst a population, segments of which are naturally friendly while other segments are not so favorably predisposed, this paper passed over Kashmiri and Palestinian groups in favor of insurgent organizations which operated amidst an attitudinally diverse population.

The FARC too offers valuable lessons to students of insurgencies, though, like a number of other organizations unsuitable for the case studies, too few of the lessons are focused specifically on population control. Though the FARC's beginnings were as an insurgent organization with political oriented motivations, at some point they transitioned into a group more closely resembling a criminal organization than insurgents. The FARC still show some insurgent characteristics, just as groups like the Taliban or Hezbollah exhibit some criminal characteristics, but the FARC are too far on the criminal side of the spectrum. A career could be made analyzing the FARC's reliance on criminality and drug running. That reliance however, has come at the expense of the FARC employing a strategy centered on population control, thus making them a poor case study selection for the purposes of this paper.

It is the case that several of the organizations considered for but not selected as case studies offered a number of lessons for insurgents, not enough of which are focused on population control. It is the opposite for the LTTE, who provide a number of lessons on population control, but not enough of them for insurgents. In many ways, the LTTE operated as a de facto conventional military force. They had their own navy and air force, and were in complete control of half of Sri Lanka for the duration of their conflict. Rather

than being asymmetric to Sri Lankan forces, the two sides had roughly symmetric capabilities. In the end, the Sri Lankan civil war was decided not by population control, but by one army defeating another in open battle. The LTTE can certainly offer some lessons for insurgents on successfully controlling populations, but the unique nature of their insurgency puts too much of a limit on the breadth and applicability of those lessons.

The final two organizations seriously considered for inclusion as case studies, the IRA and the FLN, could easily be described as first runners up to AQI, the MRLA, and Hezbollah. In particular, the IRA and the FLN were in competition with Hezbollah to represent insurgency organizations successful in their employment of population control measures. Like Hezbollah, both these organizations fought long insurgency campaigns, at least in part against a perceived foreign power, which resulted in their some form of inclusion into the governing body politic. For the IRA though, their eventual success stemmed from focusing on a political solution, at the expense of economic and informational elements of control, and after a complete renunciation of military control measures. This makes the IRA a poor substitute for Hezbollah, for whom victory was possible thanks to their successful employment of the full spectrum of population control measures. Similarly, though the FLN employed numerous population control measures, their eventual success in the Algerian war of independence rested as much on French political instability as on the FLN's ability to control the Algerian population. Plus, whereas the FLN operated among a largely homogenous population with widespread antipathy towards the French colonial government, Hezbollah operates amongst an

extremely diverse population ethnically, religiously, and politically. That diversity results in Hezbollah having to employ a much wider variety of population control measures, allowing a greater number of lessons to be gleaned from their study, especially when compared to the Taliban, who operate in a similarly diverse environment.



## CHAPTER 4 - UNSUCCESSFUL POPULATION CONTROL

### The MRLA

The MRLA arose out of the ashes of World War Two anti-Japanese resistance organizations, the most important of which was the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Association (MPAJA). The MPAJA was a communist resistance organization whose membership and supporters in the hundreds of thousands consisted mostly of rural, ethnically Chinese, Malaysians.<sup>113</sup> The Japanese generally took a harsh approach to dealing with the Chinese population of Malaya, greatly curtailing their freedoms of movement and property, and killing many thousands of them.<sup>114</sup> Japanese behavior towards ethnic Malays on the other hand, was amicable, as Malays collaborated with the Japanese and even took part in anti-Chinese violence.<sup>115</sup>

The occupation worsened ethnic relations between Malays and Chinese. Such relations had been troubled throughout the colonial period, with Chinese resentment towards Malay's special privileges growing, but it was the chaos of the war which introduced violence into the equation.<sup>116</sup> Though nominally MPAJA guerrillas were fighting against the Japanese, in reality most of their actions were taken against Malay collaborators, tribal elders, police officers, and government officials.<sup>117</sup>

The end of Japanese occupation in August of 1945 left a power vacuum in Malaya which the MPAJA desperately tried to fill, as did the returning British forces. The British

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<sup>113</sup> (Bauer, 1947, pp. 507-512)

<sup>114</sup> (Kheng, 2002, pp. 101-104)

<sup>115</sup> (Kheng, 2002, p. 105)

<sup>116</sup> (Andaya & Andaya, 2001, pp. 175-185); See also, (Bauer, 1947, pp. 505-506); (Mauzy, 1993, p. 108)

<sup>117</sup> (Mauzy, 1993, pp. 105-106)

attempted to disarm the MPAJA, but were unsuccessful in dismantling the group's support structure or chain of command.<sup>118</sup> Taking advantage of the discordant atmosphere, former elements of the MPAJA reconstituted the organization as the Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA), and in June of 1948, killed a number of European farmers and their workers.<sup>119</sup>

At first, the MRLA had hoped for a mass uprising against the British and the Government of Malaya. The government's hold on power was tenuous thanks to a still-reeling economy, weak security forces, and incomplete administrative structures.<sup>120</sup> Throughout 1947 and 1948, the MRLA further added to the chaos by organizing strikes and sabotaging mines and factories, in the hopes of destroying the government's credibility as an effective ruling authority.<sup>121</sup> The MRLA also tried to frighten the population into supporting them, with a campaign of arson, bombings, and assassination directed against political opponents.<sup>122</sup> The goal was to destroy perception that the government could provide security for the people, and to convince Malaysians that an MRLA victory was inevitable. When none of these actions sparked a mass uprising, in 1949 the MRLA retreated into the jungles to wage a classical Maoist insurgency.<sup>123</sup>

The MRLA's new strategy called for the creation of rural strongholds, within which the organization could mass support and grow in strength, and which would be

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<sup>118</sup> (Nagl, 2005, p. 62)

<sup>119</sup> (Nagl, 2005, p. 63)

<sup>120</sup> (Komer, 1972, p. 6)

<sup>121</sup> (Komer, 1972, pp. 6-10)

<sup>122</sup> (Komer, 1972, pp. 6-10); See also, (Asprey, 1994, pp. 566-567)

<sup>123</sup> (Komer, 1972, p. 9)

slowly expanded across the country.<sup>124</sup> To create liberated strongholds, the MRLA continued their terrorist attacks, this time aimed at local government structures.<sup>125</sup> After seizing control of an area, the MRLA quickly put into place their administrative structures, collected taxes, and stockpiled weapons.<sup>126</sup>

MRLA strongholds usually sprang up in areas with a high population of ethnically Chinese squatters, the main source of the MRLA's support. In particular, much of their support came from the Min Yuen, a cell based organization operating out of squatter villages.<sup>127</sup> The Min Yuen provided supplies, information, and recruits to the MRLA, sometimes through the use of coercion and extortion.<sup>128</sup> Some of the difficulties later encountered by the MRLA in exerting control over the population stemmed from a failure to gain traction beyond the rural Chinese population.

Contrary to Galula's advice regarding insurgent causes, the MRLA selected a cause unable to garner wide appeal. Ethnic Malays were uninterested in supporting a Chinese dominated movement and risking their long standing position of strength in Malayan politics. Further, the MRLA was fighting a war of independence from the U.K. The U.K. co-opted the goal of independence by offering it to Malaya, conditional on there being peace between the different ethnic groups.<sup>129</sup> Suddenly, those segments of the population on the fence about whether to support the MRLA had even less reason to do

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<sup>124</sup> (Komer, 1972, p. 9)

<sup>125</sup> (Komer, 1972, p. 9)

<sup>126</sup> (Komer, 1972, p. 18)

<sup>127</sup> (Komer, 1972, p. 8)

<sup>128</sup> (Komer, 1972, p. 8)

<sup>129</sup> (Mauzy, 1993, p. 108)

so; they could fight and maybe earn their independence, or do nothing and definitely get it.

The British further deteriorated the MRLA's ability to control the population with a carefully constructed strategy to establish their own control. At first, the British were ill-prepared to wage a counterinsurgency. They used large battalion sweeps better suited for the battlefields of Europe, and acted repressively towards any potential communist sympathizers.<sup>130</sup> As the conflict developed however, controlling the population became of paramount importance. Under the Briggs Plan, named for General Harold Briggs, the British explicitly attempted to break the ability of the MLRA to exert control over Malaysians. The first step in the Briggs plan was to resettle Chinese squatters, the biggest source of support for the MRLA, into concentration camps, termed "New Villages".<sup>131</sup> Home guard and constabulary forces were raised to watch over the new villages. With the people's freedoms of movement curtailed, they were no longer able to provide supplies, sanctuary, and intelligence to the MRLA.<sup>132</sup> The British instituted a food control program, whereby they rationed food to new village inhabitants, cooking rice and puncturing cans of perishable foods so the food would go bad before it could be smuggled to MLRA guerrillas.<sup>133</sup> To better track the population, the counterinsurgents took a census and issued ID cards to all citizens, which were then monitored frequently at police checkpoints.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> (Stubbs, 2008, pp. 115-116); See also, (Nagl, 2005, pp. 66-67)

<sup>131</sup> (Asprey, 1994, p. 568)

<sup>132</sup> (Asprey, 1994, pp. 568-573)

<sup>133</sup> (Nagl, 2005, p. 98); See also, (Stubbs, 2008, p. 123)

<sup>134</sup> (Komer, 1972, pp. 34-35)

Aside from limiting the MRLA's ability to physically control the population, new villages also curtailed their efforts at persuading the population. The government of Malaya granted formerly landless squatters deeds to tracts of land for living and farming.<sup>135</sup> COIN forces undertook a number of assistance programs in areas of education, agriculture, and employment.<sup>136</sup> Such programs were designed to convince the people that a better future laid in siding with the government over the MRLA, and that the government was capable of providing effective security.<sup>137</sup>

After a relatively short time, efforts to prevent the MRLA from being able to exert control over Malaysians began to have a demonstrative effect. The MRLA's physical isolation from the population transformed into an emotional and political isolation, thanks to the British use of persuasive control measures. Unable to effectively exert any control over the people, the MRLA could not replenish supplies or manpower, nor were they able to find reliable sanctuary. As a result, they regressed from fielding units consisting of thousands of fighters, to fielding units of a dozen fighters.<sup>138</sup>

Hungry, lacking manpower, and stuck hiding in the jungles, the insurgents were forced to attack under disadvantageous circumstances. Where Mao advised avoiding attacks on stronger enemies and striking when the guerrillas are strong and the enemy weary, the MRLA had to fight when they were weary and the enemy strong. Being cut off from the population, head-on strikes against the counterinsurgents were the only means the MRLA had to gain supplies. Without even a trickle of information from the

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<sup>135</sup> (Pauker, 1962, p. 8)

<sup>136</sup> (Nagl, 2005, p. 75)

<sup>137</sup> (Asprey, 1994, pp. 569-571)

<sup>138</sup> (Asprey, 1994, p. 569)

population, the attacks rarely succeeded. Predictably, MRLA casualties increased, their strength decreased, and attacks dropped from a height of 450-500 a month from July 1950-December 1951, to 100 incidents per month by early 1953.<sup>139</sup> The counterinsurgents' ability to control the population and effectively separate them from the MRLA directly contributed to the group's increasing irrelevance and eventual demise.

### AQI<sup>140</sup>

If one had to pin a starting date to AQI (officially the Base Organization of Jihad in the Land of the Two Rivers), October of 2004 would be a plausible place to begin. That was when Jordanian jihadist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi swore the fealty of his previous jihad organization, the Unity and Jihad Group, to Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda.<sup>141</sup> AQI sought to turn Iraq into an Islamic state which could then be used as a staging ground for jihad in the entire region.<sup>142</sup> In part because of their regional aspirations, AQI's attacks were not confined solely to Iraq. The organization also launched a handful of attacks in Zarqawi's homeland of Jordan, though, as their name implies, their main area of operations was Iraq.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> (Komer, 1972, p. 10)

<sup>140</sup> AQI is known by a number of different names. For the purposes of this paper, the following organization names are broadly considered as synonymous with AQI: the Unity and Jihad Group; the Monotheism and Jihad Group; the Base Organization of Jihad in the Land of the Two Rivers; the Mujahedeen Shura Council; and the Islamic State of Iraq.

<sup>141</sup> (NCTC, 2011)

<sup>142</sup> (NCTC, 2011)

<sup>143</sup> (NCTC, 2011)

Iraq's political situation was a mess after the American led invasion in 2003. The minority Sunnis had dominated Iraq in the form of the ruling Ba'athist party since 1968. After the invasion, the Coalition Provisional Authority instituted a process of de-Ba'athification, essentially putting millions of Iraqi men out of work, many of them armed and with military training. The de-Ba'athification process was total, affecting the ideological purists as well as those who were only members of the party in order to secure employment. Relations between the Shi'ite and Sunni communities, already tense from decades of Shi'ite subjugation at the hands of the Sunnis, only grew worse as Sunnis saw their former power stripped and handed to the majority Shi'a. The CPA further complicated the situation by disbanding the Iraqi army, flooding the streets with armed men holding grudges against the new powers that be.

To reach their goal of establishing an Iraqi Islamic state, AQI first attempted to first provoke a civil war between Iraq's Sunnis and Shi'a. AQI believed that attacks on Shi'ite communities might provoke retaliatory attacks on Sunni communities, which in turn would unleash a cycle of ever increasing sectarian violence.<sup>144</sup> Their most notable attempt at instigating civil war, which in hindsight likely succeeded, was AQI's February 2006 attack on the al-Askari Mosque in Samarra, a sacred Shi'ite shrine. The destruction of the golden domed mosque set off a wave of sectarian violence, much as AQI desired. Shi'ite militias killed thousands of Sunnis and drove tens of thousands more out of their homes, while Sunnis responded with increased terrorist attacks against Shi'ite targets.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> (Malkasian, 2008, p. 242)

<sup>145</sup> (Malkasian, 2008, pp. 255-256); See also, (Fearon, 2007, p. 5)

The popular conception of AQI is that, compared to other insurgency outfits, they heavily favored coercive measures of control. There is some evidence to back up this perception. AQI often used highly indiscriminate terrorist attacks, such as car or suicide bombings, to influence Iraqis. AQI was also known to have a penchant for kidnapping. Not only did many of the kidnappings end in beheadings or some other grisly death for the kidnapped, but AQI would record the executions for public distribution.<sup>146</sup> In part because many of AQI's cadre was foreign, and the groups' ties to Iraqis were limited, they relied heavily on theft and extortion to maintain their coffers, to the tune of millions of dollars per month.<sup>147</sup>

A closer look reveals there was more to AQI's population control tactics than blind violence. In areas where they had relatively free reign, such as Fallujah or Diyala province, AQI instituted Sharia court systems.<sup>148</sup> These courts pronounced judgments on those who violated AQI's fundamentalist ideas of Islamic law or cooperated with the government or coalition forces, even going so far as to promise "excruciating pain" for any collaborators.<sup>149</sup> In fact, AQI's bureaucracy was well developed and methodical, allowing the group to keep detailed records on tribal leaders and on developments within key villages<sup>150</sup>

Other means of influencing the population employed by AQI include those economic and religious. The organization kept a steady stream of money flowing to

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<sup>146</sup> (Ware, 2008)

<sup>147</sup> (Williams, 2009, pp. 230-234)

<sup>148</sup> (Devenny, 2009)

<sup>149</sup> (Islamic State of Iraq)

<sup>150</sup> (al-Qaeda in Iraq)



Sunnis disaffected by their post-Saddam loss of power in order to shore up their support.<sup>151</sup> The extensive use of communiqués inciting Iraqis to join the struggle out of their duty as Muslims was another favorite approach.<sup>152</sup> Notably absent was the use of political commissars, or their religious equivalent, living amongst the population, as seen in other protracted insurgencies, which could have provided a more personalized delivery system for propaganda. That lack may stem more from AQI's having had no real geographic stronghold or their being heavily comprised of foreigners without any deep ties amongst the population, rather than a disregard for the utility of such measures, but was present nonetheless.

Unlike the MRLA, which was bested by COIN forces in the competition for controlling the population, AQI's defeat was largely due to their own errors. To be sure, Iraqi and coalition forces employed many population control measures, including: walling off population centers; distributing ID cards; manning traffic checkpoints; and compiling an extensive biometric database. However, the decisive factor for AQI was their clumsy implementation of population control, rather than any overwhelming coalition success.

Chief among AQI's problems was the heavy foreign make-up of the organization. The difficulties in employing non-coercive measures of control are compounded when those trying to exert control are not tapped into local social networks or are seen as societal outsiders. It also makes it more difficult for the organization to raise money and secure sufficient supplies. Locals unhappy with insurgents levying taxes have little reason

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<sup>151</sup> (Bahney & McPherson, 2008)

<sup>152</sup> (The al-Qa'ida Organization in the Land of the Two Rivers, 2007)

not to report the foreigners to the government.<sup>153</sup> This was particularly problematic in the heavily Sunni areas in which AQI operated. West Point's Combating Terrorism Center found that the homogeneity of places like Anbar province meant that there was "no convenient group of 'others' that (they) can tax without alienating its supporters."<sup>154</sup> AQI was aware of the image problems caused by being an organization dominated by foreign jihadists. Towards the later stages of their struggle, circa 2007, the group tried to recruit increasingly large numbers of Iraqis, even going so far as to create a fake emir by the name of al-Baghdadi to give the group nationalist credibility.<sup>155</sup> It was too little, too late, and as a result, AQI had to continue relying on coercive sources of support outside of the population, such as theft, smuggling, and kidnapping.

AQI's reliance on theft, smuggling, and kidnapping, along with their penchant for indiscriminate violence ended up being a massive liability. Ayman al-Zawahiri, AQ's second in command, sent al-Zarqawi a lengthy message of caution in 2005, warning al-Zarqawi that the hostage beheadings and mass violence were becoming excessive and putting in peril AQI's overall objectives.<sup>156</sup> The warning apparently fell on deaf ears, as AQI's violence continued unabated. As the violence dragged on, more and more Sunnis, AQI's core constituency, turned against the group. More and better intelligence on AQI began flowing to coalition forces, eventually resulting in the 2006 death of al-Zarqawi.

Throughout the beginning of the insurgency, Sunnis viewed the coalition as the bigger threat, and saw groups like AQI as potential partners; an enemy of my enemy

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<sup>153</sup> (Bergen, Felter, Brown, & Shapiro, 2008, pp. 69-70)

<sup>154</sup> (Bergen, Felter, Brown, & Shapiro, 2008, pp. 69-70)

<sup>155</sup> (Kohlmann, 2007, pp. 6-7)

<sup>156</sup> (al-Zawahiri, 2005)

relationship.<sup>157</sup> AQI's growing influence, coupled with increasing American eagerness to leave Iraq, caused Sunni tribesman to eventually reevaluate their relationship with the group. AQI's announcement in October of 2006 that the Anbar province was part of the Islamic State of Iraq was the straw that broke the camel's back. Rather than simply resisting the Americans, AQI was now in direct competition with the Sunni tribes for political power. Predictably, many Sunni tribes began actively turning against AQI, in what became known as the "Awakening" or the "Sons of Iraq" movement.<sup>158</sup> By 2007, hundreds of thousands of Sunnis had joined together to fight back against violent foreign jihadists like AQI. Contrary to the simplified story often told in the media, the Awakening movement was not the result of the U.S. simply buying off the tribes; the process was in motion long before American money came into the picture, and was a result of AQI's poor political calculations.

Already deeply opposed to foreigners displacing traditional tribal power structures, Iraqis also became fed up with the careless and extremely violent tactics of AQI, especially their penchant for indiscriminate bombings. As what control they had over the population dwindled, so too did AQI's ability to replenish their strength and go on the offensive.<sup>159</sup> The tribal alliances that came about because of the Awakening movement made it nearly impossible for AQI to recruit locals or operate effectively.<sup>160</sup> Tribal societies are fairly close knit communities in which it is easy to spot outsiders. By

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<sup>157</sup> (McCary, 2009)

<sup>158</sup> (Ware, 2008)

<sup>159</sup> (Ricks & DeYoung, 2007)

<sup>160</sup> (McCary, 2009)

losing control of and alienating the tribes, AQI turned previously friendly provinces into hostile territory.

The degradation of AQI as an effective organization was not a consequence of their merely failing to effectively control the Iraqi population; it stemmed from AQI actively creating distance between themselves and the population with their clumsy and brutish attempts to exert control. When the distance between AQI and the Iraqi population became so great that a large portion of their core constituency rose up against them, there was little left for AQI to do. They had lost any hope of controlling the population.

## CHAPTER 5 - SUCCESSFUL POPULATION CONTROL

## Hezbollah

Hezbollah has steadily become one of the more successful insurgent organizations in recent history. From their starting point as a nationalist, anti-Israeli resistance organization, they have grown into a comprehensive political organism. Hezbollah's military branch still engages in guerrilla type actions, but also has the capability to fight conventionally, as they did at times in their brief 2006 conflict with Israel. Hezbollah also exists as a fully functioning political party, contesting elections and holding a number of seats in parliament, and even runs their own social services network.

In fact, Hezbollah's success now calls into question whether they should even be labeled as insurgents. In a monograph analyzing their 2006 conflict with Israel, Stephen Biddle and Jeffrey Friedman find that Hezbollah falls somewhere in between guerrilla and conventional, practicing something closely approximating Frank Hoffman's conception of hybrid war.<sup>161</sup> However, choosing not to analyze Hezbollah because of their current ability to act conventionally ignores the very success that makes their analysis so worthwhile. Hezbollah started out much as any other insurgent organization does: weak and seeking to change the status quo. Their successes, many of which stem from their use of population control measures, have allowed them to grow into an organization able to conduct itself like a conventional military force and a comprehensive political entity. In this manner, they follow in the footsteps of traditional insurgent groups like the Chinese Communists, the VC in Vietnam, the FLN in Algeria, and others.

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<sup>161</sup> (Biddle & Friedman, 2008); See also, (Hoffman, 2007)

Hezbollah came to be in the aftermath of the 1982 Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon during the Lebanese civil war. The group is a self proclaimed resistance organization, heavily anti-Israeli, but has also conducted attacks against Western peacekeepers – notably the bombings of the Marine barracks and the U.S. embassy in Beirut. Though Hezbollah's original goal was the expulsion of Israeli forces from Lebanon, their social services and reconstruction work brought them support having nothing to do with their stance on Israel.<sup>162</sup> In the big picture, Hezbollah seeks to create an Islamic theocracy similar to that of Iran, and is committed to limiting western influence in Lebanon and seeking the destruction of the state of Israel.<sup>163</sup>

During the 1980s, Hezbollah's resistance to Israeli occupation included many IEDs and suicide bombings. Throughout this time, Hezbollah began consolidating its bases in southern Beirut, the Beqa'a Valley, and southern Lebanon, focusing on recruiting, spreading propaganda, training fighters, and creating storage depots.<sup>164</sup> Of their three strongholds, southern Lebanon was the area in which Hezbollah exerted the most effort in persuading the population to lend support; offering economic aid, donating food, providing medicine, etc.<sup>165</sup>

A major breakthrough for Hezbollah came in the form of 1989's Ta'if Accord, which ended the Lebanese Civil War. The agreement bolstered Hezbollah in two ways.<sup>166</sup> First, according to the terms of the accord, all Lebanese militias were ordered to disband,

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<sup>162</sup> (Flanigan & Abdel-Samad, 2009, pp. 126-128)

<sup>163</sup> (Israel Foreign Ministry Information Division, 1996)

<sup>164</sup> (Israel Foreign Ministry Information Division, 1996); See also, (Wege, 1994)

<sup>165</sup> (Israel Foreign Ministry Information Division, 1996)

<sup>166</sup> (Bazzi, 2009); See also, (Exum, 2006)

the lone exception being Hezbollah. Second, Syria gained a more prominent role in Lebanese politics. The net effect of wiping out Hezbollah's domestic competition while increasing the influence of one of their primary state sponsors helped Hezbollah to consolidate their power and expand their operations within Lebanon.

A demonstration of Hezbollah's continued expansion was their first foray into electoral politics in 1992, when they won eight seats in parliament.<sup>167</sup> From this point on, Hezbollah became a dominant feature in Lebanese politics, drawing much of their support from the traditionally disenfranchised Shi'a.<sup>168</sup> Lebanon's Shi'ite population, poorer than the average Lebanese and weaker politically and economically than their numbers might suggest, found themselves particularly attracted to Hezbollah's charity and development work.<sup>169</sup> Hezbollah has displayed an impressive ability to mobilize electoral support, continuously increasing their vote totals in successive elections. The political coalition headlined by Hezbollah won every seat in the south in 2005, and is currently an active and influential member of the ruling government coalition.<sup>170</sup>

Before they ever entered an election, Hezbollah grasped the importance of controlling the population, and placed a heavy emphasis on persuasive means of so doing. Hezbollah secured the support of Lebanon's Shi'ite population in large part

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<sup>167</sup> (Keyes, 2010); See also, (Norton, 1998)

<sup>168</sup> Shi'a in Lebanon constitute approximately 1/3 of the total population yet are constitutionally barred from the two highest government offices and are allotted only 21% of parliamentary seats (Gambill, 2006). The representation of various ethnic and religious groups in Lebanon is based on data from a 1932 census in which Christians outnumbered Muslims. Because the number of Christians has fallen over the years, they now receive a disproportionately high amount of political and economic power, much of which comes at the expense of the Shi'a (Hajjar, 2002, pp. 3-4)

<sup>169</sup> (Flanigan & Abdel-Samad, 2009, pp. 126-128)

<sup>170</sup> (Wiegand, 2009)

through the use of providing basic social services. Such support was essential to maintaining an effective resistance against Israel from the beginning of the occupation to the complete withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, and for supplanting the government's authority with that of Hezbollah. After the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, Hezbollah turned the south into their own mini-state of sorts, providing utilities like water, electricity, and trash removal to large numbers of Lebanese.<sup>171</sup> So impressive are their efforts to provide for the population's needs that at one point in the 2000s, Hezbollah was responsible for 45% of the water utilities in the Shi'ite heavy southern parts of Beirut.<sup>172</sup> Hezbollah has also earned a lot of support by being the first, and sometimes the only, organization able to respond when there are massive humanitarian crises in Lebanon, often related to the enduring conflicts there. A notable recent example occurred after the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict. Hezbollah's *Jihad El Binaa*, or Jihad Construction Foundation, did much of the reconstruction work on homes, businesses, and infrastructure damaged or destroyed in the conflict, while also providing stipends to those adversely affected.<sup>173</sup> As of 2009, Hezbollah had spent nearly \$300 million in reconstruction and compensation for those affected by the brief 2006 conflict, and was prepared to spend another \$300 million if needed.<sup>174</sup>

Hezbollah's efforts to persuade the population to support them do not end at basic utilities and reconstruction work. They also operate extensive medical and education service networks across the whole of Lebanon. Hezbollah operates over 50 clinics and

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<sup>171</sup> (Wiegand, 2009, p. 673); See also, (Zisser, 2002)

<sup>172</sup> (Flanigan & Abdel-Samad, 2009, pp. 124-125)

<sup>173</sup> (Flanigan & Abdel-Samad, 2009, pp. 124-125)

<sup>174</sup> (Flanigan & Abdel-Samad, 2009, p. 126)



health centers plus a number of hospitals throughout Lebanon, and provides free or low cost health insurance to the needy.<sup>175</sup> The Lebanese government has even requested that Hezbollah assume control of a number of government run hospitals to increase their efficiency and capabilities.<sup>176</sup>

Much as they have done in the medical field, Hezbollah has sought to provide high quality, low cost education to Lebanon's poor, especially the Shi'a. Hezbollah has thousands of youths enrolled in their own schools, which have cheaper fees and better academics than Lebanon's public schools, and spends millions in providing scholarships and distributing books to low income families.<sup>177</sup> Hezbollah's legitimacy and support is such that Lebanese – and not just Hezbollah's main Shi'ite base - often turn to the group's social service programs first, and use government services only as a last resort.<sup>178</sup>

Providing social services has been an effective word of mouth propaganda tool for Hezbollah. As more people use Hezbollah's services, the group's legitimacy increases at the government's expense. However, it is not their only means of spreading their message. To start with, Hezbollah broadcasts on their own radio station and since 1991 have operated a satellite television network, al-Manar, the programs of which are often infused with Hezbollah propaganda, but otherwise have a lineup comparable to that of any Middle Eastern television station.<sup>179</sup> Hezbollah also makes a concerted effort to indoctrinate Lebanese youth. In addition to their national network of schools, Hezbollah

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<sup>175</sup> (Flanigan & Abdel-Samad, 2009, p. 125)

<sup>176</sup> (Flanigan & Abdel-Samad, 2009, p. 125)

<sup>177</sup> (Flanigan & Abdel-Samad, 2009, pp. 124-125)

<sup>178</sup> (Wiegand, 2009, p. 673)

<sup>179</sup> (Levitt, 2005)

has modified religious rituals to allow for the inclusion of children at a younger age than previously permitted.<sup>180</sup> They seek to pervade every aspect of the youth's lives, from daily school lessons, to after school activities, field trips, holiday events, and even summer camps, embedding within the minds of the children the sacredness and importance of Hezbollah's mission.<sup>181</sup>

Part of Hezbollah's success in gaining the steadfast support of so many Lebanese stems from their ability to provide for the many basic needs of the population in ways the government has proven itself incapable. Another aspect of their success is their reliance on persuasion and positive inducements. Hezbollah relies less on coercive measures of control than a typical insurgent organization. Their ability to rely more on persuasion than coercion is likely tied to the large amount of support Hezbollah receives from outside state sponsors like Iran and Syria. The support they receive from outside sources, to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars each year, means that Hezbollah does not have much of a need to extract payments or collect taxes from the population, and gives them more latitude to act benevolently towards civilians.<sup>182</sup>

Hezbollah's effectiveness at population control has given them comparatively sweeping success. Often, insurgent organizations are unable to progress past the initial stages of insurgency or are flat-out defeated. Hezbollah not only maintains effective control over large swathes of Lebanese territory, they have also progressed beyond

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<sup>180</sup> (Worth, 2008)

<sup>181</sup> (Worth, 2008)

<sup>182</sup> (Levitt, 2005)

merely being an armed militia bent on creating change. Hezbollah has grown into a full spectrum political organization, and are themselves now a part of the status quo.

## CHAPTER 6 - THE AFGHAN TALIBAN

### Origins and Background

The Taliban's lineage can be traced from a number of fundamentalist factions that operated during the Afghan civil war, but it was not until 1994 that they first made waves as an independent organization. By that time, many Taliban commanders already had a glut of experience thanks to the decades fighting in Afghanistan. Those commanders and the other Taliban faithful had grown disillusioned with the rampant warlordism and criminality in other supposedly Islamic militias, and were attracted by the Taliban's rhetoric of a more pure, Islamic way of life.<sup>183</sup> Many of the Taliban's rank and file were students from one or another of the many madrassas in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In fact, the group's name reflects this defining characteristic. In Arabic, "Talib" is literally translated as "one who is seeking," colloquially understood as "student," while "Taliban" is the pluralized version of "Talib."<sup>184</sup>

The Taliban adhere to a specific sect of Islam, Deobandism, of which they promote a fairly extreme interpretation. The Taliban engage in jihad against those, fellow Muslims included, they perceive to be a corrupting or perverting influence on Islam; a sort of "reform through revolution."<sup>185</sup> They are rigidly anti-modern in their beliefs, rejecting globalization, gender equality, and compromise or cooperation with any Western body.<sup>186</sup> Though the Taliban are perhaps best known for their Islamic fundamentalism, they blend their religious beliefs with Pashtunwali, the traditional

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<sup>183</sup> (Rashid, 2001, p. 23)

<sup>184</sup> (Kakar, 2000)

<sup>185</sup> (Rashid, 2001, p. 87)

<sup>186</sup> (Rashid, 2001, pp. 82-94)

Pashtun honor code. Nearly all members of the Taliban are ethnically Pashtun, and Pashtunwali dictates regarding revenge and honor are particularly thematic throughout Taliban ideology.

The ultimate goal of the Taliban is to create within Afghanistan a “pure” Islamic society modeled after that which existed during the time of the Prophet. The creation of such a society hinges on the Taliban’s ability to enforce strict Sharia. As envisioned by the Taliban, this includes: prohibitions on education and employment for women; mandatory wearing of burqas for women; mandatory growing of beards for men; enforcement of five times daily calls to prayer; the use of harsh punishments such as cutting the hands off of thieves and stoning adulterers; prohibitions on television, music, dancing, and all games; and much more.<sup>187</sup> The Taliban has also enforced Islamic prohibitions on the cultivation and consumption of drugs such as Hashish, but curiously made an exception for opium to be sold internationally.<sup>188</sup> To create space for their enforcement of Sharia, the Taliban pursued a number of practical goals, such as gaining control of Afghan territory, disarming the country, and replacing lawlessness with peace.<sup>189</sup>

War-weariness from the state of near constant conflict had left many of long established militant organizations susceptible to the Taliban’s vigor and fresh recruits in

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<sup>187</sup> (Kakar, 2000); See also, (Rashid, 2001, pp. 50-51)

<sup>188</sup> The Taliban permitted the sale of opium until early 2001, from which they made enormous sums of money through taxation and the charging of other fees. It was not until 2001 that they banned poppy cultivation, at which point they almost succeeded in completely eradicating the practice from Afghanistan. See, (Rashid, 2001, pp. 117-127); (Crossette, 2001)

<sup>189</sup> (Kakar, 2000); See also, (Rashid, 2001, p. 22)

1994. Many traditional centers of power had been disrupted by the years of fighting, leaving a void for the Taliban to fill.<sup>190</sup> The Taliban's ability to string together a series of quick victories gained them support from Pakistan, which had been looking to find a new organization in Afghanistan worthy of sponsoring to replace the oft-disappointing Hizb-e Islami.<sup>191</sup>

Compared to other militia groups entrenched in stalemates and tit-for-tat fighting, success for the Taliban came quickly. In early November, 1994, just weeks after their first formalized military actions, Taliban forces rescued a Pakistani convoy being held hostage by warlords near Kandahar.<sup>192</sup> Within days, the Taliban had routed the warlords in control of Kandahar, capturing Afghanistan's second largest city.<sup>193</sup> Along with instant credibility, the Taliban acquired numerous stores of weapons, including heavy weaponry such as tanks, MIG-21s, and helicopters.<sup>194</sup>

The credibility gained by the capture of Kandahar was a major recruitment boost for the Taliban. Tens of thousands of young Pashtuns flocked to the movement, allowing the Taliban to capture 12 Afghan provinces within three short months of their victory at Kandahar.<sup>195</sup> They next turned their sites on the historic city of Herat. Capturing Herat proved more difficult than Kandahar, taking longer to do and at the cost of many more casualties. Notwithstanding the difficulties, the Taliban captured Herat by September of 1995, in the process gaining the entire western portion of Afghanistan, taking control of

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<sup>190</sup> (Rashid, 2001, p. 19)

<sup>191</sup> (International Crisis Group, 2008, p. 3)

<sup>192</sup> (Rashid, 2001, pp. 28-29); See also, (Kakar, 2000)

<sup>193</sup> (Rashid, 2001, pp. 28-29)

<sup>194</sup> (Rashid, 2001, p. 29)

<sup>195</sup> (Rashid, 2001, pp. 31-32)

their first non-Pashtun area, and securing an important staging ground for further actions.<sup>196</sup>

The next feather in the Taliban's cap was to be the Afghan capital, Kabul. The Taliban employed an incremental approach, first gaining control of Kabul's outlying districts, then laying siege to the city itself.<sup>197</sup> To minimize morale killing casualties, the Taliban made a concerted effort to bribe many of the warlords near Kabul, convincing them to either lay down their arms or to join with the Taliban.<sup>198</sup> Eventually, in September of 1996, the Taliban siege succeeded, and Kabul fell along with the Afghan government. After fleeing Kabul, the former government's Minister of Defense, Ahmad Shah Massoud, became head of the main opposition force, the Northern Alliance. From this point on, the Taliban captured some additional territory before finding itself in a stalemate with the Northern Alliance.

The real turning point for the Taliban stemmed from their harboring of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda (AQ). Bin Laden first sought haven in Afghanistan in 1996, after his expulsion from Sudan. Despite their attempts to halt bin Laden's anti-American rhetoric and actions, the Taliban received much of the blame for AQ's September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 terrorist attacks in America. An American led assault ousted the ruling Taliban regime in November of 2001, and it is from this point that the Taliban insurgency began.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> (Rashid, 2001, pp. 39-40)

<sup>197</sup> (International Crisis Group, 2011)

<sup>198</sup> (International Crisis Group, 2011)

<sup>199</sup> (Wright, 2006)

### The Taliban and Population Control

Beginning soon after their ouster, the Afghan Taliban insurgency's intensity and level of success has waxed and waned over the last decade. Distinct fighting seasons, changing coalition troop deployments, and various Afghan political developments have all contributed to the insurgency being in a constant state of flux. One of the few constants throughout the fighting has been the Taliban's commitment to a strategy incorporating a number of fairly traditional population control measures. While many of the control measures enacted by the Taliban have been well advised, others have proven detrimental to the cause.

For the Taliban, knowing when and in what ways to enact control measures necessitates taking into account Afghanistan's unique geographic and ethnographic characteristics. Ethnographically, Afghanistan has a diverse and dispersed population. 44% of Afghans are Pashtun, the same ethnic group which dominates the Taliban, while 25% are Tajik, 10% are Hazara, 8% are Uzbek, and various other groups constitute the remaining 13%.<sup>200</sup> This severely complicates the Taliban's ability to use persuasive measures of control and appeal to a wide population base. It is far less complicated to control the population of a country dominated by one or even two ethnic groups. As ethnic diversity increases, insurgents must take into account all the cultural differences and preferences of each group. Thus, while it would be relatively easy for the Taliban to exert control over an all-Pashtun country, the many different groups residing in

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<sup>200</sup> (CIA, 2002)



Afghanistan force the Taliban to continuously adapt their tactics in order to most efficiently control the population.

While Afghanistan's ethnographic dispersion might complicate the Taliban's efforts to exert control, other characteristics aid the establishment and maintenance of insurgent control. Only 22% of Afghanistan's population lives in or around urban areas.<sup>201</sup> Also, much of Afghanistan's terrain is mountainous. This is comparatively disadvantageous to counterinsurgent and government forces as it places much of the population outside of their reach. With a highly urbanized population, insurgents wishing to interact with and control the population are forced to operate in space easily accessible by counterinsurgent forces. This is of little concern with dispersed, rural populations, especially in a country like Afghanistan whose landscape is littered with mountains and valleys and which possesses little in the way of an extensive transportation network. Insurgents simply have a greater ability to maintain an active presence amongst the population and keep their distance from counterinsurgents when counterinsurgents lack concentrated populations amongst which to concentrate their forces.

Generally speaking, the Taliban's strategy is modeled after that of Mao in that it seeks the creation and maintenance of bases among the population from which to operate, resupply, seek shelter, and extend their authority; bases to which Mao referred as his "protective belt of sympathizers." For the Taliban, these bases started in the Pashtun dominated southeast of Afghanistan, and included cross border sanctuaries in Pakistan's Pashtun heavy Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and Federally Administered Tribal

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<sup>201</sup> (United Nations, 2002, p. 121)

Areas (FATA). These areas are often collectively referred to as Pashtunistan, and having spent the first several years of the insurgency solidifying their support within them, the Taliban began expanding their reach into Kabul and the surrounding areas in 2006.<sup>202</sup>

Around the same time the Taliban were spreading east into Kabul, they were also taking advantage of the few Pashtun inhabited pockets in the North to extend their influence, particularly in the Kunduz Province.<sup>203</sup> In true Maoist fashion, initial Taliban efforts in the North flew under the radar, consisting mostly of recruiters and propagandists infiltrating the area. A small number of hit-and-run attacks apparently unsettled the German ISAF forces in the area to the point where, in the hopes of avoiding increased casualties, they adopted a policy of avoiding insurgent forces operating in Kunduz. The wide berth given to the Taliban allowed them to continue building and, between 2008 and 2010, solidifying their strongholds, including those in Kunduz and other provinces in the Northwest.<sup>204</sup> As the Taliban's presence in the North grew, so did their ability to attract non-Pashtun fighters and supporters.<sup>205</sup>

Once in possession of consolidated strongholds, the Taliban were free to institute a full complement of population control measures, often manifested in parallel governance structures. Shadow governments are perhaps the most direct way of displaying one's own legitimacy as a political authority while calling into question the

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<sup>202</sup> (International Crisis Group, 2011, p. 7)

<sup>203</sup> (Giustozzi & Reuter, *The Northern Front: The Afghan Insurgency Spreading Beyond the Pashtuns*, 2010, p. 2)

<sup>204</sup> (Giustozzi & Reuter, *The Northern Front: The Afghan Insurgency Spreading Beyond the Pashtuns*, 2010, pp. 2-3)

<sup>205</sup> (Giustozzi & Reuter, *The Insurgents of the Afghan North: The Rise of the Taliban, the Self-Abandonment of the Afghan Government and the Effects of ISAF's 'Capture-and-Kil Campaign'*, 2011)

legitimacy of the official government. The Taliban have proven adept at ensuring their shadow governments do not face the same criticisms leveled at GIRoA. Their employment of parallel governance structures has hints of both persuasion and coercion. Shadow judiciaries and law enforcement employ violence against those who support the GIRoA, and threaten those who fail to adhere to the Taliban program. However, the shadow government's ability to provide order and security in areas where there typically is none, also serve as a positive inducement to support the Taliban instead of the corrupt or absentee GIRoA. Where Afghanistan's national, provincial, and local governments are known for their high levels of corruption and slow response times, Taliban governance is renowned for being relatively free of corruption and for its quick response times. Shadow government officials are fired if there is even a whisper of corruption, while Afghans praise the Taliban for taking hours to resolve disputes or make decisions that might take the government years to finalize.<sup>206</sup>

Taliban shadow governments have several key components. First is the use of a shadow governor. Much like a governor oversees the functioning of a province, the shadow governor's job is to ensure proper functioning of an area's shadow government. They make policy and staffing decisions, and coordinate military actions with the overall political goals.<sup>207</sup> The Taliban have also managed to create a fairly well developed justice system, which is oftentimes preferred to that of the government because of its

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<sup>206</sup> (Witte, 2009)

<sup>207</sup> (Witte, 2009)

responsiveness and impartiality.<sup>208</sup> These shadow courts are mobile in areas still under government control, and operate from fixed locations in districts free from counterinsurgent influence. In either case, they address family feuds, contract disputes, criminality, and more, in accordance with the Taliban's strict version of Sharia. Such is the emphasis the Taliban places on creating legitimate structures of government to compete with GIROA, that their code of conduct expressly prohibits fighters from attempting to solve or even becoming involved with any disputes, proscribing that they instead refer all disputes to the shadow judiciary.<sup>209</sup> While the Taliban has refrained from developing organic social welfare structures, they have established health and education commissions, which in effect dictate policy to government funded medical and educational personnel.<sup>210</sup>

To help fund the insurgency, and to increase their perceived legitimacy, the Taliban levy taxes on Afghans to the tune of 10% of income, especially on agricultural profits.<sup>211</sup> As they did with judicial matters, in an effort to maintain their legitimacy as a fair political authority, the Taliban code of conduct prohibits fighters from collecting money by force from civilians, leaving the task of tax collection solely to the designated

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<sup>208</sup> (Giustozzi & Reuter, *The Insurgents of the Afghan North: The Rise of the Taleban, the Self-Abandonment of the Afghan Government and the Effects of ISAF's 'Capture-and-Kil Campaign'*, 2011, pp. 18-19)

<sup>209</sup> (The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, 2011)

<sup>210</sup> (Giustozzi & Reuter, *The Insurgents of the Afghan North: The Rise of the Taleban, the Self-Abandonment of the Afghan Government and the Effects of ISAF's 'Capture-and-Kil Campaign'*, 2011, pp. 19-20)

<sup>211</sup> (Witte, 2009); See also, (International Crisis Group, 2011, pp. 2, 26); (Giustozzi & Reuter, *The Insurgents of the Afghan North: The Rise of the Taleban, the Self-Abandonment of the Afghan Government and the Effects of ISAF's 'Capture-and-Kil Campaign'*, 2011, p. 19)

tax commissioners.<sup>212</sup> Money that is collected, must be used for “lawful” (i.e. - Sharia) purposes, and cannot be used for personal gain.<sup>213</sup>

As has already been alluded to, the Taliban employ a mixed population control strategy consisting of both persuasive and coercive means, and dabbling in all four elements of control: political; informational; military; and economic. The shadow courts and levying of taxes are examples of political and economic control measures, but the Taliban also make extensive use of informational elements of control. They use a number of mediums through which to communicate, including: DVDs and audio cassettes; internet chat rooms and videos; night letters; pamphlets and magazines; and word of mouth, among others.<sup>214</sup> The Taliban’s messages try to promote an air of legitimacy, exploit Afghan religious conservatism, and take advantage of popular dissatisfaction with the status quo. Often the messages specifically focus on government corruption, coalition caused civilian casualties, or the unpopular Bonn agreement, while also reminding Afghan’s of their duty to join in jihad and of the Taliban’s role as protector and rightful authority.<sup>215</sup>

Finally, there are no real surprises when it comes to the military control measures employed by the Taliban. Targeted assassinations, roadside bombings, and suicide attacks are all frequently used tactics, the purposes of which are to kill those siding against the Taliban and deter others from siding against them. These types of attacks have been effective in parts of the country at inhibiting popular cooperation with the

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<sup>212</sup> (The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, 2011, p. 12)

<sup>213</sup> (The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, 2011, p. 12)

<sup>214</sup> (International Crisis Group, 2008, pp. 12-16)

<sup>215</sup> (International Crisis Group, 2008, pp. 17-24); See also, (Broschk, 2001, pp. 3-4)

government or coalition forces; however appear to have only earned the Taliban passive cooperation rather than outright support.<sup>216</sup>

### Learning from the Past: Suggestions for the Future

The Taliban have now been fighting an insurgency for the last ten years. During that time period, they have experienced a range of successes and setbacks. Many, but by no means all, of their efforts to exert control over the Afghan population have succeeded, though there is room to question whether those successes contribute positively towards the Taliban's long term interests, or if they are mere short term gains. In order to ensure a greater success at exerting control, and make sure that success is for the long term, the Taliban would be wise to incorporate some of the lessons provided by the experiences of the MRLA, AQI, and Hezbollah. Below are five lessons on population control from which the Taliban could learn after a careful study of this paper's case studies, and which, if incorporated, could ensure a successful outcome for the Taliban in Afghanistan.

#### **1) You'll catch more flies with honey than with vinegar:**

All methods of population control were not created equally. Persuasion and coercion each have their advantages, but, if possible, the Taliban should seek to use persuasive control measures more often than not. To begin with, control via persuasion has fewer costs associated with it than coercive control. Coercion relies on using force or threatening its use against the population in order to alter their behavior. This requires the use of fighters to employ force and occasionally make good on the threats, and is

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<sup>216</sup> (International Crisis Group, 2011, p. 10)

obviously more cost intensive than persuasive efforts highlighting the benefits of siding with the insurgents or criticizing the government. Producing propaganda highlighting civilian casualties caused by the coalition and the Taliban's ability to ensure security costs relatively little compared to using force, but has the potential to win over substantial support.

Even types of persuasive control measures that tend to be more cost intensive do more for the insurgency organization's long term interests than coercive means of control. Providing education, healthcare, or food and economic aid can be resource intensive, but enhance an organization's legitimacy in the eyes of the population. For the Taliban to follow the Hezbollah model and engage in such types of population control would show that they are able to meet the basic needs of the people. It provides the temptation of long term stability that could cause a population to weather temporary insecurities in favor of the insurgents.

Coercion enhances legitimacy in the basest Weberian sense by employing force, but fails to show the population that a group can properly govern and tends to encourage short term support instead of long term cooperation. Populations cooperate with the coercive agent to ensure their immediate security, but the next time insecurity arises the population will support whichever agent, the insurgent or the government, is best able to provide security at that moment. If the government and insurgents seem equally attractive to the population, the heavy use of coercion in the past by insurgents may adversely affect the population's willingness to cooperate with them in the future.<sup>217</sup> On the other hand, the application of persuasive control measures in one area, providing economic aid

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<sup>217</sup> (Baldwin, 1971, pp. 32-33)

or stable governance for example, builds a relationship of cooperation between insurgents and populations, which can spill over into other aspects of their interactions and shape their future relations.<sup>218</sup>

Finally, coercive population control measures are associated with greater opportunity costs. When coercion results in control, the support given by the population is often of the passive variety. The people give the minimum level of support necessary to avoid negative sanctions. In extreme circumstances, such as with AQI, coercion can backfire and mobilize the population against the insurgents. It is crucial for the Taliban, or any insurgent group for that matter, to gain the active support of the population. Perhaps most importantly, active popular support increases the quantity and quality of intelligence flowing to the insurgents, and can also result in a greater willingness on the part of the population to go above and beyond in providing supplies, manpower, or shelter for the insurgents.

## **2) In a pinch, vinegar works too:**

As preferable as persuasion might be to coercion in theory, insurgencies occur in the real world, and certain situations sometimes call for the use of coercion. The same characteristic that can make over-reliance on coercion dangerous, its promotion of short term gains, can also make coercion a very useful tool for insurgents. This is particularly true in situations where insurgents find themselves quickly losing the initiative or suffering severe setbacks. Coercion can provide that quick stop gap necessary to stem the damage. Sudden threats or usages of violence can put an immediate halt to a population's

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<sup>218</sup> (Baldwin, 1971, pp. 32-33)



cooperation with the government, thus depriving the government of crucial sources of information.

Coercion is also useful in situations where persuasion is likely to fail. Some populations, or segments thereof, are disinclined to be persuaded. There are a number of reasons why this might be the case. Some populations might be diametrically opposed to an insurgent group on ethnic or religious grounds. This might be the case with the Taliban and certain non-Pashtun ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Though Uzbeks, Tajiks, and others have warmed up to the Taliban in certain instances, in the past they have been reluctant to side with the Pashtun dominated Taliban. It could also be the case that some portion of the population has historically benefitted from the government, and persuasion is unlikely to sever the bond.

Even where a population might be receptive towards insurgent persuasion, the operational environment might not yet be conducive to that type of control. Mao cautioned that the transition from guerrillas operating in the shadows to a more open, conventional fighting force should not be undertaken lightly. Yet while prematurely transitioning can be ruinous for insurgents not quite ready for the lime-light, they cannot simply sit back and wait until the time is right to employ persuasive measures of control. Coercion can therefore serve a dual purpose of allowing the insurgents to exert some type of control even during those times when they must remain vapor-like, but can also pave the way for insurgents to eventually get to a point where they can exist in the open and employ persuasion more easily.

Whatever the reasons, when a population cannot be ignored and is unlikely to succumb to persuasion, employing coercive measures of control is a perfectly sensible route to take. There are many instances of Hezbollah and the MRLA employing coercion to supplement their persuasive approaches, while AQI stands as a warning not to become over-reliant on coercive control. In short, coercion makes for a poor long term strategy, but in the short term can work wonders halting government/population cooperation or in pacifying an unruly population.

### **3) Don't put all your eggs in one basket:**

Population control is an essential component in a successful insurgency strategy. It helps to establish legitimacy, while detracting from that of the government. Control over a population typically results in an insurgent organization receiving better intelligence and resources, and generally having an easier path to victory. Control is a fickle beast however. It can be there one day, and gone the next. Insurgents can lose control unexpectedly for a number of reasons, perhaps through the government making a sudden shift in strategy, or flooding certain battle-spaces with manpower. It could also be the case that a population's collective disposition shifts against the insurgents, such as what occurred with Sunni tribes and AQI in Iraq.

An insurgent organization which puts all its stock into achieving control of the population control has little room to maneuver when faced with sudden or unexpected failure to exert continued control. Just as successful investors do not put all of their money into one stock, instead investing in a variety of companies and industries, insurgent organizations too must diversify. Population control should remain a main, and

indeed this paper argues the primary, way in which insurgents secure resources, but for those times when control is hard to come by, groups should have other revenue streams developed to help weather the storm. This may include outside funding, perhaps from taking part in the international drug trade or from a state sponsor, or it could include maintaining close contacts with other similar sub-national organizations that can provide weapons, money, sanctuary, or extra manpower.

Contrast the MRLA to Hezbollah. The MRLA pursued a strategy focused on controlling the Malayan population. For a number of reasons they were unable to exert steady, long-term control. A failure to develop any other sources of supplies meant that when the government won the battle for control of the population, the MRLA was left to wither on the vine. Hezbollah, on the other hand, receives funding and weapons from outside states sponsors and has contacts with a number of regional sub-national groups. Population control is the main thrust of Hezbollah's strategy; however they are well insulated should they experience failure in that area. Though the Taliban have shown a commitment to raising funds through the selling of drugs internationally, it would behoove them to cultivate deeper ties with other like-minded organizations in the region or with nearby sympathetic state governments.

As important as diversification is, it should not come at the expense of efforts to exert control over the population. Establishing control remains the surest way to achieve success. Even with a sound strategy however, there will occasionally be setbacks. Diversifying will help the Taliban survive the setbacks, but should always be a complement, rather than a replacement, for controlling the population.

#### **4) Don't get tunnel vision:**

In their efforts to establish and maintain control, insurgents must be careful not to focus solely on the civilian population. It could be easy for an insurgency organization to become so intent on exerting control, that they forget other actors share the same goal. As has been stated already in this paper, insurgencies do not occur in a vacuum, where the insurgents either succeed or fail based purely on their actions. Insurgencies are competitions for control of the population, and the actions taken by an insurgent's opponent can play just as big a role as the insurgent's own actions. No matter how soundly insurgents apply persuasion or coercive control measures, all is for naught if the counterinsurgents do it better. It is important therefore, to avoid "tunnel vision"; that is, insurgents should avoid becoming so focused on their actions vis-à-vis the population, that they neglect their opponent's efforts to establish control.

The MRLA may have suffered from a bout of tunnel vision. They were so focused on establishing control over Malaysians that they did relatively little to counter the government's efforts to do the same. The effectiveness with which the MRLA applied traditional Maoist population control techniques was nullified by the total control established by the government over the MRLA's base of support within the population. Rather than focusing much of their efforts on establishing population control, the MRLA might have been better off attempting to degrade the government's ability to control, perhaps through conducting a sustained campaign of attacks on the new villages. As it was, new villages became a place of security and stability for the peasant population, allowing for the severing of their link with the communist insurgents.

There are a number of steps the Taliban can take to limit GIRoA's and the coalition's ability to exert control. Afghanistan has an underdeveloped transportation system, with one main road circling around the country. Attacks against that road could limit the government's ability to extend their writ across the entire country, especially once coalition forces begin to depart, taking their helicopters with them. The Taliban should seek to continue their campaign of assassinations on government officials.

Assassinating officials of the national government has little drawback, though care should be taken in targeting local government officials. There are big gains to be had from eliminating local officials, in that they provide the most visible counterpoint to Taliban claims of legitimacy. However, possible large costs also loom. Local officials may have close knit family or tribal connections, and killing them could cause a rift between the Taliban and the people, endangering bigger picture goals.

The growth of an Afghan national police force is another development with threatening implications for the Taliban. A larger and more competent policing capability boosts government claims of being able to maintain law and order, protect the citizenry, and serves as a link between the people and the government. Increased police presence in villages both makes it more difficult for the Taliban to operate freely, and enhances government legitimacy. The MRLA were competitive with counterinsurgent forces for control of the population when the Malayan constabulary force was small, ill-trained, and not representative of the total population. Reform of the constabulary was not the sole, or even definitive, factor that led to the MRLA's failure, but it did play a major contributing role. Direct attacks by the Taliban on police stations, checkpoints, and recruiting drives

could serve a dual purpose: killing those individuals who are seeking to become members of the police; and more importantly, serving as a warning to those considering joining with the police. Another option, and one which limits the potential blowback suicide bombings can create, is to infiltrate security forces. Infiltration limits the effectiveness of the police, without risking alienating the population at large.

These are a small sampling of the steps the Taliban could take in order to counter government attempts to exert control. It would be impossible to list every possible step they could take. The larger point is that, while the Taliban rightly devote a lot of time and resources towards establishing or maintaining control over Afghans, they would do well to remember the other half of the equation and make efforts to degrade the government's ability to exert control.

#### **5) Slow and steady wins the race:**

There can be a real temptation for insurgents to expand quickly in order to capitalize on successes or momentum. This is a temptation that should be avoided. Insurgencies like the one the Taliban are involved in are not won by spreading out one's forces and physically outmaneuvering the counterinsurgents. They are won through a slow and methodical process of building support and legitimacy, and consolidating gains. The best example of this is perhaps the Chinese Civil War, which the Communists won after two decades of fighting. That conflict spawned Mao's three stage strategy for guerrilla warfare, a defining feature of which is its protracted nature.

Spreading too far, too fast not only leaves insurgents vulnerable, it encourages the use of sub-optimal tactics. As has been discussed, persuasive measures are preferable to

coercive when possible and are easier to implement in those areas where insurgents have taken the time to consolidate their position and secure for themselves a certain amount of space in which they can operate freely. Spreading too far, too fast forces insurgents to operate in areas where they might lack popular support. The necessary consequence is an overreliance on coercive control measures. As a counterfactual, it is interesting to ponder what could have been for AQI had they not tried to do too much, too soon; rather than heavily relying on coercive means of control and eventually alienating much of the population by declaring themselves sovereign, they could have taken a similar route as al-Sadr and slowly built up core groups of sympathizers while biding their time for the inevitable coalition drawdown. By staying true to the protracted nature of the conflict, the Taliban may be able to avoid pondering such “what-if” scenarios.

There is a certain “go with the flow” attitude insurgents are wise to adopt. Success is not merely a matter of deciding on a population control strategy and implementing it. Much of what insurgents should attempt or are able to do is dependent on other variables. The ability of an insurgency organization to shift from guerrilla to overt actions, or from coercive means of control to persuasive, is not merely a function of the insurgency group’s decisions. The COIN strategy, disposition of the population, political environment, and even the physical environment, all impose constraints on what will be successful for insurgents.

Hezbollah is an excellent example of how strategy reflects the operational environment. Hezbollah receives large amounts of external funding. This gives them greater latitude to avoid having to use coercive control measures. Regardless of their

beginnings while fighting against Israeli occupation forces, Hezbollah is now afforded a wide degree of space and autonomy by the Lebanese government. This allows them to operate overtly, and engage in activities favorable to the population such as operating schools and hospitals.

The Taliban, on the other hand, do not enjoy the same amount of space. Even if the Taliban were interested in opening a hospital, the environment in which they operate would not allow for it. Because the Taliban must still operate a vapor-like entity, certain population control tactics are not yet an option. Also restricting the Taliban's flexibility is their lack of external financial support relative to Hezbollah. The Taliban cannot forswear coercive control measures to the same degree as Hezbollah.

It is thus of vital importance that the Taliban play with the hand dealt to them and let their strategy be shaped by the operational environment, rather than trying to force a square strategy into a round environment. The control options available are dependent on whether they must remain hidden or can afford to be more overt and conventional, which is in turn determined by myriad factors, including the population, geography, outside support, and COIN strategy. As any of those factors change, there need to be corresponding shifts in strategy. The strategy must be responsive to the environment, just as was the case with the three cases study organizations.

Hezbollah pursues a control strategy highly dependent on overt persuasive control measures made possible by outside funding, a strong base of support, and their having much space in which to operate. AQI pursued a control strategy heavy on the use of coercion. Not merely the result of poor strategizing, AQI's decisions also reflected their



having to compete with a number of other political actors, operating in a highly sectarian environment, and being largely outside existing social networks. The MRLA pursued a healthy mix of coercion and persuasion, but the success of their strategy was minimized due to an inability to draw much of the population to their cause and an extremely effective COIN strategy.

The Taliban, for their part, should not try to employ a one size fit all control strategy. Just as their environments determined what options were available and likely to be successful for the case study organizations, and their successes or failures were functions of their ability to adapt to their specific circumstances, the Taliban must make the specific control measures they employ subordinate to the reality of their operational environment. A sound population control strategy that refrains from forcing inappropriate measures into action requires patience, but if the Taliban are willing to proceed slowly and steadily, they will be better off for it.

### The Future?

So when all is said and done, what will the future hold for the Taliban? Are they likely to succeed? The short answer is that the future looks bright for the Taliban, so long as they can survive the present. It is not secret that the Taliban have been losing ground recently. Surveys show that increasing proportions of Afghans prefer the GIRoA to Taliban rule. Tribal defections to the government are a worrying trend for the Taliban, and have begun to take their toll: the Taliban have lost control over a number of

provinces, including several of their traditional strongholds.<sup>219</sup> Increased deployments of coalition troops and better training for government forces have put pressure on the Taliban, resulting in higher casualty rates.

For all the recent setbacks however, the Taliban's prospects in Afghanistan are still promising. The recent surge of coalition troops into Afghanistan is already starting to drawdown, and NATO members are clearly anxious to leave as soon as possible. As troop numbers decrease, pressure on the Taliban should be relieved, allowing them to reestablish a presence in their traditional strongholds. As much as Afghans may prefer the GIRoA at the moment, once violence picks up and the wartime economy comes crashing down, Afghans may very well find themselves longing for the relative stability of Taliban rule. Not to mention the fact that Afghanistan is uniquely well suited for insurgencies. Rugged, mountainous terrain and porous borders provide ample space for insurgents in which to hide. An extremely rural, dispersed population coupled with little transportation infrastructure to speak of, makes it exceedingly difficult for the government to govern effectively.

The difficulties GIRoA has in extending their writ bodes well for the Taliban in terms of controlling the Afghan population. In those areas where the government is able to effectively exert control or contest Taliban control, the Taliban can remain as guerrillas and rely heavily on coercion. Because so much of the Afghan population is dispersed however, the Taliban are more easily able to operate openly and employ persuasion where they see fit. It is highly unlikely that the government will ever be able to truly control much of the country, meaning that as the insurgency continues, the Taliban

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<sup>219</sup> (Jones, 2011)

should be able to employ the most effective means of control, rather than having to rely solely on coercion.

In other respects as well, the Taliban have the deck stacked in their favor. Afghanistan is an ethnically diverse country. The Taliban hail from the largest ethnic group, and the idea of a Pashtun political resurgence strikes a chord with many Pashtuns. With so many Pashtuns straddling the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Taliban have a virtually permanent sanctuary. The lack of a challenger for the loyalties of the Pashtuns bodes well for the Taliban. No matter how many setbacks the Taliban are faced with at the present moment, so long as they remain the Pashtuns best hope for power, their strategic depth will remain vast.

The Taliban have years of experience, as both a sovereign entity and as insurgents. The manpower required to counter their advances is tremendous. For a decade, America's and NATO's best efforts have been unable to defeat the Taliban. The Afghan government on its own is unlikely to fare any better. The reality of the matter is that the Taliban will be able to continue exerting control over large portions of the Afghan population for a long time to come, though their ultimate end state is a mystery. It is easy to envision a number of scenarios for the Taliban. They could remain confined to, yet comfortably in control of, Pashtunistan. If they are able to dramatically broaden their base of support, it is easy to imagine the Taliban ruling all of Afghanistan. A more likely outcome might be a return to the pre-war status quo, with the Taliban ruling much of Afghanistan, yet mired in a state of semi-permanent civil war with a reconstituted Northern Alliance. If the Taliban are able to get to a point where they can control through

inducements rather than solely through threats, and so long as they maintain the patient strategic outlook thus far displayed, there will be little that can be done to beat them back. The degree to which they are able to establish effective control over Afghans, and the higher amount of that control established through the employment of persuasive control measures, the greater the chances for the Taliban of winning out over the long term.

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