Counterinsurgency in intra-state conflicts is one of the most controversial policies a state may employ to defeat armed groups. Such policies include the utilization of both military and nonmilitary measures to counter the politico-military struggle of an insurgency. When comparing these two categories of counterinsurgency measures, nonmilitary policies arguably hold more influence in terms of dismantling and eliminating insurgent movements whilst ensuring state success. Through a large-N quantitative analysis of 71 counterinsurgency cases in the post-World War II era, this study attempts to provide general trends regarding the efficacy of military and nonmilitary counterinsurgency policies. As a whole, the analysis of this universe of cases provides considerable insight into the limits of military force and the effectiveness of nonmilitary measures in counterinsurgency campaigns. After observing a significant difference between war outcomes of cases where nonmilitary measures are more likely to be positively correlated with state success, this study investigates the efficacy of specific military and nonmilitary counterinsurgency policies in three cases of variable outcomes: the Malayan Emergency (1948 – 1960) and the USSR (1979 – 1989) and US (2001 – present) occupations of Afghanistan. Specifically, the data supports a strategic approach to counterinsurgency, where the utilization of non-kinetic nation-building measures—such as the maintenance of public services and political institutions, policies that indirectly diminish insurgent control—significantly result in different war outcomes. The qualitative analysis of historical cases also reveals that successful counterinsurgency consists of a two-stage process, where the establishment and maintenance of security (accomplished through the use of military force) may be a necessary prerequisite for the implementation of nonmilitary measures. In terms of policy, this study posits that states are more likely to succeed in these conflicts if they adopt strategies that include military measures, but prioritize nonmilitary policies to neutralize intra-state armed groups.
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Introduction

The powerful are not as powerful as they seem—nor the weak as weak.¹

Insurgency and counterinsurgency, a particular form of asymmetric warfare in the international system, is not a new phenomenon. History is replete with examples of ethno-nationalist armed groups challenging—and defeating—superior states for control over a given territory. This study seeks an answer to a simple question: does counterinsurgency work, and if so, which counterinsurgency policies are associated with state success? In order to effectively answer this question, a theoretical framework consistent with Weberian notions of a state is applied, where a strong state possesses a monopoly of force and legitimacy over the population it rules over. Weak states, those that fail to meet Weber’s definition of a state, can be challenged by intra-state armed groups such as militias, terrorist groups, and insurgencies. Employing the U.S. Army’s definition of insurgency, these intra-state armed movements are conceptualized as politico-military struggles, consistent with Clausewitzean notions of war. Although counterinsurgency is broadly defined as state action to counter the politico-military struggle of an insurgency, this framework predicts that the use of both military and nonmilitary policy play an integral role in restoring the Weberian notion of statehood. Specifically, this model hypothesizes that the implementation and presence of nonmilitary counterinsurgency policy is more likely to be associated with state success. In order to test this theory, a large-N analysis of a universe of 71 counterinsurgency cases in the post-World War II era is conducted in order to extrapolate general trends in counterinsurgency warfare during the past century, where the presence or absence of military and nonmilitary counterinsurgency policies in the examination of the historiography of each case is coded dichotomously. This coded

data is then statistically analyzed to determine if there exist significant differences between policies present in successful counterinsurgency campaigns compared to policies present in failed campaigns.

These general trends are then further examined in a qualitative historical analysis of three counterinsurgency cases of variable outcome: the successful British campaign during the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960), the failed USSR occupation of Afghanistan (1979-1989), and the ongoing stalemate that characterizes the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan (2001-present). These aforementioned campaigns are chosen for their temporal variation (i.e. occur during different time periods after 1945) in addition to their variable outcome. More importantly, these cases are relatively comparable in terms of the asymmetry between the counterinsurgent and the insurgency (i.e. all three counterinsurgent states are Great Powers, and the insurgencies are relatively weak). Yet, not unlike any other analysis of historical case studies, the nuances of the various campaigns in these three case studies are evaluated to assess the causal nature of counterinsurgency policy on war outcome. Together, these quantitative and qualitative analyses will provide considerable insight into the efficacy of military and nonmilitary policies in counterinsurgency campaigns. More importantly, evidence for the validity and application of this theoretical framework in successful counterinsurgency campaigns may provide substantive policy recommendations for states who wish to engage in these tough intra-state conflicts. Today, dozens of states are involved in counterinsurgency warfare, including the U.S.; understanding the types of policies that are associated with state success may help expedite conflict resolution.

**Counterinsurgency: a Theoretical Framework**

Asymmetric warfare, commonly referred to as “small wars,” in the international system is as old as time. Indeed, history is replete with examples of non-state actors engaging in
unconventional tactics and methods when targeting state actors with unmatched military, economic and political capabilities. Nevertheless, the nature and efficacy of these strategies, and the policies adopted to counter them have been highly contested. While non-state actors have been more consistent in utilizing unconventional methods to target the highly organized, hierarchal militaries of powerful states, state responses have varied tremendously. Moreover, states have only acknowledged insurgencies as major, sometimes existential, security threats in the past century. This study primarily seeks to elucidate the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of counterinsurgency measures. Specifically, my research seeks an answer to a simple question: does counterinsurgency work, and if so, which counterinsurgency policies are associated with state success? An understanding of this work can have considerable implications for policymakers in the United States, which has recently engaged in two counterinsurgency campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as other states, who may consider applying these campaigns. Furthermore, empirical support for certain counterinsurgency measures may ease (or even complicate) the decision of policymakers to establish large-scale deployments in states vastly different from our own.

**Theoretical Considerations**

*Defining Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*

While insurgency itself has existed for centuries, it has been conceptualized and consequently, addressed, in innumerable ways. Prior to the 1900s, insurgency was generally considered to be a nuisance for states, especially empires with powerful, conventional militaries that were primed to fight the armies of fellow states, not a ragtag collection of fighters with light weapons. Due to this asymmetry, such armed groups would not directly confront a state with unmatched military capabilities; instead, they engaged in *guerilla* (Spanish for “small war”) warfare, which included hit-and-run tactics in order to exploit a conventional military’s inability
to deviate from a highly organized and structured protocol. Thus, insurgencies were conceptualized as tactical struggles to force states into engaging in long, protracted wars of attrition in order to exhaust both their resources and willpower. Stathis Kalyvas succinctly describes this dynamic:

The state (or incumbents) fields regular troops and is able to control urban and accessible terrain; while seeking to militarily engage its opponents in peripheral and rugged terrain; challengers (rebels or insurgents) hide and rely on harassment and surprise. Such wars often turn into wars of attrition, with insurgents seeking to win by not losing while imposing unbearable costs on their opponent.

Kalyvas’ definition of insurgency as a tactic is surprisingly consistent with several definitions of terrorism, which is primarily acknowledged as an operational method to employ what Steven Metz refers to as “political signaling.” Insurgencies—especially weak insurgencies—incorporate targeted political violence into their strategies during nascent stages in order to rally popular support for their cause, and once they garner considerable legitimacy amongst the population, tend to abandon it for quasi-state behavior (e.g. governance, provision of public services, etc.). Indeed, insurgencies are uniquely distinguishable from terrorist groups in that their primary objective is state control and sovereignty, which they achieve by incrementally garnering popular support. Using targeted military force themselves, these groups seek to emulate

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Max Weber’s definition of a state, that is, an entity that possesses a monopoly of force and legitimacy within a given territory.\(^7\)

Keeping in mind an insurgency’s tactical approach to gaining power whilst acknowledging its aspirations to state control, a new strategic approach began to emerge. An insurgent group no longer characterized a small army utilizing violence, exhibiting aggressive behavior against states to illustrate discontent alone; rather, a Clausewitzian understanding of small wars emerged, emphasizing a political struggle of insurgent groups over a purely militaristic one. As guerilla tactics evolved into more comprehensive, strategic approaches—in decolonization movements, for example, or wars of national liberation—insurgencies began to be conceptualized as true political movements. Such an approach to insurgency is well-documented in the U.S. *Counterinsurgency Field Manual 3-24*, which defines the concept as follows (this definition, which incorporates a strategic understanding of insurgency, will be used to identify historical cases of insurgencies in this study):

…an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict… [in other words] an organized protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control.\(^8\)

In stark contrast, counterinsurgency is difficult to define and standardize. While U.S. military doctrine defines counterinsurgency as “those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency,”\(^9\) this definition is


far too broad; it includes ostensibly any action aimed at defeating irregular forces. Different models of counterinsurgency, such as enemy-centric (classical counterinsurgency), state-centric (neo-classical counterinsurgency) and population-centric (post-classical counterinsurgency) have been developed to pinpoint more specific policies rather than address an ambiguous definition. This study will initially utilize FM 3-24’s definition of counterinsurgency, but will place counterinsurgency policies in the context of these aforementioned models in order to evaluate state success.

A strategic understanding of counterinsurgency must bring into consideration both military and non-military actions of an insurgent group, which a state can choose to address in its counterinsurgency policy (likewise, states can choose to neglect other insurgent activities). Countering the military, or kinetic, movements of insurgent organizations is often the most urgent and important security threat that states seek to address. Any state response to insurgency is associated with an implicit judgement that the state itself perceives a significant threat from the insurgent group, independent of the reality of the threat such a group could pose. In terms of the exercise of hard power, states may respond in a variety of ways, which usually includes the use of air and/or ground campaigns. Subsequently, counterinsurgency polices may entail that the occupying forces play a significant socio-political and/or economic role in or around insurgent strongholds in order to expand the state’s influence. The following state-centric model of counterinsurgency addresses how military and non-military policies can be utilized to restore or establish a Weberian notion of statehood, where a state maintains both a monopoly of force within a given territory, and is able to sustain this level of control through the generation of political and economic legitimacy in the eyes of the population it governs. More importantly, this theoretical framework furthers an understanding of the defining features of a state, and the relationship
between rulers and ruled. This understanding, in turn, raises important questions about the role of the state as Weber did a century ago:

The state is a relation of men dominating men, a relation supporting by means of legitimate (that is, considered to be legitimate) violence. If the state is to exist, the dominated must obey the authority claimed by the powers that be. When and why do men obey? Upon what inner justifications and upon what external means does this domination rest?^{10}

Military Components of Counterinsurgency

If insurgencies aspire to a Weberian notion of state control and actively engage in an armed struggle that targets the state and its established institutions, states (especially strong states) can attempt to mitigate these efforts by exercising force using a wide-range of tools at their disposal. The first major strategy states may employ vis-à-vis the direct use of military force include the targeting and elimination of insurgent groups themselves. On the tactical level, states may choose to utilize an air campaign or ground campaign in order to directly engage with the insurgency, or may establish control in unoccupied areas in order to prevent the expansion of insurgent control into other territories. The adoption of air campaigns can be successful in the elimination of fighters through the use of decapitation strikes (i.e. targeting insurgent commanders).^{11} Such campaigns are typically fiscally and politically feasible and are favorable in terms of risk and force protection for officials carrying out airstrikes. The ongoing drone campaign employed by the U.S. in states such as Yemen, Afghanistan and Pakistan is one example, where unmanned aerial vehicles are far

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^{10} Weber, 1946, p. 78.
less costly to manufacture and operate than their manned counterparts, and pose almost no risk for a state that is targeting both insurgent and terrorist groups.\textsuperscript{12}

As appealing as this can be for states that possess the technical ability to carry out such campaigns, they can be counterproductive in areas in which the insurgency is dispersed within the civilian populace. Indeed, this use of force can be quite indiscriminate from an aerial perspective, where administrators are unlikely to make the fine distinction of combatants from noncombatants in the context of protracted warfare. Mounting civilian casualties and insecurity on the ground inevitably lead to an increase in popular support and local recruitment for the insurgency, and may exacerbate the very problem the state seeks to ameliorate.\textsuperscript{13} The efficacy of drones has been especially disputed, with one recent study highlighting no significant effect of this use of force on the level of Taliban violence in Pakistan.\textsuperscript{14} In another study, the data indicates that Taliban attacks actually increased by an average of a five percent within a week of just one drone strike.\textsuperscript{15} More importantly, the victimization of civilians through the indiscriminate use of force by an out-group counterinsurgent is strongly associated with a heightened support for in-group combatants, at least in the case of the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{16} Such findings suggest that drone strikes are at best only marginally effective in the short term, and may incur unforeseen long-term costs for states that choose to employ them.\textsuperscript{17}


\textsuperscript{15} Lyall, Jason. 2014. \textit{Bombing to Lose? Airpower, Civilian Casualties, and the Dynamics of Violence in Counterinsurgency Wars}. Available at SSRN: http://ssrn.com/abstract=2422170


\textsuperscript{17} Bauer et al, 2015.
In addition to utilizing a state’s air force to eliminate insurgent groups, a state may choose to deploy troops on the ground in order to directly engage with guerilla fighters. The size of a troop deployment can vary significantly, which primarily depends upon the state’s political will and the resources at its disposal, as well as the size and geographic distribution of the insurgency itself (in cases where a transnational insurgency exists, inter-state coordination vis-à-vis air and ground campaigns may exist, where a multinational coalition force exercises counterinsurgency). On the ground, the counterinsurgent (if authorized through protocol) can utilize military force in both direct and indirect ways. Due to the nature of guerilla warfare and the hit-and-run tactics that insurgent groups adopt in combat, direct state engagement with these groups can pose a significant operational risk and decrease force protection for the state. 18 Furthermore, while ground engagement creates an environment for the counterinsurgent to exercise a discriminate use of force (i.e. distinguishing combatants from non-combatants), different policies at the state level may do little to acknowledge the importance of civilian casualties. Lastly, ground forces increase the probability of collecting intelligence on the ground. This intelligence—especially human intelligence regarding the insurgency and its activity within the local population—can be an invaluable tool to locate insurgents and discern operating areas, potentially enhancing the efficacy of implementing both air and ground counterinsurgency campaigns. 19 Obtaining such intelligence becomes difficult for states when relying upon air campaigns alone, where suspected insurgent commanders and supportive civilians are likely to be killed rather than captured.

Unlike airpower, manpower is more versatile. It can be utilized to achieve both military and non-military goals, empowering a counterinsurgent with greater freedom of action in terms of the exercise of force. More importantly, the use of military force in ground operations is often used in conjunction with non-military counterinsurgency strategies that emphasize the political implications of insurgent and/or state action. In terms of manpower, the U.S. FM 3-24 set forth a recommended force density in an area of operations (AO) of 20-25 counterinsurgents per 1,000 members of a population, which is also consistent with the Brahimi Report of 2000 on the state of the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping (DPKO). While this approach is reasonable and accounts for the wide-range of duties a counterinsurgent is tasked with (e.g. reconstruction), modern counterinsurgency campaigns rarely meet this requirement.

In addition to utilizing direct military force in counterinsurgency operations, an external state can indirectly apply force through the delivery of military aid to a host state afflicted with an insurgency. This assistance—which includes both conventional and unconventional weaponry and funds in order to utilize force against an insurgency—is one way in which an external state can conduct counterinsurgency by proxy. In cases where such a strategy is spearheaded by a powerful external state in order to support a weak host state, indirect military assistance may escalate into direct military intervention by the external state. The USSR intervention to support the Afghan government in 1979 and the U.S. intervention in Iraq in 2003 are two examples, where initial

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external support to a weak state was insufficient in the face of a nascent insurgency, and eventually resulted in extensive and large-scale deployments.\textsuperscript{23,24}

States may also provide military assistance to various non-state actors in counterinsurgency operations. This form of assistance has become increasingly favorable for states to employ in counterinsurgency wars, due in part by the exponential increase in force mechanization during World Wars I and II.\textsuperscript{25} The delivery of military aid to intra-state armed groups that antagonize or rival the insurgency—particularly those groups that have garnered considerable domestic support—theoretically tip the balance in favor of the state. In such circumstances, states can establish a direct relationship with rival armed groups (as the U.S. did in its invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, where there was direct engagement between the CIA and the Northern Alliance in order to topple the Taliban\textsuperscript{26}), and these strategic alliances with intra-state armed group are often ideal, where a state can maintain plausible deniability. In cases where an external state is primarily responsible for executing counterinsurgency policy, domestic fighters that share a similar nationality or ethnicity with insurgents are more likely to be effective counterinsurgents than fighters from an external state; the identity of these counterinsurgents alone seems to bolster credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the local population.\textsuperscript{27} Other studies find that domestic fighters must not necessarily be former combatants at all; in fact, recruiting non-combatants into civilian defense forces (CDF) is significantly more effective in terms of neutralizing belligerent

groups, due to their nature as local foraging groups that contrasts with their mechanized state counterparts.\textsuperscript{28}

Measures that include the delivery of direct military aid from the state to rival armed groups, but would include collaboration and extensive intelligence-sharing between the parties in order to isolate the insurgency from a tactical standpoint. Nevertheless, an external state may choose to arm intra-state groups in order to check the power of the host state, or another external state in a proxy war. Studies have pointed to the rise of external state support to insurgencies towards the end of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, suggesting that states perceive the assistance of such armed groups as suitable alternatives to confront direct interstate conflict.\textsuperscript{29,30} Nevertheless, the nature of the group that receives such assistance or strategic guidance must be taken into consideration.

Furthermore, a state may choose to adopt techniques in order to incentivize defection from the insurgency. Former insurgent fighters can prove to be an invaluable intelligence asset for counterinsurgents, especially if a state makes an effort to create an incentive for individuals to defect from the insurgency. A significant decrease in the number of insurgents, as well as the number of insurgent groups, is clearly advantageous for a state that seeks to diminish their control, but this decrease may also create an environment that deters individuals from joining the guerilla struggle to begin with. Often, this includes monetary compensation for former fighters as well as some form of public employment (e.g. a position in the state armed forces and/or police force) and


may even lead a fighter down the path of eventual demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and resettlement into society.  

Non-military Components of Counterinsurgency

Just as kinetic counterinsurgency measures are integral for a state to restore or establish its status as the sole entity that possesses a monopoly of force within a given territory, non-kinetic counterinsurgency measures are vital for generating legitimacy for the state. Within the state, the distinction between rulers and ruled and the socialization of a population to a forced arrangement is a gradual process, which may be prolonged in cases where an armed ethno-nationalist struggle has deep roots in the socio-political culture of a state. Nevertheless, the state may attempt to mitigate the insurgency’s influence on a population through the use of various non-military tools, two of which include the delivery of public services and the maintenance of political institutions.  

Addressing an insurgency’s state-building functions as more than just possessing a monopoly on the use of force, invasive counterinsurgency strategies can disrupt the social, political and economic spheres of an insurgency. Nevertheless, one must acknowledge that internal security is a prerequisite for many of these “state-building” measures, regardless of whether they are undertaken by the state or the insurgency. In fact, Thomas Hobbes upheld this notion: “a state that cannot provide protection cannot command obedience and hence is not a state at all.” States will undoubtedly face numerous challenges in attempting to expand their economic and political influence in areas that experience ongoing armed conflict. Yet, the fungibility of military force—

well examined and understood in inter-state conflict—must be reexamined and modified in the context of counterinsurgency warfare. As Robert Art argues, while military force is fungible in that it may be linked to other issues, it is not nearly as fungible as other measures of state power, including economic and political influence.35

Developed insurgencies that occupy a considerable area of land typically establish some semblance of governance by providing local security and public services in exchange for popular support and state opposition. States may seek to disrupt this relationship between the insurgency and the population by maintaining the delivery of public services in government controlled areas, and/or expanding the delivery of public services outside of those areas, potentially into insurgent-held territory. Such services include the building of infrastructure necessary for transportation, the provision of rudimentary amenities such as clean water, electricity, food, health services, etc. Some states halt or significantly impede the delivery of public services to areas that are insurgent strongholds, which, can result in significant socio-economic disparities between such areas in comparison to those under state control. Conversely, economic incentive and disincentive potentially accelerates the rate of insurgent defection and popular support, a carrot-and-stick approach to legitimizing the state.36 In conflict zones or disputed regions, states may seek to re-establish or improve the delivery of public services, humanitarian assistance, etc., that rival those of the insurgency in order to provide an incentive for both local fighters and civilians to support the state instead of the insurgency.37

36 McFate, 2006.
37 Kilcullen, 2012.
Secondly, states may reinforce the political institutions that effectively govern state and/or insurgent-held territory. In this regard, states can ensure that the existing political institutions, such as national and local legislatures, the electoral system, criminal justice system, police force, and bureaucracy are intact and functioning as they are intended to do so. For states that experience widespread insurgent movements, it is usually the absence or inadequacy of state functions that serves as a primary motivation for a population to shift loyalties away from the state to an entity that does provide basic political services, which may be the insurgency. Nevertheless, many states may choose to politically from areas even with a weak insurgent presence in order to meet the demands of carrying out military operations against the insurgency, which may be counterproductive and isolate the population instead.\footnote{Kilcullen, 2010.}

In addition to economic assistance in the form of public services and continual efforts to govern regions with increased insurgent activity, states may engage (directly or indirectly) in diplomatic efforts to address the political and economic grievances of the insurgency in an attempt to resolve these long, protracted conflicts.\footnote{Verret, Mark. (2013) “Comparing Contemporary Counterinsurgency Doctrines and Theories.” \textit{Baltic Security \\ & Defence Review}. 15(1): 95-122.} Often, political grievances of the insurgency such as perceived misrepresentation or lack of representation of particular ethnic, religious, or tribal groups within local and national governments fuels their armed struggle.\footnote{Jones D.M., Smith M.L.R., Stone J. 2012. “Counter-COIN: Counterinsurgency and the Preemption of Strategy.” \textit{Studies in Conflict and Terrorism} 35: 597-617.} State policies to create a more inclusive political institution or establish mechanisms to improve the delivery of political and economic services can theoretically bolster its credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of both the insurgency and the population.\footnote{McFate, 2006.} Yet, these tools are not utilized as often as they could be. Both aforementioned categories of non-military counterinsurgency policies demand, all the same,
incredible monetary and human costs from states. Moreover, discerning the effectiveness of these policies is difficult and may take years, if not decades, to prove fruitful.\footnote{Ibid.} For these reasons, states are more reluctant to engage long-term, nation-building projects compared to short-lived military campaigns.

Theoretically, the Weberian notions of establishing a monopoly of force and maintaining legitimacy within the population are two sides of the same coin, where military and non-military counterinsurgency policies are not mutually exclusive and often complement each other. Nevertheless, if war is truly politics by other means, political goals and grievances must be addressed by the state in order to successfully stabilize and terminate these conflicts. According to this approach, non-military measures must be implemented in conjunction with military ones in order for states to effectively prevail in counterinsurgency wars. The efficacy of military and non-military counterinsurgency policies are evaluated in the large-N study that follows.

**Large-N Study**

**Research Methods**

**Case Selection**

The RAND Corporation—a nonprofit think-tank that provides policy recommendations on defense issues—compiled a database of 71 counterinsurgency cases in 2010 and 2013, documenting and detailing the historical facts of the case, in addition to assigning a war outcome
value in terms of state victory.\textsuperscript{43,44} Paul et al employed the following criteria for choosing counterinsurgency cases. Firstly, the case must have involved fighting between state and non-state actors defined as insurgents, who utilized political violence to take control of a government or region (coup, coups, counter-coups or insurrections are not included in this database). Secondly, a case must have met a minimum casualty inclusion rate of 1,000 individuals, where each side (insurgency and state) incurred at least 100 deaths. Moreover, the insurgency must have incorporated guerilla warfare into its strategy, employing hit-and-run tactics against state forces rather than fighting conventionally, which is typically characteristic of civil wars rather than insurgencies.\textsuperscript{45} Though insurgencies may fight a state conventionally once they accumulate enough strength and power (according to a Maoist understanding of insurgency, at least), insurgencies will spend most of their development avoiding direct battle with the state due to the asymmetric nature of the opposing sides.\textsuperscript{46,47} Lastly, each counterinsurgency case must have been resolved between 1945 and 2008.\textsuperscript{48} The list of counterinsurgency cases analyzed from the RAND studies is provided in Appendix A.

\textit{Independent Variables: Military Components of Counterinsurgency}

Each explanatory, or independent variable is recorded dichotomously, where the documentation of the presence of the following variables (or the lack thereof) in the analysis of


\textsuperscript{45} Paul et al, 2010.


\textsuperscript{47} Lyall & Wilson III, 2009.

\textsuperscript{48} Paul et al, 2010 and 2013.
each RAND case leads to the assignment of whether a variable is present (1) or not (0). In cases where there is no mention of the variable in question, a (0) is assigned. Any errors made in this data recording process are mine.

**Conflict Dynamics**

General trends regarding the conflict duration, presence (1) or absence (0) of three or more insurgent groups, as well as the presence (1) or absence (0) of external state support to the insurgency is documented for each case as it is analyzed. These general trends in conflict dynamics can be placed in context with counterinsurgency campaigns to further extrapolate policy implications.

**Direct Military Force**

The use of direct military force by the state can be quantified in two ways: through the deployment of air campaigns (air force and/or drones) and ground campaigns. In a dichotomous analysis of the two aforementioned variables, one may classify whether the state employed the campaign (1) or if it did not (0).

**Indirect Military Force**

The use of indirect military force can be analyzed by observing the delivery of military aid to either a host state or to armed intra-state actors that antagonize the insurgency. In a dichotomous analysis, one can determine in each case study whether an external state provides military aid (including arms, monetary assistance, air and/or ground support) to the host state afflicted with an insurgency (1) or not (0), and similarly, whether a state executing a counterinsurgency strategy provides military assistance to domestic armed intra-state groups rivaling the insurgency (1) or not (0).
**Independent Variables: Non-military Components of Counterinsurgency**

**Public Services**

The delivery of public services in a counterinsurgency strategy can be quantified by observing the maintenance of public services in government controlled areas, which includes the building of infrastructure, the maintenance of sewage and electrical systems, etc., as well as the expansion of public services outside of government controlled regions into either disputed territory or insurgent-held areas. Both variables are analyzed on a dichotomous basis, where the maintenance of public services by the state is apparent (1) or not (0), and the expansion of public services by the state is apparent (1) or not (0).

**Political Institutions**

The analysis of the political implications of counterinsurgency policies will be observed through the functioning and utilization of political institutions of the state. Political institutions that are under state control, if functioning adequately, will be active and provide services through the police force, criminal justice system, bureaucracy, etc. A dichotomous analysis of functioning political institutions (1) or lack thereof (0) can then be compared to the actual use of political institutions by the population. These institutions may be active and utilized by the population, observed by the use of the state’s criminal justice system to adjudicate civil matters, for example, or the use of the police force when addressing local security concerns, as well as the activity of the electoral system (if applicable). Once again, a dichotomous analysis of the active use of aforementioned political institutions (1) or lack thereof (0) can provide the basis to observe general patterns in war outcome.
Dependent Variable: War Outcome

The dependent variable observed will be war outcome, and is coded dichotomously through the observation of state victory (1) and the lack of state victory (0) (which, would include cases of both state loss and draws between the insurgency and the state). The classification of war outcome is derived solely from the RAND studies, however; each war outcome value is compared with those found in other databases to verify assignment consistency. These databases include the Correlates of War (COW) Intra-State War Dataset (Version 3.0), the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) Armed Conflict Dataset (Version 4.0, 2015), and Max Boot’s Invisible Armies Insurgency Tracker Dataset (2013). The logic used for the assignment of case outcomes for the RAND dataset is illustrated in Figure 1. Cases in which a clear state victory was not stated or apparent were coded as counterinsurgency losses.

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49 Available at http://www.correlatesofwar.org/data-sets
50 Available at http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/ucdp_prio_armed_conflict_dataset/
51 Available at http://www.cfr.org/wars-and-warfare/invisible-armies-insurgency-tracker/p29917
Data Analysis

For each explanatory variable, the total number of cases in which the variable was present (1) was collected and compared with the total number of cases in which there was a counterinsurgency win or a loss. Firstly, a two-dimensional chi-square ($\chi^2$) test of association was conducted on all dichotomous variables in order to determine if the observed proportions of counterinsurgency outcome in the employment of each variable was significantly different from a null, or expected proportion of counterinsurgency outcome, where the null assumed that the frequency of the two dichotomous variables would not be statistically significant (reported in Table 1). In other words, the null chi-square frequencies for dichotomous values are expected to be equal (50/50). Secondly, a one-tailed independent samples t-test assuming unequal sample variances was

52 Paul et al, 2010.
performed to determine if there existed a significant statistical difference between cases in which a counterinsurgency measure was present, and those in which the measure was absent (reported in Table 2). Both aforementioned statistical analyses were performed through the VassarStats program.53

Table 1: Summary of two-dimensional goodness of fit chi-square ($\chi^2$) tests of explanatory variables. The asterisk indicates significance at the $p = .05$ level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>$\chi^2$ statistic</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict Dynamics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 3 Armed Groups</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1) = 10.54$</td>
<td>$p = .0012^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurgent External Support</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1) = 0.55$</td>
<td>$p = .46$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Military Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Campaign</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1) = 0.02$</td>
<td>$p = .89$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Campaign</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1) = \infty$</td>
<td>$p &lt; .0001^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host State Aid</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1) = 0.01$</td>
<td>$p = .92$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rival Armed Group Aid</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1) = 0.02$</td>
<td>$p = .89$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nonmilitary Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Services Maintenance</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1) = 25.72$</td>
<td>$p &lt; .0001^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Services Expansion</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1) = 12.37$</td>
<td>$p = .0004^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Institution Availability</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1) = 22.69$</td>
<td>$p &lt; .0001^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Institution Utilization</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1) = 26.99$</td>
<td>$p &lt; .0001^*$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

53 Available at [http://vassarstats.net/](http://vassarstats.net/)
Table 2: Summary of one-tailed independent sample t-tests of dichotomous explanatory variables. The asterisk indicates significance at the $p = .05$ level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanatory Variable</th>
<th># of present (1) cases in COIN Loss</th>
<th># of present (1) cases in COIN Win</th>
<th>t-statistic</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict Dynamics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 3 Armed Groups</td>
<td>23 out of 42</td>
<td>4 out of 29</td>
<td>$t(69) = +3.79$</td>
<td>$p = .0001^*$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insurgent External Support</td>
<td>36 out of 42</td>
<td>22 out of 29</td>
<td>$t(69) = +1.05$</td>
<td>$p = .15$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Military Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Campaign</td>
<td>27 out of 42</td>
<td>20 out of 29</td>
<td>$t(69) = -0.4$</td>
<td>$p = .35$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Campaign</td>
<td>42 out of 42</td>
<td>29 out of 29</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host State Aid</td>
<td>31 out of 42</td>
<td>22 out of 29</td>
<td>$t(69) = -0.41$</td>
<td>$p = .34$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rival Armed Group Aid</td>
<td>15 out of 42</td>
<td>9 out of 29</td>
<td>$t(69) = +0.4$</td>
<td>$p = .35$</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nonmilitary Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Services Maintenance</td>
<td>16 out of 42</td>
<td>29 out of 29</td>
<td>$t(69) = -6.77$</td>
<td>$p &lt; .0001^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Services Expansion</td>
<td>4 out of 42</td>
<td>14 out of 28</td>
<td>$t(68) = -4.2$</td>
<td>$p &lt; .0001^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Institution Availability</td>
<td>14 out of 40</td>
<td>26 out of 27</td>
<td>$t(65) = -6.25$</td>
<td>$p &lt; .0001^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Institution Utilization</td>
<td>1 out of 40</td>
<td>17 out of 27</td>
<td>$t(65) = -7.26$</td>
<td>$p &lt; .0001^*$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results**

Of the 71 counterinsurgency campaigns documented between 1945 and 2008, 29 cases (~40%) resulted in a state victory, compared to 42 cases (~60%) mixed and failed campaigns. In a one-dimensional goodness of fit test between the two outcomes, there was no significant statistical difference between the expected (null) probability of outcomes and the observed (actual) probability of outcomes ($\chi^2 (1) = 2.02; p = 0.16$). While states have not consistently won counterinsurgency wars since 1945, all counterinsurgency efforts have not resulted in state failure.

On average, counterinsurgency campaigns in which states emerged victorious lasted approximately 5300 days (~14.5 years), compared to 3700 days (~10 years) in cases where counterinsurgency did not result in state victory. In a one-tailed independent samples t-test
assuming unequal sample variances, conflict duration was significantly longer in cases that resulted in state victory \( t(64) = -2.09; p = .02 \). The average duration of successful counterinsurgency campaigns across all cases is consistent with the recommended values set forth by the US FM 3-24 and the Brahimi Report.

Two interesting results were found regarding conflict dynamics. Firstly, a chi-square analysis comparing the groups with varying outcomes indicates a significant statistical difference between the expected and the observed probabilities of war outcome when comparing the presence and absence of three or more armed groups (Table 1). As predicted, cases in which there are three or more insurgent groups competing with the state for control over a given territory are significantly more likely to result in state loss compared to cases in which fewer insurgent groups are active (Table 2). This result is consistent with a theoretical counterinsurgency model in which force multiplication (either on the state side or insurgent side) can clearly tip the balance in terms of the relationship between the state and the insurgency.

Secondly, in this population of cases, a chi square analysis does not indicate a significant statistical difference between the expected and observed probabilities of war outcome when comparing the presence and absence of external state support to the insurgency (Table 1). Specifically, the presence of external state support to the insurgency does not seem to create a significant difference between counterinsurgency success and failure (Table 2). This result, while odd at first, can be understood when considering the rise of an insurgency. Insurgent movements are by nature asymmetric and incredibly weak, especially when compared to their state counterparts. Thus, in order for an insurgency to become and remain prominent as a security and political threat to a state, it must accrue economic and military capabilities from other state
actors—which, are the only ones that can sustain the funding of armed groups in the long term.\textsuperscript{54} Indeed, in a number of cases analyzed from the RAND studies, insurgencies often rose to prominence with the support from an external state actor (which, the state provided in order to indirectly antagonize the host state), however; insurgencies precipitously weakened when this external support ceased or was significantly reduced. Studies that have analyzed the rise and fall of insurgencies have provided similar explanations, where the presence of external support was the primary determinant of a proto-insurgency’s ascension to territorial control.\textsuperscript{55,56} Moreover, while this large-N study focuses on active support (e.g. the delivery of weapons, material, etc.) from external state actors, passive support by such actors (e.g. rhetorical, ideological or political support) can similarly bolster sympathy for insurgent efforts to challenge the host state.\textsuperscript{57}

The use of direct and indirect military force in air campaigns, external support provided to a host state, and internal support to rival armed groups in state counterinsurgency policies are not significantly different in a chi-square analysis, with the exception of ground campaigns. All 71 counterinsurgency cases examined in this study utilized ground forces or personnel in some capacity, which explains a significant chi-square result (Table 1). On the other hand, all explanatory military variables are not significantly different in an independent samples analysis (t-test) comparing cases with different war outcomes (Table 2). From a theoretical perspective, while some uses of military force can be more effective than others, all forms of military force are

\textsuperscript{57} Paul, Christopher. 2010. “As a Fish Swims in the Sea: Relationships Between Factors Contributing to Support for Terrorist or Insurgent Groups.” Studies in Conflict and Terrorism 33: 488-510.
utilized in some way throughout counterinsurgency cases in order to address the security threat an insurgency poses for the state; however, these efforts are not significantly associated with state success or failure. These results are consistent with previous studies that have compared cases of conventional and unconventional warfare, where in the latter, the use of military force is not only uncorrelated with a war outcome that is favorable for the state, but may potentially be counterproductive in terms of the political goals a state seeks to achieve.\textsuperscript{58}

All of the nonmilitary measures analyzed, on the other hand, are significantly different in cases where state success was recorded, both in terms of the chi-square analyses and the t-test of independent samples (Table 1). The difference observed between cases in which public services were maintained or expanded is statistically significant from those cases in which public services were not maintained or expanded. Likewise, the difference observed between cases in which political institutions were readily available and utilized by the population is statistically significant from the cases in which political institutions were not readily available or utilized (Table 2). These results, compared to the results of the statistical analyses of military counterinsurgency measures, are telling. To begin with, the data suggests that counterinsurgency policies vary in terms of their effectiveness. Specifically, non-military counterinsurgency measures that indirectly target the insurgency are more likely to result in state success, compared to military counterinsurgency measures. The adage championed by proponents of population-centric counterinsurgency policies, “dollars and ballots will have a more important effect [on the counterinsurgency war] than bombs and bullets,”\textsuperscript{59} is well supported by the data obtained from this study. Consistent with the Weberian nature of statehood (that is, an entity that both possesses a monopoly of force and is perceived as


a legitimate governing authority), good and just governance in terms of maintaining political institutions and addressing political grievances can contribute to generating a sense of legitimacy within the population. In turn, this policy robs the insurgency of the support that it thrives upon for domestic survival and if sustained over a long period of time, results in state victory.60

Conclusions for Large-N Study

The results obtained from this large-N study of 71 counterinsurgency cases highlight the utility of non-military counterinsurgency measures in determining a war outcome that is favorable for the state. More importantly, these policies are directed towards the population, not towards the insurgency. Proponents of population-centric counterinsurgency models, for example, will cite such analyses and observations to call for a decreased reliance on military-centric measures to attack the insurgency, and instead adopt non-military policies to bolster popular support for the state that seeks to prevail in the conflict.61 These aforementioned findings—on both military and nonmilitary counterinsurgency measures employed by the state—attempt to extrapolate general trends regarding the type of policies that are generally associated with state success. The results on nonmilitary measures in particular point to the importance of a strategic understanding of insurgency and counterinsurgency as set forth by the theoretical framework of this study.

Case Study Analysis

Provided with a general understanding of the trends in counterinsurgency after 1945, the next sections examine particular case studies to identify specific counterinsurgency policies that are associated with state success. These cases of variable war outcome include the successful

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campaign employed by the United Kingdom (U.K.) in Malaya (1948-1960), the failed campaign employed by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in Afghanistan (1979-1989), and the mixed campaign (stalemate) employed by the United States (U.S.) during a portion of its occupation of Afghanistan (2001-present). The following sections serve to provide an overall historiography of the case in question, outlining general military and nonmilitary policies employed by the primary counterinsurgent, as well as analyze how those policies fit in with the theoretical framework of this study.

Case Study 1: The Malayan Emergency (1948 – 1960)

The Malayan Emergency is a well-known case in Southeast Asia that is consistently championed as a counterinsurgency victory for the U.K., where the use of both military and nonmilitary policies resulted in a successful and well-managed response. To understand the counterinsurgency campaign, one must first trace the roots of the insurgency to World War II, where the actions of regional powers would play a formative role on the development of the political environment in Malaya.

Roots of the Insurgency (1941 – 1947)

The Malayan Union—a collection of states in the Malay Archipelago that would form the Federation of Malaysia in 1963 as it is known today—was a British colonial settlement that pre-dated both World Wars. Prior to World War II, the territory was under indirect colonial rule through the control of regional sultans, a governing strategy that both physically and culturally separated the Malay (~44%), Chinese (~38%), Indian (~11%) and aboriginal (~6%) populations

of the country. At the onset of the Second World War, the U.K. reorganized its forces and almost completely withdrew its presence from Malaya, leaving its colony susceptible to Japanese invasion and occupation from 1941-1945 (a period that is commonly referred to by Malayans as “the period when the white man ran”). During the Japanese occupation, the decade-old Malayan Communist Party (MCP) modified its anti-colonial agenda to an anti-fascist one, and adopting this new stance, rose to national prominence with considerable support from the population. Japanese policies of political exclusion and overall animosity—particularly towards its Chinese minority—as well as the suppression of nationalist sentiment during wartime further exacerbated tensions, and the MCP quickly capitalized on this. The MCP particularly challenged socio-political perceptions of the Chinese population, disproving the notion that they were politically isolated and incapable of organizing to action. Calling on Malayans to “unite with Soviet Russia and China to support the independence of the weak and small races in the Far East, and to aid the people of Japan in their anti-Fascist struggle,” the MCP would secure British approval and assistance as well.

In 1943, the MCP officially formed the Malayan Peoples’ Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) and began coordinating with the Clandestine British Special Operations to wage a guerilla

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campaign.\textsuperscript{70} Leaving much of the strategic military planning to the party leadership, the U.K. predictably focused on its active (and urgent) campaign in Europe, leaving the heavy fighting to the locals. By the end of 1944, suffering losses on various fronts in Southeast Asia in addition to the rough guerilla campaign in Malaya, Japan would abruptly withdraw and leave the peninsula in a state of chaos (the extent to which the Malayan guerillas were responsible for this departure, however, has been widely contested).\textsuperscript{71}

From 1945 to 1948, British forces attempted to reestablish some semblance of pre-colonial rule in Malaya, to no avail. The legalization of the MCP in 1945 both legitimized the party and its goals, leaving the newly established interim British Military Administration (BMA) struggling to assert control over many areas of the country. A number of policies, including the demonetization of the Japanese currency, rampant corruption in the existing Malayan administration, and a rising unemployment rate devastated the rubber and tin industries the state relied upon for its economic productivity.\textsuperscript{72} Restrictive policies implemented by the BMA would further hinder economic growth within the most populous areas of Malaya, and would further aggravate a population tired of external occupation.\textsuperscript{73} The cost of buying food alone was so high that “…it consumed up to 70 percent of the budget of many families.”\textsuperscript{74} With widespread disillusionment with the main governing authorities in Malaya, the MCP expanded its reach into the industrial and labor sectors of society, registering almost 300 unions into its independent Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade

\textsuperscript{70} Thompson, 1978, pp. 62-84.
Unions. Along with expanding its economic power in Malaya, the armed wing of the MCP would begin its campaign of terror attacks against the BMA and the Malayan government. As levels of violence nearly doubled between 1947 and 1948, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) (or Chinese “squatters,” as they are referred to in the literature) skyrocketed to over 500,000 in the jungle-covered countryside. These individuals, politically, socially, and economically isolated from the rest of the population, became an excellent source of recruits for the MCP. By 1948, the MCP recruited many IDPs to fight a classic rural insurgency, which would carry out attacks mostly against the rubber and tin estates in the hope of disrupting a Malayan economy in sluggish recovery. British intelligence at the time estimated that the insurgency consisted of roughly 12,000 fighters, 60% of which were a part of the “old insurgency,” a reference to the MPAJA. The insurgency was roughly comparable to a security force of only 11,500 military troops, who were unable to address the rise in violent attacks during the period of BMA settlement. In June 1948, the Government of Malaya would officially declare a National Emergency, prompting British involvement.

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75 Komer, 1972, p. 5.
76 Despite tremendous variability in the scale of political violence employed by the MCP, the group is interchangeably referred to as “guerilla,” “terrorist,” and “insurgent” in official documents released by the United Kingdom. In fact, the British campaign to end the Malayan Emergency was referred to as a “counter-terror” strategy for most of the 20th century. Nevertheless, there seems to be more consistency in the identification of the ethno-nationalist movement as an insurgency in numerous scholarly works (see Stubbs, Komer, Stenson, Thompson). Thus, while the MCP undoubtedly adopted a campaign of targeted terror during its early development, its primary and specific goal of state control characterizes it as an insurgency, a distinction that is consistent with the theoretical framework of this study.
77 Komer, 1972, p. 7.
78 Thompson, 1978, pp. 62-84.
79 Komer, 1972, p. 8.
80 Komer, 1972, p. 11.
Organizing a “Counter-terror” Strategy (1948 – 1951)

The armed wing of the MCP—formerly MPAJA—refashioned its name to the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) in order to reflect both aspirations to state control as well as a willingness to integrate other Malayan ethnic groups. From 1948 to 1950, the MNLA was behind innumerable attacks on local industries, government posts in villages as well as major cities as it was simultaneously consolidating considerable swaths of territory in rural areas. Efforts to counter the MNLA were weak, however; the BMA and Malayan government faced tremendous obstacles in organizing a response to the group to begin with. Implementing both economic and military austerity measures back home, the UK and Malayan security forces were relatively weak (consisting of only 11,500 troops), forcing the British High Commissioner to manage the security situation through preexisting police and paramilitary forces. By the end of 1949, these forces were further strengthened to reach the following numbers: ~18,000 regular police, ~30,000 special constables, ~47,000 auxiliaries and ~32,000 regular army field troops (which were a combination of Malayan and British forces). Reinforcing the security apparatus, in turn, paved the way for direct confrontation with insurgents in rural terrain. Predictably, this engagement led to a precipitous increase in force casualties for the state as well as the insurgency. While the campaign did not extensively utilize offensive air support (due to geographic and technical constraints), the

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81 While the MCP is generally regarded as an insurgency, and the overall British campaign to neutralize the armed group is referred to as counterinsurgency, the initial phase of British occupation is documented—in both official documents and literature—as a counter-terror campaign. Such a term, according to the literature, is likely assigned to highlight emphasis on countering the military struggle of the insurgency rather than the socio-political movement. Further, the label reflects a period in which levels of violence in Malaya would peak, resulting in the greatest number of civilian and insurgent casualties during the entire Emergency (see Komer, Thompson, Stubbs). Throughout this case-study, I do not refer to the British occupation as a “counterterrorism” strategy; rather, I maintain consistency in identifying the campaign as a strategy to counter an insurgency.

82 Stubbs, 1989, pp. 74-82.
83 Komer, 1972, 17.
84 Ibid.
destruction of entire villages played in the insurgency’s favor. Other harsh policies directed at the population such as mass deportations and incarcerations, the expansion of security forces into villages with a complete disregard to cultural and ethnic sensitivities, as well as documented cases of arson and property damage of the homes of suspected communist sympathizers did little to bolster credibility and legitimacy for the counterinsurgents. The military efforts of the joint British-Malay coalition seemed to be feckless, as Clutterbuck describes below:

By the spring of 1950, though we had survived two dangerous years, we were undoubtedly losing the war. The soldiers and police were killing guerillas at a steady 50 or 60 a month, and getting 20 or 30 surrenders, but they [the Communists] were more than making up for this by good recruiting…the guerillas were murdering more than 100 men a month, and the police seemed powerless to prevent it…The main reason why we were losing was that the guerillas could get all the support they needed—food, clothing, information, and recruits—from the squatters…the squatters had little to lose from a collapse of the established order and economy; and besides, they had no option but to pay “taxes” and provide food for the guerillas.

Indeed, the internally displaced squatters played an integral source of ideological, physical, and economic support for the insurgency. As mentioned earlier, the systematic exclusion and targeting of the Chinese minority by the security forces further exacerbated their aversion to peaceful engagement in the political process. The levels of violence in Malaya would reach a peak in 1951, culminating in the assassination of Sir Henry Gurney, the High Commissioner to Malaya.

89 Komer, 1972, p. 18.
90 Ibid.
“‘Screwing Down’ Communist Supporters”91 (1952 – 1954)

Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the British Parliament would respond to Gurney’s assassination by calling for a structural and strategic reorganization of the “counter-terror” effort in Malaya. Lieutenant-General Sir Harold Briggs’ plan to dramatically shift British strategy was soon put into force, which prioritized the following measures: “(1) separate the guerillas from the people, (2) formalize and strengthen the C-I [counterinsurgency] management system, (3) strengthen intelligence as the key to antiguerilla operations, and (4) deploy the security forces on a primarily territorial basis.”92 The provisions of the Briggs plan entailed invasive policies to disrupt the insurgency, the most notable of which was the forcible resettlement of the squatters residing in Malayan jungles, the population that the MNLA most depended upon for its survival.93 The British campaign turned offensive rather than defensive quickly, with little restrictions on the use of force against insurgents and any communist sympathizers. From 1952-1954 an estimated two-thirds of the insurgency was completely wiped out by the coalition, most of which were killed and many were deported to neighboring China.94,95 In fact, Emergency Regulation such as 17-C and 17-D empowered the Malayan government to deport and/or indefinitely detain unregistered “non-citizens” back to their state of origin; this resulted in the deportation of over 26,000 Chinese people, as many in this ethnic group were not recognized as citizens by the Japanese government nor by the British-Malay coalition.96 By the end of 1954, over 470,000 squatters were successfully resettled—many of whom, willingly complied with state forces.97 As predicted, levels of violence

91 To quote the phrase used by Hack (1999) to describe this particular phase of the Emergency.
92 Komer, 1972, p. 19.
94 Komer, 1972, p. 20.
95 Komer, 1972, p. 37.
96 Ibid.
precipitously decreased by 1954, and the government of Malaya found itself in a situation to move on to stabilization operations.

Winning “Hearts and Minds” (1954 – 1960)

Sir Gerald Templer, the High Commissioner in Malaya (1952-1954) would coin the term “hearts and minds,” a phrase that has become embedded in the modern lexicon of counterinsurgency warfare.\(^9^8\) Templer urged the British and Malayan administration to formulate and execute policies that would not only eradicate the insurgency, but win the political support of the population.\(^9^9\) Such policies included more nonmilitary measures than military ones, where the newly centralized Malayan government was expected to restore and enforce the rule of law, register previously undocumented citizens (e.g. Chinese squatters), shut down the MCP-dominated trade and labor unions, and increase development and assistance programs in rural areas to foster post-conflict reconstruction.\(^1^0^0\) The British-Malay coalition also registered the vast majority of the Malayan population (~3 million people of all ethnic groups) into a national identification system in order to monitor the population as well as any insurgents that became embedded in the population.\(^1^0^1\) This national system was arguably one of the few policies that accelerated the process of intelligence collection and sharing regarding the insurgency between various agencies in the Malayan government.\(^1^0^2, 1^0^3\)

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\(^9^8\) While Templer first used the phrase “hearts and minds,” he derived the term from Sir Gurney’s statement regarding the British occupation of Malaya in 1951: “…this war is not to be won only with guns or the ballot-box or any other material instrument which does not touch the hearts of men…” from Straits Times Annual 1952 (Singapore: Straits Times 1952), preface.


\(^1^0^0\) Komer, 1972, p. 36.

\(^1^0^1\) Ibid.


This period of relative stability paved the way for the British government to “Malayanize” the state into self-government, with an eye towards eventual independence.104 This approach gained traction both in Malaya and in the U.K., where many felt that Britain could no longer maintain a hold on its colonies as it had done in the past.105 During this time frame, the MNLA soon died off as an insurgency, with the costs of operating so high and little incentive for the Chinese population to shift loyalties away from the state (the MCP, on the other hand, would continue to operate (albeit clandestinely) in the Malay Peninsula until 1967, where the party would wage a separate, externally funded insurgency until 1989).106 The recent memory of the brutal “counter-terror” campaign employed by the joint British-Malay forces catalyzed a major shift in the political culture of the state towards restoring some semblance of peace and security not experienced by the Peninsula for almost two decades. The Emergency was officially declared to be over in the summer of 1960, with the vast majority of British forces withdrawing soon thereafter.107 The financial and human costs of the Malayan Emergency are listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Financial and Human Costs of the Malayan Emergency (1948 – 1960)108,109,110

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Malayan Government (Host State)</th>
<th>U.K. (Primary Counterinsurgent)</th>
<th>MCP (Insurgency)</th>
<th>Civilian (non-combatants)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Emergency</td>
<td>$486,702,408</td>
<td>$235,200,000</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Killed</td>
<td>4,425</td>
<td>N/A (combined with Host State)</td>
<td>13,509</td>
<td>4,668</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

104 Komer, 1972, p. 65.
105 Stubbs, 1989, pp. 201-224.
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid.
110 Thompson, 1978.
Analyzing Counterinsurgency Success

While understanding of the Malayan Emergency provides one with particular examples of successful and failed counterinsurgency policies, the campaign must be analyzed as a whole in the historical context of the region and with respect to the nature of the insurgency in order to effectively determine the extent to which these policies were responsible for the success of the British and Malayan forces. Nevertheless, the case study clearly provides evidence for the efficacy of nonmilitary counterinsurgency policies, particularly when they were applied in conjunction with the military “counter-terror” strategy to neutralize the insurgency. Specifically, the case study suggests that effective counterinsurgency includes a two-stage approach, where the implementation of military polices to establish security creates a stable environment in which nonmilitary policies can be successfully employed.

Nature of the Insurgency

There are several circumstantial (or environmental) variables that contribute to the rise and fall of insurgency that should be taken into consideration in any analysis of counterinsurgency warfare. The MNLA—throughout its insurgency of both urban and rural attacks—was an ethnically and politically homogeneous entity. The insurgency failed to gain legitimacy and traction within the vast majority of other ethnic groups (e.g. Indian, aboriginal, Malay, etc.)—a feature that not only isolated the group from the rest of society, but arguably shortened the lifespan of an armed group that failed to assimilate other sectors of the Malayan population. This domestic characteristic of the insurgency, taken into account in conjunction with the fact that the group was not supported by an external state (financially or militarily) in its rise to national prominence,
allows one to appreciate how the insurgency was truly a weak armed group vying for power.\textsuperscript{111} David Galula, one of the founding fathers of population-centric counterinsurgency scholarship, continually cited external state assistance as a necessary prerequisite for the success of an insurgency, and consequently, a primary obstacle to host state success in terms of eliminating these armed groups.\textsuperscript{112} The absence of external assistance to the MNLA in this case study arguably diminished the insurgency’s sustainability in the long term.\textsuperscript{113}

\textit{Military-centric “Counter-terror” Campaign}

For much of the early British occupation of Malaya (1948-1951) there really was no counterinsurgency strategy to defeat the MNLA; the group was deemed a terrorist organization that sought to inflict violence on the population for the sake of violence, and its political grievances and goals were never acknowledged by the state.\textsuperscript{114} Accordingly, the British-Malay coalition sought to proportionally counter the insurgent use of force by employing a military strategy focused on tactical gains and losses—not strategic ones—and to that end, the British-Malay coalition to neutralize the MNLA consisted of a mere force of 11,500 (comparable to the roughly 12,000 insurgent fighters at the peak of MCP/MNLA activity)\textsuperscript{115} Urban and rural areas alike were not policed and cordoned to cut off insurgent control from sympathetic populations as well as crucial economic and social strongholds; rather, the primary objective of the coalition forces at this stage was to restore security.\textsuperscript{116} Cognizant of the state of the British economy at the time and the rapid post-conflict transition of Malayan society out of World War II led to a significant

\begin{footnotes}
\item[111] Record, 2007.
\item[114] Stubbs, 1989, pp. 225-244.
\item[115] Komer, 1972, p. 17.
\item[116] Sunderland, 1964.
\end{footnotes}
reduction in the number of operating military personnel in the host state.\textsuperscript{117} Few Royal Air Force (RAF) missions were deployed in Malaya to carry out strikes in rural centers—due to both financial and political limitations, the latter of which included the perception that using napalm to obliterate entire villages was counterproductive.\textsuperscript{118} This is indicative of an important feature of military operations in Malaya during the British occupation, that is, the discriminate use of force in military counterinsurgency policy is more likely to restore security, and in turn, create the stable environment needed to usher in the implementation of nonmilitary state-building policies. Prior to the abandonment of the notoriously inaccurate air campaigns, the British-Malay coalition was achieving short-term tactical gains whilst simultaneously alienating the population, whose newfound enthusiasm for the insurgency following these incidents only exacerbated the security situation. Predictably, the absence of security and ongoing violence on the ground created conditions in which the counterinsurgents felt reluctant to encourage the building of infrastructure, political and economic institutions, etc.—all of which are necessary elements in a successful counterinsurgency campaign.

\textit{Implementing the Population-centric ‘Hearts and Minds’ Campaign}

The assassination of the High Commissioner in Malaya triggered a bureaucratic and strategic shift in British-Malay policy towards the insurgency. The group was perceived as a real, almost existential threat to the national security of the Peninsula, and the counterinsurgency effort was reorganized to reflect the adoption of this assessment. The importance of this shift in the perception of the insurgency, and the adoption of an \textit{ad hoc} approach to counterinsurgency policy

\textsuperscript{118} Simpson, 1999.
(adding that the army is most effective when it operates as a “learning organization”\textsuperscript{119} is well documented in John Nagl’s work:

> How the services perceive themselves, their roles, and missions helps to determine not only how they will prepare for the next war, but how flexible they will be in responding to unexpected situations when that war occurs.\textsuperscript{120}

In addition to increasing the number of British troops in Malaya, High Commissioner reorganized the administration of the war effort, which was now to be conducted through a war executive committee system.\textsuperscript{121} More importantly, these national committees were hierarchically connected to preexisting local police and constabulary agencies with bureaucracies of their own tasked with law enforcement and transitional justice. As evidenced in this case study, local policing conducted by the host state and the Malayan population hastened the restoration of security, a necessary prerequisite for the implementation of other non-military measures (e.g. national registration, resettlement of IDPs, etc).\textsuperscript{122} In other words, this case study provides considerable evidence for the two-staged approach to counterinsurgency policy, where discriminate military force creates a stable environment for the implementation of nonmilitary measures. With significantly lower levels of violence in 1954, the British-Malay coalition simultaneously began to utilize preexisting national institutions to adjudicate matters, encourage political participation in a soon-to-be independent Malaya, and facilitate economic growth. Due to this strategy, the British government did not invest as heavily into the counterinsurgency campaign as much as the Malayan government did; this fact is illustrated in the economic cost of carrying out the


\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{122} Sunderland, 1964.
insurgency—the host state’s contribution to resolving the Malayan emergency was nearly twice that of the UK (Table 3).123

Overall, there are a number counterinsurgency policies employed by the joint British-Malay forces that resulted in state victory, and it is difficult to ascertain which policies contributed more or less to the successful elimination of the MNLA. Nevertheless, the adoption of both military and non-military counterinsurgency policies, and the integration of host state forces with the British occupiers contributed to the political legitimization process of the Malayan government, and effectively isolated the insurgency. Consistent with the theoretical framework and the large-N study, the discriminate use of force and the inclusion of policies targeted at the population in the Malayan Emergency provide evidence for the efficacy of population-centric counterinsurgency policies. While the large-N study cannot account for the chronological causal effect of military policies, the case study of the Malayan Emergency provides evidence for the efficacy of a particular, two-stage approach to counterinsurgency, where the implementation of military measures (specifically, discriminate force) during the initial phase of conflict creates a secure environment in which nonmilitary counterinsurgency policies can be executed. In other words, the case study indicates that successful counterinsurgency is not only associated with the nature of the policies implemented (e.g. military vs. nonmilitary); rather, the type of policy and the temporal context in which the policy is implemented may contribute to variable conflict outcomes.

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123 Hamby, 2002.
Case Study 2: The USSR War in Afghanistan (1979 – 1989)

Commonly referred to as “the Soviet Union’s Vietnam,” the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics’ (USSR) occupation of Afghanistan is almost universally regarded as a failed counterinsurgency campaign. Unlike Malaya, Afghanistan was not a colonial holding of the Soviet Union, and contrary to popular opinion at the time, the USSR did not have territorial ambitions to assimilate its Southern neighbor into its vast empire. Rather, what the Kremlin envisioned as a stabilization mission to prevent conflict from crossing into its borders escalated into a prolonged and intensive military engagement that would destabilize Afghanistan for decades to come.

Roots of the Insurgency (1973 – 1979)

If one considers Weber’s definition of a state—one that possesses a monopoly of force and legitimacy within a given territory—any analysis of Afghanistan would provide evidence for its historical failure to meet that definition. Not only did two Great Powers (Russia and Great Britain) fail to hold territory for an extended period of time during the “Great Game” of the 1800s, but central governing authorities in Afghanistan have been generally unsuccessful in attempts to consolidate power over a geographically and ethnically diverse country. Indeed, Afghanistan consists of at least five major ethnic groups, including the Pashtuns (40%), Tajiks (25%), Hazaras (18%), Uzbeks (6%), and Turkmen (2%). These ethnic groups are then further subdivided by tribe, where familial and tribal allegiances play a tremendous role in dictating inter-and intra-group interaction. In addition to ethnic and tribal diversity, the geographic diversity of the land-locked

125 Weber, 1946.
state physically prevented authorities from adequately integrating various regions of the state through the building of infrastructure, administration of services, etc. The vast majority (~80%) of the agrarian, landowning Afghan population resides in rural areas, consequently, out of reach of governing authorities that primarily control urban centers. These demographic and geographic features of Afghanistan will play an important role in dictating the politics of interaction between a central authority and the preexisting feudal system, and arguably, establish conditions that fostered the emergence of an insurgency.

Muhammad Daoud Khan attempted to change the dynamic between the central government and Afghanistan’s rural, tribal society when he came to power in 1973. Ousting the weak monarch, Muhammad Zaher Shah, Khan and his ruling People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) sought to modernize the state and strengthen the role of the Afghan government in society. To this end, Khan adopted a socialist platform that included the implementation of sweeping policies such as the federal acquisition of tribal lands, the mandatory matriculation of children into secular schools, gradual tax collection, and the building of infrastructure beyond urban centers into rural regions of the state—all of which, were policies rooted in Soviet models of rapid modernization within a relatively short period of time. Between 1974 – 1977, Khan was able to successfully execute his drastic campaign to advance Afghanistan, but only to an extent: while he built functioning bureaucracies and institutions in urban centers of the state, he failed to bring significant portions of rural areas under his control. In fact, Khan and his PDPA met remarkable resistance

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129 Fromkin, 1980.
from tribal elders in rural areas, who came together in numerous national assemblies (*Loya Jirga* in Pashto) to urge the government to significantly reduce or halt these expansionist policies. Khan would not address these grievances or concerns; rather, he would expand his modernization platform and garner political support and foreign aid from the USSR through the 1970s, eventually assuming authoritarian tendencies in his rule that led to division within his ruling party.\textsuperscript{135,136} As the PDPA fractures, he is assassinated in the 1978 April (Saur) Revolution and Noor Muhammad Taraki assumes the presidency. Taraki attempts to slow down some policies to address domestic tribal grievances, but under pressure from opposition parties in addition to external pressure from its Soviet ally, he continues to implement controversial legislation that alienates the rural population. The Revolutionary Decrees of 1978 that launched a new “five-year plan” were particularly drastic: decrees 6, 7 and 8 called for the cancellation of debts owed to landowners by peasants, the elimination of the *mahr* (bride price), the enforced confiscation of feudal land, and the dissolution of representative *shura* councils only exacerbated the frustration of rural Afghans.\textsuperscript{137} After years of convening in *loya jirgas*, disillusioned Afghan leaders would abandon their peaceful resistance for an active armed campaign against a secular regime that was perceived to be nothing more than a pawn in the Soviet Union’s geopolitical game.\textsuperscript{138} Encompassing a wide variety of tribal, ethnic, and linguistic groups, local armed groups began to identify themselves as *mujahideen* (those who engage in *jihad*, a defensive armed struggle), using Islam as a powerful unifying characteristic to rally against “godless communists.”\textsuperscript{139} By 1979, Taraki and the PDPA knew their government—weak and unstable—would need external assistance in order to

\textsuperscript{136} Rubin, 2002.
\textsuperscript{137} Rubin, 1988.
effectively combat and defeat the insurgency, and after numerous requests to the Soviet politburo, the USSR fearing instability from spilling into its borders, eventually conceded\textsuperscript{140,141} On December 24\textsuperscript{th}, 1979, a small contingent of 4,000 troops would arrive in Kabul to begin what many initially thought would be a short stabilization mission\textsuperscript{142,143}.

\textit{Soviet Invasion and Early Occupation (1980 – 1982)}

Outraging the international community both for its invasion and assassination of Hafizullah Amin, who had previously assassinated Taraki, the Soviet Union assumed full control of Afghanistan as security deteriorated and governance collapsed. The new Afghan leader, Babrak Karmal, was especially weak, but sympathetic to Soviet military action. The ground invasion was relatively swift: Soviet tanks, personnel, and troops essentially moved from city to city as they descended towards Kabul, establishing checkpoints and bases to consolidate control along the way. By February 1980, over 50,000 Red Army troops (mostly Soviet, but some remnants of the weak Afghan army) were operating in Afghanistan, facing little resistance during a snowy winter (during which, the insurgents retreated into rural areas). According to Girardet, “…the speed with which the invaders had swept in took most of the population by surprise. In Kabul, people reacted with sullen disbelief and hatred, but apart from shouts of abuse or stone-throwing, there was little armed resistance…”\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{141} Collins, 1987.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid, p. 17.
As the seasons changed, the *mujahideen* took advantage of Soviet expansion into rural areas by launching guerilla-style attacks. The insurgency, for much of the early phases of the war, was a comparably small force of 30,000 to 40,000 fighters, a figure that would more than triple by 1983.145 Yuri Andropov, who replaced Leonid Brezhnev as the Russian head of state in 1982, responded to the rising violence by expanding the presence of Soviet ground troops out of urban centers and into rural terrain.146 Exposure to insurgent strongholds led to an increase in force casualties on the state and, predictably, catalyzed a major shift in Soviet strategy away from using ground personnel and expanding air operations in rural terrain. Moreover, ground operations held in rural areas were highly mechanized and conventional, a characteristic that made the counterinsurgents excellent targets for small groups of fighters with light arms. Girardet highlights the overwhelming and indiscriminate Soviet force:

From dawn to dusk, they doggedly came. First, one heard an ominous distant drone. Then, as the throbbing grew louder, tiny specks appeared on the horizon and swept across the jagged, snow-caped peaks of the Hindu Kush. Like hordes of wasps, the dull grey helicopter gunships came roaring over the towering ridges that ring this fertile valley. Soon the hollow thuds of rockets and bombs resounded like thunder as they pounded the guerilla positions entrenched among the mountain slopes.

Intermittently, pairs of MIG-23 jetfighters or the new, highly maneuverable SU-24 fighter-bombers shrieked across the skies to dislodge their loads over the huddled villagers hiding among the deep ravines and gorges to the sides. As small groups of front-line resistance fighters bitterly fought against specialized Soviet heliborne assault troops, a massive onslaught of tanks, armored personnel carriers and trucks ground forward along the main valley floor in long dust-billowing columns, determined to crush whatever resistance blocked their path. (Fifth Soviet offensive against the Panjshir Valley, early summer 1982)147

The Soviet response of “digging in”\textsuperscript{148} expectedly resulted in an increase in civilian and insurgent casualties, and the \textit{mujahideen} were able to capitalize on fears of foreign encroachment and insecurity to bolster insurgent recruitment from the local population. A refugee from the province of Kunduz provided the following testimony in order to justify his support for the \textit{mujahideen}:

It was because of the bombardments and cruelty of the Russian troops. Because when the mujahedins were resisting, the Russians would bomb the villages, and when the mujahedins had to retreat, the Russians would come in the village and kill women, children everyone. It happened to our people in our district, and they killed more later around Khanabad [another district of Kunduz]. They used heavy bombs to bomb the village. The bombs make a well—the hole is so deep it brings up water. When they came inside the village they killed many children by cutting their throats. When they found more, they put petrol on them and burned them. They killed twenty, twenty-five children this way. Mostly they killed children, girls, married women, and old ladies. As soon as I saw this, I joined the mujahedins.\textsuperscript{149}

More importantly, Soviet and Afghan national policies militarily and politically alienated the few remaining political allies in the fight against the insurgency, responding with

\ldots KGB-style subversion—the use of psychological and economic pressures, informers, agents-provocateurs, financial pay-offs, imprisonment, threats and privileges\ldots an effective weapon in the government’s efforts to attract or split loyalties among the tribes, ethnic groups, exiled political parties, and resistance fronts.\textsuperscript{150}

Together, the use of authoritarian governing mechanisms in conjunction with the indiscriminate use of force effectively isolated the counterinsurgents from potential allies, an isolation that would easily be taken advantage of by the insurgency. By 1983, the \textit{mujahideen} resistance exploded to a

\textsuperscript{148} Feifer, 2009.
\textsuperscript{150} Girardet, 1985, p. 36.
force of 180,000 to 200,000 fighters (according to one estimate), in comparison to 85,000 Soviet troops.151

The Tide Turns (1983 – 1986)

By 1983, the United Nations General Assembly, the U.S., various other states and international organizations began calling for Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, citing the massive human rights violations and forcible internal and external displacement of civilians due to the use of excessive lethal force.152 Political and financial external assistance to the mujahideen undoubtedly strengthened the group’s resistance to the Soviet occupation. During the early years of the conflict, the insurgency did not receive substantial external support from the international community; rather, much of the financial, military and physical sanctuary was obtained from Afghanistan’s eastern neighbor, Pakistan. Not only did these two states share a porous border, but the Pakistani Northwest Frontier (also referred to as Federally Administered Tribal Areas [FATA], North and South Waziristan, or the Durand Line’s arbitrarily divided “Pashtunistan”153) contains a considerable Pashtun population that has historically been poorly integrated into the state and society.154 More importantly, as hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees poured into Pakistan, they would settle into similar ethno-linguistic communities to recruit and establish operating bases. As the conflict escalated in Afghanistan, the Pakistani intelligence (Inter-Services Intelligence, or ISI) and security agencies, in addition to the political institutions of the state, began to support the mujahideen in order to counter the influence of the Soviet Union (who, enjoyed friendly relations

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152 Rubin, 2002.
with Pakistan’s notorious arch-enemy, India). Reaching out to the USSR’s adversary, the U.S., Pakistan began to pressure the superpower to provide assistance to contain the communist threat. While President Jimmy Carter conceded in authorizing the delivery of nonlethal covert aid to the insurgency in 1979, this assistance was very limited and would not exceed $30 million per year. However, as the conflict intensified, the U.S. would rapidly increase its financial and military assistance to the mujahideen due to the noteworthy involvement of individuals such as Congressman Charlie Wilson. More importantly, ongoing pressure to maintain plausible deniability regarding the participation of the U.S. in the Afghan conflict shifted the primary responsibility of delivering and maintaining the terms of assistance to Pakistan, an eager actor. Indeed, Pakistani President Zia ul-Haq insisted that the U.S. and other contributors to the mujahideen such as Iran, China, and the U.K. leave the micromanagement of sponsoring the insurgency to the ISI and the Pakistani military.

International efforts to bolster the armed resistance against the Soviet occupiers rapidly increased by 1985, coinciding with the time period during which the counterinsurgency force was at its highest levels of 110,000 troops. The increase in funding to the insurgency from the U.S. alone was truly remarkable: 1984, the mujahideen received $40 million in overt assistance from Congress; within a year, this figure would double several times over to $250 million, and by 1987,
the assistance would peak at around $650 million.\textsuperscript{162,163} External assistance to the insurgency did not solely take the form of financial assistance, however. Small arms and light weapons ideal for use in guerilla combat were readily sent from the U.S., Egypt, Pakistan—all of whom took great measures to maintain plausible deniability of their involvement in the conflict, specifically, by strategically placing and concealing the insignia of the weapons to provide some (albeit weak) evidence for the notion that the insurgents obtained the arms from overrun Soviet bases in Afghanistan or directly from the battlefield.\textsuperscript{164} Perhaps the most well-known weapon supplied to the \textit{mujahideen} was the Stinger anti-aircraft missile, a tactically useful tool used to counter the constant Soviet airborne assault. The Stinger in particular empowered the guerillas to challenge Soviet air superiority, with some analysts citing the weapon as one of the most important catalysts of Soviet withdrawal (a claim that is highly contested).\textsuperscript{165,166}


By 1987, external assistance to the \textit{mujahideen} had reached its highest levels, with estimates ranging from $650 to $900 million of both monetary (e.g. placing \textit{mujahideen} commanders on the CIA’s payroll) and small arms assistance to various unsavory characters, including the Pakistani leadership, and the Islamic fundamentalists that constituted a significant portion of the insurgency.\textsuperscript{167} Facing domestic and international pressures in addition to

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{163}“Afghanistan 1979-1992.” \textit{Global Security}. Available at \url{http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/ops/afghanistan.htm}.
\item \textsuperscript{165}Phillips, Michael M. “Launching the Missile That Made History.” \textit{The Wall Street Journal}. Published 1 October 2011. Available at \url{http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052970204138204576598851109446780}.
\item \textsuperscript{166}Kuperman, 1999.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
innumerable tactical and strategic failures, the Soviet leadership began to seriously engage in peace talks that the international community was engaging in since 1980. Soviet compliance in these negotiations led to the *Agreements on the Settlement of the Situation Relating to Afghanistan*, commonly referred to as the Geneva Accords (1988).\textsuperscript{168} The agreement was essentially a bilateral agreement between the Afghan and Pakistani governments, where both pledged “non-interference and non-intervention” in the political and military affairs of the other state, in addition to certain provisions regarding the status of refugees, and the general timeline and scale of Soviet withdrawal from the state.\textsuperscript{169} More importantly, both the USSR and U.S. played an fundamental role in the terms of the agreement, where the two parties agreed to abrogate political and military support for the warring parties (a “hands-off” approach to conflict resolution which, as discussed later, was very unstable). While the agreement was “…hailed as the key to Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and a settlement of the conflict which has held the world spotlight since the Soviet invasion of December 1979…they have also been condemned by critics as a betrayal of the Afghan people and their ten-year struggle against communist domination.”\textsuperscript{170} Still, the USSR and U.S. did not renege on their promise of abrogation: By 1989, U.S. aid to the *mujahideen* would fall below the levels authorized by President Carter a decade earlier, and over half of Red Army troops would be repatriated. As the Soviet Union slowly collapsed between 1989 and 1991, Mohammad Najibullah’s government was left with a handful of military and political advisers, and the *mujahideen* would take over much of the remaining weapons caches and stockpiles left in the state (which, according to some analysts, was valued at over $1 billion).\textsuperscript{171} The total disintegration of


\textsuperscript{170} Ibid, p. 922.

the Soviet political system and the end of the Cold War effectively brought an end to the internationalization of the Afghan conflict, but as noted in the next case study, the conflict itself would not come to an end in 1989.\textsuperscript{172} Rather, the conflict would become “re-tribalized” with the country reverting to the resilient feudal system that has so characterized Afghan politics for much of its history.\textsuperscript{173}

\textbf{Table 4: Financial and Human Costs of the Soviet Occupation of Afghanistan.}\textsuperscript{174,175,176}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>USSR (Primary Counterinsurgent)</th>
<th>U.S. (External Assistance to the Insurgency)</th>
<th>Mujahideen (Insurgency)</th>
<th>Civilian (Non-combatants)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Occupation</td>
<td>$8.4 billion</td>
<td>$2.94 billion</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Killed</td>
<td>35,000 Soviets 18,000 Afghans</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>1 – 2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Displaced (IDP and Refugees)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>6 – 7 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Analyzing Counterinsurgency Failure}

The Soviet Union’s disastrous engagement in the Afghan conflict can be attributed to two factors: the nature of the insurgency the state sought to eliminate, and the nature and timing of the counterinsurgency policies implemented. The analysis of this particular case study provides considerable insight into the role of external assistance in obstructing state counterinsurgency

\textsuperscript{172} Rubin, 2013.
\textsuperscript{174} Crile, 2003; Rubin, 2002; Coll, 2004.
efforts, and the limits of military force. Specifically, the regional and international dynamics of the Cold War facilitated the internationalization of the conflict, with various states providing financial and military assistance to various factions of the insurgency in order to check the power of the USSR. Further, the indiscriminate use of Soviet force contributed to exacerbating Afghan grievances, which in turn, would fuel the insurgent goal to expel the foreign occupiers. The factors and dynamics surrounding this proxy war must be taken into consideration in addition to the policies implemented can further provide insight into the environment(s) in which counterinsurgency policies may fail.

Nature of the Insurgency

Given the nature of Afghanistan and its diverse ethnic, tribal and religious constituent groups, the emergence of a national, multiethnic insurgency undoubtedly shattered perceptions of a fractious Afghan society. Although there was significant infighting within the mujahideen, the hostilities apparent between these groups did not escalate into armed conflict; rather, these groups often coordinated to combat the foreign occupier, the Soviet army. The insurgency was relatively heterogeneous in terms of ethno-linguistic and tribal composition, drawing upon support from a greater percentage of the population. As mentioned earlier, the vast majority (~80%) of the Afghan population resides in rural areas, and during the Soviet occupation, a considerable percentage of insurgent fighters (~75%) were recruited from and operated outside urban areas of the state. In addition to the heterogeneity of the group, external assistance to the insurgency played an incredible role in bolstering the group’s efforts to resist Soviet counterinsurgency. Overt assistance from states such as Iran, China, and most importantly, Pakistan, provided the insurgency with the

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177 Barfield, 2011.
financial means to persist in the long term, and arguably narrowed the remarkable gap in capabilities between the USSR and the mujahideen. Pakistan’s role in the Afghan war should not be underestimated; not only did the state provide physical sanctuary for the mujahideen in its Northwest Frontier Provinces, but essentially administered and executed the arms assistance provided by the U.S.\(^{179}\) The reluctance of the Soviet leadership to directly confront Pakistani and U.S. policy with respect to Afghanistan further prolonged the conflict, and played an important role in expediting the formation of an international agreement that prompted Soviet withdrawal.\(^{180}\) These findings on the impact of external assistance on insurgent success are consistent with the theoretical framework of this study, in addition to the preexisting literature.\(^{181}\)

*The Indiscriminate Use of Force*

The Soviet response to the insurgency, as outlined in the historiography of the case, was overwhelming and indiscriminate. Refugees, human rights groups, as well as other non-governmental organizations continually provided detailed reports of mass atrocities committed by the Soviet regime.\(^{182}\) As set forth in the theoretical framework of this study, the use of conventional ground forces in Afghanistan in addition to the Soviet reliance on air attacks served as blunt tools to eliminate an elusive enemy.\(^{183}\) Technical constraints, in addition to limited intelligence on the insurgency and the geographic distribution of the insurgency from ground forces contributed to the rise in Afghan civilian and insurgent casualties, and forcibly displaced millions of Afghans; in fact, by 1989, over 1/3 of the Afghan population fled to Pakistan alone.\(^{184}\) Unsurprisingly, the

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\(^{179}\) Crile, 2003.

\(^{180}\) Eliot Jr., 1990.


\(^{182}\) Laber & Rubin, 1988.


\(^{184}\) Rubin, 2002.
insurgency more than tripled in size during the years in which the Soviet air assaults were frequent. Further, the mujahideen effectively exploited fears of foreign encroachment and ethno-religious differences from the occupying forces through the preexisting tribal system, and garnered tremendous domestic support. More importantly, the use of indiscriminate force by the counterinsurgents was publicized to the international community at the time, essentially pleading adversaries of the USSR (e.g. U.S.) and other Muslim nations (e.g. Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan) to support the underdog of Afghanistan. Thus, the indiscriminate use of force certainly delegitimized the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, both domestically and internationally, and essentially fanned the flames of the insurgency.

**Failure to Maintain Security and Implement Two-Stage Approach**

Provided with insight of the policies associated with successful counterinsurgency from the Malayan Emergency, evidence from this case study further strengthens the “two-stage” argument. In the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the counterinsurgents prioritized military policies and failed to maintain or expand nonmilitary policies in Afghanistan altogether. The over-reliance on indiscriminate tools to maintain security were often counterproductive, and rapidly contributed to the rise in insurgent recruitment. Rising instability and overall reluctance of Soviet forces to deploy ground forces hindered progress and physically isolated the warring parties and prevented the counterinsurgents from seizing and holding territory for long periods of time. These policies all contributed to the Soviet inability to execute the first step in the two-stage approach, where the state was unable to garner security. This maintenance of security, again, is a necessary prerequisite for the implementation of nonmilitary counterinsurgency policies. The

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185 Riedel, 2014.  
absence of Soviet presence in rural areas and consequent escalation of violence on the ground failed to create an environment in which the counterinsurgents would address the social, economic, and political drivers of intra-state conflict, and as predicted by the theoretical framework and the analysis of a successful counterinsurgency campaign, contributed to the humiliating defeat of a superpower.

**Case Study 3: The U.S. War in Afghanistan (2001 – present)**

The most recent chapter of the Afghan conflict concerns the rise of the *Taliban* and the intervention of the United States, a hegemon. Although the occupation is ongoing, with approximately 9800 U.S. forces deployed in Afghanistan at the time of this writing and no clear exit strategy under the Obama administration, an examination of U.S. and international policy in terms of counterinsurgency can provide considerable insight on the state of Afghanistan today.\(^{188}\)

More importantly, the evaluation of this case study in comparison to the British occupation of Malaya and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (counterinsurgency success and failure, respectively) can provide evidence for the type of policies that are associated with counterinsurgency stalemates—unstable situations that may result in war outcomes unfavorable for the state, as defined by the theoretical framework of this study.


The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the sudden termination of U.S. and international assistance to the *mujahideen* created a power vacuum in the state during the early 1990s, during which several factions were actively competing for control of the state. The

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mujahideen, who had successfully expelled the USSR from Afghanistan, quickly devolved into numerous factions based upon tribal, ethnic, and geographic distinctions. The collapse of Najibullah’s weak regime ushered in a period of violent conflict between various armed groups in Afghanistan, the most notable of which, were the Northern Alliance and the Taliban. The former primarily consisted of Tajik, Uzbek, and Baloch tribes who controlled territory in Northern Afghanistan (thus, the “Northern Alliance”) and sought to restore the feudal system of governance in place before the Saur Revolution of 1978. The Taliban (“students of Islam”), on the other hand, was a collection of mostly Pashtun tribes who controlled territory that spanned areas of Southern Afghanistan and across the border into the sprawling refugee camps of Northwestern Pakistan. Incorporating Wahhabi ideology along with elements of deobandi Islam, the Taliban asserted themselves as staunch opponents of political retribalization. Indeed, they sought to establish a strong central governing authority that would enforce a strict interpretation of Islam whilst safeguarding Pashtun hegemony in Afghan politics. Securing continued financial and military assistance from Pakistan—a luxury that many armed groups in Afghanistan did not enjoy—the Taliban would eventually seize the capital, Kabul, and assert themselves as the primary governing authority in central and southern provinces of the state. Their implementation of strict sharia, or Islamic, law in Afghanistan and concomitant human rights violations attracted widespread international condemnation. Moreover, Mullah Omar’s (the leader of the Taliban) hospitality towards Osama bin Laden and his flourishing terrorist organization, al Qaeda, further

189 Rubin, 2002.
191 Rubin, 2002.
alienated the group from the international community.\textsuperscript{195} Thus, when \textit{al Qaeda} committed the heinous attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on September 11\textsuperscript{th}, 2001, the \textit{Taliban} regime became a primary target for U.S. military action.

\textit{The U.S. Invasion and Early Occupation (2001 – 2003)}

President George W. Bush and his administration quickly declared a “War on Terror” in 2001, calling for rapid action by the international community to dismantle and eliminate \textit{al Qaeda} and its transnational network. Employing and operating under the provisions of the just-war doctrine, the U.S. would expeditiously invade Afghanistan in 2001, relying upon about 350 special operations forces, 100 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officers, and the air force to ally with over 15,000 Afghans (mostly Northern Alliance members) in the expulsion of the \textit{Taliban} and \textit{al Qaeda} from the state.\textsuperscript{196} While both groups undoubtedly faced territorial and tactical losses against the Americans, they soon traversed and regrouped in Pakistan’s FATA, hoping to wait out yet another round of foreign intervention into their country.\textsuperscript{197}

The Bush administration, along with the UN, convened in Bonn, Germany, by December 2001 to set in motion the establishment of a new, democratic state in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{198} Finding the leader of the Northern Alliance, Hamid Karzai, as a natural ally in the fight against “tyrants and terrorists,” the U.S. and the West supported a framework that effectively isolated the Pashtuns of Afghanistan, regardless of their affiliation with the \textit{Taliban}. More importantly, the Bonn

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
Agreement and the transitional authority that arose from it called for an unclear combination of three different governing systems, including that of Western-style democracy, the centuries-old tribal code (which, varied by tribe and region), and *sharia* law (whose interpretation and implementation varies tremendously). The U.S. played a rather limited role in the creation of this interim authority, and maintained a “hands-off” approach in terms of dictating the expectations of the new political system. Indeed, the U.S. and the UN placed considerable pressure on Karzai and the Northern Alliance to establish a multi-ethnic, secular democracy, but limiting engagement to the Northern Alliance and failing to open up diplomatic channels with other groups arguably isolated them and effectively set the tone for Afghanistan’s political representation in the future.

Thus, the interim authority and the occupying force would fail to maintain security, protect human rights, and create an environment in which the economic and political grievances of the Afghan population remained unaddressed.

Meanwhile, the ousted *Taliban* regime reassembled in neighboring Pakistan, assessing their tactical and strategic position in context of the U.S. invasion. Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and the ISI demonstrated a Janus-faced commitment to the Afghan conflict, agreeing to play a considerable role in the hunt for *al Qaeda* and *Taliban* operatives whilst simultaneously failing to stop covert assistance to the groups from the ISI, who have long-standing ties to the *Taliban* and other armed groups. Indeed, Musharraf’s efforts to accommodate the U.S. and the

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200 Jones, Seth G. *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan.* (Rand Corporation, Santa Monica: 2008).


West in its counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan were limited, due to the constant interference and meddling from the Pakistani military.²⁰³

Still, the early period of the U.S. occupation was relatively stable; levels of violence were not overwhelming and did not demand a large commitment of ground or air personnel for effective stabilization; no more than 10,000 troops were deployed in Afghanistan during this period, most of which were concentrated in urban areas (in this context, the Bush administration began to shift its attention and resources in the momentum to invade Iraq in 2003).²⁰⁴ Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was a strong proponent of this “light-footprint” approach in Afghanistan, hoping to shift political power and the responsibility of maintaining security to regional and local actors in order to prevent a protracted, almost colonial, occupation of the state.²⁰⁵,²⁰⁶ To this end, Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin Powell pushed for the transfer of the existing International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from U.S. control to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 2003, in which numerous NATO member states (most notably, the U.K., Canada, and Germany) contributed air and ground personnel for the stabilization of Afghanistan.²⁰⁷

_The Taliban Resurges (2004 – 2008)_

During much of the mid-2000s, Afghanistan was often referred to as “The Forgotten War,” where the U.S. prioritized its efforts to conduct a counterinsurgency campaign in Iraq.²⁰⁸ Although

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²⁰⁶ Jones, 2008.

²⁰⁷ NATO. “Afghanistan Resolute Support: History.” _NATO_. Available at [http://www.rs.nato.int/history.html](http://www.rs.nato.int/history.html).

the international community, NATO and the U.S. alike invested heavily in the democratic process that culminated in the elections of 2005, the newly established host government was especially weak.\textsuperscript{209} The absence of a national army and poorly trained police forces within the host state put the onus on ISAF and the U.S. for the maintenance of security on the ground. Further, as the fledgling state began to assume some governing authority in the administration of public services, widespread corruption, inefficiency, and bureaucratic infighting became increasingly apparent. The absence of considerable ground or air personnel to ameliorate the security situation further exacerbated attempts at international nation-building in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{210}

In this context of deteriorating security and legitimacy of the new Afghan government in addition to steady support from Pakistan, the \textit{Taliban} reasserts itself as a relevant actor in Afghan politics by employing a particularly violent campaign against the occupying forces. The average number of attacks against U.S. forces was highest during 2007-2008, ranging between 12 and 18 attacks per day. Kandahar, Kunar, Khost, and Ghazni—Afghan provinces bordering Pakistan that were controlled by the \textit{Taliban}—were the most violent regions in the state and, consequently, poorly occupied by counterinsurgents.\textsuperscript{211} The troop presence in 2008 was woefully inadequate: only 54,000 ISAF troops were deployed to explicitly fight the \textit{Taliban}, a mere fraction of the number needed to stabilize a territory as large and geographically diverse as Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{212,213}

\textsuperscript{213} See Brahimi Report (2000) and FM 3-24 (2007) where they define a minimum force density of 1 counterinsurgent for every 100 members of the population in order to secure urban and rural areas of a failed state. If applied to Afghanistan, approximately 300,500 ground troops would be required to effectively police the country. This estimate does not take into consideration the personnel needed to build physical infrastructure, provide public services and begin the gradual process of resuming governance by a sovereign authority.
Further, although the *Taliban* were responsible for the vast majority of attacks and civilian casualties in these violent provinces, the victims of these attacks and local residents were quick to blame their host government and the occupying forces for the deteriorating security situation.\(^{214}\) Thus, not only did the host state alienate its population by failing to garner legitimacy through effective governance, but failed to provide basic security needed for the stabilization of regions over an extended period of time.

*“The Surge” (2009 – 2012)*

As President Barack Obama entered office in 2009, his administration demonstrated a recommitment to Afghanistan in order to address a resurgent *Taliban*. Indeed, the administration would initiate the process of drawing down from Iraq in order to allocate the resources, personnel, and troops needed to conduct a more meaningful counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan.\(^{215}\) By the end of 2009, the U.S. would deploy around 34,000 additional troops—21,000 of which would be restricted to operate in combat operations. General David Petraeus, the newest CENTCOM commander in Afghanistan, would implement a counterinsurgency strategy centered around foraging and policing in order to win the “hearts and minds” of the Afghan population, a policy that was successful in decreasing the levels of violence for a relatively short period of time. Similarly, NATO member states bolstered their contribution to the ISAF mission as well, bringing the total counterinsurgency force to its highest level at approximately 140,000 troops, a number that was still a fraction of what was needed to stabilize Afghanistan.\(^{216,217}\)

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this period of American reengagement in the Afghan conflict is referred to, U.S. troops were trained to practice population-centric counterinsurgency, that is, the adoption of tactics that de-prioritized the use of military force and elevated the importance of nation-building in order to win the “hearts and minds” of the Afghan population.\textsuperscript{218} Although force casualties incurred by the U.S. and ISAF mission predictably increased as they engaged in close range combat with the Taliban, the levels of violence in the insurgent-controlled provinces of Helmand and Kandahar significantly decreased soon after the “Surge.” Despite these gains, the occupation as a whole was limited to urban areas of the state, with the Taliban retreating to their rural strongholds. Moreover, the physical and financial sanctuary offered by the Pakistani government allowed the group to regroup and plan attacks outside of Afghanistan, during which, they would seek to wait out the counterinsurgency campaign.\textsuperscript{219} In fact, some local residents likened this insurgent strategy to “…a crouching tiger, waiting for the moment to pounce.”\textsuperscript{220} Thus, while ISAF was able to consolidate control over some areas for a period of time, this control was limited and was not sustained in the long-term. Similarly, the weak Afghan National Security Forces, which included a national police and army, faced tremendous difficulty in coordinating and executing effective offensives against the Taliban, adding to obstacles to the implementation of effective counterinsurgency policy by the host state.\textsuperscript{221}

In terms of implementing nonmilitary (“nation-building”) policies in Afghanistan, counterinsurgents increasingly found themselves engaging in roles that did not involve the application of direct military force against the insurgency. Rather, these forces found themselves

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{219} Rubin, 2013.
\item \textsuperscript{220} Nordland, Rod. “Troop ‘Surge’ in Afghanistan Ends with Mixed Results.” \textit{The New York Times}. Published 21 September 2012.
\item \textsuperscript{221} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
securing public institutions, infrastructure, and aiding in the process of economic and political
development of the state. The Obama administration increased U.S. financial support to Karzai’s
weak government to $3.2 billion, most of which was designated for post-conflict stabilization
missions. Yet, much of this assistance did not result in clear or tangible internal development,
nor did it allow the government to garner legitimacy through the provision of public services;
rather, the delivery of this assistance through the host state’s corrupt channels limited the volume
and quality of public services ANSF could support, which may have contributed to the
delegitimization of the regime. More importantly, some have argued that the extensive provision
of international financial and security assistance to the Afghan government has prevented the
emergence of a self-sufficient economy and security apparatus.

An Unstable Stalemate? (2013 – Present)

Following the short-lived successes of the Afghan “Surge,” President Obama began a
process of gradual withdrawal from the conflict following his reelection. In 2013, his
administration began the process of negotiating a Bilateral Security Agreement between the U.S.
and Afghan government that Karzai would sign in September 2014. The agreement stipulates
the continued presence of approximately 9,800 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, bringing the total ISAF

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mission to a force of 12,400. Reminding domestic and international actors that the U.S. demonstrated a “continued commitment to support the new Afghan unity government,” President Obama has employed an *ad hoc* approach to the U.S. exit strategy from Afghanistan. Such an approach is increasingly feasible in context of the ongoing covert and overt drone campaign employed in Central and South Asia to target members of the *Taliban* in addition to the remnants of *al Qaeda*’s central leadership (the efficacy of which remains disputed). However, it is important to note that the U.S. leadership has not taken any retributive action towards Pakistan, the primary sponsor of the *Taliban*, and the recipient of billions of dollars in U.S. aid in the form of “Coalition Support Funds.” At the domestic level, the current Afghan political, economic, and security systems are, for the most part, quite fragile. Ongoing violent conflict between factions of the *Taliban*, the ANSF, as well as incoming foreign insurgencies such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has only complicated the situation. This deteriorating security situation in both urban and rural centers of the state in light of the most recent resurgence of the *Taliban* compelled the Obama administration to extend the withdrawal deadline to 2017. Likewise, continuing corruption and disappointing economic growth has delegitimized the Afghan

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228 Ibid.
government, adding to the growing frustrations of the local population.\textsuperscript{234} The Taliban’s recent acquisition of Helmand province further brought into question the efficacy of current U.S. and Afghan counterinsurgency policy, with many citing the host state’s engagement in peace talks with the insurgency as a catalyst of the group’s resurgence.\textsuperscript{235} None would dispute that the current evidence points to an unstable situation in Afghanistan, where the future of the insurgency and the host state, as well as U.S. counterinsurgency policy, all remain uncertain.

\textbf{Table 5: Estimated Financial and Human Costs of the U.S. Occupation of Afghanistan (2001–2014)}\textsuperscript{236,237,238}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. (Primary Counterinsurgent)</th>
<th>Taliban (Insurgency)</th>
<th>Civilian (Non-combatants)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Occupation</td>
<td>$686 billion</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Killed</td>
<td>2,350</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Displaced (IDP and Refugees)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Force/Population Size</td>
<td>9,800</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Analyzing an Ongoing Mixed Campaign

As of April 2016, the U.S. air and ground forces remain in Afghanistan, operating in a limited capacity. Due to the ongoing nature of the campaign, it is difficult for one to fully analyze successful and failed counterinsurgency policies. Still, the historiography of the U.S. engagement in the Afghan war can provide considerable insight into the types of policies that are associated with the instability the host state faces today. More importantly, by reevaluating the efficacy of policies implemented to eliminate the Taliban in the past decade, policymakers may consider an alternative approach to counterinsurgency in Afghanistan as they move forward.

Nature of the Insurgency

As mentioned in the historiography of the case, the Taliban is not only a broad collection of armed Pashtun tribes vying for control in much of Southern and Eastern Afghanistan; it is an insurgency that receives tremendous covert military and financial assistance from the Pakistani government, most notably, the clandestine ISI. Clearly evidenced by the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan (in addition to the USSR occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s), external assistance to an insurgency can play a fundamental role in bolstering the group’s capabilities to challenge a much stronger actor. Moreover, the provision of physical sanctuary in neighboring Pakistan enabled the Taliban to evade the ISAF mission during periods of heavy occupation. Unlike the USSR’s occupation of Afghanistan, Pakistan is the recipient of billions of dollars of aid from the primary state engaging in counterinsurgency (estimated at around $30 billion since 2001), bringing into question the efficacy of U.S. foreign assistance to other states in a broader counterinsurgency strategy.

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240 Rubin, 2013.
**Weak State**

The failure of the U.S.-led ISAF mission to secure vast swaths of Afghanistan, during and after the Surge of 2010, has created an environment that is not conducive to the implementation of nonmilitary policies, that is, the building of infrastructure, delivery of services, and overall governance by the host state. In addition to this precarious security situation, the extensive international involvement in the building of public institutions, democratization, and generation of domestic economic productivity prevented the emergence of local, autonomous institutions that were sensitive to Afghan grievances rather than the priorities of external actors.\(^\text{241}\) The U.S. drawdown and sudden shift of power to weak Afghan institutions such as the ANSF has worsened this situation, where the host state finds itself unable to secure the population or garner legitimacy. In this regard, the U.S. occupation thus far can best be characterized as one that failed to employ effective military counterinsurgency policies, and as a consequence, has not been successful in its nonmilitary “nation-building” attempts.\(^\text{242}\)

**Comparing Counterinsurgency Campaigns**

The qualitative analysis of three counterinsurgency campaigns of variable outcome in the post-World War II era provides one with numerous state policies that are associated with state success, failure, and stalemate. The analysis of the Malayan Emergency provides evidence for the efficacy of both military and nonmilitary policies in counterinsurgency warfare, where the use of discriminate military force (e.g. policing, foraging) and the implementation of nonmilitary policies that strengthened the capabilities of the host state resulted in a stable war outcome. Conversely,

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the overwhelming and indiscriminate use of military force and clear depreciation of nonmilitary policies in the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan played favorably for the insurgency. The final case analyzed in this study—though incomplete due to its ongoing nature—provides insight into failed U.S. policy in Afghanistan, where a low force density in vast swaths of the state has resulted in a poor security environment that is not conducive to the successful implementation of nonmilitary “nation-building” policies.

*What works?*

Together, the large-N analysis and detailed case study of the Malayan Emergency points to several counterinsurgency policies that are associated with state success. In terms of military policy, the use of discriminate force (i.e. targeting and killing of mostly combatants and minimizing civilian casualties) plays an important role in neutralizing the insurgency. Interestingly, the initial British response to the insurgency was not sensitive to civilian casualties; indeed, in the early phases of the conflict, the counterinsurgents responded with a classical “counterterror” strategy, employing a massively indiscriminate air force to wipe out sections of the rural population. Yet, after observing the rise in violence and concomitant increase in insurgent size and activity, the British force adapted very well, and abandoned its “counterterror” strategy for a “hearts and minds” one. This shift in strategy prompted the deployment of additional British and Malayan troops that engaged in a clear foraging strategy, where ground forces would police local communities in order to secure local communities from the insurgency. This adaptation, a shift away from the use of indiscriminate force towards the use of discriminate force resulted in a rapid decrease in violence, and created a stable environment in which the counterinsurgents were in a position to implement nonmilitary policies.
In terms of nonmilitary counterinsurgency policy, the British-Malay coalition employed numerous measures to address the socio-economic and political grievances of the population in order to weaken the legitimacy of the insurgency. In this regard, the resettlement of refugees, the dissolution of MCP labor unions and its political wing, and incentivizing defection from the MNLA through the provision of public services all played a role in delegitimizing the insurgency whilst strengthening the host state. By incorporating the aforementioned policies into a comprehensive “hearts and minds” strategy, the British not only emerged victorious in this conflict, but left behind a stable state that, despite intra-state conflict in later decades, would not collapse. The theoretical two-step counterinsurgency approach, supported by evidence obtained from the large-N study as well as the Malayan Emergency, is illustrated in Figure 1.
Figure 2: A visual representation of the theoretical two-step approach apparent in successful counterinsurgency cases.

What doesn’t work?

The USSR and U.S. occupations of Afghanistan can both provide insight into the types of counterinsurgency policies that are not associated with state success, which, as theorized in this study, are counterinsurgency failures. In the Soviet occupation, the use of indiscriminate force (e.g. air campaigns) and a failure to occupy territory beyond urban centers of the state created a problematic security situation that the Afghan mujahideen would exploit. On the other hand, in the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan, while the counterinsurgents did not rely upon highly indiscriminate uses of force, the absence of significant ground personnel to police and secure the population has created an unstable security situation in which the Taliban could reestablish their
control. Moreover, in both Afghan cases, the host state fails to implement nonmilitary counterinsurgency policy in the long term, illustrated by rampant corruption, the fragility of public institutions, and a failure to deliver or maintain public services. Keeping in mind that the political culture in Afghanistan has been highly feudalistic and tribal-based for centuries, the mujahideen and the Taliban tapped into these grievances to rally support against the foreign occupiers and the established government that supported them. Thus, the inability of counterinsurgents to accomplish the first step (establish security) in the two step approach created an insecure environment in which the counterinsurgency strategy could never evolve to the second step (implement nonmilitary measures) (Figure 1).

Implications

Counterinsurgency and intra-state conflict has precipitously increased in the post-World War II era, where various intra-state insurgencies have challenged the legitimacy and control of an existing state. According to Max Boot, counterinsurgency is here to stay. Today, over thirty states are engaging in unconventional asymmetric warfare, and many of them are losing to well-organized insurgencies. Explosive conflicts continue in Iraq, Syria, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Congo and Colombia, to name a few, where the host state struggles to stay in power. More importantly, the involvement of Great Powers such as the U.S. in these conflicts to support a host government has raised important questions about the efficacy of counterinsurgency policy when it is implemented or directed by an external actor. More specifically, the U.S. role in the Afghan conflict and the war against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has become a point of contention amongst policymakers and the American public. ISIS has been conceptualized as an

244 Ibid.
insurgency by academics and policymakers alike, a distinction that may prompt a shift in the U.S. response away from an *ad hoc* counterterrorism campaign to a more comprehensive counterinsurgency campaign.\textsuperscript{245} Indeed, ISIS’ aspirations to establish a caliphate, its claims to territory across Iraq and Syria and its efforts to act as the central governing authority in the area that it occupies all characterize the behavior of an insurgency. Moreover, the group calls itself the “Islamic State,” and in this regard, makes an explicit statement of its strategic goals.\textsuperscript{246} In today’s security environment, assessing the strategy, motives, and capabilities of threatening non-state actors is vital in order to better formulate an appropriate response. As the findings of this particular study indicate, states and policymakers must take into consideration the types of policies that are associated with state success and failure in order to implement policies that seek to eliminate these intra-state armed groups. Implementing the two-step approach recommended by this study is not necessarily the easiest option, in terms of both cost-effectiveness and the duration of state engagement. Yet, if this approach is correlated with state success, other states should reexamine their counterinsurgency policy in order to emerge victorious. This reexamination and improvement of state policy is no simple feat, and will not occur overnight; the authors of the American counterinsurgency field manual have gone as far to call counterinsurgency the “graduate level of warfare.”\textsuperscript{247} Some cases may not fit quite so easily in the simple paradigm of the Malayan Emergency in which state policy can be implemented efficiently. Yet, until states master the art of counterinsurgency, insurgencies will continue to plague the international system.

\textsuperscript{246} Cronin, Audrey Kurth. 2015. “ISIS is Not a Terrorist Organization: Why Counterterrorism Won’t Stop the Latest Jihadist Threat,” *Foreign Affairs* 94(2): 87-98.
**Conclusion**

Overall, the large-N study and case study analysis have provided substantial evidence for the viability and efficacy of a Weberian theoretical approach to counterinsurgency warfare. States that wish to counter the politico-military struggle of an insurgency must incorporate both military and nonmilitary policies that eventually restore the monopoly of force and legitimacy within a given territory. The results of the large-N study provides considerable evidence for the efficacy of nonmilitary counterinsurgency policy in successful campaigns, where the presence of nonmilitary policies in counterinsurgency campaigns is significantly correlated with state victory. The subsequent analysis of three counterinsurgency campaigns of variable outcomes further bolsters the theoretical framework of this study, whilst providing additional evidence for the types of policies and strategies associated with unsuccessful counterinsurgency campaigns. The British response to the Malayan Emergency is best understood as a two-step approach, where the implementation of discriminate military force during early stages of the conflict creates a stable security environment in which nonmilitary policies can be executed. Moreover, the analysis of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan provides evidence for the shortcomings of military-centric counterinsurgency policy, where the application of indiscriminate military force and the absence of meaningful nonmilitary policy contributes to extending the lifespan of the insurgency the state seeks to eliminate. Lastly, in the incomplete analysis of the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan, the absence of considerable ground forces to forage and protect the population has resulted in a fragile security environment that has prevented the emergence of strong political and economic institutions in the host state, essentially creating an environment in which the insurgency can grow. An understanding of this study may foster the development of a Clausewitzean notion of insurgency and counterinsurgency, a framework that provides the foundation for state policy. The
pervasiveness of intra-state conflict around the world should intrigue, if not compel, policymakers and academics to reevaluate the counterinsurgency policies of states around the world. Insurgencies will continue to plague the international system, and as Boot aptly observes, “counterinsurgency is here to stay.”

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248 Boot, 2014.
References


L-4, “Excess Nonlethal Supplies for Humanitarian Relief under Title 10, United States Code, Section 2547” FM 8-42: Selected Sections of Title 10, United States Code, Pertaining to Humanitarian Assistance.


### Appendix

List of Counterinsurgency Campaigns Analyzed in Large-N Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Primary State</th>
<th>Host State</th>
<th>Primary Insurgency</th>
<th>Conflict Start</th>
<th>Conflict End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Haganah</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Democratic Army of Greece</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Indochina (Bo Dai govt)</td>
<td>Viet Minh</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Hukbalahap (Huk Rebellion)</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>La Violencia</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>MLRA (Malayan Emergency)</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Mau Mau</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>National Liberation Front (FLN)</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Nat'l Org. of Cyprist Struggle (EOKA)</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>26th July Movement (Castroist)</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>Imamate (later, Dhofar)</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Darul Islam</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Nat'l Volunteer Defense Army (Tibet)</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (FAR)</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Pathet Lao/Hmong</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>SWAPO</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>ANC/Umkhunto we Sizwe</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>South Vietnam</td>
<td>Viet Cong/PAVN</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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