Summary

Insurgency has been the most prevalent form of armed conflict since at least 1949.[1] Despite that fact, following the Vietnam War and through the remainder of the Cold War, the U.S. military establishment turned its back on insurgency, refusing to consider operations against insurgents as anything other than a "lesser-included case" for forces structured for and prepared to fight two major theater wars. In the post-9/11 world, however, insurgency rocketed back into prominence. As counterterrorism expert William Rosenau notes, "insurgency and counterinsurgency . . . have enjoyed a level of military, academic, and journalistic notice unseen since the mid-1960s."[2] Countering insurgents, or supporting the efforts of allies and partners as they did so, became the primary focus of U.S. operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan. While debates continue to rage over how and even if the United States should be involved in future campaigns against insurgents, no one predicts that the future will be free of insurgencies.[3] Indeed, at the time of this writing, insurgencies were ongoing in (at least) the following coun-

[1] See Thomas X. Hammes, "Why Study Small Wars?" *Small Wars Journal*, Vol. 1, April 2005b. In his 2013 book, Max Boot makes the argument that insurgency, guerrilla warfare, and unconventional conflict have been the most common forms of warfare dating back to the Romans and the Jews in AD 66. See Max Boot, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present,* New York: Norton, 2013.

[2] William Rosenau, "Subversion and Terrorism: Understanding and Countering the Threat," *The MIPT Terrorism Annual 2006*, Oklahoma City, Okla.: National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism, 2006, p. 53.

[3] See, for example, George Friedman, "The End of Counterinsurgency," *RealClearWorld*, June 5, 2012.

tries: Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, India, Israel/Palestine, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Uganda, and Yemen. Countering insurgencies is now a major concern for regional governments, global coalitions, and international security policymakers alike.[4]

When a country is threatened by an insurgency, what strategies and approaches give the government the best chance of prevailing? Contemporary discourse on the subject is voluminous and often contentious. A variety of different concepts and areas of emphasis are advocated, but such advocacy is usually based on relatively limited evidence. Advice for the counterinsurgent tends to be based on little more than common sense, a general understanding of history, or a handful of detailed historical cases, instead of a solid and systematically collected body of historical evidence. A 2010 RAND report, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*, sought to improve this situation with thorough analyses based on a firm foundation of historical data, along with extensive and detailed comparative analyses of the 30 insurgencies begun and completed worldwide between 1978 and 2008.[5] This report expands on and supersedes that previous effort, adding 41 new cases and comparing all 71 insurgencies begun and completed worldwide between World War II and 2010. The current study also asked some additional questions, including questions about the approaches that led counterinsurgency (COIN) forces to prevail when supported or provided by another nation (an external actor) and questions about timing and duration, such as which factors are associated with the duration of insurgencies and which are associated with the length of postconflict peace intervals (the durability of insurgency outcomes), as well as how long historical COIN forces had to be engaged in effective COIN practices before they won.

---

[4] See Richard H. Shultz, Douglas Farah, and Itamara V. Lochard, *Armed Groups: A Tier One Security Priority*, United States Air Force Academy, Colo.: Institute for National Security Studies, Occasional Paper 57, September 2004.

[5] Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-964-OSD, 2010b.

Case Selection and Analytic Approach

This research quantitatively tested the performance of 24 COIN concepts against the historical record. These concepts were identified through a survey of the existing literature and based on previous research in this area. Some of the concepts were drawn from classical perspectives on COIN from the previous century, such as pacification and resettlement; others are contemporary concepts suggested for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, such as "boots on the ground" and the concept implicit in U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*.[6]

Findings and analyses are based on detailed case studies compiled for 71 insurgencies. Each case is supported by a detailed case narrative and by quantitative data on nearly 300 individual factors. These analyses benefited considerably from both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as from the ability to move back and forth between the two. The qualitative narratives frequently suggested new factors or hypotheses, which were then tested comparatively across cases using the quantitative data. Patterns that did not make sense in the quantitative analyses were explored in the detailed narratives, with the nuance from the narratives subjected to quantitative analyses in the form of still more new hypotheses or new factors.

The selected cases are the 71 most recent resolved insurgencies, spanning the period from World War II through 2010.[7] In addition to being perfectly representative of the modern history of insurgency, these cases represent geographic variation (mountains, jungles, deserts, cities), regional and cultural variation (Africa, Latin America, Central Asia, the Balkans, the Far East), and variation in the military capabilities and tactics of COIN forces and insurgent forces alike. The 71 cases do contain a subset of cases that are unlike the others, however, and are

---

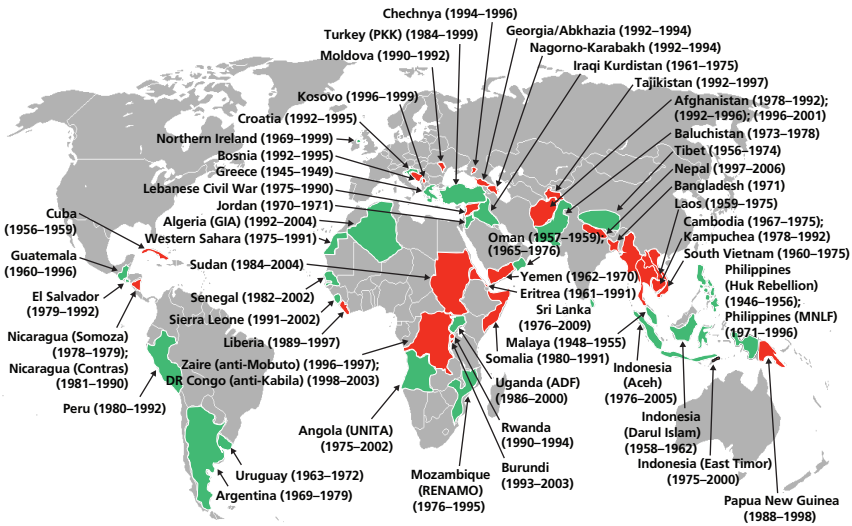
[6] Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, Field Manual 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2007. For a review of classic approaches to COIN, see Austin Long, *On "Other War": Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-482-OSD, 2006.

[7] Only resolved cases were included because cases in which the outcome had yet to be determined would not have been useful for identifying the correlates of COIN success.

therefore not appropriate comparisons for the larger set of cases. Specifically, their outcomes were not driven primarily by the effectiveness of the COIN force but by exogenous factors related to broader historical currents: the end of colonialism and the end of apartheid. We removed the cases that fought "against the tide of history" (and one more case with an indeterminate outcome) from the cases used for the quantitative analyses, leaving an analytic core of 59 cases. (See Figure S.1; for a more detailed discussion, see Chapter Three.) We retain all 71 case narratives both for comprehensiveness and because the nuance and rich detail make each case potentially instructive, even if it is not broadly comparable with other cases.

The data include several subsets of interest. First, we divided the 59 core cases into 44 "iron fist" cases, in which the primary emphasis of the COIN force was preponderantly (and often almost exclusively) on eliminating the insurgent threat, and 15 motive-focused cases,

Figure S.1
Map of the 59 Core Cases



NOTE: Green shading indicates that the COIN force prevailed (or had the better of a mixed outcome), while red shading indicates that the outcome favored the insurgents (thus, a COIN loss).

RAND *RR291/1-S.1*

with primary or at least balanced attention to addressing the motives for beginning and sustaining the insurgency. Second, we isolated the 28 cases in which a major power contributed forces to the counterinsurgent side, further dividing the set into the 13 cases in which such force contributions were limited to advisers, special operations forces, or air power and the 15 cases in which significant external ground forces were present.

Key Findings

Because this research was vast in scope, the results are rich, detailed, and sometimes complicated. Different readers may find different aspects of our findings to be particularly interesting or illuminating; this section presents findings that we have identified as particularly important to formulating and supporting successful COIN operations.

Seventeen of 24 COIN Concepts Tested Receive Strong Support; One ("Crush Them") Has Strong Evidence Against It

Table S.1 lists the 24 concepts tested in Chapter Four of this report. Each concept was represented by a set of specific factors in the data and was evaluated based on the strength of the relationship of those factors with case outcomes, both in terms of correlation and in cross-tabulation. We considered concepts to have strong support if the relationship between the implementation of the concept (as represented by the factors) and the case outcome was very strong (i.e., implementation of the concept is a very strong indicator of outcome). We considered concepts to have minimal support if there was limited correlation between the implementation of the concept and the outcome. Finally, we considered there to be strong evidence *against* a concept if it was implemented in a greater proportion of losses than wins.

Seventeen of the 24 concepts had strong empirical support.[8] There was strong evidence against one concept: "Crush them." We found

[8] The astute reader will note that 18 rows in Table S.1 are listed as receiving strong support; this is because a single concept, legitimacy, has been subdivided into two rows—one for government legitimacy and one for legitimacy of the use of force.

Table S.1
Degree of Support for 24 COIN Concepts

Concept	Degree of Evidentiary Support
Development	Strong support
Pacification	Strong support
Legitimacy (government)	Strong support
Legitimacy (use of force)	Strong support
Reform	Strong support
Redress	Minimal support
Democracy	Minimal support
Unity of effort	Strong support
Resettlement	Minimal support
Cost-benefit	Strong support
Border control	Strong support
Initiative	Strong support
"Crush them"	Strong evidence against
Amnesty/rewards	Minimal support
Strategic communication	Strong support
Field Manual 3-24 (*Counterinsurgency*)	Strong support
Clear, hold, and build	Strong support
"Beat cop"	Strong support
"Boots on the ground"	Strong support
"Put a local face on it"	Minimal support
Cultural awareness	Minimal support
Commitment and motivation	Strong support
Tangible support reduction	Strong support
Criticality of intelligence	Strong support
Flexibility and adaptability	Strong support

that this concept was applied where the COIN force employed both escalating repression and collective punishment. Of 33 COIN forces implementing "crush them," 23 lost to the insurgents.

In the discussion of the next key finding, we single out three of the strongly supported concepts for more detailed attention because they were identified as priority concepts that were always implemented by victorious COIN forces.

Effective COIN Practices Run in Packs, and Some Practices Are Always in the Pack: Tangible Support Reduction, Commitment and Motivation, and Flexibility and Adaptability

One of the key findings reported in *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency* was that "effective COIN practices tend to run in packs," meaning that COIN forces that defeated insurgencies implemented numerous effective practices rather than just a few.[9] This study confirmed that finding, but the wide range of cases considered here allowed us to further explore its nuances. Qualitative comparative analysis techniques identified three priority COIN concepts. These three concepts were implemented in each and every COIN win, and no losing COIN force implemented all three:

- tangible support reduction
- commitment and motivation
- flexibility and adaptability.

Implementation of all three of these concepts appears to be prerequisite for COIN success, based on the core historical data underlying this study.

Tangible support refers to the ability of the insurgents to maintain needed levels of recruits, weapons and materiel, funding, intelligence, and sanctuary. In every COIN win, COIN forces managed to substantially reduce tangible support to the insurgents; only two COIN forces managed to substantially reduce insurgent tangible support and still lost.

---

[9] Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b, p. xv.

Tangible support is not the same as popular support. Although tangible support can come from a supporting population, it can also come from an external supporter—either a state sponsor or a diaspora or other nonstate sponsor. This report echoes the finding from *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* that "tangible support trumps popular support."[10] In many cases, tangible support came from the population, and the level of popular support corresponded with levels of tangible support. When they did not match, however, victory followed tangible support. All three cases in which the government had the support of the majority of the population but the insurgents' tangible support was not significantly interrupted were COIN losses. Meanwhile, the COIN force won 12 of 14 cases in which the COIN force reduced flows of tangible support to the insurgents but the insurgents retained their popular support.

Commitment and motivation refers to the extent to which the government and COIN forces demonstrated that they were actually committed to defeating the insurgency, rather than maximizing their own personal wealth and power, bilking external supporters by extending the conflict, or avoiding (or fleeing) combat. In all COIN wins, both the government and the COIN force demonstrated their commitment and motivation, whereas the insurgents won all 17 of the cases in which commitment and motivation were assessed as lacking.[11] Note that this set of factors considered the commitment and motivation of both the threatened government and the COIN forces, not just one or the other.

Flexibility and adaptability captures the ability of COIN forces to adjust to changes in insurgent strategy or tactics. While some COIN forces failed to adapt in (and lost) early or intermediate phases in cases that they still managed to win, all successful COIN forces made any necessary adaptations in the decisive phase of each case.

---

[10] Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b, p. xxii.

[11] Before dismissing this result as trivial or obvious, note that there are several cases in the data in which an external actor contributed well-motivated and professional COIN forces in support of a government fighting an insurgency, but the government and indigenous COIN forces failed to demonstrate their resolve. All of these cases were ultimately COIN losses.

Every Insurgency Is Unique, but Not So Much That It Matters at This Level of Analysis; the COIN Scorecard Discriminates Cases into Wins and Losses

A regular theme in discussions about insurgency is that "every insurgency is unique." The distinct narratives for the 71 cases examined here lead the authors to concur, except that those distinct or unique characteristics do not matter at this level of analysis. All the findings of this study hold across the core cases without an exception for unique narratives or cases.[12] This holds for the prioritized concepts, and it holds for the COIN scorecard. A simple scorecard of 15 good practices and 11 bad practices perfectly discriminates the 59 core cases into wins and losses. Table S.2 lists 15 "good" COIN practices or factors and 11 "bad" COIN practices or factors.

Subtracting the total number of bad practices in the decisive phase of each case from the total number of good practices produces a scorecard score. If the score is negative (more bad practices than good), then the case was a COIN loss; if the score is positive (more good practices than bad), the case was a COIN win. This holds without exception. Table S.3 highlights this result. The first column lists the scorecard scores, from –11 (no good practices and all the bad practices) to 15 (all the good practices and none of the bad). The second column lists the number of cases receiving each score that were COIN losses, and the third column lists the number of these cases that were COIN wins. The fact that there is no overlap between the second and third columns reinforces how effectively the scorecard discriminates historical wins from losses.

[12] The distinctive features and characteristics of individual insurgencies most certainly *do* matter is in actual efforts to implement approaches and practices on the ground. Our findings do not suggest a "one-size-fits-all" approach to COIN at the execution level; rather, these findings suggest that there is a finite set of good practices that a COIN force should always aspire to realize, but how a COIN force actually does so in any given operation will vary depending on the context.

Table S.2
"Good" and "Bad" COIN Practices

15 Good COIN Practices	11 Bad COIN Practices
The COIN force realized at least two strategic communication factors.	The COIN force used both collective punishment and escalating repression.
The COIN force reduced at least three tangible support factors.	There was corrupt and arbitrary personalistic government rule.
The government realized at least one government legitimacy factor.	Host-nation elites had perverse incentives to continue the conflict.
Government corruption was reduced/good governance increased since the onset of the conflict.	An external professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of the insurgents.
The COIN force realized at least one intelligence factor.	The host nation was economically dependent on external supporters.
The COIN force was of sufficient strength to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas.	Fighting was initiated primarily by the insurgents.
Unity of effort/unity of command was maintained.	The COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.
The COIN force avoided excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate application of force.	The COIN force engaged in more coercion or intimidation than the insurgents.
The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in the area of conflict.	The insurgent force was individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform occurred in the area of conflict controlled or claimed by the COIN force.	The COIN force or its allies relied on looting for sustainment.
The majority of the population in the area of conflict supported or favored the COIN force.	The COIN force and government had different goals or levels of commitment.
The COIN force established and then expanded secure areas.	
Government/COIN reconstruction/ development sought/achieved improvements that were substantially above the historical baseline.	
The COIN force provided or ensured the provision of basic services in areas that it controlled or claimed to control.	
The perception of security was created or maintained among the population in areas that the COIN force claimed to control.	

Table S.3
Balance of Good COIN Practices and Bad COIN Practices for the 59 Core Cases

Score	COIN Losses	COIN Wins
–11	1	0
–9	2	0
–8	2	0
–7	4	0
–6	3	0
–5	2	0
–4	4	0
–3	5	0
–2	4	0
–1	4	0
2	0	2
3	0	3
4	0	2
5	0	3
6	0	3
7	0	1
8	0	1
9	0	1
10	0	4
11	0	2
12	0	2
13	0	3
15	0	1

Quality Is More Important Than Quantity, Especially Where Paramilitaries and Irregular Forces Are Concerned

Of perennial interest to scholars of insurgency are the force requirements for effective COIN. The granularity of data in these cases does not allow for conclusions regarding force ratios between COIN forces and insurgents, nor does it allow us to identify specific COIN force composition ratios of regular forces, police, special operations forces, or paramilitaries. These analyses do support some higher-level observations that should be of interest nonetheless.

First, in no case did the COIN force win unless it overmatched the insurgents and could force them to fight as guerrillas by the decisive phase of the conflict. Governments that attempted to transition their COIN forces to overmatch the insurgents usually sought to increase both the quality and the quantity of their COIN forces. While quantity may have a quality all its own, COIN force quality appears to have been more important than quantity in every case in which it mattered among the historical cases examined here.

Second, most COIN forces used significant numbers of police, paramilitary troops, or militia personnel, with virtually no correlation with outcome. This was because, too often, these forces were inadequately armed or trained or otherwise ineffective. However, in the 23 cases in which police or paramilitaries were *not* ineffective, COIN forces won 69 percent of the time. This is another historical endorsement of the importance of quality of COIN forces and, further, an endorsement of the inclusion of such forces, if they can be adequately prepared.[13]

Governments Supported by External Actors Win the Same Way Others Do

We repeated all the analyses for the subset of cases that involved forces from an external major power in support of the government (28 cases). The findings show that external or externally supported COIN forces

[13] For more on the historical role of local defense forces, see Austin Long, Stephanie Pezard, Bryce Loidolt, and Todd C. Helmus, *Locals Rule: Historical Lessons for Creating Local Defense Forces for Afghanistan and Beyond*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-1232-CFSOCC-A, 2012.

win almost as often as wholly indigenous COIN forces. This suggests that using external forces is not inherently a bad COIN practice. Further, results for cases involving COIN support by external actors match results from the core data; the same concepts whose implementation was correlated with COIN success in the broader data were also correlated with success in the external actor cases.

The external actor analysis raised two cautions. First, as noted previously, commitment and motivation of the government and COIN force are critical to COIN success. This holds in external actor cases as well. No external COIN force or externally supported COIN force was able to prevail if the host-nation government was insufficiently committed. The caution, then, is for would-be external supporters: *You can't want it more than they do!*

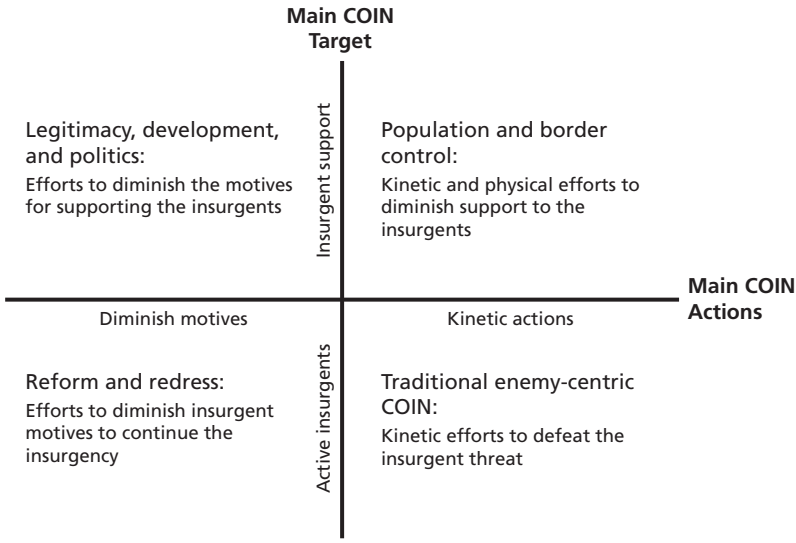
Second, every case that involved external professional forces supporting the insurgents was a COIN loss, unless it was balanced by external professional forces supporting the government. This caution applies to those who advocate a "light footprint" in supporting COIN forces or support restricted to advisers, special operations forces, and air power. History suggests that if insurgents have external conventional forces on their side, the COIN force needs such support, too.

The Iron Fist COIN Path, Focused Primarily on Eliminating the Insurgent Threat, Is Historically Less Successful

The historical cases primarily followed one of two paths: The "iron fist" path, with a focus preponderantly (and often almost exclusively) on eliminating the insurgent threat, or the motive-focused path, with primary or at least balanced attention to addressing the motives for beginning and sustaining the insurgency. Figure S.2 shows these two new conceptual divisions and how they relate to one another.

While both paths can lead to success, historically, COIN forces following the iron fist path won only 32 percent of the time, while those on the motive-focused or mixed path won 73 percent of the time. Not only have iron fist COIN efforts failed more often than they have succeeded, but they have almost always involved atrocities or other COIN force behaviors that are considered "beyond the pale" by contemporary American ethical standards.

Figure S.2
New COIN Dichotomies: Insurgent Support Versus Active Insurgents, and Efforts to Diminish Motive Versus Kinetic Efforts



RAND *RR291/1-S.2*

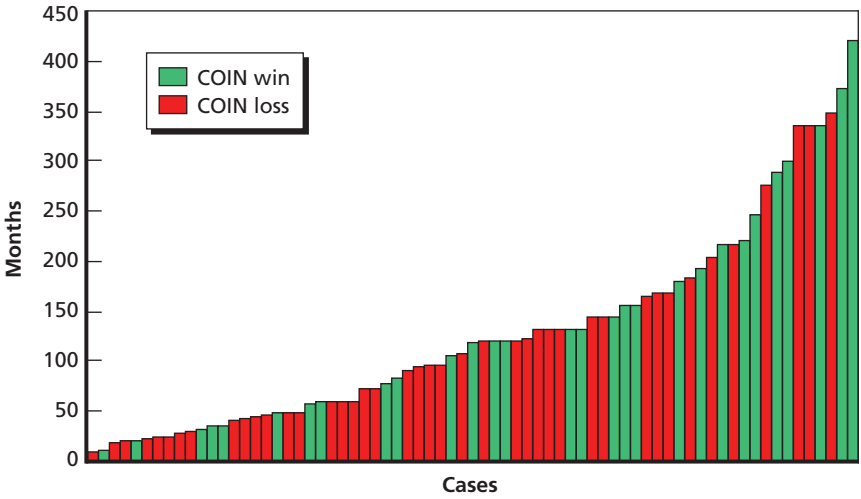
While this finding appears particularly relevant to ongoing debates between advocates of population-centric and enemy-centric COIN, this report argues that different categories provide better context for these results and provide a more nuanced understanding of COIN going forward. Iron fist COIN forces struggle because of their focus on the insurgents at the expense of a focus on *support* for those insurgents, as well as their focus on kinetic action (fighting, killing, capturing) to eliminate the insurgents at the expense of efforts to diminish the *motives* for the insurgency (and for supporting the insurgents). Successful COIN forces find a balance on the spectrums of focal targets (insurgent support or the insurgents themselves) and focal actions (efforts to kinetically eliminate insurgents/support versus efforts to diminish the motives for insurgency/support). COIN forces on the motive-focused path succeeded not just because their main emphases included motive-diminishing actions, but because they also fought the insurgents and because they targeted both insurgents and their main sources of support. The (relatively small) number of iron fist path win-

ners prevailed with a primary emphasis on smashing the insurgents but also found ways to diminish their support.

COIN Takes Time, but Some COIN Practices Help End Insurgencies Sooner and Lead to a More Durable Postconflict Peace

The durations of insurgencies vary widely. The median length of the 71 cases was 118 months (slightly less than ten years).[14] Beating an insurgency takes longer than succumbing to one, on average: The median length of a COIN win was 132 months (11 years), while the median COIN loss was only 95 months (slightly less than eight years).[15] Figure S.3 shows the duration in months of all 71 cases.[16]

Figure S.3
Durations of 71 Insurgencies



RAND *RR291/1-S.3*

[14] The mean duration is 128.4 months, pulled higher than the median by the few extremely long cases. The standard deviation for that mean is 99.3 months, due to the extreme variation in case durations, ranging from three months to 420 months (35 years).

[15] The mean duration of a COIN win was 152.2 months, with a standard deviation of 109.9 months; the mean duration of a COIN loss was 112 months, with a standard deviation of 89 months.

[16] Note that these 71 cases include completed insurgencies only. If one considers insurgencies that are ongoing, a small number of very long cases would increase the average duration.

Chapter Five presents analyses aimed at identifying factors and concepts whose presence was correlated with shortening COIN wins and prolonging the peace interval after a COIN win. The following concepts, in addition to being endorsed as associated with COIN success, all significantly decrease the remaining duration of a conflict when they have been implemented:

- tangible support reduction
- border control
- strategic communication
- beat cop.

These additional factors are also significantly associated with decreased duration:

- The COIN force was of sufficient strength to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas (COIN force overmatch).
- COIN or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by insurgents.
- There were significant government reforms over the course of the conflict.

The analysis of postconflict peace intervals was much more limited, but it identified two factors significantly related to the stability of a COIN win and extending the length of the postconflict peace interval:

- There were significant government reforms over the course of the conflict.
- There were significant ethical, professional, or human rights–related military reforms over the course of the conflict.

Note that government and military reform is a supported COIN concept (see Table S.1), and it contributes to reducing conflict length and increasing postconflict peace intervals.

COIN Takes Time: After Good COIN Practices Are in Place, the Average Insurgency Lasts Roughly Six More Years

Because the COIN scorecard presented in Table S.2 discriminates historical wins and losses so effectively, it begs a further question: Once a COIN force manages to achieve a positive balance of good and poor COIN practices, how long does it have to sustain those practices to win? The answer: about six years, on average. Figure S.4 shows the duration, in months, of the cases in our study in which the COIN force ultimately prevailed. The figure also shows the amount of time the COIN force in each case spent with a scorecard balance below 2 (shown in red) and at least 2 (shown in green). All COIN winners had a scorecard score of at least 2 by the end of the conflict. The median remaining duration of an insurgency after the COIN force achieved a positive scorecard score was 69 months, so, on average, forces that establish effective COIN practices prevail in 69 months. Note

Figure S.4
Durations of Winning Cases and Time with Good and Bad COIN Scorecard Scores

RAND *RR291/1-S.4*

that there is considerable variation around that average, but it suggests a planning point nonetheless.[17]

Poor Beginnings Do Not Necessarily Lead to Poor Ends

One of the key findings from *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* was that "poor beginnings do not necessarily lead to poor ends." In short, this means that COIN forces that get off on the wrong foot can adapt over the course of an insurgency.[18] This finding holds over the more comprehensive set of cases studied here. We divided each of the 71 cases into between one and five phases, for a total of 204 rows of data. We then scored each phase according to whether the COIN force or the insurgents had the upper hand at its end. Because each case had a single decisive phase, 204 total phases minus 71 total cases (and, thus, final phases) leaves 133 initial or intermediate phases. In more than half of the *intermediate* phases (32 of 58) en route to COIN wins at the case level, the insurgents held the upper hand. Only nine of 29 COIN winners at the case level "ran the table" and had the upper hand in every phase of the conflict. All of the others had at least one phase in which the insurgents got the better of the COIN force but the latter managed to win in the end.

Recommendations

Taken together, these key findings suggest the following recommendations:

Recommendations for Defeating Insurgencies

- Focus first on overmatching the insurgents, defeating their conventional military aspirations, and forcing them to fight as guerrillas.

[17] The variation in the amount of time spent with a positive scorecard score prior to the end of the conflict can be quantified: The median was 69 months, and the mean was 101 months, with a standard deviation of 95 months.

[18] Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b, p. xxiii.

- Identify insurgents' sources of tangible support and seek to reduce them.
- Recognize that essential tangible support may or may not flow from the population.
- Be prepared to continue good COIN practices for six or more years after a substantial balance of good COIN practices is first achieved.
- Avoid the exclusively "iron fist" COIN path.
- Generate or retain capabilities to plan and pursue multiple mutually supporting lines of operation.

Recommendations for Helping Others Fight an Insurgency

- When building host-nation security forces to fight an insurgency, balance quality and quantity, but favor quality.
- Help host-nation governments reform—to improve their commitment and motivation and to increase legitimacy.
- Retain leverage over supported governments and elites to encourage sufficient commitment and motivation; avoid creating perverse incentives or dependencies.

Recommendations for COIN Doctrine and Theory

- Move away from strategic discussions that focus on a population-centric versus insurgent-centric dichotomy, and add nuance by specifying spectrums for targets (insurgent support versus insurgents) and actions (diminishing motives versus kinetic diminution) with the goal of achieving balance.
- Revise COIN doctrine to reinforce core principles and include key insights from this research.