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Testing Concepts for Counterinsurgency

Insurgency is a complex subset of warfare. Current U.S. doctrine defines *insurgency* as "the organized use of subversion or violence by a group or movement that seeks to overthrow or force change of a governing authority."[1] Essentially, insurgency is 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.

The mirror image of insurgency is counterinsurgency, a combination of offensive, defensive, and stability operations. The doctrinal definition of *counterinsurgency* is "comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances."[2] As discussed in Chapter One, in this report we define counterinsurgency (COIN) as efforts undertaken by a government and its security forces (or the security forces of supporting partners or allies) to oppose an insurgency. COIN is the type of operation or the mission and does not presuppose the approach taken to oppose the insurgency.

Our review of the COIN literature covered everything from the classics to contemporary contributions from academics, practitioners, and military officers. Based on this broad review, we extrapolated 24 distinct concepts, partial concepts, or collections of practical advice

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[1] U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Publication 1-02, Washington, D.C., November 8, 2010, as amended through November 15, 2012, p. 150.

[2] U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2012, p. 71.

for COIN.[3] This chapter tests these 24 concepts against the historical record of the 59 core cases identified in the previous chapter. We find strong empirical evidence supporting 17 of these concepts and strong evidence against one.

The 24 COIN concepts are listed in Table 4.1. A given COIN force's strategy or approach will often involve several of these concepts in whole or in part; they are not mutually exclusive and can (and

Table 4.1
Twenty-Four Concepts for COIN Tested in This Research

Category	Concepts	
Classic COIN concepts	Development (classic "hearts and minds")	Unity of effort
		Resettlement
	Pacification	Cost-benefit
	Legitimacy	Border control
	Reform	Initiative
	Redress	"Crush them"
	Democracy	Amnesty/rewards
Contemporary COIN concepts	Strategic communication	"Put a local face on it"
	Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*	Cultural awareness
		Commitment and motivation
	Clear, hold, and build	Tangible support reduction
	"Beat cop"	Criticality of intelligence
	"Boots on the ground"	Flexibility and adaptability

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[3]   Eighteen of the 24 concepts tested here were also tested against the most recent 30 cases in these data in previous research; see Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b. In that original research, what are here referred to as "concepts" were labeled "approaches." The fact that many of the COIN concepts appear together in successful COIN campaigns (in fact, no successful COIN campaign implemented fewer than five of the tested concepts) led us to seek a term that was more stackable—that is, better implied the kind of combination, integration, and synthesis of different COIN advice into the overall COIN effort. Conventional English usage suggests that each COIN force adopts a single approach (which may, to be sure, change over time), composed from any number of different concepts. We have adopted this new convention throughout. For a discussion of updates and revisions to the factors representing the concepts tested in our earlier research, see the discussion in Appendix D.

should) be combined. To impose some order on the identified concepts, we have grouped them loosely into classic COIN concepts and contemporary COIN concepts. Many classic concepts are still prominently advocated in contemporary discourse, so the label "classic" is in no way intended to suggest that they are dated. Similarly, most of the contemporary concepts have classical roots. Within the broader classic and contemporary categories, concepts are arranged beginning with those that are more firmly aligned with population-centric COIN theory and progress to those more closely aligned with the enemy-centric view. We could have just as easily sorted for alignment on the two alternative dimensions we advocate in Chapter One, type of action (diminishing motives or direct kinetic diminution) and type of target (insurgent support or active insurgents), but because most of these concepts were designed and have been articulated in the literature according to the population-centric/enemy-centric paradigm, we chose this approach.

Representing the Concepts in the Data

As we reviewed and synthesized the concepts, we identified a set of core tenets for each (reported later in this chapter). Based on these tenets, we then identified sets of discrete, measurable factors to represent each concept and identified them as either present or absent in each case. Details of the process that we used to select and refine the factors, along with details of the process by which the factors were determined to be present or absent for each case, can be found in Appendix A, in the section "Factor Generation, Evaluation, and Scoring."

Our previous research, as reported in *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, followed the same process and evaluated many of the same concepts for the 30 insurgencies begun and completed between 1978 and 2008 (all 30 of which are included in the 59 core cases on which the current analysis is based). Details of differences between the concepts tested in that earlier research and the concepts tested here, as well as the few differences in results, can be found in Appendix D.

Analysis of the Relationships Between Case Factors and Case Outcomes

Preliminary analyses involved comparing the relationships between different factors and the case outcomes. This began with the assessment of simple 2×2 tables for each factor against each outcome. Table 4.2 is an example of such a table.

Table 4.2
Sample 2×2 Table: Perception of Security Created Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	Yes	0	14
	No	31	14

Table 4.2 divides the 59 core cases by their values on case outcome (either COIN loss or COIN win) and the perception of security created or maintained among the population in areas that the area of the conflict (either present or absent). Adding up all four cells in the table gives a sum of 59, the number of cases. The sum of the cells in the first column is 31, the total number of COIN losses; the sum of the second column is 28, the total number of COIN wins. Summing by row, we see that in 14 cases a perception of security was present, and in 45 cases it was absent. Table 4.2 shows a strong relationship between creating a perception of security and case outcome. In every case in which there was a perception of security during the decisive phase (14 cases), the COIN force won. Not all winning COIN forces succeeded in creating a perception of security, but all COIN forces that *did* succeed in creating a perception of security won.

Factor Stacks

Each concept is represented by between one and ten discrete factors. The factors are listed after the tenets for each concept later in this chapter. Because each concept is represented by more than one factor, we faced a challenging question: How many of the factors associated with a given concept for COIN must have been present in a case before the COIN force is considered to have implemented that concept? Rather than attempting to answer this question in an abstract or theory-based way, we let the data speak and sought the best empirical cut point for each concept.

For each COIN concept, we created a new factor that was the sum of all the factors tied to that concept and present in a given phase or case. We then chose a threshold value for that sum that maximized the number of COIN wins associated with the implementation of the concepts while minimizing the number of COIN losses. Here is a concrete example: Legitimacy of the use of force as a COIN concept is represented in the data by six discrete factors (listed later in this chapter in the section "Legitimacy"). For each case, we summed these six factors, creating a new variable, "sum of legitimacy of the use force factors." The results are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3
Sum of Legitimacy of the Use of Force Factors Versus Case Outcome (empirical cut point in red)

	Case Outcome	
	COIN Loss	COIN Win
6	0	7
5	0	3
4	1	4
3	2	1
2	9	3
1	7	5
0	12	5

Sum of legitimacy of the use of force factors

Here, the empirical cut point was identified to be at four or more. Having at least four legitimacy of the use of force factors captures 14 of the COIN wins and excludes all but one of the COIN losses. Thus, we created a single factor to represent legitimacy of the use of force in the analysis: "at least four legitimacy of the use of force factors," which was evaluated as present or absent in each phase of each case, just like all the other factors in the analysis. We created a "factor stack" to represent each of the 24 concepts we tested. A more detailed discussion of factor stacks can be found in Appendix A in the section "Factor Stacks."

Tests of Each Concept

In this section, we introduce and test each of the COIN concepts listed in Table 4.1. Each entry follows the following format: The concept is introduced and the core tenets of that concept as identified in the literature are presented as a bulleted list. This is followed by a list of the specific factors chosen to represent the concept in the analysis and measured as present or absent in each phase of each case. Next is a discussion of the threshold for the factor stack chosen to indicate the implementation of the concept and represent it as a single factor. A table shows the relationship between the concept and the outcome, and a summary assessment of the empirical support for the concept is levied. These assessments indicate whether the concept received strong support from the evidence in our analysis, minimal from the evidence, or strong evidence against. Strength of support is based on the ability of the concept (by way of its factor stack) to predict or discriminate between case outcomes when implemented. Concepts were considered to have strong support if the bivariate relationship between the concept's factor stack and the outcome was very strong (i.e., using it and it alone is a very strong indicator of the outcome); minimal support if there was a limited correlation between the concept's factor stack and the outcome; and strong evidence against it if the concept was implemented in a greater proportion of losses than wins.

Classic COIN Concepts
Development (Classic "Hearts and Minds")
The "hearts and minds"[4] COIN concept should perhaps more properly be called the "development" concept. Core tenets are as follows:

- Development leads to indigenous support.
- Those who have something worth fighting for will fight for it.
- Development leads to increased indigenous capacity.
- Development is painful; short-term handouts ease the pain of development.

While the phrase *hearts and minds* itself may have become a cliché, the ideas behind this concept still retain relevance. The central proposition is that development and modernity will give the population a positive stake in order and good governance and thus deprive insurgents of their support. The catch, of course, is that development and modernity can cause painful dislocations and disruptions in the old institutions of a traditional society.[5] The solution, then, "is therefore to win the public's support for the government by ameliorating some of the negative effects of development while speeding up the provision of modernity's benefits."[6] Furthermore, this concept has suffered from the "chicken-and-egg" dilemma of what should come first, security or development. As evidenced by travails associated with recent COIN operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, no clear-cut answer to this question has been realized.

This COIN concept prescribes increasing political rights, improving standards of living, and reducing corruption in the government

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[4] The phrase *hearts and minds* can be traced to Sir Gerald Templer, who used it to describe aspects of the British COIN campaign in Malaya (1948–1955). While called "hearts and minds" at its inception, there is very little in this approach that pertains to efforts to influence or woo the population in the way the phrase is often used in the contemporary era. Perhaps a better short moniker would be "give the population a stronger stake."

[5] This idea is articulated thoroughly in Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968.

[6] Austin Long, *On "Other War": Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-482-OSD, 2006, p. x.

while pursuing a path to development. The development concept follows popular support–based theory, positing that development leads to support, and support leads to positive COIN outcomes.[7] Extra nuance comes in with the proposed relationships between development and indigenous capacity and the inclination to resist insurgents. It is also an unambiguously motive-focused concept, aiming not only to diminish motives for supporting the insurgents but also to increase motive for actively resisting the insurgents among the population.

The development concept is represented in our analysis by four factors. The threshold for a COIN force to receive credit for implementing this concept is having at least two of the following four factors present:

- Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform occurred in the area of conflict that was controlled or claimed by the COIN force.
- In the area of conflict, the COIN force was *not* perceived as worse than the insurgents.
- Planned reconstruction/development improvements were substantially above the historical baseline.
- Reconstruction/development met at least two of these criteria: based on popular demand, initiated mainly at the village level, used local labor/created local jobs, aimed at self-empowerment of the people, and was sustainable.

As Table 4.4 shows, the COIN force won whenever at least two of these four factors were present in the decisive phase. Since the COIN force won every time it implemented this concept, *development receives strong support in our analysis.*

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[7]   Long, 2006, pp. 21–23; David C. Gompert, John Gordon IV, David R. Frelinger, Seth G. Jones, Martin C. Libicki, Edward O'Connell, Brooke Stearns Lawson, and Robert E. Hunter, *War by Other Means: Building Complete and Balanced Capabilities for Counterinsurgency: RAND Counterinsurgency Study—Final Report*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-595/2-OSD, 2008, pp. 91–92.

Table 4.4
At Least Two Development Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least two development factors	Yes	0	13
	No	31	15

Pacification

Primarily thought of as a Vietnam War–era concept, *pacification* is a broad and fairly vague umbrella term for a handful of population-centric COIN concepts that focus on the local level.[8] These concepts emphasize the simultaneous pursuit of development and security, beginning on a small scale then then expanding across geographic locales. Classic pacification relates to the "community policing" perspective that was developed domestically in the United States in the 1970s.[9]

The core tenets of pacification are as follows:

- "All politics is local."[10]
- Engage in or enable community policing or beat-cop activities.[11]
- Development and security need to go hand in hand; the pursuit of either on its own can be counterproductive.[12]

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[8] Long, 2006, p. 52.

[9] Long, 2006, p. 53.

[10] "All Politics Is Local" is the heading of the section on pacification in Long, 2006, p. 52; the quote is originally attributed to former Speaker of the House Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, Jr.

[11] Long, 2006, p. 53. The phrase "beat-cop behaviors" can be found in David Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency," *IO Sphere*, Summer 2006a, p. 29.

[12] Long, 2006, p. 53. This thinking seems to have been adopted by COIN experts and U.S. government departments. See David Kilcullen, "Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency," pre-

Again, while often considered a concept of yesteryear, pacification has stood the test of time, bridging the gap between classic and contemporary. This can be directly attributed to its focus on the population as a key to effective COIN. The support of the population is again implicitly important, but here that support is won locally. A premium is placed on providing and maintaining security at the local community or village level and then expanding the area that is "pacified." Though focused on the population, this concept implicitly balances efforts to reduce the population's motives and opportunities to support the insurgents, and of course the emphasis on local security includes an element of kinetic action against active insurgents.

Pacification is represented by six factors in our analysis:

- A perception of security was created or maintained among populations in areas that the COIN force claimed to control.
- Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform occurred in the area of conflict that was controlled or claimed by the COIN force.
- The COIN force established and then expanded secure areas.
- Planned reconstruction/development improvements were substantially above the historical baseline.
- COIN force undertook all three of clear, hold, and build.
- Reconstruction/development met at least two of these criteria: based on popular demand, initiated mainly at the village level, used local labor/created local jobs, aimed at self-empowerment of the people, and was sustainable.

The empirical cut point for the factor stack requires that at least two of these factors be present for the COIN force to qualify as having employed pacification.

Pacification receives strong support from these data. Every COIN force that realized at least two of these six factors won. (See Table 4.5.)

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sentation, U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Conference, Washington, D.C., September 28, 2006b. This theme has also been commandeered by the U.S. Department of State, as evidenced in a report released in October 2007 titled *Counterinsurgency for U.S. Government Policymakers: A Work in Progress.*

Table 4.5
At Least Two Pacification Factors Present Versus Case Outcome

| | | Case Outcome | |
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least two pacification factors	Yes	0	18
	No	31	10

Legitimacy

Sociologist Max Weber wrote extensively on the societal importance of legitimacy and authority.[13] Legitimacy is fundamentally a motive-focused concept. The core tenets are as follows:

- Insurgency is fundamentally a contest of legitimacy.[14]
- A legitimate government:
  - has a monopoly on the use of violence[15]
  - maintains the rule of law[16]
  - is a provider of basic services.[17]

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[13] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1958, p. 78.

[14] Eliot Cohen, Conrad Crane, Jan Horvath, and John Nagl, "Principles, Imperatives, and Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency," *Military Review*, March–April 2006, p. 49.

[15] Max Weber defined the state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory" (Weber, 1958, p. 78).

[16] 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, p. 154.

[17] Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2007, p. 153.

- The government's role can be expanded to include the need to protect legitimacy by avoiding collateral damage.[18]

This position asserts that people offer their support to the side that they perceive as having the greatest legitimacy. If made to appear illegitimate, the insurgency will lose support and supporters and will wither away. If legitimacy accrues to the government, then the government will enjoy greater support, greater patience for its shortcomings, and better intelligence on insurgents. Consequently, if the government is seen as corrupt, self-serving, and inept, the population may be persuaded to support the insurgents, who, even if somewhat draconian in their rule, are perceived to be more just and fair than the government.

Perceptions of legitimacy are complicated and involve contextual nuances. Legitimacy should always be evaluated as a perception of the stakeholders, not against some arbitrary external standard.

Because so many different aspects of and behaviors by the government and the COIN force can affect perceptions of legitimacy in a way that could relate to COIN outcomes, we divide legitimacy into "government legitimacy" and "legitimacy of force" for our analysis.

Government Legitimacy

Government legitimacy was represented by these two factors:

- Government leaders were selected in a manner considered just and fair by the majority of the population in the area of conflict.
- The majority of citizens viewed the government as legitimate in the area of conflict.

Having either factor was an empirical threshold. Twenty-three cases had at least one of the government legitimacy factors, and 17 of them were COIN wins; 36 cases lacked either of the legitimacy of government factors, and the vast majority (25, or 69 percent) were COIN

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[18] Montgomery McFate, and Andrea V. Jackson, "The Object Beyond War: Counterinsurgency and the Four Tools of Political Competition," *Military Review*, January–February 2006, pp. 14–16.

losses. This degree of correlation is *evidence in support of the importance of government legitimacy.* (See Table 4.6.)

Table 4.6
At Least One Government Legitimacy Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least one government legitimacy factors	Yes	6	17
	No	25	11

Legitimate Use of Force

Six factors represent the legitimacy of the COIN force's use of force:

- The COIN force *avoided* excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force.
- COIN force collateral damage was *not* perceived by the population in the area of conflict as worse than the insurgents'.
- In the area of conflict, the COIN force was *not* perceived as worse than the insurgents.
- The perception of security was created or maintained among populations in areas that the COIN force claimed to control.
- COIN force did *not* employ the indiscriminate force.
- The COIN force did *not* employ practices considered beyond the pale by contemporary U.S. ethical standards.

The empirical break point for legitimate use of force was four of the six factors, a relatively high threshold. Of the 14 cases with at least four legitimate use of force factors, 13 were COIN wins. This is *strong evidence in support of the importance of government legitimacy.* (See Table 4.7.)

Table 4.7
At Least Four Legitimate Use of Force Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least four legitimate use of force factors	Yes	1	13
	No	30	15

Reform

If an insurgency draws support from those frustrated with the performance of the government, improving government performance is a logical way to reduce that support. Similarly, if the way security forces deal with insurgents further alienates the population, such efforts can be counterproductive. Reform, of both the government and the security forces, is a motive-focused concept that can increase the legitimacy of the state and undermine support for insurgents as a better alternative. The core tenets are as follows:

- Government reform portrays the government as responsive and responsible, and changes leading to greater professionalism and good governance increase legitimacy.[19]
- Reducing corruption is critical to earning the trust of the population and can function as a force multiplier, particularly in COIN.[20]

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[19] Daniel L. Byman, "Friends Like These: Counterinsurgency and the War on Terror," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 2, Fall 2006; see also John A. Lynn, "Patterns of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency," *Military Review*, July–August 2005, and Carter Malkasian, "The Role of Perceptions and Political Reform in Counterinsurgency: The Case of Western Iraq, 2004–2005," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 2006.

[20] George K. Tanham and Dennis J. Duncanson, "Some Dilemmas of Counterinsurgency," *Foreign Affairs*, October 1969.

Reform was represented in the analysis by the following five factors:

- Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since the onset of the conflict.
- There were significant government reforms since the onset of conflict.
- There were significant ethical/professional/human rights–related military reforms since the onset of conflict.
- There were significant government or military reforms in this phase.
- Reforms were recognized/appreciated by the population in the area of conflict.

The best empirical cutpoint for these five factors proved to be at least four of the five. The government won 11 of the 12 cases that had four or five of these five factors in the decisive phase. This provides *strong evidence in support of reform as an effective COIN concept.* (See Table 4.8.)

Table 4.8
At Least Four Reform Factors Versus Case Outcome

| | | Case Outcome | |
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least four reform factors	Yes	1	11
	No	30	17

Redress

If insurgencies are initially motivated by a set of grievances, and continued grievances sustain support for insurgencies, then redress of those grievances should lead to reconciliation and peace. Like reform, redress is related to legitimacy and, as such, is a motive-focused concept. The core tenet is as follows:

- The redress of grievances addresses the root causes of the conflict and increases the legitimacy of the host-nation government.[21]

Redress of grievances was represented in the analysis by three factors:

- Grievances leading to the initial insurgency substantially resolved.
- Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since the onset of the conflict.
- COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents.

These three factors did not yield an empirical cut point, because there was very limited correlation between these factors and outcome. Table 4.9 presents the sum of redress factors versus outcome, showing both the lack of a clear empirical cut point and the lack of substantial correlation. This means that *there is minimal support for redress as a COIN concept*.

Table 4.9
Sum of Redress Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
	3	4	4
	2	4	8
Sum of redress factors	1	6	7
	0	17	9

Initially, this result seems somewhat surprising; after all, if insurgencies really are about grievances, one would expect the redress of those grievances to be more strongly correlated with success. Reflection, however, reminded us of the work of scholar Charles Tilly. In

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[21] See, for example, Thomas A. Marks, "Ideology of Insurgency: New Ethnic Focus or Old Cold War Distractions?" *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2004, and Patrick M. Regan and Daniel Norton, "Greed, Grievance, and Mobilization in Civil Wars," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 49, No. 3, June 2005.

his seminal 1978 *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Tilly cited several important prerequisites to mobilizing effective collective action. He notes the presence of grievances but dismisses them as an important variable, finding that grievances are pretty much always present; variation in successful mobilization depends on other things.[22] If, as Tilly states, grievances are always present, it is, in fact, not surprising that redressing grievances is not strongly correlated with COIN success. It is certainly likely that mobilized insurgents and their supporters would remain mobilized and simply claim other grievances or continue to claim the resolved grievances.

Democracy

Democracy is advocated as a way to increase the legitimacy of a government and as a way to resolve grievances short of violence. The core tenets of this concept are as follows:[23]

- Democratic voice and expression resolve grievances.
- Democracy equals legitimacy.

At its undertheorized worst, democracy is held to be a panacea.[24] More reasonable articulations posit that democracy and democratization help resolve grievances through democratic expression, or they equate democracy with legitimacy.

Democracy is represented by four factors, the first two of which are mutually exclusive (so no more than three of the four factors could be present in any one case):

- The government is a functional democracy.

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[22] Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1978.

[23] Though certainly not the only example of this kind of thinking, both tenets can be found in Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Policy Coordinating Committee, *U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication*, Washington, D.C., June 2007, p. 3.

[24] The word democracy or democratic appears 44 times in the 60-page 2010 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. The strategy has an entire section dedicated to the establishment and promotion of democracy, titled "Promote Democracy and Human Rights Abroad."

- The government is a partial or transitional democracy.
- Free and fair elections were held.
- The government respects human rights and allows a free press.

The empirical cut point is having at least one of these four factors. As Table 4.10 reveals, 31 cases had at least one democracy factor in the decisive phase, with 21 of them being COIN wins. This is a positive correlation but a much weaker correlation than that observed for many other concepts, and, thus, we find *minimal support for democracy as a concept for COIN*.

Table 4.10
At Least One Democracy Factor Versus Case Outcome

| | | Case Outcome | |
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least one democracy factor	Yes	10	21
	No	21	7

Unity of Effort

As a COIN concept, unity of effort draws on the classic military imperative, positing that successful COIN forces coordinate the efforts of all security forces, and the government more broadly, toward a unified purpose. Achieving unity of effort is often difficult in COIN, especially when balancing between sometimes-competing actions related to diminishing motive and eliminating the insurgent threat. The core tenet is as follows:

- When COIN forces are able to maintain unity of effort, it drives the core common goals and stated purpose/objectives of the mission.[25]

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[25] Robert M. Cassidy, "Back to the Streets Without Joy: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam and Other Small Wars," *Parameters*, Vol. 34, No. 2, Summer 2004; Max G.

Unity of effort was represented by a single factor:

- Unity of effort/unity of command was maintained.

When unity of effort was maintained, the COIN force won in 24 out of 29 cases; when it was not, the COIN force lost in 26 out of 30 cases. (See Table 4.11.) This constitutes *support for unity of effort*.

Table 4.11
Unity of Effort Versus Case Outcome

| | | Case Outcome | |
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Unity of effort maintained	Yes	5	24
	No	26	4

Resettlement ("Drain the Swamp")

Pacification also has been used occasionally throughout history as a euphemism for relocation and resettlement—actions that take the prescription to separate the population from the insurgents quite literally.[26] This concept has also been referred to as "draining the swamp"[27]

Manwaring and John T. Fishel, "Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency: Toward a New Analytical Approach," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1992; Jeffrey Record, *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win*, Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2009.

[26] Kelly M. Greenhill, "Draining the Sea, or Feeding the Fire? The Use of Population Relocation in Counterinsurgency Operations," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, Ill., September 2, 2004.

[27] This phrase is often attributed to former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in remarks made shortly after the attacks of September 11, 2001. See "Rumsfeld: U.S. Must Drain the Swamp," CNN, September 19, 2001. It is also a common phrase for the strategy of separating insurgents from the population, often used by the British in past COIN campaigns. For more information, see Wade Markel, "Draining the Swamp: The British Strategy

or "draining the sea,"[28] harkening back to Mao's quote about the population being the sea in which the insurgents swim. Though focused on the population, this is not necessarily a motive-focused concept. It is founded in action based on opportunity: Rather than getting the population to stop wanting to support the insurgents, relocation is intended to constrain its ability to do so. This places the concept in the upper right quadrant of Figure 1.1 in Chapter One, primarily targeting insurgent support through physical means.

This version of draining the swamp has two tenets:

- The population is the sea in which the fish of insurgency swim.[29]
- Separate the insurgents from the population (physically, in this case).[30]

If the COIN force is unable to provide security to the population where it is and insurgents are extracting necessary inputs from that population, relocation of that population might seem to be an obvious solution. According to Kelly Greenhill's research, the historical record for this form of pacification is extremely poor.[31] Citing examples in Turkey, Burundi, Indonesia, and Colombia, Greenhill finds that relocation is likely to work only "in those rare cases where promises made by the counterinsurgents actually are fulfilled and the quality of life actually is improved for the displaced population—i.e., where a culture

of Population Control," *Parameters*, Spring 2006, and Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, p. 180.

[28] Benjamin Valentino, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay, "'Draining the Sea': Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare," *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No. 2, Spring 2004.

[29] Mao Tse-Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, Samuel B. Griffith II, trans., New York: Praeger, 1961.

[30] Greenhill, 2004.

[31] Greenhill, 2004.

of cooperation and co-optation can be inculcated."[32] The oft-invoked example of success in this concept is the British in Malaya.[33]

Alternatively, resettlement could be both a kinetic action and a motive-focused concept (and thus fall into both the upper right and upper left quadrants of Figure 1.1). Under this construction, removing the population prevents the insurgents from coercively drawing support out of that population; supporting the quality of life of the relocated population diminishes any willing motive for offering further support. The focus is on denying the adversary the support of the population. If the population cannot be secured in place (as the generic version of pacification obviously prefers), then it must be removed to a location where it can.

The resettlement concept is represented by a two factors in our analysis:

- The COIN force resettled or removed civilian populations for population control.
- Relocated populations were sufficiently compensated, and their quality of life improved.

When both resettlement factors were present, success followed. (See Table 4.12.) However, the presence of both factors was rare, occurring in only three of 59 cases. Much more common was resettlement for population control without much attention to the care of the resettled. When the first factor occurred without the second (as shown in Table 4.13), the COIN force lost in five of the 13 cases. Taken together, this constitutes *minimal support for resettlement as a COIN concept.*

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[32] Greenhill, 2004, p. 3.

[33] John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2005; Thomas E. Willis II, "Lessons from the Past: Successful British Counterinsurgency Operations in Malaya 1948–1960," *Infantry Magazine*, July–August 2005; Kalev I. Sepp, "Best Practices in Counterinsurgency," *Military Review*, May–June 2005.

Table 4.12
Resettlement and Care for the Resettled Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Resettlement and care for the resettled	Yes	0	3
	No	31	25

Table 4.13
Resettlement Alone Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Resettlement alone	Yes	5	8
	No	26	20

Cost-Benefit

During the Vietnam War era and writing in opposition to those who advocated popular support–based concepts for COIN, RAND's Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., focused instead on insurgents' needs for certain inputs.[34] This insurgent-focused concept has the following tenets:[35]

- Treat the insurgency as a system.
- COIN forces must increase the cost of insurgent inputs.

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[34] Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, R-462-ARPA, 1970.

[35] Also referred to as "carrots and sticks." These tenets are found in Long, 2006, pp. 24–26.

- COIN forces must interrupt the process by which inputs are converted into activities.
- COIN forces must destroy insurgent outputs.
- COIN forces should seek to blunt the impact of insurgent outputs.

Leites and Wolf suggested that insurgencies are best viewed as systems and that COIN efforts should be evaluated in terms of how well they either raised the cost of inputs to the system or interfered with outputs.[36] This concept came to be known as "cost-benefit" and indicated that, under certain circumstances, "development" could lead to increased inputs for insurgents:

> In effect, development made more resources available to citizens, which insurgents could then acquire from the population through persuasion, coercion, or a combination of the two. Thus, paradoxically, programs designed to reduce popular support for insurgents could actually reduce the insurgent cost for inputs such as food.[37]

The concept relies on system dynamics theory to posit that disrupting the input or output of an insurgent system will result in a reduction of the overall impact of insurgent output.

The core elements of a cost-benefit concept are captured in six factors in this analysis:

- COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgent processes.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent financing.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent command and control.

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[36] Long, 2006, p. 25.

[37] Long, 2006, p. 25.

Having at least two of these six factors is the empirical cut point used as the threshold for the factor stack to represent the cost-benefit concept. There is a very strong correlation between the application of the cost-benefit concept and outcome, with 25 of 26 cases with at least two cost-benefit factors being COIN wins, and only three COIN wins coming without at least two of these factors. (See Table 4.14.) *This constitutes strong evidence in favor of cost-benefit.*

Table 4.14
At Least Two Cost-Benefit Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least two cost-benefit factors	Yes	1	25
	No	30	3

Border Control

The importance of border security follows the logic of the cost-benefit concept: If the insurgent "system" is able to freely receive inputs from cross-border sources, efforts to restrict in-country insurgent inputs will be far less consequential. "Indeed, with few exceptions (perhaps most notably Cuba), successful insurgencies have been able to obtain aid and comfort from outside sources."[38] This is a concept targeting insurgent support, but through kinetic/physical means. Tenets include the following:[39]

- Insurgencies benefit from cross-border support and havens.

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[38] Long, 2006, p. 49.

[39] Long, 2006, pp. 49–51; Gompert et al., 2008, p. 190. See also Paul Staniland, "Defeating Transnational Insurgencies: The Best Offense Is a Good Fence," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Winter 2005–2006, and Alexander Alderson, "Iraq and Its Borders: The Role of Barriers in Counter-Insurgency," *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 153, No. 2, April 2008, p. 19.

- Securing the border reduces the flow of fighters and materiel and/or provides useful intelligence.
- Secure borders increase international legitimacy.

The importance of border security is clearly evident in contemporary Afghanistan, where the Taliban has been able to move fighters, money, and materiel back and forth between that country and neighboring Pakistan. Although remotely piloted drones patrol the skies above the Federally Administered Tribal Areas on the Pakistani side of the border, the rugged terrain and centuries-old smuggling routes make sealing the border virtually impossible.

As a COIN concept, border control is always connected to other concepts, such as cost-benefit (deprive the insurgents of cross-border inputs), tangible support reduction, and legitimacy.

Border control is represented in the analysis by a single factor:

- The flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent.

Table 4.15 reveals a very strong correlation between border control and COIN success, with the vast majority of COIN wins (25 of 28) including border control in the decisive phase, while very few (four) of the COIN losses did. *This is strong evidence in support of border control as a COIN concept.*

Table 4.15
Border Control Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained largely absent	Yes	4	25
	No	27	3

Initiative

Seizing the initiative is a timeless military imperative predicated on striking fast, striking first, and striking hard. We discerned a single core tenet:

- Seizing and maintaining the initiative puts the COIN force in position to beat the insurgents back and gain the upper hand in a given phase.[40]

This concept is represented in the analysis by a single factor:

- Fighting in phase initiated primarily by COIN forces.

In the majority of cases won by the government (22 of 28), the COIN force held the initiative in the decisive phase. However, in cases won by the insurgents, the COIN force also held the initiative almost one-third of the time (ten of 31; see Table 4.16). When we interrogated the case narratives looking for an explanation, one offered itself: the difference between seizing the initiative by blindly striking first and seizing the initiative by coupling flexible and dynamic capabilities with actionable intelligence. Looking more closely at the theoretical literature, several scholars assert that successfully seizing and maintaining the initiative depends in large part on actionable intelligence.[41] Indeed, in Chechnya, Russian forces seized the initiative by conducting an all-out attack on Grozny, the Chechen capital. However, the insurgents were lying in wait, prepared to ambush the cumbersome COIN advance. Russian tanks were trapped in the narrow streets as Chechen snipers picked off retreating soldiers as they fled. On the opposite side of the spectrum, British COIN forces in Northern Ireland seized the initiative in Operation Motorman in 1972, a comprehensive sweep

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[40] Robert R. Tomes, "Relearning Counterinsurgency Warfare," *Parameters*, Vol. 34, No. 1, Spring 2004. See also Ted L. Stokes, *Creating Time and Space: Depth, Simultaneity, and Tempo in Counterinsurgency*, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, School of Advances Military Studies, 2012.

[41] See, for example, Walter L. Perry and John Gordon IV, *Analytic Support to Intelligence in Counterinsurgencies*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-682-OSD, 2008.

of insurgent no-go zones aided by reliable human intelligence and an actionable plan for how to exploit that intelligence.

Table 4.16
Initiative Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Fighting in phase initiated primarily by COIN forces	Yes	10	22
	No	21	6

Table 4.17 shows the relationship between case outcomes and the COIN force having both the initiative and significant intelligence (as per the intelligence concept described later in this chapter). The COIN force won in all but one case in which it had both the initiative and the intelligence to support it. These results, taken together, constitute *strong support for initiative as a concept*.

Table 4.17
Initiative and Intelligence Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Both initiative and intelligence	Yes	1	16
	No	30	12

"Crush Them"

"Crush them" is a concept singularly focused on the kinetic elimination of both active insurgents and the support they need. Clancy and Crosset suggest that, if diagnosed sufficiently early, a nascent insur-

gency can be annihilated through the vigorous application of force and repression.[42] While Clancy and Crosset's version of this concept is intended to apply only to nascent insurgencies, "crush them" is also a more general concept for COIN that predates the modern era.[43]

This position has but a single tenet:

- Escalating repression can crush an insurgency.

This concept sits uneasily alongside legitimacy and popular support–based concepts, because repression and unrestrained force are unlikely to be well regarded by the population at large. Indeed, an established insurgency met with escalating repression would likely gain further domestic and international support and legitimacy. What separates a nascent insurgency from a mature one and the resulting implications for this theory are not well articulated in the existing literature. The use of escalating repression is not limited strictly to dictatorships, but democracies typically lack the political will to employ this tactic for a prolonged period. After all, democracies, in theory at least, must respond to their domestic constituencies, while dictatorships have far more leeway in crafting COIN strategies. This concept sounds like it belongs in the "iron fist" playbook, and, in fact, most COIN forces employing "crush them" generally belong in that category. The two are not equivalent, however. An iron fist COIN effort focuses almost exclusively on the insurgents, and almost exclusively through kinetic means. That does not necessarily mean that the force applied to the insurgents is not discriminate and proportionate, or that supporting or source populations are also targeted. "Crush them," however, focuses both on the application of force to insurgents and on repression of supporting populations.

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[42] James Clancy and Chuck Crosset, "Measuring Effectiveness in Irregular Warfare," *Parameters*, Summer 2007. The authors note that "combat operations have defeated insurgencies by overwhelming and annihilating the insurgency and its supporters through bombings, massive raids, heavy shelling, and even torture and executions" (p. 91). "The quick and overwhelming smothering of an infant insurgency is a very effective tactic" (p. 92).

[43] Indeed, Roman "decimation" can be seen as an early application of this approach.

Escalating repression as a COIN concept is captured in the analysis by two factors:

- The COIN force employed escalating repression.
- The COIN force employed collective punishment.

Our data provide *strong evidence against repression as a concept for COIN*, as there is a strong *negative* correlation between the presence of both "crush them" factors and case outcome. (See Table 4.18.) Using repression does not guarantee defeat (11 of the 34 COIN forces using escalating repression and collective punishment still managed to win), but it is unambiguously a poor COIN concept.

Table 4.18
Both "Crush Them" Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Both "crush them" factors	Yes	23	11
	No	8	17

Amnesty/Rewards

This COIN concept is little more than a piece of practical advice, and the benefits accruing to amnesty or reward programs are a motive-focused way to diminish the active insurgents that could support the elements of many other concepts. An amnesty program is usually one of the first steps toward establishing an effective disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process.[44]

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[44] For further reading on the DDR process, see Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein, "Demobilization and Reintegration," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 51, No. 4, 2007; Jeremy Weinstein and Macartan Humphreys, *Disentangling the Determinants of Successful Demobilization and Reintegration*, Working Paper No. 69, Washington, D.C.: Center

The logic and tenets are simple:[45]

- Amnesty is a potentially attractive option for insurgents, reducing the need for a "fight to the finish."
- Even expensive rewards can be more cost-effective than large-scale military operations.

Three factors represent amnesty in this analysis:

- An amnesty or reward program was in place.
- The amnesty program reduced the number of insurgents.
- Phase included significant DDR efforts beyond amnesty.

The empirical cut point required at least two factors. (See Table 4.19.) All ten cases that had all three factors were COIN wins. While this appears to offer strong support for this concept, two shortcomings in our analysis require that we temper our support. First, the effectiveness of an amnesty program hinges on a number of variables but mostly on the attractiveness of the offer relative to alternatives. The attractiveness of an amnesty offer depends in part on the insurgents' perceptions of their prospects for success. This leaves this factor as partially tautological: If you are beating the insurgents, they are more likely to accept your amnesty. Second is the issue of causal ordering. Does the COIN force win because it offers amnesty, or does the COIN force offer amnesty because it is winning? Our phases are not sufficiently fine-grained to discriminate the sequence of events enough to tell. If we are just interested in correlation, then it does not really matter: Effective amnesty programs co-occur with COIN wins. If we are interested in plausible causal explanations (as we are), then our analysis is not well structured to adjudicate the contribution of this concept. What we can tell from our data is that we do not reject this concept. That is, while we cannot determine whether winners offered amnesty or amnesty

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for Global Development, 2005; and Nicole Ball and Luc van de Goor, *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Mapping Issues, Dilemmas and Guiding Principles*, Clingendael, Netherlands: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, August 2006.

[45] Long, 2006, pp. 45–49.

offers led to victory, we can tell that amnesty is correlated with victory: Amnesty does not lead to insurgent victory. *We interpret this as offering minimal support to amnesty as a COIN concept.*

Table 4.19
At Least Two Amnesty Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least two amnesty factors	Yes	3	16
	No	28	12

Contemporary Concepts for COIN
Strategic Communication

Strategic communication is a relatively recent term of art for coordinated whole-of-government persuasion and influence efforts, synchronizing the communicative content of both words and deeds. When applied to the COIN context, it suggests a motive-focused and legitimacy-based concept for which we have distilled the following tenets:

- Maintain credibility.
- Minimize the "say-do" gap, the distance between COIN force claims and actions.
- Prioritize consistency of message.
- Continuity of message over time improves credibility.
- Kinetic and nonkinetic messaging is noncontradictory.
- Core messages flow from policy goals.
- There is unity of effort.
- Core themes contribute to COIN operational goals.
- There is expectation management.

Capturing the essence of strategic communication as a concept for COIN is challenging. None of the COIN literature predating the turn of the current century explicitly mentions strategic communication, simply because the term was not yet in use. Lacking a period synonym, much of relevance to strategic communication can be found in discussions of PSYOP, information operations (IO), propaganda, political warfare, or simply as subtext among the principles and theories of COIN.

Though no one explicitly articulates a theory of strategic communication for COIN, there are sufficiently clear statements and recommendations in the literature to extrapolate a strategic communication COIN concept.[46] Existing work on strategic communication implies that, done correctly, strategic communication can deliver the support (or at least tacit approval) of an indigenous population, reduce motives for support for an insurgency, and sometimes influence the behavior of insurgents themselves. Strategic communication is *not* posited as a sufficient solution to the challenge of COIN—that is, no one suggests that effective strategic communication alone is enough to end an insurgency. Strategic communication is variously held to be a force multiplier or one important pillar concept in a multipronged approach to countering insurgency.

Strategic communication was represented in the analysis by five factors:

- COIN force and government actions were consistent with messages (delivering on promises).
- The COIN force maintained credibility with populations in the area of conflict (includes expectation management).

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[46] See, for example, Mari K. Eder, "Toward Strategic Communication," *Military Review*, July–August 2007; Richard J. Josten, "Strategic Communication: Key Enabler for Elements of National Power," *IO Sphere*, Summer 2006; Jeffrey B. Jones, "Strategic Communication: A Mandate for the United States," *Joint Force Quarterly*, No. 39, 4th Quarter 2005; Richard Halloran, "Strategic Communication," *Parameters*, Autumn 2007; Christopher Paul, *Information Operations—Doctrine and Practice: A Handbook*, Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2008; and David P. Anders, *Developing an Operational Level Strategic Communication Model for Counterinsurgency*, Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 2009.

- Messages or themes cohered with the overall COIN approach.
- COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations.
- Themes and messages were coordinated across all involved government agencies.[47]

As noted elsewhere in this report, the tested concepts for COIN are not all mutually exclusive and often have tenets and, thus, factors in common. However, all five of these factors are unique to strategic communication in this analysis. (That is, none of these factors also appears in another concept.)

The empirical cut point for the sum of strategic communication factors present in a given case was three or more, so we considered strategic communication to have been employed in any case in which at least three of these five strategic communication factors were present.

Strategic communication as a concept for COIN receives strong support in this analysis. In all 12 cases in which the COIN force realized at least three of the strategic communication factors, it prevailed. (See Table 4.20.)

Table 4.20
At Least Three Strategic Communication Factors Versus Case Outcome

| | | Case Outcome | |
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least three strategic communication factors	Yes	0	12
	No	31	16

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[47] Note that following the core tenets of the approach, a factor addressing unity of command was originally included among the factors representing strategic communication. Subsequent discussion led to the decision to treat unity of command as its own separate concept and remove it from strategic communication. See further discussion in the relevant subsection of Appendix D.

COIN FM

FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, released in December 2006, was the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps' collective attempt to update their doctrine to address the changes in COIN since the end of the Cold War.[48] The concept implicit in FM 3-24 has these tenets:

- Provide security.
- Establish government capabilities.
- Provide basic services.
- Address grievances.
- Reduce corruption.

All of the above help separate the insurgents from the population, and this popular support improves intelligence collection and contributes to legitimacy.

FM 3-24 contains a population-centric concept for COIN with an emphasis on security, development, positive relations, and legitimacy. It is a hybrid built by combining traditional COIN concepts with new insights. According to FM 3-24, legitimacy is the main objective of COIN forces and, as such, all operations should be undertaken with consideration for the effect they have on the legitimacy of the COIN force and the host-nation government.[49]

This concept is clearly primarily motive-focused and popular support–based, and it makes explicit connections between popular support and COIN enablers, such as improved intelligence, reduction of inputs needed by insurgents, and a relationship between support and COIN force or government legitimacy.

FM 3-24 was represented in our analysis by nine factors:

- A perception of security was created or maintained among the population in areas that the COIN force claimed to control.

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[48] See Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006.

[49] Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, p. 38.

- Government corruption was reduced or good governance increased since the onset of the conflict.
- Insurgent-claimed grievances were substantially addressed since the onset of the conflict
- The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in the area of conflict.
- The COIN force provided or ensured the provision of basic services in areas that it controlled or claimed to control.
- There were short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform in the area controlled or claimed by the COIN force.
- The COIN force received substantial intelligence from the population in the area of conflict.
- The majority of the population in the area of conflict supported or favored the COIN force.
- The COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages.

As a blend of classic and contemporary COIN thinking, the concept implicit in FM 3-24 shares several of these factors with other COIN concepts. The empirical cut point for the summation of these nine factors was four, so the factor stack representing FM 3-24 is "at least four COIN FM factors present."

FM 3-24 receives strong empirical support, with all 19 cases having at least four COIN FM factors present in the decisive phase being won by the government. (See Table 4.21.) FM 3-24 was being revised at the time of this writing.[50] These findings suggest that the core principles of the 2007 version have served well against modern insurgencies and should predominantly be preserved.

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[50] U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, "Army Seeks Input on Revision to FM 3-24," June 8, 2012.

Table 4.21
At Least Four COIN FM Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least four COIN FM factors	Yes	0	19
	No	31	9

Clear, Hold, and Build

"Clear, hold, and build" is a hybrid of pacification and development, and it is a distinct and separable part of COIN doctrine.[51] In this analysis, it is represented by the following core tenets:

- Clear the area by destroying, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of the insurgents.
- Hold the area with security forces to effectively reestablish a government presence at the local level.
- Build support for the government by protecting the populace and improving economic, social, cultural, and medical services.[52]

Clear, hold, and build is represented by three factors in the analysis:

- COIN force undertook "clear" of "clear, hold, and build" in area of conflict.
- COIN force undertook "hold" of "clear, hold, and build" in area of conflict.

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[51] Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006.

[52] FM 3-24 provides these tenets as written; see also Colin H. Kahl, "COIN of the Realm: Is There a Future for Counterinsurgency?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 6, November–December 2007; Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian, eds., *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2008; and Brian Burton and John A. Nagl, "Learning as We Go: The US Army Adapts to Counterinsurgency in Iraq, July 2004–December 2006," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 2008.

- COIN force undertook "build" of "clear, hold, and build" in area of conflict.

For most supported concepts, the empirical cutpoint is clear. Not so for clear, hold, and build. As Table 4.22 shows, either "at least two" or "all three" clear, hold, and build factors would make a good empirical cutpoint. Having all three of clear, hold, and build is a strong discriminator, with all cases meeting that higher threshold being COIN wins. However, only seven COIN forces were able to do so. When only "clear" and "hold" were accomplished, the COIN force still managed to win 13 of 18 times. Regardless of which threshold is used, *this constitutes strong evidence in support of clear, hold, and build.*

Table 4.22
Number of Clear, Hold, and Build Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Number of clear, hold, and build factors	3	0	7
	2	5	13
	1	3	1
	0	23	7

"Beat Cop"

The beat-cop concept is concerned with the employment of the COIN force. If the COIN force is routinely present in communities in the area of conflict and conducts regular dismount patrols—becoming individually familiar with and known to the local population (in the manner of the traditional urban beat cop)—then numerous advantages are envisioned to accrue to the COIN force. Such community policing or regular dismount patrolling in the mode of a beat cop

- enables intelligence collection
- creates greater understanding of the local situation
- deters criminal activity

- deters insurgent support and activity
- creates trust between the COIN force and the population.[53]

Various beat-cop discussions imply a subordinate form of the more general pacification concept and are closely aligned with population-centric COIN theory. The beat-cop concept is implicit in much of the advice offered in FM 3-24, which places the onus on soldiers and marines to connect with the population they seek to protect. At its core, this concept is about establishing and maintaining trust with the locals. As David Kilcullen asserts, "For your side to win, the people do not have to like you but they must respect you, accept that your actions benefit them, and trust your integrity and ability to deliver on promises, particularly regarding their security."[54]

Familiarity breeds trust, which, in turn, can lead the COIN force to garner intelligence. While fundamentally in agreement with the core principles of pacification concepts, these practices are focused on how best to employ security forces in a pacified or partially pacified area.

The beat-cop corollary to the pacification concept is represented in our analysis by nine factors:

- The perception of security was created or maintained among populations in areas that the COIN force claimed to control.
- The COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in or enabled community policing in areas that it controlled or claimed to control, and these militias did not work at cross-purposes with COIN or government forces.
- The COIN force received substantial intelligence from the population in the area of conflict.
- In the area of conflict, the COIN force was not perceived as worse than the insurgents.
- The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in the area of conflict.

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[53] Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, pp. 229–231.

[54] Kilcullen, 2006a, p. 29.

- The COIN force employed "counter-gangs," "scouts," or "ferret forces" against insurgents.
- Significant numbers of largely effective police, paramilitary, militia, or other nonconventional military in COIN forces used.
- The government employed significant numbers of locally recruited military, paramilitary, militia, or police forces.
- COIN forces primarily deployed in a space-domination/passive-presence role.

The empirical cut point for the beat-cop concept is at least four of these nine factors. Fifteen of the 16 cases with at least four of these nine factors were COIN wins. (See Table 4.23.) Based on this evidence, *the beat-cop concept receives strong support.*

Table 4.23
At Least Four "Beat-Cop" Factors Versus Case Outcome

| | | Case Outcome | |
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least four "beat-cop" factors	Yes	1	15
	No	30	13

A Word About Militias

Several concepts (including beat cop) call for the use of local militias to extend the COIN force's armed presence or allow locals to have a stake in their own security.[55] Recent successes in Iraq have made militias more prominent in contemporary discussions.[56] This research

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[55] Historical examples of militias used in COIN operations include the Popular Forces, the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups, the People's Self-Defense Forces in Vietnam, and the *quadrillage* in Algeria, although, as Austin Long points out, the forces used by the *quadrillage* were mainly regular troops instead of locals. See Long, 2006, p. 54.

[56] See Austin Long, "The Anbar Awakening," *Survival*, Vol. 50, No. 2, April–May 2008.

provides mixed evidence on militias. During development of the case studies, we quickly realized that creating or fostering of militias could lead to both positive and negative results. Indeed, we inductively added a factor, "Militias/local irregular forces did *not* work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government," to most concepts that recommend militias. Fully 42 of our cases employed militias or otherwise enabled community policing. Eighteen of those 42 cases were COIN wins, and 24 were losses. The use of militias alone is unrelated to outcome, having a modest negative correlation. When militias that worked at cross-purposes with the COIN force or the government are removed, however, a modest relationship between militias and COIN success appears: Eight cases in which the COIN force won employed militias that did not work at cross-purposes with the government, as did six COIN losses.

A word of caution: None of the COIN forces that armed and recruited militias *wanted* them to work at cross-purposes, but roughly two-thirds (28 of 42) *did*, and with generally poor results (18 of the 28 cases in which a militia worked at cross-purposes with the government were COIN losses). This supports a recommendation for extreme caution in the use of militias in support of COIN.

"Boots on the Ground"

Without articulating exactly why, several scholars and observers insist on a certain minimum force ratio, either between counterinsurgents and insurgents or between COIN forces and the population. See, for example, James Quinlivan's foundational research in this area, which reports historical ratios of security forces to population for a number of stability operations;[57] FM 3-24, which advocates a troop density of approximately 20–25 counterinsurgents per 1,000 residents;[58] and Douglas Ollivant and Eric Chewning, who advocate a 10-to-1 or 20-to-1 ratio of counterinsurgent to insurgent to prevent the develop-

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[57] James T. Quinlivan, "Force Requirements in Stability Operations," *Parameters*, Winter 1995.

[58] Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, p. 23.

ment of insurgent safe areas.[59] The logic behind "boots on the ground" would presumably follow that of other pacification concepts, though it might also include elements of legitimacy associated with force presence or connect to traditional military theory concerned with the minimum sufficient force with which to conduct certain types of operations. As far as we can discern, those advocating boots on the ground see the following advantages:

- The presence of forces deters adversary action and reassures the population.
- COIN requires a certain amount of infantry presence spread throughout the contested area.[60]

These are testable tenets and so are sufficient for this analysis.

This concept for COIN is represented by six factors in our analysis:

- Perception of security created or maintained among populations in areas the COIN force claimed to control.
- The COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control.
- The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in area of conflict.
- No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to the COIN force.
- The COIN force included significant numbers of largely effective police, paramilitary, militia, or other nonconventional personnel.
- COIN forces primarily deployed in a space-domination/passive-presence role.

The summation of boots on the ground factors versus case outcome shows that at least three of the six factors is the empirical cut

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[59] Douglas A. Ollivant and Eric D. Chewning, "Producing Victory: Rethinking Conventional Forces in COIN Operations," *Military Review*, July–August 2006, p. 52.

[60] Ollivant and Chewning, 2006, p. 52.

point. Seventeen of 18 cases with at least three of these six factors were COIN wins. (See Table 4.24.) *This constitutes evidence in strong support of the boots on the ground concept.*

Table 4.24
At Least Three "Boots on the Ground" Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least three "boots on the ground" factors	Yes	1	17
	No	30	11

Note that this factor stack includes the use of militias and does not actively exclude militias that worked at cross-purposes. Apparently, using militias and realizing some of the other boots on the ground factors correlates with militias not working at cross-purposes or otherwise diminishes the negative effects of such behavior.

"Put a Local Face on It"

A piece of practical advice from contemporary operations advises the COIN force to seek to "put a local face on it."[61] This advice implies that local communities in insurgent-contested areas need security and development and that well-prepared indigenous forces serve most effectively in meeting those needs.[62] Tenets include the following:

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[61] David H. Petraeus, "Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq," *Military Review*, January–February 2006, pp. 3–4.

[62] There are authors who go against the grain in this regard. Some believe that a focus on the development of indigenous forces conflates a state's ability to exercise functional control over its territory with state security capacity. Eric Jardine argues that the scope of a state's control over its national territory is really a function of both the state's aggregate security capacity and the costs of projecting its power over a distance. As such, functional territorial control is maximized when the return on investment in security capacity is equal to the return on investment in factors that reduce the costs of power projection. See Eric Jardine, "Control-

- Invest in training, developing, and equipping local security forces.[63]
- Indigenous forces may need training in the use of measured force, in addition to other COIN training.[64]
- Appropriate indigenous actors will know the culture and will be less vexing to the population (if they restrain themselves to proportional force).[65]
- Indigenous forces can form (or may already have) long-term relationships that can facilitate the COIN effort.[66]
- Indigenous forces need to develop sustainable security capabilities before foreign COIN forces can leave.[67]

This concept harkens back to the time of classic counterinsurgent and well-known Arabist T. E. Lawrence, who famously quipped, "Better the Arabs do it tolerably than you do it perfectly."[68] The greatest difficulty here is finding indigenous forces that are up to the task of conducting COIN operations that meet U.S. standards. Even after months and years of training, some indigenous forces still may not be able to reach a level acceptable to U.S. military trainers. This poses an obvious dilemma related to timetables for withdrawal and the consequences of being perceived as occupiers.

Like all pacification-related concepts, this is a motive-focused concept for COIN. This COIN advice is predicated on the assumption

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ling Territory and Population During Counterinsurgency: State Security Capacity and the Costs of Power Projection," *Civil Wars*, Vol. 14, No. 2, June 2012b.

[63] Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, pp. 199–235. See also Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, "All Counterinsurgency Is Local," *The Atlantic*, October 2008.

[64] Sepp, 2005, p. 11.

[65] Gompert et al., 2008, p. 81. See also Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, p. 247.

[66] James S. Corum, *Training Indigenous Forces in Counterinsurgency: A Tale of Two Insurgencies*, Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, March 2006.

[67] Sepp, 2005, p. 12.

[68] T. E. Lawrence, "The Twenty-Seven Articles," *The Arab Bulletin*, August 20, 1917.

that the primary COIN force is from out of town—either an extranational force (as the United States will always be as a COIN actor) or a national force that is sufficiently culturally different to be considered "foreign" by the locals.[69]

Five factors represent this corollary concept in our analysis:

- The COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in or enabled community policing in areas that it controlled or claimed to control, and these militias did not work at cross-purposes with COIN or government forces.
- The COIN force did not employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations.
- Indigenous forces conducted the majority of COIN operations.
- The COIN force included significant numbers of largely effective police, paramilitary, militia, or other nonconventional military personnel who were locally recruited.
- Development was not predominantly provided by (or perceived as being provided by) an external actor.

For all 59 core cases, there is a modest empirical cutpoint at four or more of these five factors. (See Table 4.25.)

Table 4.25
At Least Four "Put a Local Face on It" Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least four "put a local face on it" factors	Yes	4	10
	No	27	18

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[69] An example of the latter point is Russian COIN forces fighting in Chechnya.

However, this concept is really only meant to apply to cases with external actors. When examining the factor stack for "put a local face on it" for subpopulations involving external actors (for which it should theoretically be most applicable), virtually no correlation was observed. We examined this factor stack against the outcomes of the 28 cases involving a direct external supporter, as well as the divided external subpopulations: the 13 cases with limited direct external support and the 15 cases with significant external ground troops. Virtually no correlation was observed. See Table 4.26 for an example. Taken together, these analyses provide *minimal support for "put a local face on it" as a COIN concept*. Narrative analyses suggest that this concept should and has contributed to legitimacy, but apparently legitimacy and its contribution to COIN success is driven primarily by factors beyond the implementation of this concept.

Table 4.26
Sum of "Put a Local Face on It" Factors Versus Case Outcome for Cases Involving External Forces (n = 28)

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
	5	0	0
	4	2	3
Sum of "put a local face on it" factors	3	5	4
	2	4	4
	1	1	0
	0	2	3

Cultural Awareness

Offered as necessary but certainly not sufficient is the proposition that cultural awareness is critical to COIN success. The tenets are straightforward and have clear face validity:

- Cultural insensitivity can undermine otherwise successful COIN practices.

- Good cultural awareness is an enabler.
- Without an understanding of the culture, much intelligence cannot be understood and will likely be improperly applied.[70]

This supporting concept is relevant only when the COIN force is not culturally "native" to the area of conflict (by virtue of being outsiders or culturally dissimilar indigenes). In the modern era of instant communication, a seemingly innocent cultural faux pas can be disseminated around the globe in minutes, exposing the COIN force to worldwide criticism and portraying a negative image for all to see.

Furthermore, just as with the United States in Japan following WWII, unfamiliarity with the language and culture means that an occupier or COIN force must rely more on the locals and any preexisting political, bureaucratic, and social structures.[71]

This corollary to other COIN concepts is intended to apply only where the COIN force is not culturally similar to the population in the area of conflict. It is represented by six factors in our analysis:

- The COIN force did *not* employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations.
- The COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages.
- COIN or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents.
- Government did not sponsor or protect unpopular economic and social arrangements or cultural institutions.
- Government did not repress and/or exclude significant societal groups from state power or resources.
- Force protection actions by external COIN forces (if present) did not alienate the population.

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[70] Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, p. 41.

[71] David Edelstein, "Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail," *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Summer 2004, p. 67.

Across the 59 core cases, none of these six factors has a particularly strong individual correlation with case outcome. When assembled as a factor stack, the overall correlation is not sufficient to suggest a clear cutpoint. While having all six factors does correlate perfectly with COIN success (all seven cases with all six factors present are COIN wins), there is nothing in the concept as posed that suggests that complete adherence to all factors should be necessary, begging the question why seven of the 13 cases in which five of the six factors were realized were COIN losses). See Table 4.27.

Table 4.27
Sum of Cultural Awareness Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
	6	0	7
	5	7	6
	4	5	1
Sum of cultural awareness factors	3	7	7
	2	8	3
	1	2	3
	0	2	1

Of course, cultural awareness should be most relevant where COIN forces are culturally different from local populations, which is most likely when an external actor is involved. As with "put a local face on it," we examined this factors stack against the outcomes of the 28 cases involving a direct external supporter, as well as the divided external subpopulations: the 13 cases with limited direct external support and the 15 cases with significant external ground troops. Virtually no correlation was observed, as shown in the example in Table 4.28. Taken together, these analyses provide *minimal support for cultural awareness*. Narrative analyses suggest that this concept may be an enabler or inhibitor of the successful implementation of other

COIN concepts when the COIN force is culturally dissimilar to the population, and several case narratives show successful COIN forces demonstrating cultural awareness (the British in Sierra Leone, for example) or unsuccessful COIN forces running afoul of cultural sensitivity (the Egyptians in Yemen, for example). However, the narrative analyses also provide several examples of cases in which an external COIN force is able to succeed without any cultural sensitivity, most of which are "iron fist" efforts, such as the Chinese in Tibet.

Table 4.28
Sum of Cultural Awareness Factors Versus Case
Outcome for Cases Involving External Forces (n = 28)

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
	6	0	2
	5	4	2
	4	3	0
Sum of cultural awareness factors	3	2	5
	2	3	2
	1	0	1
	0	2	1

Commitment and Motivation

The concept of commitment and motivation was introduced into the study as a working hypothesis after early discussions of case narratives for the cases involving external actors produced a relatively straightforward maxim for intervening forces: "You can't want it more than they do." While this hypothesis was initially conceived in relation to external actors, our research suggested that it could be applied more broadly and to cases of all types: To defeat an insurgency, the government and COIN force must be committed to doing so. The core tenets of this concept are as follows:

- If a government is more interested in political infighting, self-enrichment, or protecting unfair divisions than in combating an insurgency, it will not be effective at COIN. Defeating the insurgency must be the top priority of both the government and the security forces.
- When a COIN force is committed and motivated, it is more likely to be effective, adapt to changing circumstances, and prove resourceful in the pursuit of its objectives without becoming overly dependent on support from another actor or entity.[72]

Commitment and motivation was captured in this analysis by the following factors:

- Insurgent force *not* individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.
- COIN force or allies did *not* rely on looting for sustainment.
- COIN force and government did *not* have different goals/level of commitment or both had relatively low levels of commitment.
- Government did *not* sponsor or protect unpopular economic and social arrangements or cultural institutions.
- Government did *not* involve corrupt and arbitrary personalistic rule.
- Government type was *not* kleptocracy.
- Elites did *not* have perverse incentives to continue conflict.
- The country was *not* economically dependent on an external actor.

The empirical cutpoint for this factor stack proved to be four or more. All 28 COIN wins had four or more of the commitment and motivation factors. (See Table 4.29.) This held across all cases, not just those in which an external actor sought to bolster and encourage a

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[72] Robert M. Cassidy, "The Long Small War: Indigenous Forces for Counterinsurgency," *Parameters*, Vol. 36, No. 2, Summer 2006; David H. Ucko, *The New Counterinsurgency Era: Transforming the U.S. Military for Modern Wars*, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2009; Daniel Byman, Peter Chalk, Bruce Hoffman, William Rosenau, and David Brannan, *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-1405-OTI, 2001.

host-nation government. *This constitutes strong evidence in support of commitment and motivation.*

Table 4.29
At Least Four Commitment and Motivation Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least four commitment and motivation factors	Yes	14	28
	No	17	0

Tangible Support Reduction

What we call the "tangible support reduction concept" is a contemporary spin on cost-benefit and popular support–based concepts. We hypothesized and collected evidence on this concept for the original *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* study, where it received strong support. Building on that research, tangible support reduction became foundational in the proposed typology of COIN theory discussed in Chapter One. This concept posits that it does not matter whether it is by reducing motives or by reducing physical opportunities/capabilities, the way to defeat an insurgency is to eliminate its tangible support.

This perspective follows the cost-benefit concept in suggesting that it is the support the insurgents receive, from wherever they get it, that is the real center of gravity.[73] Tenets include the following:[74]

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[73] Christopher Paul, "How Do Terrorists Generate and Maintain Support?" in Paul K. Davis and Kim Cragin, eds., *Social Science for Counterterrorism: Putting the Pieces Together*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-849-OSD, 2009.

[74] Christopher Paul, "As a Fish Swims in the Sea: Relationships Between Factors Contributing to Support for Terrorist or Insurgent Groups," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 33, No. 6, June 2010.

- Insurgencies need manpower, funding, materiel, sanctuary, intelligence,[75] and tolerance.[76]
- These needs can be met through self-supply, looting, purchases, or reliance on an external source.[77]
- External sources could be local populations, state sponsors, diaspora communities, or other groups within or outside the area of conflict.
- Effective COIN interrupts the supply of support to insurgents.

This concept does not take the full "systems" concept of the classic cost-benefit concept but simply suggests that the COIN force identify and focus on depriving the insurgents of the sources of support on which they actually rely. When the insurgents draw significant support from the population, this concept is wholly consonant with popular support–based concepts.

Insurgents' many support needs can be met in myriad ways. Ten factors were identified to represent this concept from a COIN perspective in our analysis:

- The flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent.
- Important external support to insurgents was significantly reduced.
- Important internal support to insurgents was significantly reduced.
- Insurgents' ability to replenish resources was significantly diminished.
- Insurgents were unable to maintain or grow their force size.

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[75] Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response*, Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, November 2004.

[76] Paul, 2009.

[77] Anthony Vinci, "The 'Problems of Mobilization' and the Analysis of Armed Groups," *Parameters*, Spring 2006, p. 51.

- COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgent processes.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent financing.

The empirical cut point for this set of factors proved to be three or more. The COIN side won all cases in which three or more tangible support reduction factors appeared. All 28 COIN wins had at least three tangible support reduction factors, and only two losses had more than two. (See Table 4.30.) *This is extremely strong evidence in support of a tangible support reduction concept for COIN.*

Table 4.30
At Least Three Tangible Support Reduction Factors
Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least three tangible support reduction factors	Yes	2	28
	No	29	0

Tangible Support Versus Popular Support

Many of the concepts described and tested here are based on a population-centric theory of COIN. They maintain that the population is the center of gravity and that wooing the population, through legitimacy, security, investment, and services, or some combination of these or other things, will lead the population to renounce the insurgents, inform on them, vote against them, and *deny them materiel support.*

If insurgents are meeting their support needs from the population in the area of conflict, then tangible support and popular support

would be largely the same thing, and persuading that population to stop meeting the needs of the insurgents would be an effective tangible support reduction strategy. Are they the same, however?

In 42 of the 59 core cases, popular support and tangible support covaried. That is, when the insurgents had the support of the population, they were able to maintain their tangible support, and vice versa. The 17 cases in which these conditions did not correspond are quite instructional: In three cases, the COIN force had the support of the population but did not accrue at least three tangible insurgent support reduction factors. In all three of these cases, the insurgents prevailed. In 14 cases, the COIN force reduced at least three tangible support factors but did not gain the support of the population, yet the COIN force won 12 of those 14. One of the two COIN losses was the Lebanese Civil War. It can be argued that no matter how successful the Israelis were in reducing the insurgents' tangible support, the predominantly Shi'a Muslim population of southern Lebanon would never support soldiers from the Jewish state.

This suggests an important caveat to the conventional wisdom that the population is *the* center of gravity. It appears that, in fact, *tangible support* is "the" center of gravity.[78] Tangible support usually (but not always) stems from or connects to popular support. When it does, treating the population as the center of gravity will lead to the desired outcome; that outcome is less certain when insurgents' tangible support does not come from the population. This agrees with advice published elsewhere that COIN forces should identify the specific support needs and sources of that support for their specific adver-

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[78] The is in quotation marks here as a reminder that we reject a single-factor or unitary explanation of successful COIN that hinges on only one center of gravity. The core argument of our original study, that "victory has a thousand fathers," recognizes that a substantial collection of effective practices or a host of complementary lines of operation is what wins the day in COIN. The theoretical construct offered in Chapter One and validated throughout this report suggests the importance of balance between reducing insurgent tangible support and reducing the insurgents themselves. To the extent that one area of COIN emphasis is primary, however, these analyses suggest that tangible support is more critical than popular support and that the distinction is immaterial when insurgent tangible support needs are met primarily by the population.

sary.[79] This also supports the typology of COIN theories advocated in Chapter One, seeking to replace "population-centric/enemy-centric" with dichotomies on action type (motive-focused or kinetic) and target (tangible support or active insurgents).

Criticality of Intelligence

COIN doctrine also asserts the criticality of actionable intelligence to COIN success.[80] Intelligence is clearly important to many of the concepts listed here. It is difficult to articulate specific tenets without making explicit the individual connections to some of the broader concepts. Generally, statements of this concept offer a single tenet:

- Actionable intelligence drives successful COIN operations.

This concept is captured in the analysis by two factors:

- Intelligence was adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on the COIN force's terms.
- Intelligence was adequate to allow COIN forces to disrupt insurgent processes or operations.

The empirical cut point is at least one of the two. Twenty-two of the 28 cases won by COIN forces included at least one of these two intelligence factors, while both factors were absent in 30 of the 31 losing cases.[81] (See Table 4.31.) This is *strong evidence in support of the criticality of intelligence.*

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[79] Paul, 2010.

[80] Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, p. 41.

[81] The two cases in which the COIN force managed to prevail without at least one intelligence factor present were El Salvador and Uganda.

Table 4.31
At Least One Intelligence Factor Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least one intelligence factor	Yes	1	22
	No	30	6

Flexibility and Adaptability

Overwhelming firepower and sophisticated technology have never been guarantors of victory in COIN operations. At no time has this been truer than in today's operating environment, in which insurgents use the Internet to great effect and use rudimentary materials to construct increasingly deadly improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to counter COIN forces. Nagl's *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* emphasizes the importance of the COIN force's ability to adapt quickly and effectively to changes in warfare.[82] This practical advice (flexibility and adaptability) extends to other, broader concepts for COIN. The tenets are simple:

- COIN is a two-player game against an adaptive adversary.
- A successful COIN force must learn and adapt.[83]

The insistence that only an adaptive COIN force can prevail is represented by a single factor:

- The COIN force did not fail to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.

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[82] Nagl, 2005.

[83] Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, p. 46.

All 28 COIN forces that prevailed avoided failure to adapt in the decisive phase, as did 11 of the losing COIN forces. (See Table 4.32.) This constitutes *strong evidence in support of the importance of flexibility and adaptability.*

Table 4.32
Flexibility and Adaptability Versus Case Outcome

Flexibility and adaptability		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
	Yes	11	28
	No	20	0

The case-level analysis showed that when a COIN force failed to adapt, it never prevailed. This holds at the phase level as well. In no phase in which the COIN force failed to adapt did it end the phase with the upper hand. However, it remains possible for the inflexible to recover. In fully 17 cases, the COIN force failed to adapt (and did not have the upper hand) in an early or intermediate phase but ultimately prevailed in the case.

Summary of the Tests of the Concepts

Table 4.33 summarizes the results for each concept. Each concept is listed, along with whether it received strong support from the evidence in our analysis, minimal support from the evidence, or strong evidence against. As reported at the beginning of this chapter, we assessed strength of support based on the ability of the concept's implementation (by way of its factor stack) to predict or discriminate between case outcomes. Concepts were considered to have strong support if the bivariate relationship between the concept's factor stack and the outcome was very strong (i.e., using it and it alone is a very strong indica-

tor of the outcome); minimal support if there was a modest correlation between the concept's factor stack and the outcome; and strong evidence against if the concept was implemented in a greater proportion of losses than wins.

As Table 4.33 shows, most of the concepts we tested receive strong support. For those concepts, this is firm validation in the advice drawn from common sense or based on a small number of cases. For those receiving minimal support, these concepts may still have merit in specific contexts or as one of many strands of a multilayered campaign or composite approach, but they are not strongly correlated with historical COIN success and should not be the primary focus of a COIN campaign or particularly emphasized when developing capabilities, plans, or training for COIN. The single concept receiving strong evidence against, "crush them," is shown to be more strongly correlated with failure than with success in modern COIN and should serve as a strong cautionary tale about the prospect for campaigns that rely exclusively on force.

The next chapter presents the results from our analyses and findings beyond the tests of these 24 distinct concepts for COIN.

Table 4.33
Strength of Evidentiary Support for 24 Concepts for COIN

Concept	Factor/Factor Stack	Degree of Evidentiary Support
Development	at least two of four development factors	Strong support
Pacification	at least two of six pacification factors	Strong support
Legitimacy (government)	at least one of two government legitimacy factors	Strong support
Legitimacy (use of force)	at least four of six legitimate use of force factors	Strong support
Reform	at least four of five reform factors	Strong support
Redress	three redress factors, no clear cutpoint	Minimal support
Democracy	at least one of three democracy factors	Minimal support
Unity of effort	the single unity of effort factor	Strong support
Resettlement	one or both of two resettlement factors	Minimal support
Cost-benefit	at least two of six cost-benefit factors	Strong support
Border control	the single border control factor	Strong support
Initiative	the single initiative factor	Strong support
"Crush them"	both "crush them" factors	Strong evidence against
Amnesty/rewards	at least two of three amnesty factors	Minimal support
Strategic communication	at least three of five strategic communication factors	Strong support
Field Manual 3-24 (*Counterinsurgency*)	at least four of nine FM 3-24 factors	Strong support
Clear, hold, and build	at least two of clear, hold, and build	Strong support
"Beat cop"	at least four of nine "beat cop" factors	Strong support
"Boots on the ground"	at least three of six "boots on the ground" factors	Strong support
"Put a local face on it"	four of five "put a local face on it" factors	Minimal support
Cultural awareness	six cultural awareness factors, no clear cutpoint	Minimal support
Commitment and motivation	at least four of eight commitment and motivation factors	Strong support
Tangible support reduction	at least three of ten tangible support factors reduced	Strong support
Criticality of intelligence	at least one of two intelligence factors	Strong support
Flexibility and adaptability	the single flexibility and adaptability factor	Strong support