AS A HIGH-IMPACT WAR-FIGHTING: THE OTHER SIDE OF THE US COUNTERINSURGENCY (COIN) WARFARE

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Abstract
        The ultimate aim of any successful counterinsurgency approach is to defeat the insurgency and establish peace for the host country. In order for the counterinsurgent to achieve this aim, there are two approaches to adopt; simply through heavy use of force or through winning hearts and minds of the local population. This paper deals with the US Counterinsurgency approach, which is depicted as a kinder or gentle warfare, arguing that the adaptation of a people-centric approach and of Human Terrain System (HTS), merely cover up the high-impact war-fighting; somehow, the military is deployed to carry out commands in a kinder light, and high impact war fighting is an inherent part of the current counterinsurgency doctrine.
        Keywords: Counterinsurgency, People-centric Approach, Human Terrain System (HTS), the US Army and Marine Corps Field Manual 3-24.

I. Introduction

        The idea of counterinsurgency has been on the agenda for decades. This is because many non-international armed conflicts have taken place in different parts of the world witnessing conventional armed forces and governments that have been encountered by different kinds of insurgents. In this century's conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the center of attention has once again given to counterinsurgency (Williamson, 2011). Because strategies and tactics that are deployed to defeat insurgents vary from those utilized in the Cold War era on the grounds that counterinsurgency is not stable, but changing over time; it evolves as opposed to shifts in insurgency (Kilcullen, 2006). Therefore counterinsurgency has been interpreted and enlarged in the context of publications devoted to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (Khalili, 2010).

        The current US counterinsurgency doctrine - which was introduced in 2006 and portrayed as a less kinetic, more subtle form of warfare - consists of a program of liberal rule and liberal war, whose final goal is to pacify unruly populations so as to control them (Kienscherf, 2011). Accordingly, the US Army and Marine Corps Field Manual 3-24 Counterinsurgency offers arguably a limited use of force, and rather places an emphasis on development projects, provisions of essential services, training local police, and an attempting to further understand local populations and cultures, by promoting safe forms of life whilst keeping the insurgent away from populations.

        This might be appealing to many because it signals the advent of 'a more reflective and empathetic US military' (Gilmore, 2011:21). González (2008), however, points out that it is a propaganda that paints this picture of a 'gentler' counterinsurgency, aimed at those who oppose military operations in both countries. It is worth stating that, as with all kinds of wars, counterinsurgency is itself warfare; depicting it as less violent is misleading and the reality behind it is different (Cohen, 2010). This paper contests such an interpretation, arguing that the adaptation of a people-centric approach and of Human Terrain System (HTS), merely cover up the high-impact war-fighting; somehow, the military is deployed to carry out commands in a kinder light, and high impact war fighting is an inherent part of the current counterinsurgency doctrine.

        This paper first seeks to examine why this topic has received much attention recently, and to define both insurgency and counterinsurgency. It then explores the people-centric approach as a competition instrument among the counterinsurgent and the insurgent. Secondly, the paper assesses critically the Human Terrain System, which has been designed to gather information about local cultures and populations for the purpose of intelligence, and discusses the role of anthropology within it. It then analyses HTS's affiliation with the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), along with CORDS' infamous program 'Phoenix'. The paper then goes on to explore the use of force in the context of the US Army and Marine Corps Field Manual 3-24, and finally, concludes by giving future recommendations.

II. Counterinsurgency and People-centric Approach

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In order to argue that counterinsurgency is warfare, it is necessary to explain why it has gained attention in recent years, and to give definitions of insurgency and counterinsurgency. This part will also briefly introduce the people-centric approach.

Until the advent of the 21st century, discussions on counterinsurgency operations and doctrine were under the control of military strategists and historians (Williamson, 2011). Although the world witnessed various conflicts within the framework of counterinsurgency during the 20th century, counterinsurgency did not receive public or media attention to the extent it has now.

Today, however, counterinsurgency - not only as a term but also as a doctrine and approach - has been discussed internationally by the common public, the media and academics (Williamson, 2011; Weiss, 2010-11). This might be the result of the U.S.' failure in Vietnam, discomforting obstacles in both Lebanon and Somalia, as well as remaining political and military problems in Afghanistan - and in particular Iraq – which have highlighted the boundaries of America's conventional military power (Record, 2006). Record (2006) goes on to argue that military power has not achieved convincing success against non-state enemies who practice prolonged irregular warfare, but quite the reverse; America's conventional power and approach to war are not often productive enough in this sense, because it relies on firepower and high-technology. That is to say, the US Army is perhaps good at conventional war-fighting, but not in particular good at fighting irregular enemies.

Moreover, the current counterinsurgency doctrine attempts to integrate the military strategy with political and economic plotting. This means there is an attempt to redraft the perceived frontiers 'between war, politics, economy and anthropology' along with the notion of 'population-centric ' approach that shows arguably less civilian casualties (Owens, 2013:140). From this point of view, counterinsurgency warfare can be interpreted as a new way of war, whose principles and ideas come from Field Manual 3-24 (Gentile, 2009).

In terms of this issue, it is crucial to define counterinsurgency and insurgency. Counterinsurgency is defined as 'military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency', whereas insurgency is described as 'an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and the legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control' (US Department of the Army, 2007:2; cited in Kienscherf, 2011:520). What stands out from these definitions is that the counterinsurgency approach should be understood as a program of not only rule but also warfare, seeking to turn people, technologies, strategies and means of knowledge into an uncertain machine geared to the pacification of unruly places and populations (Kienscherf, 2011; Owens, 2013) and also as a form of social governance where the population is seen by both counterinsurgency and insurgency as 'the centre of gravity' (Owens, 2013:151). Some go further on to argue that the current counterinsurgency doctrine is an up-to-date executive guidebook of imperial rule, on the grounds that civilian populations are regarded as flexible masses that are subject to manipulation by both insurgents and counterinsurgents. Their agreement is necessary for gaining intelligence and tactical backing, and preserving 'stability' from the very beginning up until the final stages of the campaign (Khalili, 2010). This need gave birth to the Human Terrain System, which is discussed in the second part.

According to proponents of counterinsurgency doctrine, an insurgency is a competition between counterinsurgency - or government - and the insurgent, for the purpose of gaining the support from the civilian population (Kilcullen, 2006; Galula, 1964). For counterinsurgency it is a race to determine how to mobilize popular support; there therefore needs to be more awareness of how to approach it.

With regards to the Field Manual FM 3-24, the population-centric approach is adopted to achieve this aim. In order for the Army to tackle difficulties of the insurgent and instability, this approach is seen as the only operational tool (Gentile, 2009). The population-centric approach might be a plausible operational method to utilize under certain conditions; however, it is not a strategy. As a consequence of not being a strategy thus results in endless nation-building operations and efforts to alter whole societies in countries like Afghanistan (Gentile, 2009). This approach is flawed and has limitations.

Supporters of the population-centric approach point to the British counterinsurgency experience in Malaya, whereby the colonial government fought against the Malayan National Liberation Army, a communist insurgent group backed up by the colony's ethnic Chinese population and the local people. However, the British experience in Malaya was not constructed on the notion of a population-centric approach, but instead resulted from the use of overwhelming force against the civilian population in accordance with civil action and amnesty programs (Cohen, 2010). Despite the long history of small wars and colonial counterinsurgencies, population-centric counterinsurgency is presented as 'soft option' by its

supporters, particularly with reference to conventional military methods where the eradication of the enemy has been the ultimate aim (Khalili, 2011:1472).

In addition to previous the remark, in this doctrine, progressive language and plans - such as a running the economy, information and intelligence operations, the use of local forces, and the integration of civilian and military efforts including aid and governance so as to finally win over civilians - are foregrounded, instead of making kinetic force public (Khalili, 2011). It is also worth noting that FM 3-24 calls for the construction of infrastructure and basic services in counterinsurgency; this can include, for example demanding new levels of coordination and international organizations, NGOs and private companies fulfilling the tasks of the military (Owens, 2013; Williamson, 2011).

However, this cooperation runs the risk of mixing humanitarian assistance with military activities. For example, in 2009, 16 NGOs who were providing humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan requested NATO troops to divide military actions and humanitarian activities into separate categories; this concern was restated by the International Crisis Group in 2011(Williamson, 2011). The collaboration might also run the risk of humanitarian aid workers being targeted by insurgents because of the affiliation with the Army. Indeed, five staff members from the international medical humanitarian organization, Medicins Sans Frontiers, were killed in Afghanistan due to this reason (Denselow, 2010).

Additionally, the population-centric approach, whose first goal is to provide security for the local population is underpinned by the sense of pacification whilst reconstructing the political and economic structure (Kienscherf, 2011). The population is transformed by the COIN into a human terrain in which they 'can be made visible, knowable and malleable' for the purpose of pacifying them straightforwardly (Khalili, 2011:1479). This classification of combatants and non-combatants is required by population-centric counterinsurgency as it is the simplest way to differentiate low-risk civilians from high-risk combatants (Khalili, 2011).

Moreover, it is pointed out that in addition to using force, engineering consent through development and information operations allows counterinsurgency to pacify foreign societies, with the aim of evaluating international insurgency risks and therefore controlling already pacified societies (Kienscherf, 2011). In this respect, the use of force is carried out through drone attacks, targeted assassinations and night raids on homes, as a result of this great number of civilian deaths (Owens, 2013). From this perspective, it is fair to say that pacification efforts in population-centric counterinsurgency appear, to some extent, similar to the high-intensity and coercive policing of domestic crime hotspots, rather than to conventional war-fighting operations (Kienscherf, 2011).

III. 'Human Terrain System'

'Human Terrain System' is the second evidence that counterinsurgency is a form of warfare.

To be able to counter the insurgency both in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is necessity to hold a cultural and social understanding of the adversary, on the grounds that conventional means of war-fighting have proven insufficient in both places (McFate, 2005). In order for counterinsurgency to target and act on perceptual life, all of life should be known (Anderson, 2011). This understanding was to give birth to 'Human Terrain System' (HTS) that fulfils the cultural gap. However, the way in which it has been deployed is problematic and needs to be closely scrutinized.

Before analysing these problematic issues it is essential to describe its function. HTS - which was launched in 2006 - was designed to provide brigade commanders with the skills to deal with "human terrain" – the social, ethnographic, cultural, economic, and political factors of the people within the occupied area – with the goal of increasing cultural awareness at the operational and tactical levels (Kipp et al., 2006:9).

HTS consists of five person teams (Human Terrain Teams) with Army combat brigades (Gonzâlez, 2015). The duty of HTTs is to collect information by means of the use of social methodologies for commanders (Zehfuss, 2012) so that the Army can distinguish insurgents from passive majority and supporters of the host-nation government (Kienscherf, 2011). The first HTT was sent to Khost in Afghanistan, and the number of HTTs deployed reached its peak in 2010, consisting of more than 500 people from different academic backgrounds in both Afghanistan and Iraq (Gonzâlez, 2015). Gonzâlez (2008:21) points out that HTS served as a propaganda instrument for persuading American people that US-led invasions in both Iraq and Afghanistan were benign operations in which academics played a role – this would make it seem like 'a kinder, gentler form of occupation' led by the US forces. Additionally HTS was based on the population-centric and thus the idea of reducing the use of lethal force (Zehfuss,2012).

The deployment of anthropology into counterinsurgency warfare came under fire for militarization of social science and the exploitation of anthropology. HTS project was rightly condemned by The American Anthropological Association's Executive Board as 'an unacceptable application of anthropological expertise'

(Gonzâlez, 2007:21). The Network of Concerned Anthropologists collected more than 1,000 signatures of anthropologists who promised not to take part any counterinsurgency work (Gonzâlez, 2015; Zehfuss, 2012). There is a clear contradiction between the aim of the anthropology - to serve people - and the aims of the U.S military, to tend to pacify and control the population (Zehfuss, 2012). One might argue that the right intention and the reduction of harm to civilians as a result of participation could be plausible and seductive for anthropologists to take part in HTS (Zehfuss, 2012). However, whether anthropologists are more likely to join HTS remains to be unclear for various reasons. First, people might get killed because of the information they share with anthropologists who then pass on this information to the military (Zehfuss, 2012). It is believed that HTTs 'do at some point contribute to the collective knowledge of a commander which allows him to target and kill the enemy in the Civil War in Iraq' (cited in Zehfuss, 2012:180). Secondly anthropologists themselves might be targeted by the insurgent (Gonzâlez, 2007); indeed, four anthropologists have been targeted and killed by the insurgent (Jaschik, 2015). Last but not least, future social scientists could be accused of being spies whenever they conduct research abroad (Gonzâlez, 2015).

Another problematic issue arisen is the association of HTS with the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), which focused on gathering intelligence with the aim of 'winning hearts and minds' of the local population in Vietnam (Kipp et al., 2006; Gonzâlez, 2008). CORDS was also designed to integrate civilian and military activities as HTS does so (Cohen, 2010). Additionally, other US Government agencies, like the CIA, would have access to central databases and therefore the information collected by HTS and CORDS (Kipp et al., 2006).

Furthermore, CORDS was infamous for its affiliation with the Phoenix program, which 'was an assassination program' (Cohen, 2010; Gonzâlez, 2008), created to eliminate top Vietcong figures (Cohen, 2010). Over 26,000 people were murdered by means of Phoenix (Cohen, 2010; Gonzâlez, 2007) - it was utilized to pacify the local people in South Vietnam (Cohen, 2010), to ensure that HTS was described as nothing more than an 'espionage programme' (Gonzâlez, 2008) and as 'a CORDS for 21st century' (Kipp et al., 2006).

The potential use of HTS could be understood in reference to this dubious history (Gonzâlez, 2008), which raises some ethical questions: 'if embedded anthropologists collect detailed information for databases accessible by the military, the CIA the Iraqi police or the Afghan military, what is to keep any of these groups from sooner or later using the data to target suspected insurgents for assassination, or even simply to gain economic, cultural or political control? Policy changes, shifting allegiances or mistaken identity might easily transform a friendly, cooperative Iraqi or afghan into a future target or tool to achieve some other objectives. What safeguards are there to prevent the transfer of local population knowledge to commanders planning military attacks?' (Gonzâlez, 2007:22).

IV. The Use of Force in Counterinsurgency

The use of force is another significant aspect that should be analysed when discussing the content of counterinsurgency warfare. This part of the essay explores the problems brought about from using force, in order to prove that counterinsurgency is simply the continual of violence.

The current US counterinsurgency doctrine restrains the deployment of force (Khalili, 2010; Williamson, 2011), but it maintains a substantial role for high-impact war-fighting or kinetic operations (Gilmore, 2011). Despite the significance of population-centric approach - which calls for local engagement, development, human security discourse, embedded in Field Manual 3-24 - this restriction contradicts with the tradition of US Army (Gilmore, 2011), on the grounds that the Army has trained, furnished and prepared for large-scale conventional warfare since the 1940s (Record, 2006). The use of force is explicitly mentioned in the current Field Manual, which states that 'measured combat operations are always required to address insurgents who cannot be co-opted into operating inside the rule of law. These operations may sometimes require overwhelming force and the killing of fanatic insurgents (cited in Gilmore, 2011:26). Moreover, the 'kinetic' aspect of using force is overtly found in the 'clear' part of Field Manual 3-24's 'clear, hold, build' method. The 'clear ' part is introduced as 'a tactical mission task that requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organised resistance in an assigned area. The force does this by destroying, capturing or forcing the withdrawal of insurgent combatants (cited in Gilmore, 2011:26). Therefore, it is fair to say that the amount of force is not limited; for example, the US forces can freely deploy any weapon accordingly depending on the terrain (Khalili, 2010). Therefore, Gonzâlez (2008) claims that there is no clear evidence to prove that no less kinetic operations are conducted in Afghanistan.

Indeed, from 2009 on, a significant amount of night raids on homes, excessive use of aerial firepower, and assassinations of insurgencies conducted by US forces, have claimed many civilian lives in Afghanistan (Owens, 2013), along with intelligence-led raiding tactics and large-scale assaults in open spaces in Iraq have an impact on alienating neutral populations (Gilmore, 2011). Furthermore, Iraq Body Count, a

database that records the number of civilian casualties in Iraq, has showed that since 2003, the number of casualties has increased, and that US air-strikes in 2007 resulted in the deaths of four times as many Iraqis than that in 2006 (Cohen, 2010). According to Department of Defence, however, insurgent power is diminished by utilizing military kinetic operations by the US-led and Afghan forces (Gilmore, 2010). It is therefore evident that the execution of population-centric approach in counterinsurgency warfare does not lead to a decline in violence (Owens, 2013). It may be seen as a means to an end. From this perspective, counterinsurgency could be described as a continual account of violence and coercion conducted mostly against unarmed civilians (Cohen, 2010).

V. Conclusion

The paper has examined counterinsurgency warfare with regards to population-centric approach, Human Terrain System and the use of force in the light of FM 3-24 and concludes that counterinsurgency appears to be seductive and humanitarian approach, but in many ways turned out to be brutal and just as vicious, coercive, destructive as any other form of war (Cohen, 2010). That is, a problematic formulation has arisen from the marriage of high-impact war-fighting, development and human security discourse (Gilmore, 2011). This could mean that the deployment of people-centric means providing human security, which might result in disempowerment of local populations (Roxborough, 2007); these disempowerment efforts are associated with pacifications tactics (Gilmore, 2011) such as identity cards and monitoring the populations (Khalili, 2011).

Moreover, Col. Martin Schweitzer argues that the deployment of HTS in counterinsurgency might decrease kinetic operations by 60-70% (Zehfuzz, 2012). However, the deployment of HTS has given rise to night raids on homes, targeted assassinations, and greater emphasis on air strikes (Gilmore, 2011). Above all, the use of force is overtly mentioned in the current counterinsurgency doctrine. In this regard, it is highly likely to say that kinetic operations still maintain importance within the framework of contemporary counterinsurgency warfare (Gilmore, 2011). Therefore, in the light of what has been described above, it could be stated that the current counterinsurgency encourages the military to 'be polite, be professional and be prepared to kill' (cited in Khalili, 2010:17).

It is crucial to mention that it is a truism that the current counterinsurgency doctrine based on lessons drawn from British and French counterinsurgency experiences in Malaya and Algeria respectively, as well as America's involvement in Vietnam (Khalili, 2010: Gentile, 2009: Gilmore, 2011). These lessons could be misleading and irrelevant to the problems of today (Petraeus, 2010; Cromartie, 2012) and they may not be universally applicable, on the grounds that different counterinsurgency policies are required for different populations and countries (Sepp, 2005). This need for different policies has been ignored in the case of Iraq and Afghanistan, because these conflicts are based on ethnic and sectarian divisions - similar to what was witnessed in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia – and are not based on ideological, class or people's war as with in Vietnam and Malaya (Roxborough, 2007: Record, 2006). This negligence results in the current counterinsurgency not being capable of identifying the underlying reasons behind the insurgent. By doing so, Western problematizations of insecurity may be backed up by counterinsurgency, by engendering societal divisions and resistance; this may therefore results in further counterinsurgency operations in the future (Kienscherf, 2011).

The paper analyses whether counterinsurgency marks a gentler warfare briefly and seeks to provide a broad understanding of the issue - further research and practice should focus on analysing in detail the key aspects of counterinsurgency warfare. It should find answer to the question of how soldiers that have been trained and equipped through traditional methods shift from conventional warfare to asymmetrical warfare (Gilmore, 2011). Finally, further research should assess how less invasive and more indirect interventions, which are built on associations with indigenous authorities, security agencies, and key civil figures, affect the success of counterinsurgency warfare (Williamson, 2011).

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