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(b. 1972) has a PhD in history (Stockholm University, 2003). Before coming to the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies in 2007 he worked at the Swedish National Defence College, Stockholm, from 1996 to 2007. In 2005–06, Kronvall was a visiting scholar at George Washington University, Washington DC.

ABSTRACT

In 2006, the US Army adopted a new counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine, *Field Manual 3-24*. The doctrine establishes new guidelines for conducting operations such as those currently taking place in Afghanistan and Iraq, where its validity is being tested. It is also a turning point in the US Army's doctrinal approach to such operations as it fully embraces the "small war" approach to COIN. Earlier post-Vietnam Army doctrine has had an ambivalent view of the small war approach, which is contrary to the Army's traditional preference for fighting big-scale, conventional wars. While earlier post-Vietnam COIN doctrines have used the conflicts in Vietnam and El Salvador as models, *FM 3-24* takes into account many other possible forms of insurgency as well. It also recognizes more clearly the key role of popular legitimacy and accepts a potentially much more extensive degree of Army involvement. Furthermore, *FM 3-24* wholeheartedly argues that political concerns should take precedence over strictly military ones when applying force. COIN operations are viewed as a long-term commitment. The doctrine may help to fill a gap in US military capabilities, but this ultimately requires a change in the Army's mindset and in US national strategic culture.

INTRODUCTION[1]

In December 2006 the US Army and the US Marine Corps adopted a new counterinsurgency doctrine, known to the Army as *Field Manual 3-24* (*FM 3-24*) and to the Marines as *Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5* (*MCWP 3-33.5*). These somewhat dry designations barely hint at the document's significance. Arguably, the new manual represents a dramatic shift in Army doctrine and it may have revolutionary ramifications for the Army as an institution as well as for US military capabilities. The doctrine is intended to guide the conduct of US operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and may thus affect the outcome of those conflicts, but it may also have a wider impact. *FM 3-24* prescribes a new and different approach to operations, which may in turn require far-reaching changes in training, procurement, and organization. Ultimately, the doctrine may serve as a catalyst for a new direction of Army transformation and a dramatic enhancement of the Army as an instrument of US policy. Given these characteristics of the new doctrine it certainly merits in-depth studies. A few studies have addressed various aspects of the doctrine,[2] and the present paper expands upon that analysis.

The main purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that *FM 3-24* represents a substantial change in US Army counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine. The nature of the change will be characterized and gauged by placing the new doctrine in a historical context and relating it to the development of Army COIN doctrine since the Vietnam War.

In his book, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, John A. Nagl refers to the aphorism of T. E. Lawrence ("Lawrence of Arabia") that "Making war on insurgents is messy and slow, like eating soup with a knife." Nagl likens the process of transforming the US Army into a fully capable COIN force to a pro-

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1 This paper was presented at the war studies seminar at the Swedish National Defence College. I would like to thank my discussant, Anders Palmgren, Jan Angstrom, who chaired the seminar, and the other participants for a fruitful discussion. I would also like to thank a number of colleagues at the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies for their valuable comments: Kjell Inge Bjerga, Kjetil Henriksen, Michael Mayer, and Svein Melby. Last but not least, I want to thank Anna Therese Klingstedt for her excellent editorial work. The paper is part of my ongoing study of American doctrine for using conventional forces since the end of the Vietnam War. The study examines doctrine from the national security policy level to the operational level, including joint military doctrine as well as service doctrine. It is due to be finished in 2008.

2 To the best of my knowledge, the most thorough study of the new doctrine so far is James S. Corum's "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 28, no. 1 (2007). *FM 3-24* is also briefly addressed in Steven Metz, *Learning from Iraq: Counterinsurgency in American Strategy* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), p. 65; and Thomas R. Mockaitis, *The Iraq War: Learning from the Past, Adapting to the Present, and Planning for the Future* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), pp. 50–51 and 53–54.

cess of learning to eat soup with a knife.[3] In doctrinal terms, *FM 3-24* may be described as a decisive step in that direction. The 2006 doctrine was preceded by a temporary version issued in 2004. As James S. Corum points out: "Prior to the 2004 doctrine, the last official counter-insurgency doctrine field manual had been published in 1966." The 2004 and 2006 field manuals thus represent a dramatic revival of COIN in US Army doctrine. *FM 3-24* holds a central place in the Army's doctrinal hierarchy in its capacity as "one of the 'capstone' Army doctrine manuals, that is, one of six field manuals that set out the basic principles of warfare and operations for the whole Army, and serves as a foundation document for tactical and unit-specific doctrine on COIN and stability operations."[4]

What, more specifically, is a doctrine and why should we study it? Corum's description, quoted above, gives us some guidance, and other analysts have addressed these issues as well. According to one of them, Robert M. Cassidy, "Doctrine is salient because it is central to how militaries execute their missions – it is how [they] operate. Doctrine, therefore, is an authoritative expression of a military's fundamental approach to fighting wars and influencing events in operations other than war." Of the American services, the Army is the one in which doctrine plays the most central role. Its system for developing and revising doctrine is highly institutionalized and the Army has been described as a doctrine-based institution. Doctrine may thus be regarded an important expression of the Army's mindset, i.e. how the Army as an institution proposes to handle the tasks given to it. Richard Duncan Downie has argued that published Army doctrine reflects the service's culture and preferences, to some extent including informal norms, and James A. Blackwell has described doctrine as the Army's "professional cognitive map." The doctrinal importance of various types of operations indicates which scenarios the Army focuses its mental and organizational efforts on, and which scenarios it is less ready to tackle.[5]

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3   John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife. Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago, IL & London: Chicago University Press, 2005). For Nagl's reference to Lawrence, see p. xii. Nagl's study is a revised version of his PhD thesis. He is a US Army major with personal experience from COIN operations in Iraq.

4   Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," pp. 128 and 132.

5   For Cassidy's definition, see his *Peacekeeping in the Abyss: British and American Peacekeeping Doctrine and Practice after the Cold War* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), p. 3. On the centrality of doctrine to the ArmyArmy, see, e.g., James A. Blackwell, "Professionalism and Army Doctrine: A Losing Battle?," in *The Future of the Army Profession*, eds. Don M. Snider and Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill; 2nd edition), pp. 325–326. Blackwell uses the concept "professional cognitive map" on p. 329. For Downie's argument, see his *Learning from Conflict: The U.S. Military in Vietnam, El Salvador, and the Drug War* (Westport, CN: Praeger, 1998), pp. 43 and 122.

Doctrinal definitions of COIN and the related concept of insurgency have shifted over time, but for the purposes of this paper it is sufficient to relate the current definitions used by *FM 3-24* which are in turn based on joint doctrine:

> Joint doctrine defines an *insurgency* as an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict […]. Stated another way, an 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. *Counterinsurgency* is military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency […].[6]

The rationale for using the Vietnam War as a point of departure has to do with its role as a watershed not only in American national security affairs in general, but in the US Army's doctrinal development as well. The fundamentals of doctrine tend to evolve slowly, over the course of decades rather than years. In important respects the Army of today and its doctrine are products of reforms undertaken in the wake of the Vietnam War.[7] Not least important in the present context, the Vietnam trauma has significantly shaped Army COIN doctrine over a long period of time. I therefore hope that tracing Army COIN doctrine since the Vietnam War will help identify, characterize, and gauge the doctrinal change represented by *FM 3-24*, thus fulfilling the paper's main purposes.

To this end I have developed and applied an analytical framework. The framework, which is outlined in greater detail in the next section, distinguishes between two approaches to COIN; the big war approach and the small war approach. The bulk of the analysis characterizes the development of US Army COIN doctrine by relating it to this framework. The analysis of the period from the Vietnam War to the beginning of the "Global War on Terror" is primarily based on the findings of previous research which are being integrated and synthesized. The last part of the analysis consists of applying the framework to primary sources, i.e. *FM 3-24* and its two immediate precursors, *Field Manual 3-07*, *Stability Operations* (2003) and *Field Manual, Interim 3-07.22, Counter-*

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6   Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC, 2006), 1-2, p. 1-1; italics in the original. These definitions are also used in Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.22*, *Counterinsurgency Operations* (Washington, DC, 2004), p. vi and 1-1, p. 1-1.

7   On Vietnam as a watershed and the enduring impact of doctrinal and other changes that took place in the immediate post-Vietnam era, see, e.g., Frederick W. Kagan, *Finding the Target. The Transformation of American Military Policy* (New York, NY: Encounter Books, 2006), pp. 3–5; and Richard Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation From Vietnam to Iraq* (London & New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), p. 2.

insurgency Operations (2004). Covering doctrinal development over a longer period of time entails the risk of neglecting important nuances, but hopefully the benefits of being able to identify long-term trends will outweigh this disadvantage.

While the present study focuses on the importance and contents of a specific body of doctrine, i.e. Army COIN doctrine, it considers this doctrinal evolution in relation to certain other aspects. As a systematic explanation of the doctrinal development is outside the scope of this study I do not analyze these factors in depth, but they are touched upon to provide a context. For example, conditions in the international environment, and their implications for US security, are often outlined. Furthermore, the overall development of Army doctrine will be discussed, and US national security policies and so-called use-of-force doctrines are also used as a backdrop for the analysis.[8]

Another interesting aspect is the relationship between doctrine and actions, in this case the actual conduct of Army COIN operations. In this study I primarily deal with formal, written doctrine. In other words, informal doctrine or the relationship between doctrine and practice are not systematically examined. Given the central role of doctrine to the Army as an institution, it seems reasonable to assume that it has a more or less substantial effect on the conduct of Army operations. However, many other factors may be relevant as well, such as the circumstances in a given situation and the resources at the commander's disposal. A direct and simple causal linkage between doctrine and the conduct of operations cannot be taken for granted.[9] A doctrinal analysis could be taken one step further and include the relationship between doctrine, action, and the outcome of operations. Such an analysis is even more complicated, as it has to take into account additional factors, including enemy behavior and resources.

Doctrine can also be analyzed in the context of Army capabilities. The promulgation of *FM 3-24* can be seen as part of a broader trend at the Army and national level. Enhancing COIN capabilities is currently official US policy. The

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8   While ArmyArmy doctrine pertains to how the ArmyArmy operates, use-of-force doctrines are found at the level of national security policy. They are thus formally superordinate to ArmyArmy doctrine and are broader in scope, as they deal with how the US should use military power as a means to implement national policies. For further discussion of the doctrinal hierarchy, see, for example, Arnel B. Enriquez, "The US National Security Strategy of 2002: A New Use-of-Force Doctrine?," *Air & Space Power Journal*, vol. XVIII, no. 3 (2004), p. 32. For my analysis of use of force doctrines, see Olof Kronvall, "Is the Bush Doctrine an Anomaly? American Use-of-Force Doctrines from Vietnam to the War on Terror," in *Säkerhet och försvar. En vänbok till Kent Zetterberg* [Security and Defense. A *Festschrift* to Kent Zetterberg], eds. Gunnar Artéus, Karl Molin and Magnus Petersson (Karlskrona: Axel Abrahamssons Tryckeri och förlag, 2005).

9   For a critical discussion, see, for example, Thomas A. Marks, "Introduction," p. 99; and p. 103 in Ed O'Dowd's review of John Nagl's *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*; both articles appeared in *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 17, no. 1 (2006).

Pentagon's 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (*QDR* 2006) repeatedly mentions the need for improving COIN capabilities in order to wage the war on terror, or "the Long War," more effectively. Part of the document's vision for the development of joint ground forces reads as follows: "Future warriors will be as proficient in irregular operations, including counterinsurgency and stabilization operations, as they are today in high-intensity combat."[10] COIN operations have traditionally been an Achilles heel of American policy and being able to handle them effectively would fill a gap in terms of US military capabilities, thus further amplifying the superpower's strength. If the *QDR*'s vision actually materializes it will provide US policy-makers with a potent instrument that has not been at their disposal before, at least not on the scale and with the permanence hypothesized here.

The promulgation of *FM 3-24* is arguably a step in that direction. But while doctrine may be a crucial factor in the development of military capabilities it can be assumed that in order to have a full impact it must be matched by appropriate organization, training, equipment, etc. Ideally a doctrine used as the basis for developing capabilities should also be sound, i.e. based on a correct assessment of the problems which it is designed to handle.

To sum up, then, all of these aspects – the causes of doctrinal change; the relationship between doctrine, action, and outcomes; and doctrine as a component of military capabilities – are intriguing, but also highly complex. Systematically studying any of them is beyond the scope of the paper. Put another way, the doctrinal analysis proposed in the following pages cannot strictly speaking answer the question posed in the title of the paper, i.e. whether the US Army is now fighting insurgents in the way prescribed by Lawrence and others. However, by fulfilling the more limited purposes stated above and providing an analysis of the doctrinal development it sheds light on phenomena that are interesting in their own right. This analysis may also serve as a point of departure for studies with a broader scope. Furthermore, while the bulk of this paper focuses on doctrinal content, the related aspects mentioned above are addressed tentatively in the concluding section.

The next section presents the analytical framework utilized in the paper. It describes two basic approaches to COIN, termed the big war approach and the small war approach. In the following three sections this framework is applied to US Army COIN doctrine since the Vietnam War. Regarding the importance of COIN in Army doctrine, I argue that *FM 3-24* and its immediate precursor, *FMI 3-07.22* from 2004, represent a dramatically heightened doc-

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10   Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report, February 6, 2006* (Washington, DC: Pentagon, 2006; henceforth *QDR* 2006); the quotation may be found on p. 42. See also pp. 3–4, 23, 36, 38, 83, and 91.

trinal interest in COIN. Regarding the substance of COIN doctrine, I argue that throughout the post-Vietnam era US Army COIN doctrine has contained a mix of small war elements and big war elements. *FM 3-24* represents an important change in this respect, as arguably it signals a whole-hearted doctrinal acceptance of the small war approach. The final section of the paper sums up the main argument and briefly addresses the possible impact of *FM 3-24* on current operations, Army capabilities and US national security policies.

Two Approaches to Counterinsurgency

Throughout its modern history the US military, including the Army, has been dominated by what can be termed, to use Robert M. Cassidy's expression, the big war paradigm. This paradigm has pervaded Army culture, doctrine, and training. It entails a preference for fighting the conventional forces of other nation-states and defeating them swiftly and completely by applying decisive force. While accepting civilian control of the military and the Clausewitzian idea that war is fought for political ends, it tends to view war and conflict in rather narrowly defined military terms and emphasizes that political considerations ideally should not infringe on military efficiency. The Army has repeatedly performed other types of operations throughout its history, but the service has considered these aberrations, and the experiences learned from them were normally not absorbed systematically. Army COIN doctrine has often essentially been derived from the big war paradigm. Put simply, whenever Army doctrine has not ignored COIN, it has regarded such operations as a smaller version of the preferred big war scenario, and the methods judged appropriate to defeat conventional armies have been considered relevant to fighting insurgents as well.[11]

A radically different approach to COIN can be termed the small war approach. This approach, which has been primarily expressed in US Marine Corps culture and doctrine, has coexisted with the predominant big war paradigm. The roots of the small war approach in its modern form can be traced back to the experiences from the so-called Banana Wars in which the Corps was involved between the two World Wars. The Banana Wars were a series of interventions in

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11   On the big war paradigm and its implications for COIN, see Robert M. Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror. Military Culture and Irregular War* (Westport, CT & London: Praeger Security International, 2006), pp. 2–3, 100, and 114–126. While Cassidy's introduction of the concept "big war paradigm" is new, his analysis is based on several earlier studies. One of the more influential is Russell F. Weigley's classic *The American Way of War. A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1973). For an in-depth study of US Army COIN doctrine during the first part of the 20th century, see, for example, Larry E. Cable, *Conflict of Myths. The Development of American Counterinsurgency and the Vietnam War* (New York & London: New York University Press, 1986), chapters 2–6.

the Caribbean and Latin America, and what later came to be known as COIN was an important component of these operations. The lessons learned were codified in the 1940 *Small Wars Manual*, a doctrinal publication that epitomizes the small war approach to counterinsurgency.[12]

Rather than recommending the use of decisive force aimed at the physical destruction of insurgent forces the doctrine claimed that political considerations must be paramount; consequently they may override strictly military concerns. Military operations must be coordinated with diplomacy. The struggle between the government and the insurgents was viewed as being essentially a contest for popular legitimacy. The party that could gain and keep legitimacy in the eyes of the people was also likely to win the struggle for sovereignty. The manual called for working in concert with indigenous forces and stressed the importance of understanding and taking into account local cultural, social, and economic conditions. Political stability could not be achieved without ensuring economic prosperity. The manual also stated that "In small wars, tolerance, sympathy, and kindness should be the keynote to our relationship with the mass of the population."[13] Excessive force should thus be avoided, although force was deemed necessary to defeat the insurgency. But in order to be effective, it must be combined with the use of political and diplomatic instruments, and it should be applied in the guise of aggressive patrolling and population security measures aimed at denying sanctuary to the insurgents, rather than big unit operations against enemy units.

Although the Marine Corps has been the clearest proponent within the US military of the small wars approach to COIN, one can hardly talk about a concomitant small wars paradigm equivalent to the big war paradigm. The *Small Wars Manual* comes close to promoting such a paradigm, as it states that "small wars represent the normal and frequent operations of the Marine Corps." But the Marine Corps and its doctrine have not been consistently preoccupied with small wars; for considerable periods of time such considerations have been eclipsed by big war concerns. This was the case from World War II until the early 1960s. However, Marine Corps operations in Vietnam were considerably influenced by the spirit of the *Small Wars Manual*, and an updated version of the document was also released in 2004.[14]

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12 The following description of the *Small Wars Manual* is based on Cable, *Conflict of Myths*, pp. 161–163 and 167–169; Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace. Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002), pp. 283–285; and Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror*, pp. 130 and 135.

13 See, for example, Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, p. 284.

14 For examples of big war concerns eclipsing the small war approach, see Cable, *Conflict of Myths*, pp. 170–171; and Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, p. 285. On the doctrinal heritage and Marine Corps operations in Vietnam, see, for example, Cable, *Conflict of Myths*, chapter 9 and p 284; and Boot, pp. 304–307. The quotation from the *Small Wars Manual* can be found in Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, p. 284.

Based on this broad description of two contrary approaches to COIN, an analytical framework, consisting of five interrelated aspects, can be distilled. This framework is used to characterize the development of Army COIN doctrine over time by determining the relative emphasis on elements associated with the big war and the small war approach respectively.

It is important to note that the labels big war and small war can be misleading in one important respect, as these terms may seem to suggest that the decisive difference between the two approaches is of a quantitative nature, based on the scale of the conflicts they are designed to deal with. While the scale of those conflicts may indeed differ, this is not necessarily the most important distinction between the two approaches. Instead, the crucial distinction is actually a qualitative one, since the two approaches prescribe very different methods for achieving victory in COIN. But despite these conceptual drawbacks, the big war/small war distinction is still useful as shorthand for the two main directions in COIN doctrine that are under discussion here.

It should also be remembered that the framework is somewhat schematic. By no means does it claim to capture the full complexity of American COIN doctrine, let alone US military doctrine in general. This is a multifaceted body of thought which cannot be fully described and understood through the use of a few key words, or through any one analytical model. While these limitations should be kept in mind, it is also true that any analysis requires a measure of simplification. As discussed above, important nuances may be lost due to the inclusion of a decades-long time period, and the schematic character of the framework may have a similar effect. However, the framework will hopefully enable the identification of certain important trends and thus compensate for these possible deficiencies.

The first aspect of the framework is how the various doctrines view *the character of insurgency*. This includes assumptions regarding the dynamics, purpose, and methods of insurgency. Compared to the other aspects, this one is not necessarily as directly linked to the two approaches to COIN, but it facilitates the analysis and understanding of the other aspects.

The second aspect is the *basis for COIN strategy*. Here, two basic preferences can be discerned; one that tends to define victory in military terms, and another one that tends to define victory in political terms. The first preference is associated with the big war approach and the second one with the small war approach.

The third aspect is the *degree of Army involvement* prescribed by the doctrines. It is assumed that a restrictive and narrowly defined Army role in COIN efforts is an expression of the big war approach, whereas an acceptance of a more extensive role is an expression of the small war approach.

The fourth aspect concerns *the use of force*. An emphasis on applying force in the manner which is deemed most efficient in a strictly military sense, i.e. to defeat enemy forces militarily, is considered an expression of the big war approach. Conversely, making the use of force dependent on its likely political effects is considered an expression of the small war approach.

The fifth aspect concerns the *time frame* envisioned for COIN operations. Here, the big war approach conceives of COIN operations, at least as far as the Army is concerned, as a short-term engagement. The small war approach, on the other hand, advocates a long-term commitment, which it perceives as an integral component of successful COIN operations.

Admittedly, other aspects could have been included as well (or instead), such as the relative importance of intelligence, the priority of force protection vs. interaction with the populace, and preferences for big unit or small unit operations. These or other expansions or alterations of the analytical framework could lead to different results. At the same time, it should be noted that some findings from earlier research seem to reinforce the overall argument advanced in this paper. In his article, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," James S. Corum notes that the new doctrine emphasizes the need for understanding the culture in the countries where the Army is involved in COIN, as well as the importance of psychological and media operations. Both of these features may be seen as expressions of a small war approach to COIN.[15] At any rate, despite the reservations noted above, I believe that the aspects included in the framework will be sufficient to capture the overall direction of the doctrinal development. In the following sections, the framework outlined above is applied to US Army COIN doctrine from the Vietnam War to the "Global War on Terror."

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15   See Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," pp. 134 and 138. On cultural understanding as an aspect of the small war approach, see the above description of the *Small Wars Manual*. The emphasis on psychological and media operations can be linked to the small war approach's concern with achieving popular legitimacy. This connection is suggested by Corum on p. 138.

The Vietnam Legacy[16]

A central concern of the security policies of the John F. Kennedy Administration (1961–63) was to check Soviet and Chinese influence in the Third World. It was believed that the communist powers initiated and exploited various forms of insurgencies and that purely military approaches were often insufficient to tackle this challenge. Instead, when trying to stamp out insurgencies in the Third World, US forces should also engage in so-called nation-building in concert with civilian government agencies, such as the State Department. It was believed that an insurgent movement could not win, i.e. overthrow the government, without significant popular support, and nation-building operations ultimately aimed at depriving the insurgents of legitimacy. The means to achieve this was to improve the living conditions of the population in the threatened country so as to reduce any grievances that might otherwise be exploited by the insurgents. Nation-building operations entailed developing the infrastructure of the country in question, or distributing food and medicine in poor, rural areas.

In important respects, the ideas behind nation-building were a mirror image of the strategy used by America's communist adversaries, in this case the Viet Minh/Viet Cong insurgents, backed by the North Vietnamese government. Their strategy was, in turn, based on Mao Zedong's concept of "people's war", according to which an insurgency began "when a highly motivated cadre mobilized a support base among the rural peasantry using nationalism and local grievances (often including corruption, repression, excessive taxation, and issues associated with land ownership)."[17] This popular support was to form the basis for a phase of guerilla warfare against the government. The insurgents' military operations must be continuously coordinated with political and propaganda operations. While the government was gradually weakened, politically and militarily, the insurgents gathered strength. In the final phase of the insurgency, they

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16   On the Army's attitude to the Vietnam War as a manifestation of the big war paradigm, see Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror*, pp. 114–116. In addition, this section is based on Cable, *Conflict of Myths*, chapters 7–14; Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 38 and 185–187; Deborah D. Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons from Peripheral Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994); Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2004), pp. 8–10; John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment. A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, revised and expanded edition, 2005), chapters 7–8, especially pp. 216, 223–224, 247–248, and 251–252; and Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife*), chapters 3 and 6–9. I have not seen the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations' Vietnam strategies being characterized explicitly in terms of the big war and small wars approaches, but such labeling may easily be justified based on the literature.

17   Metz and Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century*, p. 8.

should be capable of turning to large-scale conventional operations, aimed at finally defeating the government and taking over power.

In order to counter such a development in South Vietnam the Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson Administrations used nation-building as one instrument to prop up the government in Saigon and defeat the Viet Cong insurgents. Nation-building was undertaken parallel to operations of a more conventional nature, directly aimed at North Vietnamese territory and forces. This strategy can be characterized as a mix of the big war and the small war approaches. By contrast, Army efforts were clearly dominated by the big war approach, which was derived from the overarching big war paradigm.

Following a presidential directive the Army established its own special forces, "the Green Berets," who engaged in nation-building in South Vietnam. But the Army's doctrinal heritage was not very conducive to such ideas. Destroying conventional opposing forces through the application of firepower was traditionally at the core of Army doctrine. Since Army counterinsurgency doctrine was essentially an outgrowth of this basic doctrine it assumed that insurgent forces could be defeated in the same way as conventional forces. This was the way in which the bulk of Army operations against the Viet Cong was conducted and this doctrine also pervaded the Army's advisory program in South Vietnam.

In accordance with their small war traditions the Marine Corps approached the Vietnam insurgency differently, with a greater emphasis on nation-building and on gaining the support of the South Vietnamese population, but this did not have a significant impact on Army operations. Neither did British advice, based on experiences from the relatively successful Malayan counterinsurgency campaign (1948–60) in which winning popular legitimacy had been a vital concern.

Whether a different Army counterinsurgency doctrine and strategy could have ensured an American victory in Vietnam will remain a matter of speculation, but it is clear that the doctrine which was in fact used did not bring victory. The US leadership increasingly felt that South Vietnam's sovereignty could not be defended at an acceptable cost. As Richard M. Nixon's administration took office in 1969 it initiated US disengagement from the conflict, in which the US had been involved with large numbers of ground forces since 1965. Responsibility for the defense of South Vietnam was gradually shifted to that country itself, a process known as "Vietnamization." The withdrawal was completed in 1973 and Hanoi conquered South Vietnam in 1975.

From Vietnam to the End of the Cold War

The loss in Vietnam was traumatic and humiliating for the US. The Vietnam experience had a lasting impact on its national security policies, as well as Army doctrine. Although the US was still a global power, its attitude to military intervention abroad became more cautious compared to the first two decades of the Cold War. Examples of this approach include the 1969 Nixon Doctrine, which placed the primary responsibility for the defense of US allies on these countries themselves, and the 1984 Weinberger Doctrine, which came in the form of a declaration by Secretary of Defense (1981–87) Caspar Weinberger. This doctrine stated, among other things, that "the commitment of US forces to combat should be a last resort." For all practical purposes, the Weinberger Doctrine excluded the deployment of US forces for nation-building and other operations below the threshold of all-out war.[18]

The evolution of Army doctrine after Vietnam essentially mirrored this outlook. The Vietnam War had a significant impact on the US armed forces and the Army was arguably the service most deeply affected.[19] At the time of withdrawal from Vietnam the Army was severely demoralized and barely functioned as an institution. In order to remedy these afflictions and rebuild itself, the Army launched a comprehensive reform program that included an oversight of Army doctrine under the auspices of the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), established in 1973.

The doctrinal development in the 1970s and 1980s was partly based on a specific interpretation of the Vietnam War that acquired the status of conventional Army wisdom. The idea was essentially that the Army's main mistake in Vietnam was not that it paid insufficient attention to nation-building as part of

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18 On the Nixon Doctrine, see, for example, Robert S. Litwak, *Détente and the Nixon Doctrine: American Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of Stability, 1969–1976* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 191–194. On the Weinberger Doctrine, see, for example, Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 46–47; and Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation From Vietnam to Iraq*, pp. 131–132.

19 Unless otherwise specified, the following account of the Army's overall doctrinal development in the 1970s and 1980s is based on Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism. How Americans Are Seduced By War* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 34–47; Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife,* pp. 205–207; Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation From Vietnam to Iraq*, chapters 3–4, especially pp. 104–105; and Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," pp. 128–129. As is well known, "maneuver warfare" was a central concept in this doctrinal evolution. For a recent critical analysis of AirLand Battle doctrine and its understanding of the maneuver warfare concept, see Torgeir E. Sæveraas, "Maneuver Warfare: Genghis Khan – Blitzkrieg – AirLand Battle?" in Torgeir E. Sæveraas and Kjetil Henriksen, *Et militært universalmiddel? Amerikansk "Maneuver Warfare" og norsk doktrineutvikling* [A Military Panacea? American 'Maneuver Warfare' and Development of Norwegian Doctrine], Oslo Files on Defence and Security, no. 1 (Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, 2007).

a counterinsurgency strategy, but that it had not applied its firepower-centric doctrine against the guerillas forcefully enough. In geographical terms the Army once again turned its attention to Europe and the threat of a Soviet invasion after having been bogged down in Vietnam for a decade. Army doctrine could be wholeheartedly refocused on the problem of defeating a conventional great power Army. This doctrinal evolution culminated in the AirLand Battle concept, which was promulgated in the 1982 edition of the Army's key doctrinal document – *Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations* – and refined in the 1986 issue of the same document. Other forms of operations were initially marginalized; the Army purged itself of the experiences and capabilities relevant to other conflicts than high-intensity, conventional warfare that it had acquired during the Vietnam War.

A PARTIAL RENAISSANCE FOR COIN

Despite all this, however, developments at the national security policy level during the 1980s once again prompted the armed forces, including the Army, to pay more attention to the problems of COIN.[20] As part of its concerns regarding Soviet global policy, which was perceived to be increasingly ambitious and aggressive, the Reagan Administration took an interest in counterinsurgency. In rhetoric reminiscent of the Kennedy Administration, top officials pointed to the dangers of Kremlin-backed insurgencies around the world. Despite these similarities the Reagan Administration's counterinsurgency strategy was more cautious and differentiated than that of the Kennedy years. While Soviet-sponsored insurgency was identified as a global threat, US counterinsurgency strategy focused on Central America and the Caribbean, i.e. areas of more immediate American concern, and the risk of escalation was emphasized. The 1987 *National Security Strategy* advocated the indirect application of US military power in counterinsurgency efforts and the 1988 issue of the document stated that US involvement in what was now termed low-intensity conflict "must be realistic, often discreet, and *founded on a clear relationship between the conflict's outcome and important U.S. national security interests.*"[21]

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20   Unless otherwise specified, the following account of developments at the political level and the Army's COIN doctrine is based on Steven Metz, *Counterinsurgency: Strategy and the Phoenix of American Capability* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1995), pp. 8–15; Conrad C. Crane, *Avoiding Vietnam: The U.S. Army's Response to Defeat in Southeast Asia* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2002), pp. 3–6 and 12; Thomas K. Adams, *The Army After Next. The First Post-Industrial Army* (Westport, CT & London: Praeger Security International, 2006), pp. 14–15; Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror*, pp. 100–103; and Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation from Vietnam to Iraq*, pp. 104–105. The concluding characteristic of US COIN doctrine in the 1980s and early 1990s is an attempt to synthesize the findings of the literature by utilizing the framework underlying this paper.

21   Metz, *Counterinsurgency*, p. 10 (Metz's italics).

Like that of the Kennedy Administration, the Reagan Administration's counterinsurgency strategy assumed that the Soviet Union and other communist states – exploited indigenous political and economic problems in the Third World for the advancement of their interests. In the words of COIN expert Steven Metz, "the Reagan counterinsurgency strategy blended 'carrots' and 'sticks,' simultaneously promoting democracy, development, dialogue, and defense."[22]

These signals from the political level triggered an increased focus on COIN on the part of the Army. While it was only mentioned very briefly in the 1982 and 1986 editions of *FM 100-5*, COIN and its requirements reemerged as a subject of professional debate and the importance of COIN skills was upgraded in the training of Army officers. In cooperation with the Air Force, the Army founded the Center on Low-Intensity Conflict, which was devoted to studying and analyzing this neglected topic.

Just as the Kennedy Administration's COIN strategy had been tested in Vietnam, the Reagan Administration's strategy was implemented in El Salvador where the FMLN guerillas, backed by the Soviet bloc, were struggling to overthrow a right-wing dictatorship. The US engaged in the conflict by sending civilian and military advisors to the Salvadorian government; an Army Special Forces training team arrived in 1981. The Army was hardly enthusiastic about US involvement in El Salvador, but it had absorbed a set of lessons from Vietnam and was anxious to avoid the perceived mistakes of that conflict. The Army's strategy was thus primarily designed to counter a "people's war" type insurgency, similar to the one practiced by the South Vietnamese insurgents during the previous decades. The goal of creating popular support for the government was thus of primary importance in the Army's strategy, and military concerns were subordinate to this overriding goal. The US military was to play a predominantly advisory role. The Salvadorian military and police's COIN strategy was marked by indiscriminate violence, and trying to change this approach became a major goal of US efforts. Although human rights abuses continued, El Salvador was by the early 1990s, in Steven Metz's words, "at least a qualified success."[23] The quality and efficiency of the El Salvador armed forces had improved, El Salvador had become a democracy – albeit a fragile one – and popular support for FMLN had decreased significantly.

The lessons from Vietnam and the new experiences from El Salvador were distilled into Army doctrine over the 1980s as the 1981 *Field Manual 100-20*, *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict* was being revised; a new edition was issued in 1990. The doctrine stressed the need for legitimacy and assumed that the people would support the government or the insurgents depending on

22   Ibid.
23   Ibid., p. 14.

which side could offer them the best material conditions. US participation in COIN operations presupposed that the host government applied an internal defense and development (IDAD) strategy aimed at ameliorating the people's political, economic, and social grievances. This emphasis in *FM 100-20* on the political character of insurgencies did not mean, however, that Army efforts should be directly integrated with those of civilian US and host government agencies attempting to address popular grievances. The Army's primary function was to advise the indigenous military with the purpose of developing or boosting internal military COIN capabilities. Like the 1987 *National Security Strategy*, *FM 100-20* envisioned US forces in a primarily assisting role, but it did not categorically rule out their direct participation in combat. This theme recurred in tactical level doctrine but, echoing the Weinberger Doctrine, the doctrine stated that US forces would only participate in combat operations as a last resort.

Army low intensity conflict (LIC) doctrine of the early 1990s expressed a somewhat contradictory approach to the use of force. Consistent with the emphasis on legitimacy it accepted that political considerations influence military activities. But they were to do so in a limited sense, reflecting the aloof attitude taken to direct integration of civil-military COIN efforts. Civilian affairs and psychological affairs were not an integrated part of Army COIN operations. Instead, political constraints should take the form of restrictions applied to purely military operations. For example, engagement criteria and the size and type of forces used could be designed to comply with political imperatives. Furthermore, the doctrine alternated between advocating a minimum use of force, believed to further political legitimacy, and advocating the use of decisive force, which was prevalent in US military doctrine in general.[24]

COIN DOCTRINE AT THE END OF THE COLD WAR

In sum, then, it could be argued that US Army COIN doctrine at the end of the Cold War encompassed elements of the small war approach while simultaneously reflecting the big war paradigm which was ingrained in Army doctrine as a whole. During the Vietnam years the Army had rejected or ignored the view of insurgency as an essentially political struggle and the concomitant notion that defeating it required a political, economic, and social strategy. But these ideas were now accepted as the basis of Army involvement in El Salvador and were subsequently codified in doctrine. On the other hand the Army was to play a rather narrowly defined military role; the direct implementation of non-military measures was left to other actors. Furthermore, direct Army involvement in

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24   See Thomas K. Adams, "LIC (Low-Intensity Clausewitz)," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1990, pp. 266–275; Thomas R. Mockaitis, "A New Era of COIN," *The RUSI Journal,* No. 136 (September 1991), pp. 77–78; and Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation from Vietnam to Iraq*, pp. 105 and 156.

combat as part of COIN efforts – a type of conflict that did not fit into the big war paradigm – was to be a last resort. A corresponding tension between small war and big war approaches to COIN could also be found in strategy at the national level. Regarding the relative salience of COIN in Army doctrine, it should be remembered that while the publishing of LIC manuals in 1981 and 1990 represented a change when compared to the immediate post-Vietnam years, COIN was by no means a dominating theme in Army doctrine as a whole.

The revised version of *FM 100-20* was published at a time when the Soviet Union was crumbling and the international landscape was being remolded. In this international environment the US, leading a UN-sanctioned multilateral coalition, evicted Iraqi forces from occupied Kuwait in the 1990–91 Gulf War. The operation was widely seen as a model application of the Weinberger Doctrine. From an Army perspective the spectacular American victory was perceived as a vindication of the reforms that had been implemented since the 1970s, including the refinement of Army doctrine to defeat a conventionally organized opponent in a high-intensity conflict of short duration. The corresponding downgrading of nation-building, counterinsurgency, etc. to a peripheral role could also be justified with reference to the first Gulf War, as it could be argued that this was the kind of conflict for which the Army needed to be prepared.[25]

"The Strategic Pause," 1991–2001

In terms of US national security policies the 1991–2001 period can be characterized as an interwar phase between the victory in the Cold War and the intensified confrontation with international terrorism beginning on 11 September 2001. Despite important differences there were also considerable similarities between the respective approaches to national security issues of the George H.W. Bush Administration (1989–93) and the William J. Clinton Administration (1993–2001). It was clear that the end of the Cold War had a tremendous impact on the global security environment, and both administrations grappled with the implications for US national security. A common policy theme was that the fall of the Soviet Union opened up for the possibility of a worldwide expansion of democracy, free-market economics, and global economic integration. It was argued that the US had an important stake in encouraging and supporting these

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25   See, for example, Bacevich, *American Empire*, pp. 46–47; Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, pp. 320–322; Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation From Vietnam to Iraq*, pp. 140–145; and Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," p. 129.

trends. Doing so was not only consistent with American values and the country's internationalist tradition; it was also a means of promoting US security.[26]

Both administrations argued that the global Soviet threat had been replaced by a number of lesser threats, including smaller powers who might oppose US interests on a regional level. Notable among these regional adversaries were Iraq, Iran, and North Korea – long-standing sources of American concern. The emergence of a peer competitor – a nation-state that could challenge the US globally – was considered a future possibility. A revitalized Russia and, increasingly, a rising China were seen as candidates for this role. In addition to these threats from nation-states there was a host of other post-Cold War dangers, including organized crime, terrorism, and ethnic conflict. None of these threats was considered imminent however, and the Clinton Administration asserted that, given the historically benign international environment, the US was in a "strategic pause."[27]

The Clinton Department of Defense directed the armed forces to use the strategic pause to adapt to the envisioned security environment while maintaining their capabilities for dealing with current threats, focusing on the Persian Gulf region and the Korean Peninsula. The adaptation of US forces to future needs went by the name of "military transformation" and one of its declared goals was to increase deployability and capabilities for expeditionary operations. Another key feature of military transformation was the attempt to exploit the so-called revolution in military affairs (RMA), i.e. utilizing America's technological superiority to maintain and increase its military advantages over potential adversaries. The transformation was primarily aimed at honing the US edge in conventional, high-intensity conflicts against other nation-states.

At the level of national security policy the big war paradigm was challenged by the Clinton Administration's approach to the use of force. The Weinberger Doctrine was still a powerful factor in issues involving the possible use of military force and it was followed in 1990 by the Powell Doctrine, which shared many

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26　On the 1991–2001 years as an "interwar era," see, for example, D. Robert Worley, *Shaping U.S. Military Forces. Revolution or Relevance in a Post-Cold War World* (Westport, CT & London: Praeger Security International, 2006), p. 70. The description of the George H.W. Bush and the Clinton administrations' national security policies is based on Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York, NY: Touchstone/Simon & Schuster, 1994), chapters 1 and 31; Bacevich, *American Empire*, chapters 3–4 (especially p. 87, 88, 90, and 114–115); and John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 77–80.

27　The present paragraph and the next are based on Bacevich, *American Empire*, pp. 98–100; Adams, *The Army After Next*, pp. 26–33 and chapters 3–5 (especially pp. 35–36, 42–43, 46–50, and 63–65); Kagan, *Finding the Target*, chapter 4, pp. 176–184, and chapter 6 (especially pp. 239ff); Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation From Vietnam to Iraq*, pp. 159–165 and 175–176; and Worley, *Shaping U.S. Military Forces*, pp. 42–50 and 91–93.

of the Weinberger Doctrine's characteristics. The Powell doctrine was coined by General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1989–93), who had also been Secretary Weinberger's Military Assistant and in that capacity coauthored the Weinberger Doctrine. The use of decisive force, a basic tenet of the Powell Doctrine, was repeated in the 1992 *National Military Strategy*. In contrast to the Weinberger-Powell framework, the Clinton Administration declared its willingness to use force to promote interests that were not considered vital to US national security and emphasized that the military instrument must be relevant to humanitarian interventions and other operations falling outside the big war paradigm. This approach was implemented as the Clinton Administration repeatedly utilized airpower for limited purposes and committed ground forces to peace operations and humanitarian interventions.[28]

A DIMINISHING ROLE FOR COIN – AGAIN

COIN as such was not at the heart of this tension between the big war paradigm and the Clinton Administration's use of force doctrine and policies: "American involvement in internal wars took the form of multinational peacekeeping rather than counterinsurgency." During the latter half of the 1990s documents such as the 1997 *Quadrennial Defense Review* (*QDR*) discussed the problem of asymmetric challenges, which had some relevance to the problems of insurgency. It was assumed that America's enemies could avoid confronting the US in conventional war, in which the US was clearly superior, and would prefer instead to use methods which could offset this imbalance. Asymmetric methods included terrorism and the use of weapons of mass destruction. But the recognition of asymmetric challenges did not significantly affect the course of military transformation.[29]

Similarly, COIN was not a prominent theme in Army transformation or doctrine. The big war paradigm was still strong, and to the extent that it was challenged it was not by demands pertaining specifically to COIN. In response to pressure from the political level, and as a result of a re-evaluation of the strategic environment on the part of the Army itself, operations falling outside the big war paradigm became incrementally more prominent in Army doctrine

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28   See Bacevich, *American Empire*, pp. 92–93, 102–112, chapter 6, and p. 167; Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, pp. 322–327; Jeffrey Record, *Making War, Thinking History. Munich, Vietnam, and Presidential Uses of Force from Korea to Kosovo* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2002), pp. 31–32, chapter 8, and p. 115; Bacevich, *The New American Militarism*, pp. 51–52, 57–58, and 60; Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror*, pp. 28–30, 118, and 122; Kagan, *Finding the Target*, pp. 99 and chapter 5, especially pp. 180, 184–185, and 194–195; and Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation From Vietnam to Iraq*, pp. 133, 147–149, 169–171, and 173–175.

29   Metz, *Learning from Iraq*, pp. 12–14; quotation on p. 12. See also Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," pp. 129–131.

over the course of the 1990s. A milestone in this process was the publication in 1993 of a new edition of the Army's key doctrinal publication, *FM 100-5*, *Operations*, which differentiated between war and operations other than war (OOTW). The latter was a new doctrinal category which replaced LIC. OOTW was divided into different subcategories: evacuation operations, arms control, support to domestic civil authorities, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, security assistance, nation assistance, support to counterdrug operations, peace enforcement, show of force, support to insurgencies and counterinsurgencies, and attacks and raids.[30]

Thus, while counterinsurgency, together with counterdrug operations, had been the focus of LIC doctrine, it was now subsumed within the wider OOTW category together with an array of other types of operations. The 1993 issue of *FM 100-5* dealt very briefly with insurgencies and counterinsurgencies, as did the 2001 edition of the same document, *FM 3-0*.[31]

The substance of Army COIN doctrine remained relatively unchanged during the 1991–2001 period. The 1992 *FM 7-98*, *Operations in a Low-Intensity Conflict*, which remained in force until 2003, focused on the Maoist "people's war" type of insurgency and prescribed the application of AirLand Battle principles in LIC. The 1993 issue of *FM 100-5* cited the El Salvador COIN model and emphasized the US Army's role in supporting the Salvadorian government forces. Other doctrinal publications repeated the perceived utility of providing the people in a contested country with material goods, thus building popular legitimacy and undermining the insurgents. The 2001 *FM 3-0* referred to Vietnam in a way that clearly expressed reluctance to, if not outright rejection of, Army involvement in combat for COIN purposes.[32]

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30 On the overall direction of Army transformation in the 1990s, see, for example, Adams, *The Army After Next*, chapters 3–4. On the Army's development of doctrine for operations outside the big war paradigm in the 1991–2001 period, see James W. Reed, "Should Deterrence Fail. War Termination in Campaign Planning," *Parameters*, vol. XXIII, no. 2 (1993) [Online 22 June 2007]; James T. Quinlivan, "Force Requirements in Stability Operations," *Parameters*, vol. XXV, no. 4 (1995) [online 22 June 2007]; David Fastabend, "The Categorization of Conflict," *Parameters*, vol. XXVII, no. 2 (1997) [online 22 June 2007]; John L. Romjue, *American Army Doctrine for the Post-Cold War* (Honolulu, HI: University Press of the Pacific, 1997), pp. 47, 52, 53, 115, 120, 126–127, and 151; Cassidy, *Peacekeeping in the Abyss*, pp. 132, 135, 139–144, 215–224, and 235; Adams, *The Army After Next*, pp. 26–27 and 35–36; Blackwell, "Professionalism and Army Doctrine," pp. 335 and 339; Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror*, footnote 43, p.171; Kagan, *Finding the Target*, pp. 160, 167–168, and 205; and Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation from Vietnam to Iraq*, pp. 150–156, 158, and 163.

31 Crane, *Avoiding Vietnam*, pp. 12–14. The denomination 3-0, rather than the traditional 100-5, reflected an administrative change in the categorization of Army doctrinal publications.

32 Metz, *Counterinsurgency*, p. 22; and Crane, *Avoiding Vietnam*, pp. 13–14.

Another notable feature of *FM 3-0* was that it used the term *stability operations*, referring to efforts at maintaining or establishing basic political order and protecting the physical security of a population. This concept had been absent from Army doctrine since the end of the 1960s counterinsurgency era but now resurfaced.[33] The reintroduction of the term stability operations did not, however, amount to a comprehensive doctrinal interest in COIN.

It has been argued that Army COIN doctrine, crafted to defeat insurgencies similar to those in Vietnam and El Salvador, was inadequate for dealing with interventions in the post-Cold War environment, such as the one in Somalia. Here, President Clinton had inherited from the George H.W. Bush Administration a commitment to a UN peacekeeping and humanitarian operation. However, the character of the operation soon changed and US forces – including Army Rangers – became involved in heavy fighting in Mogadishu, during which they suffered a number of casualties. This prompted the withdrawal of US forces from Somalia, which was completed in 1994. The situation in Somalia can be characterized as an insurgency whose characteristics differed from those of the Cold War. The US Army embarked on the Somalian intervention without relevant specific doctrinal guidance, since the existing LIC manuals dealt with a rather limited set of operations, i.e. Cold War-type counterinsurgency and counterdrug operations. The requirements of interventions such as that in Somalia were quite different and the doctrinal void arguably contributed to the disastrous outcome of that operation.[34]

COIN DOCTRINE AT THE END OF "THE STRATEGIC PAUSE"

To sum up the doctrinal development of the 1990s, it can be said that the big war paradigm still dominated Army doctrine, and although "operations other than war" became more salient COIN was hardly considered more central than it had been during the latter part of the Cold War. Since the substance of Army COIN doctrine from the 1980s and 1990s did not change radically during the 1991–2001 period, doctrine still contained a mix of elements of the big war and small war approaches, including a general reluctance to being drawn into COIN operations, especially outside a rather narrowly defined military advisory role.

COIN had been a rather marginal concern of the Clinton Administration despite its generally interventionist policies. The prospects of COIN becoming

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33 See Quinlivan, "Force Requirements in Stability Operations"; Fastabend, "The Categorization of Conflict"; and Blackwell, "Professionalism and Army Doctrine," p. 335.

34 Metz, *Counterinsurgency*, pp. 18 and 22; Cassidy, *Peacekeeping in the Abyss*, chapter 5 (especially p. 165f); and Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation from Vietnam to Iraq*, pp. 151–158. See also Metz, *Learning from Iraq*, pp. 10–11 for a critical analysis of the El Salvador model which was the basis of much of COIN doctrine in the 1990s.

a centerpiece of US policy did not seem to be greater under Clinton's successor. In his 2000 election campaign the Republican candidate George W. Bush criticized the Clinton Administration's approach to military action. In one of his speeches Bush cited the lessons of Vietnam and said that "When America uses force in the world, the cause must be just, the goal must be clear, and the victory must be overwhelming." This was a recurring theme in the campaign: if Bush were elected president he would return to the ostensibly more judicious use of military force practiced by his father's administration. By implication this would entail the reaffirmation of the Weinberger-Powell framework. Bush argued that the armed forces should be geared toward deterring and winning wars and dismissed operations outside the big war paradigm.[35]

"The Global War on Terror"

The period after 9/11 has witnessed the most dramatic changes in US approaches to COIN since Vietnam, both at the national level and in Army doctrine. At the national level three sub-phases can be distinguished. First, prior to 9/11 the Bush Administration stuck to its verbal rejection of using the military for operations that did not fit into the big war paradigm, but it did not act upon this rhetoric in any discernable way. Thereafter, the administration's grand strategy was activated in the wake of 9/11 and the wars against Afghanistan and Iraq were undertaken. Even during the first year or so of the Iraq conflict COIN was still a peripheral concern. Finally, beginning in 2004, the importance of stability and reconstruction operations was elevated and in 2006 COIN was also formally recognized as an integral component of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

The changes in Army doctrine immediately after 9/11 were not as dramatic as those at the national security policy level; the years 2001–03 saw a modest continuation of the OOTW/stability operations doctrinal trend that had began in the 1990s. A new phase began with the 2004 publication of a new COIN manual, *FMI 3-07.22*, which marked a rising importance of COIN in Army doctrine. This trend continued with the issuing of *FM 3-24* in 2006. Given the rather substantial differences between these two documents in terms of content, one could argue that *FM 3-24* marks the beginning of yet another phase in the evolution of Army COIN doctrine. In the following, the lines of development outlined above are accounted for in greater detail, beginning with the national security policy level.

35 See Bacevich, *American Empire*, pp. 203–204 and 207–209; Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, p. 319; Kagan, *Finding the Target*, pp. 264–267; Worley, *Shaping U.S. Military Forces*, p. 42; Metz, *Learning from Iraq*, pp. 14–15; and Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," pp. 129–130 (quotation on Vietnam from Boot).

During its first eight months the national security policies of the George W. Bush Administration, like those of its predecessor, were based on the notion of a strategic pause that would give America time to transform its military forces for future needs. Initially those needs were defined in much the same terms that Bush had outlined during his campaign, i.e. continuing and accelerating the technology-based transformational process. This was the mandate of Secretary of Defense (2001–06) Donald H. Rumsfeld, who vigorously took on the task. When it came to the actual use of force prior to 9/11 there was no substantial revision of the Clinton Administration's policies despite Bush's campaign rhetoric. The US did not withdraw from its peacekeeping commitments in the Balkans, and Saddam Hussein was still contained by sanctions and air power.[36]

But in the wake of the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 the Bush Administration revised its approach to the use of force. The vision of a "humble" foreign policy and a highly selective use of military force was replaced by the very different grand strategy captured in the Bush Doctrine. The administration declared that America was now waging a "Global War on Terrorism" and argued that the US faced a grave threat from "shadowy terrorist networks" and "rogue states." According to the doctrine these enemies were determined to acquire weapons of mass destruction and use them against the US. Since they were not susceptible to deterrence their plans must be actively thwarted, if necessary by the anticipatory use of military power. When US forces conducted such attacks they would also overthrow the hostile regime so as to make permanent the gains for American security; this was termed "regime change." In his 2002 State of the Union speech President Bush identified the three "rogue states" claimed to pose the greatest threat to US national security: Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, together forming an "Axis of Evil."[37]

The Bush Doctrine thus symbolized a substantial reorientation of the administration's grand strategy, but at least in the short term it did not have a cor-

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36   On the Bush administration's acceptance of the "strategic pause" concept, see Adams, *The Army After Next*, p. 105. On the Bush administration's rhetoric and policy regarding transformation, see Adams, *The Army After Next*, pp. 95–100 and 102–104; Kagan, *Finding the Target*, pp. 265–281; Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation From Vietnam to Iraq*, pp. 176–177; and Worley, *Shaping U.S. Military Forces*, pp. 49–50. On the Bush administration's use of force before 9/11, see Bacevich, *American Empire*, pp. 207–209.

37   On the key tenets of the Bush Doctrine, see, for example, Bacevich, *American Empire*, pp. 227–233; Elaine M. Bunn, "Preemptive Action: When, How, and to What Effect?," *Strategic Forum*, no. 200, July 2003; Lawrence Freedman, "Prevention, Not Preemption," in *Reshaping Rogue States: Preemption, Regime Change, and U.S. Policy Toward Iran, Iraq, and North Korea*, eds. Alexander J. T. Lennon and Camille Eiss, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004); and Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience,* pp. 83–87, 90–92, and 100.

responding effect on its overall defense transformation policies.[38] A few weeks after 9/11 Rumsfeld's Pentagon released the 2001 *Quadrennial Defense Review* (*QDR*) which was to guide US defense policy. Its prescriptions for the development of the armed forces did not differ significantly from previous statements by the Bush Administration: the goal was still to exploit the RMA by enhancing US capabilities for swift, decisive operations against a conventionally-organized enemy. Reflecting the emerging Bush Doctrine, *QDR* 2001 identified regime change as a military mission, but it scarcely addressed the potential implications in terms of stability and reconstruction operations once a hostile regime had been removed.

Afghanistan and Iraq became the first battlefields in the GWOT and a testing ground for the Bush Administration's concept of regime change. The administration held both operations up as models for future warfare: the US had rapidly toppled the Taliban and Saddam Hussein by using small, agile, networked ground forces operating in synergy with air power. However, overthrowing these hostile regimes turned out to be the least difficult part, and problems of a different nature soon ensued as US forces faced a protracted state of turmoil in Afghanistan and Iraq. In both cases the Bush Administration had severely underestimated the difficulties associated with the transition from a power vacuum to stability, not to mention the transition from dictatorship to democracy.

In the face of continuing difficulties in Afghanistan and Iraq the Bush Administration gradually changed its transformation policies and its overall approach to the use of military power, beginning in 2003. A number of Department of Defense directives issued in 2004–05 decreed that stability and reconstruction operations were henceforth to be assigned the same priority as major combat operations in the activities of the armed forces. The 2004 *National Military Strategy,* the 2005 *National Defense Strategy*, the 2006 *National Security Strategy*, and the 2006 *QDR* increasingly addressed post-conflict operations and irregular warfare. As part of its vision for the development of joint ground forces the *QDR* stated: "Future warriors will be as proficient in irregular operations, including counterinsurgency and stabilization operations, as they are today in high-intensity combat." This change of policy at the national level was accom-

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38   On these policies up to and including the initial post-conflict phase in Iraq, see, for example, Stephen D. Biddle, *Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2002); Jeffrey Record, *Dark Victory. America's Second War Against Iraq* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2004), pp. 97–105 and 119; Adams, *The Army After Next*, chapters 6–8, especially pp. 109–110, 112, 117, 121–122, 125–126, 134–140, 149f, 158f, 177, and 179; Kagan, *Finding the Target*, pp. 283 and 285–286, chapter 8 (especially pp. 297–299, 305ff, and 310–322), and chapter 9; Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation From Vietnam to Iraq*, pp. 178–184; Worley, *Shaping U.S. Military Forces*, pp. 49–50; and Metz, *Learning from Iraq*, pp. 15–17.

panied by changes in the organization, force structure, etc., of the services.[39] This was certainly true for the Army. It should also be noted that among the military services, the Army has been assigned the primary responsibility for stability operations.[40]

THE REVIVAL OF COIN

Part of the Army's COIN-related efforts was the development of new doctrine. The development of stability operations doctrine continued; in February 2003 *FM 3-07*, *Stability and Support Operations*, was published. The manual superseded a number of 1990s doctrines dealing with what used to be called OOTW. In accordance with the terminological changes made in the 2001 edition of *FM 3-0*, *Operations* the new *FM 3-07* replaced the term OOTW with SASO, for Stability and Support Operations. SASO included those operations that had formerly been part of the OOTW concept, i.e. peace operations, counterdrug operations, etc. One form of SASO was Foreign Internal Defense (FID), and counterinsurgency was identified as one type of FID operation. It was thus a sub-sub-category of a larger set of operations, and the 2003 SASO doctrine's treatment of COIN was rather meagre.[41]

An important step in the development of COIN doctrine was taken in October 2004 with the publication of *FMI* (*Field Manual, Interim*) *3-07.22*, *Counterinsurgency Operations*. As mentioned previously this was the first official COIN field manual to be published by the US Army since 1966. In *FM 3-07* COIN was embedded in the broader categories of SASO and FID and was discussed on a few pages out of some 230 in total. By contrast, the 2004 manual was exclusively devoted to COIN and comprised 182 pages. Army COIN doctrine expanded further with the 2006 *FM 3-24*, a 282-page document.[42] In

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39   See, for example, Adams, *The Army After Next*, pp. 204 and 227; Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror*, pp. 121–122; Michael R. Melillo, "Outfitting a Big-War Military with Small-War Capabilities," *Parameters*, vol. XXXVI, no. 3 (2006), pp. 28–29; and Metz, *Learning from Iraq*, pp. 58–67. For the quotation, see Rumsfeld, *QDR* 2006, p. 42. (According to Metz, *Learning from Iraq*, p. 62, *QDR* 2006 did not use the words insurgency or counterinsurgency. However, one or both of these words appear on pp. 4, 19, 23, 36, 38, 42, 83, 90, and 91.)

40   On the Army's special role, see, for example, Adams, *The Army After Next*, p. 204; Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror*, p. 35; and Nadia Schadlow, Charles Barry and Richard Laquement, "A Return to the Army's Roots: Governance, Stabilization, and Reconstruction," in *The Future of the Army Profession*, eds. Snider and Matthews, pp. 260 and 267.

41   Cassidy, *Peacekeeping in the Abyss*, p. 248; Michael J. McNerney, "Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?," *Parameters*, vol. XXXV, no. 4 (2005), p. 33; and Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-07*, *Stability Operations and Support Operations* (Washington, DC, 2003), chapter 3.

42   See Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-07*, pp. 3-3–3-6; Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.22*; and Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*. For an analysis of *FMI 3-07.22*, which is primarily focused on the tactical level, see Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," pp. 131–132.

sum, the 2004 and 2006 COIN doctrines represent the dramatically increasing salience of COIN operations in Army doctrine.

When compared to the 2003 and 2004 doctrines, it is clear that *FM 3-24* also represents a turning point in Army COIN doctrine from a qualitative perspective. The new doctrine has been described as an indication of a "major cultural shift in the military" and it has been stated that while the 2004 manual "relied heavily on Vietnam-style insurgency as a conceptual template, the revised version released in December 2006 pressed beyond this, seeking to incorporate the changes insurgency has undergone since the Cold War."[43] This analysis of the two documents can be further elaborated. Using the analytical framework employed in this paper to compare the contents of the 2003, 2004, and 2006 doctrines, one could argue that *FM 3-24* marks a rather clear-cut acceptance of the small war approach to COIN. Since *FM 3-07* and *FMI 3-07.22* contain a mix of big war and small war elements, they are similar to previous post-Vietnam COIN doctrines. However, *FMI 3-07.22* represents a considerable shift toward the small war approach. The manual could thus be described as a bridge between, on the one hand, the dominating trends in Army COIN doctrine since the Vietnam War and, on the other hand, the full acceptance of the small war approach as embodied by *FM 3-24*.

The doctrinal evolution may be briefly summarized as follows. Regarding the *character of insurgency*, *FM 3-24* shares to some extent the focus on Maoist "people's war" expressed in the 2003 and 2004 doctrines, but it takes many other possible forms of insurgency into account as well. Regarding the *basis for COIN strategy*, all three documents declare the primacy of political factors and the key role of legitimacy. However, *FM 3-24* expands on these themes and also differs from the two other doctrines by emphasizing the need for adaptation, learning and flexibility. In terms of the *degree of Army involvement*, *FM 3-24* accepts and advocates a potentially much wider and deeper degree of involvement than its forerunners. All of the doctrines advocate the same basic approach to the *use of force*, i.e. the principle of measured force, but *FM 3-24* expands on the rationale underpinning the principle and elaborates on its practical implications. Finally, addressing the *time frame*, it can be stated that while the 2003 and 2004 doctrines tend to view Army engagement in COIN operations as a short-term undertaking, *FM 3-24* clearly embraces the view that a long-term commitment is necessary.

43   Melillo, "Outfitting a Big-War Military with Small-War Capabilities," p. 29; and Metz, *Learning from Iraq*, p. 65.

THE CHARACTER OF INSURGENCY

Regarding the *character of insurgency*, *FM 3-07* and *FMI 3-07.22* share a similar outlook as their main model of insurgency is the Maoist "people's war," which begins with committed cadres mobilizing popular support, continues with guerrilla warfare, and concludes with conventional operations aimed at completing the insurgents' seizure of power. (However, the latter document also identifies another model, "armed action," distinct from Mao's popular mobilization).[44] *FM 3-24* represents an expanded and more elaborate understanding of the character of insurgency. It stresses the manifold and ever-changing forms of insurgency and the historical basis for the analysis has widened considerably beyond the Chinese, Vietnamese, and El Salvador models. For example, *FM 3-24* states the following:

> Insurgency has taken many forms over time. Past insurgencies include struggles for independence against colonial powers, the rising up of ethnic or religious groups against their rivals, and resistance to foreign invaders. Students and practitioners of COIN must begin to understand the specific circumstances of their particular situation. The history of this form of warfare shows how varied and adaptive it can be, and why students must understand that they cannot focus on countering just one insurgent approach. This is particularly true when addressing a continually complex, changing situation like that of Iraq in 2006.[45]

The doctrine further specifies the character of insurgency in more recent times thus:

> While some Cold War insurgencies persisted after the Soviet Union's collapse, many new ones appeared. These new insurgencies typically emerged from civil wars or the collapse of states no longer propped up by Cold War rivalries. Power vacuums breed insurgencies. Similar conditions exist when regimes are changed

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44   See Metz and Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century*, pp. 17–18 and 20; Christopher M. Ford, "Speak No Evil: Targeting a Population's Neutrality to Defeat an Insurgency," *Parameters*, vol. XXXV, no. 2 (2005), pp. 57 and 61; Michael F. Morris, "Al-Qa´ida as Insurgency: The Quest for Islamic Revolution," in *Strategic Challenges for Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror*, ed. Williamson Murray (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2006), p. 285. See also Ken Tovo, "From the Ashes of the Phoenix: Lessons for Contemporary Counterinsurgency Operations," in *Strategic Challenges for Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror*, ed. Murray, pp. 25 and 26, who identifies the Maoist model's appearance in lower-level Army doctrine.

45   Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, 1-15, p. 1-3. Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," p. 136, also points out that the development of Army COIN doctrine has been accompanied by a "broad expansion of historical research and analysis on subjects relating to insurgency, nation-building and stability operations since 2003."

by force or circumstances. Recently, ideologies based on extremist forms of religious or ethnic identities have replaced ideologies based on secular revolutionary ideals. These new forms of old, strongly held beliefs define the identities of the most dangerous combatants in these new internal wars. These conflicts resemble the wars of religion in Europe before and after the Reformation of the 16th century. People have replaced non-functioning national identities with traditional sources of unity and identity.[46]

The doctrine also addresses differences and similarities between various insurgencies: "Each insurgency is unique, although there are often similarities among them. In all cases, insurgents aim to force political change; any military action is secondary and subordinate, a means to an end. Few insurgencies fit neatly into any rigid classification." The doctrine then goes on to describe insurgent approaches. While the 2003 and 2004 manuals centred on one type, *FM 3-24* identifies seven insurgent approaches: conspiratorial, military-focused, urban, protracted popular war, identity-focused, and composite and coalition. Even so, when the various approaches are discussed, protracted popular war receives the most attention and Mao's theory of protracted war and the Vietnamese example are discussed at some length. These proportions may be motivated by the assessment that protracted popular war is one of the approaches most difficult to counter: "Protracted conflicts favour insurgents, and no approach makes better use of that asymmetry than the protracted popular war." It is also stated that "some Al Qaeda leaders suggest [using this approach] in their writings today." Furthermore, according to the doctrine, many contemporary insurgent movements apply parts of this approach.[47]

THE BASIS OF COIN STRATEGY

The three documents share certain fundamental assumptions in their overall approach to COIN. One is that popular legitimacy is of crucial importance in COIN. Here, *FM 3-24* differs from the 2003 and 2004 manuals primarily in its more detailed treatment of the subject. It also shares the view that Army efforts must be integrated into a political-military strategy. An important difference between *FM 3-24* and the other documents, however, is that the new doctrine takes a less categorical view of appropriate COIN measures. While the 2003 and 2004 doctrines are rather straightforward in their prescriptions, *FM 3-24* frequently qualifies its prescriptions by stressing that actions must be adapted to rapidly shifting circumstances, that counterinsurgents must be innovative, etc.

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46 Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, 1-21, p. 1-4. See also Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," p. 133.
47 Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, pp. 1-5–1-8. Of the four pages, two are devoted to analyzing "protracted popular war." Quotations from 1-24, p. 1-5; and 1-30, p. 1-6.

The 2003 and 2004 doctrines both stress the paramount importance of popular legitimacy in determining the outcome of the conflict. For example, *FM 3-07* states: "Success in counterinsurgency goes to the party that achieves the greater popular support." It also stresses that support will go to the party that can offer the population the best conditions in terms of "political, social, and economic development." According to *FM 3-07*, security operations performed by military and police forces "provide the necessary security environment in which development can occur." *FMI 3-07.22* states that COIN operations encompass all instruments of national power and emphasizes the need for coordination between the military and diplomatic efforts.[48]

FM 3-24 stresses that there is no single model of insurgency and emphasizes the need for flexibility on the part of the counterinsurgents. The doctrine states that correctly understanding the approach chosen by the insurgents is "essential to developing effective programs that attack the insurgency's root causes."[49] In its analysis of "protracted popular war," the form of insurgency to which the doctrine devotes the most space, it says:

> Insurgents may use guerrilla tactics in one province while executing terrorist attacks and an urban approach in another. There may be differences in political activities between villages in the same province. The result is […] a shifting "mosaic war" that is difficult for the counterinsurgents to envision as a coherent whole. In such situations, an effective COIN strategy must be multifaceted and flexible.[50]

The doctrine also identifies another contemporary insurgent *modus operandi* which is even more challenging for the counterinsurgents: "composite approaches and coalitions":

> As occurred in Iraq, contemporary insurgents may use different approaches at different times, applying tactics that take best advantage of circumstances. Insurgents may also apply a composite approach that includes tactics drawn from any or all of the other approaches. In addition – and as in Iraq at present – different insurgent forces using different approaches may form loose coalitions when it serves their interests; however, these same movements may fight

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48   See Metz and Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century*, pp. 17–18 and 20; Ford, "Speak No Evil," pp. 52, 57 and 61; Gerald E. Galloway, "Counterinsurgency: Relearning How to Think" (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2005), pp. 6 and 7–8; and Morris, "Al-Qaʿida as Insurgency," pp. 288–289. The full quote of the relevant passage in *FM 3-07* can be found in Metz and Millen, p. 17; parts are also quoted in Ford, pp. 52 and 57.

49   Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, 1-25, p. 1-5.

50   Ibid., 1-37, p. 1-8.

among themselves, even while engaging counterinsurgents. […] This reality further complicates both the mosaic that counterinsurgents must understand and the operations necessary for victory.[51]

These thoughts are also expressed in one of the doctrine's "paradoxes of counterinsurgency operations": "If a Tactic Works this Week, It Might Not Work Next Week; If It Works in this Province, It Might Not Work in the Next." This idea is elaborated on in the following way:

> Competent insurgents are adaptive. […] Indeed, the more effective a COIN tactic is, the faster it may become out of date because insurgents have a greater need to counter it. Effective leaders at all levels avoid complacency and are at least as adaptive as their enemies. There is no "silver bullet" set of COIN procedures. Constantly developing new practices is essential.[52]

Nevertheless, despite this emphasis on the multifaceted nature of the problem and the need for flexibility, adaptation, and learning, the doctrine states that there are commonalities between all insurgencies. For example, it says: "All insurgencies are different; however, broad historical trends underlie the factors motivating insurgents. Most insurgencies follow a similar course of development."[53] The doctrine also identifies a number of COIN principles "derived from past insurgencies," as well as "contemporary imperatives," "paradoxes of COIN operations," and "successful and unsuccessful COIN practices." But the doctrine cautions against a simplistic reading or understanding of the principles; they "provide some guideposts for forces engaged in COIN operations. However, COIN operations are complicated, and even following the principles and imperatives does not guarantee success. […] The following principles and imperatives are presented in the belief that understanding them helps illuminate the challenges inherent in defeating an insurgency."[54] The emphasis on avoiding rigidity is clearly expressed in another passage, dealing with possible COIN approaches:

> There are many approaches to achieving success in a COIN effort. The components of each approach are not mutually exclusive. Several are shared by multiple approaches. The approaches described below are not the only choices available and are neither discrete nor exclusive. They may be combined, depending on the environment and the available resources. The following methods and

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51 Ibid., 1-39, p. 1-8.
52 Ibid., 1-155, p. 1-28.
53 Ibid., p. ix.
54 Ibid., pp. 1-20–1-29; quotation on p. 1-20.

their components have proven effective. However, they must be adapted to the demands of the local environment.[55]

To some extent, the remedies prescribed by *FM 3-24* are similar to those presented in the 2003 and 2004 doctrines, remedies that are essentially designed to defeat a people's war type insurgency. Thomas R. Mockaitis has noted that *FM 3-24* "emphasizes the primacy of a political as opposed to a military solution to the conflict and stresses unity of effort in combating the insurgents." Mockaitis also mentions that the new manual identifies legitimacy as a crucial aspect of COIN and argues that political, social, and economic development is necessary to maintain legitimacy.[56] In other words, *FM 3-24* shares the same basic approach to COIN as the 2003 and 2004 doctrines. However, it offers a considerably deeper treatment of these common themes. This deepening is part of the more elaborate understanding of COIN represented by *FM 3-24* and an account of its basic ideas are given in the following.

The following quote from the chapter "Executing Counterinsurgency Operations" neatly summarizes some of the manual's key points:

> Counterinsurgency (COIN) operations require synchronized application of military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions. Successful counterinsurgents support or develop local institutions with legitimacy and the ability to provide basic services, economic opportunity, public order, and security. The political issues at stake are often rooted in culture, ideology, societal tensions, and injustice. As such, they defy non-violent solutions. Military forces can compel obedience and secure areas; however, they cannot by themselves achieve the political settlement needed to resolve the situation. Successful COIN efforts include civilian agencies, U.S. military forces, and multinational forces. These efforts purposefully attack the basis for the insurgency rather than just its fighters and comprehensively address the host nation's core problems. Host-nation (HN) leaders must be purposefully engaged in this effort and ultimately must take lead responsibility for it.[57]

The importance of creating popular legitimacy is stressed throughout the document. For example, in chapter 1 it is stated that "The primary objective of any COIN operation is to foster development of effective governance by a legitimate government." At the end of the chapter the doctrine says, "At its core, COIN is a struggle for the population's support. The protection, welfare, and support

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55   Ibid., 5-50, p. 5-18.
56   Mockaitis, *The Iraq War*, pp. 50 and 53–54 (quotation on p. 50).
57   Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, 5-1, p. 5-1. See also Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," pp. 132–133.

of the people are vital to success." And, in the same vein: "Both insurgents and counterinsurgents are fighting for the support of the populace."[58]

A closely related, pervading theme is the paramount role of political factors, including their implications for the Army's role in the overall COIN effort and how they should affect military operations. Here, we also find similarities with the 2003 and 2004 doctrines. At the beginning of the document, it is stated that "the Armed Forces cannot succeed in COIN alone." The limits of the military instrument are identified; for example, the doctrine says, "Military action can address the symptoms of a loss of legitimacy. In some cases, it can eliminate substantial numbers of insurgents. However, success in the form of a durable peace requires restoring legitimacy, which, in turn, requires the use of all instruments of national power." The doctrine stresses the need for balancing military and non-military measures and programs and asserts that "Military efforts are necessary and important to counterinsurgency (COIN) efforts, but they are only effective when integrated into a comprehensive strategy employing all the instruments of national power."[59]

At this general level, then, *FM 3-24* is similar to its 2003 and 2004 forerunners in its overall approach to legitimacy as a crucial component of COIN and the need for an integrated civil-military strategy for achieving it. However, *FM 3-24* advocates a much more direct and comprehensive Army role in the framework of an overarching interagency strategy. This brings us to the next aspect.

THE DEGREE OF ARMY INVOLVEMENT

FM 3-24 accepts and advocates a potentially much wider and deeper degree of Army involvement than its precursors. This change has three main components: first, the diffusion of responsibility for COIN; second, the attitude toward participation in combat operations; and thirdly, the attitude toward participation in non-combat operations.

Concerning the diffusion of responsibility for COIN, *FM 3-24* primarily differs from the 2004 *FMI 3-07.22* by formalizing something that is implicit in the previous doctrine. To be more specific, both doctrines signal that COIN is no longer the preserve of Army Special Operations Forces. *FMI 3-07.22* notes that since Vietnam, COIN tasks have "largely fallen on SOF [...]"although conventional forces have also been affected.[60] It does not explicitly state that this division of labor should be changed, but the manual's status as Army doctrine, rather than just Army Special Operations Forces doctrine, sufficiently demon-

58   Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, 1-113, p. 1-21; 1-159 and 1-160, p. 1-28.
59   Ibid., 1-4, p. 1-1; 1-113, p. 1-21; 1-120, p. 1-22; 2-1, p. 2-1; and 2-5, p. 2-2.
60   Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.22*, p. vi.

strates that this doctrinal barrier was no longer considered relevant. *FM 3-24* explicitly spells out this change as it discusses training of HN forces:

> For Soldiers and Marines, the mission of developing HN security forces goes beyond a task assigned to a few specialists. The scope and scale of training programs today and the scale of programs likely to be required in the future have grown. While FID has been traditionally the primary responsibility of the special operations forces (SOF), training foreign forces is now a core competency of regular and reserve units of all Services.[61]

The second component in the move toward a doctrinal sanction of a substantially greater Army involvement in COIN has to do with the participation in combat operations. The 2003, 2004, and 2006 doctrines all attach great importance to the training of indigenous forces and do not describe US direct involvement in combat operations as a preferred or primary option. Instead, the first priority should be to train HN forces, the ultimate goal being that they should eventually be capable of maintaining order and security in their country, a condition which will in turn allow US forces to withdraw. (This focus on training indigenous forces is also to be found in the 2006 *QDR*, making it Department of Defense policy.)[62] However, the 2006 doctrine goes considerably farther than its precursors in sanctioning a direct US combat role.

   FM 3-07 of 2003 contains a very restrictive passage dealing with the involvement in combat. A somewhat watered-down version of this passage appears in *FMI 3-07.22*, which states that "US forces may be required to engage in combat, either unilaterally or with multinational or HN forces." The 2004 doctrine continues:

> As quickly as possible, though, HN military and police must assume the primary combat role. A long-term US combat role may undermine the legitimacy of the HN government and risks converting the conflict into a US-only war. [...] On the occasion when the threat to US interests is great and indirect means have proven

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61   Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, 6-12, p. 6-3. See also 2-20, p. 2-5. For further discussion, see Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," p. 135. On the role of the Navy and Air Force in training foreign forces, see *FM 3-24*, 2-19, p. 2-5; and 6-15, pp. 6-3–6-4.

62   On the 2003 and 2004 doctrines' position, see Metz and Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century*, pp. 18 and 20; Robert M. Cassidy, "The Long Small War: Indigenous Forces for Counterinsurgency," *Parameters*, vol. XXXVI, no. 2 (2006), p. 48; and Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror*, pp. 127–128. The link to *QDR* 2006 is mentioned in Cassidy's *Parameters* article. For the 2006 doctrine's position, see Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, e.g., 1-147, p. 1-16; 1-154, p. 1-27; 2-22, p. 2-5–2-6; 5-40, p. 5-13; 6-6, p. 6-2; 6-29, p. 6-6; and 6-107, p. 6-22; and Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," p. 133.

insufficient, preemptive US combat operations may be required. Direct use of US combat forces in counterinsurgency remains a policy option for the President, and Army forces provide it when required. […] US forces may conduct offensive operations to disrupt and destroy insurgent combat formations.[63]

Another passage in *FMI 3-07.22* seems to qualify these rather restrictive prescriptions slightly:

> To the extent the HN has its basic institutions and security forces intact, the burden upon US and multinational forces and resources is lessened. To the extent the HN is lacking basic institutions and functions, the burden upon the US and multinational forces is increased. *In the extreme*, rather than building upon what is, the US and other nations will find themselves creating elements (such as local forces and government institutions) of the society they have been sent to assist. Military forces thus become involved in nation building while simultaneously attempting to defeat an insurgency.[64]

The 2004 doctrine thus accepts the prospect of doing most of the fighting in an initial phase, but only in "extreme" cases, which is concurrent with its restrictive view on US forces participating in combat. *FM 3-24* contains a number of statements pertaining to the same issues. Taken together, these new statements amount to a lowering of the threshold for an extensive and possibly sustained US combat role. For example, at one point *FM 3-24* states, "COIN efforts *may* require Soldiers and Marines to create the initial secure environment for the populace." Similarly, it asserts that "*In some cases*, U.S. forces might be actively engaged in fighting insurgents while simultaneously helping the host nation build its own security forces." This notion is taken a step further in the following section:

> When countering an insurgency during the Cold War, the United States normally focused on increasing a threatened but friendly government's ability to defend itself and on encouraging political and economic reforms to undercut support for the insurgency. Today, when countering an insurgency growing from state collapse or failure, counterinsurgents *often* face a more daunting task: helping

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63   Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.22*, 2-16 and 2-17, p. 2-3; and
      Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-07*, 3-23 and 3-25, p. 3-7. See also
      Metz and Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century*, p. 18.
64   Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.22*, 1-40, p. 1-10. My italics.

friendly forces reestablish political order and legitimacy where these conditions may no longer exist.[65]

In sum, while the 2004 doctrine describes US forces taking the main responsibility for creating basic stability and security as an extreme scenario, the new doctrine normalizes this prospect and at one point even states that it will occur frequently. In this context it should also be remembered that the statements in question are not counterbalanced by anything resembling the 2004 doctrine's cautions regarding escalation and the morphing of a COIN engagement into a "US-only war."

Further illustrating this line of development the new doctrine asserts that the "focus of COIN operations *generally* progresses through three indistinct stages that can be envisioned with a medical analogy […]" The doctrine terms the first of these stages "stop the bleeding" and it is likened to "first aid for the patient." More specifically, "The goal is to protect the population, break the insurgents' initiative and momentum, and set the condition for further engagement. Limited offensive operations may be undertaken, but are complemented by stability operations focused on civil security." While this passage uses the general expression "counterinsurgents" and does not explicitly say that these actions should be performed by US forces, this meaning could be inferred from the description of the following two stages. (Stages two and three are termed "Inpatient care – recovery" and "Outpatient care – movement to self-sufficiency" respectively.) The creation of competent HN forces is mentioned as part of the second stage and the doctrine does not exclude direct US involvement in operations even in the final stage, albeit on a smaller scale.[66] As this three-stage model is described as a general pattern for US involvement in COIN operations, the conclusion seems to be justified that direct Army combat operations during the initial phase is seen as the rule, rather than the exception.

As stated above, the new doctrine also sanctions a potentially much broader involvement in the civilian-oriented tasks associated with nation-building. As noted previously, the 2004 doctrine describes the involvement of US forces in nation-building – i.e. efforts at establishing basic civilian institutions, rebuilding infrastructure, etc. – as an extreme possibility. The category corresponding most closely to nation-building in *FMI 3-07.22* seems to be "Civil-Military Operations," and the doctrine's prescriptions for their conduct is wholly centred on such matters as law enforcement, population control, and helping establish a

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65   Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, , 5-89, p. 5-25; 6-1, p. 6-1; and 1-21, p. 1-4. All italics are mine. See also 1-147, p. 1-26: "the sooner the main effort can transition to HN institutions, *without unacceptable degradation*, the better." (My emphasis.) This qualifier implies that as long as HN institutions, including security forces, are not capable of maintaining order, this will be the responsibility of US forces.

66   See Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, 5-3–5-6, p. 5-2. My italics.

judicial system.[67] While this is a deviation from strictly military tasks (with some exception for those of the military police), they still pertain to core security functions, rather than more purely non-violent aspects of society.

Like the 2004 doctrine, the new doctrine does not consider civilian tasks the primary responsibility of US forces. However, it does sanction a much broader involvement in "civilian" operations. For example, *FM 3-24* states that "An essential COIN task for military forces is fighting insurgents; however, these forces can and should use their capabilities to meet the local populace's fundamental needs as well."[68] The doctrine expresses a rather pragmatic view regarding the division of labor between military and civilian agencies. For example, it states:

> Political, social and economic programs are most commonly and appropriately associated with civilian organizations and expertise; however, effective implementation of these programs is more important than who performs the tasks. If adequate civilian capacity is not available, military forces fill the gap.[69]

Furthermore, it is stated that "Most valuable to long-term success in winning the support of the populace are the contributions land forces can make by conducting stability operations." These operations, according to the doctrine, aim to "maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief […]."[70]

The doctrine clearly spells out its views on the civilian-military division of labor. It starts by saying that "In COIN it is always preferred for civilians to perform civilian tasks." But, for a number of reasons – including the limited capability of many civilian agencies for rapid overseas deployment and the level of violence in the area of operations – "the preferred or ideal division of labor is *frequently* unattainable." In such a situation, the Army may take over all kinds of necessary civilian functions; however, this should only be "a temporary measure, one taken to address urgent circumstances."[71]

But another passage opens up for a more long-term commitment. After noting that the military may have to play a leading role in developing services and infrastructure, the doctrine states that "COIN military planning includes preparing to perform these tasks for an extended period." The services discussed include a broad range of categories: police and fire, water, electricity, schools,

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67   See Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.22*, pp. 3-2–3-7.
68   Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, 2-4, p. 2-1.
69   Ibid., 2-5, p. 2-2. See also 2-13, p. 2-3.
70   Ibid., 2-22, p. 2-5.
71   Ibid., 2-41–2-42, p. 2-9. My italics. See also 5-42, p. 5-14.

transportation network, medical, and sanitation (trash and sewage).[72] It is also noted that in the absence of a functioning HN government, US efforts "may involve establishing and maintaining a military government or a civil administration while creating and organizing a HN capability to govern."[73] In sum, then, the new doctrine sanctions, and to some extent advocates, a much more comprehensive type of involvement for Army forces in COIN operations. This pertains to combat as well as non-combat operations.

THE USE OF FORCE

As mentioned previously, *FM 3-24* adopts the principle of *measured force* as a guideline for the conduct of both US and indigenous forces. This does not itself represent a major difference between the new doctrine and its 2004 forerunner, but *FM 3-24* seems to embrace the principle more wholeheartedly; it also expands on the motivations for adopting the principle and deepens the discussion of its practical application.[74]

At a general level *FM 3-24* establishes that "Durable policy success requires balancing the measured use of force with an emphasis on non-military programs." It also notes that the use of force is often necessary to protect the populace, but: "Indeed, excessive use of military force can frequently undermine policy objectives at the expense of achieving the overarching political goals that define success. This dilemma places tremendous importance on the measured application of force."[75]

The principle of measured force is to be all-pervasive: "In all applications of combat power, commanders must first ensure that likely costs do not outweigh or undermine other more important COIN efforts."[76] In another passage the doctrine gives an example of such calculations: "An operation that kills five insurgents is counterproductive if collateral damage leads to the recruitment of fifty more insurgents."[77] The following prescriptions, ending with a phrasing that is clearly reminiscent of one found in the Marine Corps 1940 *Small Wars Manual*, are also indicative of *FM 3-24*'s approach to the use of force:

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72   Ibid., 5-42, p. 5-14; and figure 5-4, p. 5-15.
73   Ibid., *FM 3-24*, 5-54, p. 5-15.
74   For the 2003 and 2004 doctrines' position on the use of measured force, see Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-07*, 3-12, p. 3-4; and 3-30, p. 3-8; and Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.22*, pp. 2-13–2-15; p. 3-9 (the third "bullet" from the bottom of the table); and 3-40, p. 3-10. In addition to the following analysis, see Mockaitis, *The Iraq War*, p. 51; and Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, 1-150–1-153 , p. 1-27; and 1-156, p. 1-28. On measured force as a principle for the conduct of HN forces, see, e.g., 1-141–1-143, p. 1-25; and 5-69, p. 5-20.
75   Ibid., 2-3–2-5, pp. 2-1–2-2.
76   Ibid., 2-21, p. 2-5.
77   Ibid., 1-141, p. 1-25. See also 1-142.

Insurgents use unlawful violence to weaken the HN government, intimidate people into passive or active support, and murder those who oppose the insurgency. Measured combat operations are always required to address insurgents who cannot be co-opted into operation inside the rule of the law. These operations may sometimes require overwhelming force and the killing of fanatic insurgents. However, COIN is "war amongst the people." Combat operations must therefore be executed with an appropriate level of restraint to minimize or avoid injuring innocent people. Not only is there a moral basis for the use of restraint or measured force; there are practical reasons as well. Needlessly harming innocents can turn the populace against the COIN effort. Discriminating use of fires and calculated, disciplined response should characterize COIN operations. Kindness and compassion can often be as important as killing and capturing insurgents.[78]

This last sentence may be taken as a point of departure for illustrating a subtle but interesting difference between *FM 3-24* and the 2004 doctrine. If the emphasis on kindness and compassion epitomizes the acceptance of violence as a subordinate means in an essentially political struggle, *FMI 3-07.22* contains two passages that can perhaps be considered vestiges of the big war approach to COIN. The 2004 doctrine's discussion of rules of engagement (ROE) is generally pervaded by the principle of measured force. However, at one point, it is stated that the drawbacks of applying force excessively or indiscriminately must be weighed against another risk: "Insufficient use of force results in increased risks to US and multinational forces and perceived weaknesses that can jeopardize the mission by emboldening insurgents and undermining domestic popular support." This is directly followed by a sentence that potentially negates the primacy of political concerns:

Achieving the appropriate balance requires a thorough understanding of the nature and causes of the insurgency, the end state, and the military's role in a counterinsurgency operation. Nevertheless, US forces always retain the right to use necessary and proportional force for individual and unit self-defense in response to a hostile act or demonstrated hostile intent.[79]

Nothing comparable to these statements appears in *FM 3-24*, which unequivocally embraces the principle of measured force and seems to prefer to err on

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78   Ibid., 5-38, p. 5-12. The corresponding phrase in *Small Wars Manual* is, "In small wars, tolerance, sympathy, and kindness should be the keynote to our relationship with the mass of the population." See Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, p. 284.

79   Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.22*, 2-66, p. 2-13. See also 2-71, p. 2-14: "Finally, leaders must balance the safety of their Soldiers with the safety of civilians."

the side of caution when it comes to the application of the principle. While the divergences between the two doctrines' approaches to the use of force should not be overstated, the differences between the sentences analyzed above seem to demonstrate a subtle shift encompassing the full acceptance of the measured force principle and the politically grounded rationale underpinning it.

THE TIME FRAME

Finally, *FM 3-24* emphasizes that COIN is a long-term commitment. Here, it differs from the 2003 and 2004 doctrines. These previous doctrines do not discuss the time frame of US COIN commitments in principal terms, but from their emphasis on turning over responsibilities to HN forces as quickly as possibly one can infer a preference for short-term commitments.[80] The new doctrine asserts that "Insurgencies are protracted by nature. Thus, COIN operations always demand considerable expenditure of time and resources." While repeating that the HN government must bear the ultimate responsibility, *FM 3-24* argues that a long-term US role may be necessary for the successful outcome of a COIN effort. "The populace must have confidence in the staying power of both the counterinsurgents and the HN government. Insurgents and local populations often believe that a few casualties or a few years will cause the United States to abandon a COIN effort." This perception can be countered by "Constant reaffirmations of commitment, backed by deeds […]."

The doctrine goes on to identify the military and political requirements of a long-term COIN effort, one of them being "headquarters and support structures designed for long-term operations. […] Even in situations where the U.S. goal is reducing its military force levels as quickly as possible, some support for HN institutions usually remains for a long time." In this discussion, the doctrine also touches upon political conditions in the US:

> At the strategic level, gaining and maintaining U.S. public support for a protracted deployment is critical. Only the most senior military officers are involved in this process at all. It is properly a political activity. However, military leaders typically take care to ensure that their actions and statements are forthright. They also ensure that the conduct of operations neither makes it harder for elected leaders to maintain public support nor undermines public confidence.

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80   On the 2003 and 2004 doctrines' attitude to HN responsibility, see the section on "The Degree of Army Involvement" above. In section 2-2, p. 2-1, *FMI 3-07.22* claims that insurgencies "are protracted"; this leads to a recommendation for interagency coordination but no discussion corresponding to that in *FM 3-24* is to be found. Similarly, in section 2-3, the 2004 doctrine briefly notes that building HN capabilities may be costly and time-consuming. The following analysis of *FM 3-24*'s approach to long-term COIN commitments is primarily based on Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, 1-134–1-136, p. 1-24. See also Mockaitis, *The Iraq War*, p. 51.

The theme of a long-term commitment is echoed in the doctrine's treatment of the operational level. In the description of one of the COIN approaches, it is stated that "Clear-hold-build objectives require lots of resources and time. U.S. and HN commanders should prepare for a long-term effort." (*FMI 3-07.22* contains a very similar assessment of this type of operations, but unlike *FM 3-24* it does not extend the implications to the strategic or political levels.)[81]

Conclusion

As we have seen, *FM 3-24* represents an important step in the evolution of US Army COIN doctrine. First, it is a manifestation of a trend involving a dramatically increased doctrinal interest in COIN. Second, it differs from all other Army post-Vietnam COIN doctrines in the sense that it fully embraces the small war approach to COIN. In contrast, previous post-Vietnam COIN doctrines have contained a mix of big war and small war elements. In doctrinal terms, this is a profound change. Some of the same trends can be identified in the temporary COIN doctrine of 2004, but they are more clearly manifested in the 2006 doctrine. When compared to previous doctrines, *FM 3-24* demonstrates a more complex understanding of the character of insurgency and more fully embraces a political, as opposed to a military, basis for COIN strategy. It advocates a potentially broader and deeper degree of Army involvement in COIN. Furthermore, it wholeheartedly adopts the principle of measured force and views COIN as a long-term commitment.[82] This final section will place the new doctrine in a wider perspective by tentatively addressing some of the issues raised in the introductory section, i.e. its potential impact on current and future operations and its role in enhancing US military capabilities.

WILL IT WORK?

The most immediate concern regarding the doctrine, on the part of the Army as well as its political masters, is presumably and understandably whether it can help untangle the current imbroglios in Iraq and Afghanistan. As noted above, the doctrine itself identifies a number of strategic requirements necessary for a successful COIN campaign, such as sufficient time, money, and political support. Assuming that this assessment is correct, one might pose the question

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81 Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, 5-53, p. 5-18; and Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.22*, 3-60, p. 3-14.

82 Once again, the reader is reminded of the significance of the analytical framework underpinning these conclusions and of the fact that a different design might have led to a different result. However, it is reasonable to assume that the framework used is sufficient for demonstrating the overall tendencies of the doctrinal development identified in the paper; and as pointed out previously, Corum's analysis of other aspects of the new doctrine point in the same direction.

whether these conditions will be forthcoming. If not, the doctrine will not prove its potential in these trouble spots. On the other hand, given that the doctrine is sound, it may help to reduce the number of US casualties and ameliorate the situation on the ground in Iraq, even if it were to prove insufficient to achieve strategic success.

In order to further US goals in Afghanistan and Iraq, the doctrine must also be based on a valid analysis of the type of conflict that is being fought and of the methods used to acheive victory. Steven Metz and Thomas R. Mockaitis, both distinguished COIN scholars, take a rather positive view of the doctrine's adequacy, although Mockaitis questions its ranking of political goals over social and economic ones as being potentially detrimental.[83]

This criticism, however, does not challenge the core assumptions of the doctrine. A more fundamental critique of US policy in Iraq, with implications for the new doctrine, has been raised by the leading military analyst Stephen Biddle. In his 2006 article, "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon," Biddle argues that US strategy in Iraq has basic similarities to its strategy in Vietnam; Like the Vietnam strategy, the Iraq strategy is "built around winning hearts and minds while handing off more and more of the fighting to indigenous forces." According to Biddle, US strategy in Iraq is deeply flawed. A Maoist people's war, like the one waged in Vietnam, may be won by the side that offers the population superior material conditions and governance. However, communal civil wars, like the ones in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, are "about group survival, not about the superiority of one party's ideology or one side's ability to deliver better governance."[84] Iraq, Biddle argues, is a communal civil war. Economic reconstruction will not reconcile the various sectarian groups, and democratization may prove positively harmful. Moreover,

> The biggest problem with treating Iraq like Vietnam is Iraqization – the main component of the current U.S. military strategy. In a people's war, handing the fighting off to local forces makes sense because it undermines the nationalist component of insurgent resistance, improves the quality of local intelligence, and boosts troop strength. But in a communal civil war, it throws gasoline on the fire. Iraq's Sunnis perceive the "national" army and police force as a Shiite-Kurdish militia on steroids. And they have a point: in a communal conflict, the only effective units are the ones that do not intermingle communal enemies.[85]

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83   Metz, *Learning from Iraq*, p. 65; and Mockaitis, *The Iraq War*, pp. 53–54.
84   Stephen Biddle, "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 85, no. 2 (2006), pp. 3–5 and 8. (Quotations on pp. 3 and 5.) For a similar analysis, see Metz, *Learning from Iraq*, pp. 83–84: "In a cultural struggle, identity structures already exist. 'Hearts and minds' are not subject to competition."
85   Biddle, "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon," p. 8.

In essence, Biddle sees current US military strategy in Iraq facing the choice of either making Iraqi security forces an instrument for Shiite and/or Kurdish repression against the Sunnis, or rendering these forces inefficient by making them ethnically integrated.[86]

If Biddle's criticism is valid, it also has implications for *FM 3-24*. As previously described, training HN forces is central to the new doctrine, although it sanctions a more far-reaching direct participation of US forces than did previous doctrines. *FM 3-24* addresses some of the problems raised by Biddle; it recognizes religious and ethnic identities as central factors in current internal wars and also addresses some of the problems identified by Biddle (albeit with no explicit reference to Iraq).[87] In principle, the doctrine's overarching pragmatism and emphasis on flexibility in the choice of means also offer a safeguard against an over-reliance on HN forces. Nevertheless, HN forces are a centrepiece of the doctrine and if Biddle's analysis is correct, a substantial revision of its approach to HN forces seems warranted. On at least one point the doctrine rather categorically takes a view that is incompatible with Biddle's analysis, as it asserts that the integration of various ethnic groups in HN security forces "must be included in the recruiting effort." (This position is taken even while recognizing that "Most HN governments will resist" this recruitment policy.)[88] Assuming that Biddle's criticism is valid, and to the extent that doctrine is actually shaping the actions of US forces, such a doctrinal adjustment would be a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for an optimal handling of the Iraq situation.

FM 3-24 AND FUTURE CAPABILITIES

Obviously, the validity of the doctrine also has potential implications beyond Iraq and Afghanistan. A valid doctrine may help to increase the likelihood of success in future COIN operations, whereas a flawed doctrine is likely to have the opposite effect. Important as the endorsing of the small war approach is in itself, it is conceivable that the complex understanding of insurgency and counterinsurgency, together with the emphasis on learning, adaptation, flexibility, and pragmatism, may have an even greater impact. If the doctrine has struck the right balance between sound imperatives and prescription, on the one hand, and innovation and imagination on the other, it may work as a highly potent force multiplier. Such an "optimal" approach would entail, for example, the ability to wage a COIN campaign focusing on countering a "people's war" strategy when

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86   Ibid., pp. 8–9. On pp. 9–14, Biddle discussed possible alternatives to the present course.
87   Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, 1-21, p. 1-4; 1-143, p. 1-25; 6-10, pp. 6-2–6-3; and 6-45, pp. 6-9–6-10. See also 1-15, p. 1-3.
88   Ibid., 6-45, pp. 6-9–6-10.

appropriate and using substantially different methods in a scenario that may pose other challenges, such as a sectarian civil war.[89]

Discussing future capabilities, it is worth repeating that although doctrine is an important indicator of the Army's mentality and capabilities, adopting a relevant and valid doctrine does not in itself guarantee proficiency in COIN operations. Several analysts argue that Army culture, with its deep roots in the big war paradigm, is a major impediment to the enhancement of Army COIN capabilities. It is a matter of debate whether this culture can be changed so as to allow the Army to fully embrace a role as a COIN and stability operations force, not just a war-fighting force, but some recent analyses make a rather optimistic assessment of this factor. James S. Corum has analyzed these issues in generational terms:

> In conflicts involving non-state enemies, nation building is a primary task, and the traditional principles of war that emphasize destruction of conventional enemy armed forces are largely irrelevant to such wars – and can even be counterproductive. The young captains and majors who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan certainly understand these concepts, but it will be difficult for many in the senior leadership, who have focused on conventional warfare for their whole career, to adjust to what the doctrine describes as a fundamentally different kind of war.[90]

Finally, it can be assumed that in order for a doctrine to actually translate into capabilities, it must be accompanied by the means and other conditions needed for its execution. In other words, to the extent that funding, training, education, equipment, organization, force structure, etc., are not geared toward conducting COIN operations, the impact of COIN operations doctrine is likely to be correspondingly limited.[91]

Certain factors at the national security policy level could underpin the current trend of a growing importance of COIN. These factors include a continuation of "the Global War on Terror," continued concern with "rogue states," "failed states," and regime change; and sustained political pressure for enhanced

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89   For further discussion of current and future conflicts and their implications for US doctrine, see David Kilcullen, "Counter-insurgency *Redux*," *Survival*, vol. 48, no. 4 (2006); Metz, *Learning from Iraq*, pp. 76–91; and Steven Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007).

90   Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," p. 133. On the role of Army culture, see also for example Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror*; Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*; and Metz, *Learning from Iraq*, pp. 89–90.

91   On the implications for organization and training, see, e.g., Mockaitis, *The Iraq War*, pp. 57–58. On the implications for force structure, see, e.g., Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-insurgency Doctrine," p. 139.

COIN capabilities. Relative American success in Afghanistan and/or Iraq, the likelihood of which will not be discussed in detail here, may work in the same direction. Other conceivable scenarios, involving Pakistan, Indonesia, Congo, or Saudi Arabia, may also underpin the current trend.[92] Conversely, failure in Afghanistan and/or Iraq may strengthen an opposite trend at the political level, namely rejection of COIN, nation-building, and stability operations, combined with an increasing US restraint regarding military intervention in general. Such an approach to military intervention would in some respects be comparable to that epitomized by the Nixon, Weinberger and Powell doctrines and expressed by George W. Bush in the 2000 election campaign. As Steven Metz points out, "Iraq has reinvigorated the Vietnam-era idea that the United States simply should not undertake counterinsurgency."[93]

Another possibility that could also stymie or dilute the rising importance of Army COIN capabilities and doctrine is that other perceived threats may come to dominate US security policy. Some of these threats may be seen not to warrant COIN capabilities, but rather conventional combat skills. For example, if China becomes the focal point of US security concerns,[94] the US government will probably have another reason to prioritize military capabilities for war-fighting against other nation-states rather than unconventional warfare and stability operations. This possibility exists independent of the outcome in Afghanistan and Iraq, but a rejection of COIN due to US failure in those countries may converge with increasing concerns over China; the two factors may thus be mutually reinforcing in diverting US attention from COIN.

In this context, a core question is also whether US national strategic culture may evolve in a direction that is conducive to the sustained development of COIN capabilities and that allows repeated and sustained COIN commitments. Colin S. Gray has asked whether "the American Way of War" can adapt to the requirements of successfully fighting irregular opponents. His answer is, "perhaps, but only with difficulty."[95] In a structural sense, this issue is similar

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92   For discussion of these latter scenarios, see Frederick Kagan and Michael O'Hanlon, "The Case for Larger Ground Forces," *Bridging the Foreign Policy Divide*, April 2007 (Muscatine, IA: The Stanley Foundation).

93   Metz, *Learning from Iraq*, p. 59.

94   For discussion of the China factor see, for example, Kagan, *Finding the Target*, pp. 374–377; and Svein Melby, "Stormaktspolitikkens renessanse? ," [The Renaissance of Great Power Politics?] in Svein Melby, Johannes Rø, Olof Kronvall and Anders G. Romarheim, *Supermaktens begrensning. Perspektiver på Bush-doktrinens utvikling* [The Limits of the Superpower – Perspectives on the Development of the Bush Doctrine], IFS Info, no. 6 (Oslo, Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, 2006), pp. 11–13.

95   Colin S. Gray, *Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy: Can the American Way of War Adapt?* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2006), p. 55. See also Jeffrey Record, "The American Way of War. Cultural Barriers to Successful Counterinsurgency," *Policy Briefing* #577 (Washington, D.C.: The Cato Institute, 2006).

to that of cultural adaptation on the part of the Army. However, if US national strategic culture does not embrace, or at least accept, COIN as an integral part of the nation's security policies, developments within the Army are going to be less relevant. If US policy-makers and voters categorically reject US involvement in COIN operations, it will hardly matter how well the Army has mastered the skills of COIN.

In sum, there are a number of interdependent factors that will likely determine the future course of the Army's transformation into a full-blown COIN operations force. One thing seems to be clear: the outcome of the transitional process will have a tremendous impact on US military capabilities.

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