A Counterinsurgent's Guidebook

The application of COIN doctrine and theory

Counterinsurgency Training Center – Afghanistan

Camp Julien, Kabul, Afghanistan

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PURPOSE

The purpose of *The Counterinsurgency Training Center—Afghanistan (CTC-A) "Counterinsurgent's Guidebook"* is two-fold. First, to provide a common language and framework for counterinsurgents currently engaged in Afghanistan, as well as those involved in yet-foreseen conflicts. While each insurgency is unique, the principles, processes, and tools in this *Guidebook* are intended to be broadly applicable. The second purpose is to provide a structured cognitive process—and supporting tools—whereby counterinsurgents can translate existing counterinsurgency doctrine and theory into practical application. The intended audience for this *Guidebook* is operational and tactical level U.S./NATO/Coalition counterinsurgents, military and non-military alike.

Note: This guide is not meant to replace or supersede existing NATO, United States, Coalition, or Host Nation counterinsurgency doctrine. The *Guidebook* is meant to enhance the application and understanding of counterinsurgency doctrine by providing an abbreviated and consolidated guide to existing doctrine.

MISSION OF CTC-A

CTC-A enhances coalition forces, Afghan National Security Forces, and other GIRoA agencies' capabilities to reduce insurgent influence through the delivery of regionally-focused, timely, and relevant best practice counterinsurgency training and education that fosters greater unity of effort among all stakeholders in order to facilitate the development of a secure and stable Afghanistan.

INQUIRIES

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of *The Counterinsurgent's Guidebook* is to provide a common language and framework for current and future counterinsurgents, as well as provide a structured cognitive process—and supporting implementation tools—whereby counterinsurgents can translate existing counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine and theory into practical application at the operational and tactical level.

As mentioned earlier, this document is not meant to replace existing planning doctrine. Rather, the process used in this *Guidebook*—which we call "COIN IPB" (Counterinsurgency Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield)—falls within the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) and equivalent military planning processes. The COIN IPB process exists to ensure that while using the traditional planning process in an irregular environment, sufficient emphasis is given to counterinsurgency considerations, principles, and imperatives. COIN IPB ensures that the unique elements of counterinsurgency are identified, assessed, emphasized and executed. The figure below—Figure A—is derived from Chapter 4 of FM 3-24.2 (*Tactics in Counterinsurgency*) and depicts where COIN guidance is found in the existing planning process.

Figure A: COIN MDMP and IPB

As counterinsurgents it is imperative that we understand what and whom we are countering, as well as develop a comprehensive understanding of the environment in which we operate. Effective COIN operations—a complex subset of irregular warfare—requires the counterinsurgent to do the following within the COIN IPB Process:

- Understand, and maintain complete immersion in, the operating environment;

- Develop a nuanced understanding of the issues ("grievances") fomenting insurgent support and freedom of movement;

- Identify the insurgent strategy, and exploit weak points and fracture points;

- Coordinate all available COIN assets along identified lines of operation—with the Host Nation—to deny insurgency influence over the population and defeat the insurgency.

While a substantive body of COIN theory and doctrine is available to modern counterinsurgents, each campaign is unique. In that regard, both civilian and military COIN leaders must think asymmetrically by exercising adaptive situational awareness, tactical patience, keen judgment, and strategic innovation in order to defeat any given insurgency. All of these attributes require the counterinsurgent to accept (and mitigate) certain levels of risk while conducting COIN operations, with an understanding that every action and reaction impacts the population's perception, and corresponding strategic sympathies, in the conflict.

This material is meant to facilitate the practical understanding and application of COIN doctrine, and make it relevant to counterinsurgents. The *Guidebook* will take the user through a series of fundamentals and tools consisting of the following: Operational Environment (ASCOPE3xD and ASCOPE/PMESII), Prerequisites for an Insurgency (Root Cause Identification Form), Insurgency Fundamentals (Insurgent Strategy Assessment Tool), and Counterinsurgency Fundamentals and Operations (Clear-Hold-Build Operations and Security Force Assistance).

In addition to facilitating the practical application of COIN doctrine, this *Guidebook* also assists the counterinsurgent in shaping a mindset required to conduct effective COIN operations. The process herein provides a framework allowing evaluation, re-evaluation, and continual adjustments: ensuring a population-centric methodology remains at the forefront of every step of analysis. The figure below (Figure B) represents the COIN IPB process that will be examined in subsequent sections of the guide.

Figure B: The COIN IPB Process
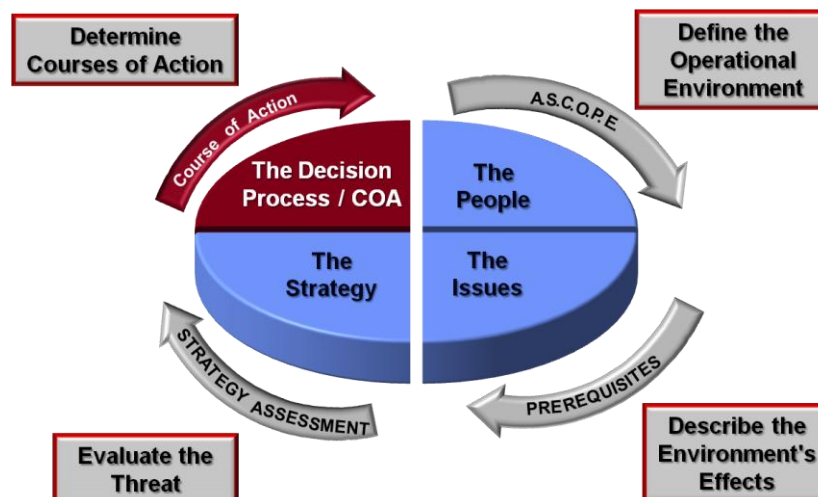
REFERENCES

Primary:

FM 3-24.2:   Tactics in Counterinsurgency (U.S., 2009)

                (Similar version used by the Afghan National Army)

AJP 3.4.4:   Allied Joint Doctrine for Counterinsurgency (NATO, 2011)

Secondary:

FM 3-24:   Counterinsurgency Field Manual (U.S., 2006)

JP 3-24:   Counterinsurgency Operations (U.S., 2009)

FM 3-07:   Stability Operations (U.S., 2008)

FM 3-07.1:   Security Force Assistance (U.S., 2009)

FM 3-90:   Tactics (U.S., 2001)

NATO ISAF: COMISAF Guidance, Directives, and Campaign Plan (NATO, 2010)

ACRONYMS

ASCOPE:	Tool used by counterinsurgents to understand the Operational Environment (includes: Areas, Structures, Capabilities, Organizations, People, and Events)
CF:	Coalition Forces
C-H-B:	Clear-Hold-Build
COA:	Course of Action
COIN:	Counterinsurgency or Counterinsurgent
COP:	Combat Outpost
CTC-A:	Counterinsurgency Training Center—Afghanistan
DTG:	Date Time Group
FID:	Foreign Internal Defense
HN:	Host Nation
HNSF:	Host Nation Security Forces
IDAD:	Internal Defense and Development
INS:	Insurgency or Insurgent
IPB:	Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield
ISAF:	International Security Assistance Force
ISAT:	Insurgent Strategy Assessment Tool
LOO:	Lines of Operation
SFA:	Security Force Assistance

# SECTION 1:
OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Overview

The Operational Environment (OE) is *a composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander* (FM 3-24). At the tactical and operational levels, defining the operational environment involves understanding the various layers and aspects of a unit's Area of Operations (AO) and determining Area of Interest (AI) therein. An AI is *an area of concern to the commander, including the area of influence, areas adjacent thereto, and extending into enemy territory to the objectives of current or planned operations.* This area also includes areas occupied by enemy forces that could jeopardize the accomplishment of the mission (FM 3-24).

In COIN operations, the ever-changing OE shapes operations; whereas on the conventional battlefield, operations are used to shape the environment. The OE defines the AO and AI with respect to the physical and "human terrain." In population-centric COIN warfare, it is the "human terrain" that is most important, even more so than the physical terrain—which is primary in conventional warfare. Both the insurgent and counterinsurgent seek the support and freedom of movement that the population enables.

Defining the OE through the lens of the civil considerations of ASCOPE3xD (a tool described on the following page) should preface, and link, all other COIN activities. All counterinsurgents need to appreciate the importance of immersion into, and understanding of, the civil considerations of the operational environment. As the COIN IPB process below depicts (Figure C), our initial consideration is based on the people, and the ability to understand the environment in which they live.

Figure C: Operational Environment
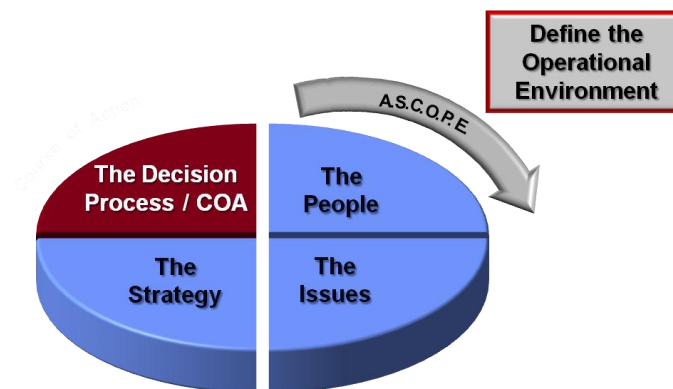
Standardized Tools

Counterinsurgents should use standardized tools (ASCOPE3xD and ASCOPE/PMESII-PT) to develop a common operating picture at all levels of the OE. These tools allow counterinsurgents to capture salient data about the population in order to understand the relationship between human and physical terrain. It also allows leaders to identify specific groups, group leaders, grievances of the population, and significant physical terrain. This is accomplished by complete immersion into the OE. Additionally, this method enables counterinsurgents to understand the perspective of the people, the insurgent, and the counterinsurgent (a three dimensional perspective).

The methods described in this section are a foundation that can be used for most COIN operations. ASCOPE3xD and ASCOPE/PMESII-PT are standardized in this guide to provide continuity and facilitate information sharing between adjacent units, different echelons, incoming and outgoing units, military and civilian organizations, Coalition Forces (CF), and Host Nation (HN) forces. These tools are designed to be used at the tactical and operational levels respectively (ASCOPE3xD at the tactical; ASCOPE/PMESII-PT at the operational). Both enables counterinsurgents to collect and codify the vast amount of incoming information into a mosaic of the human terrain that holistically describes the area of operations. Once analyzed, that information then becomes intelligence; and key to effective COIN operations is the timely and accurate dissemination of that information/intelligence to units above, below, left, and right.

The tools help commanders gain an understanding of the many communities, neighborhoods, or subordinate groups in a particular area, and their relevance to counterinsurgency efforts. Commanders require this information to properly allocate the resources and efforts necessary to successfully conduct COIN operations. This larger mosaic can assist in identifying trends throughout the OE. Such trends include insurgent and lawless patterns that are difficult to identify at the single user level. They also include wide-spread population values and interests that augment the decision-making process of governmental leaders and advisors at the regional and national levels. The manner in which counterinsurgents identify these trends will be discussed in Section 2—Prerequisites for an Insurgency

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Human Terrain

Obstacles, avenues of approach, key terrain, observation and fields of fire, and cover and concealment (OAKOC) are aspects of physical "terrain" within the mission variables (METT-TC) in military operations. While still considered in COIN operations, the "human terrain"—and the tools we use to understand it (ASCOPE3xD and ASCOPE/PMESII-PT)—plays a larger part in understanding the operating environment. In conventional operations, the population is considered an obstacle to avoid harming. In COIN, however, the population is "key terrain" and whoever (insurgents or counterinsurgents) garners the population's support has the advantage.

Effective COIN, therefore, requires a more in-depth understanding of the civil considerations of the human terrain (ASCOPE) than in conventional operations. This analysis requires counterinsurgents to understand the perspectives of the people, the insurgent, and the counterinsurgent in order to develop a complete picture of the operational environment.

Building this picture for counterinsurgency operations also involves several other components. These components include, but are not limited to, imagery overlays that depict attacks and patterns of incidents, lines of communications (roads, rivers, railroads, etc.), key terrain, government buildings, markets, infrastructure, and other information of political, economic, social, and military significance. Counterinsurgents can use this information to develop more sophisticated methods of pattern analysis. Leaders identify specific communities and demographic groups, sectarian lines, slums, gang and militia territories, police districts, smuggling routes, significant events, and tactically/culturally important structures to broaden and deepen this picture.

Developing a picture through immersion—using the ASCOPE3xD and ASCOPE/PMESII-PT tools—provides a foundation for isolating population grievances, identifying insurgent strategies, and developing population-focused COIN courses of action.

ASCOPE3xD Tool

An in-depth analysis of the civil considerations of the battlefield is vital for the long-term success of the counterinsurgent. This analysis can be accomplished at the tactical level through the use of the ASCOPE3xD tool.

ASCPOPE3xD (three dimensional) is a methodology in which equal consideration is given to the perspective of the people, insurgent, and counterinsurgent (3xD) in order to provide units a holistic view of their operating environment at the tactical level. As previously emphasized, the population in the OE is the most important aspect of the terrain, and ASCOPE3xD helps counterinsurgents ask the necessary questions and consider all available perspectives when studying the civil considerations of the human terrain. It is a living document that must adapt to the constantly-changing OE.

This analysis should also influence counterinsurgents to appreciate foremost the perceptions of the people. In COIN, the population's perception drives their active and passive support, and is therefore the main target of counterinsurgent efforts. Conversely, failure to understand all three perspectives of the operational environment will lead to unintended, inaccurate, or incomplete analysis that undermines counterinsurgent efforts.

ASCOPE3xD enables counterinsurgents to specify what information to collect, identify who is the best to collect it, organize the information collected, and assist in the preparation and

Operational Environment

understanding of the operational environment. It provides the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the OE. This insight is critical for counterinsurgents to psychologically and physically separate the population from the insurgency and deny them active and passive support. Counterinsurgents will naturally ask "who?" and "what?" for each civil consideration; however, the questions on the following page are the primary question that should be asked for each individual civil consideration of ASCOPE3xD. The primary question listed below is intended to encourage counterinsurgents to appreciate the multi-dimensional aspects of OE.

- **A**reas: What is the relationship between people and *where* they live?

- **S**tructures: *Why* are the natural and manmade structures important?

- **C**apabilities: *Who* is capable and responsible for providing people basic services?

- **O**rganizations: *What* are the different groups of people in the OE?

- **P**eople: *How* do people communicate?

- **E**vents: *When* are events occurring?

Collecting ASCOPE3xD

ASCOPE3xD is a proactive and deliberate collection plan/process used to better understand the OE. At the tactical level, the collection of ASCOPE3xD is an ongoing process that starts with initial information/intelligence, is developed deliberately during your tour, and is continuously updated. Before arriving in an AO, counterinsurgents should seek and exploit all available intelligence, open source information, imagery overlays, and counterpart continuity information (RIP/TOA with previous unit) in order to build a basic, shell ASCOPE. Likewise, during pre-deployment training units need to train soldiers to study the human terrain and continuously internalize and disseminate information ("every soldier a sensor") so they are trained to effectively collect the correct information.

Once in country, units must put a plan in place to quickly, accurately, and deliberately develop their ASCOPE3xD, filling in the holes on the original ASCOPE3xD and confirming/denying initial assumptions. Foot patrols—with a specific task and purpose—are the primary way to gather this information. Other techniques include key leader engagements (KLEs), census operations, tactical questioning, patrol debriefs, ISR assets and enemy propaganda. Once this information is collected and placed into an ASCOPE3xD at the tactical level, that document should be pushed up, while continuously being updated. The scope, size, and complexity of any ASCOPE3xD will depend on the level and timeline of operations. Figure D is a simplified, sample ASCOPE3xD tool.

Figure D: ASCOPE3xD Tool

COIN IPB (Operational Environment)				
Demographic Group, Community, or Neighborhood (Center of Influence)				
	Data	**Population**	**Insurgents**	**Counterinsurgents**
AREA	LOCATION			
STRUCTURE	LOCATION			
CAPABILITIES	STATUS			
ORGANIZATION	LOCATION/ DETAILS			
PEOPLE	LOCATION/ RECIPIENT			
EVENTS	DTG/ LOCATION			

ASCOPE3xD Tool Explanation:

- **Column 1:** Specific items, by civil consideration (ASCOPE).
- **Column 2:** Raw data about each item (location, DTG, status, etc.).
- **Column 3:** The First Dimension (*Population*); refers to the local population's perception.
- **Column 4:** The Second Dimension (*Insurgents*); refers to the perspective of insurgent groups impeding the government (also includes militias, gangs, criminals, terrorists, etc).
- **Column 5:** The Third Dimension (*Counterinsurgents*); refers to the perspective of CF, the Host Nation, civilian organizations, and other counterinsurgent actors.

ASCOPE/PMESII-PT Matrix

At the operational level, ASCOPE/PMESII-PT is used by battalions and higher to analyze and synthesize information and intelligence provided by subordinate and parallel units. The matrix is meant to be used in conjunction with ASCOPE3xD, which counterinsurgents at the operational level synthesis and fuse with other relevant information and intelligence to build a larger picture of the OE. ASCOPE/PMESII-PT is further designed to be developed and managed at equivalent civil and government echelons.

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As with ASCOPE3xD, equal consideration must be given to the insurgent, counterinsurgent, and the population when using ASCOPE/PMESII-PT. However, through the use of PMESII-PT, counterinsurgents can begin to further analyze the information and civil considerations provided by ASCOPE3xD. In this regard, PMESII-PT is defined as a set of interrelated operational variables that provides counterinsurgents with a method to analyze the OE through specific filters. Thus, counterinsurgents consider the following factors and their relevance to the OE as they relate to the civil considerations of ASCOPE:

- **Political**: Key elements of the formal, informal, and shadow governance and how they are relevant to the population and overall stability in the area.

- **Military**: Key elements influencing the security situation and overall stability in the area.

- **Economic**: Key elements of overall economic stability and activity in the area.

- **Social**: Key elements that influence traditional social dynamics in the area.

- **Infrastructure**: Key facilities, essential services, and installations that affect the overall stability of an area and their relevance to the population

- **Information**: Key elements that facilitate the transfer of information amongst the local population and their relevance to the population.

- **Physical Environment**: Key terrain affects people, equipment, trafficability, visibility, and the employment of many weapons.

- **Time**: The population, counterinsurgent, and insurgent often view time differently.

Analyzing the civil considerations of ASCOPE through these filters and determining their relevance to all three dimensions (population, insurgent, counterinsurgent), provides counterinsurgents a better understand of the interconnected and strategic implications of their activities. It also helps them plan accordingly for effective operations that will have long-term effects on the operating environment.

Figure E (following page) is a simplified example of how the operational variables of PMESII-PT can be used in conjunction with the civil considerations of ASCOPE to provide a more comprehensive and strategic understanding of the major factors, themes, and influencers of the operating environment.

Operational Environment

Figure E: ASCOPE/PMESII-PT Matrix

ASCOPE/PMESII-PT Matrix			
PMESII-PT Description	**ASCOPE Filter**	**Specific Factors**	**Relevance to the Operational Environment**
Political/Governance: Political actors, agendas, government capability and capacity	A S C O P E }	Formal, informal, and shadow systems of government which significantly influence the local population	Why is it relevant to: • The population? • Insurgents? • Counterinsurgents? How does it affect stability?
Military/Security: Capabilities in the AO (equipment, mission, resource constraints)	A S C O P E }	Key elements influencing the security situation and overall stability in the area	Why is it relevant to: • The population? • Insurgents? • Counterinsurgents? How does it affect stability?
Economic: Trade, development, finance, institutional capabilities, geography, regulation, business	A S C O P E }	Key elements that influence economic activity in the area	Why is it relevant to: • The population? • Insurgents? • Counterinsurgents? How does it affect stability?
Social: Demographics, migration trends, urbanization, living standards, literacy/education level, etc.	A S C O P E }	Key elements that describe or influence traditional social dynamics in an area	Why is it relevant to: • The population? • Insurgents? • Counterinsurgents? How does it affect stability?
Infrastructure: Basic facilities, services and installations	A S C O P E }	Effects on the physical infrastructure: sewage, water, electricity, educational facilities, health facilities, and transportation	Why is it relevant to: • The population? • Insurgents? • Counterinsurgents? How does it affect stability?
Information: Means of communication, media, telecommunications, word of mouth	A S C O P E }	Key elements that facilitate the transfer of information to and among the local population	Why is it relevant to: • The population? • Insurgents? • Counterinsurgents? How does it affect stability?
Physical Environment: Categorized as either rural or urban, includes weather and climate	A S C O P E }	Key terrain affects people, equipment, trafficability, visibility, and the employment of many weapons	Why is it relevant to: • The population? • Insurgents? • Counterinsurgents? How does it affect stability?
Time: Time affects everything and influences all decisions	A S C O P E }	The population, counterinsurgent, and insurgent often view time differently	Why is it relevant to: • The population? • Insurgents? • Counterinsurgents? How does it affect stability?

Tool Explanation:

- **Column 1:** Description of specific items, by operational variable (PMESII-PT)
- **Column 2 and 3:** Examine each operational variable through specific factors of the civil considerations (ASCOPE)
- **Column 4:** Determine relevance to the overall operational environment

Operational Environment

SECTION 2:
PREREQUISITES FOR AN INSURGENCY

Overview

Building on the information and intelligence garnered during the first step of the COIN IPB process (Operational Environment), this section outlines how the counterinsurgent can use that understanding to identify the prerequisites that allow the insurgency to exist. From there, the counterinsurgent can begin to target and address the specific root causes underlying those prerequisites. This step allows the counterinsurgent to isolate "the issues" of the population and categorize them into one of three prerequisites for an insurgency. Doing so also allows the counterinsurgent to implement sustainable political, economic, military, and social solutions (the "pillars" for civil consideration) to address each prerequisite.

This section also introduces a Root Cause Identification Form that counterinsurgents can use to systematically identify—and isolate—the root causes underlying the prerequisites allowing the insurgents freedom of action. The aggregation of these root causes assists the counterinsurgent in analyzing trends to address and eliminate root causes, rather than approach grievances individually. This process allows counterinsurgents to more efficiently allocate scarce resources and limited assets on the battlefield. Figure F below depicts the second element of the COIN IPB Process.

Figure F: Prerequisites for an Insurgency
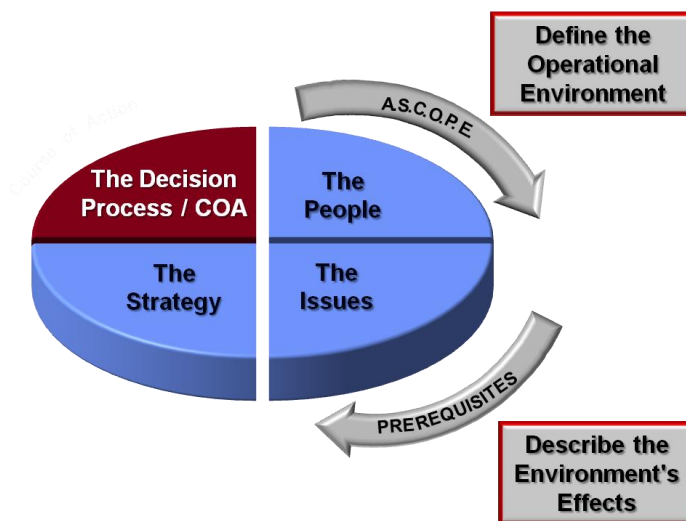
Prerequisites for an Insurgency

There are three (3) prerequisites that allow an insurgency various degrees of support from the population – a vulnerable population, leadership available for direction, and lack of government control (FM 3-24.2). When all three exist in any particular area, an insurgency can operate with significant freedom of action (progression from partial to total); this is gained through active and/or passive support of the population, which can become entrenched over time. These prerequisites are common to all insurgencies, but will take different forms and intensities.

1) **Vulnerable Population.** A population is vulnerable if the people have real or perceived grievances that insurgents can exploit. The insurgents can exploit the population by offering hope for change as well as exploiting political, economic and/or social dissatisfaction with the current government. A gap between the population's expectations and the government's ability to meet those expectations may cause unrest within the population, including turning to the insurgency. The larger the gap, the greater the population's perceived or relative sense of deprivation between what they have and what they perceive they should have. Similarly, the larger the gap, the more susceptible the population is to insurgent influence through promises to close the gap.

2) **Leadership Available for Direction.** A vulnerable population alone will not indefinitely support an insurgency. There must be a leadership element that can direct the frustrations of the population. If insurgents can recruit, co-opt, and coerce local leaders or the local leaders are part of the insurgency, these leaders can direct the frustrations of the populace.

3) **Lack of Government Control.** Real or perceived lack of governmental control can allow insurgents to operate with little or no interference from security forces or other agencies. The greater the control the government has over the situation, the less likely are the chances for insurgent success. The opposite is also true. If the government is not providing what the people believe their government should, insurgents may provide an alternative government, or 'shadow' government, or they may merely nullify governance to allow freedom and movement, depending on their end state. Host Nation failure to see or admit that there is an issue or outright refusal to change can further strengthen this prerequisite.

The Four 'Pillars' for Civil Consideration

While the prerequisites needed for all insurgencies do not change, the specific grievances and underlying root causes will vary from insurgency to insurgency. A thorough analysis of the four (4) 'pillars' for civil consideration—within each prerequisite—can be used to categorize the specific root causes underlying a particular insurgency. The four 'pillars' are:

Prerequisites for an Insurgency

- Political

- Military

- Social

- Economic

For example, the question you ask for each 'pillar' under the "vulnerable population" prerequisite would be: How is the population vulnerable politically/militarily/socially/ economically? Additionally, the Social 'pillar' can be subdivided further into the following categories, summarized by the pneumonic SWEAT-MSO:

- <u>S</u>ewer

- <u>W</u>ater

- <u>E</u>lectricity

- <u>A</u>cademic

- <u>T</u>rash

- <u>M</u>edical

- <u>S</u>ecurity

- <u>O</u>*ther Sub-Categories as necessary*

Grievances and Root Causes

The grievances and underlying root causes for an insurgency differs from one movement to another. A root cause is *the basis of a grievance among the population* (FM 3-24.2). Root causes may change over time, and counterinsurgents must continually assess the changing operational environment. Insurgents also manipulate or create root causes and grievances to suit their own purposes. General examples of root causes (this is not an exhaustive list) may include:

Identity. Membership in a particular socio-cultural group may foster a strong allegiance to that group's collective aims. This can be typified through ethnic, tribal or sectarian disputes. External actors with similar social identities may also assist insurgents.

Religion. Religion, either as an expression of a separate identity or through extremist religious views, can be a significant factor in motivating and sustaining an insurgency. Religious ideologists can become a root cause of an insurgency—and external groups with similar religiously-based views may also assist insurgents.

Occupation or Exploitation. The perception of outsiders occupying and/or exploiting a Host Nation can serve as, or exacerbate, a grievance. This may be a result of external businesses dominating a local economy or the presence of foreign troops. The specific actions of foreigners (accidental civilian casualties, for example) may offend religious or cultural sensibilities, regardless of how well-intentioned those actions may have been.

Economic Failure. Poverty and associated desperation can contribute to a root cause of an insurgency. Underserved youth without jobs or hope are ripe for insurgent recruitment. A large gap between a poor majority and a rich minority can also exacerbate these issues.

Corruption and Repression. Both can lead to popular dissatisfaction with the current government. Rampant corruption leads to the loss of HN legitimacy and possibly a desire to change or replace the HN government.

Unfulfilled Expectations. These may exist between one or more classes or sectors of society and relate (as examples) to a lack of political representation, lack of basic services, or unfulfilled promises from counterinsurgent elements.

Root Cause Identification Form

In order to comprehensively analyze and identify the number and type of prerequisites in your OE—and the underlying root cause for those prerequisites—counterinsurgents can use the Root Cause Identification Form. This form is a tool (not necessarily "the" tool), and meant to challenge the counterinsurgent to continually ask "why?" in order to get to the bottom of a population's grievances and find the underlying root cause for that grievance.

The accurate identification of prerequisites and root causes cannot be done effectively without the foundational understanding provided through the first element of the COIN IPB process (Operational Environment). The ASCOPE3xD created during that process will have defined the communities and the detailed aspects of each community. Once that is complete, then each area and/or community's specific immediate grievances and underlying root causes can be identified. In addition to a detailed analysis of the existing ASCOPE3xD, the counterinsurgent can use the following approaches and examples as a "how to" framework in determining prerequisites and root causes:

- ASCOPE, first and foremost.
- Consultation with outgoing units, including even earlier units (if possible).
- Ask the local population, talk to as many sources as possible.
- Ask your interpreters and Host Nation counterparts (military, police, government, etc.).
- Analyze insurgent propaganda. What are they promising? What are they saying

about counterinsurgents?

- Study local media reporting.

- Conduct dismounted patrols with the Host Nation Security Forces (HNSF).

- What do the women and youth say? (Note: Avoid asking them in public).

- Ask walk-ins and informants about prerequisites and root causes.

- Ask detainees about local issues and how insurgents will address or exploit them.

Root Cause Identification Form Explanation:

The diagram on the following page (Figure G) is a sample Root Cause Identification Form. It is meant to be read, and filled out, from left-to-right—forcing the counterinsurgent to start with the initial grievance on the left and work progressively towards the underlying root cause on the right. While there are only three (3) columns in the form, in reality there can be more—the important aspect of the form is forcing the user to continually ask "why?" in order to identify the root cause, rather than the symptomatic initial grievance. The critical column on the form is on the far right—representing the information the counterinsurgent should use (the root causes) when determining priorities and courses of action. The form should also be used to quantify the number of prerequisites present (1, 2 or 3) in any given area.

Remember, even if there are multiple grievances and root causes under a prerequisite, the collection of those points only constitute one prerequisite. While there can be numerous grievances and root causes in a given area, there can only be a maximum of three (3) prerequisites present. The number of prerequisites present represents the potential population support, and resulting freedom of movement, for either the insurgent or counterinsurgent.

Figure G: Root Cause Identification Form

Root Cause Identification Form

Identifying the "root causes" of population grievances

AREA _____   DATE_____

3 x Prerequisites	First Step *(Start here)*	Intermediate Step(s) *(Can be one or multiple)*	Final Step *(Root cause identification)*
Based on Political, Military, Social, and Economic categories common to all groups.	**Initial Grievance:** Grievances, complaints, and problems common to local group or community	**Perceived Causes:** Repeatedly ask: *"Why?"* What is the reason or cause for the answer in the first step?	**Root Cause:** What is the underlying reason for the initial grievance?
Vulnerable Population	➡	➡	➡
Political			
Military			
Social (SWEAT-MSO)			
(Add other sub-categories as applicable)			
Economic			
Leadership Available for Direction	➡	➡	➡
Political			
Military			
Social (SWEAT-MSO)			
(Add other sub-categories as applicable)			
Economic			
Lack of Government Control	➡	➡	➡
Political			
Military			
Social (SWEAT-MSO)			
(Add other sub-categories as applicable)			
Economic			

Prerequisites for an Insurgency

Overview

Insurgency (INS) is defined as *an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict*. Stated in other terms, 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* (FM 3-24.2).

Counterinsurgency operations require a thorough understanding of the insurgent threat. The insurgency in a particular environment (usually an irregular environment) commonly organizes its movement to achieve a desired end state. The insurgent's organizational structure will, by and large, be tethered to the components and manifestations of a particular insurgency. Understanding the relationship between these components and manifestations can provide the counterinsurgent an analytical lens through which to apply pressure to defeat an insurgency. As Figure H indicates, once we understand the operational environment and identify the prerequisites for an insurgency, we continue through the COIN IPB process—shifting our focus to understanding the insurgent threat and strategy.

Figure H: Insurgency Fundamentals
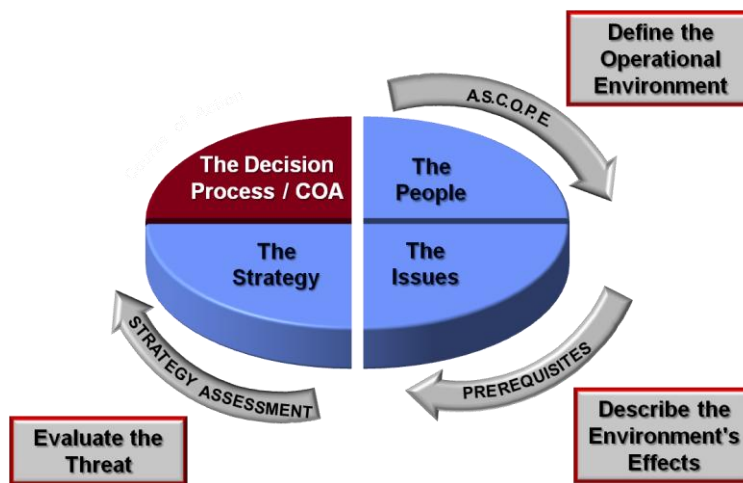
A thorough understanding of the eight (8) dynamics, five (5) elements, and six (6) strategies of an insurgency, allows the counterinsurgent to frame the insurgent movement, methods, and strategy. By understanding the threat's strategy, the counterinsurgent can anticipate insurgent actions (using the Insurgent Strategy Assessment Tool introduced later in this section), thereby proactively garnering population support and preventing the insurgency from exploiting prerequisites and grievances.

Eight (8) Dynamics of an Insurgency (FM 3-24.2)

1) **Leadership.** Provides vision, direction, guidance, coordination, and organization for the movement. Leadership can be a single person, single group, or group of groups, all of which can be centralized, or decentralized.

2) **Ideology.** Used to show the population how the movement can address the root causes the counterinsurgent is unable to mitigate or address. Ideology is "what the insurgents believe" and provides followers a vision for remedying the existing situation.

3) **Objective.** Can be strategic, operational, and tactical, all of which are influenced politically, militarily, socially, and economically. Objective is "how the insurgents" plan to implement their vision/campaign plan.

4) **Environment and Geography.** Affects all participants in an operational environment. The manner in which the insurgency adapts to the realities of the environment and geography creates advantages and disadvantages.

5) **External Support.** Includes moral, political, resource, and sanctuary support, all of which can affect the legitimacy of both the insurgents and counterinsurgents. This support can come from any entity outside of the Host Nation.

6) **Internal Support.** Includes popular, logistical, and insurgent base support. Popular support can be either active or passive.

7) **Phasing and Timing.** The insurgent movement often progresses through three phases in their effort—Latent and Incipient (Phase 1), Guerilla Warfare (Phase 2), and War of Movement (Phase 3). Figure I (on next page) includes sample activities within each phase of an insurgency. Not all insurgencies progress through all three phases, and linear progression is not a requirement for success. Also, insurgencies can revert to an earlier phase and resume development when favorable conditions return. Movement from one phase to another phase does not end the operational and tactical activities of earlier phases; it incorporates them. A single insurgency may be in different phases in different parts of the country. Advanced insurgencies can rapidly shift, split, combine, or reorganize if they are adaptive and dynamic.

Additionally, when classifying "phases" the counterinsurgent can dedicate whether the insurgent is in the low or high end of any particular phase (e.g. "high-end Phase 1" or "low-end Phase 3"). This designation assists the counterinsurgent in identifying whether an insurgency is about to enter a "phase shift", either forward or backward. Phase shifts are the moment when insurgencies are most vulnerable, as they require an increased signature in order to plan, stage, coordinate, and communicate for upcoming operations.

8) **Organizational and Operational Patterns.** Although each insurgent organization is unique, there are often similarities among them; knowing the common patterns helps to predict the tactics and techniques that may be employed by insurgents. Organizational and operational patterns can vary inside one insurgency, depending on location and phasing.

Figure I: Phasing and Timing

Phase I Latent and Incipient	Phase Shift	Phase II Guerrilla War	Phase Shift	Phase III War of Movement
Popular support		Regular guerrilla ops		Seize urban areas
Propaganda		Disrupt government		Prepare remote areas
Intelligence network		Hit and run attacks		Support of majority (pop.)
Sabotage + infiltration		Avoid deliberate battle		
Organize cells		Inability to protect populace		Decisive battles
Recruiting + training				Conventional tactics
Political organization		Prep AO		Collapse of civil admin.
Disrupt LOCs		Stockpile logistics		Gov. Intel destroyed
Demonstration/riots		Improve intelligence		Gov. react as insurgents wish
Terrorism		Prepare ingress and egress routes		Infiltrate government
External support		Force HNSF across		Linked to legitimate

Note: The above list is not exhaustive, and represents general indicators of phasing.

Six (6) Strategies of an Insurgency

The following are historical insurgent strategies that together provide a common framework of analysis for the counterinsurgent. Successful insurgent movements utilize all of the aforementioned dynamics in a synchronized manner, and the lack of particular dynamics can impact the insurgent strategy. The knowledgeable counterinsurgent can frame whether a particular insurgency is using one, or a combination, of the strategies. Understanding which type of strategy the insurgents are using helps counterinsurgents anticipate insurgent courses of actions and operations.

At the tactical level, counterinsurgents will most likely deal with only four of the six strategies, though this does not preclude the application of these strategies at the operational level as well. These four strategies are qualified as either basic or advanced. The remaining two strategies are described as blended.

The Two Basic Strategies are *Urban* and *Military-Focused (Foco)*.

Urban Strategy. In this strategy, insurgents attack government targets and other counter-insurgent assets with the intention of causing an overreaction against the population. The insurgency wants oppressive counterinsurgent countermeasures to enrage the population so they will rise up, support the insurgency, and overthrow the Host Nation and counterinsurgent efforts.

Common characteristics of this strategy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The use of terrorist attacks
- Propaganda focused on counterinsurgent brutality and oppressive measures
- Minimal insurgent political structure with no sustained political indoctrination
- Little or no effort to subvert the government
- Need for only a small amount of popular support

Military-Focused (Foco) Strategy. In this strategy, insurgents exploit the weaknesses of soft counterinsurgent targets, and rely on their insurgent guerilla-focused elements. The intent is to demonstrate the weakness of the government, thereby encouraging the people to the insurgent cause. Small groups of guerillas operating in an area where prerequisites exist can eventually gather enough support to achieve their aims.

Common characteristics of this strategy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The ability to continuously attack targets to show a lack of counterinsurgent legitimacy and strength
- Propaganda that incites people to join the insurgency and is focused on the weakness and illegitimacy of the Host Nation
- Little evidence of long-term efforts to build a political base
- Minimal attempts to infiltrate legitimate organizations

The Two Advanced Strategies are *Protracted Popular War & Subversive*.

Protracted Popular War Strategy. This strategy is based on Mao Zedong's theory of a pro-tracted popular war and focuses on effective utilization of the eight (8) insurgent dynamics. This strategy is generally used to exhaust and outlast the counterinsurgent.

Common characteristics of this strategy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- High level of organization and indoctrination

- Effective use of a robust military and political apparatus

- Activities along multiple insurgent lines of operation

- Leadership available to direct the shifting of phases

- Continuous long-term efforts to build popular support

- Infiltration of legitimate organizations.

- Organized clandestine and auxiliary elements

- Attacks on infrastructure, designed to wear down the counterinsurgents

Subversive Strategy. Although subversive activities take place in other strategies, particularly the Protracted Popular War and/or Urban strategies, this insurgent strategy attempts to insert an illegal political apparatus into the legitimate governing structures, usually through a quasi-legitimate political party. The aim is for that party to take control of the government from the inside—integrating into the government, but not overtly overthrowing it.

Common characteristics of this strategy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Political "wing" (cadre) seeks meetings with the Host Nation government

- Military wing attacks infrastructure and HN security forces to wear down and reduce HN legitimacy

- Political cadre distance themselves from the military wing by making public statements denouncing violence, yet both wings remained connected

- Insurgents will create a deceptive public breech between the militant and political cadre, forming new alliances with groups that seemingly have little in common with the insurgency or its ideology

- Insurgents may also reduce their kinetic signature while increasing political activity, as well as make intensive efforts to gain international moral and political support

- Insurgents will use sophisticated propaganda aimed at specific target audiences, especially the political apparatus seeking recognition and entry into political processes at the national and sub-national level

The Two Blended Strategies are the *Identity-Focused* and *Composite and Coalition*.

Identity-Focused Strategy. This strategy mobilizes support based on common identity. In this strategy popular support and legitimacy are tied to an insurgent group's identity and often no effort is made to garner popular support outside their identity.

Common characteristics of this strategy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Attacks on those who threaten the traditions and social structure of the identity
- Little or no need to establish a shadow government because it is already established though religious, clan, tribal, and ethnic affiliation
- Willingness to use tactics of other strategies
- A mass population base easily aligned with insurgent objectives

Composite and Coalition. This strategy takes shape when different insurgent groups, using different strategies, combine to form loose coalitions that advance the purpose of the different groups. Those using this strategy are usually united in opposition to something, for example an occupier or specific root cause related to a prerequisite.

Common characteristics of this strategy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Unclear and/or vague objectives
- Multiple or disjointed strategies within a single area of operations
- Alliances with criminal actors
- Attacks on other members of the loose coalition.

Five (5) Elements of an Insurgency (See Figure J on the following page)

Insurgent organizations vary considerably, but are typically made up of the five (5) elements supported by a military element (and advanced strategies have a robust political wing). The proportions of each depend upon the strategy and degree of support obtained and used. The five (5) elements are:

Leadership. Provides direction to the insurgency.

Guerrillas. Any insurgent who uses a weapon of any sort and fights for the insurgent movement.

Auxiliary. Active sympathizers who provide insurgents aid and support in the form of safe haven and logistical services. This element does not directly participate in combat operations.

Underground. Provides covert and clandestine action and support to the insurgent movement.

Mass Base. The segment of the population who is sympathetic to the insurgent movement and by default passively supports the movement.

Insurgency Fundamentals

Figure J: Five Elements of an Insurgency

Note: The figure on the left depicts the five (5) elements of an insurgency; and the figure on the right depicts the same elements with the plausible proportions of each element.

Weak Points and Fracture Points

Weak Points and Fracture Points represent internal and external flaws inherent to the insurgency that can be exploited by the counterinsurgent. The primary reason for assessing the insurgent strategy is to identify the weak points and fracture points in order to exploit them. By understanding an insurgencies strategy, dynamics, and structure, the successful counterinsurgent can begin to identify and attack these flaws in an coordinated, overall effort.

Weak Points. These are external flaws between the insurgent movement and the population or counterinsurgent. Weak points are key aspects of the insurgency where the application of physical and/or psychological pressure can create a fissure within the weak point. It is important to note that exploiting a single weak point may not fracture the insurgency's movement, but it can reduce the movement's effectiveness. Additionally, any indicator within the eight insurgency dynamics that can be considered basic or undeveloped represents a potential weak point.

Fracture Points. These are internal flaws within the movement and are generally indicative of a basic insurgent strategy. They are individual aspects of the insurgency that represent a 'crack' in the insurgent's structure which counterinsurgents can exploit towards fracturing the insurgency. Each fracture point represents an opportunity to be exploited. Counterinsurgents need to attack multiple fracture points. The effective counterinsurgent will identify and attack several fracture points in a cumulative effort to cause a larger fracture in the movement. It is this collective effort that will have the most impact on disrupting, degrading, and destroying the insurgency. It is also important to understand that some splits in an insurgency can have an adverse impact;

instead of reducing the effectiveness of one insurgency, two movements can be created, and in some cases become even more radicalized in their efforts.

Fracture points can be found throughout an insurgency:

- Leadership
- Internal ideological differences
- Planning and execution of objectives
- Inability to adapt to the environment and geography
- Ineffective coordination with external support
- Inability to achieve sufficient internal support
- Overly rapid or uncoordinated transition and timing of phases
- Overall organization

The Insurgent Strategy Assessment Tool (ISAT)

The Insurgent Strategy Assessment Tool (ISAT) is a matrix that aids the counterinsurgent in capturing the previously information in order to determine the insurgent strategy, current phase (1, 2 or 3 and high/low end), and weak points and fracture points. The effectiveness of the tool is determined by the quality of information related to the insurgency analyzed. The questions included under each of the eight dynamics in the tool below are not prescriptive, and serve only as basic examples. Individual units can, and should, determine sector-specific questions that provide more insight into the nature of local insurgent elements.

Fundamentally, this tool—used in conjunction with ASCOPE3xD and the Root Cause Identification Form—assists the counterinsurgent in identifying the vulnerabilities of the insurgent movement (weak points and fracture points) and forecast its most probable, and most dangerous, courses of action. Properly used, the tool allows counterinsurgents at the tactical and operational level to be more proactive in lethal and non-lethal actions against the insurgency.

ISAT Explanation (Figure K on page 28):

When using the tool respond to the answers in relation to your AO. Use the Yes/No, Unknown, Basic, and Advanced columns. Fill out the table using a check mark to answer each question. Some questions are answered with either a simple "yes" or "no" response and do not require anything further in the Basic and Advanced columns. If the answer cannot be determined, leave it blank or check the Unknown column. If the characteristic is present, but you are in doubt as to whether it indicates a Basic or Advanced strategy, assume Advanced.

It is not necessary or feasible to answer all of these questions for every insurgency. However, by addressing as many as possible we begin to understand (1) how and why the people provide

active/passive support to the enemy; and (2) gain insight on what the insurgent may do next (getting in front of their decision cycle). Additionally, the ISAT (Figure K on the following page) assists the counterinsurgent in determining the right questions to ask, and if other questions should be asked. To determine if the indicator on the ISAT represents a Basic or Advanced strategy, use the following guidelines below:

- **Basic:** Insurgency is new and rudimentary. The item or idea in consideration is present in the insurgency, but with limited or little effectiveness and emphasis.
- **Advanced:** The item or idea in consideration is present in the insurgency, has a sustained presence, and regular effective use and emphasis.

Dynamics of Insurgency	Basic	Advanced
Leadership	Weak leadership at various echelons	Well-disciplined and trained leaders
	Centralized leadership	Decentralized leadership
Ideology	Less focused indoctrination	Focused and effective indoctrination
Objectives	Actions designed for immediate results, rely on high number of low value targets; limited propaganda	Longer term objectives; better reconnaissance; focus on fewer high-value targets; effective propaganda
Environment and Geography	Insurgents do not effectively use human and physical terrain	Insurgents effectively adapt to the environment and have knowledge of the terrain
External Support	Focus more on logistical and sanctuary support	Focus on political and moral support
Internal Support	Rudimentary understanding of local grievances	Advanced understanding of local grievances and ability to address underlying issues
Phases and Timing	Ineffective at shifting between phases of insurgency	Able to prepare logistics, reconnaissance, replacements, messages and means of their delivery
Operational / Organizational Patterns	Unilateral organization and infighting with rival groups; lack of a political wing	Cooperation with other insurgent/criminal organizations, regardless of differences; effective political wing
	Cells and wings are less compartmentalized	Use of "cut-outs" to improve compartmentalization

Insurgency Fundamentals

Figure K: Insurgent Strategy Assessment Tool (ISAT)

Insurgent Strategy Assessment Tool

Insurgent Dynamics and Indicators	Yes/No	UNK	Basic	Advanced
1. LEADERSHIP				
Is the INS leadership experienced and/or disciplined?				
Is the INS leadership effective in controlling and/or inspiring the people?				
2. IDEOLOGY				
Are the leaders well indoctrinated?				
Is the INS ideology focused and appealing to the local population?				
3. OBJECTIVE				
Are the INS attempting to strengthen or build a political wing?				
Do their operational objectives have specific, supporting IO messages?				
4. ENVIRONMENT AND GEOGRAPHY				
Do the INS understand and effectively use local culture to gain support?				
Do the INS use knowledge of local communities & terrain effectively?				
5. EXTERNAL SUPPORT				
Do the INS receive support from an outside, constituted government?				
Are insurgents actively seeking validation from outside entities/actors?				
6. INTERNAL SUPPORT				
Do insurgents have passive support of the local population?				
Do insurgents have active support of the local population?				
7. PHASING AND TIMING				
Are the INS able to shift through phases to capitalize on current events?				
Do INS recruiting efforts expand when people lose faith in the government?				
8. ORGANIZATIONAL & OPERATIONAL PATTERNS				
Do the INS have a robust, active, and committed underground element?				
Are the INS skilled at intelligence gathering?				

OVERALL ASSESSMENT / JUSTIFICATION / NOTES		URBAN	FOCO	PROT.	SUBV.
OVERALL STRATEGY					
PHASE (HIGH OR LOW OR SHIFT)					
FRACTURE POINTS / WEAK POINTS					

Section 4:
Counterinsurgency Fundamentals & Operations

Overview

Counterinsurgency (COIN) is defined as "*Military, paramilitary, [political], economic, psychological and civil action taken by a government to defeat an insurgency*" (FM 3-24.2). The goal of COIN is the physical and psychological separation of the insurgency from the population, thereby denying insurgents freedom of movement, a byproduct of active and passive population support. The strategic sympathies of the population are the ultimate prize for the counterinsurgent. Success is primarily achieved by indentifying the prerequisites that allow the insurgency to exist, addressing the specific root causes underlying those prerequisites, and implementing sustainable political, economic, military, and social solutions.

At the strategic level, COIN operations are guided by the Host Nation's Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) strategy, defined as the "*full range of measures taken by a nation to promote its growth and protect itself from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security*" (FM 3-24.2). A Host Nation's IDAD is oftentimes supported by outside nations executing their Foreign Internal Defense (FID) and Security Force Assistance (SFA) plans. At the operational level, counterinsurgents use Lines of Operation (LOO) to direct and synchronize operations—by conceptual category—when positional reference to enemy forces has little relevance.

At all levels, the conduct of modern COIN operations is guided by basic core principles (The Eight (8) Principles of Counterinsurgency) and conducted primarily using Clear-Hold-Build (C-H-B) Operations. In particular, counterinsurgents must understand the phases of C-H-B and how they impact population, insurgent, and counterinsurgent perspectives. Additionally, both Strike and Population and Resource Control Operations are part of COIN operations and conducted throughout C-H-B. Counterinsurgents must integrate information operations through all phases, implement measurable transition criteria to shift through phases, and develop metrics that reinforce the COIN mindset and accurately measure the true impact of the lines of operation.

Finally, counterinsurgents should partner at all levels, and in all ways possible, with the Host Nation government and Host Nation Security Forces (HNSF). Security Force Assistance (SFA) is essential to developing capable HN and HNSF counterparts who can continue to conduct counterinsurgent operations when the CF elements are no longer on the ground

As Figure L on the following page indicates, once we understand the civil considerations of the operational environment, isolate the prerequisites for an insurgency, and identify the insurgent strategy being used, we continue the COIN IPB process—shifting our focus to the conduct of counterinsurgency operations. This final element of the process will provide basic information

on Lines of Operation, the Principles and Attributes of COIN, basic tools for counterinsurgents to execute Clear-Hold-Build Operations, and guidelines for effective security force assistance.

**Figure L: Counterinsurgency Fundaments and Operations**
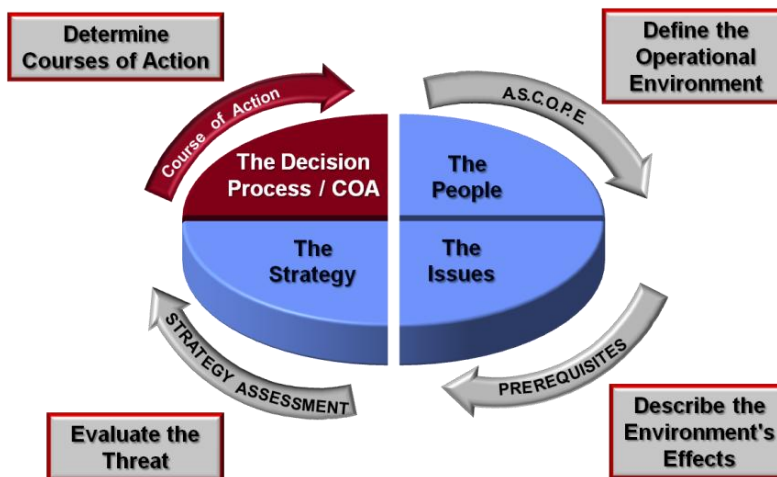
COUNTERINSURGENCY FUNDAMENTALS

Lines of Operation

As mentioned earlier, Lines of Operation provide counterinsurgents a tool through which they can direct and synchronize operations. Each Line of Operation represents a conceptual category through which counterinsurgents seek to undermine the dynamics and strategies of insurgents. Lines of Operation are not exclusive, and should overlap and reinforce each other; additionally, Lines of Operation are not necessarily sequential in nature. If used correctly, they synchronize, unify, and focus the actions of counterinsurgents toward addressing prerequisites for an insurgency and garnering active and passive support of the population.

Note: Both U.S. and NATO doctrine refer to "Lines of Operation" using different nomenclature. FM 3-24 (Counterinsurgency Field Manual) calls them "Logical Lines of Operation," FM 3-24.2 (Tactics in Counterinsurgency) calls them "Lines of Effort," and AJP 3.4.4 (Allied Joint Doctrine for Counterinsurgency) and ISAF call them "Lines of Operation" (See Figure M on the next page). Still other popular references call them "Lines of Action." For our purposes, we will use Lines of Operation.

Figure M: ISAF Lines of Operation (as of September 2011)
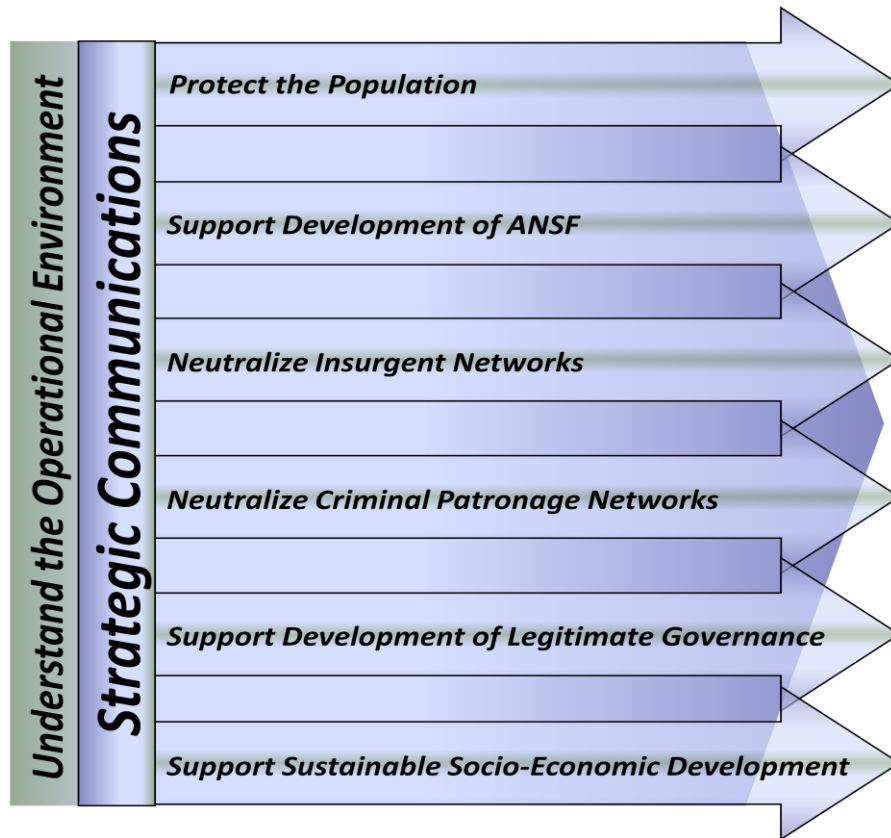
The Principles and Attributes of Counterinsurgency

At the tactical and operational level, effective counterinsurgents embody and implement basic core principles. Derived from historical lessons, the COIN principles and attributes provide guideposts for forces engaged in counterinsurgency operations. These principles directly counter the impact of insurgent dynamics. U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine identifies eight (8) principles, whereas NATO doctrine identifies ten (10) attributes. The lists are very similar, and are both listed below:

The Eight (8) Principles of Counterinsurgency (FM 3-24)

1) **Legitimacy is the Main Objective.** The primary objective of any COIN operation is to foster development of effective governance by a legitimate government. This is achieved through the balanced application of both military and nonmilitary means. Governments described as "legitimate" must be perceived as such by the population.

2) **Unity of Effort is Essential.** Unity of effort must be present at each echelon of a COIN operation. Otherwise, well-intentioned but uncoordinated actions can negate each other or provide vulnerabilities for insurgents to exploit. Ideally, at all levels, a single counterinsurgent—military or nonmilitary—has authority over all agencies involved in operations.

3) **Political Factors are Primary.** Resolving most insurgencies requires a political solution; it is thus imperative that counterinsurgent actions do not hinder achieving that political solution. Political considerations must guide the military's approach, and counterinsurgents should seek to strengthen the Host Nation government's legitimacy.

4) **Counterinsurgents Must Understand the Environment.** This principle underscores the importance of the first aspect of the COIN IPB process. Ultimately, successful conduct of COIN operations depends on thoroughly understanding the society, culture, and relationships ("human terrain") within the operating environment.

5) **Intelligence Drives Operations.** Effective COIN operations are shaped by timely, specific, and reliable intelligence, gathered and analyzed at the lowest level possible and disseminated throughout the force. Without good intelligence, counterinsurgents can cause costly unintended harm; however, with good intelligence, counterinsurgents can surgically dissect an insurgency.

6) **Insurgents Must be Isolated From Their Cause and Support.** Counterinsurgents must isolate the insurgent physically and psychologically from the population and their support networks, as well as address the root causes for an insurgency. Support can be internal and external; for example, insurgent internal support can be mitigated through population support for counterinsurgents, and external support cut off through border operations that interdict incoming resources.

7) **Security Under the Rule of Law is Essential.** The cornerstone of any COIN effort is establishing security for the population. Using a legal system established in line with local culture and practices to deal with insurgents and criminals enhances the Host Nation government's legitimacy. Without rule of law, corruption, extortion, and trafficking (amongst other criminal activities) will undermine counterinsurgent efforts.

8) **Counterinsurgents Should Prepare for a Long-Term Commitment.** Insurgencies are protracted by nature; thus, COIN operations almost always demand considerable expenditures in time, troops, and resources. Ultimately, the people will not actively support the counterinsurgents unless they are convinced they have the means, ability, stamina, and will to win.

Counterinsurgency Fundamentals

The Ten (10) Attributes of COIN (AJP 3.4.4)

Six of the ten attributes are nearly identical to the principles above. Those six are listed below:

1) **Political Primacy** (and a clearly-defined political objective)

2) **The Relevance of Legitimacy**

3) **Intelligence Drives Operations**

4) **Unity of Effort** (the requirement of a coordinated government structure)

5) **Prepare for a Protracted Campaign**

6) **Security Under the Rule of Law is Essential**

The other four attributes are either new, or contain differences, from the eight COIN principles previously describe and therefore merit further explanation:

7) **It is a Struggle for the Population, Not Against the Population.** The population is the main focus and arguably the center of gravity of COIN. To that end, effective Host Nation government information activities such as public affairs should "vaccinate" or insulate the population against insurgent misinformation and disinformation.

8) **Neutralize the Insurgency and Isolate the Insurgents From Their Support.** While the main focus of COIN is to protect the population and secure access for Host Nation agencies, another significant military contribution is neutralizing insurgents. This involves the application of appropriate force to detect, capture, combat, and neutralize irreconcilable insurgents.

9) **Hand Over Responsibility to the Local Forces as soon as is Practicable.** Achieving this requires the development of reliable local leaders and institutions, and capable police and military forces. However, some nations are so vulnerable that there may be no other option but for outside counterinsurgent forces to lead operations for a protracted period of time.

10) **Learn and Adapt Quickly.** An efficient and effective counterinsurgent force is an organization with the ability to learn and adapt more quickly than the insurgents. In this context, the battle between the insurgent and the counterinsurgent represents an iterative action-reaction process; it is competitive learning. The side that adapts quickest will seize the initiative and progressively win control of the operational environment.

Counterinsurgency Fundamentals

CLEAR-HOLD-BUILD OPERATIONS

Overview

Clear-Hold-Build (C-H-B) operations are full-spectrum civil-military operations that combine offensive, defensive, and stability operations with the goal of eliminating the insurgency, protecting the populace, increasing HN capacity and legitimacy, and establishing the rule of law. Each phase of C-H-B operations combines offensive, defensive, and stability operations in varying degrees. Commanders must decide the degree and intensity of these operations in regard to their particular operating environment and tactical situation.

Clear-Hold-Build operations are designed to be conducted in specific, high-priority areas that are experiencing overt insurgent operations. The pattern of Clear-Hold-Build is intended to be conducted area by area, and then spread out into adjacent areas so that zones of security and stability eventually expand into each other. First, counterinsurgents must plan and shape the OE, a process that should include a "working group" comprised of military, civilian, Host Nation, NGOs, and other entities who will be involved in all aspects of C-H-B. Civil-military forces then conduct offensive operations to eliminate guerrilla elements and secure the area. These forces then transition to a defensive posture to allow government, civilian, and military elements to address the prerequisites/root causes of the insurgency and the immediate needs of the population—this happens in the hold and build phases. C-H-B operations then expand outward from this secured area into contested and insurgent dominated areas, while transitioning areas that the HN can secure and govern. In previous conflicts, this strategy of expansion has been known as the 'oil spot strategy'.

Clear-Hold-Build operations aim to develop a long-term, effective Host Nation government framework and presence that secures the people and facilitates meeting their basic needs through legitimate governance. This is accomplished by conducting operations that establish (or reestablish) support of the population in order to provide a relatively secure environment in which the full range of internal development programs can be pursued. All C-H-B operations should be tied to established lines of operation and ultimately be designed to address existing prerequisites in the OE.

This section provides the counterinsurgent with a basic understanding of the fundamentals of Clear-Hold-Build operations as well as supporting operations conducted throughout the varying phases of C-H-B, including transition criteria.

Objectives of Clear-Hold-Build

Clear-Hold-Build operations should be designed with the following operational and tactical objectives in mind. The objectives loosely mirror the COIN principles:

- Create a secure physical and psychological environment

- Address the prerequisites for an insurgency

- Provide a continuous security presence for the local populace

- Eliminate the insurgent presence

- Reinforce political primacy

- Enforce the rule of law

- Rebuild local Host Nation institutions

- Gain populace support

To achieve these objectives and create success that can spread, Clear-Hold-Build operations should not begin by assaulting the main insurgent stronghold. Instead operations should begin by controlling access to the area and then controlling key points within the area. Security and influence can then spread out from these areas. With this in mind, C-H-B operations are conducted in five phases: Shape, Clear, Hold, Build, Transition. While planned and conducted in this generally linear manner, commanders must be flexible and understand that the separate phases of operations will overlap, with activities often conducted simultaneously.

The following pages provide a phase-by-phase examination of the basic offensive, defensive, and stability tasks associated with all five phases of C-H-B: Shape, Clear, Hold, Build, and Transition. Additionally, each section (except Shape, which is where criteria is developed) provides transition criteria counterinsurgents should consult before moving to the next phase. Finally, the Shape Phase includes an explanation of a Stability Working Group (SWG). If possible, the Shape Phase should include the formation of a SWG, or similar civil-military coordination "working group."

Shape Phase

All operations must be thoroughly planned and resourced. During the shape phase, thorough preparations for the following phases will help commanders shape their area of operations appropriately so that successful C-H-B operations can be conducted. Commanders must first conduct a detailed analysis of their area of operation using ASCOPE3xD. Considerable effort must be given to identify the existing prerequisites and how to address them. C-H-B operations require a substantial amount of time and resources, as well as unity of effort by all involved participants. By identifying and organizing key local players and resources in the shape phase, commanders will be better prepared for a long-term effort.

Where to begin C-H-B operations should also be a priority consideration during the shape phase; this usually correlates with areas demonstrating the prerequisites allowing for the greatest insurgent freedom of movement. Exercising control of key human and physical terrain is essential to the successful conduct of COIN operations. In counterinsurgency campaigns, both the insurgent and the counterinsurgent are vying for the support of the population, or human terrain. As such, it is imperative for commanders conducting COIN operations to secure the population during every phase of the operation.

In order to accomplish this, many commanders choose to establish combat outposts (COPs) in their area of operations. A COP is *a reinforced observation post that can conduct limited combat operations* (FM 3-90). In COIN operations, combat outposts are often company and platoon-sized bases inside of insurgent-influenced territory. These combat outposts promote ties to the local community, and thus deny insurgents freedom of movement among the population. Commanders should use a combination of population considerations (density and prerequisites), insurgent considerations (tactical value and insurgent phase), and counterinsurgent considerations (key infrastructure and government facilities) to help determine possible COP locations in the OE. Much of this will depend on the discretion of the local commander, as well as where the commander decides to initiate C-H-B operations.

During the shape phase, commanders should also plan for proper transition between the phases by identifying measurable transition criteria for moving on to the next phase, as well as criteria for moving back to previous phases if necessary. Transition criteria should be tied to operational and tactical objectives, and should coincide with the proper preparation of conditions for success in the next phase. Overall, as C-H-B operations progress, focus should inevitably shift from military focused operations to civil and civil control operations as HN capacity and capability increases and root causes, grievances, and prerequisites are addressed. This should produce an inverse relationship between Coalition and HN capacity: as HN capacity increases, Coalition capacity should decrease.

Shape Phase - The Stability Working Group

Proper civil-military planning between Coalition and Host Nation elements (unity of effort) is best achieved by the formation of a Stability Working Group (SWG) early in the planning cycle during the shape phase. The make-up of an SWG will evolve over time—with Coalition elements initially in the lead, then likely passing responsibility to HN Security Forces, and finally to a fully staffed and capable local government entity (see the evolution of the SWG in Figure N below).

Figure N: Sample Evolution of a Stability Working Group
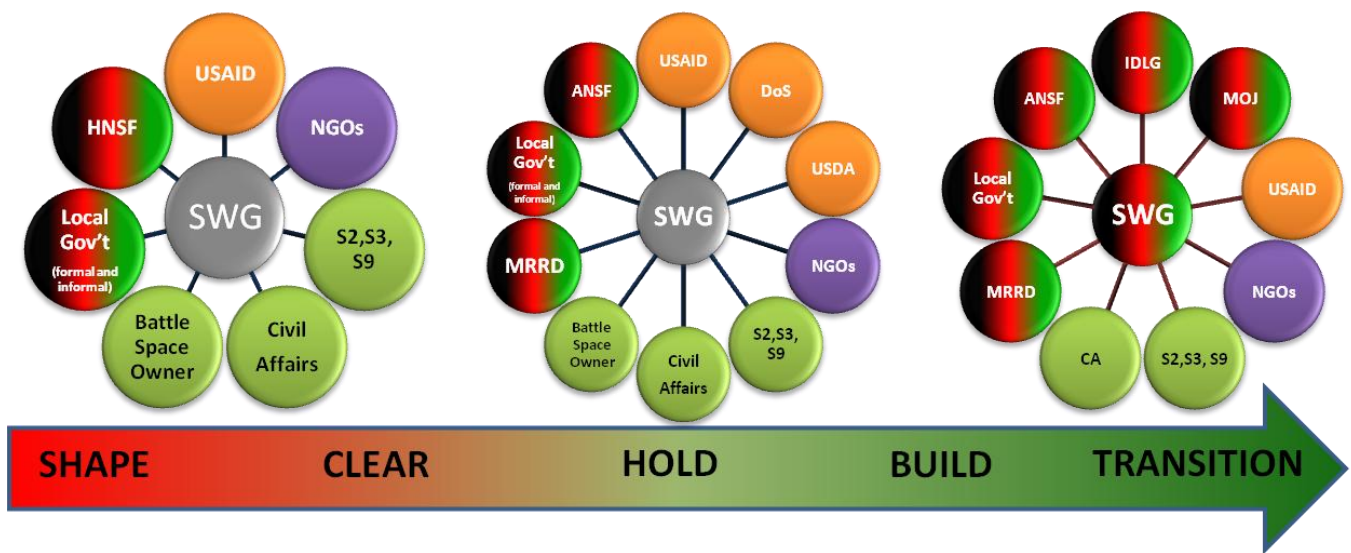
The SWG should be made up of all relevant actors within a given AO including, but not limited to, Coalition Forces (specifically the Battle Space Owner, Intelligence Officer, Operations Officer and Civil Affairs Officer), representatives from Coalition governmental organizations such as the State Department and USAID, local HNSF commanders from all security elements, and local governmental representation—including governors, directors, and ministerial representatives.

The SWG works on a consensus decision-making model with no formal chair but with each representative holding the others accountable. The SWG will eventually evolve into the local government entity once both the local HNSF elements and local government leader(s) have gained confidence and proficiency; with the HNSF able to provide security and the local government able to provide for the general welfare of the population. Once the SWG has reached this stage the local government representative will become the natural chair of the SWG, or the SWG will dissolve all together.

Clear-Hold-Build Operations

SWG's can use the tools outlined in this *Guidebook* in order to fully understand the operational environment, identify root causes, assess the insurgency, and develop coordinated efforts to stabilize the AO and advance counterinsurgent lines of operation.

It is critical that an SWG is formed early in the shape phase of COIN Operations for several reasons. First, the SWG can bring unity of effort to the overall mission allowing counterinsurgents to capitalize on each others' strengths. Where CF and HNSF can bring security to an area, USAID can bring development dollars, USGA can bring agricultural expertise, IGO's can bring financing expertise offering micro-finance opportunities, and the local government team can bring local knowledge. Second, the SWG can also be used to hold each group accountable so that both financial and personnel resources are devoted to actual root causes rather than the pet projects of individual players. All of these resources must be coordinated as an integrated program of solutions during the planning phase, in order to address root causes.

Clear Phase

Offensive operations are predominant during the clear phase. Clear is a tactical task that requires commanders to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance in an assigned area. This will begin to physically and psychologically separate insurgents from the population by denying them support, safe havens, and freedom of movement. The force does this by destroying, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of insurgent combatants and leaders from the area, and creating an initial zone of security. This task is most effectively accomplished through targeted raids, clear-in-zone, or cordon-and-search operations.

Once guerilla forces have been eliminated, removing the insurgent infrastructure begins. As long as insurgent leadership, auxiliaries, and underground persist, they will continue to co-opt the population and undermine the HN government. Commanders must look to continuously disrupt and isolate these insurgent forces as well. Particular care should be taken to prevent insurgents from re-entering cleared areas, which can include the establishment of Combat Outposts (COPs). Once counterinsurgents have established their bases, they must not remain static. They should patrol aggressively while maximizing interaction with the populace (eg. dismounted patrols). Defensive and stability operations should not be neglected during this phase, and should focus on maintaining gains and preparing for future phases.

Sample Transition Criteria from Clear-to-Hold Phase:

- Guerrilla activity within a cleared area has been largely neutralized.

- Military and police forces have control of the area.

- HN government agencies enter area and poised to regain control.

Hold Phase

The hold phase is largely defensive in nature, though offensive operations continue and preparations begin for increased stability operations. In this phase, cleared areas freed from enemy control are held by ensuring that they remain under the control of the HN government with an adequate HNSF presence. Ideally, but not always, this phase is conducted with HNSF in the lead. The success or failure of this phase depends, first, on effectively and continuously securing the population, and, second, on effectively establishing or reestablishing a HN government presence at the local level. Operations during this phase should focus on the following:

- Securing the population.

- Addressing the prerequisites for an insurgency.

- Establishing bases amongst the people.

- Securing key infrastructure.

- Eliminating insurgent leaders, infrastructure, and support.

- Supporting HNSF operations.

- Improve/develop essential services and economic development in accordance with ASCOPE3xD.

- Train and support local security forces.

Sample Transition Criteria from Hold-to-Build Phase:

- Security vulnerabilities of key infrastructure and population centers are addressed to protect against sabotage and attack. The insurgent organizational support infrastructure (auxiliary) has been neutralized or eliminated.

- A HN government presence is established and the local populace is willing to support HN presence and tolerate CF assistance.

- Military forces begin to transition its control to local police in preparation for operations in the next planned adjacent area.

- Military and civilian elements of internal development are in place in the cleared/held area and ready to conduct efforts identified in the shape and build phases.

- Local security force recruiting and training programs occurring.

Clear-Hold-Build Operations

Build Phase

During the build phase, transition to stability operations takes priority—and the work of the Stability Working Group should be coming to fruition. Operations should be designed to resolve the root causes that led to the insurgent's freedom of movement. Efforts during this phase should be aimed at long-term, lasting impacts as operations shift away from military control to civil control. Activities should focus on building capacity and capability of HNSF and local institutions to deliver services, advance the rule of law, and nurture civil society.

These activities require robust coordination and cooperation with outside civilian and development entities (SWG). People who do not believe they are secure from insurgent intimidation, coercion, and reprisals will not risk overtly supporting counterinsurgent efforts. Only the population—physically and psychologically—decides when it feels secure and confident enough in the viability of HNSF and the HN government. As such, operations during the Build phase should focus on the following:

- Promoting legitimacy and viability of HN authority.

- Development and empowerment of local leaders.

- Continued security of the population, key leaders, and key infrastructure; led by HNSF.

- Transitioning of authority to HN government and security forces; shifting to advisory and support for CF civil-military elements.

- Continued training, equipping, and advising police forces.

- Continued efforts to improve essential services and economic development.

- Continued operations to degrade, disrupt, and destroy insurgent leadership and the underground, ideally led by HNSF with CF support.

Sample Transition Criteria from Build-to-Transition Phase:

- Local security forces protect area from guerrillas.

- Local government elements and security forces can sustain themselves with advisory assistance within the categories of:

  - Systems in place for community to call for rapid assistance if needed.

  - Local police and government assume role in rule of law.

  - Local government with local leadership assume role in providing essential services, dispute resolution, and infrastructure development.

Clear-Hold-Build Operations

Transition Phase

The end-state of C-H-B operations is the successful transition of an area of operations from CF predominance to HN autonomy. During the earlier shape phase, commanders should have identified key criteria for transitioning to HN control. Critical objectives and goals will have been met, based on the measurable effectiveness and realistic impact of C-H-B operations. By this phase, insurgent presence is eliminated from the area, and their ability to influence the population destroyed. Life will have returned mostly to normal and a viable, legitimate HN government will have been established, to include competent leaders and capable local security forces. Essential services and a sustainable economy will be in place. Ultimately the population will have been completely and irreversibly separated from the insurgency, root causes will have been addressed, and prerequisites removed.

Sample Transition Criteria to Complete the Transition Phase:

- Local security forces are capable of defending and securing area, with minimal assistance from CF.

- Security is at a level that allows the population to pursue routine daily activities.

- Local government is meeting the needs and expectations of the people, addressing prerequisites and the underlying root causes.

- Major portion of the population accepts or supports the local government.

- Population has a method to air and resolve grievances.

Supporting Operations to Clear-Hold-Build

A number of ancillary operations can be conducted in support of C-H-B operations, which include:

- Strike Operations

- Population and Resource Control Operations

- Information Operations

Although these operations can be conducted outside of C-H-B, these operations are also designed to supplement C-H-B operations by specifically targeting and isolating the insurgency, justifying the legitimacy of CF and HN efforts in the eyes of the population, and separating the insurgency from the population. This especially applies to Information Operations, which should be conducted continually and aggressively during every phase of C-H-B.

Strike Operations. These are short duration, offensive, tactical operations conducted in insurgent contested areas or controlled areas (often called "counterterrorism operations"). They are targeted operations designed to find, fix, and destroy the five insurgent elements. Strike operations seek to isolate, interdict and/or destroy insurgent elements, sanctuary, support, infiltration routes, and lines of communication. Strike operations may also be used as a means to encourage reconcilable insurgents to the negotiating table. During C-H-B operations, commanders can use strike operations to augment and enhance offensive operations and efficacy.

Population and Resource Control (PRC) Operations. These are government actions to protect the populace and its materiel resources from insurgents, to deny insurgents access to the populace and material resources, and to identify and eliminate the insurgents, their organization, their activities, and their influence. In C-H-B operations, PRC operations should support defensive and stability operations in particular by assisting in establishing/reestablishing a state of law and order, and preserving security in cleared areas. Typical PRC operations include census taking, travel restrictions, curfews, checkpoints, pass/ID systems, and control of select resources such as food, fuel, and medical supplies, as well as vehicles and key equipment. Ideally, PRC operations are conducted by HNSF, particularly police forces; but in areas with high insurgent activity, these efforts will be supported by CF.

Information Operations (IO). These are a range of activities designed to convey selected information and indicators to specific audiences to influence their emotions, motives, reasoning, and ultimately their behavior. IO should occur during every phase of C-H-B and has four main audiences or targets: the population, the insurgents, the counterinsurgents, and the regional/international media. The objective of information operations is to induce or reinforce ideas that are favorable to CF, HNSF, and the HN government, while justifying their activities and delegitimizing those of the insurgency to these four audiences. Commanders should take care to tailor IO messages specifically to each line of operation conducted throughout each phase of C-H-B. Additionally, whenever possible, IO responsibilities should be pushed down to the lowest levels, to ensure timely, targeted, and effective local messages ("local messaging").

Clear-Hold-Build Operations

SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE

Overview

Security Force Assistance (SFA) is defined *as the unified action to generate, employ and sustain local, host-nation or regional security forces in support of a legitimate authority* (FM 3-07.1). SFA improves the capacity and capability of Host Nation and/or regional security forces.

SFA is designed to build both the capacity and capability of the HN government in pursuit of its Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) strategy. Development programs that are carefully planned, implemented, and properly publicized can serve the interests of population groups and deny exploitable issues to the insurgency. Effective security programs provide the atmosphere of stability within which development can take place.

Security Force Assistance includes the operations, training, planning, sustaining and assessing of Host Nation Security Forces (HNSF). Partnering units must become familiar with the benefits of partnering, including what assistance the CF element can build within the HN element, and what skills and benefits the HN element brings to the fight. There are several methods of cooperation units must become familiar with, including advising (or advisor teams), partnering (or partner units) and augmenting. Partnering units utilize the teach-coach-advise methodology both to build capacity and capability within the HN element, as well as to continually assess the HN element.

While working with HN elements, partner units should become familiar with, utilize and learn the 10 Principles of Advisors (FM 3-07.1) as well as capitalize on positive practices, and avoid negative practices, learned from COIN experiences. Finally, partner units must recognize that their HN counterparts have the advantage of keen cultural and situational awareness within the OE from which partner units can learn.

Benefits of Partnering

Partnered units should recognize that both HN and CF elements bring different, and oftentimes complementary, assets to the fight. CF elements can bring advanced technological weapons support as well as advanced intelligence collection efforts, a strong NCO Corps, and professionalization and ethos to the HN element; while the HN element can bring knowledge of the local area, language and customs culminating in sharp situational awareness, and a network of HUMINT sources from which the CF element can benefit.

Too often, counterinsurgents only facilitate the information flow from the CF element to the HN element. Instead, the advisor element should serve as a link between the two; analyzing information, sharing intelligence, and evaluating capability of the HN element and bringing

appropriate resources to bear from the CF element. This would also include passing the cultural and situational understanding of the HN to the CF element (see Figure O below). While it is important for the CF element to conduct effective training to build HN capability, the HN element can also be utilized to teach the CF element, instructing classes on weapons, local customs, language and geography (OE considerations).

Figure O: HN/CF Partnership Benefits
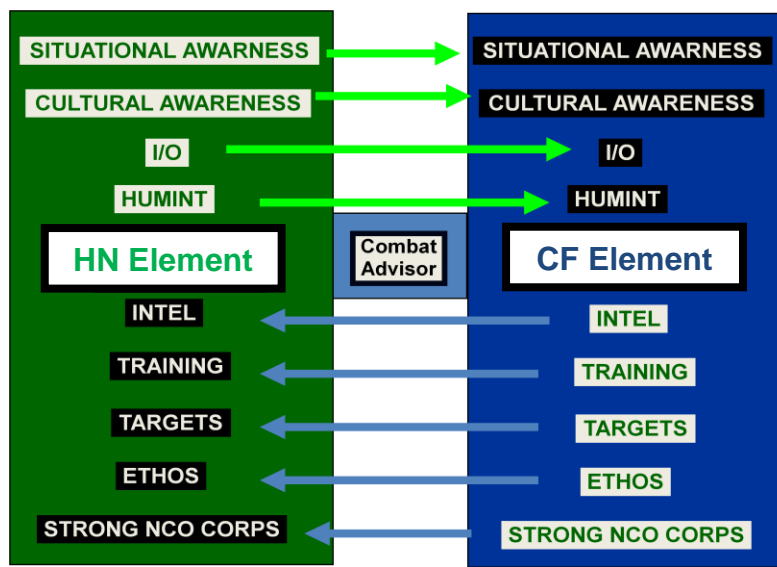
Partnering Roles

Host Nation and partnered elements can work together under several arrangements each having its own unique set of advantages.

Advisors or Advisor Teams. These individuals or teams are made up of conventional or special forces and can be attached to HN elements operating both as trainers to the HN element and as an additional asset. CF advisor teams bring many resources to bear, such as indirect fire, close air support, and MEDEVAC capabilities (and other interagency assets).

Full Partnership. Elements can also work together as full partner units where a HN element and CF element are jointly responsible for the same battle space. Either element can take the lead in operations depending on the capacity and capability of the HN element, as well as the political arrangement.

Augmented. While less frequently utilized, individual soldiers or groups of soldiers from partner elements can be augmented into HN elements and vice versa (see Figure P below). Key HN leaders can be augmented into a CF element, or entire HN squads can be augmented into a CF platoon. Under this arrangement, the augmented HN elements becoming part of the CF element

(or vice versa). The intent of this method is to train and expose key HN personnel to CF operations so that those HN augmenters can return to their home element as key trainers. CF elements can then be augmented into HN elements, as capability expands.

Figure P: Augmentation of a Sample Unit
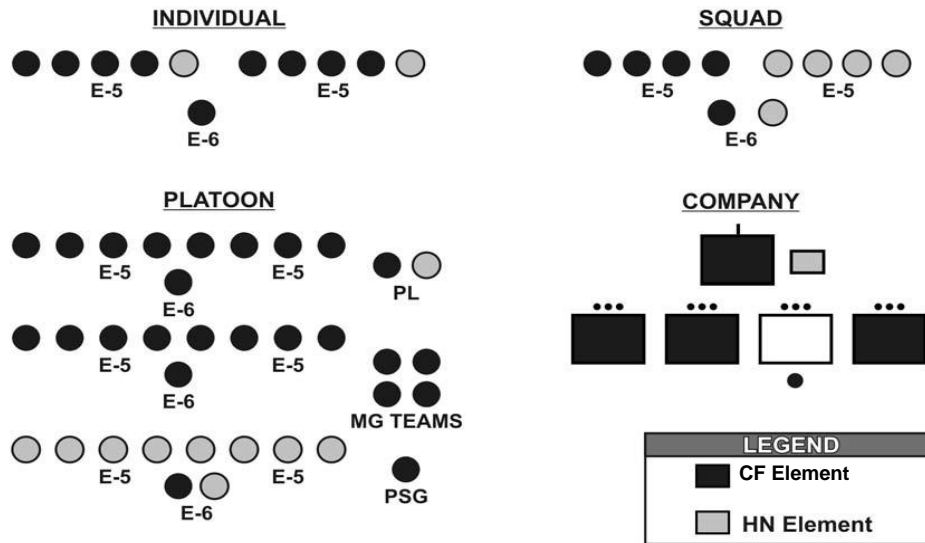
Teach-Coach-Advise

Security Force Assistance teams utilize the Teach-Coach-Advise model when partnering with HN elements across the four lines of operation: Training, Planning, Operations and Sustainment. During the Teach Phase, CF elements serve as direct trainers, instructing classes for HN elements and more detailed "train the trainer" classes for selected HN personnel. As part of the Teach Phase, CF instructors demonstrate tasks and answer any questions raised. In the Coach Phase, CF elements allow the HN to execute the tasks at a "walk" pace. CF instructors are available to make on the spot corrections, provide direction and guidance and initiate retraining where necessary. Once HN elements have gained proficiency, CF elements transition to the Advise Phase, taking a more "hands-off" approach allowing HN leaders to lead training or operations. CF instructors remain present to review plans and continue to participate in missions monitoring execution of HN elements including all skills associated with the task or operation. When a HN element reaches full proficiency, CF elements will have a more limited role.

Security Force Assistance