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ARTICLE

Comparative Models of Counterinsurgency: British and French Traditions and their Applicability in Contemporary Conflicts

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Comparative Models of Counterinsurgency: British and French Traditions and their Applicability in Contemporary Conflicts

Luis Alexander Montero Moncada

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to carry out a comparative analysis between the British and French counterinsurgency models. The purpose is to identify the differences and relevant aspects between both models, in order to address the requirements of counterinsurgency in contemporary conflicts, which are full of multiple elements of gray zone, extremely irregular actors and means. To achieve this, first an overview of counterinsurgency will be presented, then the British model will be examined in detail, followed by a review of the French model. Finally, comments will be made to highlight some of the most significant aspects of the application of these models in the context of contemporary counterinsurgency warfare, which is characterized by extremely ambiguous and nebulous scenarios.

Keywords: *War, Counterinsurgency, Insurgency, Models, NewCOIN, Defense.*

Introduction

Understanding counterinsurgency is one of the most relevant challenges in the study of warfare, throughout the 20th century and so far in the 21st century. Conflicts, based on the participation of rebel actors following patterns of irregular warfare, continue to exist rather than disappear and even become more complex in operational environments extremely difficult to frame with conventional strategies.

This scenario is characterized by asymmetric and hybrid conflicts, where insurgent groups transcend the boundaries of the traditionally irregular, as proposed by Mao Zedong, also known as Mao Tse-tung, and become protagonists that blur the line between civilian and military. They face great difficulties in applying the rules of the law of war and rely on multiple transnational processes that affect both the sustainability of their insurgent

actions and their ability to use fire, intelligence and knowledge of the adversary. In addition, there is a growing convergence with other illegal groups. All this is occurring in a State that is much more reactive than in the past.

For this reason, the study of counterinsurgency becomes a priority and the identification of the challenges in current scenarios is of vital importance. In this sense, this paper aims to carry out a comparative analysis between the British and French counterinsurgency models in order to identify the differences between the two approaches and to find useful elements that can be applied in contemporary contexts, characterized by multiple gray zone elements, as well as by extremely irregular agents and means.

Thus, the article was structured in four main parts. First, the generalities of counterinsurgency were presented from a theoretical perspective, in order to establish a frame of reference for the discussion. Second, a detailed review of the British counterinsurgency model was conducted, addressing its origin, the challenges that motivated its development and its current state. Third, the French counterinsurgency model was examined, following the same approach used for the British model. Fourth, concluding remarks were offered that identified the most relevant aspects of counterinsurgency that could be applied to contemporary conflicts.

Finally, through this comparative analysis, it is hoped that a more complete and enriching view of counterinsurgency will be obtained, providing readers with tools and knowledge to address the challenges faced in today's disputes.

General Theoretical Context of Counterinsurgency

Counterinsurgency is, in essence, the political-military action aimed at countering the effort of a rebel side against a central authority. This usually employs guerrilla tactics, either in a traditional or contemporary sense, while attempting to promote political, economic and social action within a segment of the population.

In order to carry out a conceptual construction, it is necessary to specify, in the first instance, what insurgency represents, which is defined as an armed rebellion against a constituted authority. In this case, the armed actors, who are part of the rebellion, are not necessarily recognized as belligerents or, in a narrower sense, as exclusive parties to an international conflict. Likewise, the CIA's Insurgency Analysis Guide defines it as an actor that poses "a protracted political-military confrontation with the objective of supplanting or displacing the legitimacy of a constituted government or occupying political power, and partially or totally controlling the resources of a territory, through the use of irregular military force and illegal political organizations".¹

Despite the specificity of the concepts, counterinsurgency is often confused with other terms such as guerrilla or subversion, which are utilitarian categories. Guerrilla refers to the tactical and disaggregated use of force, being one of the components of Mao's protracted people's war doctrine and the first step in the sequence of guerrilla warfare, war of movement and war of position.² It refers to small, highly mobile, easily camouflaged units with the mission of permanently harassing larger units. This is done to weaken their strength and will to fight, deny them rest and make supplying them difficult.

Subversion is part of an armed, rebellious and oppositional movement that seeks to change the status quo or the existing order in institutional, legal and political terms. It is not limited to a tactical guerrilla struggle; on the contrary, it can employ any resource at its disposal to achieve the objective of eroding the status quo.³ Its methods may include terrorism, gray zone

1 Central Intelligence Agency, "Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency" (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2011), <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP87ToH127R000300220005-6.pdf>

2 Mao Tse-Tung, "Selección de Escritos Militares" (Pekín: Ediciones en Lenguas Extranjeras, 1967), <https://www.iberlibro.com/Selecci%C3%B3n-escritos-militares-Mao-Tse-Tung-Ediciones/30909851940/bd#%3Fgclid=1&pid=4>

3 Rafael Calduch, "Dinámica de la Sociedad Internacional" (Universidad Complutense de Madrid: Centro de Estudios Ramón Areces, 1993), <https://www.ucm.es/rrii-e-historia-global/libro-dinamica-de-la-sociedad-internacional-1>

warfare, economic boycott or diplomatic isolation, as well as any political action that questions the legitimacy of official institutions.

Thus, an uprising may employ irregular warfare tactics, although not necessarily. It may even seek a radical alteration in the established order. According to Ehrlich,⁴ there may be cases of rebel movements seeking to return to the past, which does not necessarily imply destabilization. In any case, counterinsurgency faces a complex and challenging context. This is one in which the rebellion uses guerrilla tactics and, at the same time, seeks to modify the status quo, which would also be considered subversion. It is in the context where insurgency, guerrilla and subversion are combined that the counterinsurgency effort is much more demanding.

Given that insurgency is older than guerrilla tactics, which are little more than two centuries old, in doctrinal terms, it is in the 20th century that the concept acquires incredible force. The processes of decolonization and the political and ideological influence of the Cold War gave decisive impetus to the emergence of insurgent conflicts in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. As a result, this period saw the greatest theorization of the way in which states and their military forces should face this challenge through counterinsurgency.

British Counterinsurgency: The Origin of the Trail

British counterinsurgency is not based on a manual, but on colonial experience, which can be seen in the works of Nagl⁵ and Mockaitis,⁶ who emphasized the policing role that the imperial army was to play in the

4 Christian Ehrlich, "Insurgencia Criminal y Contrainsurgencia: Aplicación de métodos de contrainsurgencia moderna en territorios controlados por grupos criminales" (México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estratégicas de la Armada de México, 2017), https://cesnav.uninav.edu.mx/cesnav/ININVESTAM/docs/docs_analisis/da_13-17.pdf

5 John Nagl, "Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam" (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/L/b03649905.html>

6 Thomas Mockaitis, "The origins of British Counterinsurgency" (Small Wars and insurgencies 1 (3), 1990), <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592319008422956>

British colonies. Moreover, from these studies, it is clear that the military factor could not be separated from a dialogue with the colonial civilian authorities in a way that complemented the military effort. This principle became one of the fundamentals of counterinsurgency, even to this day. On the other hand, Beckett points to the period between 1900 and 1945 as the time of the “roots of British counterinsurgency”, where an attempt is made to formalize the British model by establishing principles and objectives.⁷

However, Colonel Charles Callwell was a pioneer in formalizing the counterinsurgency described by Beckett. In his book “Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice”, Callwell characterized colonial wars as a completely new type of conflict for European armies, accustomed to conventional engagements with large armies and considering the operational variables of a conventional army. In Callwell’s words, Small Wars are “all campaigns except those in which both sides consist of regular troops. It includes expeditions against savage and semi-civilized races by disciplined soldiers, campaigns undertaken to put down rebellions, and guerrilla warfare”.⁸

It is important to mention that Callwell does not claim that colonial wars are “small” in their extent or level of commitment in response, but rather a simple criterion to differentiate them from European wars. According to the type of challenge, the author proposes three types of colonial counterinsurgency wars: campaigns of conquest or annexation, campaigns against insurrections in conquered territories, and campaigns of revenge or expulsion of territorial threats.⁹

An important military factor in Callwell’s classification is the technological superiority of the European armies, which had organized cavalry and

7 Jorge Delgado, “La doctrina contrainsurgente británica y su influencia en la política de defensa y seguridad democrática” (Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes, 2007), <https://repositorio.uniandes.edu.co/handle/1992/23518>

8 Charles Callwell, “Small Wars: Their principles & Practice” (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), https://books.google.com.pe/books?id=YwQwKGWdPaoC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ViewAPI&hl=es&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

9 Ibid.

artillery, while the enemy, hardly considered an army, had a tribal structure without military training or organization, and was armed with arrows and spears. Consequently, the main test of counterinsurgency, at this stage, was not a powerful adversary, but logistical challenges such as supply, troop relief, sanitation and relations with the colonial political authorities.¹⁰

Additionally, it establishes principles that later became the British doctrinal basis. These include the relocation of sectors of the population in counterinsurgency wars, so that the opponent loses an essential element of support or, possibly, its center of gravity. He also highlights the critical role of intelligence in an environment that is much more diffuse and difficult to characterize than conventional warfare.¹¹

For his part, General Sir Charles Gwynn, a British Army officer, also addressed the difficulties of counterinsurgency and partially took up Callwell's ideas on the essentially policing roles of colonial armies. Gwynn emphasized the importance of restoring civilian authority rather than establishing or creating it, which marked a departure from one of Callwell's proposed approaches.¹²

What Gwynn and Callwell fully agree on is the central role of the population in counterinsurgency conflicts, which are essentially political in nature and have a high sociological impact. According to Gwynn, insurgents take advantage of the civilian population to camouflage themselves and become invisible,¹³ which marks a significant difference compared to conventional wars. In both types of warfare, the use of force plays a leading role and results are sought through the use of force. However, in counterinsurgency wars, the military objective is achieved by balancing the use of force with the pursuit of political objectives.¹⁴

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Charles Gwynn, "Imperial Policing" (Macmillan and Company, 1934), https://books.google.com.pe/books/about/Imperial_Policing.html?id=49Lx_0a709AC&redir_esc=y

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

This concern is central to Gwynn's thinking and is reflected in his four recognized principles. These include the total subordination of military authorities in charge of the counterinsurgency effort to civilian authorities, cooperation between civilian and military authority without the former abandoning military action, the minimum necessary use of force, and determination and promptness in the employment of military power to avoid delays being interpreted as weakness.¹⁵ It is important to mention that, although "Imperial Policing" was not an official doctrine, Gwynn's paper provided a detailed analysis of several British colonial campaigns, becoming an influential work in counterinsurgency theory.

According to French,¹⁶ during the wars of decolonization in the 1950s and 1960s, British thinking focused on the concept of "Brush Fire Wars." Furthermore, Newsinger¹⁷ argues that it was evident that one of the main obstacles of this period was the diversity of the operational theaters where decolonial uprisings were taking place, which required specific operational expertise on the part of each commander. The second challenge, in this type of counterinsurgency warfare, was the model of administration. The British crown aimed to maintain its influence over its former colonies, so priority was given to the maintenance of civil authority and the application of British Common Law as pillars of the management model.¹⁸ Although military employment was the predominant option, British counterinsurgent thinking during this period remained faithful to earlier theory, seeking the primacy of political over military authority. As a result, coordination and cooperation between deployed British forces and local civilian and police authorities was facilitated. The third challenge was to adequately separate civilians from the direct influence of insurgent groups. This was of paramount importance, but not easy to achieve, so it was necessary to

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ David French, "The British Way: In Counter-Insurgency 1945-1967" (Oxford University Press, 2011) <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-british-way-in-counter-insurgency-1945-1967-9780199587964?cc=us&lang=en&#>

¹⁷ John Newsinger, "British Counterinsurgency" (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137316868>

¹⁸ Ibid.

accurately calculate the use of military force, ensuring that it was only the minimum required.¹⁹ Finally, intelligence played an essential and cross-cutting role in overcoming all the aforementioned challenges, so it had to be strengthened as much as possible, providing it with high quality human and technical means.²⁰

In this period, the contributions of Brigadier General Sir Robert Thomson, Julian Paget and Frank Kitson are paramount. According to Thomson,²¹ counterinsurgency during the Cold War not only represents an anti-colonial challenge, but is heavily influenced by Soviet and Chinese communism. Therefore, it is crucial to understand Eastern texts and, in some cases, Mao's thought. In addition, a carefully crafted counterinsurgency campaign plan with a clear methodology must be devised, rather than isolated or uncoordinated actions. In this regard, local authorities must have a defined political objective that allows them to use the legal framework to their advantage. The defeat of political subversion should be prioritized over armed subversion. Finally, it is necessary to define and secure the base areas of insurgent action.

Julian Paget,²² for his part, distinguishes three phases in counterinsurgency warfare. The first is characterized by popular mobilization, due to past or present socio-political grievances. At this stage, it becomes clear that the management of the insurgent threat must be primarily political. The second occurs when the enemy exceeds the capabilities of civil authority. At this point, Paget suggests that a state of emergency be declared in order to have the necessary tools to deal forcefully with the uprising. This implies using the most efficient and creative means to separate the insurgency from the population and move to a military offensive. The third involves

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Robert Thomson, "Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam" (London: FA Praeger, 1966), https://books.google.com.pe/books/about/Defeating_Communist_Insurgency.html?id=KVvbAAAAMAJ&redir_esc=y

²² Julian Paget 1967 "Counter-Insurgency Operations, Techniques of Guerrilla Warfare" (New York: Walker and Co., 1967), <https://www.iberlibro.com/Counter-Insurgency-Operations-Techniques-Guerrilla-Warfare-Julian/973830155/bd>

the coordinated action of all available military resources. It seeks to ensure separation between the civilian population and the insurgent enemy, establish a unified command and make full use of intelligence. For these stages to develop, the full employment of a triad composed of civilians, police and military must be ensured.²³

The third author on the scene is Frank Kitson, who proposes that any counterinsurgent understanding must be based on a full understanding of Mao. According to Kitson, insurgency rests on three pillars: the party, the weapons, and the population. Consequently, operational analysis must focus on the coordination of military effort and civilian agencies. He also stresses the essential need for effective control of the population.²⁴

In the 1990s and during the second Iraq war, an interesting period of updating was observed in British counterinsurgency.²⁵ Based on its own experiences and compared to France and the United States (US), the British command, according to Dixon, proposed six elements for counterinsurgency planning. The first focuses on the political dimension of counterinsurgency warfare, emphasizing the need to ensure the supremacy of the political over any other factor. The second involves establishing an efficient governmental base from which to develop policies and make decisions to quell the insurgency. The third seeks to strengthen intelligence processes and extend their scope to information operations. The fourth, following tradition, seeks to separate the insurgent from his civilian support base. The fifth involves neutralizing the insurgent threat through the full use of military power. Finally, the sixth element, associated with the concept of stability, involves long-term planning of actions that discourage insurgent activities and support base.²⁶

Lessons learned from the Iraq wars led to a new process of adjustment to the counterinsurgency model. As a result, the previous six elements were

23 Ibid.

24 Frank Kitson, "Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peace-Keeping" (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), <https://files.libcom.org/files/low-intensity%20operations.pdf>

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

transformed into a seven-step model, which introduced one new element and disaggregated another. Thus, the phase of obtaining and securing the consent of the civilian population was incorporated, which strengthens the focus on effective communication with the people. In addition, the role of intelligence was separated from information operations for greater potency and integration.

Finally, contemporary British models for counterinsurgency warfare are formalized, unlike previous periods, in official Ministry of Defense (MINDEF) publications.²⁷ This perspective emphasizes the analysis of the enemy, based on four elements: ideology, narrative, motivation and objectives.

Ideology emerges as the structural factor and the starting point of the insurgency. Understanding it is vital for counterinsurgency planning, as it indicates the political and psychological cohesion of the insurgents, as well as the ability to influence the population. Ideological strength has a directly proportional effect on public opinion and may even affect the foreign policy of the threatened state. If it is weak or incoherent, the counterinsurgency strategy can take advantage of the opportunity to divide the insurgent enemy.²⁸

The narrative is equally important, as it is the mechanism for constructing a “post-truth” that erodes the institutional legitimacy required by the insurgent adversary. Through this, it seeks to mobilize the population, blame the State, ideologically unify the community and gain its support for the enemy’s violent expression.²⁹

Motivation refers to objective conditions, such as inequality, poverty, lack or precariousness of political rights or unemployment, which become the mechanism for the narrative to materialize.³⁰

27 Ministry of Defense, “Intelligence, Counter-intelligence and Security Support to Joint Operations JPD 2-00” (UK Ministry of Defence, 2023), https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1178940/JDP_2_00_Ed_4_web.pdf

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

Objectives constitute the last element, which usually have two clear characteristics: strategic design to be long-lasting and have the greatest possible impact on the population, as well as the pursuit of reforms, changes in government, and resistance to external aggression and even territorial secession. Based on this taxonomy of objectives, insurgency can be classified into conspiratorial movements, rural, urban or identity-based armed emphasis.³¹

As for timing, the British model understands that the insurgent adversary will seek to prolong the duration of hostilities as much as possible, affecting the will to fight of the counterinsurgent forces, their legitimacy in the eyes of the population, making them easy prey to black propaganda and pressuring them to make operational and strategic mistakes. However, extending the time of operations too long can also work against the insurgency, as it will hinder the overburdened sustainment function.

Finally, the British manual proposes eleven principles of counterinsurgency, which reflect much of the experience to date:³²

- Political primacy
- Development and promotion of legitimacy in the host state
- Handing over responsibility to local forces as soon as possible
- Safeguarding the population
- Thoroughly understand the Operational Environment (AO), especially from the cognitive domain
- Isolate and defeat the adversary militarily
- Operate in accordance with international and local law
- Prepare for enduring and sustained operations
- Learn and adapt
- Seek joint efforts
- Flexibility and adaptability in the use of force

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

French Counterinsurgency Model: Dissimilar Experiences

The French counterinsurgency model is strongly focused and permeated by Galula's³³ approaches. Although it is not the only reference, the author gathers both his own experiences and elements of counterinsurgency warfare from other countries to materialize them in his book "Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice",³⁴ where he identifies four essential laws for conducting a counterinsurgency campaign. The first law proposes, as the strategic center of gravity, the support of the population, which is vital for both the insurgent and counterinsurgent sides. The second law defines that the achievement of this center of gravity is through a small group that acts as an active or multiplying minority and serves as a catalyst to achieve the necessary support. The third law makes it clear that the support of the civilian population is neither certain nor permanent, but is conditioned by circumstances and the evolution, especially, of the understanding of the legitimacy of institutions. Finally, the fourth law suggests that it is decisive to maintain the initiative according to the resources available to carry it out.³⁵ On the other hand, Trinquier develops in his book "Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency" a perspective similar to that developed by Galula.³⁶

The authors recognize an orthodox or traditional model for the development of insurgent movements, characterized - in general terms - by five linear stages. The first consists of the creation of a mass party. Then, a series of alliances is established, in favor of the insurgent side, while the support base is strengthened. The third involves the implementation of a guerrilla

33 David Galula, "Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice" (London: Praeger Security International, 2006), <https://books.google.com.pe/books?id=DRbMEAAAQBAJ&pg=PR5&dq=Galula%2C%20David.%202006.%20Counterinsurgency%20Warfare%3A%20Theory%20and%20Practice.%20London%3A%20Praeger%20Security%20International.&lr&hl=es&pg=PR5#v=onepage&q=Galula.%20David.%202006.%20Counterinsurgency%20Warfare.%20Theory%20and%20Practice.%20London.%20Praeger%20Security%20International.&f=false>

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Roger Trinquier, "Le premier bataillon des bérets rouges. Indochine 1947-1949" (Paris: Plon, 1984), <https://www.iberlibro.com/firmado/premier-bataillon-b%C3%A9rets-rouges-Indochine-1947-1949/30878109797/bd>

war logic as part of an ideological confrontation at the international level. In the fourth, the insurgency is further strengthened, moving from guerrilla warfare to a strategy of movements, based on a regular army, guerrilla areas and occupied areas. Finally, the fifth involves a war of annihilation, where the insurgent side reached political and military maturity, managing to corner the counterinsurgent side through major operations.³⁷

According to Demelas, Dory and Trinquier,³⁸ the traditional model can be contrasted with an abbreviated model composed mainly of two high-intensity stages. The first stage is characterized by indiscriminate acts of terrorism, seeking to generate maximum material and propaganda impact, without requiring a great effort in terms of personnel or infrastructure. The second involves a modification of the terrorist tactic towards a selective one, where the objectives are focused on undermining the legitimacy of the counterinsurgent side, isolating it from the population and encouraging massive participation of the population in the direct confrontation between the parties.³⁹

In a broader sense, the French model considers effective intelligence focused on human intelligence as the decisive factor in solving the problem of the malleability of an adversary who is elusive, even if the counterinsurgent side clearly defines an area of operations. In addition to intelligence, force and mobility must accompany the counterinsurgency effort. At the strategic level, this model proposes that the counterinsurgent side saturate the territory with garrisons, so that the insurgency does not have freedom of action or empty spaces.⁴⁰

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 David Galula, "Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice" (London: Praeger Security International, 2006), <https://books.google.com.pe/books?id=DRbMEAAQBAJ&lpg=PR5&dq=Galula%2C%20David.%202006.%20Counterinsurgency%20Warfare%3A%20Theory%20and%20Practice.%20London%3A%20Praeger%20Security%20International.&lr&hl=es&pg=PR5#v=onepage&q=Galula,%20David.%202006.%20Counterinsurgency%20Warfare:%20Theory%20and%20Practice.%20London:%20Praeger%20Security%20International.&f=false>

40 Roger Trinquier, "Le premier bataillon des bérets rouges. Indochine 1947-1949" (Paris: Plon, 1984), <https://www.iberlibro.com/firmado/premier-bataillon-b%C3%A9rets-rouges-Indochine-1947-1949/30878109797/bd>

In synthesis, the French model derived from Galula, complements the four laws previously announced with five clear principles of counterinsurgency. The first of these is the principle of economy of forces. It emphasizes that the counterinsurgency effort must take into account the limits of sustainability, specifically, in a confrontation where this side carries the main effort.⁴¹

The second corresponds to irreversibility, which means that, once the counterinsurgency effort is initiated, it must be carried out decisively, since a prolonged operational pause will never favor the counterinsurgent side and could weaken its legitimacy.⁴² The third relates to the initiative, which is of paramount importance. Capturing and maintaining the combat initiative implies that the counterinsurgent side deprives the insurgent side of one of its main advantages and even retreats to areas isolated from the population.⁴³ The fourth is directly related to the first and consists in the absolute use of the superior resources available to the counterinsurgent side. Although the economy of forces requires prudence in the use of resources, this principle highlights the strength of the counterinsurgency, in terms of production and resources superior to those of the insurgency, which must be fully utilized.⁴⁴ The last of the principles corresponds to simplicity in the conceptual planning and detailed planning of operations.⁴⁵

However, these laws and principles defined by Galula and complemented by Trinquier have a materialization in military operations, which must follow a series of clearly defined steps. The first involves an all-out effort with mobile and territorial units which, by means of encapsulation and pressure from the inside out, lead the guerrillas to a blockade zone where larger units would accompany the decisive effort. This stage implies a protagonism of psychological operations to gain the support of the population. The second stage suggests the insertion of special units and mobile reserves

41 U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. "U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Catalog" (2014). https://usacac.army.mil/sites/default/files/documents/cace/350-1_CGSCCatalog.pdf.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

of the territorial units to carry out small-scale operations and ambushes, so that the enemy does not manage to take advantage of the traditional guerrilla advantage of having resting zones.⁴⁶ The third step is closely related to the political and population aspect, where political authority is reestablished, the population is further isolated from the insurgency and intelligence measures are deepened to neutralize the insurgency's support networks and political activities.⁴⁷ The fourth phase consists of deepening the previous one so that intelligence bears fruit in terms of the functional disarticulation of the insurgency's political structures. This should be as detailed as possible, clearly identifying legitimacy on the counterinsurgent side.⁴⁸

Subsequently, the calling and holding of local elections are essential to shore up the official political structure and neutralize the political action of the insurgency. However, this phase may be difficult if the population is not yet fully convinced that the counterinsurgency effort can succeed or if the insurgency has gained a strong hold on the minds of the population. Therefore, the choice of an innovative and supported policy is vital.⁴⁹

In the same vein, the sixth step requires that the election results lead to efficient models of political action. Only in this way will the counterinsurgency effort be sustainable and there will be no risk of the re-emergence of a remnant of the insurgency. In case of failure, not only will the insurgency be reborn, but the counterinsurgent side will have lost all its effort to sell an idea of legitimacy and the population's support for the enemy will be even stronger than at the beginning.⁵⁰ On the other hand, the

46 David Galula, "Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice" (London: Praeger Security International, 2006), <https://books.google.com.pe/books?id=DRbMEAAAQBAJ&lpg=PR5&dq=Galula%2C%20David.%202006.%20Counterinsurgency%20Warfare%3A%20Theory%20and%20Practice.%20London%3A%20Praeger%20Security%20International.&lr&hl=es&pg=PR5#v=onepage&q=Galula,%20David.%202006.%20Counterinsurgency%20Warfare:%20Theory%20and%20Practice.%20London:%20Praeger%20Security%20International.&f=false>

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

seventh stage, once the area has been militarily and politically consolidated, implies the structuring of a new way of doing politics, renewed and free of accusations coming from the insurgency. Thus, it will be possible to advance towards the final moment, which consists of the complete defeat of the guerrilla remnants, which will be isolated from the population, completely delegitimized and without any kind of military advantage or capacity.⁵¹

Figura 1

French Counterinsurgency

Models	Laws	Principles	Operational Stages
Orthodox model	The support of the population as a strategic center of gravity.	Economy of forces	In-depth effort with mobile and territorial units that, through encapsulation and inside-out pressure, bring the guerrillas into a blockade zone against larger units.
	The existence of a small group that acts as an active or multiplying minority.	Irreversibility	Insertion of special units and mobile reserves of territorial units for small-scale operations and ambushes.
Abbreviated model	The support of the civilian population is neither secure nor permanent, but conditional.	Initiative	Re-establishment of political authority, isolation of the population from the insurgency and emphasis on Intelligence.
	It is essential to maintain the initiative according to the resources available to carry it out.	Use absolute use of superior resources.	Intelligence of its fruits for the functional disarticulation of the political structures of the insurgency.

⁵¹ Ibid.

		Simplicity in planning.	Call and conduct of local elections.
			Election results must lead to efficient models of political action.
			New efficient political structures.
			Defeat the last guerrillas.

Source: Own elaboration

Conclusions

Contemporary conflicts characterized by insurgent forces present significant challenges in the 21st century. These asymmetric confrontations involve opponents with political, ideological, local, historical or religious claims, making them highly irregular adversaries.

Moreover, hypermediated globalization has amplified their power by multiplying their social or political action. It is important to emphasize that these are not simply enemies employing guerrilla tactics, but complex networks of armed action supported by multiple private actors. These networks have connections with criminal organizations and have the capacity to recruit and configure support networks beyond the traditional, which increases the possibility of resorting to terrorist action.

On the other hand, insurgencies with a political objective find a force multiplier effect by criticizing illegitimate, corrupt or unprofessional regimes that perpetuated themselves in power or came to power through lies and manipulation. The possibility of gaining popular support is significantly higher in these cases. Confronting these asymmetric insurgent enemies represents a considerable challenge.

In terms of counterinsurgency models, the British model focuses on building legitimacy from the established authorities, while the French model advocates building legitimacy through the accession of new authorities to

power. However, the political factor and the struggle for legitimacy remain central to contemporary wars. The adoption of Western liberal democracy does not always guarantee legitimacy, according to different interpretations in different societies.

From the perspective of gray zone warfare, the challenges of counterinsurgency are even greater, due to opaque operational environments that facilitate the development of deniable or unattributable actions. This creates an ideal scenario for an insurgency that benefits from fighting in the shadows. This invisible insurgency occupies a strategic position to conduct destabilization operations and thrives on disinformation, manipulation and propaganda operations in cyberspace.

Likewise, this insurgency is based on global humanist agendas that reinterpret illiberal discourses. They also benefit from the difficulty in determining their structures, their affiliation with transnational crime organizations and their connections to government agendas that promote covert warfare.

Finally, the challenge of counterinsurgency in the 21st century goes beyond the British and French models. In the past, it was possible to geolocate the enemy, but today it is impossible. The battlefield is in the cognitive domain, where the counterinsurgency wars of the 21st century will be fought.

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