The Anatomy of Counterinsurgency Warfare

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"*Revolutionary war...represents an exceptional case not only because...it has its special rules, different from those of the conventional war, but also because most of the rules applicable to one side do not work for the other.*"[1]

Since the beginning of the new millennium, the West has been increasingly involved in a tiresome and rather particular type of conflict: insurgency warfare. The bloody and shocking terrorist attacks on New York and Washington in September 2001 marked the beginning of a new era, and the introduction of new security measures since then have largely reshaped the operational reality within which American, British and Danish soldiers (among others) function on a daily basis. Concomitantly, the political and military discipline known as counterinsurgency (COIN) has been assigned a new and far more central position in the doctrines, planning and task portfolio of the Western forces. This development has not passed unnoticed in the academic discipline known as Strategic Studies. According to the Australian COIN expert David Kilcullen, as many articles and books on insurgency and counterinsurgency have been written since 2004 as in the last four decades.[2] So on both practical and theoretical levels, insurgency warfare has had a veritable comeback. Or in the words of Kilcullen: "Counterinsurgency is fashionable again".

As a category, insurgency warfare differs fundamentally both from conventional warfare (or intergovernmental warfare), and from various types of peacekeeping operations. Counterinsurgency is neither the former nor the latter, but belongs to its own category. In contrast to conventional warfare, insurgency warfare always involves a non-governmental and – usually – militarily weak actor. And in contrast to peacekeeping operations, counterinsurgency often involves fighting against a relatively well-defined enemy. The basic dynamic that characterises this conflict category is therefore essentially different from the rhythm which is characteristic of other types of warfare.

However, judging from public discussion of the subject in Denmark and abroad, the unique nature of insurgency warfare is still unfamiliar to a large cross-section of politicians, journalists, civil servants, public opinion makers and military personnel. The widespread debate (and unfortunately to some extent even the military debate) about the ongoing insurgency wars in Iraq and Afghanistan indicates that many people have still not

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(1) Galula 1964, p. xii.
(2) Kilcullen 2006, p. 111.

fully understood the fundamental set of rules which dominates irregular conflicts. Few people doubt that the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan differ in significant respects from the engagements in Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Gulf War and elsewhere; but very few people have recognised the completely distinctive anatomy of counterinsurgency.

One particular reason why the dynamic of counterinsurgency is so difficult to comprehend is undoubtedly that the ongoing conflicts have been mistakenly described and conceptualised in the vocabulary and mindset of conventional warfare. Many people – especially journalists – have had an unfortunate tendency to view and analyse the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan using the language of intergovernmental warfare. And the result has been discouraging. The use of the language and logic of conventional warfare has been one of the most important factors impeding the development of a strategic and tactical understanding of the underlying mechanisms which determine the limits of the present Western military engagement.

The ambition of part I of this report is to produce a modest contribution to counteract this unfortunate tendency. In other words, the objective is to analyse and describe some of the key elements that distinguish insurgency warfare from what is known as "conventional warfare". The following pages therefore contain a comparative analysis of the two overall types of conflict, focusing on five core concepts or key parameters: territory, tactics, centre of gravity, time and means. The part I is based on these five parameters, but it begins by briefly defining the terms and describing the concepts involved.

Conventional warfare versus insurgency warfare
"*War is merely a continuation of politics by other means*".

Clausewitz's statement regarding war as a natural continuation of politics by other means constitutes a fair description of the traditional "state versus state" paradigm. In its most basic, traditional version, war is all about the battle for existence of one state in relation to another. However, like other types of conflict, intergovernmental war may be limited in its objectives – it may for instance be mere border disputes, wars about a province etc. But whatever the extent of the war, Clausewitz's trinity describing the relations between people, defence and state is a useful tool for analysing traditional wars. The defence forces are seen as the people's protector, and they are legitimised by the government, which in turn responds to a mandate given by the people whenever the existence of the nation is in danger. This dynamic can be described as a series of informal contracts between the three groups: the defence forces fighting on behalf of the people but with a legitimate expectation of obtaining the status of the keeper of the nation with the moral and material support which follows from this; the people, who are spared unnecessary suffering and whose existence is secured thanks to the efforts of the defence forces; and the state, which can continue its policies during the peace-crisis-war-peace cycle.

However, when it comes to analysing counterinsurgency, Clausewitz's model requires – as a minimum – a couple of intermediate calculations. In modern insurgency warfare (that is, insurgency warfare in which Western states act as belligerent players in other countries), the link between people, defence and government is under pressure. The people's support for their defence forces is most easily obtained when the existence of the nation is at risk and when their own nation is the non-aggressor. But it is difficult to use domestic security as an argument when what is involved is insurgency against another government in a country far from home. As a result, when it comes to explaining the threat involved in such cases, a higher degree of "creative" dialogue with the focus on preserving one's own values, preventive intervention and other arguments is often necessary.

The absence of a common understanding that there is a threat to the nation's existence, largely legitimises people's disagreement with the decision to use military power. As a result, there is a risk that the link between people and armed forces will corrode. From being "the people's army", the defence forces may risk becoming "the government's army". If the government fails to inform the people of the necessity of its actions, this task generally falls on the defence forces themselves – often resulting in a loss of credibility. If the soldier himself is forced to inform people about the necessity of a conflict, his status as the champion of the nation is weakened because he will be seen as a party in the conflict. Consequently, the information he provides will carry with it the unfortunate whiff of propaganda. The defence forces will become isolated, and the informal contract regarding moral and material support will be cancelled.

The consequences of the absence of a major direct threat – that is, the legitimisation of disagreement about the necessity of war and the weakening of the informal contract between the people and the defence forces – may manifest itself in a reduction of the support provided by "the home country" for its soldiers. A complete mobilisation of the state's resources in favour of a counterinsurgency mission becomes unthinkable because the status of peace at home must be maintained. The national mechanisms continue as in peacetime, and an insurgency war in a distant country will therefore be given priority in relation to other issues and policy areas in the national debate. In this way a counterinsurgency war as a rule fails to achieve the primary role of a traditional war for existence. Instead of being "war as a continuation of politics by other means", counterinsurgency wars become "war as a political issue in line with other political issues".

Modern counterinsurgency wars thus weaken Clausewitz's trinity, which risks undermining the determination to fight in a broader sense unless such wars are constantly addressed in the national debate.

Territory
"*The conventional army...deploys its considerable resources on a field devoid of the ene-*

my. It cannot meet him except by chance, because the two normally operate on complet-ely different planes, and the army's attacks fall more often than not into a void".[3]

One central and in many respects defining difference between conventional warfare and insurgency warfare is linked to the significance of territory. Whereas conventional conflicts are normally characterised by a basic commonality between the parties involved with re-gard to geographical space, counterinsurgency is characterised by a fundamental asymme-try with regard to territory. The counterinsurgent is bound to the defence of – and has the responsibility for – a given area, whereas the insurgents enjoy the freedom to use a basically Fabian strategy and avoid decisive battles for the control of cities, infrastructure and land areas.[4] One of the most important strengths of a insurgent is that he is not bo-und or burdened by territory. He is indiscernible, and usually he gives up territory freely in order to gain time. If he is forced to abandon a base, a village or a position he merely mo-ves his activities to another area, where the counterinsurgents, due to limited resources or political restrictions, are not present in great numbers. The paradox, then, is that the military weakness of the insurgent is also the essential source of his strength, since he is forced into the role of a "free bird" in the conflict. As described in one of the classical works of COIN literature:

"*The strategy of conventional warfare prescribes the conquest of the enemy's territory, the destruction of his forces. The trouble here is that the enemy holds no territory and re-fuses to fight for it. He is everywhere and nowhere. By concentrating sufficient forces, the counterinsurgent can at any time penetrate and garrison a red area. Such an operation, if well sustained, may reduce guerrilla activity, but if the situation becomes untenable for the guerrillas, they will transfer their activity to another area and the problem remains unsolved.*"[5]

To the insurgent, escape and retreat are not associated with shame or the loss of face. Instead, they constitute a special discipline which – according to Mao Tse-Tung – should be mastered to perfection by any insurgent or guerrilla soldier.[6] The freedom from territo-rial responsibility also helps to make the military superiority of the counterinsurgent less relevant. The insurgent's willingness and ability to hide undermines and erodes the signi-ficance of superior fire power, discipline and training.

One direct consequence of the territorial asymmetry between insurgents and counterin-surgents is that insurgency warfare rarely has regular front lines. In many cases, the entire

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(3) Trinquier 1964, p. 83.
(4) For a description of the Fabian – or indirect – strategy, see Hart 1967, p. 26. and Cassidy 2006, pp. 24 and 51. The concept comes from the Roman consul Fabius Maximus's attempt to defend the Roman Empire from Carthage in the 2nd Punic War (219-201 BC). Fabius Maximus refused Hannibal and Carthage the chance to fight the Roman troops in a decisive battle by surrendering the fight for territory or defence positions.
(5) Galula 1964, p. 50.
(6) Mao 2000, p. 22.

conflict-stricken country constitutes the scene of the clashes between the revisionists and the system-keeping forces; and the classical geographical distinction between the front and rear area known in conventional warfare is therefore much less relevant in counterinsurgency warfare. None of the troops of the status quo forces can feel secure in a less exposed rear area, and no support structure is completely safe. Often, the support structure will even be subject to more attacks than the actual battle forces, since the insurgents tend to regard these as the "soft belly" of the counterinsurgents.[7]

The absence of a front line means that it is sometimes difficult to determine how the conflict is evolving. Whereas the location and movement of the front line serve as a relatively precise measurement of success, failure and the development of the war in conventional intergovernmental warfare, the more diffuse geographical character of insurgency warfare makes it very difficult to decide which of the two parties in an irregular conflict is winning at any given time. Success and failure are not physically visible in the same obvious way as in conventional wars.[8]

Tactics

"*Tactics favour the regular army while strategy favours the enemy – therefore the object is to fight, not to manoeuvre*".[9]

The above quotation from the publication Small Wars, Their Principles and Practice by Colonel C.E. Callwell still has great relevance, in spite of the age of the book (1906). In most cases, a regular military force will be superior to irregular forces tactically speaking; better training, better equipment and better leadership combined with the advantage of being able to call on support from advanced weapon systems normally put regular forces at a tactical advantage. So the insurgent will only seek a confrontation when circumstances are in his favour. The intention of the irregular combatant will often be to create losses with a view to eroding the political will to fight in the home countries of the regular forces. Since direct fighting is connected with great risk, the insurgent will use more indirect tactics such as ambushes, roadside bombs and indirect firing weapons. Whatever the impression generated by the media, these methods in fact are not completely unfamiliar to regular forces. A roadside bomb is fundamentally the same as an intelligent mine, and a suicide bomber is much like an auto-guided bomb. These are aspects of warfare to which a modern force always has to relate. So the basic tactics developed in traditional conflicts are still useful. Western forces do in fact win the majority of the tactical confrontations in the present conflicts.

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(7) Gray 1999, p. 291.
(8) Long 2006, p. 38.
(9) Callwell 1906, p. 85.

However, in this respect it is important to examine one factor in particular; this is the thinking which precedes tactical confrontations. Western forces traditionally operate through a rational approach to military planning. The object is analysed and projected, and calculations are made backwards towards the object. During implementation, the focus is placed on the final objective, and adjustments are made throughout the process when fortune or misfortune so requires. It all sounds very logical, and it is logical. However, there is a certain amount of asymmetry here in relation to many insurgency movements. Due to their culture, the terrain in question and their military inferiority, insurgents often use what can be described as an incremental approach to planning – they place far more focus on the "here and now" situation than on the final objective. Simply put, insurgents adjust their actions to suit the situation on a daily basis.

When they get up in the morning, the important thing is to stay alive and if possibly improve their situation by the time evening comes. To a westerner this may sound "unprofessional" and fortuitous, but this way of thinking explains, among other things, the many shifting alliances between different rebel groups which apparently have completely different objectives. This incremental approach also explains why many insurgency movements, in spite of the apparent irrationality of their actions, often demonstrate superior timing – the ability to seize the transient opportunities with which they are presented by counterinsurgents. In a traditional hierarchical military system which has to take the civilian population and also the risk of "blue on blue"[10] into consideration, this ability is less manifest.

Militarily inferior and forced to adjust constantly, the insurgent focuses completely on learning. With a flat organisational structure, fighting on his own home territory, and with a wide framework for his actions, the insurgent often has a circle of learning far superior to that of Western forces. The time between the insurgent is actively engaged in fire and he has a chance to share his experiences with his fellow insurgents is often very short; it is no more than the time it takes him to reach his group or cell. Military forces also have this direct channel, but they are limited by the fact that the troops are rotated from one place to the next every few months. So the transfer of experiences must be formalised, and often essential information is lost. The transfer from soldier to soldier must take place in the short period of time during which all other aspects of the mission are transferred, or possibly through mission-oriented training via databases and instructors with experience from previous missions. The insurgent remains engaged until he dies, loses or wins.

The centre of gravity of war[11]

"*In conventional warfare, the enemy's military forces and capital city are often considered*

(10) Situations in which soldiers mistakenly fire on their own troops; also known as "friendly fire".
(11) This paragraph is based partly on Ringmose 2006.

its centres of gravity...the centres of gravity in counterinsurgency warfare are completely different, and focusing on defeating the enemy's military through traditional form of combat is a mistake".[12]

A completely decisive, although often neglected, difference between intergovernmental war on the one hand and insurgency conflicts on the other is linked to what Carl von Clausewitz labelled "the centre of gravity of the war".[13] In his timeless publication Vom Kriege, Clausewitz recommended that political and military decision-makers should focus their military undertakings on the opponent's centre of gravity, "the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends."[14] The centre of gravity of the enemy can, in other words, be described as "a focal point...[that] possesses a certain centripetal force that acts to hold an entire system or structure together". An appropriate strike concentrated on this point will make the opponent tremble and lose his foothold, or in best cases lead to his total collapse.[15]

When it comes to conventional warfare, the enemy's centre of gravity is usually defined as his army (or parts of it), his capital or significant alliance partners. In the Clausewitzian interpretation, a concentrated employment of your own means of power targeted at these points will – with a little bit of luck – lead to the collapse of the enemy and thus to victory. This formula does not apply to counterinsurgency. While the centre of gravity in interstate warfare is often made up of governmental, civilian and/or military structures, the critical factor of insurgency warfare is (almost without exception) the political perception of the civilian population.[16] So in general, both the insurgents and the counterinsurgents acknowledge that the way to control a conflict-stricken country is paved by victories in the dominating political dimension of the conflict. In classical COIN literature, the military instrument is therefore also regarded as having a far less salient role than it has in conventional warfare. In Galula's precise 1964 characteristic, it is said that

"...military action remains the principal instrument of the conventional war...The picture is different in the revolutionary war. The objective being the population itself, the operations designed to win it over (for the insurgent) or to keep it at least submissive (for the counterinsurgent) are essentially of a political nature. In this case, consequently, political actions remain foremost throughout the war."[17]

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(12) Krepinevich 2005, pp. 90.
(13) In the original German edition: "Schwerpunkt des Krieges".
(14) Clausewitz 1993, p. 720.
(15) Echevarria 2002, p. 16. Among military analysts and researchers with ties to the field of strategic studies there is little agreement about what the exact content of the concept should be. For an introduction to this debate, see Barnett 2003, p. 93; Gray 1999, p.104. and Echevarria 2007.
(16) Trinquier 1964, p. 27. For more novel interpretations of the same viewpoint, see Krepinevich 2005, and Barno 2007.
(17) Galula 1964, p. 8.

While the literature on insurgency and counterinsurgency is thus characterised in broad terms by agreement that the political perceptions of the local population constitute a centre of gravity, the field is also characterised by growing acknowledgement that political opinions on the counterinsurgent's home front also constitute a centre of gravity.[18] In a globalised era, insurgent groups located far from Western capitals have a good chance of influencing the global media and information flow. The technology-driven globalisation of the media has fundamentally changed the primary framework of insurgency warfare. Although the media have always reported from the crisis centres of the world, the appearance of digital cameras, mobile phones, satellite TV and Internet-based communication has provided both Western and non-Western TV stations and newspapers with previously unknown (and parallel) access to image material from the battlefield. Globalisation has thus established a worldwide audience – thanks not least to the effective and focused exploitation by the insurgents of the easy and useful creations of technology.

The probability that the insurgency wars of the 21st century will be determined on the home front in Western capitals is therefore greater than was the case in the middle of the 20th century.[19] Whereas the majority of the "classical revolutionary wars" in Malaya, Greece, the Philippines and Cuba had the local population as their dominating centre of gravity, the ongoing insurgency wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are characterised by the fact that the citizens of the intervening countries also constitute an important centre of gravity. The rebels of our time do not aim their campaigns at the local population alone – they also target the population in the intervening countries.[20]
The insurgency wars of the 21st century are fought on two main fronts to an extent far greater than was the case in Malaya and El Salvador, for instance. To the insurgents, success is no longer a function of local support and legitimacy, but also a product of global and regional legitimacy and the ability to refuse "energy and mobility to the enemy's support base".[21]

Means
"*Since the end of World War II, a new form of warfare has been born. Called at times either subversive warfare or revolutionary warfare, it differs fundamentally from the wars of the past in that victory is not expected from the clash of two armies on a field of*

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(18) See Merom 2003 and Kilcullen 2006. For an early version of the fundamental argument that revolutionary fighters lose on the political home field, see Mack 1975.
(19) Gil Merom has argued convincingly that the revolutionary wars in Algeria (1954-1962) and Vietnam (1962-1973) were also largely determined as a consequence of war resistance movements in France and the United States, Merom 2003. However, Merom also stresses that the increased media coverage of the revolutionary wars of the 21st century increases the possibility that citizens in Western democracies will limit and reduce the opportunities of their governments to fight and win revolutionary wars, Merom 2003, p. 250.
(20) About the Iraq war Hammes writes: "Recognizing that the strategic centres of gravity for the coalition members are their people's willingness to accept casualties, the ACT [Anti-Coalition Forces] exhibit a keen sense for projecting their message through the media", 2004, p. 178.
(21) Kilcullen 2006, p. 121.

battle...Warfare is now an interlocking system of actions – political, economic, psychological and military".[22]

Despite the rather bombastic character of the above quotation, anyone with just a small amount of historical military knowledge will know that the tools of war have always included more than just military means. During the 2nd World War, economic sanctions, diplomatic approaches and similar instruments were applied to the full extent. There is nothing new about that. As mentioned earlier, the difference between traditional warfare and insurgency warfare is more likely to involve the extent to which different means are used in different cases.

In traditional wars there is a clearer separation in terms of time and area between the individual political means of power used. Traditionally, diplomacy works before and after a war or in connection with a ceasefire situation. Often there is a clearly defined diplomatic opponent who operates according to the same rules of the game. The military acts primarily during the armoured part of the conflict and, secondarily, before and after the conflict with a view to deterrence and occupation. Economic means of power are used during the entire conflict – before the battle in the form of sanctions and trade barriers; during the conflict, typically in the form of blockades carried out by the military; and after the conflict as a means of ensuring that the defeated party remains on the course set out by the victor. In the field of information, the available media are used to demonise the opponent prior to the fight and during the fight. After victory, engagement in this area ensures that the victory is maintained and used by influencing the defeated country.

Counterinsurgency challenges this established hierarchy. In counterinsurgency conflicts, diplomatic efforts often fail because insurgents are not susceptible to influence through dialogue. Since the insurgent – by definition – does not have control of a country, he cannot establish a diplomatic representation. Nor does the insurgent recognise any rules of engagement, which is why agreements are not necessarily respected.

The military cannot deliver a result alone. Instead, a dynamic situation of security is often the result, which can only be maintained for a limited period of time if no progress is made on the civilian front. Thus, the traditional decisive battle disappears and is replaced by a long series of tactical engagements which have no direct strategic significance. An unusual dependency on civilian players is the result, because these civilian players have a greater influence than the military with regard to ending a conflict.

The economic means of power are difficult to use in insurgency warfare because of the presence of insurgents among the civilian population. Sanctions will hit civilians to a larger degree than the insurgents, since the insurgents can optimise their own situation by

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(22) Trinquier 1964, p. 52.

the use of weapons and thereby worsen civilian suffering. On the other hand, insurgency warfare is basically about obtaining the favour of the civilian population, so economic support will often be a very powerful tool – but only if this support is provided as early as possible in the conflict. This means that the counterinsurgents can not wait until the armoured conflict has been won. The counterinsurgents must act proactively as soon as the security situation allows. The longer they wait, the more difficult it will be for the military to maintain the necessary security. As a consequence, there is a far greater risk to the civilian population, and to those civilians who deliver economic and civilian relief.

Insurgency warfare is also different from conventional warfare in terms of information. Both sides to a conflict have always demonised their opponent in order to gain the support of their own people, but this approach is difficult to carry through on a large scale in counterinsurgency. The insurgents often constitute a part of the population that the counterinsurgents wishes to influence positively, and any such demonisation may therefore have excluding effects. It is the wish of the counterinsurgents that as many insurgents as possible should change sides, and this cannot of course be achieved by alienating them. At the same time, modern counterinsurgents must focus on the situation that is required before they can withdraw from the conflict. Local parties have to unite around one common positive project such as the advancement of the principles of a state governed by law and democracy, which is why a general division into good guys and bad guys must be avoided.

All in all, insurgency warfare challenges the hierarchy of political power. It requires far more coordination and synchronisation because all parties must play a role simultaneously. As a result, greater knowledge of each other's strengths, weaknesses and capabilities is required when the strategy for counterinsurgency is planned.

Time

"*The enemy will pass slowly from the offensive to the defensive. The blitzkrieg will transform itself into a war of duration. Thus, the enemy will be caught in a dilemma: He has to drag out the war in order to win it, and does not possess, on the other hand, the psychological and political means to fight a long-drawn-out war*".[23]

Another important difference between conventional and insurgency warfare is linked to the significance of time as a strategic/operational parameter. Traditional conflict (state versus state) prescribes that wars should end as soon as possible. The parties will save resources, public support can be maintained more easily, and the devastation of war can be limited. However, the desire for a swift settlement is particularly evident on part of the weaker side. In conventional intergovernmental warfare, time works in favour of the

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(23) Vo Ngyen Giap, quoted in Taber 1965, p. 64.

stronger combatant: The longer the war goes on, the greater is the probability that the stronger party will have the fortune and skill to mobilise its full power potential and enforce a settlement in its favour.

Not so in counterinsurgency. Here, time is usually the ally of the weaker party. This is not least the case when the primary counterinsurgent is a foreign state which does not risk its own existence and can choose to abandon the conflict and withdraw from the conflict-stricken country.[24] As a consequence of their "free bird" status, the insurgents do not need to aim for a quick settlement and can therefore convert time into a weapon. This is a point which was made by the theoretical authors of the classical revolution:

"*So Mao's military problem was how to organize space so that it could be made to yield time...Mao's real military aim was not that of getting the war over with, the question to which Western military thinkers have directed the greater part of their attention, but that of keeping it going.*"[25]

By avoiding the decisive battle and only fighting when a guaranteed advantage is in sight, the insurgents prolong the conflict and wear down the political support of their opponents. The insurgents do not always need a military victory in order to achieve strategic progress, because an occasional victory is enough to prolong the lifetime of the insurgency.[26] Or in the classical words of Raymond Aron, "guerrilla fighters win the war as long as they don't lose it, and those who fight guerrillas lose the war as long as they don't win it".[27] Essentially, time always works in favour of the insurgent who – as long as they stay alive – maintain the strategic initiative.

Conclusion

"*Though the strategy of guerrillas is inseparable from war strategy as a whole, the actual conduct of these hostilities differs from the conduct of orthodox operations. Each type of warfare has methods peculiar to itself, and methods suitable to regular warfare cannot be applied with success to the special situations that confront guerrillas*".[28]

The objective of part I of this report has been to identify and analyse a series of central

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(24) For the differences between national insurgencies (revolutionary movement versus national government) and independence insurgencies (revolutionary movement versus a foreign power), see Ringmose 2006 and Metz & Millen 2004.
(25) Taber 1965, p. 43.
(26) Mack 1975, pp. 184; Arreguin-Toft 2001, p. 105.
(27) Aron 1962, p. 33. In an American context, the quotation is often – credited to Henry A. Kissinger (see Cassidy 2006, pp. 23, for instance). Kissinger was, however, undoubtedly aware of Aron's words. Thus, in an article about the Vietnam War from 1969 he wrote: "In the process, we lost sight of one of the cardinal maxims of guerrilla war: The guerrilla wins if he does not lose. The conventional army loses if it does not win". 1969, p. 214.
(28) Mao 2003, p. 73.

differences between the traditional, interstate war on the one hand, and the insurgency wars in which the West has been involved since 2001 on the other. The analysis has been based on five points – territory, tactics, centres of gravity, time and means – and, above all, has tried to depict the way in which the fundamental anatomy of insurgency warfare differs from the so-called "Westphalian wars". It is true that conventional warfare and insurgency warfare differ with regard to a series of other central points as well; but we find that the five parameters analysed here are of particular importance.

However, the fact that insurgency warfare and intergovernmental warfare are so different in several respects (as the references above confirm), is far from new. Galula, Trinquier and Taber decoded, with great precision, the significant characteristics of counterinsurgency some time ago. But in spite of the fact that the basic differences between the two types of conflict have already been thoroughly described, there is still an urgent need for more studies of the insurgency warfare of this century. The classical analysis of armed conflict between insurgents and counterinsurgents holds many insights, but the framework has changed significantly since the last quarter of the 20th century. For instance, how does globalisation affect the chances of fighting an armed conflict against an irregular opponent? What difference does it make that the present day's counterinsurgents act in alliances or coalitions? It is one thing to coordinate the military and non-military capacities of one state, but is it at all possible to coordinate the civilian and military resources of 40 states? And finally: what demands are made on COIN forces from the fact that present-day insurgents are more deeply motivated by religious ideas than by political ideologies? If the West is to increase the probability of success in Afghanistan or Iraq, it is vital that these questions are addressed.

The Anatomy of counterinsurgency Warfare - Case Afghanistan

By Research Fellow Peter Dahl Thruelsen and Major Lars Mouritsen, Faculty for Strategy and Military Operations, Royal Danish Defence College

"An insurgency is a competition between insurgents and government for the support of the civilian population"[29]

As described in the previous part, The Anatomy of Counterinsurgency Warfare, there are undoubtedly many differences between conventional warfare and insurgency. Many of these differences are due to the way in which wars are planned, and they are often located at the strategic level. But there are also several characteristics at the operational level which separate the two types of military engagement. The objective of part II of this report is to present some of these differences, thereby showing the complexity of counterinsurgency.

Part II argues that it is essential to legitimise any conflict in the eyes of the home front in order to secure support for military engagement. At the same time, part II argues that the success criteria on both the home front and abroad are not comparable, and that this fact also requires openness about involvement and the possibility of success. On the local stage on which counterinsurgency takes place, it is important that other elements (not just military ones) are included in the operational planning, and that these means are provided to the military engagement. If these demands are not met, the risk of total failure is considerable.

The focus will be on the Danish involvement in Afghanistan in general and in Helmand in particular, it will discuss the six characteristic areas of insurgency which have been dealt with previously in the Anatomy of Counterinsurgency Warfare. Under each characteristic, part II will describe the primary focus of the engagement and consequently describe the actual steps taken in Afghanistan. Finally, the relationship between the political and military outcome will be touched upon.

Conventional warfare versus insurgency warfare
When a democratic state engages in counterinsurgency, its contribution needs to be legitimised both in the eyes of the population at home and in the eyes of the population in the country in which fighting takes place. This is also the case with regard to the Danish presence in Afghanistan – something which became evident when NATO's area of responsibility was enlarged to include the southern part of Afghanistan. As a result of this enlar-

(29) Galula 1964, pp. viii.

gement, Denmark became a direct player in counterinsurgency and all elements related to this kind of warfare. The Danish population must now relate to the challenge of gaining the confidence of the people of another country, and they must face the loss of Danish soldiers in an alien part of the world.[30] To legitimise this involvement in the eyes of the population, great efforts are required on the part of the Danish government. If the population cannot see the link between their own security and the military engagement in Afghanistan, it will be difficult to maintain the involvement and thereby also the possibility of success. Extensive studies of success or failure in connection with military occupations and interventions show that the absence of any immediate threat to the contributing country is one of the key elements involved in military failure.[31]

Consequently, one significant question for a small country engaged in counterinsurgency is how to legitimise a war in the eyes of its population in peace time. "A war in peace time" involving counterinsurgency by a country such as Denmark or one of its European allies does not necessarily lead to the injection of more government resources. On the contrary, in most cases, it is the question of a smaller involvement of the military apparatus supported by a limited development aid to a country that most people have only a fairly vague concept of. All in all, the war in Afghanistan is not something that affects the daily life of most Danes or the ability of the Danish government to pursue a national policy independently of the conflict. Consequently, the challenge facing the Danish government is how to create national support for the engagement when the people of Denmark cannot see any directly beneficial effects in terms of increased national security.

How has the Danish government legitimised the engagement in Afghanistan in the eyes of the Danish population? The main discourse has been that of solidarity with the Western world and burden-sharing, the spread of democracy, and the risk of a terrorist attack on Denmark. In his New Year address for 2008, the Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen said that "Afghanistan must not again become a haven for terrorists. That is the reason why we are in Afghanistan. It is also a question of our own security".[32] Similarly, on several occasions the Danish Minister of Defence Søren Gade has linked the Danish contribution to the risk of a terrorist attack on Denmark: "Today, Denmark's security is not only determined at our border stations.[...]The terrorists who carried out the attack on New York on 9/11 in 2001 were trained in camps in Afghanistan, and for years the country has been the cradle of terrorism. Our presence is therefore a necessary step in the fight against terrorism, and at the same time we are working to improve the daily life of the Afghanistan people through a series of civilian projects".[33]

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(30) There is further information on how to gain the trust of the Afghan people in the section about "the centre of gravity of the war".
(31) Edelstein 2004, pp. 69-75. David Edelstein carried out a study of 24 military involvements from 1815 to 2003. In the study, Edelstein examines various reasons for the success or failure of military occupations.
(32) http://www.stm.dk/Index/dokumenter.asp?o=2&n=0&h=2&t=14&d=2951&s=1
(33) http://forsvaret.dk/FMN/Ministeren/Taler+og+artikler/Nødvendig+indsats+i+Irak+og+Afghanistan.htm

It is difficult to say whether this legitimisation is working, but the support of the Danish population in the involvement in Afghanistan has been about 50% since the beginning of the conflict. The latest polls in April 2008, produced by Zapera for metroXpress, show that approximately 46% of the population are in favour of the engagement and 40% are against it. A Rambøll poll in Jyllands-Posten conducted at the same time shows that 48% of the respondents feel that the Danish soldiers should remain in Afghanistan, while 45% feel that they should come home.[34]

If the support of the Danish population is to be maintained, the Danish government must convincingly argue that there is a real and tangible threat to Denmark. This threat must not only be mentioned in the Prime Minister's New Year addresses, in connection with visits from foreign heads of state, and in connection with the loss of Danish soldiers in battle. Attempts to justify the war in terms of national security must be related not just to individual sacrifices but to national interests instead. Justification in terms of security should be made explicit in the strategies of the Danish government for the engagement in Afghanistan. One example of this involves development strategies. The Danish people do appreciate the importance of a broader contribution involving both military action and development aid with a view to improving the security of Denmark. But in the recently published Danish plan for the involvement in Helmand Province, "The Danish engagement in Helmand 2008", the link to Danish security policy is not described, and there is no clear link between political aspects, development aid efforts and the military contribution. The same is true of the previous strategy "Afghanistan-Denmark Partnership – Strategy for development aid 2005-2009" and of the newly developed Danish strategy "Denmark's engagement in Afghanistan 2008-2012"[35]. In these strategies, the involvement is linked to Danish security only a couple of times, thereby missing the chance to legitimise the broader Danish contribution. Most of the Danish military engagement is located in Helmand province, leading to severe fighting and losses, so it is essential that the Danish government makes a constant effort to legitimise the involvement on a broad basis – particularly in the Danish Parliament (Folketinget) and in the Danish population – in order to secure continuous support for the contribution and thus for the work of the soldiers.

Territory

In Indochina, the Vietminh reached the conclusion that no base or permanent installation was worth defending when the enemy – the counterinsurgent – was able to win all the "conventional" battles causing great losses for the insurgents.[36] In insurgency warfare, territory does not have the same significance as it has in conventional warfare, and the focus of the fighting is therefore placed not on gaining territory directly, but rather on

(34) http://www.metroxpress.dk/dk/article/2008/04/09/07/2030-66/index.xml and http://jp.dk/arkiv/?id=1319154&eceExpr=flere%20bakker%20op%20om%20Afghanistan-krigen&eceArchive=0
(35) http://www.afghanistan.um.dk/da
(36) Hosmer 2006, pp. 2.

winning the consent and support of the population. In other words, the primary target of counterinsurgents should not be to win considerable areas of land from the insurgents. As Galula writes, "conventional operations, by themselves, have, at best, no more effect than a fly swatter".[37] Territory will be won once the counterinsurgent has gained the support of the population. This is why the strategy of the counterinsurgent must be to define objectives and methods that can win the support of the population (and thereby also the control of territory), and then to place the territory in the hands of the host nation; As noted by Hosmer, "the first step for the counterinsurgents, therefore, is to choose, within the contaminated territory, a smaller area in which to concentrate their efforts."[38]

When it comes to choosing the territory in which the population must be influenced, it is important that the counterinsurgent considers his choice carefully and that his selection is based on motives reaching far beyond traditional military and geographical considerations. At the same time, the counterinsurgent must also consider the composition of the population and the length of time that the insurgents have been in the area. The latter is vital in order to measure how "contaminated" the population has become due to the insurgents. In case of "contamination", the task of regaining the trust of the population and securing the territory will be difficult. The areas which the counterinsurgent chooses must be selected on considerations about which cities and villages constitute the most important part of the area – for instance the ethnic composition and the influence of local clans and senior councils. In many cases, a variety of contrasting military and political factors may influence the decision of which area to choose, particularly the choice of which strategy to follow subsequently. Based on his experience in Algeria, David Galula underlines that

"...in revolutionary warfare you need [...] the man who can say, at the time an operational idea is first conceived and before the operation is planned, 'this operation is useless in terms of your objective of winning the population, but that one, which seems militarily stupid, is excellent from the political point of view'".[39]

In Afghanistan, and especially in Helmand Province, in the summer of 2006 the choice was to concentrate the engagement in precise geographical and limited areas (Afghan Development Zones) in order to increase the effect of the military and civilian resources at hand. [40] Within these zones, attempts are made to fulfil the basic requirements of the local population, especially with regard to security and development. If the resources are

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(37) Galula 1964, pp. 51.
(38) Hosmer 2006, pp. 15 and 56-57.
(39) Ibid, pp. 58.
(40) The concept of development zones and the incorporation of a new military concept in particular became visible in Helmand during Operation Achilles in the spring of 2007 and onwards. At this time the concept of Clear-Hold-Build became the method used by the military. Physically, it is not possible to define a development zone, which is why the zones are often named after the city to which they are attached. For instance, Lashkar Gar, Kandahar, Qalat, Tarin Kwot, Ghazin, Parwan and Jalalabad. For more on this, se Thruelsen 2007, p. 11.

available, the population – in theory – will experience visible and positive progress, and thus realise that the international forces and the national administration and government are a legitimate provider of security and social contributions. The population should therefore in theory choose the side of the counterinsurgent instead of the insurgent – or in the words of Mao Tse-Tung - "separate the fishes from the water" (that is, the insurgent from the population). The most important element in this process is that the population does not become alienated – thereby giving rise to antagonism – because of an overwhelming use of force or because of cultural arrogance. At the moment it is not possible to say whether the population in the areas of Helmand Province where the Danish battlegroup is located is satisfied with the international involvement. However, the experiences of the Danish 4th team in Helmand suggest that the population is increasingly showing confidence in the international forces and supplying information and abandoning Taliban, which ultimately is the overall objective.[41]

Tactics

As mentioned above, the tactic to use in order to fight the insurgents should in principle focus from the outset on separating the insurgents from the population. In Helmand, this can be done by establishing secure zones or development zones in which the first thing to do is to build is a safe environment, thereby creating the conditions needed for a favourable development for the population. Afterwards, the zones can be expanded until they reach each other – or they can be maintained and the surrounding areas can be swept for insurgents. At first, this may seem evident and logical, but when counterinsurgents operate on foreign soil and within foreign cultures, it is often very complicated as it also is in Afghanistan.

The superiority of the regular forces is evident – the international NATO force (the International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF) possesses modern technology and weapon systems. The insurgents will therefore choose to fight where the technology and weapon systems of their opponent cannot operate effectively as this will enable them to fight on more equal terms. When fighting on technologically equal terms, the party who knows the terrain better will utilise its local knowledge and thereby have the bigger advantage. This is why in Afghanistan, Taliban choose to fight where ISAF cannot fully use their fighting capacity and technological superiority. It is therefore important for ISAF to have the initiative so that ISAF can determine the place and time of battle. If not, ISAF will lose the initiative and the advantage will be to Taliban. This principle has been evident in the offensive and defensive tactics of ISAF during 2008, particularly in the southern part of Afghanistan, where the aim has been to keep the initiative.

Unfortunately, fighting to gain the initiative leads to inevitable losses. Insurgents can ac-

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(41) Interview carried out on 26 March 2008 with the Danish Lieutenant Colonel Kim Kristensen, Head of the Danish 4th team in Helmand and Commander of the Danish Battle Group Centre in Helmand.

cept more losses than counterinsurgents. ISAF consists of many contributing countries, each of which is affected by losses. The loss of lives will most directly have an effect on the population in the contributing countries; and thereafter it will influence the national policy of the governments taking part.

This means that losses are a direct factor involved in national support for the mission, and losses consequently will affect the political unity. In this way, the insurgents can sacrifice their lives in order to produce losses for the counterinsurgents and thus weaken their alliance in order to improve the terms of battle for themselves. This principle has been evident in Iraq, for instance, where some of the coalition partners have withdrawn after suffering losses. In Afghanistan, the alliance still stands together in the fight, even though there have been signs of weakness in certain countries as well as in countries that do not wish to participate in the fighting.

If the insurgent is to sustain losses without any damage to its organisation, it needs a flat structure expanding across a network. This is exactly how the Taliban movement is organised. Taliban have a more flexible organisation than ISAF, which is slower to adjust to new situations. In Afghanistan, generally ISAF has a very inflexible organisation with many national limitations; but on the regional level, and especially in the southern and eastern areas of Afghanistan, ISAF operates with more flexible organisations and task forces. At the same time, Taliban have a large concentration of insurgents in for instance southern Afghanistan, and they choose to fight the few battles in which the chance of success is greatest. Their actions are therefore controlled by opportunity, which is why the battle for the initiative by ISAF has to do with getting the Taliban fighters to lose their grip on these opportunities, thereby losing the initiative.

The centre of gravity of the war
Afghanistan can be compared to Galula's picture of an area which is formed like a blunt-tipped star and has other land areas on all sides, with mountains along the borders, rivers and valleys with vegetation, very sparse settlements and a primitive economy.[42] Such an area is a near-optimum ground for the insurgent – only a jungle would be preferable to this.

The gravity areas that will be decisive for insurgents in the above-mentioned area are very similar to the area occupied by Taliban in Afghanistan. Taliban are dependent upon external players to ensure that supplies such as weapons, ammunition and personnel can be imported and heroin and opium exported. Often, these routes will coincide and pass through mountains, river valleys or remote areas where borders can be crossed easily. These routes are critical for the insurgents, and the struggle to isolate Taliban in Afghani-

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(42) Galula 1964, pp. 25.

stan will therefore be focused on and around these routes. ISAF, at the operational level, has done this by reinforcing Regional Command South with the objective of strengthening control of the border to Pakistan, and by the offensive actions on the tactical level in the Green Zone in Gereshk Valley by Task Force Helmand.

In dealing with a CoG that is decisive with regard to freedom of movement and manoeuvre options, it is the support of the local population that counts. As mentioned in the beginning of this part, this CoG will often apply to both parties in insurgency warfare. The fight for the support of the local population will therefore be essential for the outcome of the battle. The side that wins the support of the population or makes sure that its opponents do not win this support will triumph in the end. The insurgents have a natural advantage in relation to forming the way the local population perceives the situation, since they know all the local customs, religions and cultures. The understanding of local customs, religions and cultures is of utmost importance for the counterinsurgents if they are to gain the support of the local population.

One key factor in the fight to gain support is the use of information as an operational and strategic tool. This tool can be utilised to maximum advantage if it is used in combination with other initiatives in order to win and maintain decisive support. The most essential steps in which information must work in combination with other factors involve financing and rebuilding.[43] At the moment, there is an ongoing movement aimed at developing the ability of NATO to speak with one voice on different stages. The tool used is the development of specific mission-oriented strategies which must try to secure coordination and synchronisation between informative steps like public diplomacy, public affairs on the strategic level, and information operations on the operational and tactical levels.

Both ISAF and Taliban have recognised the importance of information, and both use information as an important part of their modus operandi in Afghanistan. Both parties are fighting for the same level of knowledge and understanding of the target groups. These target groups consist roughly of the population and politicians in the home countries of the counterinsurgents as well as the local population and key persons within the actual battle area.[44] On the ground in Afghanistan, both parties are fighting for the support of the local population – particularly the support of the clan leaders and the elders of the villages. ISAF uses a series of tools under Information Operations as an integrated part of its operations with the objective of winning the support of the target groups and thereby indirectly reducing Taliban's ability to operate within the area.[45] As a rebel group, Taliban is dependent on operating within the local population, including finding hideaways, logi-

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(43) The use of political, civilian, military, financial and informative means in combination with each other is the focus of the development of a comprehensive approach to the management of crisis and conflicts.
(44) Nissen 2007.
(45) Key leader engagement and the use of psychological operations are carried out on a daily basis in large areas of Afghanistan.

stics, intelligence and freedom of manoeuvrability. ISAF is making a great effort to persuade the local population to acknowledge its responsibility for the future of Afghanistan, including development, education etc. Among the many campaigns which ISAF has carried out, anonymous "Call in lines" has been established from where local people can report about Taliban activities. As a result, on several occasions ISAF has been able to maintain the offensive approach and the effect of surprise.

But on the strategic level, ISAF has had difficulties in maintaining the offensive approach. The press and information services of ISAF have found it hard to supply the important images to the Western media. Taliban have been the first to deliver their version of the story to Western media on many occasions. They have developed the ability to create images of all their actions on the battlefield.[46] They have been good at spreading these images through new, modern, internet-based media types, thereby winning great support amongst like-minded people in Afghanistan – and in the rest of the world. Today Taliban have spokesmen who are quoted on a regular basis in the established Western press. And these spokesmen are often faster at producing their versions of the situation than is ISAF. Consequently, stories of disproportionate use of force, the killing of civilians etc. have often occupied more space in the media than the reality which ISAF is hoping to report. Among other things, this has meant that ISAF has down-classified intelligence images and published them through the same media as Taliban.

ISAF has now recognised the importance of winning this fight for people's perceptions.[47] The ability to keep the offensive within this area has increased significantly after the launch of www.natochannel.tv, an internet-based TV station capable of providing reports and images from the fighting scenes quickly and reliably.[48] With this initiative, it is hoped that NATO and ISAF will be able to intercept the activities of Taliban more effectively.[49]

Means
The population in any area controlled by insurgents is typically divided into four groups: regular insurgents, part-time insurgents, political and ideological supporters, and the rest of the population. Once the counterinsurgents have secured one area militarily, it is political and ideological support that they have to undermine.[50] In order to remove and un-

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(46) Taliban use combat cameras in many of their tactical deployments. In many cases, the actions of Taliban are primarily seen as a means of producing images rather than of engaging in battle.

(47) NATO's Secretary-General has strongly criticised the lack of willingness and ability of various nations to provide NATO with TV images. This criticism was expressed at a major public diplomacy conference in Copenhagen in October 2007.

(48) www.natochannel.tv is a Danish project which is run by Danish Defence Media Centre on behalf of NATO. The facilities are initially at the disposal of NATO until 1 April 2009.

(49) The section on information operations is based on information provided by Captain Steen Kjærgaard, who works at the Institute for Military Operations at the Danish Defence College.

(50) Hosmer 2006, pp. 16-19.

dermine this support, it is essential that counterinsurgents receive intelligence from the population. This intelligence is only provided if the population is convinced that their security will be guaranteed by a significant military presence and a positive development of the area. If security and development are not provided, the population will not feel convinced about the intentions of the counterinsurgents, and will therefore not provide the necessary information. Once the area has been secured and intelligence on supposed supporters of the insurgents begins to flow, it is the local national security forces that must perform the task of keeping the area safe and identifying the persons who are undermining development. The international forces can then continue with the more military-related assignments.

This entire development will only occur if the forces involved have sufficient political supervision, military means, financial means and civilian expertise at hand. The Danish engagement in Afghanistan is significant in comparison with other NATO countries – both militarily and financially speaking.

At the moment, in accordance with a Parliamentary decision (Folketingsbeslutning B 161 and B 6 of 2007), Denmark has approximately 750 soldiers stationed within Afghanistan – most of them in Helmand Province. Furthermore, eight police officers are stationed at the ESDP mission (EUPOL) of the EU[51], and five civilian advisers are stationed in Helmand. Apart from this contribution, Denmark has, on average, donated DKK 180 million annually from 2002 to 2007, and will, in the period from 2008 to 2012, spend approximately DKK 400 million annually. Of this, approximately DKK 50 million are earmarked for Helmand.[52] An additional DKK 10 million will be provided by the Danish Ministry of Defence for security cooperation.

Looking at the possibility of increasing the effect of the engagement in Helmand Province, there are two areas in particular in which the Danish contribution can be strengthened in the future, using the present resources.

The first area is the Danish involvement in the building of Afghan National Army (ANA). At the moment, the Danish military contribution is spread out with the main contribution of some 600 soldiers in Helmand, 50 soldiers in Kandahar, 12 soldiers in Kabul and 10 soldiers in Chaghcharan.[53] At the NATO summit in Bucharest in April 2008, the Danish Prime Minister announced that the Danish contribution of 21 soldiers in Feyzabad[54] would be shut down and that the soldiers placed there will be transferred to Helmand in the form

(51) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/110908_EUPOL_AFGHANISTAN-Police_Strength_chart.pdf
(52) In connection with an Afghan conference at Christiansborg, seat of the Danish Parliament, the Danish Minister for Development, Ulla Tørnæs, announced that Denmark will more than double the development aid granted to Afghanistan to approximately DKK 400 million annually. The share for Helmand will increase as a result of this.
(53) For more information on the placement of the Danish soldiers see www.hok.dk
(54) Denmark have contributed with soldiers to the German led PRT in Feyzabad since 2005

of training teams for ANA – Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT). As a first smaller step, the decision is in full compliance with one of the main elements of insurgency warfare, which involves gaining local engagement at the front in the fight against the insurgents. On the military side of the involvement, the local people are represented by the national army, which will participate in the operations to show the local population that the fight in Afghanistan is not an international project from abroad, but that the Afghan state is involved as well.

At the moment the Afghan army is in great need for NATO's military advisers to give counsel and to train the Afghan soldiers ahead of and during operations in the eastern and southern areas in particular. As of March 2008 NATO has only deployed 31 validated OMLT of the 71 teams needed to train and strengthen the ANA, which illustrates a lack of priority by NATO members (Report to Congress 2008: 18). These advisers, in combination with the actual operations in the field, help to increase the level of professionalism of the national army, which will ultimately enable ISAF to relocate and reduce the international military presence. A strengthened ANA will show the local population that an alternative to the international military involvement exists. This valuable fact can help to convince the population of the legitimacy of the engagement and to show them that the Afghan government can regain power in the country at some point in the future – without a permanent external military presence.

The second area in which the means used to achieve the objective can be strengthened involves comprehensive planning or interagency planning. The fact that Denmark has eight police officers only in Afghanistan working to expand "the rule of law", and five development advisers to facilitate the process, clearly demonstrates that too little priority has been given to the task of achieving common objectives. At the moment, it is difficult to see the direct connection between the military and development objectives in the Danish contribution. A variety of resources must be placed at the disposal of the military in order to make this connection more apparent. It is important that the Danish contribution is made so flexible that it can quickly be adjusted to match the military progress in the field and to help secure the support of the local population. As soon as a village within the Danish area of operations is considered ready, a strengthened contribution should be made in order to achieve this progress, and it must be supplied with the human and financial resources needed. This could be done by having a team of people with broad development and capacity building expertise at the ready in Denmark – a team that could be sent out to the area of operations at short notice.

Time
In principle, insurgents have all the time they need to achieve their objective. They are not subject to the pressure of time – whereas counterinsurgents often are. Traditionally, counterinsurgents are under pressure to create secure and stable conditions, to make

progress and ensure development, and to gain the support of the local population. This must be seen in relation to the accumulated losses of the counterinsurgents – a factor which affects both the people of the contributing states and the politicians. In Afghanistan, the time aspect is a determining factor.

The contributing nations are subject to the pressure of time. Results must be achieved so that the legitimacy of the mission can be justified by pointing to the success of participation. But in the regions and provinces (Helmand, for instance), the counterinsurgent units are also subject to a certain amount of time pressure if they are to win the support of the local population. If they fail to establish the support of the local population by achieving local results, the fight will be prolonged. Counterinsurgency has always been a long process. The response from the NATO summit in Bucharest about the necessity of a long haul is therefore essential for the unity of the alliance and ongoing support within the populations in the home countries and within the local population in Afghanistan. There is no doubt that it will take NATO a long time to complete its task in Afghanistan.

The fight for the initiative, for instance an offensive initiative on behalf of the counterinsurgents, is based on a number of factors. And one of them is time. If the time can be prolonged by carefully selected operations carried out by Taliban, this will lead to frustration in the local community and the populations of the contributing countries. And this may weaken the alliance and the morale of the soldiers. In this way, Taliban can ultimately gain territory because of local mistrust of ISAF and developments in the local area. A broad perception of the time aspect is therefore very important to ensure support for the long haul which the information operations are supposed to make more evident.

In order to resist these operations by Taliban, it has become increasingly important to retain what has been achieved. Clear-Hold-Build is one of the principles of the US COIN doctrine[55], which is comparable with the UK COIN doctrine. In general terms, Clear-Hold-Build is an approach in which counterinsurgents first clean an area of insurgents, then hold the area while gathering local support, and finally rebuild the area including the civilian sectors. The Clear-Hold-Build approach must be seen in a full and comprehensive spectrum, so that not only military means are used. This has been described earlier, but the time aspect underlines the importance of "Hold", ensuring that the counterinsurgents do not have to recapture lost terrain, something which would weaken the rebuilding process and the confidence of the local community.

Within the time aspect, there is also a rationality paradox which has been dealt with in the previous part. Counterinsurgents often produce a strategy or a campaign that will contain a defined End-state, Centres-of-Gravity, including objectives and/or effects with

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(55) The principles of Clear-Hold-Build are described in the US COIN Field Manual for the US Army and USMC of 2006. This doctrine is used by the US troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere.

actions attached and synchronised in phases as well as probable Lines of Operations; this is all done to ensure that the counterinsurgents achieve their overall objectives. This typical western military approach is a paradox in relation to insurgents who organise themselves in a quite different manner. Insurgents have plenty of time, which is why they often focus on an incremental approach, making decisions to act shortly before carrying out their actions. Counterinsurgents rotate their units with varying frequencies, and this rational approach in combination with constantly changing strategies and campaign plans provide insurgents with more time. This paradox is also present in Afghanistan, and it demonstrates the importance of having legitimacy and the support of the local community.

The relationship between the military and the political outcome

One subject that has been debated at great length and in great detail with regard to insurgency warfare, is how to know when you are winning. A symposium in the USA in 1962, attended by 12 officers with experience of campaigns in nine different countries, quickly came to the conclusion that success can be measured within the population.

"*They also addressed the issue of when and how the counterinsurgent knows he is winning, and came to consensus that the most important indicator of success was when the people voluntarily cooperated in providing intelligence and were willing to disregard insurgent orders*".[56]

This voluntary support of the counterinsurgent should be evident in areas both with and without a military presence. This is important, because it shows that the political cause of the host country has defeated the cause of the insurgents. It demonstrates that "a safe base" for the counterinsurgent is to be found at the political level, with the population in a given area refusing to cooperate with the insurgents even after the counterinsurgents have left the area.[57] Territory can be occupied without the complete destruction of the insurgents and without the approval of the population. However, once the population has been won over, the counterinsurgent can allocate his troops and intensify the fight in other areas.

"*...the primary objective of counterguerrilla warfare is not merely the guerrilla's elimination, neutralization, and conversion, but the winning-over of the apathetic majority of the people*".[58]

The destruction of the insurgent is thus indirectly completed by separating the population from the insurgent. The insurgent cannot survive without having the population as a

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(56) Hosmer 2006, pp. iv.
(57) Ibid, pp. 8.
(58) Ibid, pp. 12.

base. Victory in insurgency warfare therefore does not mean destroying an area or the military forces of the insurgents or his political organisation. Instead, "a victory is that plus the permanent isolation of the insurgent from the population, isolation not enforced upon the population but maintained by and with the population".[59]

Determination from the top political level down to the commanders on the ground is also one of the key elements of victory over an insurgency. If this determination is not present, the insurgency will not be crushed. It is essential that the host country in which the fighting takes place has a political cause which surpasses the cause of the insurgents. It is the determination and the cause which will win the support of the population, convincing them not to choose the side of the insurgents instead. Victory must be in the interests of the population. The counterinsurgent must realise that the war may be long and that the insurgent will try to prolong it. It is important from a political point of view to address both the national and the local populations, clearly stating that the battle will take a long time and cannot be won quickly.[60]

These criteria for success challenge the determination of the national political scene. Apart from showing determination from a political point of view, it is evident that the argumentation for success at home will be different than the actual success criteria in the operation. On the national scene (this has been the case in Afghanistan), the debate will often be characterised by the spread of democracy and human rights, making the campaign more vulnerable to possible setbacks in the field. In broad terms, the political success criteria should be modified and adjusted to match the actual conditions and the allocation of resources to the mission. By arguing in favour of superficial and very Western-inspired success criteria, the target is made vulnerable and difficult to achieve. The success criteria of the Western world for Afghanistan must incorporate and accept the often long time horizon for success, and more realism should be incorporated into the expectations of success which are presented on the national scene.

Conclusion

Based on events in Afghanistan, part II of this report has emphasised some of the characteristics and complexity which exist in insurgency warfare on the strategic and on the operational level. Success for Afghanistan and the international community in the fight against the insurgents depends on winning the battle for legitimacy and the support and consent of both the local population and the national populations in the countries involved. And success depends among other things on the ability to isolate the insurgents, to fight in combined and joint fashion independently of time, to coordinate the means available, and to control the information supplied with a view to maintaining the initiative.

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(59) Galula 1964, pp. 54.
(60) Hosmer 2006, pp. 142-143.
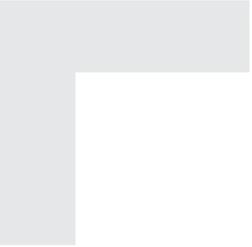
This will create the conditions needed for rapid development in identified zones and for the subsequent expansion of this development to cover the provinces, the regions and finally the country as a whole.

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