Countering Terrorism and Insurgency in the 21st Century

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

VOLUME 1: STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Governments have been countering the threat of terrorism and insurgency since the establishment of the Westphalia system of nation-states. However, the rapid evolution of science and technology over the past 100 years—from the invention of dynamite to commercial air travel and the Internet—has enabled new forms of terrorist and insurgent activity. It is thus likely that further technological advances over the next 100 years will yield similar results, as today's terrorist and insurgent groups have proven to be adaptable, learning organizations. This three-volume set, *Countering Terrorism and Insurgency in the 21st Century*, seeks to encourage the development of learning organizations among national security professionals by examining what we currently know about the strategic application of hard and soft power in countering the sources and facilitators of terrorism. As a collection, the thematic essays and focused case studies represent an ambitious effort to capture existing knowledge in the field of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, and draw lessons (from successes as well as failures) that will inform new, adaptable strategies to counter the new threats that—judging from historical trends—will no doubt emerge over the next century.

At the outset, it is necessary to address why this publication covers both terrorism and insurgency, as there is confusion about these terms among many in the academic, media, and policymaking communities. In some countries that have faced the threat of violence for many years—including Colombia, Ireland, Spain, Sri Lanka, and Turkey—societies have grappled with additional terms like "paramilitaries" and "freedom fighters," but the general view reflected throughout the chapters of this publication is that all groups or individuals (including insurgents) who engage in the act of terrorism can be considered terrorists. In essence, the act of terrorism defines its perpetrator as a terrorist, regardless of the ideological motivation behind such acts.

According to the Department of Defense, terrorism is defined as "the calculated use of violence or threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological," while insurgency is

defined as "an organized resistance movement that uses subversion, sabotage, and armed conflict to achieve its aims. . . . [and which] seek to overthrow the existing social order and reallocate power within the country." In teaching my classes on these topics to future U.S. Army officers at West Point, the distinction I make is that insurgents can and do use terrorism (among other forms of violence), but insurgents are but one type of violent nonstate actors who may choose to use terrorism. In other words, not all insurgents use terrorism, and not all terrorists are part of an insurgency. Further, while the use of violence by insurgents to target governments is driven by a particular ideology, terrorists use violence against a range of targets (including governments) to advance their ideology.

While such distinctions may seem academic to most readers, they are actually quite important when formulating strategic, tactical, and policy responses to the threat posed by terrorism and insurgencies. As described in Volume 1 of this publication, strategies and tactics for countering insurgency are an important aspect of our knowledge base on countering terrorism, and vice versa. In both cases, experts have emphasized that the use of force to counter an organization whose objectives resonate with a larger disaffected population yields limited (if any) success. Instead, it is argued, the ideology, political, and socioeconomic aspects of an organization—through which it derives its financial support, recruits, and sympathizers from amongst the local population—must be addressed. In other words, the use of hard power in countering terrorism (including insurgencies that employ terrorist tactics) must be complemented by elements of soft power.

The link between counterinsurgency and counterterrorism is also informed by recent analyses which suggest that the al Qaeda movement can be described as a global insurgency, seeking to replace the existing Westphalia-based system of nation-states with a global caliphate in which Islamic law reigns supreme. Recent terror attacks in Bali, Madrid, London, and Cairo, as well as disrupted terror plots in Denmark, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, are all seen as examples of how individuals and groups around the world have been inspired by al Qaeda's ideology to commit violence as part of a strategy to change the policy and behavior of these nation-states. In other words, it is argued, al Qaeda uses terrorism tactically and operationally to advance its global insurgent strategy. When described in these terms, the U.S.-led global effort against al Qaeda can be considered to be fighting both terrorism and insurgency. Thus, *Countering Terrorism and Insurgency in the 21st Century* addresses the many challenges that stem both types of threats to our security.

Another source of confusion in the study of terrorism and insurgency involves disagreement over the proper spelling of certain groups (or, rather, the spelling of the transliteration from the original language into English). For example, a brief survey of the literature reveals that a certain Lebanese militant group can be spelled Hizballah, Hezbollah, Hizbullah,

Hezballah, and Hizbollah. For these volumes, we have standardized the spelling of certain common names across all the chapters, such as al Qaeda (because this is how several agencies of the U.S. government are now spelling it), Hizbollah (because this is how the group spells it on their English language Web site), and Osama bin Laden (rather than Usama). Finally, it is important to note that while many chapters discuss aspects of the "global war on terrorism (GWOT)," we recognize that this term has fallen out of favor among many in the academic and policy communities. However, there currently is a worldwide effort to reduce the capabilities of globally networked terror movements like al Qaeda, and in the absence of an equally useful short-hand reference for this effort, GWOT serves an important role.

At this point in the development of the global counterterrorism effort, it is particularly important to pause for reflection on a number of critical questions. What do we know about effectively countering terrorism and insurgencies? What are the characteristics of successful or unsuccessful counterterrorism and counterinsurgency campaigns? What do we need to learn in order to do these things more effectively? *Countering Terrorism and Insurgency in the 21st Century* addresses these and related questions, and in doing so contributes to national security policy as well as to our understanding of the common threat and how it can be defeated. Chapters of this publication address many different aspects of the unconventional warfare puzzle, examining the most important diplomatic, information, military/law enforcement, and economic/financial dimensions to regional and global cooperation in countering terrorism and insurgency, and providing specific examples of these dimensions in practice.

Authors in the first volume address issues of important strategic and tactical concern, organized around the primary instruments of power through which nations pursue their counterterrorism and counterinsurgency efforts. These instruments can generally be described as either hard power (the use of force by military and law enforcement) or soft power (including diplomacy, information, and intelligence). The second volume provides a variety of insights on how to assess and combat the sources and facilitators of political violence, including state-sponsors of terror, authoritarian regimes, criminal network activity, border insecurity, and the global struggle for influence among societies. As highlighted by several authors in this volume, the community of responsibly governed democracies faces uniquely complex challenges in combating terrorism and insurgencies while maintaining civil freedoms. And contributors to the third volume offer in-depth analyses of historical events and lessons learned in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency. Each volume contains a preface and introductory chapter, describing the contributed essays and providing an intellectual background for the discussions that follow.

This project is the final installment of an ambitious trilogy published by Praeger Security International. The first of these—the three-volume *The Making of a Terrorist: Recruitment, Training and Root Causes* (published in 2005)—intends to help readers understand the nature of the threat by exploring what transforms an ordinary individual into a terrorist. This was followed by the three-volume *Homeland Security: Protecting America's Targets* (published in 2006), which explored the ongoing efforts in the United States to secure our borders and ports of entry, and to protect our public spaces and critical infrastructure from future terror attacks. The volumes of *Countering Terrorism and Insurgency in the 21st Century* complement these earlier publications by focusing our attention on the broad, worldwide effort to actively confront those who threaten or use political violence against our communities. Together, these nine volumes are meant to provide a central, authoritative resource for students, teachers, policymakers, journalists, and the general public, as well as stimulate new ideas for research and analysis.

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The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not purport to reflect the position of the United States Military Academy, the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

PREFACE

The chapters of this first volume of *Countering Terrorism and Insurgency in the 21st Century* advance our understanding of national security strategy challenges, as well as raise important questions and issues for further research. Fighting terrorists and insurgents effectively requires a variety of strategies and tactics, and their success or failure is largely dependent on context. After an introductory chapter, the volume addresses the use of hard power, soft power, and intelligence, and the strategies that guide these efforts.

PART I: STRATEGIC AND POLICY DIMENSIONS

The first section of the volume begins with a thoughtful examination of strategy and grand strategy by Brad Bowman, a U.S. Army officer and a faculty member at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He argues that the current U.S. grand strategy overrelies on military operations, misidentifies the nature of the conflict with al Qaeda, ignores the struggle's true "center of gravity," and neglects major sources of radicalization. After defining the terms "grand strategy" and "strategy," Bowman describes their theoretical and practical relationship to one another, and suggests that strategy—which is essentially military operations—often usurps the nation's grand strategy and political interests. He then explores the nature of the current conflict with al Qaeda, arguing that a misdiagnosis of the nature of the struggle has encouraged the United States to neglect the central role of Muslim popular opinion. He concludes by offering a set of strategic recommendations for addressing sources of Muslim radicalization.

Next, Douglas Borer and Michael Freeman of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School provide a thoughtful discussion of strategy and establish a framework for the analysis of U.S. performance in the global war on terrorism (GWOT). At its essence, they explain, strategy is an iterative or dynamic process, one that is shaped by a given context and defined by the relational environment between various actors. As such, a successful strategy in one situation will most likely be different than a successful