A winning combination: toward a more diversified and successful counterinsurgency toolbox

Creator:
Burkart, Meredith Kay.

Description:
Thesis (M.A.)--Georgetown University, 2010.; Includes bibliographical references.; Text (Electronic thesis) in PDF format. The development of modern counterinsurgency doctrine has found that the most successful core objective of such wars is to win the hearts and minds of the insurgency's population. While the reliability of this population-centric objective may be valid, many theorists and practitioners of counterinsurgency have extended its message: they believe that every aspect of a counterinsurgency--from strategy to operations to tactics--ought to be population-centric in nature. This project endeavors to discover whether such a belief best serves the route to victory in counterinsurgency, or if rather a diversity of methods is preferred for success. It explores two cases of counterinsurgency, the successful Indian counterinsurgency in Punjab and the failed Russian counterinsurgency in Chechnya, both of which employed population-centric, enemy-centric, and anti-population methods of counterinsurgency. Through an analysis of each method used in its historical context and established measures of success, it assesses the reliability and probability of success for each kind of method--be it population-centric, enemy-centric, or anti-population in nature. The analysis of both cases shows that each of these three kinds of methods is a valid tool for use in counterinsurgency--but that their success relies upon the central government's ability (1) to identify the core population-centric objective of insurgency, the winning of hearts and minds, and (2) to guide the strategic development of operations and tactics, regardless of their basic nature, that will aid in the achievement of this overall goal. The results of this analysis recommend that population-centric theorists and practitioners refrain from the dogmatic pursuit of population-centric methods for every aspect of a counterinsurgency. Instead, policymakers waging a counterinsurgency ought to identify the core population-centric objective of their campaign; and all counterinsurgents ought to think beyond categorically confining terms such as 'population-centric,' 'enemy-centric,' and 'anti-population' to develop creative solutions in support of the main objective.

Permanent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/10822/553458

Date Published:
2010

Subject:
Military Studies; Asian Studies; History, Russian and Soviet

Type:
thesis

Collections:
Program of Security Studies

Metadata:
One example of a successful counter-insurgency would be the Selous Scouts, a special forces regiment of the Rhodesian Army during the Rhodesian Bush War (1974-1979) in Zimbabwe. Caucasian Scouts were encouraged not to shave in order to hide their white skin. During this time, Rhodesia was ruled by a white-minority government lead by Prime Minister Ian Smith. Black Zimbabwean guerilla movements fought to introduce majority rule. The government began developing their counter-insurgency forces, which lead to the formation of the Selous Scouts. Their founder and commander was Ronald Reid-Daly, who

Many of the more renowned insurgencies of the 20th Century followed the Maoist ‘Protracted Warfare’ model; being monolithic organizations with a centralized, hierarchical command structure, clearly defined aims and a sequenced approach to achieve them. However, modern insurgencies are increasingly being recognized as complex matrices of irregular actors with widely differing goals. Meanwhile, with knowledge about counterinsurgency warfare waning among policymakers, resurgent terrorism scholarship and counterterrorism policy initiatives avoided the issue of a strategic terrorist campaign to destabilize nation-building. More recently, vague historical references and misplaced analogies to Vietnam have muddled discussions of the Iraqi counterinsurgency effort.