Two Sides of the Same COIN: A Critical Analysis of "Winning Hearts and Minds" in Counterinsurgency Operations

by

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Abstract

Hearts and Minds Theory' has been raised from the ashes of the 20th century and indiscriminately applied to conflicts in the 21st Century without sufficient critical analysis of the theory itself, the context of its origins, and modern applicability. This research investigates deficits in the application of HaM Theory protocols in counterinsurgency operations as well as its repeated use by the USA to combat counterinsurgencies across the world despite repeated military failures. In order to have a fuller understanding of HaM Theory and its aptitude for success, this research examines the insurgent origins of HaM Theory, the application of the theory's core pillars in counterinsurgency (COIN) operations, as well as COIN operations that have employed HaM Theory. USA COIN operations continue to employ soft-power frameworks (such as HaM Theory) despite the Groundhog Day-like cycle that they perpetuate. This research analyzes why American Strategic Culture and Exceptionalist self-image leaves no alternative but to continue to repeat this pattern. This critical analysis of the HaM Theory and its attractiveness will provide a critical baseline for understanding future engagement in foreign intervention to support COIN operations and their consequences.

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Abbreviations

9/11	Al-Qaeda terror attacks on the USA (Sept. 11, 2001)
AE	American Exceptionalism
AWOW	American Way of War
CAC	US Army's Combined Arms Center
CIA	US Central Intelligence Agency
COG	Centre of Gravity
COIN	Counterinsurgency
DoD	US Department of Defense
DPT	Democratic Peace Theory
FM	Field Manual
GWOT	General War on Terror
HaM	Hearts and Minds Theory
IL	International Law
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
IW	Irregular Warfare
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
EBO	Effects-Based Operations
RAND	**R**esearch **and D**evelopment Corporation
TRMEs	Tribalized Rural Muslims Environments
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

USAF	United States Air Force
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WWI	World War I (1914-1918)
WWII	World War II (1939-1945)

"Out of the night that covers me
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance,
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate
I am the captain of my soul."

— William Ernest Henley, *Invictus*, *Book of Verses* (1888)

Chapter One

Introduction

"Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult."

- Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (1832)[1]

This research aims to better understand the specific theoretical framework, 'Hearts and Minds Theory' (**HaM**), within the subset of Irregular Warfare (**IW**). Within the broad category of armed conflict exists two types of warfare involving states –Regular or Conventional Warfare and Irregular or Unconventional Warfare. In the simplest of terms, Conventional Warfare is hostilities conducted between the armed forces of states. Contrastingly, Irregular Warfare refers to any conflicts in which there is a disparity in power between adversaries, in which one side does not consist of state armed forces. Included in IW are insurgent/counterinsurgent conflicts in which non-state actors (insurgents) rise up against the state and its forces (counterinsurgents) in pursuit of changing the political status quo. The Counterinsurgency (**COIN**) discipline has waves of change dictated by shifting international political contexts. Population-Centric Counterinsurgency is one such wave that has dominated the discourse since the mid-late 20th Century. Unlike Enemy-Centric approaches, Population-Centric COIN refers to a soft-power subset of COIN strategies in combatting insurgencies in which the local population is heavily considered, and even prioritized[2] (Galula 1964, 4). One such strategy that has repeatedly been recycled by COIN operations is

[1] The 1984 (page 101) translation was used for reference in this research.
[2] Alternative population-centric COIN strategies include, but are not limited to: civil-military relations, border control (Long 2006), 'carrots and sticks' (Anderson 2005, 293), restitution payments (Blair 2020), 'within-the-wire' detainment (Willardson 2016), etc.

'Hearts and Minds' Theory in which the strategic aim is to win the hearts and minds of the local population in order to weaken and ultimately defeat the insurgency (Duyvesteyn 2011, 448).

This research investigates the deficits in the application of HaM Theory protocols in COIN operations and the United States of America's (**USA**) repeated use of it to combat insurgencies globally despite repeated military failures. In order to have a fuller understanding of HaM Theory and its aptitude for success, this research examines the insurgent origins of HaM Theory, the application of the theory's core pillars in COIN operations, as well as COIN operations that have employed HaM Theory (Cohen 2010, 78).

There has been a push in the counterinsurgency academic community to develop more humanitarian approaches to be employed in counterinsurgency operations (FM 3-24 2014, 6) (Cohen 2010, 78). However, the theoretical literature on COIN is desperately lacking in critical analysis of the effectiveness of counterinsurgency theories and their effects upon the larger population. Population-centric theories, such as 'Hearts and Minds Theory', are more relevant and palatable to the domestic populations of foreign Western intervenors than the local populations impacted by insurgencies (MacKenzie 2013, 208). The lack of resonance and effectiveness of HaM Theory with local people has often further complicated COIN battles against insurgents. Despite its lack of effectiveness in defeating insurgencies, Western powers, such as the USA, continue to employ HaM Theory in COIN operations into the 21st Century (Hoffman 2004).

With this issue in mind, the goals of the research are multifold. The primary aim of this research is to better understand the origins, history, popularity and attraction of Hearts and Minds Theory in the COIN discipline. Secondary to this, it answers several questions. What is COIN? What is HaM Theory in COIN? Does HaM Theory achieve its set strategic objectives? Why does the United States, in particular, repeatedly employ HaM Theory in COIN operations?

This research is upheld by three central pillars of analysis: the complex dynamic between insurgents and counterinsurgents; the development of the HaM Theory, and the continued employment of HaM Theory by the US. The analysis of data follows an integrative and holistic approach. The data set is derived from a combination of primary and secondary literature regarding diverse examples of COIN operations throughout history and leading disciplinary research on COIN and HaM Theory. The examples referenced in this research were selected for their range in culturally, politically, and geographic variation, with a specific focus on prominent and oft-cited examples in research on HaM Theory. The variety in the survey sample allows for a comprehensive understanding of the implementation and imposition of the HAM Theory upon local populations in COIN operations throughout history. An emphasis has been placed upon US engagements in order to further understand the results and outcomes of US COIN operations in contrast to those of other nations.

The survey of COIN operations in practice is supported by a theoretical analysis of manuscripts by significant counterinsurgency experts throughout history, including Charles E. Callwell (1896), Lucian Pye (1958), Walt Whitman Rostow (1959), David Galula (1964), Samuel Huntington (1968), John Nagl (1999), David Petraeus (2006), and David Kilcullen (2007) form the foundation of this research. Writings from prominent insurgent leaders, including Mao Tse-Tung (1937), Ho Chi Min (1967), Fidel Castro (1953), and Ernesto Che Guevara (1961), were also analyzed in order to better understand the source from which COIN combatants and experts gained their knowledge[3]. Significant US military reports and directives from the Department of Defense (DoD) (*"Irregular Warfare (IW)"* (2007)), United States Army (*Field Manual 3-24* (2014[4]), and

[3] Hearts and Minds Theory is deeply connected to the writings of insurgent leaders as it was derived from strategies outlined in Mao Tse-Tung's writings (1937) and replicated by later insurgent leaders (Gurman 2013, 60).
[4] FM 3-24 was originally published in December 2006.

U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) (*Small Wars Manual* (1972)) were also surveyed. Historical speeches and statements released by US government leaders and officials were also analyzed for greater understanding of the appeal of HaM Theory to the American government and people. All critical analysis conducted on practical case studies, reports, and the media is grounded within the historical context and leading theoretical approaches of the respective time.

The narratives that have been perpetuated by the modern media regarding COIN operations and HaM Theory have focused on the importance of the protection of the population and provision of services. Population-Centric COIN frameworks, such as HaM Theory, are used to support the notion that counterinsurgency operations can be won through the protection and support of the people. Unfortunately, this perspective has instead contributed to a perception that counterinsurgency is a "kinder [and] gentler war" than inter-state warfare (Cohen 2010, 78). This narrative conceals the violent and coercive reality of counterinsurgency conflicts and instead contributes to the veil of armed engagements that suit the exceptionalist self-image of Great Powers, liberal and otherwise, that intervene in local conflicts across the world (Gurman 2013, 29). The success of this proposed research will aid in providing greater understanding of the use of HaM Theory, the impact of Western intervention in foreign lands, and the future of counterinsurgency operations.

The introductory chapter of this thesis outlines the goals and parameters of this research. The following chapter (Chapter 2) examines insurgencies and counterinsurgency operations in-depth. Chapter 3 explores the Hearts and Minds theoretical framework and its symbiotic connection to American Exceptionalist ideals. Chapter 4 analyzes the pitfalls and weaknesses present in the HaM Theory framework and practical application. The fifth and final chapter

discusses the disciplinary implications and future of counterinsurgency operations in the era of Great Power warfare.

HaM theory and practice has been raised from the ashes of the 20th century and indiscriminately applied to conflicts in the 21st Century without sufficient critical analysis of the theory itself, the context of its origins, and modern applicability. In spite of historical failures to defeat insurgencies using a HaM Theory approach (i.e. Philippines (c. 1899) Vietnam (c. 1965[5]), Afghanistan (c. 2001), Iraq (c. 2003), and more) US COIN operations continue to employ soft-power frameworks, such as HaM, despite the Groundhog Day-like cycle[6] that they perpetuate (Hoffman 2004). This research analyzes why American Strategic Culture and Exceptionalist self-image leaves no alternative but to continue to repeat this pattern. This critical analysis of the HaM Theory and its attractiveness will provide a critical baseline for understanding future engagement in foreign intervention to support COIN operations and their consequences.

[5] Although the Vietnam War officially began in 1955, HaM Theory was not yet present in US Military strategy. President Lyndon B. Johnson first referenced "winning hearts and minds" in the Vietnam War in his "Remarks at a Dinner Meeting of the Texas Electric Cooperatives, Inc." on May 4, 1965 (Johnson 1965).

[6] In his 2004 paper, Bruce Hoffman wrote that American COIN operations were reminiscent of the Bill Murray film *Groundhog Day* (1993) in which the events of Murray's day were repeated until his character learned the necessary lessons and avoided past mistakes (Hoffman 2004). This has comparison continued to be relevant past the early 2000s (Long 2006, 1).

Chapter Two

Insurgency & Counterinsurgency

"Guerrilla war is a kind of war waged by the few but dependent on the support of many"

- B.H. Liddell Hart, Foreword in *Guerilla Warfare* (1962)

Conventional warfare forms the basis of how most governments, private and public organizations, and the larger public traditionally understand and view war. Conventional warfare "involves direct engagement in military terms between *states*, aimed at undermining or destroying each other's capacity to make war" (Berger et al. 2007, 913). This type of armed conflict may also involve attempts to capture and control enemy territory and overthrow the opposing government. Since the conclusion of the Second World War (1945), the nature of warfare has shifted. Conventional large-scale interstate wars are no longer the dominant form of armed conflict. Instead, Irregular Warfare (**IW**) steadily has grown in frequency and has been characteristic of the battlefield of the early 21st Century (Ringsmose 2008, 411). There is no shortage of alternative terms that have been applied to irregular warfare (i.e. small wars, revolutionary war, asymmetric warfare). For the sake of clarity, this thesis will exclusively use Irregular Warfare to refer to such conflicts.

In the simplest terms, IW encompasses any conflict that contains a substantial difference in resources and power between adversaries. This inequality is most frequently displayed through arms, military strength, and technological abilities (Sloane 2011, 371). Although, the broad umbrella of IW extends to many conflicts, it most commonly associated with:

> "*Violent struggle[s] among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may*

> *employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will*" (Department of Defense 2007, 1).

IW does not subscribe or follow traditional norms of armed conflict and is inherently characterized by confusion, variability and the necessity to adapt (Berti 2016, 3).

In traditional warfare, both armed forces adhere to the norms of traditional standards of engagement, often based on international agreements such as the Geneva Conventions. This assurance concerning standards of behaviour does not exist in IW (Berti 2016, 4). IW can occur in varying physical and social environments, and may involve unique asymmetrical methods of combat, and include distinct cultural features that govern rules of behaviour, such as tribal, ethnic, religious, and traditions. Consequently, the flexibility and creativity of regular forces involved in IW is vital and each conflict should be treated as an independent and unique case (Callwell 1996, 23).

Due to the broad nature of the term, a variety of different types of conflicts fall under the umbrella of IW, including, for example, cyber, hybrid, guerilla, and revolutionary warfare (Kazmi 2012, 1368). At least since the end of the Cold War, the conceptualization of IW has been dominated by the terms 'insurgency' and 'counterinsurgency'. In their simplest meaning, the former is an attempt to overthrow the political status quo within a state, and the latter is an attempt by the state and/or an external power to maintain its political dominance by not allowing the political status quo to be upset. Both typically involve political, military, monetary, and cultural asymmetries (Pouw 2013, 18).

Historical Background

International Relations literature tends to see the contextual and compositional changes in IW in temporal waves. Before the fall of empires after WWII, insurgencies were largely against

the various colonial empires (French in Vietnam, Dutch in Indonesia, Britain in Africa) (Gurman 2013). Some of these were peaceful, such as the Ghandian approach in India against the British, but many, if not most were violent such as the MauMau uprising in Kenya. In most violent cases, they were perceived as rebellions against central authority and were ruthlessly put down (Anderson 2005, 13). Yet, the imperial powers were so weakened by the end of WWII that they allowed most of their former colonies eventually to achieve independence. The new rulers were generally the leaders of the rebellion that finally overthrew their masters (Lobban Jr. and Dalton 2017).

The conclusion of the Second World War (1938-1945) marked dramatic changes in the balance of power across the globe. Former imperial powers, such as Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands, were significantly weakened and became reliant on their allies, such as the US. In contrast, new power centres emerged across the globe with the US and the USSR as rival superpowers. Ultimately, there appeared a third leg of the superpower triumvirate for the second half of the 20th century – Communist China. None of them formally declared war against the other, engaged directly in conventional combat, with the exception of China in Korea, or invaded each other's sovereign borders. Instead, the struggle between superpowers was largely carried out through a series of proxy wars across the globe that often overlapped in time.

The weakening of the pre-WW II empires and the widespread recognition of the principle of national self-determination, embedded initially in the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, led to a mass wave of former colonies seeking independence and freedom (Wilson 1988, 93). Initially, one tribe, ethnic, religious or political faction would achieve dominance in the newly independent colony. However, many of these former colonies ultimately sank into the morass of internal civil wars, some for extremely long periods of time. These conflicts typically began between competing local

factions, one or more of which rebelled against existing governing group, and eventually against each other if the central authority fell (MacKenzie 2013, 203).

Each of the new post-WWII superpowers took advantage of emerging IW by supporting the opposing forces indirectly to compete for dominance. Despite the prevalence of IW for the duration of the Cold War period (1945-1989), insurgent conflicts were largely conceptualized as sideshows where the big powers could compete, but not actually go to war directly against each other. The point was to avoid the possibility of escalation to a nuclear war, which would be the result of a direct superpower conflict.

The fall of the USSR in late 1991 and the refocusing in Communist China on internal issues, resulted in the emergence of the US as the global hegemon in a unipolar international power system. This radically changed the strategic context through which insurgencies were perceived and ultimately studied (Kuzmarov 2013, 182). For decades, they were viewed through the lens of superpower rivalry. For the first time, they were conceptualized as they mostly were in reality - small local civil wars where local factions battled for power and dominance. The basis of these conflicts was now recognized as local conditions, rather than superpower conflicts.

With the rise of religious fundamentalist-inspired terrorism as a world-wide, rather than local phenomenon, the world once again changed, as did the perception and influence of the great powers (now the US, Russia, and China). The watershed moment for this change was the September 11, 2001 (9/11) terror attacks on New York and the Pentagon. It marked the end of the perception of insurgent conflicts as “small wars” with the world-wide reach of insurgents. Insurgencies were no longer local as the insurgents now had the capacity and will to reach across the globe and wreak havoc far beyond their territorial base (MacKenzie 2013, 218).

Following 9/11, insurgent conflicts took main stage on the global battlefield as the US and its allies responded by the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. Over the course of the first two decades of this century, insurgencies across the world dominated the international stage and became the central challenge not only faced by the US and its allies and client states, but also by Russia and China. This led to the development of counter-insurgency practices that were employed like a hammer on the world-wide stage rather than contextualizing conflicts as the result of local conditions (Rowley 2013, 136).

Insurgency

Insurgencies are by definition political. They are all about power relationships that exist within a political system. Insurgents are non-state actors or sub-state groups that use violence and untraditional warfare tactics to attain control, power, and legitimacy in order to achieve change within a state for political goals (Berti 2016, 3). Insurgencies are conducted by these non-state actors. They may be characterized as "individuals or groups of individuals who act in an individual capacity, as private persons, and as such are neither de facto nor de jure acting on instructions or under the command of a state" (Pouw 2013, 13). They may also be formally constituted political units that claim a territorial unit and begin to rule from there, as in the case of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and the Eritrean Liberation Front (San-Akca 2016, 77, 122, 231).

The central concepts that characterize insurgencies are the nature of the asymmetrical relationship between insurgent and counterinsurgent forces, control of the local population as the shared objective of both sides, and the inherent unconventional, political, and protracted nature of all such types of IW (Galula 1964, 10). Regardless of time and space, the most consistent

characteristic of insurgent conflicts is ironically its varied nature (Johnson, 2014). The composition of any insurgency is dependent upon the historical, cultural, political, ethnic, and economic influences of the society from which it arises. Therefore, understanding the nature, characteristics, and behaviour of each insurgency on its own terms can be the key to solving such conflicts (Kemsley 2007, 118).

Even though the nature and structure of insurgencies are highly variable, there are a number of key characteristics that define insurgent forces (Kemsley 2007, 118). The superior technology, organizational hierarchy, budget, weapons, and other resources that states possess forces insurgent groups to rely upon other tactics to compete effectively against the strength of the state (Long 2006, 1). In order to overcome the disparity in resources between insurgents and counterinsurgent forces, insurgents use a constellation of unique tools at their disposal to gain an advantage over their adversaries (Kocher 2011, 203). Insurgents typically employ prolonged, yet irregular violence and political propaganda, exploit local knowledge and local populations, within which to hide and obtain provisions, and utilize challenging physical terrain, psychological warfare, and other guerilla tactics in their strategic battle plans (Berti 2016, 3).

Unlike terrorist groups, not all insurgencies employ terror tactics. On the one hand, they protect or are perceived as protecting the local population from the state's more formal instruments of power, such as their security forces. Many embed themselves within the local population. Their success is also based on receiving significant support from the local population (Dixon 2009, 356). The silence and cooperation of the people, whether given willingly or gained through fear is one the most significant advantage insurgencies possess (Kocher 2011, 203). If this advantage is lost, insurgencies are left vulnerable. This tactic was successfully used by many insurgencies in the 20th or 21st centuries, such as Mao's Communist revolution that overthrew the nationalist government

of Chiang Kai-shek. Similarly, the success of the Vietcong and North Vietnamese against the US and the South Vietnamese government was predicated on their ability to merge into the local populace (Kuzmarov 2013, 183).

The element of concealment in their physical and social surroundings causes the size, structure, and strength of insurgent forces to often be impossible for COIN forces to determine and counter (Long 2006, 1). Insurgents aim to stay hidden, using both the local environment and people, and avoid engaging in sustained, direct, 'large-scale' confrontations with COIN (Kocher 2011, 203) at least until the final stages with victory on the horizon. Insurgent forces may use all kinds of environments to avoid detection from COIN forces. For example, they may hide in rural, remote places, such as mountains and jungles, or are concealed in urban areas (urban buildings, apartments, and schools), as well as within the general population itself (Gawthorpe 2017, 842). Insurgent forces typically do not wear military uniforms, insignias, or possess traditional military bases and are therefore exceptionally difficult for COIN forces to identify as combatants and thwart (Gawthorpe 2017, 842). This is another tactic employed by Mao Tse-Tung who has become known as the Modern Father of Insurgency and whose model was copied in many parts of the world (Lovell 2019). In the 21st Century, insurgencies also use technological advancements, such as the internet, cell phones and social media, to their advantage. The inherent cultural understanding and connections that insurgents possess places them at an advantage in manipulating the narrative that both the local and global audiences witness (Egnell 2010, 292).

Notwithstanding the view that every insurgency is unique in its own right, the causes of insurgency generally are theoretically conceptualized in several ways. First, the rapid modernization of underdeveloped countries is popularly credited with the rise of insurgencies (Huntington 1968). While, modernization may explain some insurgencies, it does not explain them

all. Other explanatory factors, include tribal/religious/ethnic conflict (Israel-Palestine), irredentist secessionist movements (Nigeria's war with Biafra; Russia versus Chechnya), the failure of government to provide basic necessities of life and the disenfranchisement of large segments of the population from the political process (South African apartheid), or the revolution of rising expectations as found in Latin America where there was a failure of modernization by the local governments. Rising expectations lead to insurgencies in cases when population expectations rise but are not met often due to government corruption or unequal distribution of benefits (Borum 2011).

Regardless of the cause, insurgencies do not remain stagnant throughout the conflict once they have arisen. Their fluid, highly political, and localized nature often results in ever-changing entities that learn and adapt throughout the conflict (Galula 1964, 10). In an effort to understanding how best to combat insurgencies, the RAND Corporation, preeminent researchers in the COIN discipline, intensively investigated how insurgencies themselves are organized (Long 2006, 36). Research at RAND did not limit understanding of insurgent organizational structure to hierarchical charts or force numbers. Instead, there was a concerted effort made to understand the elements that work in tandem to create the overarching organization as a whole. RAND analyst, Austin Long, writes that the internal organization of insurgencies is characterized by a multitude of components that serve a core, yet loose ideological system (Long 2006, 36). Insurgencies may contain separate components working together. For example, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was the military wing of the Northern Irish insurgency, whereas Sinn Fein was the political wing, working together at arm's length.

Independent from the wealth of research gathered by COIN theorists, literature from insurgents themselves also offers great insight into the organization of insurgent groups. For

example, Mao Tse-Tung's *On Guerilla Warfare (Yu Chi Chan)* (1937) outlines how insurgencies can structure themselves most effectively based on force size and resources. Mao's explicit and direct written instructions have served as strategic and tactical guidebooks for countless insurgencies ranging from the Huk Rebellion in the Philippines (c. 1942), Viet Cong in Vietnam (c. 1955), Naxalite in India (c. 1967), Khmer Rouge in Cambodia (c. 1975), Red Army Faction (AKA the Baader-Meinhof group) in West Germany (c. 1970), and People's Liberation Army in Nepal (c. 1996) to many more (Lovell 2019). The widespread success and influence of Mao's lessons also drew the attention of early counterinsurgents and COIN theorists searching for guidance (Gurman 2013, 60).

Counterinsurgency (COIN)

Counterinsurgency (COIN) campaigns are reactionary military and political operations that are organized in response to the rise of an insurgency. *Counter*insurgency is defined as wars waged by governments against non-state actors (insurgents) that are fighting to change the political status quo. Often the end goal of the insurgents is to overthrow the government or occupying power. The distinction between counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism is determined by popular support (Dixon 2009, 356). COIN campaigns are typically supported by and sometimes led by external sovereign states. External support by outside states can include foreign intervention, investment, arms, and aid. However, foreign involvement for COIN operations typically includes the deployment of armed forces and traditional military power (Berger et al. 2007, 911).

COIN operations often aim to provide security and basic services to civilians, establish or re-establish legitimate local governing structures, and engage in reconstruction activities (Cohen 2011). It is preferable for goods and services to be provided and carried out by organizations that

are created for the specific purpose of providing aid, such as non-governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, and charities. However, such agencies are frequently prohibited from or unable to operate in unstable environments due to the risks involved (MacKenzie 2013, 217). Consequently, COIN military forces are often forced to shoulder the additional burden of providing basic services, much-needed goods, reconstruction missions, develop governing structures, provide security, and engage in combat against insurgents (Ucko 2009, 2).

Counterinsurgency campaigns are designed, theoretically, to detect and destroy insurgent forces in order to block the attainment of their goals (Malkasian 2006, 389). However, due to the very different nature of insurgent conflicts, COIN campaigns cannot be conducted in the same way as conventional military operations and the strategies employed must always be updated (Ellington 2013, 72). Traditional military might does not achieve the same results in COIN conflicts as it does in large-scale conventional warfare between sovereign states. As a direct consequence of the size and power disparity, insurgent forces use any advantages that they have at their disposal in order to compete (Galula 1964, 10). The guerilla warfare tactics that insurgencies employ presents both military and political difficulties for COIN operations. As noted above, these challenges may include insurgent use of political propaganda, psychological warfare, ambush attacks, intimate connection with the local population, and knowledge of the local culture, history and the physical landscape (Berti 2016, 3).

The term “counterinsurgency” officially began to be used by the USA during President John F. Kennedy’s term in office (c. 1960) (Kuzmarov 2013, 182). However, the foundations of COIN theory predate the use of the term itself. In 1896, Charles E. Callwell published the first guide to counterinsurgency: *Small Wars: Principles and Practice* (1896). In *Small Wars*, Callwell examined a diverse collection of insurgent conflicts between regular and irregular forces that

spanned the Middle East, South Africa, and Central Asia (Callwell 1996, 22[7]). Callwell discusses the causes of insurgencies, the nature of COIN combat, guerilla warfare tactics, the implications of varying theatres of war, and the need for deliberate action in COIN conflicts (Callwell 1896).

Callwell repeatedly cautions that COIN forces must treat each insurgency as a unique case. The only uniformity that insurgencies have is resistance to the status quo. The need to view each insurgency as a unique situation continues to form the basis of COIN understanding of insurgent forces into the 21st Century (Gurman 2013, 102). Independent of the passage of time and context, Callwell's work is still referred to for foundational understanding of modern insurgent conflicts. However, this advice is often ignored in subsequent conflicts, as is explained below (MacKenzie 2013, 210).

Up until the second half of the 20th Century, the field of COIN was largely dominated by imperial campaigns to suppress colonial uprisings. COIN campaigns aimed to supress colonial uprisings, utilized harsh traditional military might to destroy the insurgency, and in many cases annihilated the insurgents themselves (Callwell 1996, 30). However, the dynamic between insurgents and counterinsurgents shifted radically following during the era of mass decolonization following the Second World War (Kuzmarov 2013, 182). With this global political change, insurgencies were fighting against their own governments, with the Great Powers most often being behind-the-scenes supporters of said governments or the insurgents. Great Powers often intervened in IW conflicts directly after their own colonies or client states gained independence. The use of Great Power armed forces to put down insurgencies has had a spotty record, such as the case of the French in Chad (Lemarchand 1981, 414).

[7] The reference provided for Callwell's "Small Wars" is the 3rd edition (1996).

Unlike insurgents or past colonial empires, liberal democratic states cannot explicitly utilize violent or coercive measures to stamp out insurgent uprisings for any great length of time because they are in danger of losing popular support in the home country (Turcan 2009, 105). This is particularly true with respect to foreign interventions, such as the recent Iraq War and the Afghan War conducted under the umbrella of the US-led 'coalitions of the willing' in Iraq and NATO in Afghanistan. As a result, the COIN literature has mainly moved on to focus upon soft-power and political strategies as potential solutions that are more palatable to the home country's electorate. The asymmetrical nature of counterinsurgency operations and increasing humanitarian imperative of warfare has necessitated alternative soft power tactics to be employed in search of victory (Khalili 2011, 2).

The significance of preserving the well-being of the local population while at the same time combating their dynamic relationship with insurgents has prompted the emergence of population-centric (soft) COIN theory and its adoption by the US and other Western liberal, industrialized democracies (Duyvesteyn 2011, 457). In *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (1964), David Galula (later regarded as the father of COIN theory) argued that non-violent political tactics would be the most valuable tools for counterinsurgents to combat insurgencies and thereby achieve success. Although military power continued to be relevant and often necessary in IW, Galula argued that COIN operations would only be victorious against insurgents if they attained widespread support among the population impacted by the insurgency (Heuser 2007, 157). Galula's work marked the first written support for population-centric strategies by counterinsurgent forces. Galula's acknowledgement of the fact that counterinsurgency operations are ultimately political operations (Galula 1964, 4) was (and remains) significant. Decades later (in the early 2000's), Galula's theory of the importance of the

local population was revived by USA General David Petraeus in the publication of Field Manuel 3-24 for counterinsurgent operations during the Global War on Terror (GWOT) (Gurman 2013, 77).

Despite the abundance of literature, manuals, and examined case studies that exist to guide operations battling insurgencies, modern COIN forces have continued to fail repeatedly and consistently. COIN operations face 'immaterial' barriers to victory on all sides. Both their adversaries and compatriots at home limit the operational and strategic choices available to COIN forces. The asymmetric balance in IW extends to regular COIN, as well as irregular insurgent forces (Long 2006, 4). However, unlike their opponents, COIN forces are not limited by firepower, technological adaption, or military might. Most advanced states, democratic and non-democratic, possess superior technology, training, budget, and weapons that far exceed those commonly seen in states with insurgent uprisings. For example, the US emphasizes "high intensity conflict" which is incompatible with IW and combatting insurgents. This focus on military might has left smaller nations and forces, such as insurgents, to adopt and use irregular tactics to their advantage in competing with US forces. The military campaign is only one piece of the larger strategy to defeat an insurgency (Ives 2007, 76). For COIN campaigns to be successful and effectively eliminate the insurgency as a whole, the operation must include a complex and multi-faceted strategy that lowers the attraction of the insurgency for the local population and prevents it from growing. However, COIN operations involve much more challenging tasks than location and termination of targets (MacKenzie 2013, 219).

Firepower and technology are not only ill-suited to compete with insurgent guerilla tactics and knowledge (Berti 2016, 3), but often perpetuate existing conflicts. Targeting insurgents with military power in any situation presents operational risks. Due to the nature of insurgencies and

the tactics they employ, the neutralization of individual insurgents away from populated areas will hold little meaning for the overall conflict (Ellington 2013, 72). The low-visibility and often complex terrain that insurgents choose to create rural camps ensures that COIN operations are rarely able to target, surprise, or have the advantage against insurgents away from the civilian population. On the other hand, although the targeting of significant urban areas (typically high density) with extreme military force may eliminate many insurgents, urban areas used by insurgents are also typically high-density and would result in mass civilian casualties (e.g., Israeli operations in Gaza 2023-24). Civilian casualties are not only devastating for the local population, but also work against the goals of COIN operations (Berger et al. 2007, 914). The indiscriminate use of firepower that typically results in civilian casualties will counterproductively lower local civilian support for the COIN operation. Notable counterinsurgency expert, David Kilcullen, has consistently argued that conventional military force and strategies, particularly the use of sizable ground forces [8] is highly detrimental to the goals of COIN operations (Kilcullen 2007, 29-35).

Barriers to the success of COIN operations exist not only in the foreign locales (where COIN is taking place), but also domestically. There are two primary areas where governments struggle: a loss of domestic support and an unresponsive and sluggish bureaucracy. Governments present many reasons to their domestic electorate to justify foreign COIN operations (MacKenzie 2013, 208). However, these reasons may be ultimately rejected by the electorate, such as the Domino Theory, and the electorate may shift support away from the government over time if it is perceived that there is little benefit to the home country (Vietnam War) (Gurman 2013, 92). Governments may wish to support counterinsurgencies, but the home economy and bureaucracies

[8] There are two central arguments regarding size of force for COIN operations - small vs. large footprint. David Kilcullen argues in favour of a small footprint because the latter serves to alienate the local populations and highlights their status as foreign interveners (2007, 29-35). In contrast, Sidney Ellington argues that a large footprint serves COIN operations best as it allows them to secure the population (2013).

may be unwilling or unable to meet the needs of counterinsurgencies forces, including the inability to produce sufficient and relevant weapons at a rate necessary for replacement (Builder 1989 5), currently evident in the ongoing Russo-Ukraine War.

The type of regime, government, political and strategic culture, bureaucratic processes, and accountability measures of intervening states further constrain COIN operational options and independence on foreign soil. Many political theorists and institutions have offered potential solutions to the difficulties that domestic governments pose for counterinsurgency operational success (Long 2006, 40). For example, Callwell's pioneering suggestion for COIN operations to remain uninhibited by bureaucratic structures at home involved military independence in the field. But this removes accountability to the civilian political structure which is an anathema to western-style democracies. Callwell suggested that "flying columns[9]" that were fully autonomous during operations was necessary for COIN success (Callwell 1996, 118). Such "flying columns" have been useful for locals to combat local insurgencies, as found with Israel in the West Bank territories (Amidror 2008, 24-25), and the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) combatting ISIS (Broekhof et al. 2019, 97).

However, the strategic context that existed during Callwell's time differs greatly from that of modern times. While military autonomy is a viable option for imperial armed forces[10], COIN operations undertaken by liberal democracies do not exist in a vacuum. Similar to empires, authoritarian regimes with a monopoly on power (i.e. totalitarian, monarchic, and oligarchic states) are not constrained by domestic populous accountability, legality, due process, spending and budgetary limits, or restraints on the use of military power when engaging in IW. In contrast,

[9] "Flying Columns" are self-sufficient, contained teams of troops that act as fully independent mobile units within the arena of battle (Callwell 1996, 118).
[10] Callwell suggested military autonomy for COIN forces deployed by the British Empire (Callwell 1996, 118).

accountability to the people and limits on power are the foundation of liberal democracies. Liberal democratic nations are dependent on domestic support for wars and generally[11] beholden to a system of checks and balances on power. Consequently, COIN operations are limited in their military autonomy and ability to compete with the fast-paced nature of insurgent conflicts. Thus, they end up failing for the most part when conducted by a foreign democratic power.

Over half a century later (c. 1950), the American RAND Corporation analyzed the organizational structure of COIN operations and conducted studies on how to overcome the difficulties that arise on the battlefield for foreign intervention COIN operations due to their domestic democratic governments (Long 2006, 40). For example, bureaucratic barriers that slow progress in COIN operations include, but are not limited to the process of approvals before military action, lengthy waiting periods for approvals, lack of communications between departments and reliance on communication with relevant officials at home in order to receive orders. The central finding of RAND research at the time was that the division of duties between different bureaucratic levels of government organizations (political, civil, and military) was counterintuitive to the needs of COIN conflicts (Long 2006, 42).

Subsequent research at RAND investigated why this is the case and how COIN operations can be organized to prevent domestic (home state) bureaucracies from impeding gains in the field (Long 2006, 41)[12]. For example, RAND analyst Francis West ("Bing") researched Marines Corps operations that utilized small teams, Combined Action Platoons (CAP)) to achieve specific mission objectives (1969 and 1985). West argued that such teams were invaluable and were overlooked by

[11] Although liberal democracies are subject to accountability measures, they are not immune to violating their own standards of behaviour and International Law, especially in the case of hegemonic superpowers, such as the United States (Turcan, 2009, 105).

[12] Researchers at RAND have released a variety of publications with their findings (see Leites (1951), Selznick (1952), Galula (1963), Jenkins, (1970), Komer (1972), Blaufarb (1972), West (1969, 1985), Hosmer (1990), Hoffman (2004), etc.) on how government agencies and institutions (civil and military) should coordinate and be organized to best serve USA COIN objectives (Long 2006, 40).

military leaders that overemphasized conventional warfare. Following the Vietnam War, another RAND analyst Bruce Hoffman, also suggested that close civil-military cooperation all the way down to the battlefield is vital to success (Long 2006, 43). However, US state institutions are tied to their strategic culture and are not structured for IW or the swift cooperation needed to employ rapid military action in the field (Builder 1989, 5).

Other experts in the COIN field have suggested alternative solutions in more recent years. In 2006, RAND analyst and COIN theorist Austin Long suggested that a "unified civilian and military structure" in the form of a "council" that coordinates with intelligence would prove useful in overcoming bureaucratic barriers in COIN campaigns (Long 2006, 58). Long asserts that the "consistency and close coordination" provided by a council would prove vital in attaining strategic success (Long 2006, 58). This structure would mean that military engagement could not occur unless it was approved by the council. While this solution may provide a coordinated government approach, a COIN council would ensure increased dependence on officials at home and continue to be contrary to the nature of COIN. Notwithstanding domestic constraints, the other side of the COIN problem concerns the centre of gravity for insurgents and counter-insurgents alike – the local population (MacKenzie 2013, 210).

Local Population in COIN

The third, and arguably most significant, group that exists in all insurgent/counterinsurgent conflicts is the local population. The reliance of insurgencies on local populations has led many COIN theorists to believe that the support of the local people themselves is the key to COIN

success in vanquishing insurgencies. In Effects-Based Operations[13], military strategists refer to this key as the "Centre of Gravity" (COG) [14] (Ong 2013, 2). The COG relies on the notion that in each distinct conflict, the adversary is believed to have a centre of gravity that if correctly targeted will cause their complete collapse and a swift victory (Read 2010, 132).

Proponents of Effects-Based Operations have long argued that military operations should be conducted and centered around the effects that are desired from the conflict, rather than simply the targets themselves (Anderson 2010, 227). For example, although leadership may lie at the centre of a society, it is not necessarily the target that will achieve the desired effect of the operation. Col. John Warden III's "Five Ring Theory" focuses upon this notion and distills the systems that can be considered as targets for EBO as "five concentric rings". All enemies should be viewed as simply a structure of systems (English & Coombs 2007, 8). From the innermost ring outward, they consist of leadership, key production sites, infrastructure, population, and fielded forces. The rings are each potential centres of gravity for the enemy. Targeting a ring that is not the COG in that particular conflict can be disastrous (Warden 1997, 175).

The COG of the enemy will vary in each conflict. For example, during the 1991 Gulf War, national command and control within the leadership ring was the most vital to target (Warden 1997; 176). During WWII, although the population were initially targeted by the British 'morale

[13] Effects-Based Operations (EBO) is a theory of categorization to evaluate, plan, and implement operations based on an understanding of the environment and systems of adversaries (i.e. economic, political, military, infrastructure, communication, and social structures) to attain a specific outcome. (Umstead 2005; 2). In EBO, the emphasis lies on the results desired from the military operation. While the means of attainment may vary throughout the conflict, the desired effect can remain unchanged (Meilinger 2007; 139). Historically, effects-based airpower operations have been greatly concerned with the population and targeting of their morale, "will to fight", and desire to support their end of the conflict. This has been the case in conventional conflicts, such as the allied bombing of Germany in the Second World War, as well as COIN operations, such as the Vietnam War, and the War on Terror in Afghanistan and Iraq (Anderson 2010; 225).

[14] The Centre of Gravity (COG) can be defined in simplest terms as the "characteristics, capabilities, or sources of power" from which the enemy draws its "freedom of action", strength, and "will to fight" (Warden 1997; 175).

bombing'[15]) without positive effects, key production was the COG for the German military (Kocher 2011, 202). As non-state actors, insurgents do not have economic or industrial targets that can be attacked with airpower (Lyall 2015; 2). In the case of COIN operations, the local population is the centre of gravity[16] for insurgent forces due to their reliance upon the people for mobilization, concealment, materials, and silence (Kocher 2011, 201). Without the participation and support of the people, insurgencies fail. COIN campaigns with backing from the population provides their operations with greater legitimacy, power, and the likelihood of success against insurgents. Therefore, counterinsurgents are forced to compete with insurgents that already possess the upper hand for the support of the local population (Farquhar 2017, 52).

Insurgents emerge from inside the civilian population themselves and are ultimately entwined within the local community in ways that are not replicable by incoming counterinsurgent forces (Egnell 2010, 292). Insurgents already possess the distinct advantage of inherent native

[15] Early airpower advocates (such as Hugh Trenchard, Giulio Douhet, and Winston Churchill) were strongly impacted by the successes of "aerial policing campaigns" in colonial territories (i.e. Somaliland, Tripolitania, Mesopotamia, Transjordan, etc.) (Lyall 2015, 2). They were also influenced by their experiences in the First World War and the horror and devastation that it brought. WWI made the notion of war unpalatable. The concept of strategic bombing in WWII was championed as a way to avoid the devastation and horror of the previous war (Haslam 2012). Trenchard argued for airpower targeting of infrastructure that supported the population in order to negatively impact the morale of the civilian workers, and the national population at large during the war (Rigole 2002, 8). Similarly, Douhet believed the "will of the people" to be the centre of gravity (Rigole 2002, 8), and that the effects of sustained bombing would prove so unbearable for the enemy population that wars would be resolved swiftly (Anderson 2010, 220). Douhet also argued that there was no longer any true distinction between civilians and militants as the entire nation supported the war effort through a variety of ways (Haslam 2012). With introduction of the allies into the Second World War, the theory of airpower strategic targeting was applied in warfare. However, both the Americans and the British discovered that despite the number of fierce advocates of the tactic and its highly destructive nature, it proved to be minimally effective (Stockings & Fernandes 2006, 10). 600,000 German civilians were killed as a result of strategic airpower, and yet the morale of the German people was not undermined by the aerial bombardment (Werrell 1986). Instead, the outcome greatly mirrored the reaction that British citizens had towards the German bombings (Stockings & Fernandes 2006, 11). The morale of the German people was not undermined by the Allies' aerial bombardment (Hughes 2011). Instead, the population unity, nationalism, and their overall support of the war effort was furthered strengthened as a result of the campaign. The death of civilians as a result of Allied strategic bombing in an attempt to target morale, and later infrastructure, resulted in the reinforcement of the resistance of the entire German nation (Kocher 2011, 202). The future utilization of "morale bombing" by the United States to combat insurgency in the Vietnam War produced similar results and the strategy gained a widespread reputation as counterproductive (Lyall 2015, 36).

[16] Populations have frequently been targeted by airpower in an attempt to meet the goals of Effects-Based Operations (EBO). Most commonly, the morale of the populous has been targeted in an attempt to undermine conventional war efforts as well as insurgencies (Farquhar 2017, 52).

cultural understanding, intimate local contacts, personal and familial relationships, and more. In contrast, foreign intervention counterinsurgents do not possess any natural or pre-existing connection with the local population to leverage for support. As well, popular support for insurgents does not equal agreement or affection for insurgent forces (Read 2010, 134). Local support for the insurgency may be maintained through fear, coercion, and violence (Long 2006, 21). Families and other groups in the local community may remain compliant to the insurgency without genuinely supporting them in order to protect family and friends that have willingly joined, been recruited, or conscripted to the cause. In contrast to local insurgents, counterinsurgents from democratic states that employ coercive measures to squash insurgencies violate international law, and damage support from both local populations and domestic citizens (Turcan 2009, 105).

In most cases of foreign (especially Western) intervention in ethnically or tribally organized societies, invaded communities are already hostile to the central government and their armed forces. Civilian populations in societies outside North America and Europe often hold strong anti-colonial anti-Western sentiments and therefore may be strongly opposed to *any* foreign COIN intervention regardless of ongoing harms caused by insurgencies or local governments. As a result, such communities already have negative perceptions of COIN forces at the outset of the operation (Ellington 2013, 77).

By and large, the literature suggests that insurgents have the advantage over counterinsurgents in connecting with the people. However, this assumption implies that local populations are homogenous[17]. Reflective to the idea that each insurgency is unique in time and space, the composition of local populations is similarly dependent and unique in every nation (Read 2010, 134). There are often internal divisions within the population – ethnic, tribal, religious,

[17] European states are largely ethnically homogenous, and the population could therefore be expected to respond in a singular manner (Stockings & Fernandes 2006, 11).

and socio-economic for example, – that will trump and dictate where the allegiances lie for different segments of the population (MacKenzie 2013, 206). For example, in the case of states that are dominated/characterized by strong, exclusionary, ethnically dominated identity systems, ethnically based insurgencies can only 'swim in the sea' (Tse-Tung 1937) amongst their own ethnic faction. TRMEs (i.e. Afghanistan, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and others Middle Eastern tribal nations) are one such example of the aforementioned conditions (Turcan 2009, 86). COIN operations that do not take such nuances into account are doomed to failure from the outset (MacKenzie 2013, 211).

Conclusion

The debate regarding the solution to barriers presented by insurgents and COIN home governments and interveners continue into present day. No template or standard set of rules that will guarantee triumph over insurgencies has been discovered. In search of a solution to insurgent conflicts, endless options have been suggested by COIN theorists and many have been tested in the field, and most have ultimately failed (Johnson 2014, 1).

As a result of the designation of 'the people' as the insurgent centre of gravity, local populations embroiled in insurgent conflicts have been has subjected to countless COIN theoretical and tactical experiments (Egnell 2010, 283). Most have failed, unfortunately (or fortunately depending on whose side you are on). In other words, the most effective way to win over the local population being targeted by an insurgency has proved elusive (Duyvesteyn 2011, 457). Numerous

approaches[18] and perspectives aimed at uncovering the key to victory against insurgent adversaries have risen and fallen in popularity throughout time. Since the mid-20th Century, the theory of winning the 'Hearts and Minds' (HaM) of the people to achieve victory has remained at the centre of the counterinsurgency discipline (Duyvesteyn 2011, 448). This issue will be explored in detailed in the next chapter.

[18] Alternative approaches applied by COIN in insurgent conflicts include, but are not limited to: traditional military might (including firepower, violence, and coercion), Pacification (see Long 2006, 52), Cordon & Search Operations (see Greer [2005, 41] and CAC/US Amy/USMC [2009, 12]), Decapitation (see Johnston 2012), Cost/Benefit Theory (see Long 2006, 24), Drain[ing] the Sea (see Plakoudas 2016), Morale Bombing (see Lyall 2015, 36), Diplomatic Relations (see Petraeus 2006, 2), Cultural Intelligence (see Johnson 2014), etc.

Chapter Three

Hearts And Minds (HaM) Theory

"The ultimate victory will depend upon the hearts and the minds of the people who actually live out there. By helping to bring them hope and electricity you are also striking a very important blow for the cause of freedom throughout the world."

- President Lyndon B. Johnson on the Vietnam War (1965)

In this chapter, the theoretical framework, known as "Hearts and Minds" Theory, often used in COIN operations, will be examined. As a result of insurgent reliance upon the population, the local populous plays an important role in the success, or failure of COIN operations (Pennekamp 2013, 1626). Their support for and viewpoint of the legitimacy of the COIN campaign are vital to the success of such operations and the likelihood of defeat of the insurgency (Gross 2011, 369).

For counterinsurgents to win the hearts and minds of the people, they must gain their genuine support. The terms 'hearts' and 'minds' respectively refer to the emotional and reasonable/rational support of the local population. HaM Theory views these targets as the only way to remove the support base that insurgencies count upon (Egnell 2010, 283). The bounds of this chapter will be limited to a strict exploration of the theory itself. Subsequent chapters will critically analyze and explore the flaws present in HaM Theory.

HaM Theory

The formal structured theory of "Winning Hearts and Minds" (HaM) was developed by the RAND Corporation (**R**esearch **AND** **D**evelopment) in the 1960s. The RAND Corporation is a private independent American research institution and thinktank established in 1945 (Long 2006,

5). The RAND Corporation research into counterinsurgency increased significantly following the election of President Kennedy to office (1961) and the escalation of US engagement in the Vietnam War. In search of historical solutions to modern problems, RAND began to analyze lessons from past COIN operations. RAND also invited notable players in the discipline to serve as consultants and participate in symposiums to elucidate solutions from repeated outcomes in insurgency and counterinsurgency efforts (Long 2006, 7). Due to the intimate relationship between RAND and the US government during Kennedy's term, these research symposia were largely funded by the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ISA). David Galula, considered now to be the Father of Counterinsurgency, was amongst the invited consultants for the April 1962 symposium (Long 2006, 7).

The outset of COIN theory development was also largely dominated by government funded academic institutions and scholars, such as the Center for International Studies (CIS) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (supported by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)). Due to close professional relationships, CIS and RAND theorists often communicated and collaborated (Long 2006, 21). Institutions involved in the research of early counterinsurgency theory (c. 1950s) focused on strategic issues in insurgent conflicts caused by development and modernization with an emphasis on Cold War proxy battles taking place across the globe between the superpowers (Long 2006, 22). The HaM theoretical framework posited that COIN forces needed to restore the hope and confidence of the people in their government by providing the goods and services expected by the people from their government. RAND theorists also asserted that COIN forces must protect the local population from exploitation and attacks by both the insurgents and the government (Long 2006, 23).

The central tenets of the HaM Theory focus upon the defeat of insurgent forces through the protective and pacifist provision of goods and services to the local population (Egnell 2010, 290). Counterinsurgency operations employing HaM principles have sought the support of the local population by attempting to mitigate the negative effects of development (Modernization Theory), augment the positive attributes of societal progress, and protect the population from insurgent exploitation and attacks (Egnell 2010, 283).

Modernization

Modernization Theory serves as the first component of the HaM theoretical framework. It is grounded in the belief that local populations in developing states suffer tremendously from the negative consequences of rapid modernization and economic development (Pye 1958). To "win the hearts and minds" of the local populations, counterinsurgents attempt to persuade the local population to support them by resolving negative outcomes that have arisen in their society due to accelerated development without the pre-existence of necessary political, social, and economic structures and systems to support such changes (McLennan 1970).

Early counterinsurgency theorists (see Pye [1958], Rostow [1959], and Huntington [1968]) believed that the pressure generated by accelerated modernization in developing nations created instability and vulnerability that could be exploited by insurgent forces that offered alternatives to struggling or failed governments. This was a widely accepted theory and considered to be the backbone of COIN theory since the 1960s when it was first widely implemented by the US in Vietnam (Long 2006, 22).

Politically and economically developed states rely on robust and refined institutions to function peacefully and effectively (Huntington 1968). States that have undergone development too rapidly typically do not possess institutions capable of governance at this level. As a result, the

absence of such regulatory structures may lead to political instability, corruption, violence, and a lack of public security and provision of goods and services. A good example are the many African states that declared independence from their imperial overlords beginning in the 1950s. In most of these situations, the necessary governmental structures did not exist beyond that provided by local tribal structures (McLennan 1970).

In situations where the government has failed to provide the basic needs required by the local population[19], insurgent groups often organized to provide for the people instead, as evident in Russia, China and Vietnam (Gurman 2013, 79). The October 1917 Russian Revolution is a great example where a small insurgent and well-organized group could take over a disintegrating state structure. In such cases, insurgent groups can provide a valid alternative to existing governments in rapidly modernizing societies. To shift local support from the insurgency to the COIN operation, COIN forces employ pacifist, protective, and political initiatives to mitigate the negative effects of rapid modernization relative to underdevelopment, corruption, and ethnic conflict. These activities can include, *inter alia*, reconstruction activities, the provision of goods and services, the establishment of educational programs, usually Western in nature, the development of democratic systems, and monetary gifts (Kuzmarov 2013, 188).

Societal Progress

The second component of HaM Theory is societal progress. Societal progress implies changes in the underlying conditions of societies whereby people's lives are improved. The new lifestyle becomes more desirable based on a shared system of values and goals. With societal

[19] A Social Contract exists between governments and the people that dictates that governments provide basic necessities (or more) in return for the people adhering to the laws and norms of the state (see John Locke (1698) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1791)).

progress, there is meant to be an increased societal (including economic and political) capacity to meet basic human needs (MacKenzie 2013, 204). The quality of the lives of citizens and their communities are enhanced in a manner that can be sustained, and citizens live with hope that individuals may reach their full potential. Societal progress is a pillar of COIN operations which should enhance and support the positive effects of societal progress that rapidly modernizing nations experience, which in practice included the development of liberal democratic structures and institutions, the establishment of Western education system, and in recent times gender equality, among others (Rowley 2013, 156).

Population Protection

The goal of the third component of the HaM framework is safety; the protection of the local population from attacks by insurgents, as well as reduction in the overall level of fear of retribution by insurgents. As insurgents rely upon the local population for their existence, local civilians must also play an important role in the success of COIN operations (Pennekamp 2013, 1626). Their support and viewpoint of the legitimacy of the COIN campaign is vital to the success of COIN operations and the defeat of the insurgency. Therefore, the protection of their safety, as well as rights, freedoms and quality of life must be a priority for invading COIN forces (Gross 2011, 369).

The first conflict that the HaM framework is most commonly attributed to is the British COIN operation in Malaya (the Malayan Emergency) in 1952-1954 (Duyvesteyn 2011, 445). British COIN forces were viewed as triumphant in the Malayan Emergency due to the initial defeat of insurgent forces. However, a variety of factors were at play that led to this outcome. Richard Stubbs states that:

> *"The coercion and enforcement approach might ensure that the British did not lose, but neither did it give them any hope of winning… [until] General Sir Gerald Templar, the new High Commissioner [February 1952] … implemented what became known as the 'hearts and minds' approach." (*Hearts and Minds in Guerilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency 1948-1960 (1989)*)*

The initial years of the conflict were characterized by extreme bloodshed and coercion. HaM was only adopted by General Templar when the conflict was determined to have reached a stalemate. It was after the implementation of HaM that progress was gained once more. However, throughout the time period that HaM was established in Malaya, the local population still remained subject to forced relocation, terror tactics, and violence. It is also vital to note that the British High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney, was assassinated in 1951 and Malaya gained independence from the British shortly after the conflict in 1957 [20]. These fundamental, and well-documented, facts were overlooked and disregarded by COIN disciples seeking answers to the question of insurgency (Gurman 2013, 18). Following the perceived success of the British forces against the local Malayan uprising, the HaM theoretical framework was adopted in subsequent Western counterinsurgency operations and as a classic example of the defeat of insurgents through the hearts and minds of the people (Duyvesteyn 2011, 448).

Despite the fact that the concept has remained popular as a counterinsurgency strategy, HaM Theory originated initially as guidelines for insurgent success. The origins of the HAM theoretical framework derive from Mao Tse-Tung's *On Guerrilla War* (1937). He asserts that insurgents must win the hearts and minds of their own local populations to carry out a successful insurgency (Tse-Tung 1961, 44) (Long 2006, 22). Mao understood that without the support of the local population, his Communist Revolution would be doomed to failure. Hence, he first focused on winning the support of the locals by providing them with the services that the local nationalist

[20] The other most-cited example of HaM success, Algeria, followed the same pattern.

government had failed to fulfill (Gurman 2013, 60). Ultimately, this laid the groundwork for his nation-wide uprising against the corrupt and inept nationalist government and their military forces that rapidly disintegrated after the withdrawal of US military support upon the conclusion of World War II.

HaM and the US

Since its resurgence in COIN campaigns in the 21st Century, HaM has largely been employed and touted as a dominant strategic guideline by the US and its military forces in numerous conflicts around the world. US attraction to HaM values far outpaces other Western states interests and compatibility with the population-centric theory. The unique attraction that HaM holds for the USA is due to its compatibility with American ideals and national narratives established at independence (Britton 2006, 128). In the American foundational viewpoint, all problems can be solved with the development or wholesale adoption of a capitalist economic system and western style political system. Symbiotically, HaM is theoretically all about making sure that everybody should have a voice, their bellies should be filled, and they should not have to live in fear.

Across cultures and time periods, myths have continued to shape human experiences and provide meaning to the flow of events in societies. Myths are shaped by the cultural, historical, religious, military, geographic, and ideological narratives that dominate the national experience (Record 2006, 3). Myths synthesize the events of history and apply meaning, explanation, and morality upon the cultural and historical occurrences in the world. The dominant narratives in the socio-political culture of a nation serve as a lens through which issues and solutions are interpreted by significant political figures and the general population. Narratives that hold enduring power in

a society develop into a foundational lens through which past, present, and future events are interpreted and understood (Ramazani 2018, 193) (Pease 2009).

The driving force of myths exists even at the state level. The behaviour of states is not ahistorical or acultural, but rather intimately tied to their own unique experiences (Beneš 2017, 66). In the realm of governance and national security, the interpretive lens shapes the strategic culture of the state. The strategic culture of a state can be defined as a "socially constructed identity that shapes national security policy and strategic behaviour… [S]trategic culture is the interaction of a state's higher level strategic assumptions shaped by history: and lower-level assumptions about the best strategic options for operating in the rules-based international regime" (Kamara 2015, 79). Strategic culture can impact state strategic and political behaviour as a whole, rather than simply that of the military (Hill 2015, 86). Therefore, analysis of a nation's strategic culture can illuminate the state's actions and reactions in international and domestic affairs (Record 2006, 3). In American political and strategic culture, American Exceptionalism is one of the most dominant and powerful myths (Ramazani 2018, 193). American Exceptionalism has influenced and shaped American foreign policy and the judgements of the domestic population throughout the nation's history (Barnett 2016, 7).

American Exceptionalism

The concept of American Exceptionalism is heavily entrenched in the origins of American society and comprised from the synthesis of historical, political, cultural, religious, literary, and mythical sources (Barnett 2016, 3). The core concepts present in American Exceptionalism have been instrumental in the modern formation of the United States' civil religion (Vlahos 2012, 68). The roots of the theory of American Exceptionalism have typically been attributed to French writer

and political scientist Alexis de Tocqueville, author of *Democracy in America* (1835). American Exceptionalism depicts the United States as an exceptional nation surrounded by a "savage yet pure wildness" and as a "new Jerusalem" with the mission of liberating and redeeming humanity. Central to the concept that America can provide a new way beyond the limits of Europe is America's unique lack of a feudal past, in contrast to the societal structures surrounding nobility in Europe (Chapman 2016, 6).

The concept of American Exceptionalism fundamentally centres around three main premises regarding the nation and the American people: "The first part of the myth reflects America as a nation chosen by God, a "new Jerusalem" on Earth. Second, as God's chosen nation, America has a calling or mission in which to expand its ideals and values of democracy and freedom. Finally, America acts as a unique force of good in the world against evil" (Barnett 2016, 8).

The belief in their own exceptionalism relies upon the philosophy that regardless of any shortcomings or fatal flaws that may exist, "the United States is inherently superior to all other countries, its government and citizenry more enlightened, morally and politically, than any other" (Ramazani 2018, 193). Entrenched in American Exceptionalism is the concept that the United States is destined to "spread freedom and democracy" throughout the world in order to lift it from the shackles of Old-World feudalism and dictatorships. As a result, this concept becomes a defining element of American nationalism and identity (Britton 2006, 128).

The ideals that are central to American Exceptionalism and American political culture are not distinctly unique from other nations on earth. The values that are essential to American Exceptionalism are a combination of ideals central to the Enlightenment era (i.e. liberty, individualism, equality, and reason) and moralistic and theological values that stem from the

United States' Puritan origins (Rojecki 2008, 69). However, despite the shared nature of Enlightenment ideals by other nations, the belief in their exceptionalism is one of the strongest forces in American strategic and political culture and has impacted American foreign policy throughout history regardless of variation in administrative interpretation (Beneš 2017, 67).

The influence of American Exceptionalism in American political culture has made the nation highly vulnerable and reactive to existential threats, including terrorism perceived as such. It is also prone to the development of polarizing moralistic and normative narratives and inclined to revert to romantic depictions of itself (Britton 2006, 129). Societies that are heavily based upon exceptionalism are uniquely vulnerable and reactive in the face of threats. Threats [21] that may be viewed as arguably small are often transformed into existential ones that threaten the fabric of domestic and global society (Barnett 2016, 14). The threat of terror strikes at the unique and particularly vulnerable weaknesses of the United States and serves to undermine its presumed exceptional nature and divine mission (Rojecki 2008, 69).

The United States is also uniquely more vulnerable to existential threats since American Exceptionalism was fundamental in the formation of the United States' civil-religious identity (Haberski 2009, 8). American civil religion bears several similarities to that of the Roman Empire. In nations that are defined by a civil religious community, identity is not tied to observance of religious rules or behaviours, but rather the complete loyalty and belief in sacred civic values [22]. "A nation that is also an idea must at all costs defend that idea, lest faith and thus identity fail us"

[21] In the case of the United States, rather than viewing the 9/11 terrorist attacks as an attack by a singular terrorist organization opposed to the foreign policy initiatives of the United States, the attack was framed as an existential threat to the American way of life, civil-religious identity, and core values (Britton 2006, 132).

[22] Among others, the sacred civic values of the US are considered to be freedom, equality, independence, individualism, etc.

(Vlahos 2012, 70). In the case of the United States, American Exceptionalism serves as the idea that the nation rests upon (Vlahos 2012, 69).

The lack of monarchy and moralistic Puritan origins of the United States have contributed to the national myth that the American Way (including when waging war the American Way of War (AWOW)) revolves around the pursuit of the greater good. American traditions of Exceptionalism dictate that the USA cannot wage Holy War or Crusades on religious or ethnic grounds, as their colonial predecessors/European empires did. Instead, American Exceptionalism and the American strategic culture that follows necessitates that engagement in warfare is a "moral act" (Beneš 2017, 68). In many ways, the national identity of America itself serves as the only acceptable religious tradition to engage in war. Instead of bringing unwelcomed gifts in the form of religious holidays, and forced conversions, for example, the American way of waging war has often involved bringing incompatible liberal democratic and capitalistic/socio-political and economic offerings together (Vlahos 2012, 70).

Despite the characteristic separation of church and state in the United States, the religious *origins* of American society have shaped the nation's modern identity. The intensely moral character of American Exceptionalism is rooted in the Puritan origins of the United States (Haberski 2009, 6). As a result, American Exceptionalism has often acted as the guiding moral compass of American strategic and political culture (Rojecki 2008, 68). War is meant to be carried out against evil and in service of American Exceptionalist values, such as freedom and equality (Beneš 2017, 68). Throughout the history of the America, this idea has frequently resulted in the attempt to conceal ulterior motives for warfare if they stem from the desire for power, territory, or material (Chávez 2013, 134).

Population-centric counterinsurgency strategies (such as HaM Theory) grounded in soft power theories support, if not are a product of the American cultural ideals of liberalism, humanism, equality, and freedom and allow the United States to wage wars in a manner that supports their personal image of themselves domestically and internationally. Liberal democratic states cannot explicitly utilize violent or coercive measures to stamp out insurgent uprisings (Turcan 2009, 105). The tradition of American Exceptionalism ensures that the US government and population is especially intolerant of blatant engagement in violence and coercion. The bloody reality of counterinsurgency operations would radically undermine the core values of American Exceptionalism that the USA is meant to embody and espouse, and its leaders are expected to uphold (Turcan 2009, 75). The withdrawal of American popular support for the Vietnam War is a case in point. The leadership of the USA government was seen as duplicitous, venal, callous, and corrupt. The leak of the Pentagon papers demonstrated that the government was lying to the people, and seeing children being covered in napalm on nightly television made it apparent to the bulk of Americans (Gurman 2013, 92).

Fundamentally, the domestic and international perception of the United States' moral and political superiority and primacy stems from the political myth of American Exceptionalism. The strategic application of American Exceptionalist values to the United States' military engagements has spurred massive ramifications (Beneš 2017, 68). Although American Exceptionalist ideals of liberty, equality, individualism, and moral judgement are admirable and laudable values, they can also be manipulated and utilized to achieve goals contrary to their character (Rojecki 2008, 69).

The strength of American Exceptionalism as a cultural and political narrative that impacts foreign policy is evident in the language utilized by American presidents and administrations (Chapman 2016, 1). For example, in the midst of the First World War, President Woodrow Wilson

declared America's entrance into the war to Congress by proclaiming that "neutrality is no longer feasible or desirable where the peace of the world is involved and the freedom of its people" (Wilson 1917). The rhetoric utilized by Wilson is illustrative of the grand moral and normative existential narratives characteristic of the American Exceptionalist myth (Britton 2006, 129).

Similarly, in 1945, at the conclusion of the Second World War, President Franklin Roosevelt's speech during his Fourth Inaugural Address was dominated by religious, divinity, and exceptional character language. Roosevelt stated that:

> *"The Almighty God… has given our people stout hearts and strong arms with which to strike many blows for freedom and truth. He has given our country a faith which has become of all peoples in an anguished world" (*Britton 2006, 129*).*

Although there are references and minor indicators, the USA did not heavily employ or invoke HaM Theory prior to the conclusion of WWII and their emergence as a world superpower. The successful experiences of the USA in transforming dictatorships, such as Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, into western-style liberal democracies based on capitalism reinforced the belief in the American system of ideals (Payne 2006, 209). The Korean War conflict similarly allowed the USA and its allies to remake South Korea in its own image once again (Park 2009, 51). Similarly, providing protection to the Kuomintang against the Communist Party of China (c. 1949) led to the eventual transformation of Taiwanese society in a manner palatable to the interests and ideals of the USA (Tsang 2008, 300). These successes reinforced the belief that the American Way is the Best Way – in other words, American Exceptionalism – and the USA tried to replicate those successes in subsequent conflicts during the Cold War and beyond (Payne 2006, 210).

Following the Second World War, irregular conflicts and insurgent uprisings, due to decolonization and proxy wars, dominated the latter half of the 20th Century. However, the USA had much more limited success when dealing with the transformation of the third world from

imperial to independent states (Hoffman 2004). In consequence, the use of American Exceptionalist rhetoric by Presidents in the United States was much more limited throughout the remainder of the 20th Century. Following its collective negative experience during the Vietnam War, America pulled back from foreign intervention (i.e. Nixon Doctrine 1969) and was reluctant to engage in insurgent conflicts. American Exceptionalism was deeply shaken by the experience in Vietnam. The repeated losses against Vietnamese insurgents/Viet Cong caused America to shy away from any conflicts that remotely appeared to be COIN/insurgency focused (Gurman 2013, 102).

This began to change under Ronald Reagan where he was more inclined to support local counterinsurgents in Africa (Angola, Mozambique) and Latin America (El Salvador and Guatemala) as part of the Cold War. However, the American public became very disenchanted with the growing perception of corruption at the highest levels of government (Iran-Contra scandal) and the obvious brutality of counterinsurgencies in Latin America (Chávez 2013, 128). Yet, the American public responded to Reagan's overtures for support time and time again to the point where some considered him a beloved figure on the American political landscape with the winning of the Cold War in 1989.

The voice of American Exceptionalism that began to creep back into the political discourse of the USA during the Reagan Administration continued to do so in every administration since then (Chapman 2016, 1). In 1995, President Bill Clinton declared that America carried a unique obligation to combat "forces which just as surely as Fascism and Communism would spread darkness over light, disintegration over integration, and chaos over community" (Clinton 1995).

No President or administration so strongly invoked and referenced American Exceptionalism as President George W. Bush (Chapman 2016, 1). One of the most prominent areas

in which the influence of American Exceptionalism on American foreign policy and response to external threats is most explicit and significant is his rhetoric and response to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the construction of the War on Terror (Rojecki 2008, 68). On 9/11, the United States was struck by an unprecedented act of terror perpetrated by members of the al-Qaeda terrorist network. The attacks resulted in the death of approximately 3,000 individuals and targeted powerful and significant political and economic sites in America (Armstrong 2003, 1).

Following the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States, President Bush and his administration consistently referenced American Exceptionalist values and heavily relied upon exceptionalist rhetoric to garner political support for the War on Terror (Barnett 2016, 15). Later in the day of the 9/11 attacks, President Bush stated that "thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror. Today our nation saw evil, the very worst of human nature. The search is underway for those who were behind these evil acts" (Barnett 2016, 14). This binary and moralistic rhetoric positioned the United States as fundamentally 'good' in contrast to those that had attacked them as fundamentally 'bad' (Barnett 2016, 15). Bush also framed the attack as directly targeting America's core values due to its exceptional nature and status (Britton 2006, 132). Unlike the attack on Pearl Harbour, the exceptional status of the US was particularly vulnerable to 9/11 as it occurred while they possessed hegemonic superpower globally (MacKenzie 2013, 217).

The Bush Administration's use of American Exceptionalist rhetoric ushered in a new era of American militarism and foreign policy (Britton 2006, 133). The effects of the 9/11 terrorist attack have strongly reverberated for nearly two decades and marked the beginning of a new era in the foreign policy and military engagements of the US (Barnett 2016, 13). Irregular Warfare quickly became the most common form of conflict in the new post-Cold War era. Consequently,

counterinsurgency theory and practice accrued revitalized interest (Ringsmose 2008, 418). As counterinsurgency expert, David Kilcullen, described the situation, “asymmetric wars have become fashionable again” (Ringsmose 2008, 411). The existential crises in America’s identity and purpose in the world that was brought on by the American experience in Vietnam was effectively forgotten despite the similar challenges that lay ahead in the Global War on Terror (GWOT). For the first significant time since the failures of the Vietnam War, the US willingly led a major war on insurgents on foreign soil in Afghanistan 2001 and Iraq in 2003 (Gurman 2013, 78).

In response to the attacks, the GWOT was launched as an international crusade against the evil terrorists that opposed American values of liberty and equality (Barnett 2016, 6). Before the close of 2001, the Bush administration deployed US military forces to invade Afghanistan to topple the Taliban terrorist organization from power and eliminate al-Qaeda and its supporters. The armed engagement was to target not only al Qaeda, but every terrorist organization or state that protected or supported terrorist activities globally (Britton 2006, 132). Before forces had even been deployed to invade Afghanistan in retaliation for the 9/11 attacks and pre-emptively invade Iraq, Bush was already indicating the military pursuit of terrorist networks beyond the engagement zone in the Middle East, such as in Africa and, the Philippines (Barnett 2016, 6).

In 2008, at the end of Bush’s second term, American forces were stationed in over 60 countries during the GWOT (Barnett 2016, 3). Ultimately, terrorism is the antithesis of American Exceptionalism and the American civil religious identity (Barnett 2016, 14). The grand narrative of the GWOT that President Bush and his administration constructed heavily drew from American Exceptionalism and past rhetoric used by previous presidents (Chapman 2016, 1). Language filled with moral judgements regarding America’s adversaries continued to be extremely prevalent

throughout the GWOT (Rojecki 2008, 77). The exceptionalist and moralistic rhetoric extended far beyond simply Afghanistan and Iraq. In a speech regarding the War on Terror in 2002, President Bush declared that the GWOT would be extended to "envelop and disarm" nations, such as Iran, Iraq, and North Korea. Bush later resurrected the WWII term of the 'axis of evil' in reference to all three aforementioned nations, which he argued "threatened the peace of the world" (Britton 2006, 133).

The creation of the narrative that the 9/11 attacks were an existential threat to America allowed Bush to reaffirm America's exceptionalism, justify the global crusade against terror, and frame America's adversaries as the antithesis of American values (Barnett 2016, 14). Societies based on exceptionalist values are not only particularly vulnerable to existential threats, but also utilize such threats to reinforce cultural normative narratives and increase fabricated unity (Aradau and van Munster 2009, 690).

The framing of the 9/11 attacks as committed by explicitly evil individuals situated the United States as fundamentally good and as a victim of evil (Haberski 2009, 15). This moralistic and binary judgement of the two sides in the conflict, with America as the heroic protagonist, is characteristic of the narrative of American Exceptionalism (Barnett 2016, 15). Through the continuous and explicit emphasis on the connection between the 9/11 attacks and the need for the GWOT, the Bush Administration capitalized on the existential dread and heightened emotions created by the attacks (Rojecki 2008, 83). Not coincidentally, this response also served to increase

domestic support and acceptance for America initiating a global war against multiple nations [23] (Spanos 2013, 292).

The continuous reference to American Exceptionalism and its core values illustrates the resonance of the concept for the American people and served to increase national unity at a time of insecurity (Karabel 2011). The elevation of the 9/11 terrorist attacks into an existential threat and an attack on American values that must be defended, served to unify the American people against a singular external threat (Spanos 2013, 292). American Exceptionalism, in broad terms, still strongly resonated with the American population in the early 21st Century (Gerhard 2014, 12). For example, in 2010, a Gallup opinion poll indicated that over 80% of the American people felt that "the United States has a unique character that makes it the greatest country in the world" (Spanos 2013, 292). Although there was some variation across partisan lines, this sentiment was shared across both Democratic and Republic party members. Approximately, 91% of Republicans supported the statement, while 73% of Democrats agreed. This equitable distribution highlights the resonance of American Exceptionalism as a significant symbol of American culture (Spanos 2013, 292).

In 2003, the GWOT expanded as the United States pre-emptively invaded Iraq to eliminate the threat that Saddam Hussein's regime posed (Davis 2014, 794). In the years following, American military engagement continued to expand as the trajectory of the war and global counterinsurgency campaign grew increasingly difficult for the United States to control or successfully achieve their strategic goals (Haberksi 2009, 19). Consequently, Western COIN

[23] The influence of American Exceptionalism upon the Bush Administration's response to 9/11 and the construction of the War on Terror is starkly illustrated by their inflation of the 9/11 terrorist attacks as an existential threat to the United States (Aradau and van Munster 2009, 690). The shock and devastation of the attacks resulted in a heightened level of emotions throughout the nation (Rojecki 2008, 81). The combination of fear, anxiety, and national insecurity in the United States and the resurgence in American patriotic and nationalistic rhetoric resulted in an increase in resonance with American Exceptionalism for the American people (Entman 2004).

scholars, such as Kilcullen and General Petraeus, determined that new approaches were desperately needed (Duyvesteyn 2011, 458). The repeated struggles experienced by COIN forces as the GWOT wore on led to a search for historical theories applicable to present problems. Scholars re-examined past literature on COIN conflicts historically and aimed to refurbish and apply old theories that had proved successful in past counterinsurgency campaigns [24] (Gurman 2013, 77).

In 2006[25], General David Petraeus declared in the US Military Field Manual 3-24 (FM 3-24) that "winning the hearts and minds" (HaM) of the local population was the key to winning the GWOT. Although traditional military activities still formed a notable component of counterinsurgency operations in GWOT operations, the USA military strategically and increasingly shifted over the course of the conflict to attempt to win the genuine support of the local populations through the provision of much needed goods, services, and protection from insurgents (Gurman 2013, 1). Consequently, COIN operations increasingly included stability initiatives, reconstruction programs, and other non-kinetic strategies in attempts to bolster local populace support for the COIN operation (Armstrong 2003, 1). The publication of FM 3-24 ensured the revival and implementation of population-centric Hearts and Minds (HaM) theory as the core COIN strategy and blueprint for US Military success for the remainder of the GWOT (Gurman 2013, 1).

[24] Petraeus was drawn to HaM Theory through his PhD dissertation (Princeton University, 1987) on HaM Theory in Vietnam (Gurman 2013, 77). Amongst other endeavours in the Vietnam War influenced by HaM Theory, the Strategic Hamlet Program was created by one of the designers of COIN strategy in Malaya - Robert Thompson. Thompson was hired by US-installed South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1961 as he sought to replicate what he considered to be Malaya's successes. Petraeus' 2006 FM 3-24 COIN Manual is thought to be based upon research gathered during his dissertation (Gurman 2013, 85).

[25] The first edition of FM 3-24 was published in 2006. However, HaM and population-centric COIN was not adopted as the dominant strategy for the GWOT until Gen. Petraeus assumed a commanding position later in the conflict (c. 2009).

Conclusions

In this chapter, the use of HaM Theory in pursuit of victory was analyzed. The HaM concept is essentially linked to the strong ethos in American culture of Exceptionalism – a mission to be a shining light for the rest of the world (Beneš 2017, 68). The use of HaM Theory as a tool for combatting insurgents is both as an example of a propagandistic tool to support America's value-system and serve as an acceptable justification for the invasion of foreign sovereign states on moral grounds (MacKenzie 2013, 223). On the other hand, Americans may truly believe that they are a shining light to the nations and that they have a mission to make the world better. But even when used without intending to do harm, it can cause harm. The US may be willing to get involved, share, and take risks to build a better world, but HaM is often not compatible with the theatre of war or the values of the local population. As previously mentioned, the HaM Theory was examined in a theoretical and practical vacuum. The next chapter will focus on critically analyzing the pitfalls of HaM Theory in theory and practice.

Chapter Four

A Critical Analysis of Hearts & Minds Theory

"The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish by analysis the kind of war on which they are embarking. Neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature."

- Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (1832) [26]

Many of the technological issues that regular armed forces once faced in small wars have largely, although not completely, been solved through the progression of society and technology [27]. However, several larger fundamental problems continue to plague regular forces entangled in conflicts that characterize small wars. While the theoretical perspective that the local population can be persuaded through the provision of goods, services, and security to shift their support to the counterinsurgents, the realistic consequences associated with this theory have been problematic. Significant concerns have arisen over the past few decades since 9/11 regarding whether or not the support of the local population can be won and not simply forcibly taken (Egnell 2010, 283). Historically, the use of population control, repression, collective punishment, and other coercive measures by counterinsurgent forces were the traditional means by which local populations were controlled and their support denied to insurgents. But capturing the hearts and minds of the population necessitated different approaches (Egnell 2010, 283).

Since the 1960s, HaM Theory has been widely accepted and popularly supported in the counterinsurgency discipline. However, RAND researchers failed to conduct critical analyses on the likelihood of success in cases using HaM Theory before the strategic framework was circulated

[26] The 1984 (page 101) translation was used for reference in this research.
[27] See Callwell's points regarding supply, transport, disease, armaments, etc. in Small Wars (1996).

widely. There are a multitude of organizational and individual reasons for this oversight, not least of which is the reality that the Kennedy-administration sponsored corporation "sang to the choir". Funding allocation and the desire to sustain financial support often led RAND and its researchers to conduct analysis on areas that were already of interest to the funding government [28] (Long 2006, 21). This symbiotic cycle ensured that RAND continued to receive funding to conduct analyses on counterinsurgency theory and practice and the US government was provided with research that supported ongoing military operations. This relationship allowed counterinsurgency research to continue to focus on HaM Theory without verifiable proof that the theoretical parameters being developed would in fact work in the field (Long 2006, 22). This lack of independent and unbiased analysis failed to account for three critical factors: HaM's origins as an insurgent theory and strategy; the compatibility of HaM theoretical components with local populations, and whether HaM was employed in line with its theoretical parameters in historically famous cases of success (i.e. in Malaya (1952-1954) and Algeria (1954-1962)).

Insurgent Origins

Ultimately the primacy of the 'native' holds distinct advantages for insurgent forces that cannot be mirrored/replicated in counterinsurgency operations (Gawthorpe 2017, 842). HaM is derived and adapted from an insurgent strategy for victory, meant to be employed by insurgents drawn from the local population, that already understand and know the culture, history, language, traditions, and the land. The inspiration for HaM is drawn from Mao Tse-Tung's assertion that insurgents themselves must win the hearts and minds of their own local populations in order to carry out a successful insurgency (Long 2006, 22). Despite adaptations and attempts to make the

[28] See further details on the creation of the RAND Corporation and its relationship with primary funders during the Kennedy Administration on pages 37-39 ("**HaM Theory"**).

core of HaM work for counterinsurgents, it ultimately does not achieve the same effects because it is missing the fundamental and natural connection with the population.

Although foreign COIN forces can gain advantages from understanding the history and culture of local communities, understanding does not give them entrée nor acceptance into the local social systems (Luttwak, 2007). For example, the mechanical solidarity composition of Tribalized Rural Muslim Environments (TRMEs) is fundamentally contrary to Western societal organization of organic solidarity (Johnson 2014). Mechanical solidarity in societies generates tendencies towards "obedience, respect for elders, hostility to all outsiders, loyalty, fidelity, [and] the obligation for revenge and blood payback" which reinforce the feelings of solidarity in the system over time. Collective mentality and tribal hierarchy are prioritized in a manner that increases isolation from outsiders (Johnson 2014). Therefore, external entities, such as foreign COIN forces, are often rejected simply as a result of their outsider status. COIN forces should not expect local populations to accept external invaders with open arms, regardless of local distaste for the insurgency. The author of *Counterinsurgency as Military Malpractice*, Edward Luttwak, noted that in such cases "many [local] people prefer indigenous and religious oppression to the freedoms offered by foreign invaders" (Luttwak 2007). Therefore, simply the presence of foreign counterinsurgency forces will likely be alienating to most of the population (Luttwak 2007).

Intervening forces coming from a society composed on an entirely different basis from that which it is invading ensures that the two systems are inherently incompatible. Foreign counterinsurgent forces will always be deemed as external entities and ultimately outsiders (Gurman 2013, 103). This friction/barrier is not only central to the character of counterinsurgent conflicts, but also cannot be overcome or changed by winning the hearts and minds of the people. Only examples where counterinsurgency is conducted by locals themselves does one find

successes, such as the Israelis in the West Bank territories (Amidror 2008: 13) and Iraqi militias fighting ISIS (Broekhof et al. 2019, 96).

HaM Theoretical Flaws

Modernization

Modernization Theory serves as the first component of the HaM theoretical framework. To win the hearts and minds of the local populations, counterinsurgent forces often attempt to persuade the local population to support them by resolving negative outcomes. Such outcomes are theorized to have arisen in their society due to accelerated development without the necessary structures and systems to support such changes (Ukwandu 2017, 101). The weaknesses of this component include lack of cultural understanding, a prevailing sense of ethnocentrism, and other classic attitudes brought by foreign COIN forces when dropped into an unfamiliar cultural environment (MacKenzie 2013, 204).

Cultural understanding holds immense importance in present COIN theory as it often utilizes an effects-based approach in operations against insurgents. In cases where the operation is centered around the desired end result, misunderstanding the needs and values of the local population often leads to mission failure. It highlights a fundamental lack of understanding of the enemy and the conflict itself (Callwell 1996, 21). Strategic, operational, and tactical superiority is meaningless when the cultural context of the conflict is disregarded (Duyvesteyn 2011, 450). Lack of culturally sensitive education for foreign COIN forces and lack of a common language for communication ultimately doom missions to failure (Johnson 2014).

Understanding and awareness of cultural nuance and ethnic differentiation is especially crucial for counterinsurgency forces engaging in any foreign environment, but more particularly

for insular communities as found in TRMEs, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey. (Turcan 2009, 87). The structure, distinct social roles, and standards of behaviour are vastly different than that of the foreign COIN forces (Johnson 2014). For example, tribal order is a form of societal structure that rejects alternative lifestyles and outside beliefs in favour of the traditional way of tribal life (Turcan 2009, 86). As small segmentary societies, tribal systems are characterized by mechanical solidarity, which is the creation of an inorganic collective conscience as the community evolves and members grow to learn their place and the rules of the system (Johnson 2014). Insurgencies already possess the local cultural understanding and awareness, and local connections necessary to achieve their goals (Turcan 2009, 105).

Cultural anthropologist, Montgomery McFate asserts that "misunderstanding culture at a strategic level can produce policies which exacerbate an insurgency: lack of cultural knowledge at an operational level can lead to the development of negative public opinion, and a lack of cultural knowledge at a tactical level endangers both civilians and troops*"* (Duyvesteyn 2011, 453). For example, rapidly modernizing societies are not harmed exclusively by the negative effects of accelerated development as modernization itself may poses a threat to traditional beliefs and values of local populations. This is especially the case if it is imposed from the outside, which creates insecurity within the society which can be exploited by insurgents, as evident with the Taliban in Afghanistan post-2001. Similarly, imposing incompatible Western values on local societies by counterinsurgents leads to resentment and often support for insurgencies. This can be a self-perpetuating cycle when foreign Western counterinsurgent forces intervene in traditional societies to combat local insurgents (MacKenzie 2013, 203).

Societal Progress

The central aim of the second component of HaM, Societal Progress, is for COIN operations to augment positive attributes of societal progress in the nation plagued by the insurgency. In the case of foreign invaders as counterinsurgents, the goal of this task is to essentially result in nation-building (MacKenzie 2013, 204). This is particularly true in American COIN operation goals since 2001 in the Near East in Iraq and Afghanistan. The goal was to augment local societal structures by enhancing physical infrastructure and to establish liberal democracies in underdeveloped nations (Rowley 2013, 156). The weaknesses of this component are manifold.

Research on the micro-level of legitimacy has revealed that local legitimacy is of course inherently tied to the local norms, traditions, social structures, and history of the given society (Gawthorpe 2017, 844). "Legitimacy is not an objective measure, but the result of the local perceptions of the political system's effectiveness, values, and identity" (Egnell 2010, 300). Even in cases where COIN forces possess cultural understanding, they still cannot overcome the local viewpoint that they are outsiders who have invaded the country and interrupted the lives of locals. In cases where the legitimacy supported by COIN forces leaves no consideration for local desires, the population is likely to reject both the reforms as well as the COIN operation itself (Wardak 2003, 1). Therefore, attempts by Western COIN operations to develop Western liberal democratic structures are doomed to fail if incompatible with the culture of the local population (Gawthorpe 2017, 844).

Western states often fail to recognize that other forms of legitimate authority exist beyond the normative Western liberal democratic form (Luttwak 2007). Legitimacy is grounded in the preferences and attitudes of the local population, and therefore is extremely difficult to quantifiably

assess and measure. This is particularly problematic in cases of societies highly subject to fragmentation and numerous ethnic groups. As a result, it is difficult for COIN forces to ascertain which endeavours to support to bolster local structures of legitimacy (Gawthorpe 2017, 843). In cases such as Afghanistan, traditional forms of governance possessed greater legitimacy than the Western normative structures being introduced (Egnell 2010, 294).

This is also an ultimately ethnocentric perspective that imposes Western normative values upon other societies with which they may not be compatible. The Western presumption 'to know better' is grounded in the foundations of Immanuel Kant's Democratic Peace Theory (DPT). The core concepts of DPT have long been advocated by famed western political thinkers, such as Jeremy Bentham, John Locke, and John Stuart Mill, among others (Minch 2011, 245). However, Immanuel Kant's essay (1795) "Perpetual Peace" contains the strongest groundwork for the theory (Kant 1795). In its simplest form, the central idea of DPT is that liberal democracies only engage in armed conflict with one another on exceptionally rare occasions because of shared values, trade interdependency, and alternative modes of conflict resolution. (Luttwak 2007).

The concept of DPT is often connected with the Western belief that all societies are in the process of progression and will inevitably evolve into liberal democratic states themselves, and of course is deeply embedded in American Exceptionalism. The concept of liberal democracies as the ideal form of societal and political structure have historically greatly influenced the belief framework of Western counterinsurgency theory and practice (Egnell 2010, 285). As a result, foreign COIN operations often engage in nation building and attempt to insert Western political and cultural structures within other non-Western states. For example, in servitude to the perceived value and inherent validity of liberal democracy, counterinsurgent forces have often attempted to force other states to adopt centralized governments and other Western structures regardless of

cultural precedent (Turcan 2009, 106). This is an ethnocentric perspective that imposes Western normative values upon other societies with which they may not be compatible. The analysis of states as either democratic or otherwise fails to recognize the nuance present in individual societies, especially those with longstanding cultural traditions and ways of life (Minch 2011, 246).

In reality, this binary approach highlights none of the nuances that characterize societies around the globe and fundamentally overlooks the details and attributes of any structures or systems that are not characterized as stereotypically democratic (Gawthorpe 2017, 844). For example, Afghans are fairly opposed to a centralized government that removes their tribal freedom and autonomy, not centralized governance in and of itself. Rather than recognizing the validity of this statement, since the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan in 1980, intervening states have repeatedly attempted to insert their own form of governance in Afghanistan. In each case, the Afghans have rejected such impositions and fought every invader until they have given up and left (MacKenzie 2013, 220).

There is a misconception that if states are rebuilt to reflect western liberal democracies, then Democratic Peace Theory ensures that there will be a decrease in conflict and sustainable peace in the future. However, structures and systems recreated in the image of Western society without regard for pre-existing local culture are ultimately doomed to fail (MacKenzie 2013, 205).

Population Protection

An essential component of any HaM approach to insurgency is to protect the local civilian population. However, this is extremely difficult as the nature of insurgencies is for combatants to hide amongst the civilian population. The end result is that the battle is waged against insurgents who have embedded themselves amongst civilians. The enemy physically and metaphorically

embeds itself within the population (Pedden 2012, 834), as seen today by Hamas in Gaza (2024). The weaknesses of this component are clear.

The scale of the conflict further affects the ability of COIN forces to protect civilians. It is difficult for COIN forces to protect and maintain the protection of local populations across a vast geographic region. COIN forces are typically spread too thin and are often present only during the day. Not only do insurgents often return at night to villages after the COIN forces have retreated to their bases, but also peaceful civilians during the day may become insurgents at night. This was the favored tactic of the Vietcong in South Vietnam and continued in Afghanistan throughout the recent foreign intervention (Kuzmarov 2013, 183).

The favoured guerilla tactics of insurgencies enmeshment with the local population, further complicate this goal. Not only is the protection of the population a difficult task in and of itself, but COIN operations employing all components of HaM also face additional complications. The previously discussed two components, Modernization and Societal Progress, can be causal factors in sparking insurgencies. COIN operations that use Modernization and Societal Progress development tools as a means to gain popular support often backfire and instead perpetuate repeated insurgent attacks against the population (Turcan 2009, 105). COIN activities in support of development and modernization often draw greater attention to the local population and may place them at greater risk for insurgent attacks, such as the repeated building and repeated bombing of wells by COIN and insurgent forces respectively. Insurgents may target and harm the local population in retaliation for a variety of reasons, including the threat of modernization to tradition, punishment for local collaboration with COINs, as a message to COIN operatives, and psychological warfare (MacKenzie 2013, 203).

High levels of civilian casualties and injuries, intentionally or otherwise, causes high levels of resentment towards COIN forces and erode the possibility of any level of social legitimacy (Pedden 2012, 822). Not only has high levels of collateral damage and violence to civilians been seen to weaken social legitimacy and support for COIN campaigns, but it has also perpetuated the issues of the conflict (Pennekamp 2013, 1629). In cases where the actions of COIN forces harm or endanger local civilians, the population is likely to reject the actions and goals of COIN forces and the legitimacy of the operation (Wardak 2003, 1).

High levels of civilian casualties or injuries cause local populations to perceive the COIN operation as illegitimate, dangerous, and an unwanted invasion (Pouw 2013, 3). This can cause a rise in support for the insurgency as the alternative competitor in the struggle for power and legitimacy (Sloane 2011, 371). Increases in civilian casualties have been linked to higher levels of insurgent numbers. The increase in insurgents can be traced to both intentional insurgent recruitment because of resentment towards COIN actions, as well as the joining of willing civilians impacted by the violence (Sloane 2011, 373). Regardless of the reasoning, the impact of COIN violence upon the local population has significant strategic consequences and results in the perpetuation of the conflict and support for the insurgent force in the face of a now perceived common enemy (Pedden 2012, 822).

The False Attribution of Success

There are huge issues with the three components discussed above, but those are often not relevant in many HaM cases because the components are not even being followed. The weaknesses present in enforcing each component of HaM have led to COIN forces informally discarding HaM directives when they are unsuitable for the conditions or using violence and coercion to achieve

desired results. However, HaM is often still credited with any success achieved, especially if it is formally and strategically established at the outset operations (Gurman 2013, 100). Not all COIN disciples have bought the narrative repeatedly sold by HaM proponents at the state level. Following the implementation of HaM in Afghanistan and Iraq by Gen. Petraeus (c. 2009), Michael Cohen quoted an unnamed, but notable, COIN theorist and US military official saying to him that "*COIN is a form of warfare and thus involves violence. Don't be fooled by the fact that Petraeus found some useful idiots to make it sound more palatable and humanitarian*." (Cohen 2011).

The attempt to create a softer narrative surrounding COIN operations is not limited to American COIN campaigns. This is particularly applicable in the case of colonial counterinsurgents suppressing an uprising of colonized peoples (Gurman 2013, 57). Several famous cases of COIN operations credit the winning of hearts and minds in victories won against insurgents. For example, in the British colonial counterinsurgency operation in Malaya (Malayan Emergency 1952-1954), HAM is generally viewed as having secured victory for COIN forces (Duyvesteyn 2011, 445). In fact, the Malayan Emergency is most famously cited as a successful victory for British COIN forces obtained without bloodshed or traditional military might (Sundar 2012, 717). This is plainly false to any individual that has studied the conflict itself. British colonial forces used extreme violence and coercion to defeat the insurgency and turn the tide of the operation.

Similar to the Malayan Emergency, the French experience in Algeria (Algerian War 1954-1962) is also notably pointed to as an example in which soft power and political techniques were utilized to gain the support of the population and defeat the insurgency (Cohen 2010, 78). Once again, it was actually it was extreme violence, coercion, forced relocation and other hard power military actions (both during and after the conflict) that temporarily defeated the insurgency. In

both the Malaya and Algeria examples, colonial COIN forces won and ultimately defeated the insurgency through **violent** means rather than through the hearts and minds of the people. However, the indiscriminate use of military power by COIN forces counterintuitively also helped pave the way for independence from the British and French empires, respectively (Seydler 2009, 6). A foreign COIN force must be willing to stay the course, and the political leaders of the COIN force must retain the support of its own electorate. In both the Malaya and Algerian example, the home country electorate withdrew support, and the empires disintegrated. The extreme bloodshed and consequential independence of both colonies is often disregarded or minimized by COIN scholars that upheld Malaya and Algeria as examples of HaM Theory success in action (Gurman 2013, 18).

Similarly, the US' first external engagement in counterinsurgency in the Philippines at the turn of the Nineteenth Century is often regarded as a successful application of HaM principles. Initially United States' COIN forces engaged in nation-building and used reconstruction and stability activities at the onset to achieve strategic objectives without bloodshed. This strategy quickly degraded to violence and coercion and brought the conflict swiftly to a close (Cohen 2010, 78). Only a few years later, the insurgency reorganized and rebelled anew. In other words, if a COIN operation is viewed only from the short-term (the operation itself), then it can be considered to have concluded on a positive note. However, when viewed from the longer-term perspective of several years or decades, as in Afghanistan, they can be considered to have failed with the complete and sudden chaotic withdrawal of foreign forces in 2022 and the reestablishment of a Taliban government across the country (MacKenzie 2013, 2001).

Conclusion

Some scholars have argued that HaM can be utilized by a foreign state's COIN forces to win the hearts and minds of the local population and triumph over insurgencies. However, this approach has proved to be inherently problematic when applied by COIN operations in a variety of asymmetric conflicts (Egnell 2010, 287). While HaM stresses the integral need for COIN forces to increase the legitimacy of local governance in order to win the hearts and minds of the people and remove the support base of the insurgents, this recommendation is both ineffective as well as frequently misapplied (Duyvesteyn 2011, 445). As historically illustrated, in reality capturing the hearts and minds of the population often necessitates a combination of population control, repression, collective punishment, and other coercive measures (Egnell 2010, 283).

Chapter Five

Conclusions

"If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle."

—Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (5th Century B.C.E.)

Powerful states have engaged in irregular warfare with non-state actor foes for millennia. However, contrary to its Western allies, the US has continued to become repeatedly entangled in unsolvable and never-ending counterinsurgency campaigns (Gurman 2013, 81). This pattern can be seen through the emergence of insurgencies as the primary form of conflict and warfare since the Second World War, particularly post-9/11 (Hoffman 2004). Although small wars have existed since the distinction between state and non-state was formed, the nature of the conflicts and combative methods have been shaped by the international context of the time.

In the late 20th and early 21st Century, a perception was cultivated in Western popular culture that depicted COIN campaigns and operations as humane, well-intentioned, and bloodless (Cohen 2010, 78). However, this modern perception that counterinsurgency operations are kinder, gentler wars largely arose due to the changing public perception regarding the use of force by Western liberal democracies in general and the US in particular. HaM and other population-centric counterinsurgency theories have simply marked the most recent stage of the American Way of War (AWOW) adjusted to suit the context surrounding modern American COIN campaigns (Cohen 2010, 75) yet repeatedly failing to understand their non-state foes.

Despite attempts to make the core of HaM Theory work for counterinsurgency, it frankly does not achieve the desired effect. For example, despite the fact that US technology, tactics,

strategy, and training had progressed massively since Vietnam, American forces were still met with insurgents that proved vexing in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The American experience with counterinsurgency is reminiscent of the trope of the film “Groundhog Day”. The central character is forced to relive the same experiences until he determines what is necessary to successfully move on (Long 2006, 1). The result is a self-perpetuating cycle as the US has refused to unabashedly analyze and learn from the mistakes of the past in order to apply them to future conflicts (Gurman 2013, 103). The third chapter of this thesis examines the failures and inconsistencies of HaM Theory when applied in reality by COIN operations. HaM Theory is ultimately derived and adapted from an insurgent strategy for victory, meant to be employed by insurgents drawn from the local population. Counterinsurgents are unable to replicate the natural connection and understanding that insurgents have with the people, culture, history, language, traditions, and the land (Luttwak 2007).

The heart and the mind of the people - their loyalty and support and their rational desire to reap benefits - are nearly always conceptualized as one strategic target. This is perhaps the greatest yet most basic misunderstanding of HaM Theory. In 1777, British General Henry Clinton, [Commander in Chief of British operations in North America (1778-82)], mused in his writings during the American Revolution that the British needed to “gain the hearts and subdue the minds of America” (Atkinson 2019, 133). The distinction made by Clinton, in that the minds of the people are not won in a package deal with their hearts, is nuanced yet critical. This distinction begs the questions and holds the answer all at once - Rather than assume that the local populace can be persuaded rationally to support COIN operations in order the reap the supposed benefits, Clinton’s phrasing indicates that the minds cannot be “won” as such, but rather subdued and therefore

quieted. Clinton indicates that this is done by gaining the hearts of the people - presumably appealing to their emotions, ideals, and sensitivities.

If subduing the minds of the people is contingent on gaining their hearts, this begs the question - ***can the hearts be won***? Small wars, especially in cases of foreign intervention, are deeply emotional conflicts for the local population and their insurgents. The values and identity of a society, especially in traditional communities, have been shown to supersede manipulations, attacks and appeals by adversaries that are deemed contrary to their traditions (Stockings & Fernandes 2006 11) (Lyall 2015, 36). The minds of Americans were neither gained nor won by British forces, and this inability to appeal to the hearts of Americans marks and cements the roots of American identity, values, and exceptionalism against British imperial rule. The fundamental ideals that propelled American forces forward to rebel, ensured that their hearts could not be gained and therefore their minds not subdued.

By the 1781 Cornwallis invasion of Virginia, Clinton seems to understand the harsh reality that his contemporary American counterparts repeatedly deny – that the hearts of the people cannot be won and if "*we have not their hearts – which I fear cannot be expected in Virginia… we may conquer [but] we shall never keep*" (O'Shaughnessy 2013, 220). The irony that the US grapples with the same inexplicable struggle around the world as did their British colonial adversaries seems plain and yet unacknowledged.

American Exceptionalist entrenched values draw the US towards strategic theories and paradigms that reflect their own values and identity back towards them, regardless of the fact that the outcomes of employing these frameworks are negative and contrary to their foundational national identity. Regardless of the repeated failures of HaM Theory to deliver victory for COIN forces, the US continues to employ and uphold HaM Theory as a disciplinary standard. This

perpetuation is due to a compatibility between the ideals of HaM Theory and those of American national identity and traditions (or American Exceptionalism). Their foundational ideals and national identity dictate that warfare waged by the US must be a moral act. Therefore, a moralistic justification must be provided for all cases of US military invasion/engagement outside their borders [29] (Turcan 2009, 105). The US continues to remain in a "Groundhog Day" cycle because their strategic culture and military blinders leave no alternative. Their successes in shaping Germany and Imperial Japan into Western-style democracies created a lasting desire to replicate these achievements in other conflicts regardless of the radically different circumstances present in Middle Eastern, African, and Latin American cases (Payne 2006, 209). Even in the aforementioned cases of success, the USA and their Western partners have been quick to forget that these victories were not a result of popular support and that targeting the support or morale of the local populations was fraught with misunderstandings and failures (Lyall 2015, 36) [30]. The US continues to try to apply same frameworks because of their own values and identity, even when it repeatedly does not achieve the same results.

Without watershed internal or external changes, the strategic and political culture of a state is highly unlikely to change swiftly. Instead, it is typically subject to incremental shifts over large periods of time in a more linear fashion. Even in cases of significant all-altering events, changes to strategic culture will be averaged against the existing and enduring norms, ideals, patterns, and habits. The US will continue in this cycle (albeit in varying forms and theatres of war) unless their underlying strategic and political culture is radically altered. Although they may take different forms (i.e. proxy wars in this new great power era - a reinvention of their Cold War engagements

[29] This requirement does not appear to be present in domestic engagement (use of military force against American citizens domestically is abundant and well documented).
[30] See footnote 14 for further details on "Morale Bombing" and the COG during WWII.

rather than American “boots on the ground”), the US value system dictates that they will always strive to spread their principles of ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’ around the world whether they are wanted or not.

The unavoidable reality that HaM Theory does not work for US counterinsurgents as outside invaders does not render counterinsurgency moot as a whole. On the contrary, the acceptance of COIN forces as powerful external invaders allows the discipline to move forward in search of strategies compatible with the strengths of COIN forces. Therefore, the point of this thesis is not to say - stop using HaM, in part because the US in particular cannot do so due to Exceptionalism, or to pull out of foreign intervention conflicts, or that pulling out of IW conflicts will be better. With the return of Great Power conflicts, similar to the Cold War strategic context, IW is likely to remain relevant as ever in the form of insurgencies and proxy wars. But there has to be an acknowledgement and understanding that these tactics do not work for intervening foreign insurgents, often are not even used on the ground in the manner outlined in HaM, and that the relationship between the insurgents and population cannot be replicated for counterinsurgents by using the same tactics. For COIN operations to achieve any tangible success, it is necessary to learn from the mistakes of the past, cease nation building, and instead be transparent about the strategic purposes of the mission.

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