The Police in Counterinsurgency Operations

C. Christine Fair and Sumit Ganguly

Abstract

The literature on counterinsurgency is vast, but the bulk of it is focused on the role of military forces in quelling insurgencies. With a few exceptions, very little focused attention has been devoted to the critical role of police forces in counterinsurgency operations. The inattention is puzzling because, while national armed forces can help suppress insurgents, the task of restoring public order invariably involves careful and sustained police work. Among other tasks, winning the support of an aggrieved or fearful population requires a neutral, competent, and reliable police force. Through a careful and fine-grained examination of a range of cases extending from colonial to post-colonial and contemporary counterinsurgency campaigns this book attempts to address this lacuna in the literature.

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THE LITERATURE ON COUNTERINSURGENCY (COIN) is vast, but the bulk of it is focused on the role of military forces in quelling insurgencies.1 More specifically, most analyses, both historical and contemporary, have dealt with appropriate COIN strategies, organizational issues, and politico-military relations. With marked exceptions noted below, very little focused attention has been devoted to the critical role of police forces in COIN operations. The inattention to the role of the police in COIN operations is quite puzzling because while national armed forces can help suppress insurgents, the task of restoring public order invariably involves careful and sustained police work. Among a host of other matters, winning the support of an aggrieved or fearful population requires a neutral, competent, and reliable police force. Through a careful and fine-grained examination of a range of cases, extending from colonial to post-colonial and contemporary COIN campaigns, this book attempts to address this lacuna in the literature.

Before providing brief accounts of the chapters in this volume, we turn to an examination of the limited corpus of recent literature on the role of policing in COIN operations. Cassidy, for example, contends that the use of indigenous police forces in any COIN will enhance the quality of troops on the ground and will yield an exponential improvement in actionable intelligence.2 Other scholars have come to similar conclusions in their work on different countries, including Simonsen in his study of East Timor (Simonsen 2009: 575–96),3 Wilson in his study of the

United Nations' efforts to rebuild Kosovo's police and justice system (Wilson 2006: 152–77), Herbst in his study of African police and other armed forces in stabilizing rebellions (Herbst 2004: 357–69),4 Call in his examination of Latin America (Call 2002: 1–20),5 and Carun in his examination of the British in Malaya (Corum 2006). Jones et al. (2005) come to similar conclusions in their examination of post-Cold War reconstruction efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Panama, El Salvador, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and East Timor.

While local police can play a positive role, they can also contribute to greater instability. In various phases of some insurgencies, police have been very much a part of the problem because they have been incompetent, corrupt, or co-opted and exploitative or abusive of local populations (Ladwig 2007: 285–93). Dixon documents this phenomenon in Northern Ireland (Dixon 2009: 445–74), Fair finds this to be the case in the early phase of India's Punjab insurgency (Fair 2009), Metz sees as critical the early failures of the nascent Iraqi police force to contend with criminality and violence (Metz 2003–4: 25–36), and Wilder does the same for the most recent phase of COIN in Afghanistan (Wilder 2007).

Even if conventional military forces are needed to provide the force levels and capabilities necessary to clear an area of insurgents, they are typically ill-suited in providing long-term security. Building domestic armies is not a long-term solution for 'holding and building', as even domestic military forces tend not to come from the area in which they are deployed and thus lack granular knowledge of the local population, terrain and, in multi-ethnic and multi-lingual states, critical language skills.

Curiously, despite the abundance of re-issued and recent writings on counterinsurgency by David Galula (Galula 2006), David Kilcullen (Kilcullen 2009), John Nagl (Nagl 2005), as well as the recent publication of a new U.S. Army Counter Insurgency Manual (The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual 2007: 3–24), evolving scholarship pays scant regard to the fundamental role that police play—both negative and positive—in pacifying an insurgency and maintaining long-term peace.

Scholars have increasingly focused attention on the importance of police. However, most of the recent scholarship has focused on domestic policing and the role of police in disrupting terrorist cells and of sustained police intelligence operations in improving domestic vigilance. Gordon, studying India's police, calls upon the local and federal government to enact

a series of reforms that will enhance police capabilities against an array of terrorist threats posed by domestic actors or supported by Pakistan (Gordon 2008: 111–24). Jafa, who also focuses upon policing in India, with specific reference to Kashmir, devotes less attention to policing per se and stresses a search for root causes of terrorism and ways of addressing them. However, he also understands that policing is part of the problem in Kashmir. He offers a number of suggestions, including fortifying police intelligence, focusing upon terrorists' financial transactions, improved training, and modifying their force posture for greater effectiveness (Jafa 2005: 141–64).

Others, such as Kenninson and Loumansky, focus primarily on the 'militaristic style' of policing adopted by some police forces in the United Kingdom following 9/11, specifically regulations which permitted officers to 'shoot to kill' if they suspected that an individual was a suicide attacker (Kenninson and Loumansky 2007: 151–68). Similarly, Perliger, Hasisi, and Pedazhur examine the track record of the Israeli military, local police, and quasi-police organizations in combating terrorism. They argue that not only do appropriate law enforcement actions within the regular criminal justice system greatly diminish the likelihood of terrorist attacks but that such an approach also attenuates residual psychological effects of successful terrorist attacks. They concede, however, that in some circumstances (for example, when terrorists enjoy state support beyond Israel's borders), a military response is likely the only suitable approach (Perliger et al. 2009: 1279–304). Pickering, McCullouch, and Wright-Neville conducted a three-year long study of Australian police officers in Victoria and Melbourne to measure the effectiveness of rights-based, community-friendly policing as regards terrorism prevention. Like Perliger et al. (2009) they reject militarized approaches to counter-terrorism policing in favour of community policing (which they call 'cohesion policing') (Pickering, McCullouch, and Wright-Neville 2008: 91–109).

Given the growing sense of the importance of policing in domestic counter-terrorism, the relative paucity of recent studies of policing in sustained COIN operations is unfortunate. This volume seeks to address these critical empirical and practical gaps by documenting the roles that police forces have played in the contexts of several COIN campaigns. Our selected cases include COIN campaigns waged both by indigenous and foreign militaries and those that arose during colonial and post-colonial periods. We have also taken care to ensure that they draw from a wide

geographical area, allowing us to capture important lessons from the most important cases in contemporary history. These case studies include COIN campaigns waged in Northern Ireland, Kenya, Iraq, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Malaya, Colombia, and the southern Philippines.

To ensure analytical comparability, all authors evaluate several key questions in turn. After providing a historical overview of the insurgency in question, the authors describe the kinds of security forces that were employed to defeat insurgents and over which periods of the campaigns. They specifically address the points at which police were brought into the conflict and with what outcomes. Second, the authors spell out those political and institutional considerations that influenced force engagement, including that of the police. Third, each author addresses the degree to which the domestic police were prepared for COIN operations, as well as whether and how the state in question enhanced the capabilities of the police forces. (In some cases, police were assisted by foreign entities on a bilateral or multilateral basis.) The contributors also assess how police capabilities evolved over the duration of the campaign and how they interacted with other security forces, such as military and paramilitary organizations. Where data are available, they next focused upon the interagency processes by which the counterinsurgent forces coordinated intelligence, military, paramilitary, and police activities and responsibilities. In countries like India, where policing is a state matter, this requires coordination among several state police bodies. The contributors also assessed the performance of police in the COIN campaign itself. In some cases, as several chapters in this volume attest, police conduct is very much a part of the problem.

The case studies, where possible, try to document how each country in question infers and distills lessons learned from past COIN operations. In militaries, this may happen at command and staff colleges or during specific training sessions pertaining to deployments. However, as policing tends to be a state or provincial level function, it can be difficult to draw out systematic lessons from police operations and disseminate these lessons widely. Authors also sought to discern, where possible, the kinds of intelligence that were available to the police and how the police obtained this evidence. In many countries, police and intelligence agencies co-exist uncomfortably and resist sharing information, due to bureaucratic turf considerations, but also to source protection concerns and tensions between federal and state agencies over jurisdiction and appropriate

access to restricted material at different levels of these non-comparable organizations. When COIN forces are foreign (for example, Americans in Iraq or Afghanistan), these challenges can be even greater, as police are working with domestic and foreign intelligence agencies as well as an array of military organizations.

The contributors also evaluate what resources are available to the police (for example, infrastructure, ground mobility assets, personal protection equipment, munitions and arms, secure communications, air assets, and so on). In many countries studied in this volume, the police are often outgunned by the insurgents, who exploit the soft targets the police present. Effective targeting of the police erodes public trust in the government and degrades any sense of public safety. Finally, the case studies also consider the available rule of law institutions. The countries in our volume exhibit considerable variance with respect to the rule of law institutions and legislative frameworks erected to contend with insurgents.

In the first case study, Walter C. Ladwig III examines the Philippine Constabulary (PC) during the Hukbalahap Rebellion (1946–54). He highlights a phenomenon all too common in COIN—the institutional corruption and oppressive behaviour of the security forces emerging as a prime factor driving support for an insurgency. In the aftermath of World War II, the paramilitary police of the PC were a highly politicized force. Notionally tasked with maintaining order in the countryside, they were more frequently deployed by local politicians against their rivals and by large landowners to suppress political organizing by tenant farmers.

When the newly independent Philippine government sought to reconstitute the country's traditional landlord-dominated political and economic order in the wake of Japanese occupation, its efforts were met with armed resistance by the veteran guerrillas of the Hukbalahap. The Constabulary was dispatched to forcibly suppress the uprising by tenant farmers and landless peasants in the country's agricultural heartland. The Huks could not have asked for a better recruitment tool. The poorly equipped and trained PC preyed on local civilians for supplies and employed brutal collective punishments to extract information about the insurgents because they lacked the investigative skills to sever the links between the guerrillas and the population, their support base.

As the Huk's ranks swelled and the insurgents expanded their control of the countryside to threaten Manila, the Philippine government appealed to the United States for emergency military aid. The price of American

assistance was a reorganization and depoliticization of the security forces. The incumbent Liberal government, which relied on the Constabulary to maintain political power and advance its interests, strongly resisted these conditions. However, as the Huk threat grew, Manila was forced to comply. The Constabulary was shrunk by two-thirds and equipped and oriented solely to carry out policing duties in rural areas. The bulk of the paramilitary force was transferred to the Philippine army, who assumed control of COIN operations. As new leadership depoliticized the security forces and American aid facilitated better pay and training, the Philippine government was able to ameliorate a major source of grievances driving support for the insurgents.

With the security forces able to build grass roots support and connections in the community, local civilians were increasingly willing to pass information to the government. This facilitated an enhanced COIN intelligence effort that in turn improved the effectiveness of COIN operations in the field. With political support for the insurgents declining, the government was able to force the Huks onto the defensive, bringing the conflict to a close by 1954. Although several factors contributed to the Huk's defeat, the key turning point in the conflict was the reform and reorientation of the security forces to clearly delineate policing and military functions and end the abuses that led many to join the insurgents out of self-defense.

In the second case study, Kumar Ramakrishna addresses the specific role of the Malayan Police in contributing to the ultimate success of the British colonial authorities against the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) during the 12-year long war known popularly as the Malayan Emergency (1948–60). The chapter identifies three foundational lessons—first, it shows that the Malayan Police, as the key agents of government most frequently and directly in contact with the public, needed above all else to close the affective gap with the rural Chinese community which sustained the MCP both morally and materially. Second, the reasonably effective, if imperfect, police force finally established in Malaya by the middle of the 1950s was a necessary but insufficient condition for ultimate success against the MCP. The police aside, the entire governmental apparatus in contact with the ordinary Chinese—from the top political and military commander down to the street-level policeman and civil servant in direct contact with the public—had to do their part in closing the affective gap as well—everyone had to sing from the same song sheet, in other

words. Finally, competent and suitably empowered, highly visible and inspirational leadership, not merely at police headquarters but at the highest political levels in-theatre, exemplified by the leadership of both High Commissioner General Gerald Templer and Police Commissioner Arthur Young, proved crucial.

These three foundational lessons set the stage for four more specific ones. First, as a corollary of the fact that closing the affective gap with the rural Chinese was the foundational strategic concern of the entire government and not just the police, Kuala Lumpur formalized joint Civil, Police, and Army co-ordination in the so-called 'war committee' system at all levels. As part of this interagency approach, key government strategies to build relationships with the rural Chinese included the important civics courses as well as the recruitment and deployment of scores of Chinese or Chinese-speaking European Resettlement Officers, Chinese Affairs Officers, and Red Cross personnel who came into daily contact with the ordinary Chinese. Second, the Emergency Regulations provided the necessary legislative framework within which all Government departments and the police could carry out activities that would not normally have been possible in peacetime—although the more draconian laws pertaining to collective punishment and deportation later needed toning down or even abolishing so as not to alienate the population. The latter outcome would only have helped the Communists replenish their ranks.

Third, within the specific police domain, Kuala Lumpur's community policing philosophy needed fleshing out in several ways. Above all, better and more professional training (and retraining) of police recruits and, in particular, the poorly trained Special Constables, was essential to the entire attempt to close the affective gap with the rural Chinese. The Federal Area Training Schools and the Police College were certainly very useful means of isolating 'best practices' in police operations in the COIN effort. In addition, the ongoing effort to recruit larger numbers of Chinese officers as well as British officers able to communicate in Chinese dialects was of no small importance. Another attempt to build bridges with the rural Chinese was Operation Service—the adroitly executed police public relations exercise launched at the end of 1952. The fourth and final second-order lesson, that suggests itself, is the importance of a specialized police intelligence unit like the highly professional Special Branch. This was notably spearheaded by Chinese ground officers but

overseen by the Federal Intelligence Committee and well-integrated with military intelligence assets.

In the third case study, Huw Bennett and Andrew Mumford examine a frequently overlooked campaign—the COIN effort undertaken by the British in Kenya between 1952 and 1960. The fight against the shadowy tribal insurgency of the Mau Mau holds some fascinating lessons about the conduct of irregular warfare in general, as well as specific ones about the role that the police can play in such conflicts. The predominantly rural nature of the campaign saw those fulfilling policing functions becoming the 'front line' in the battle.

The strength of the regular and reservist police force grew from 7,703 in the first year of the Emergency, in 1952, to 12,146 by the time it came to an official end in 1960. But the growth in the size of the police was accompanied by the Africanization of the force, reducing the colonial influence over the police as the security situation improved. Increasing levels of professionalization and integration, especially with military intelligence units, ensured that more specific units of the police, notably Special Branch, were able to play a key role in the COIN campaign. Special Branch's pioneering use of pseudo-gangs, units composed of former insurgents, would be emulated by police forces in future British COIN campaigns, most notably in Northern Ireland, revealing just how much of a policing watershed the Kenyan Emergency represented.

In the fourth case study, Mark Cochrane examines the Royal Ulster Constabulary, Northern Ireland's sole police service. The organization confronted one of the longest and most relentless insurgencies yet faced by a domestic police force in any democracy. It was called upon to counter the violent actions of Republican (nationalist) terrorists seeking to rid the country of the British presence, in addition to combating the activities of Loyalist (pro-state) terrorists, intent on maintaining the union between Britain and Northern Ireland. The chapter examines the years between 1969 and 1996, a period that saw the deaths of over 3,600 people in a country with a population of 1.7 million.

Many lessons of the conflict in Northern Ireland are applicable to other environments; not all of them confined to policing. They fall broadly into three separate strands. First, in the area of government and rule of law—it is imperative that the state have a coordinated and multi-faceted counterterrorism strategy, incorporating robust legislation that seeks to put offenders before a court of law at the earliest opportunity without

affording them the mantle of legitimacy. The state should never discount the likelihood of having to engage in dialogue with representatives of terrorist groups. Second, the use of the military, once order is restored, beyond supporting the police, should be minimal and if possible, avoided completely. Third, countering terrorist activity requires a professional police service, adequately resourced and financed. Substantial investment must be made in highly trained personnel to perform specialist counterterrorist functions, with an emphasis on targeted recruitment of human intelligence sources coupled with a community policing 'hearts and minds' ethos. The adoption of such a policing model within the context of Northern Ireland effectively brought terrorist groups to a standstill in a conflict which they acknowledged they could not lose, but also could not win.

In the fifth case study, Jennifer Morrison Taw examines the evolution of the Colombian police force's role in COIN from La Violencia in the 1940s, through the nearly anarchic 1990s, and up to today's significantly improved security situation. By casting the police role in the context of the broader security force effort, changes in the judiciary and legal structures, shifting political agendas, and the United States' ever influential involvement, a comprehensive picture emerges of how the unique skills and capabilities of civilian police forces were leveraged to help combat not only insurgency but related criminal activities.

Colombia's relative success in reducing the intensity of its internal conflict, even in the face of challenges like insurgent ties to drug cartels, the rise of deadly militias, and increases in corruption at every level of government, offers hope to countries like Mexico, which are facing similar challenges today. Indeed, Colombia's police now train Mexican, Central American, and Afghan police forces in counterinsurgent techniques.

Overall, the Colombian case proves what has long been understood about COIN—it requires that government forces seize and hold territory as part of a comprehensive effort to provide the population with security, development, and a political voice. The police play a crucial role in this strategy, backfilling the military's territorial gains, and thus helping to return safety and normalcy to insurgent areas. Although Colombia's insurgency continues, the lessons of the early 2000s, when the government finally began to make serious inroads in the conflict, should continue to inform ongoing and expanded COIN efforts.

In the sixth case study, Adnan Naseemullah turns to Pakistan's nearly decade-long Islamist insurgency and the role of Pakistan's police in

the various COIN efforts. He spells out the structural and political factors that have shaped (and constrained) the Pakistan police's response to the Taliban insurgency in that country. The chapter outlines the trajectory of a conflict that began in the years after 2001 and still constitutes a fundamental threat to the security and the legitimacy of the Pakistani state. In recent years, the insurgency has largely transformed from a delimited geographical conflict to a campaign of terrorism and violence throughout the country, one in which the police are at the front line.

Naseemullah argues that police performance against insurgents is limited by two main factors. First, the ordinary provincial police forces in Pakistan have for decades been the victims of serious underinvestment. Second, Pakistan's police are embedded in and rely on a wider network of disciplinary governance which has deteriorated or fallen apart in recent years. He assesses the political and bureaucratic reasons for police underinvestment and the lack of support from intelligence services, the judiciary, and the military, and the consequences for combating insurgency.

In the seventh case study, Austin Long observes that in Afghanistan, the police force is still nascent, being barely more than a decade old. Created with extensive help from the international community after the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, it remains a work in progress in an institutional sense. The politics of Afghanistan, where corruption and ethnic competition have been endemic, have hampered the development of the police. This has been compounded by the fact that the police have been integral to the campaign against the Taliban insurgency that began only a few years after the invasion. Like the Iraqi police, the Afghan police were essentially born into COIN.

From the outset, the Afghan police have been weakened by four overarching problems. The first is that the quality of police recruits has been low, even by Afghan standards, as the police force is viewed as less prestigious and having fewer resources than the Afghan army. The second problem is corruption, with the police being widely (and not inaccurately) viewed as intensely corrupt and predatory. While what is seen as corruption can sometimes be a mechanism for coping with the weakness of the Afghan government system, with corrupt police chiefs recycling illicit revenue into improving the effectiveness of their policemen, this nonetheless makes police development difficult. The third problem, related to but distinct from corruption, is abuse of the population. Afghan police have a reputation for excessive force and mistreatment of detainees. The final problem is ethnic

division, with the police seen as dominated by Tajiks, to the detriment of the Pashtuns, who constitute the bulk of the insurgents.

The interaction of these problems with the demands of fighting COIN has produced three basic types of Afghan policemen. The first are the rare 'good' cops, who are minimally corrupt and highly effective. The second are bad police, who are ill-trained, unmotivated, or all but indistinguishable from uniformed bandits in how they treat the population. While the latter predominate, they are at least clearly a problem. A more difficult challenge for the international community and the Afghan government alike are police who are capable fighters but draw on illicit revenues and political connections to entrench themselves in the power. These problematic police are highly effective in the short run, but in the long run will likely hamper the development of the police force in Afghanistan. As the international community reduces its presence in Afghanistan it will likely be forced to make decisions that empower these problematic police, as short run stability becomes paramount.

In the eighth case study, Matt Sherman and Josh Paul examine the role of the Iraqi police in COIN operations following the outbreak of the civil war in post-invasion Iraq. They argue that following the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime, a breakdown of law and order occurred across Iraq. This multifaceted conflict led, over the course of three years, to a near-civil war. During this period, the Iraqi police was, at various times, the only Iraqi security force, the largest security force in the country, and the Iraqi force most capable of independent action. Yet it was also, at times, the least effective security force, the most corrupt and sectarian security force, and a tool of political interests rather than public service, even itself contributing to the breakdown of society. Thus, the development of the Iraqi Police Service (IPS) provides, with few exceptions, a case study in how law enforcement development can be a major obstacle to effective COIN if not properly managed both within the capital and across the country.

To identify the broader lessons for police in COIN, the authors review the development of the Iraqi police between 2003–6, with special attention to a case study on the deployment of the Iraqi police in the city of Fallujah in 2004–5. In Fallujah, formerly a hotbed of insurgency, an initial rush to transition to 'Iraqi ownership' resulted in the deployment of an immature force and conflict between multiple stakeholders, and provides a microcosm of the challenges of police reform.

The main question is why—in Fallujah and across the country—the IPS did not play a more effective role. Four themes emerge—the lack of attention to the political aspects of police reform and employment is perhaps the most important. This was compounded by a strategy based on quantity rather than holistic—but less easily measurable—development of a criminal justice system. This contributed to legitimacy issues between the police, the population, and other providers of security—such as local militias. Finally, despite the vast resources poured into police development, an inability to build sustainable systems led to a constant reinventing and reorientation of the programme.

In the ninth case study, Jugdep S. Chima focuses on the Sikh separatist movement, in which a section of the Sikh community waged a bloody fight for an independent country carved out of India's northern state of Punjab. He argues that the Punjab police became a more effective COIN force by fashioning a purposeful confluence of the interests of the population and the local police, the effective use of Sikh cultural symbols, and enhanced civil-military coordination. This confluence of interests, identities, and institutions was contextualized by favourable socio-political trends, including the Sikh peasantry's increasing alienation from the insurgents due to their use of indiscriminate violence and the insurgency splintering into competing factions.

Chima demonstrates that the re-establishment of political patronage networks through the 1992 democratic elections, after nearly a decade of the President's Rule, allowed agents of the state to become 'more reliable and stable source of benefits and physical security for villagers than the militants'. These elections also brought the Congress Party to power both at the centre and in Punjab, thus improving governmental and bureaucratic coordination for COIN. The new political leadership gave the police a relatively free hand against the militants, while concurrently smearing the militants' image by feeding stories to the press about their purportedly morally lax and lavish lifestyles. In addition, the Punjab police's strength was more than doubled, thus increasing its operational capacity and also providing an alternative source of income for young men who comprised the insurgents' recruiting pool. The Punjab police also strategically introduced Sikh cultural motifs into its force and upgraded its weapons to match those of the militants. Large bounties were paid to policemen who killed militants, thus providing further material incentives to support the state.

These counterinsurgent operations took place in a legal environ-ment which facilitated 'unconventional' methods, including torture and extrajudicial executions, while shielding the police from prosecution. The central government also contributed large amounts of secret funds which enabled the local police to enhance its intelligence wing by purchasing the services of paid informants. At the same time, the army's role was redefined. Instead of spearheading COIN, army forces played a support role and let the revamped indigenous police forces 'go in for the kill', in order to avoid further alienating the Sikh peasantry from the central state. Thus, as Chima argues, the confluence of interests, identities, and institutions contributed to successful COIN in Punjab.

Arvind Verma, in the tenth case study, shows how the left-wing Naxalite (neo-Maoist) insurgency began in the 1960s in a small village in West Bengal. Today, the Naxalites operate in more than 200 districts and 20 states and pose the single most important internal security threat to the country. They have mounted audacious attacks on security forces, looted armouries for weapons and ammunition, broken open prisons to free their comrades, and killed well-guarded politicians with impunity. They have successfully established bases in areas where the state presence is thin and capitalized on poor governance to attract disgruntled people to their cause. Their support has come from the estranged and alienated people, particularly the lower castes and tribal communities who have been neglected by the state for decades.

In the 60s and 70s, the Naxalites were able to make inroads into the central regions of Bihar, where the prevailing feudal system allowed higher castes to exploit the poor (particularly women) and deny them basic rights. The state and the police, in particular, failed to come to the aid of the oppressed people and in many ways became a party to their exploitation. Naxalites provided the muscle and organization to slowly build a resistance movement and earned the support of poor people. By the 1980s, Naxalite squads began successfully launching violent attacks against landowners and state agents.

For several years, the Indian police response was poorly conceived and executed. The ill-trained state police forces, lacking resources, were unable to halt the growing power of Naxalite militias. Unfortunately, the police also remained indifferent to the growing threat of Naxalite groups and rarely launched any systematic long-term operations. Only in the past decade and with assistance from central government have state police

forces initiated modern training, resource mobilization, and directed planned operations against the Naxalites. Specialized courses in jungle operations, automatic weapons, and modern technology to synchronize various intelligence efforts have been introduced. There is growing cooperation amongst the various forces and determined efforts to combat this threat to internal security.

In this regard, the Andhra Pradesh (AP) police has evolved innovative strategies that have proved effective. A new police unit, the Greyhounds, has been established which focuses only on anti-Naxalite operations. The force is specially trained for deep forest pursuit and combat. The AP police have also formed cultural troupes and trained personnel to stage drama and songs set to music to wean the rural population from Naxalite influence. This use of soft power has been very successful in combating Naxalite propaganda and countering their ideology. The AP model is being emulated by other police forces that are setting up their own specialized units and training centres.

Police actions against the Naxalites in central India provide an interesting blueprint for COIN operations. Primarily, the police have to enhance their professionalism and build their capabilities. But more significantly, the police must further combat the Naxalite ideology of violence and vilification of democracy in the country. Extremism grows not only from the barrel of gun but also within the minds of affected people. The police, in exercising the coercive power of state, need to work with the citizenry to address their grievances. The use of cultural symbols, ideas, and imagery are as necessary as guns in COIN operations.

In the final chapter, David P. Fidler surveys the case studies to identify common features concerning the role of police in COINs. While recognizing that every COIN campaign is unique, Fidler focuses on patterns that point to the need for comprehensive reform of police forces, with a focus on political legitimacy and operational effectiveness. He argues that the challenge of reform bridges two themes in the literature on police in counterinsurgency—that weak and/or predatory police contribute to the emergence and strength of insurgencies and that legitimate, capable police are important in ending insurgencies effectively. Fidler breaks down the broader reform challenge into two related strands—conceptual reforms and capability reforms—and provides examples from the case studies to demonstrate the enduring nature of these tasks across COIN experiences.

Conceptual reforms relating to the police in COIN involve re-inventing the idea of the police in a society, understanding the place of the police in the web of legitimacy counterinsurgents attempt to create, and re-aligning the police with the rule of law. Fidler uses the case studies to locate capability reforms—core changes counterinsurgents make to improve their operational effectiveness against insurgent threats, including expanding police forces, professionalizing the police, creating functional specializations within police forces, outside subsidization of capability reforms, integrating the police into communities, and mastering interagency coordination. He concludes by arguing that the contributions of police forces to COIN campaigns depend on the success or failure of conceptual reforms aimed at providing police with legitimacy and capability reforms designed to equip police with operational capacities to defeat insurgencies on the ground.

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Notes:
(1) A comprehensive review of the literature on how armies wage counterinsurgency (as opposed to the equally vast literature on how insurgents wage insurgency) is beyond the scope of this current effort. However, key works include: Anderson 2003; Cable 1986; Charters 1989; Galula 2006; Hennessy 1997; Hoffman 2007; Kilcullen 2010; Krepinevich 1986; Mockaitis 1990; McInnes 1996; Nagl 2005; Trinquier 2006; Townshend 1986.

(2) Cassidy provides an analysis of American and French experiences with indigenous forces in various counterinsurgencies and cites that the employment of such forces should be under the direction of a joint or combined interagency counterinsurgency task force. See Robert Cassidy (2006).

(3) Simonsen (2009: 575) finds that 'new initiatives aimed at reforming East Timor's military and police forces appeared to be lacking in both depth and relevance for addressing the country's new level of internal division, and its immediate, internal security challenges.'

(4) Herbst argues here that the international community must help African countries to strengthen militaries as well as police and intelligence agencies to enable governments to respond quickly to rebel threats.

(5) Call (2002: 16–17) writes 'The experience of war transitions in regions outside Latin America indicates that conflict-ending regime transitions have opened the way for significant security reforms elsewhere. Important police reforms have occurred in conjunction with war transitions in places such as South Africa (1994), Bosnia (1996), Mozambique (1992), Rwanda (1994), Eastern Slavonia (1997), Northern Ireland (1998), Kosovo (1999), and East Timor (1999). These cases represent some of the most far-reaching police reforms in the world, and some of the most prominent war transitions of the 1990s. This association lends some support to the proposition that war transitions provide windows of opportunity for sweeping security reforms.'