



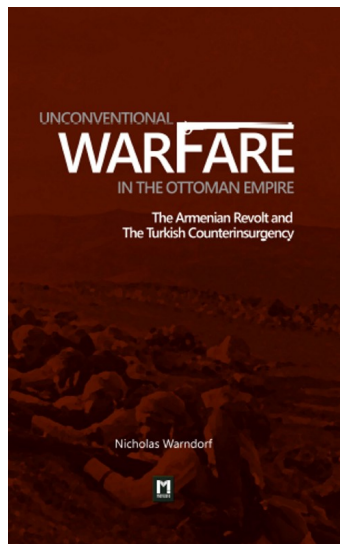
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Reading of:

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# **Unconventional Warfare in the Ottoman Empire**

**The Armenian Revolt and the Turkish Counterinsurgency**



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It is necessary to examine the meaning of insurgency and counterinsurgency from a variety of sources to better understand the complexities of unconventional warfare. By defining the two and their application in past and present military conflicts, it is the intention to clarify such encompassing concepts to better direct the reader toward a clear understanding of the topic. It would be unwise to focus on all forms of irregular warfare, because the scope of such a topic exceeds the capacity of this research. It is also necessary to recognize the importance of the “center of gravity” distinction in defining forms of warfare. Though the specific class of society is subject to change with the type of warfare, the fact remains that the focus is on the civilian population.

### *Insurgency*

The revolutionaries almost invariably find it easier to establish themselves in the ‘countryside’— isolated, difficult terrain where the governing authorities are weakest, know least what is going-on, and show the least interest. Here, the revolutionary political network and propagandists manage to get enough recruits to form their terrorists into small, local guerrilla bands.<sup>13</sup>

Though the “countryside” argument has been disproven by the American Revolution and American experiences in Iraq during the twenty-first century, the countryside

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<sup>13</sup> John J. McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War: The Strategy of Counter Insurgency* (Harrisburg: Stackpole Books, 1966), 33.

still remains an effective place to begin. An insurgency is a threat which generally builds from within a country due to hostility toward the government or a foreign occupying power. A guerrilla war is often the vehicle by which a smaller insurgent force makes their demands known to the larger, more powerful opponent when all other negotiations have failed. In many cases, armed conflict begins by way of the guerrilla war, with the guerrilla or partisan as its warrior. Where regular armies fight in open conflict with one another on a large scale, the guerrilla often chooses to utilize hit-and-run tactics whereby smaller, irregular fighting forces conduct surprise attacks on larger forces and then dissolve into their indigenous habitat. The favored techniques of insurgents include, but are not limited to: bombs and bomb making, coercion, kidnapping, assassination, terrorism, bribery, theft, and any number of other approaches that will provide expediency toward their ultimate goal. Such techniques are intended to destabilize the government or invader by constantly keeping them on the defensive against a force which they cannot directly assault due to its clandestine nature and natural cover within their own indigenous elements such as jungles, cities, and mountainous terrain.

According to Bard O'Neill, professor of international affairs at the National War College in Washington, D.C., there are three groups of people who fit the ideal criteria within an insurgency which provide favorable conditions: Parochials, subjects and participants. O'Neill argues that parochials are, "Those citizens who have little or no awareness of the political system at the national level and no perception of their ability to influence it." These indi-

viduals are generally illiterate, live at the subsistence level in isolated areas and generally prefer to be left alone. Such individuals can be compared to Kurdish tribes in Anatolia, the Arabs of Saudi Arabia and the Armenians of Eastern Anatolia. Subjects “have become part of the political system and are aware of its impact on their lives but are not directly active in shaping policy.” Participants “are generally educated citizens who are cognizant of national, political institutions and policies and wish to engage actively in the decision-making process.” These individuals are generally educated, confident of their impact on policy change and vulnerable to recruitment by insurgents. This is perhaps because their involvement offers a shortcut to political recognition that would otherwise take time within a system of bureaucratic policy and regulation — a system which they already condemn.<sup>14</sup>

According to the United States Army and the Marine Corps, there are a number of different forms that an insurgency can take.<sup>15</sup> One is of conspiratorial nature; an example of this being the Bolshevik revolution of the twentieth century in Russia or the Young Turk rebellion of the Ottoman Empire in 1908. Conspiratorial insurgencies involve exactly what the name implies, groups of conspirators meeting in secret, generally educated,

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<sup>14</sup> Bard E. O’Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*, (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books Inc., 2005), 83

<sup>15</sup> United States Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army-Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 114

dreaming up plans to overthrow the government. Another form is of military focused nature. Examples of this can be found all over Latin America, but perhaps the most influential would be the efforts of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara in Cuba. This form of warfare is also known as “Focoism,”<sup>16</sup> which consists of small paramilitary bands of fighters using an insurrection to create the conditions necessary to overthrow the government.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if bands of resistance fighters defy the government, the government response, which can sometimes be violent, targets any and all suspects, showing the true nature of the government and drawing attention to the guerrillas’ cause.

Urban insurgencies are those fought mainly in heavily populated urban centers, usually within key districts or cities which are crucial to a nations’ stability. An example of this would be the efforts of Al-Qaeda, The Taliban and the IRA (Irish Republican Army). Perhaps the most recognizable form of urban insurgency would be the efforts of the IRA. They remain without question an example of what has been called a “surgical” approach to irregular warfare within the confines of an urban environ-

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<sup>16</sup> The term was inspired by the Cuban revolution but is perhaps more recognizable as a “peoples war” and how it has since been adopted by Al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

<sup>17</sup> This has also been referred to as the “ink-blot” effect, a comparison to the nature of ink drops on paper beginning small in various locations and slowly spreading from its point of contact.

ment.<sup>18</sup> Protracted popular warfare is the form of insurgency that Mao Tse-tung utilized in the Chinese Revolution and was later adapted by the North Vietnamese. This form of warfare is meant to create popular support for governmental reorganization by draining the enemy of resources, man power and the will to carry on the fight with a political ideology in place, which in China and Vietnam's case was communism.<sup>19</sup>

### *Counterinsurgency*

The accumulated effect of these revolutionary wars, and there seems to be no end to them, is extremely serious and vitally concerns us all. Whatever the result, the protracted nature of each struggle does immense long-term damage, particularly to rural communities where, to add to all the other problems, the population is increasing at an alarming rate. The so-called newly emerging forces are rapidly in danger of becoming the future starving masses.<sup>20</sup>

Counterinsurgency is the process by which a government or an outside force attempts to reverse the effects of insurgency within a nation that is on the verge of internal

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<sup>18</sup> Patrick D. Marques, "Guerrilla Warfare Tactics in Urban Environments" (M.A. Thesis, US Army Command, and General Staff College, 2003) 23-24.

<sup>19</sup> United States Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army-Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 9

<sup>20</sup> Robert Thompson, introduction to *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War: The Strategy of Counter Insurgency*; by John J. McCuen (Harrisburg: Stackpole Books, 1966), 15

collapse or has already imploded. According to the U.S. Army and Marine Corps, “Today, when countering an insurgency growing from state collapse or failure, counterinsurgents often face a more daunting task: helping friendly forces reestablish political order and legitimacy where these conditions no longer exist.”<sup>21</sup>

It must be said and cannot be overstated that the versatility of counterinsurgency requires a special breed of unit commander to face the challenges of such dynamic obstacles. There are a number of reasons why guerrillas/insurgents are frustrating to regular forces, but perhaps the most frustrating aspects are that they do not don conventional uniforms, they are not bound by a military code of conduct, and their support base can come from anywhere at any time.<sup>22</sup>

Guerrillas also adapt faster than regular forces because they have to and there is little doctrine behind their tactics, it is mostly theory in practice. All warfare is ever changing; however, guerrilla warfare or insurgencies are often a reaction to modernity, political change and combating the technology of the future using more elementary methods and techniques. Due to this fact, insurgents/guerrillas are typically forced to change their strategies rapidly and regularly to adapt and respond to their

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<sup>21</sup> US Army, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, 8

<sup>22</sup> Department of the Navy and the USMC, *Small Wars Manual* (Washington: The United States Government Printing Office, 1940), sect. 1-8 p. 12