



What's left of counterinsurgency theories? 2/4

A populo-centric counterinsurgency: the adhesion of the population as a desired end state -
Revue militaire n°55

Monsieur Benjamin HAMM

Published on 22/10/2019

Histoire & stratégie

"The answer to terrorism is not to flood the jungle with more troops. Rather, it lies in the hearts and minds of the Malaysian people . With these words, General Sir Gerald Templer (1888-1979), Malaysia's civilian and military commander, expressed in 1953 the need to "win the hearts and minds" to quell an insurgency³.

Indeed, by depriving it of its access to the population - through the latter's adherence to the loyalist cause - the insurgency loses its source of income, logistics, supporters and intelligence. In doing so, it will be reduced to riskier actions in which the military action of loyalist forces, often asymmetric, can prevail. The adherence of the population is therefore an objective since it will lead inexorably to a physical and psychological separation of the insurgents from the population, which is the goal of counter-insurgency. In order to obtain this adherence, General Templer has the idea accepted, through socio-economic measures, that it will be more profitable for the populations, in a rational cost/benefit calculation, to be on the loyalist side than in the communist insurgency.

Repeated on many occasions, the famous Templer formula certainly finds its inspiration in the pacification works of Marshals Gallieni (1846-1916) and Lyautey (1854-1934) in Madagascar and Morocco in particular. Indeed, both of them understood the immense stakes of the population's support and contributed to it through political, social and economic measures.⁴ These measures cannot be effective, however, without a proper understanding of the needs of the population, hence the importance of intelligence. For the two marshals, it was truly "political action [which] is by far the most important", military action being only supplementary. Gallieni and Lyautey also insist that political action must respect cultural and traditional structures if it is not to produce the opposite of its expected effects. Intelligence is therefore also important here. This alternative to "all-kinetics" can be explained by the lessons learned from the revolutionary and imperial wars (Vendée, Spain, Algeria), especially those of Marshal Bugeaud (1784-1849) during the conquest of Algeria. Bugeaud, although he used force more than once, also instituted the "Arab Bureaux". These were intended to administer the population to meet its socio-economic needs and to coordinate civil and military actions.

Even today, the adherence of the population to the loyalist forces remains the epicentre of the counter-insurgency doctrines, which were largely watered down by the "Galleonic" writings and their repetition in the "neo-classical" doctrines.⁵ especially under the impetus of General David Petraeus. Because counter-insurgency is not only a military operation, but above all a political operation, it must be conducted by civilian and military means and actors.

3 Templer considered that while priority is given to restoring security (protect), which helps win hearts, a rapid move towards socio-economic reforms to improve living conditions (serve) helps win minds. The Malaysian case was nevertheless a particular insurgency since it was based on a Chinese ethnic minority and cut off from external support.

4 Thus, in 1905, after nine years under the command of Marshal Gallieni, 38 hospitals, 42 maternity wards and more than 700 schools were built. Marshal Lyautey attributed the following sentence to Marshal Gallieni: "All officers know how to take a village at dawn; I want officers who know how to take a village at dawn and open the market at noon". Taken from "Gallieni in Madagascar and Lyautey in Morocco, two complementary 'pacification' works", Cahiers de la Recherche doctrinale, Centre de Doctrine et d'Emploi des Forces, 2011, p. 74.

5 Counter-insurgency doctrines, discredited by the failure in Vietnam, will find supporters in the 1990s following stabilisation operations in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia.

Title : Monsieur Benjamin HAMM

Author (s) : Monsieur Benjamin HAMM

Release date 18/10/2019

[FIND OUT MORE](#)
