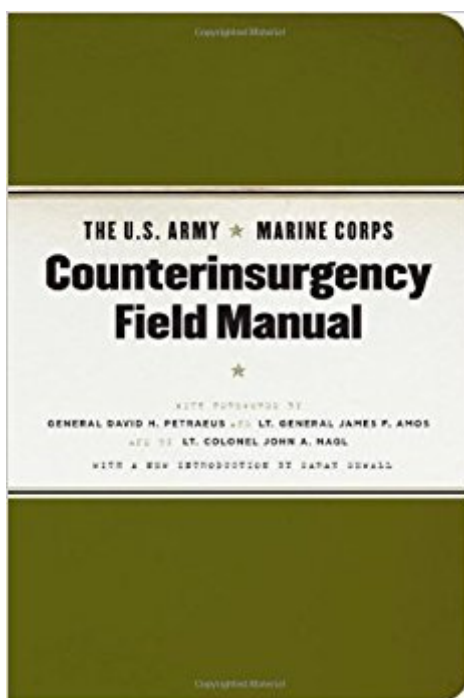


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The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual



Synopsis

When the U.S. military invaded Iraq, it lacked a common understanding of the problems inherent in counterinsurgency campaigns. It had neither studied them, nor developed doctrine and tactics to deal with them. It is fair to say that in 2003, most Army officers knew more about the U.S. Civil War than they did about counterinsurgency. The U.S. Army / Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual was written to fill that void. The result of unprecedented collaboration among top U.S. military experts, scholars, and practitioners in the field, the manual espouses an approach to combat that emphasizes constant adaptation and learning, the importance of decentralized decision-making, the need to understand local politics and customs, and the key role of intelligence in winning the support of the population. The manual also emphasizes the paradoxical and often counterintuitive nature of counterinsurgency operations: sometimes the more you protect your forces, the less secure you are; sometimes the more force you use, the less effective it is; sometimes doing nothing is the best reaction. An new introduction by Sarah Sewall, director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, places the manual in critical and historical perspective, explaining the significance and potential impact of this revolutionary challenge to conventional U.S. military doctrine. An attempt by our military to redefine itself in the aftermath of 9/11 and the new world of international terrorism, The U.S. Army / Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual will play a vital role in American military campaigns for years to come. The University of Chicago Press will donate a portion of the proceeds from this book to the Fisher House Foundation, a private-public partnership that supports the families of America's injured servicemen. To learn more about the Fisher House Foundation, visit www.fisherhouse.org.

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Customer Reviews

EXCELLENT BOOK.

The U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual, some say, is an odd book for a business analyst to read. But in my work, as a competitive strategy analyst engaging with NGO and activist organizations, having a good understanding of this book can be an asset, especially so given that many of the organizations I study have written that they have used this manual to inform their own strategies. Certainly, many of the sections such as "Developing Host-Nation Security Forces" and the sections on logistics and "Detention and Interrogation" are not directly applicable to the development of business strategy opposing adversarial advocacy organizations. However, the sections on "Intelligence in Counterinsurgency," understanding the environment, and planning and strategy execution can be very helpful, and are must reads for any business professional who engages with NGOs and activists who are more destructive than constructive.

I actually bought this book some months back but I kept putting off picking it up because I assumed this would be a dense work filled with military jargon and more acronyms than one could shake a stick at. I assumed that it would be a tedious and difficult read so I found reasons to put it off, but when I finally forced myself to begin this book I was quite shocked. The book is very easy to read and very well written. The book has just a few acronyms that I had memorized within a couple of pages after their introduction, and the book is very well laid out with impeccable organization (as should be expected I guess). I dare say I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book on all levels. Of course the information and the knowledge to be gleaned from this work is extremely important. I think if this book were to become required reading for students then I think we could prevent some costly misadventures in future because this book really details what an occupation requires. Everyone would understand that military action will require a deep level of commitment for the

military and on all levels of civil society as well. I also think it is the least we can do as citizens to educate ourselves on what our military men and women are doing and attempting to implement in situations where they face this type of conflict. One gets a sense of what a soldier goes through and the huge load that is put on the ordinary soldier. It is an extremely difficult task they are asked to perform in these situations, and they are asked to perform this task with honor and discretion in the face of terrible situations. There are some good reviews here that speak more to the content of the work by people obviously more versed in the topic than myself, so I will just say that this book is very well done and an easy read. If you are like me and are putting off reading or buying this book, then let me just say go ahead. It is worth the money and the effort. I highly recommend this book.

A must-read to understand how the frackers are using this book--courting the media and working against the counter-insurgency (their words, not mine) of citizens fighting hydraulic fracking in their towns. If anyone doubts that the fracking juggernaut is swiftly taking over the whole country, the links below should put their doubts to rest. won't let me include links, but you can google: Oil Executive: Military-Style 'Psy Ops' Experience Applied (from CNBC) Google Fracking map of the USA (Gasland website) And be sure to watch The Sky is Pink (Josh Fox 18 min. video) on Vimeo.

I've been studying insurgent warfare for a long time before it became a hot topic... again. I still recommend Galula's Counterinsurgency Warfare and Hamilton's The Art of Insurgency which is a great book but is little referenced. There are of course books by Kitson and others. (Nagl's book which I've reviewed is a good dissertation but is limited in its scope and perception. He writes the forward to this edition.) The two volume War in the Shadows is okay background but not worth a two volume read. Which brings us to the Counterinsurgency Field Manual, which if you are serving and only have time to access one source, this is a dependable one. Although the CFM is oriented more toward the current unpleasantness the principles of counterinsurgency have been carefully gleaned from the best sources and multiple situations as well as updating insurgent response for the 21st century. Keeping food deliveries out of active insurgent areas might have worked for the British in Malaya, but you could imagine the field day CNN would have with it today. Probably the best thing the writers do in this manual is freely admit that the devil is in the details and that these will have to be worked out locally and supported nationally. For those who still aren't buying into "the insurgent stuff" which unfortunately over the last 30+ years has gone under state department approved phrases like "nation building" and executive office of the President terms like "counter terrorism" you don't have to worry that the Army or Marines are going to lose their conventional edge with these

approaches. The CFM makes it clear that this is only one form of warfare and that modern war can slip across the entire spectrum. What is not needed is more doctrine...what is needed is a tool box and the CFM attempts to be one of those tools. The CFM makes many good points and I'm not going to list them all here, but the most important one I felt has to do with the assumption of more risk. Insurgent warfare requires soldiers to go out and get in the streets with people to provide the basic security for everyday activities that will lead to a legitimate government. Legitimacy cannot come from the national level down no matter what form of government people actually settle for (A basic concept found in any undergraduate PolySci 101 class which no one in the State Dept or Congress must have taken.) The average Joe doesn't care about the grand schemes. He wants to go to work, get married, raise a family and have a shot at some level of comfort without getting killed. The key to winning against insurgents is that the most committed to providing these basic parameters for the average Joe, wins. You show your true colors and level of commitment when you have to go out and get shot at. But the alternative, which never works, and we still seem to be doing is to concentrate forces on large FOB's and separate them from the population. This has got to be one of the toughest of balancing acts to provide force protection, logistics as well as force projection and maintenance that supports an ongoing relationship with the civilian population. Fighting an insurgency is not for the faint hearted, the draftee, or those who needed to be reelected every 2 years. It takes soldiers in neighborhoods who know the people and have the power to affect their lives...albeit indirectly if possible. I disagree with the CFM on two points. I disagree with using the idea of "counterinsurgency" for philosophical reasons. The term by its very nature places you at a disadvantage to the insurgents. I believe you fight an insurgent war and win it by being better insurgents, not by being better "counterinsurgents." But this is probably more a matter of semantics. My second area of disagreement is really the book itself. This "new" book on insurgent warfare is really a great gazette of all the current knowledge that has been around for years plus the all necessary Army doctrine, without which the lowliest private cannot have a bowel movement. The Army's "can't do it without doctrine" attitude is what made this book come out so far behind the power curve to begin with. All this information is and has been known and available but the Army couldn't "discover" it. The US has a long insurgent history that is little studied or learned from. Our nation was founded by an insurgency. We've fought insurgents throughout our history: Native Americans, especially in the West, the border struggles during the Civil War, Phillipines, Cuba, Nicuagua, Vietnam, and Afghanistan. As organizations that need to be highly adaptable, the Army and the Marines need to stop paying tuition for the same lessons over and over again. I realize that not all of this lack of organizational awareness is theirs. A great deal of the responsibility for lack of

responsiveness lies at the feet of elected officials who do not do their part and provide the clarity of purpose upon which coherent military strategies are based. The mist in Congress becomes a dense fog for those who are tasked with the nation's defense.

This is a perfect example of a bad doctrine presented in an excellent way. I have not seen a single example of this doctrine working. As with all "Field Manuals", this one is written in a clear and concise manner. I recommend this to any and all who might care to learn how not to win a war.

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