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APPENDIX A: INSURGENCY AND COUNTERINSURGENCY

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To establish a realistic context for counterinsurgency (COIN) air operations, this appendix describes the dynamics of classical insurgency and counterinsurgency. A detailed treatment of the many variants and paradigms of COIN is beyond the scope of this document. Accordingly, the following text attempts to establish a generic profile for the conflict arena, acknowledging that insurgencies vary considerably in scope and detail. There are situations, for example, where insurgent forces may want something less than total control of the government. There are also examples of insurgents being impervious to government reforms or concessions (e.g., Khmer Rouge fighters bent on destroying the government and all its supporters through combat actions).

The appendix describes ways to apply various instruments of power to achieve balanced development, neutralize enemy combatant forces, and promote political mobilization and legitimacy through reforming economic and legal sectors of society, alleviating grievances, recognizing causes, etc. This appendix provides Air Force commanders, trainers, advisors, and other personnel involved in foreign internal defense (FID) a basic framework for understanding and evaluating the major components of the conflict arena. This framework is the basis for Air Force FID planning and execution, and especially for recognizing appropriate and inappropriate uses of airpower resources.

The discussion focuses on the nature and characteristics of insurgency and counterinsurgency and on the major functions and objectives of a host nation's (HN's) internal defense and development (IDAD) strategy. Insurgencies have individual characteristics that should be taken into consideration. The classic concept of social, economic, and political fragmentation engenders a "winning hearts and minds" approach to successfully countering insurgent movements, an idea that gained relevancy during the Vietnam War era. This idea does not have universal application.

ANALYZING INSURGENCY

Because insurgencies vary greatly in form, scope, and intensity, it is impossible to construct a universal model. Elements can be analyzed to determine the composition and likely direction of an insurgent movement. The way an insurgency is inspired,

organized, and employed should be of principal interest to FID planners. Typically, insurgency incorporates an ideological content that furnishes a revolutionary theory and cause; a revolutionary infrastructure providing leadership, organization, logistics, communications, and intelligence; and a militant arm to defend the revolutionary movement and help achieve its political objectives. Understanding these elements allows those defending against an insurgency to direct their campaign against root causes and supporting infrastructure as well as the insurgent's military forces. To devise appropriate countermeasures, including the use of airpower, defense planners should also analyze the insurgent's strategy—the goals and likely methods of attack.

Ideological Content

Poverty, class oppression, political disenfranchisement, and ethnic or religious strife often create the necessary conditions for revolution, but are rarely sufficient to generate armed conflict. Given economic and political grievances, another condition must be met. A catalyst must draw attention to these grievances and focus them on the failure of the state to act in the best interests of the people. The catalyst originates in the ideological content of the revolution (Marxism or religion, for example). Together, the grievances and the ideological content function as necessary conditions to set the revolution in motion. Ideology is the mechanism for connecting the population with the central ideas and goals of the revolutionary movement. It defines the economic and political future of the revolutionary state and provides the inspirational basis for revolt. The ideological underpinnings of a revolution may extend beyond the legitimate needs and aspirations of the people. Insurgents bent on achieving power at any cost often view government reforms as a threat to their political ambitions.

Revolutionary Infrastructure

Revolutionary infrastructure furnishes the organizational devices to administer and control all social, economic, informational, political, and military initiatives. Leaders, located at the infrastructure's center, formulate strategic plans, policies, and goals. They are the source of political-ideological order and discipline. In many revolutions, political cadres located throughout the organizational structure represent party leadership. Overall, the infrastructure functions as the heart of the insurgent organization's [command and control](#) (C2) system.

The infrastructure is often organized into interconnected, clandestine cells responsible for recruitment, training, intelligence, deception, propaganda, and logistics. C2 lines extend to insurgent military elements and, where possible, to agents located in various segments of local and national government, host military organizations, and society at large. Insurgents may conduct political action and influence operations through legal front organizations such as labor unions, organized student groups, and registered political parties.

The infrastructure is often a coalition of factions with differing grievances, ideological patterns, and political agendas. When faction leaders differ significantly over

revolutionary ends, ways, or means, internal alliances are often dynamic and fragile. The nature of these alliances—their dominant political direction and degree of cohesion—is an important indicator of the nature of the revolution, its strategic goals, strengths, and weaknesses.

Insurgent Strategy

Usually, [insurgent](#) strategy executes on multiple fronts (through social, economic, informational, political, and military initiatives) to separate the government from the population and to neutralize the government's self-defense mechanisms. The contest is for legitimacy and, where possible, political mobilization of the people. Mobilization furnishes the revolution with workers, fighters, money, weapons, and intelligence, while at the same time denying these assets to the government. The insurgent creates opportunities to exert forms of political and economic control of the population by neutralizing the government's authority through the use of information and force. In certain types of insurgency, the strategy is aimed at "out-administering" the host government. The insurgent does not necessarily require the active participation of the majority of the population, the insurgent can achieve objectives through neutrality or passive support.

Military Operations

The insurgent movement usually enters armed conflict with a small insurgent force that increases in strength as personnel and weapons become available. The insurgents fight as guerrillas because they lack the means to apply force quickly and decisively in open battle with defending conventional forces. The insurgents usually begin with little of the materiel and manpower resources available to the government. They avoid all-out confrontations, relying instead on accumulating smaller successes to achieve social, economic, psychological, and political objectives.

Guerrilla tactics extend the revolution with the means available, wearing down the host-nation financial and materiel resources and the political and moral resolve of foreign friends and allies supporting the counterinsurgency effort. Interdicting vital lines of communication, halting or slowing agricultural production, and inhibiting domestic and foreign trade, reduces the government's financial ability to resist. Successful interdiction of economic targets also undermines the legitimacy of the government by creating inflation, higher taxes, and critical shortages of goods and services. Insurgents may also employ terrorism or terrorist techniques (e.g., assassination, bombings, kidnapping, extortion, and blackmail) as tactical instruments to suppress or inhibit government actions. Selective attacks against industrial facilities, transportation systems, government officials, and civil law enforcement agencies may have significant psychological effect, primarily in discrediting the host government's ability to manage and administer the affairs of state.

Guerrilla tactics may also function as a crucial lead-in phase to conventional operations aimed at defeating the government's main forces. In many instances, national security

forces are driven into their most defensible positions during the protracted guerrilla phase. This withdrawal provides insurgents time and secures maneuvering space to consolidate their political and economic control in rural areas. It also gives them time to establish their legitimacy and to assemble a larger, more conventionally structured force capable of making decisive, final assaults on government garrisons. When the defending forces become isolated in static positions, the government's chances of success are poor.

Phased Actions

A Maoist-type insurgency is usually a progressive, evolutionary process marked by a series of phases corresponding to major transitions in the revolutionary movement. Although insurgencies can take many forms, three phases are common to many: a pre-hostility or incipient phase, a guerrilla warfare phase, and a conventional confrontation phase.

- ✪ **Phase I** (pre-hostility or incipient phase) corresponds to infrastructure development plus initial recruiting, organizing, training, and equipping of combat elements. During this phase, insurgents may engage the government in open political confrontations like public demonstrations, labor strikes, and boycotts. Insurgents often establish secure base areas for military command elements and guerrilla operations during this phase. Political-ideological cadres focus on indoctrination of civilians and armed revolutionaries.

- ✪ **Phase II** (guerrilla warfare phase) is the first level of armed violence. Irregular forces engage in sabotage, interdiction of communication and logistics links, assassination, and selective attacks against government forces. Insurgents expand their secure base areas and, where possible, link them to form strategic enclaves of political autonomy.

- ✪ **Phase III** (conventional confrontation phase) marks the transition from guerrilla actions to operations incorporating the tactics, techniques, and procedures of conventional fire and maneuver.

The reference to conflict phases in a Maoist insurgency is only a means of identifying critical shifts in the scope and intensity of insurgent activity. Phases may not signify a clean break between one kind of activity and another and not every Maoist insurgency will pass through all three phases. Furthermore, non-Maoist insurgencies generally do not follow the three-phase model at all. Infrastructure development is a continuous process of expanding administration, C2, training, and employing mobilized resources. Mobilization of insurgent combat forces must continuously expand to carry the insurgency from one phase to the next. Similarly, guerrilla operations may carry over into the conventional confrontation phase as a force multiplier. An insurgency does not have to progress through all three phases to succeed. A critical combination of political, economic, psychological, and military pressures may be sufficient to precipitate a government's collapse or persuade a government's foreign backers to withdraw at any

stage of a conflict. For example, in Afghanistan's war against Soviet occupation, insurgent operations essentially consisted of armed violence by irregular forces for the duration of the conflict, with no initial phase of infrastructure development and no transition from guerrilla actions to conventional confrontation required to force the withdrawal of Soviet forces and the collapse of the Soviet-supported government in Afghanistan.

A revolutionary movement is most vulnerable to government countermeasures during the initial build-up phase, before the insurgent develops military forces. Once the insurgency takes up armed combat, government countermeasures become far more complicated and difficult to apply. Insurgent warfare is, however, reversible.

Reversibility can work to the advantage of either side in the conflict. If an insurgency fails militarily in one phase, it can revert to a lower phase, thus securing its survival while generating or reinforcing combat capabilities. The government, on the other hand, may be able to capitalize on reduced levels of military activity to focus on solutions aimed at rooting out the infrastructure and eliminating economic and political grievances that may fuel the revolution.

COUNTERINSURGENCY

Countering a revolutionary strategy focused on political or ideological mobilization and protracted violence requires a wide range of social, economic, informational, political, and military initiatives. No single government initiative is sufficient, particularly when the insurgents are able to bind political-ideological goals with genuine grievances. The government's initiatives should be taken simultaneously and should reinforce each other. These initiatives require all instruments of national power be combined into a single, integrated IDAD program using both military and civilian resources. An effective IDAD strategy emphasizes unity of effort, maximum use of intelligence and counterintelligence activities, minimum use of violence, and responsive government leadership and administration. Ideally, the IDAD strategy should be used early enough to prevent an insurgency, but it can also be employed to counter an insurgency that has already started. The strategy incorporates four major tasks—balanced development, mobilization, security, and neutralization.

Balanced Development

Balanced development attempts to create a social, economic, and political environment resistant to insurgent attack. It does this through reforms aimed at removing or alleviating sources of legitimate grievance that can be exploited by insurgent elements. Although the scope and detail of the reforms vary from country to country, their principal functions are to establish the defending regime's legitimacy, capture the political initiative from the insurgent movement, and mobilize public support of IDAD efforts. In some cases, balanced development may require major investments in the industrial and agricultural sectors. Economic development, however, should be balanced with equally important nation-building initiatives in such areas as human rights, legal processes,

public education, communications, health care, transportation, utilities, water, and other public service programs. The host military often possesses unique capabilities in transportation, communications, and manpower that can be employed in nation-building programs. Balanced development should be driven by the nature of the conflict. In conflicts where the insurgency is inspired by economic grievances or class oppression, economic development may be very effective, whereas insurgencies based primarily on longstanding cultural, ethnic, or religious discord may respond better to other forms of nation building, like human rights and other political reforms.

Mobilization

The government mobilizes the population to participate in IDAD efforts. Mobilization maximizes manpower, materiel resources, political support, and intelligence available to the government while denying these resources to the insurgent. The net effect of mobilization is a social-political environment in which the government can "out-administer" the leadership and control mechanisms of the insurgent movement. Mobilization relies heavily on informational instruments to instill public confidence in the government and to reduce anxiety over military initiatives.

Security

Security includes all activities to protect the population, the government, and vital economic resources from insurgent violence. Security provides a safe environment for balanced development and denies the enemy access to popular support. The ability of internal security forces to maintain law and order is a key factor in demonstrating the government's legitimacy. During the early stages of insurgency, civil law enforcement agencies should function as a major line of defense for internal security. Revolution's major dynamic—political mobilization—occurs at the grass-roots level, and the government agency closest to that level acts as the local police. Generally, the police are first to detect critical signs of unrest, particularly in rural areas, and they are often closest to important sources of human intelligence on infrastructure organization and methods. They also provide a nucleus for establishing local auxiliaries and paramilitary forces. In some instances, civilian security forces are more acceptable to the local populace than the military. Military participation may begin with lateral support or augmentation of the police during low levels of violence and increase to a direct combat posture if the insurgency escalates.

Neutralization

Neutralization is physically and psychologically separating the insurgents from the population. It includes all lawful activities to disrupt, disorganize, and defeat insurgent organizations. Neutralization thus enlarges the objectives of security to include eliminating sources of insurgent violence. Neutralization relies on civil law enforcement agencies as well as military forces to accomplish these objectives.

The principal target of neutralization is the active or tacit support that the insurgents

receive from the populace. Neutralization requires internal defense forces that are organized, trained, and equipped for joint combat operations. However, military force rarely is decisive in determining long-term strategic outcomes. Insurgent leaders and forces often are deeply embedded in the civilian sector. They operate in a clandestine manner, many times under the protective cover of legitimate institutions. In most cases, penetrating and rooting out leadership and other insurgent elements is done more effectively with legal, informational, and civil law enforcement and investigative instruments than with military forces. Defeating the insurgency militarily may drive the conflict to a lower level of violence or drive it underground, but it does not eliminate the social, economic, political, or cultural tensions fueling the insurgency. Counterintelligence activities may be the most effective mean in neutralizing the insurgency without escalating to the use of military force and operations. Counterintelligence activities can be employed to penetrate the insurgency to disrupt, exploit, or neutralize the insurgency's overall effectiveness. Military force should be aimed at holding the conflict at the lowest possible level of violence while the government eliminates the insurgents' infrastructure and engages in balanced development and reform. Force is not an end in itself, it is only a way to buy time until the processes of reform and nation building take effect.

The reversible, multiphase nature of insurgency requires great flexibility in planning and executing military operations. Tactics, techniques, and procedures appropriate for conventional confrontations may be ineffective, even counterproductive, when executing military operations during counter-guerrilla operations. Because of varying situations and force requirements, decision makers and planners require accurate, timely intelligence to facilitate the process of selecting proper options.

The social, psychological, and political implications of military actions, particularly those employing deadly force, should be clearly understood and correctly exploited by the HN government. Excessive or ineffective use of force erodes government legitimacy and promotes political mobilization in favor of the insurgents. Even when the government assumes special emergency powers through legislation or decree, security forces must provide for the safety of law-abiding citizens.