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Counterinsurgency and the War on Terrorism

Throughout the 1980s, the United States poured money into El Salvador to check communist expansion in Central America. Although at that time the Salvador conflict was the costliest U.S. military effort since Vietnam, at the end of the decade the United States found itself spinning its wheels. Despite almost a decade of training, aid, and high-level pushes for reform, the Salvador armed forces still suffered basic flaws such as a mediocre and disengaged officer corps, widespread corruption, a poor promotion system, and conscripts who did not want to fight. These military weaknesses were only part of a broader problem. The armed forces perpetrated or supported blatant and brutal oppression such as the killing of moderate political opponents and Catholic Church officials, including priests and nuns. The military also was a strong voice against much-needed economic, political, and social reforms that, had they been implemented, would have hindered the insurgents' ability to recruit and operate. Not surprisingly, as the decade ended, U.S. military officials concluded that an outright military victory over the communist insurgents was unlikely and that a political settlement was required.

In his landmark study of El Salvador, Benjamin Schwarz found that the problem was not that the United States was fighting the wrong war or otherwise repeating Vietnam-era mistakes of using conventional military power to fight an unconventional war. Rather, the United States did not understand its own allies. El Salvador's military mirrored the country as a whole, complete with the same fractures, weaknesses, and pathologies. Indeed, U.S. attempts to initiate reform often failed because they relied on the Salvadoran military and government even though they had interests quite distinct from the U.S. agenda.¹ Nor is El Salvador an exception. In his study of various Cold War

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The author would like to thank Sunil Dasgupta, David Edelstein, Alan Kuperman, Kathleen McNamara, Sara Bjerg Moller, Jeremy Shapiro, Benjamin Valentino, and two anonymous reviewers. The piece draws in part on his 2005 monograph *Going to War with the Allies You Have: Allies, Counterinsurgency, and the War on Terror* (Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College).

1. For a superb overview of the U.S. counterinsurgency program and its many problems, see Benjamin C. Schwarz, *American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador: The Frustrations of Re-*

International Security, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Fall 2006), pp. 79–115
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insurgencies, Douglas Blaufarb found that the United States consistently had little leverage with its allies, which frequently pursued policies that both hindered counterinsurgency (COIN) and went contrary to U.S. interests.²

The El Salvador and other Cold War experiences are relevant to policy-makers today as well as to historians, for the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States not only ushered in a new era of counterterrorism, but they also forced the return of the counterinsurgency era. The global effort against al-Qaida has meant closer ties with a number of governments involved in fighting Islamist insurgents that, to different degrees, have ties to al-Qaida. Since the attacks, the United States has forged closer relations with Algeria, Pakistan, and other countries fighting insurgent groups that have relations with the global Sunni jihadist movement that al-Qaida champions, as well as having become embroiled in a costly counterinsurgency campaign in Iraq that has become linked to the global jihad. In most of these struggles, local security forces are the tip of the spear. And in Iraq, one of the most important U.S. problems is that Iraqi security forces are too inept to take over from the United States.

Despite this central importance, thinking and scholarship on counterinsurgency tends to ignore the role of allies. Analyses are typically divided into two kinds: those that focus on the insurgents, and those that examine COIN forces, with the latter including both the United States and the host government and thus wrongly assuming they both share the same interests. Even the U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine issued in 2004 mentions the role of the host nation only in passing, without any serious discussion given to problems that may be encountered.³

What obstacles do potential U.S. allies face when fighting insurgents? What are the sources of these challenges? What influence can the United States exert to compensate for its allies' weaknesses? These are the questions this article seeks to answer.

form and the Illusions of Nation Building (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1991). Another valuable study of the U.S. problems in El Salvador with regard to reform is Andrew J. Bacevich, James D. Hallums, Richard H. White, and Thomas F. Young, *American Military Policy in Small Wars: The Case of El Salvador* (Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1988).

2. Douglas Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance* (New York: Free Press, 1977). This proved a particular problem for the United States in Vietnam where, as in Iraq today, the goal was to stand the Vietnamese up while U.S. forces stood down. For a review, see Scott Sigmund Gartner, "Differing Evaluations of Vietnamization," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Autumn 1998), pp. 243–262.

3. U.S. Army, "Counterinsurgency Operations," FMI3-07.22 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Headquarters, 2004), section 2-16, notes that the United States seeks to improve host-nation security forces, but it does not discuss their common problems and weaknesses.

This article draws on several bodies of research to better understand why allies often perform poorly, including principal-agent theory, work on moral hazards, and the vast body of research on the general problems facing alliances.⁴ The principal-agent approach and work on alliances suggest that allies often have highly divergent objectives and that they can effectively manipulate information to exploit the United States. When trying to exert control over its allies, the United States frequently faces problems identified by scholars working on moral hazards: the very words Washington uses to demonstrate its commitment to an ally have the unintended effect of making the ally more reckless and less likely to heed the wishes of the United States.

U.S. allies that are fighting al-Qaida-linked insurgencies often have four categories of structural problems that explain some of their distinct interests and lead to particular challenges against insurgents: illegitimate (and often repressive) regimes; civil-military tension manifested by fears of a coup; economic backwardness; and discriminatory societies.⁵ Because of these problems, allies frequently stray far from the counterinsurgency ideal, both militarily and politically. Their military culture often is characterized by poor intelligence; a lack of initiative; little integration of forces across units; soldiers who do not want to fight; bad officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs); and difficulties with training, learning, and creativity. In addition, the structural weaknesses have a direct political effect that can aid an insurgency by hindering the development and implementation of a national strategy, encouraging widespread corruption, alienating the military from the overall population,

4. This article does not claim to systematically test these literatures. Rather, it selectively draws on their insights to shed light on the problems the United States faces when confronting insurgencies.

5. The forces examined include not only regular military forces but also those involved in fighting the insurgency, such as special police and intelligence units. In Saudi Arabia, for example, the regular army is excluded from many sensitive duties linked to counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, with the Saudi Arabian National Guard playing the key role. The special security forces and the special emergency forces play particularly important roles in the effort against al-Qaida. See Anthony H. Cordesman and Nawaf Obaid, "Saudi Internal Security: A Risk Assessment," Working Draft (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 2004), p. 18. In Algeria, initial failures led to the formation of elite COIN units that over time became quite large. Luis Martinez, *The Algerian Civil War, 1990–1998*, trans. Jonathan Derrick (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 149. India has numerous forces involved in fighting insurgents in Kashmir, including the regular and special police, village defense committees, the central reserve police force, the Indian reserve police force, the central industrial security force, and the border security force. For a review, see Thomas A. Marks, "At the Frontlines of the GWOT: State Response to Insurgency in Jammu," *Journal of Counterterrorism & Homeland Security International*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Fall 2003), pp. 38–46. In many countries, the paramilitary forces are as large or larger than the regular army forces. In Uzbekistan, the paramilitary forces number approximately 20,000, and those in the regular army and air force account for another 55,000. Roger N. McDermott, "The Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1992–2002: Threats, Influence, and Reform," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (June 2003), p. 29.

and offering the insurgents opportunities to penetrate the military. Taken together, these problems and divergent interests explain in part why allies often have security services that are poorly postured to fight insurgencies and why allies do not make the necessary reforms to improve their performance.

The United States is on the horns of a dilemma when working with allies to fight insurgents. Allies experience insurgencies because of the weakness of the state, as well as other factors such as discrimination and corruption.⁶ These problems create tremendous difficulties when the United States expects allied militaries to fight on its behalf—the structural problems that cause the insurgencies also shape how well allies fight them.

The implications of these weaknesses go beyond the ability (or lack thereof) of local forces to fight the insurgents and shape the relationship between the regime and the United States. Washington must recognize that its allies, including those in allied militaries, are often ineffective at fighting insurgents and at times can make the problem worse. U.S. COIN doctrine, no matter how well thought out, cannot succeed without the appropriate political and other reforms from the host nation, but these regimes are likely to subvert the reforms that threaten the existing power structure. The influence of the United States is often limited, as the allies recognize that its vital interests with regard to fighting al-Qaida-linked groups are likely to outweigh any temporary disgust or anger of an ally's brutality or failure to institute reforms.

These conflicting interests are painfully relevant to Iraq today. The United States seeks to shift the primary burden for fighting the Iraqi insurgency to Iraqi forces. Should this happen, the broader problems in Iraqi society and the distinct interests of those who make up the regime are likely to cause severe problems for the Iraqi forces fighting the insurgency, suggesting that the U.S. strategy to "hand off" the fight to local allies may fail.

To help overcome these problems, the United States should try to increase its intelligence on allied security forces so that it can better understand the true nature of their activities. To reduce its vulnerability to manipulation, the United States should also try to diversify its intelligence sources to ensure that it does not rely exclusively on the local ally for information. At times, Washington should try to act more like a third party to a conflict rather than an open and strong ally of government forces. In doing so, it can better exert lev-

6. James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin believe that factors that indicate a country is vulnerable to insurgency include poverty (which suggests states that are poor and bureaucratically weak), instability, inaccessible terrain, and a large population. See Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1 (February 2003), pp. 75–90.

erage over the government to make useful reforms and other concessions that might help solve fundamental problems.

In all of its COIN programs, the United States must have realistic expectations. Training, military-to-military contacts, education programs, and other efforts to bolster its COIN capabilities all can be beneficial. Indeed, these capabilities are often the best available options for the United States to shape and help allied efforts. Washington must recognize, however, that the effects of various COIN programs are likely to be limited at best because of the structural problems and divergent interests noted above: even massive amounts of aid cannot create a healthy economy where the preconditions of the rule of law and social stability do not exist, and U.S. programs for developing honest government can at best help around the margins. At times, the brutality and incompetence of the local regime may simply be too much to overcome. In these cases, the United States may damage its image profoundly yet achieve little on the ground, which suggests that the United States should carefully pick its battles and not embrace every counterinsurgency effort uncritically.

The article has seven main sections. The first section discusses the overlap between counterinsurgency and counterterrorism. The second section describes the role of allies in counterinsurgency, with a particular focus on countries fighting al-Qaida-linked insurgencies. To identify likely problems, this section draws upon research on alliances made during conventional wars and by looking at work on principal-agent problems that have plagued many businesses and international organizations. The third section offers an “ideal type” COIN force and then assesses how allied militaries involved in the struggle against al-Qaida fare against this hypothetical force. The fourth section discusses the structural factors that shape allies’ military cultures and their political profiles and explains how these general factors in turn affect the politics of counterinsurgency and the military cultures of the countries in question as they are relevant to COIN. The fifth examines the implications for the United States and discusses the limits of U.S. influence over its allies. The sixth section discusses the implications of many of these problems for Iraq, should the United States transfer more of the burden of fighting the insurgency to the Iraqi forces. The article concludes with recommendations for how to mitigate some of the problems.

Counterterrorism, Counterinsurgency, and al-Qaida

Counterinsurgency and counterterrorism overlap considerably both in theory and in practice. This article uses the definition of “insurgency” provided in the

Central Intelligence Agency pamphlet “Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency,” which reads as follows:

Insurgency is a protracted political-military activity directed toward completely or partially controlling the resources of a country through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations. Insurgent activity—including guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and political mobilization, for example, propaganda, recruitment, front and covert party organization, and international activity—is designed to weaken government control and legitimacy while increasing insurgent control and legitimacy. The common denominator of most insurgent groups is their desire to control a particular area. This objective differentiates insurgent groups from purely terrorist organizations, whose objectives do not include the creation of an alternative government capable of controlling a given area or country.⁷

Insurgents’ primary method is usually guerrilla war, which is often supplemented by terrorism—defined as the use of violence or the threat of violence against civilians to achieve a political purpose and have a psychological effect. Terrorism offers insurgents another method of weakening a state and can give more narrow advantages in the broader struggle. For example, killing civilians may lead a rival ethnic group to flee a contested area, demonstrate that the government cannot impose order and protect its people, and convince officials and the populace as a whole to collaborate out of fear.⁸

The relationship between counterterrorism and counterinsurgency is not new. Many of the state-supported terrorist groups are also insurgencies—there is no clear dividing line, and in fact tremendous overlap exists. Although the exact percentage depends heavily on coding decisions, in my judgment approximately half of the groups listed by the U.S. Department of State as foreign terrorist organizations in 2005 were insurgencies as well as terrorist groups.⁹ Even more important, the majority of the most worrisome terrorist groups in the world today are also insurgencies. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Kurdish Workers’ Party, the Lebanese Hezbollah, and the Revolu-

7. Central Intelligence Agency, “Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency” (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency), p. 2. The pamphlet was published in the 1980s. For an alternative definition that emphasizes the importance of guerrilla war and the spirit of peasant rebellion, see Raj M. Desai and Harry Eckstein, “Insurgency: The Transformation of Peasant Rebellion,” *World Politics*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (July 1990), p. 442. Fearon and Laitin define “insurgency” as involving guerrilla warfare from rural base areas, whereas the U.S. Army definition emphasizes that “political power is the central issue in an insurgency.” Fearon and Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War”; and U.S. Army, “Counterinsurgency Operations,” sec. 1-1.

8. See Daniel L. Byman, “The Logic of Ethnic Terrorism,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (April/June 1998), pp. 149–169.

9. U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism, 2005* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, April 2006), pp. 183–228.

tionary Armed Forces of Colombia all use guerrilla war as a major component in their struggles, just as the Palestine Liberation Organization attempted to do in the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, many terrorist groups that did not use guerrilla warfare, such as the Provisional Irish Republican Army and Hamas, had attempted to do so but found they were not strong enough. Other insurgent groups often expand their activities to include terrorism. Lashkar-e-Taiba, an insurgent group fighting in Kashmir, also began to conduct terrorist attacks in the rest of India as its campaign wore on.¹⁰

Al-Qaida recognizes the importance of insurgencies. Michael Scheuer, a prominent counterterrorism expert, argues that its leader, Osama bin Laden, has promoted (and at times directed) a “worldwide, religiously inspired, and professionally guided Islamist insurgency.”¹¹ Support for insurgencies in Chechnya, Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere has long been an al-Qaida priority as is shown in its rhetoric, recruitment, and spending.¹² Understandably, the United States focuses on terrorist attacks, but with regard to both body counts and destabilization, these lower-profile insurgencies are causing much greater suffering.

Insurgencies serve several vital organizational functions for al-Qaida beyond its broader ambition of wanting them to triumph and replace local governments. Insurgent veterans are often at the core of the terrorist organization. The long struggle against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, of course, was a uniting experience for much of the al-Qaida leadership. Many members also came together and were vetted in struggles in the Balkans, Chechnya, Kashmir, and now Iraq.¹³ Because al-Qaida can tap into these insurgencies for recruits and its logistics network, it is able to conduct operations far beyond where its narrow core is located and can replenish cadre as they are lost.¹⁴ Insurgencies also add legitimacy to al-Qaida as Muslims around the world support many of these struggles, even though they might otherwise oppose al-Qaida’s ideological agenda and use of terrorism. Thus, defeating al-Qaida

10. Thomas A. Marks, “India: State Response to Insurgency in Jammu & Kashmir—The Jammu Case,” *Low Intensity Conflict & Law Enforcement*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Autumn 2004), p. 137.

11. See Anonymous, *Through Our Enemies’ Eyes: Osama bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s, 2002), p. xviii. “Anonymous” was subsequently revealed as Michael Scheuer.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 207.

13. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), pp. 47–70; and Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

14. The ability to recruit and replace lost cadre is vital for successful terrorist organizations. Kim Cragin and Sara A. Daly, *The Dynamic Terrorist Threat: An Assessment of Group Motivations and Capabilities in a Changing World* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2003), pp. 34–36.

requires defeating, or at least inhibiting, its ability to tap into insurgencies around the world.

Al-Qaida maintains links to several insurgencies and proto-insurgencies around the globe. Insurgent fighters in Algeria (the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat), Iraq (various Sunni groups), Afghanistan (the Taliban), India (groups fighting in Kashmir such as Lashkar-e-Taiba), Chechnya, Pakistan (former Taliban and their sympathizers among Pakistani domestic groups), Somalia (various Islamist fighters), and Uzbekistan (the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan) all have varying degrees of ties to al-Qaida and the movement it supports. Size is a key criteria for an insurgency, and several groups examined in this study are not yet strong enough to be deemed insurgencies, but may move in that direction. They include the anti-Saudi al-Qaida on the Arabian Peninsula, the Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia, the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines, and the Islamic Group and Egyptian Islamic Jihad in Egypt.¹⁵

To be clear, al-Qaida did not “cause” any of these insurgencies, and in almost all the cases the insurgents have agendas that are in many ways distinct from al-Qaida’s. Nevertheless, individuals affiliated with these groups are often members of al-Qaida, and the terrorist organization in turn exploits these groups’ networks and personnel for its own purposes. It is thus plausible that a “war on terrorism” might lead to greater U.S. involvement with these countries, and in most cases it already has.¹⁶ As Steven Metz and Raymond Millen note, “The United States is more likely to assist regimes threatened by insurgents linked to al-Qaeda or its affiliates.”¹⁷

Iraq is excluded from the analysis section of the article because the focus is on allied militaries and their relations to their societies, which in Iraq is complicated by the U.S. occupation and heavy role in the post-occupation. Since the insurgency began in 2003, U.S. forces have done the bulk of the fighting, not local Iraqis.¹⁸

The arguments in this article, however, have tremendous implications for

15. Somalia is excluded from this study because it lacks a true government. The United States, however, appears to have allied with local militias fighting those tied to jihadists. See Emily Wax and Karen DeYoung, “United States Secretly Backing Warlords in Somalia,” *Washington Post*, May 17, 2006.

16. Bruce Hoffman notes that the United States repeatedly fails to detect the development of insurgencies until it is too late. Hoffman, “Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq,” Occasional Paper OP-127-IPC/CMEPP (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, June 2004), pp. 1–4.

17. Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, November 2004), p. 18.

18. Using preliberation forces, however, would skew the data as well. For a superb review of the

the future of Iraq once U.S. forces depart or draw down: objectives that both the George W. Bush administration and its critics seek. As the Bush administration's National Strategy for Victory in Iraq makes clear, the United States aims to build up the capabilities of the Iraqi security forces and steadily shift responsibility for the fight to them.¹⁹ Thus, the findings from other struggles are applied to Iraq briefly in the article's conclusion.

Although counterterrorism and counterinsurgency overlap, they are far from identical. Some components of the U.S. global counterterrorism campaign have little value for counterinsurgency. The United States tries to inhibit the international travel of terrorists, track cells operating in otherwise peaceful countries, render suspects from one country to another, and construct barriers around national icons in the United States. All of these are done primarily against the relatively small number of international terrorists (or those they inspire) and have little to do with guerrilla war or the broader popular struggles noted above. They require the United States to develop ties to many countries in Europe and Asia, use its intelligence services to monitor radicals around the world, and construct effective defenses. All of these steps require capabilities different from those needed for counterterrorism.

Similarly, many insurgents, including some Islamist ones, have a local focus and do not see their insurgency as inherently involving the United States. The LTTE, for example, is a vicious terrorist group and a highly capable insurgency. Its actions, though violent, are primarily directed against the government of Sri Lanka and do not involve U.S. interests. Similarly, the United States can participate in or avoid struggles against Maoist rebels in Nepal or even Islamist rebels such as those found in Hamas, who have shunned al-Qaida, but these are not part of the struggle against bin Laden and his allies.

Allies' Centrality in Counterinsurgency

Successful counterinsurgency against anti-U.S. groups linked to al-Qaida depends heavily on allies' military forces. In addition to establishing government control and eliminating insurgent combatants, military forces act to secure an area so that political and other reforms can be carried out.²⁰ Allies are also vital

Iraqi military performance through the 1991 Gulf War, see Kenneth M. Pollack, *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948–1991* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), pp. 155–266.

19. National Security Council, "National Strategy for Victory in Iraq" (Washington, D.C.: National Security Council, November 2005), pp. 18–21, http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/iraq/iraq_national_strategy_20051130.pdf.

20. Thomas A. Marks, "Insurgency in a Time of Terrorism," *Journal of Counterterrorism & Homeland Security*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Spring 2005), pp. 46–53.

in part for political reasons at home. The American people naturally prefer that others fight and die in their stead, particularly when the conflict so obviously involves a third country's vital interests.²¹ Equally important, allies should be better able to carry out most aspects of counterinsurgency. Their forces speak the language and know the culture, so they are better able to gather intelligence and avoid actions that gratuitously offend the population.²² Even the best-behaved foreigners may generate a nationalistic backlash among local citizens who feel little sympathy for the insurgents. By most accounts, the U.S. military has tried to respect Afghanistan's culture and empower local officials there. But resistance has grown since the 2001 invasion, and the United States' welcome has worn thin in parts of the country.²³ Finally, perhaps the greatest factor affecting the insurgents' success or failure is the response of the regime: a clumsy or foolish response can be the insurgents' greatest source of recruits.²⁴

Allies, however, have their own distinct interests and approaches to counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, as they do with all serious security issues: a point well developed in the scholarship on international relations. Historically, major powers have differed from their allies in such basic questions as, What is the overall level of risk? Who is the primary enemy? How much should different allies contribute? And what is the best means to fight the insurgents?²⁵ Many of these differences hold true for counterinsurgency as well. Like those of the United States, the ally's interests also include defeating the insurgents: but here the commonality often ends. As discussed below, allied security ser-

21. Stephen T. Hosmer, *Constraints on U.S. Strategy in Third World Conflicts* (New York: Crane Russak and Company, 1987), p. 128.

22. U.S. Army, "Counterinsurgency Operations," sec. 1-10.

23. Ahmed Rashid, "Afghanistan: On the Brink," *New York Review of Books*, June 22, 2006, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/19098>. For a discussion on the nationalistic backlash that outside occupiers face, see David Edelstein, "Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail," *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Summer 2004), pp. 49-91; and Bard E. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare* (Dulles, Va.: Brassey's, 1990), p. 137.

24. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism*, p. 125. Some experts argue that this has happened already in Uzbekistan. See "Prepared Statement of Martha Brill Olcott," reprinted in "Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Instability," Hearing before the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia of the House Committee on International Relations, 108th Cong., 1st sess., October 29, 2003, p. 57.

25. The literature on alliances among states is vast. Leading works include Mancur Olson and Richard Zeckhauser, "An Economic Theory of Alliances," *Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (August 1966), pp. 266-279; Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity," *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 137-168; Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997); and Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987).

vices also seek other goals—for example, propping up an authoritarian regime or maintaining a favored ethnic group in power—or otherwise have ambitions and problems that undermine the effectiveness of counterinsurgency campaigns. In such circumstances, the ally may not act as the United States wants (e.g., refusing democratic reforms) or may act in a counterproductive way (e.g., engaging in atrocities against rival ethnic groups) because it perceives such measures to service its other interests, even at the cost of counterinsurgency. Thus, while many of the allies' problems involve incompetence and ineffectiveness, these are not a product of ignorance or chance. Rather, they stem from the very nature of allied regimes and societies. Indeed, allies that suffer from these structural problems and have ineffective militaries are more likely to experience insurgencies.

The basic problem of divergent interests inherent in most alliances is compounded by dilemmas similar to a principal-agent problem in which the United States cannot rely on its allies to serve its interests faithfully.²⁶ For counterinsurgency more than other forms of warfare, the United States relies heavily on others to act on its behalf. A classic principal-agent problem occurs when information asymmetries make it hard for an employer to monitor the action of an employee, allowing the employee to act in a way that meets his or her needs, not those of the employer. The United States, like other principals, cannot control its agents completely. Allies are sovereign states, and as such enjoy at least *de jure* independence. As a superpower, the United States has considerable influence. But as noted below, many of the issues linked to coun-

26. The similarity is far from exact: foreign governments are not "employees" of the United States, no matter how dependent they are on U.S. aid or financial support. Nor are the governments created bodies such as the European Commission, which other scholars have pointed to as an example of an agent that at times acts contrary to the interests of its principals. Mark Pollack, "Delegation, Agency, and Agenda Setting in the European Community," *International Organization*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Winter 1997), p. 108. Nevertheless, the problems are similar, making the comparison worthwhile. As Joseph Stiglitz contends, "The employer cannot travel on the road with his salesman to monitor precisely the effort he puts into his salesmanship. In each of these situations, the agent's . . . action affects the principal." Stiglitz, "Principal and Agent" (ii), in Josh Eatwell, Murray Milgate, and Peter Newman, eds., *New York Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, Vol. 3 (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 967. For other important works on the principal-agent problem, see David E.M. Sappington, "Incentives in Principal-Agent Relationships," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Spring 1991), pp. 45–66. See also Kenneth Arrow, "The Economics of Agency," in John W. Pratt and Richard J. Zeckhauser, eds., *Principals and Agents: The Structure of Business* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1985), pp. 37–51. Principals can try to monitor their agents through a variety of measures, such as threatening to cut budgets or impose other sanctions and providing incentives to follow the principals' desires, but these in turn are costly and often imperfect. Pollack, "Delegation, Agency, and Agenda Setting in the European Community," pp. 116–129. See also Roderick Kiewiet and Matthew D. McCubbins, *The Logic of Delegation: Congressional Parties and the Appropriation Process* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 27.

terinsurgency involve a regime's very hold on power, a concern that at best limits outside leverage that is exercised in the form of aid or threats of sanctions.²⁷

Information disparities compound this problem further. U.S. forces are not present in every village or neighborhood where insurgents are fought, and indeed the United States often does not have a robust official presence in most of an ally's major cities. Moreover, the security services that fight the insurgency are also the ones that gather much of the relevant information. They may inadvertently filter the information according to their own biases and deliberately distort the information to reinforce their views (e.g., that the rival ethnic group's village was a hotbed of al-Qaida-linked unrest). Evaluating the ally's true efforts is difficult for reasons that go beyond the information disparity and involve the inherent complexity of the problem. Many of the key issues involved—for example, the pace of democratic reform, the level of professionalism in a military, and the level of success in wooing local support—are exceptionally difficult to measure.

Counterinsurgency Ideals and Realities

Counterinsurgency is difficult for even the best militaries. It requires not only remarkable military skill but also a deft political touch. The soldier on patrol must be a fighter, a policeman, an intelligence officer, a diplomat, and an aid worker. Not surprisingly, even well-trained, well-led, and well-funded militaries such as those of the United States, Britain, and Israel have foundered when facing insurgent movements.

COIN problems only multiply if the government in question seeks to avoid extreme brutality, which is typically a U.S. goal. Iraq under Saddam Hussein, and the Algerian government in the 1990s, both defeated insurgencies, but they did so in part by widespread slaughter. Embracing such a brutal regime has tremendous normative problems for the United States. Even if these are put aside, the problem of being tarred with an ally's brush grows tremendously as a result.

The problems for many militaries confronting insurgents linked to al-Qaida fall into two categories. First, at the tactical and organizational levels, they are often not prepared for counterinsurgency operations. Second, as a political en-

27. Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman, *The Dynamics of Coercion: American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 37–45.

tity the military frequently contributes to popular anger or other problems that aid the insurgents' cause.²⁸

TACTICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONCERNS

The characteristics of an ideal COIN military at the tactical and organizational levels are vast,²⁹ but several of the most important include a high level of initiative, excellent intelligence, integration across units and services, leadership, motivated soldiers, and learning and creativity. The reality for many militaries involved in fighting al-Qaida-linked insurgencies, however, is often far from the ideal.³⁰

INITIATIVE. Counterinsurgency fighting rarely involves a set-piece battle, which outgunned and outmanned insurgents typically shun. Soldiers try to flush out hidden insurgents and defeat them through aggressive patrolling and ambushes. To do this successfully, COIN forces must also operate out of garrison and at nighttime. Part of their job is to convince the population that they will be protected; insurgents will exploit the absence of COIN forces to intimidate locals and sow fear.³¹ Fighting occurs either because the insurgents choose to engage or ideally when government forces leave them no choice. In both cases, planning is difficult: the terrain can vary, the number of forces involved is hard to predict, and so on. Much of the effort is done at the small-unit level, as larger units are far easier for insurgents to avoid.

Many developing world militaries, however, are garrison militaries that

28. For a general overview of insurgency and counterinsurgency issues that pays particular attention to the problem of allies, see D. Michael Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988). Other excellent works are Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era*; George K. Tanham and Dennis J. Duncanson, "Some Dilemmas of Counterinsurgency," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (January 1970), pp. 113–122; William E. Odom, *On Internal War: American and Soviet Approaches to Third World Clients and Insurgents* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1992); Harry Eckstein, ed., *Internal War: Problems and Approaches* (New York: Free Press, 1964); Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts* (Chicago: Markham, 1970); Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies: Guerrillas and Their Opponents since 1750* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Bruce Hoffman, Jennifer M. Taw, and David W. Arnold, *Lessons for Contemporary Counterinsurgencies: The Rhodesian Experience* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1991); and Marks, "Insurgency in a Time of Terrorism."

29. For one useful list, see Central Intelligence Agency, "Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency," p. 13.

30. Most of these militaries also suffer similar problems in conventional military operations. The Saudis' lack of initiative in counterinsurgency, for example, is mirrored in their problems in conventional warfare. This article focuses on the characteristics useful for effective counterinsurgency, but many of these problems apply to overall military operations.

31. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism*, p. 130; and Central Intelligence Agency, "Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency," p. 10.

fight, when they do, from 9:00 to 5:00. They often operate poorly as small units, with junior officers and NCOs reluctant to exercise initiative. In Uzbekistan, insurgents “own the night.”³² In Algeria, units often feared to leave their garrison and patrol in dangerous parts of cities where insurgents enjoyed sympathy. The Egyptian and Saudi armed forces historically exercised little initiative, a problem that is more profound farther down the command chain. Even the smallest details had to be spelled out in advance.³³ COIN suffered as a result in all these cases.

INTELLIGENCE. Intelligence is the *sine qua non* of counterinsurgency. The insurgents’ primary advantage is their stealth: if they can be found, they can usually be killed or captured. A corollary is that insurgents’ advantage is their superior knowledge of the local population and conditions: denying or minimizing this advantage is therefore vital.³⁴ To be useful, intelligence must not only be collected but also be analyzed, disseminated, and integrated into the overall strategy.³⁵

Many U.S. allies, however, collect, analyze, and disseminate information poorly. Intelligence analysis benefits from superb information sharing and from the proper storage and dissemination of data—general weaknesses in developing societies. Although many allies do a fine job collecting information, they often do not integrate it well and have at best a limited picture of their adversary.³⁶ The major intelligence agencies in the Philippines frequently do not share information and do not coordinate their activities. Indeed, intelligence money is often paid directly to officials as a form of graft.³⁷ In Egypt, key information is compartmentalized, and failures are not brought to the attention of senior officers.³⁸ Often, information is not shared because commanders and units do not trust each other. In the Sikh insurgency, Indian units rarely shared information with local forces because they were perceived as sympathetic to

32. McDermott, “The Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1990–2002,” p. 32.

33. Kenneth M. Pollack, “The Sphinx and the Eagle,” 1998, chap. 4.

34. See Fearon and Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War.”

35. O’Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism*, p. 144; and Bruce Hoffman and Jennifer Morrison Taw, *A Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Insurgency* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1992), p. 9.

36. For a more complete overview of this problem, see Kenneth M. Pollack, “The Influence of Arab Culture on Arab Military Effectiveness,” Ph.D. dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1996, pp. 564–566.

37. Emil P. Jurado, “Need for Coordinated Intelligence Network,” *Manila Standard*, February 23, 2005; and Fe.V. Maragay, “Safeguarding the Spy Fund,” *Manila Standard*, January 31, 2005.

38. Pollack, “The Sphinx and the Eagle.”

(and penetrated by) Sikh insurgents.³⁹ The International Crisis Group reports that Indonesian intelligence is “marked by blurred lines of authority, inter-agency rivalry, lack of coordination, unnecessary duplication, lack of adequate oversight, and the legacy of an authoritarian past.”⁴⁰

INTEGRATION ACROSS UNITS AND SERVICES. All military operations benefit from synergies, and this holds true for counterinsurgency as well. At a most basic level, units must work together to ensure proper coverage of a territory and to prevent insurgents from slipping between the seams of different units. Also, if unexpectedly heavy resistance is found, units must reinforce their beleaguered comrades, particularly when forces operate as small units.

Information sharing and coordination across services are often exceptionally poor for allies fighting insurgencies linked to al-Qaida. In Egypt and Saudi Arabia, commanders of different services and units frequently do not communicate with each other. In Afghanistan, the United States has worked not only with the Afghan National Army but also with numerous regional warlords, several of whom owe little loyalty to the central government.⁴¹ At times a military may have multiple groups within it vying for power. In Algeria, the army has numerous divisions based on region and tribe.⁴² The division of labor between the police and the military is not clear in Indonesia, and the military’s own coordination with regard to counterterrorism and counterinsurgency is poor.⁴³

LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS. Officers must be creative, take the initiative, inspire the soldiers who follow them, and perform other essential military functions. In addition, officers doing COIN must play a major role in ensuring the gathering of intelligence and reassuring the population—both difficult tasks that go beyond traditional training for conventional military operations. Because much of counterinsurgency is done by small units, having strong NCOs is also vital.

Military leadership in many of the countries fighting al-Qaida, however,

39. C. Christine Fair, *Urban Battle Fields of South Asia: Lessons Learned from Sri Lanka, India, and Pakistan* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2004), p. 94.

40. International Crisis Group, “Indonesia: Rethinking Internal Security Strategy,” *Asia Report*, No. 90 (December 2004), p. 13.

41. Raymond A. Millen, *Afghanistan: Reconstituting a Collapsed State* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 2005), p. 3.

42. International Crisis Group, “The Algerian Crisis: Not Over Yet,” *Africa Report*, No. 24 (October 2000), p. 12.

43. International Crisis Group, “Indonesia: Rethinking Internal Security Strategy,” p. 5.

is quite poor. In most Arab militaries, junior officers and NCOs are given little responsibility. In Egypt, for example, colonels have responsibilities similar to those of U.S. captains.⁴⁴ In Uzbekistan, officers have often performed poorly when facing insurgents.⁴⁵ Afghan army leaders appear better than most of those in this study, but even here the NCOs are not given appropriate responsibility.⁴⁶

MOTIVATED SOLDIERS. Soldiers who believe in their government and their officers are more likely to brave the hazards of COIN warfare. They will confront rather than flee from the enemy and take the necessary initiative to ensure victory.

Many developing world countries facing al-Qaida, however, have poorly motivated soldiers. Afghan recruits often prefer to work for local warlords than for the national government, and many trainees and recent recruits desert their posts. As one Afghan sergeant commented, "Everyone wants to run away."⁴⁷ Uzbek soldiers suffer from low morale, and mass desertions are common.⁴⁸ In Egypt, many soldiers do not embrace their profession.⁴⁹ In India, the emphasis on caste creates problems for cohesion, as soldiers often speak different languages and the caste system creates a hierarchy among them.⁵⁰

TRAINING, LEARNING, AND CREATIVITY. Counterinsurgency requires a high degree of skill and constant refinement. In addition, a successful military must learn from its mistakes and be able to go beyond its standard procedures when confronted with a new situation. Moreover, both successful and unsuccessful insurgencies go through stages, and the mix of conventional and unconventional operations needed to defeat them will vary as a result.⁵¹ COIN is also

44. Pollack, "The Sphinx and the Eagle."

45. Farkhad Tolipov and Roger N. McDermott, "Uzbekistan and the U.S.: Partners against Terrorism," *Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (Summer 2003), p. 2.

46. Charles DiLeonardo, "Training the Afghan National Army," *Infantry*, Vol. 94, No. 2 (March/April 2005), p. 32.

47. Quoted in Tom Coghlan, "Toughing It Out in the Afghan Army," *BBC News*, June 15, 2005, <http://www.news.bbc.co.uk>.

48. Ahmed Rashid, "A Long, Hot Summer Ahead," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 19, 2001, p. 29.

49. Many Egyptian air force officers, for example, do not enjoy flying. Pollack, "The Sphinx and the Eagle."

50. Stephen Peter Rosen, *Societies and Military Power: India and Its Armies* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 243.

51. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism*, p. 131; and Metz and Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century*, p. 25.

more art than science: creativity is vital. Helping this process is the free flow of information and an institutional culture of honest criticism.⁵²

Many countries do not emphasize training for a variety of reasons. Most important, training still focuses on conventional military operations: the traditional emphasis of most militaries. In Uzbekistan, the military was structured from Soviet-era forces intended to fight conventional wars. Although Uzbek leaders have initiated some reforms, Roger McDermott notes that these are only a “modest beginning” and are focused on a few elite forces.⁵³ (Indeed, as a sign of how bad training is, an individual who was picked to lead special forces teams had not had basic infantry training.)⁵⁴ Some of the paramilitary forces involved in COIN are expected to be around only temporarily, leaving officials reluctant to invest in long-term training.⁵⁵ Egypt’s military is huge, making it hard to do more than rudimentary training for many of the forces. Live-fire exercises or other forms of realistic training are rare.⁵⁶

Many of these militaries do not learn from their mistakes. The Egyptian military has institutionalized some practices that U.S. trainers see as disastrous, in part because changing them would require an embarrassing admission of failure.⁵⁷ U.S. trainers spent years working with the Saudi air force, only to watch it steadily decline. In part, this problem occurs because professional military education is weak, and the institutions that do exist focus on perpetuating existing doctrine rather than on seeking to correct mistakes in current operations.

POLITICAL CONCERNS

In counterinsurgency, the military is a political actor as well as a fighting unit. Several other, more political criteria include proper civil-military integration, a lack of corruption, a lack of insurgent penetration, and a sense that the army can win over the population.

CIVIL-MILITARY INTEGRATION. Defeating an insurgent movement is as much (if not more) a political effort as a military one. A national approach that incorporates all dimensions of power is essential. If political and military leaders

52. John A. Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam: Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002), pp. 191–226.

53. McDermott, “The Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1992–2002,” p. 30.

54. Tolipov and McDermott, “Uzbekistan and the U.S.,” p. 14.

55. Sunil Dasgupta, “Rise of Paramilitary Forces: Military Reorganization in Developing Societies,” Working Draft (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2005), p. 23.

56. See Pollack, “The Sphinx and the Eagle.”

57. *Ibid.*

are in harmony, military and political measures to defeat the insurgents are more likely to be as well.⁵⁸ The two cannot be done in isolation: the military methods used affect the overall perception of the government, and the perception of the regime influences the ability of the military to operate.

In many of the countries in question, however, civil-military relations are poor. In India, civilian leaders historically saw the military as a vestige of the British imperial mentality and at odds with their nationalistic (and more socialist) vision of the country. In Algeria and Pakistan, military leaders have seized power from civilian officials, while in the Philippines and Indonesia civilian leaders have feared military interference in their control of the country. In Egypt, the government has long been unsure of the reliability of the military to protect the regime: a well-founded perception given that Islamist militants penetrated the military to kill Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981 and that mass riots involving 17,000 conscripts broke out in 1986.⁵⁹

In some countries, the government is divided on issues related to counter-insurgency, making it exceptionally difficult to produce a coherent strategy. The Algerian regime was long split between the “conciliators” and the “eradicators,” leading to a policy that was at times incoherent, with olive branches suddenly withdrawn and attempts to intimidate offset by surprising concessions.⁶⁰

HONESTY AND CORRUPTION. The military is more likely to gain the respect of the population if it is not corrupt or otherwise engaged in illicit activities. A lack of corruption sends the message that the military is indeed fighting for the country, not just for the personal interests of a few individuals. This in turn inspires soldiers to fight harder and makes it more difficult for the insurgents to penetrate the armed forces.

Corruption is rampant in many of the countries in question, and the military is no exception. Of the countries surveyed in this article, all were in the lower half of Transparency International’s 2005 Corruption Perception Index, with the exceptions of Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which scored in the middle. Indonesia, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan were among the most corrupt countries in the world.⁶¹ Uzbekistan’s military leaders often will exempt an individual

58. O’Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism*, p. 146; and Hoffman and Taw, *A Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Insurgency*, p. v.

59. Lawrence E. Kline, “Egyptian and Algerian Insurgencies: A Comparison,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Autumn 1998), p. 127.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

61. See Transparency International, “The 2005 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index,” <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0781359.html>.

from military service for the right price.⁶² The Abu Sayyaf Group buys weapons and immunity freely from government and military officials—several leading terrorists simply walked out of the heavily “secured” national police headquarters in Manila with the aid of local officers.⁶³ In Egypt and Saudi Arabia, it is assumed that senior military leaders will skim off the top of military contracts: an assumption that is duplicated in lesser ways down the chain of command. In Algeria, business rivalries prevent the different military leaders from cooperating.⁶⁴ In Indonesia, corruption is rampant in the buying of equipment and other supplies.⁶⁵ All of these examples only scratch the surface of the myriad ways corruption undermines military effectiveness.

INSURGENT PENETRATION. Ensuring that the military remains free from insurgent penetration is vital. Successful penetration allows the insurgents to avoid regime attempts to arrest or kill insurgent cadre. In addition, it gives the insurgents inside information that greatly increases their effectiveness in planning attacks.

Many of the regimes fighting al-Qaida have been penetrated by insurgents. In Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, al-Qaida has made a conscious effort to cultivate military and government officials.⁶⁶ U.S. officials working with the Afghan National Army are prohibited from sharing intelligence, as they fear it will fall into the hands of ex-Taliban.⁶⁷ In Algeria, many of the early insurgent successes involved members of the security forces who collaborated with them, and the regime often hesitated to use the army because it feared that many soldiers would desert.⁶⁸

MILITARY SUPPORT FROM A POPULATION. Famously, counterinsurgency involves winning the “hearts and minds” of the population at large and denying such support to the guerrillas. As the military plans and conducts its operations against insurgents, it must also think about how to win over the general population, as one of its most important roles is to “serve as the shield for carrying out reform.”⁶⁹ The military needs the active support of the population to

62. McDermott, “The Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1992–2002,” p. 36.

63. Steven Rogers, “Beyond the Abu Sayyaf,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 1 (January/February 2004), pp. 15–20.

64. International Crisis Group, “The Algerian Crisis,” p. 12.

65. International Crisis Group, “Indonesia: Next Steps in Military Reform,” *Asia Report*, No. 24 (October 2001), p. 13.

66. Anonymous, *Through Our Enemies’ Eyes*, p. 22.

67. DiLeonardo, “Training the Afghan National Army,” p. 38.

68. Michael Willes, *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria: A Political History* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), p. 295; Martinez, *The Algerian Civil War, 1990–1998*, p. 161; and Kline, “Egyptian and Algerian Insurgencies,” p. 129.

69. Marks, “Insurgency in a Time of Terrorism,” p. 52.

gain information—a disadvantage, as mere passivity often allows insurgents to operate effectively without being vulnerable to government intelligence efforts.⁷⁰ In addition to using the population to collect intelligence, greater popular support gives guerrillas more eager recruits and more money on which to draw. To gain active support, it is helpful if the military is fighting for a system that offers political, economic, and other opportunities to all concerned: something that is often beyond its control. In addition, a military is more likely to win over the population in general if it is seen as fighting for more than just a political or social clique. If the armed forces are viewed as representing all the diverse communities of any state, they are more likely to be seen as trustworthy and not provoke a backlash. Finally, successful COIN is characterized by restraint as well as by violence. Too much destruction can alienate a population rather than reassure it and unwittingly create disincentives to fight for and cooperate with the government.⁷¹

Such benign characteristics are often lacking among militaries fighting al-Qaida-linked groups, making it harder for them to capture popular support. In India, for example, the army's outlook is more akin to the British imperial army. As a result, it sees itself more as occupier than as part of the local population, with the result that relations are often poor.⁷² When suppressing the Punjab insurgency, the Indian forces saw themselves as protecting the local Hindu population from Sikh militants, and as a result it alienated local services that sought to balance Sikh and Hindu concerns.⁷³ Indonesian soldiers often take sides in local disputes according to whether the soldiers are Muslim or Christian.⁷⁴

If the military lacks popular support, basic counterinsurgency functions such as gathering intelligence and denying information to the insurgents are

70. Christopher M. Ford, "Speak No Evil: Targeting a Population's Neutrality to Defeat an Insurgency," *Parameters*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Summer 2005), p. 53. T.E. Lawrence noted that the guerrillas needed only a limited amount of active support, but that much of the population must be passive or inactive backers. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies*, p. 20. See also Central Intelligence Agency, "Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency," p. 8. For an alternative view, see Chalmers Johnson, "Civilian Loyalties and Guerrilla Conflict," *World Politics*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (July 1962), pp. 646–661.

71. For an assessment of how incentives affect the success of rebellions, see Mark I. Lichback, "What Makes Rational Peasants Revolutionary? Dilemma, Paradox, and Irony in Peasant Collective Action," *World Politics*, Vol. 46 No. 3 (April 1994), pp. 383–418; and Jeffrey Berejikian, "Revolutionary Collective Action and the Agent-Structure Problem," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 86, No. 3 (September 1992), pp. 647–657.

72. Rosen, *Societies and Military Power*, p. 241.

73. Fair, *Urban Battle Fields of South Asia*, p. 90.

74. International Crisis Group, "Indonesia: Next Steps in Military Reform," p. 4.

more difficult to fulfill. In addition, the lack of popular support facilitates the ability of insurgents to gain recruits and resources.

Brutality is a particular problem. The Algerian military is notorious for its atrocities against civilians. In Uzbekistan, torture is widespread,⁷⁵ and in June 2005, the military fired on a peaceful political opposition rally. The United States and Uzbekistan have dramatically reduced military cooperation because of these problems. The Indonesian military was linked to numerous human rights abuses in Aceh, Papua, Central Sulawesi, and Maluku.⁷⁶ Such actions create sympathy for the guerrillas, particularly when the government's control is weak and people have an option of siding against it with less risk.⁷⁷

As the above discussion suggests, most potential U.S. allies against al-Qaida-linked insurgencies do not do well according to these criteria. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that several range from poor to abysmal. Tables 1 and 2 provide an overview of militaries fighting al-Qaida-linked insurgencies, using the above criteria to indicate problems they have.

Structural Causes of Tactical, Organizational, and Political Problems

A look at the countries in question indicates that they suffer from several structural weaknesses: illegitimate and repressive regimes, civil-military tensions (particularly with regard to suspicions of a coup), economic backwardness, and social exclusion. Even the democracies among the lot suffer from several of these problems. Table 3 displays the extent of the difficulties. These problems, of course, are not universal and, as discussed further, the military culture and broader political problems of counterinsurgency vary accordingly.⁷⁸

These structural problems should not be surprising. Although the causes of insurgency can be vast, common ones include a lack of popular legitimacy caused by an exclusive government, discrimination, and economic discontent.

75. Jim Nichol, *Uzbekistan: Current Developments and U.S. Interests* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, updated April 21, 2004), p. 6, Order Code RS21238.

76. Aleksius Jemadu, "Intelligence Agencies Must Be Held to Account," *Jakarta Post*, June 20, 2005.

77. See Leites and Wolf, *Rebellion and Authority*.

78. These structural problems raise the interesting question of why the insurgencies have not won outright victories. The regimes' continued survival stems from several sources. First, the insurgents are often poorly led, brutal, and unpopular. Second, they face a much harder collective action problem. Because of the insurgent groups' smaller size, it is difficult to push uncommitted individuals to actively side with them. Third, not all of the regimes suffer from every problem identified here. Fourth, the insurgents' very structure makes eliminating them hard, but at the same time, this makes it difficult for them to mass forces to engage in mid-intensity combat. Thus there is often a stalemate or low-level strife, with neither side able to gain a decisive advantage.

Table 1. Allied Militaries and COIN: Tactical and Organizational Characteristics

	Afghanistan	Algeria	Egypt	India	Indonesia	Pakistan	Philippines	Saudi Arabia	Uzbekistan
Poor intelligence				X			X	X	X
Poor integration across units	X	X	X	X*	X		X	X	X
Garrison mentality/low level of initiative		X	X	X			X	X	X
Soldiers who do not want to fight	X	X	X				X	X	X
Bad officers		X	X	X			X	X	X
Bad noncommissioned officers	X	X	X				X	X	X
Training, learning, and creativity problems		X	X	X		X	X	X	X

*The Indian army historically did not integrate well across services in its counterinsurgency operations. In recent years, however, the police, military, and paramilitary forces have worked better together. See C. Christine Fair, *Urban Battle Fields of South Asia: Lessons Learned from Sri Lanka, India, and Pakistan* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2004), p. 70.

Table 2. Allied Militaries and COIN: Political Characteristics

	Afghanistan	Algeria	Egypt	India	Indonesia	Pakistan	Philippines	Saudi Arabia	Uzbekistan
Poor civil-military integration	X	X		X	X		X	X	
Bad rapport with outside patrons (United States, etc.)		X		X	X	X	X		
Corruption	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Military not fighting for a system that can win over the population	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Vulnerable to insurgent penetration	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X

Table 3. Structural Problems of Counterinsurgency Allies

Structural Problems	Afghanistan	Algeria	Egypt	India	Indonesia	Pakistan	Philippines	Saudi Arabia	Uzbekistan
Illegitimate regimes		X	X			X			X
Coup suspicions			X	X			X	X	
Economic backwardness	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social exclusion				X	X	X	X	X	X

A weak and dysfunctional government is particularly important, because in such cases even small groups can effectively use violence without being shut down by the government.⁷⁹ Indeed, the very shortcomings of the regimes often are major reasons for the existence of an insurgency. Thus, at times the very causes of insurgency also create problems for fighting it.

The structural characteristics produce the distinct interests for the security forces fighting insurgents. Thus, one of the problems common to alliances in general (as well as inherent in a principal-agent relationship)—systematically distinct preferences—is common to U.S. relations with allied security forces. The allies' distinct interests can cause many of the above-listed problems with fighting an insurgency. In addition, the regime often does not make the reforms that would improve its ability to fight the insurgents.

ILLEGITIMATE AND REPRESSIVE REGIMES

Many if not most of the regimes facing al-Qaida-linked insurgencies have a legitimacy problem. Of the countries surveyed, only India, the Philippines, and to a lesser degree Afghanistan and Indonesia qualify as democracies. Freedom House reports that Algeria, Egypt, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Uzbekistan are "not free," and these countries scored sixes and sevens on their scale, with seven being the least free.⁸⁰ Being "not free" does not inherently mean a government is illegitimate, but it is suggestive of a problem. Algeria's military government took power so as to overturn elections that Islamists were poised to win peacefully. President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan also took power in a military coup. The coup had considerable support at the time, but he has subsequently alienated middle-class Pakistanis, while many Islamists view him with suspicion. Uzbekistan is governed by a brutal dictator, and all opposition political activity is banned.⁸¹ Egypt's leader has held power for a quarter century, with only the trapping of democracy. Saudi Arabia is a monarchy that has some legitimacy even though it is "not free," but the regime's corruption and exclusiveness have bred considerable cynicism.⁸²

79. Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." In such circumstances, the military becomes vital. As Morris Janowitz notes, "The absence of or the failure to develop more effective patterns of political and social control leads military regimes or military-based regimes to rely more heavily on internal police control." Janowitz, *Military Institutions and Coercion in the Developing Nations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 7.

80. Freedom House, "Table of Independent Countries' Comparative Measures of Freedom," *Freedom in the World, 2005*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/chart33File36.pdf>.

81. Jim Nichol, *Uzbekistan*, p. 5.

82. A lack of democracy does not inherently make a regime illegitimate in the eyes of its people. The al-Saud royal family, for example, has long enjoyed legitimacy (though some argue this is fac-

An illegitimate and repressive regime has several pernicious effects on tactical and organizational aspects of counterinsurgency. The flow of information in authoritarian states is limited, particularly if the information may be perceived as critical of the regime. In such an environment, information is deliberately compartmentalized. Nor are mistakes critically examined or even identified. As a result, the overall quality of intelligence is poor, either because intelligence officers lack all the necessary information or because many plausible findings (e.g., that people are rebelling because the regime is brutal and illegitimate) are suppressed because they are unwelcome at senior levels. In Uzbekistan, the regime has resisted intelligence reform that would enhance the information gained by the military, as it wants to ensure that intelligence is concentrated in the hands of regime loyalists.⁸³

Military regimes such as those in Algeria and Pakistan face particular problems. In contrast to militaries whose senior officers must ultimately report to civilian officials, military regimes face less pressure to change their procedures and methods in response to problems.⁸⁴

Militaries that are not accountable to elected leaders and the public in general are less likely to correct mistakes or undertake bureaucratically painful changes. Particular problems may include poor integration across units and services and a lack of creativity when standard procedures fail or when new situations arise. Politically, such a military may be more prone to human rights abuses, as it can cover up any problems and not risk broader censure.

Corruption is also a problem, as military figures in power use their positions to enrich themselves at the public's expense, even if it hinders overall military effectiveness. A corrupt military is also a less popular one. Soldiers will not be inspired by their officers, and the people in general will see the military more as a parasite than as a savior. Uzbekistan's soldiers oppose military service, in part because corruption is widespread, which enables many to buy their way out of serving.⁸⁵ Not surprisingly, officers enriching themselves through their military positions are likely to resist any reforms that increase accountability and oversight or otherwise hinder opportunities for graft.

ing) due to its provision of economic goods, conquest of rivals, and efforts to uphold the kingdom's religious credentials. For the purposes of this article, Saudi Arabia is coded as a legitimate regime, though it is a borderline case. See Mamoun Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); and F. Gregory Gause III, "Be Careful What You Wish For: The Future of U.S.-Saudi Relations," *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 37–50.

83. McDermott, "The Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1992–2002," pp. 36–37.

84. Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell, 1984), pp. 53–54, 225–226.

85. McDermott, "The Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1992–2002," p. 36.

The political problems dwarf the tactical and organizational ones. At the most basic level, the lack of regime legitimacy complicates the ability of the military to portray itself as fighting for a system that its citizens should embrace. The population is less likely to provide intelligence, offer willing recruits, or otherwise support the military; and many soldiers may be sympathetic to the rebels. The regime may rely primarily on repression to stay in power, as it does in Uzbekistan, leading the military to become involved in human rights abuses. In Algeria, this process reached its acme in the mid-1990s, as the military regime there regularly used its forces to commit atrocities. Military leaders may also oppose reforms because they are instruments of the regime and thus they stand to lose power, opportunities for graft, or other benefits. In Algeria, the military feared that an Islamist victory at the polls would lead them to lose their power in the country and their financial influence—a fear that led them to disrupt elections through a coup.⁸⁶

Another difficult issue is that the military is often opposed to reforms that would take the wind out of the insurgency's sails, such as land reform, greater democracy and accountability, or the ending of discriminatory policies. The military leadership may see such reforms as a threat to their political and social position and thus not worth the potential benefits against the insurgents.

The lack of legitimacy also poses a difficulty for cooperation with a foreign power. Close cooperation with a foreign government can inflame nationalism and lead to questions about a government's competence: a particular problem if the government lacks broad support. The widespread unpopularity of the United States in the world today worsens this problem.⁸⁷

SUSPICION OF A COUP

In many developing world countries, the military is viewed as a threat as well as an ally of a regime. As a result, governments go to great lengths to "coup proof" their regimes, emasculating the military in a variety of ways to ensure its political loyalty.⁸⁸ Egypt, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi

86. Willes, *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria*, p. 245.

87. In none of the Arab countries surveyed by the Pew Foundation in July 2005 did a majority have a "favorable" view of the United States, though the poll did show an increase in U.S. popularity from past rock-bottom levels. See Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics," July 14, 2005, <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?PageID=811>.

88. Risa Brooks, "Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East," in Nora Bensahel and Daniel Byman, eds., *The Future Security Environment in the Middle East* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2003), pp. 129–162; and James T. Quinlivan, "Coup-proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East," *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Fall 1999), pp. 131–165.

Arabia, and Uzbekistan all have taken steps to control their militaries, even at the cost of their overall effectiveness.⁸⁹

Coup-proofing shapes a military culture in several negative ways. Most important, the senior officers are chosen primarily for their loyalty to the regime, not for their competence. In Saudi Arabia, for example, many senior officers are royal family members, while others have close ties by marriage and other relationships. As a result, many important skills such as leadership, creativity, and knowledge of military affairs are in short supply. Indeed, in some militaries charismatic and capable leaders are viewed as a threat rather than as an asset. Finally, governments also use corruption as a way to placate military leaders.⁹⁰

Coup-proofing also inhibits the flow of information. The regime discourages leaders from communicating with one another, an effective means of preventing antiregime plotting but one that also inhibits coordination and learning best practices. Training can also suffer. In Egypt, for example, troops are given little independence (or ammunition) when doing training, and exercises are unrealistic—in part to prevent a training mission from turning into an attempt to topple the regime. Without the flow of information, integrating forces becomes much harder, as does designing or redesigning procedures in a creative way to handle persistent problems.

Poor training and learning structures can stem from coup-proofing measures (and a political system where information is guarded) and have a severe impact on COIN effectiveness. Integration will suffer if units cannot train for it. Without training for COIN in particular, integration may prove particularly hard for soldiers who are given standard training for conventional operations to work in small groups, exercise low-level initiative, be discriminate in their use of firepower, or otherwise carry out tasks that differ from conventional operations. Many officers and NCOs will lack the skills to fight insurgents properly. Without institutions to disseminate knowledge on the best techniques (and to critically appraise what is going wrong), the military will be less likely to adapt new and creative solutions to the problems it encounters.

89. In India, many state parties fear a strong army and oppose a heavy role for it, believing it would be used to weaken their autonomy at the local level. At the federal level, however, there was historically both disdain and suspicion from civilian leaders. Stephen Cohen, *India: Emerging Power* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2001), p. 110; and Rosen, *Societies and Military Power*, p. 208. In the Philippines, corruption and politics both shape promotion. See “Yet Another Coup in the Philippines?” *Jane’s Foreign Report*, June 23, 2005.

90. Brooks, “Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East.”

ECONOMIC BACKWARDNESS

Many of the countries fighting al-Qaida-linked insurgencies are poor, while others are at best in the middle-income range. Algeria, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, and Uzbekistan suffer a range of economic problems, including relatively low per capita gross domestic product, high unemployment, poor infrastructure, and stagnant growth. Again, such backwardness is not surprising: poorer countries are more likely to suffer insurgencies than wealthy ones, and insurgencies themselves are a barrier to economic development.

The impact of a poor economy is relatively straightforward. Corruption, of course, is more tempting when overall wages are low (and, indeed, corruption may be particularly common, as it is often a source of poor economic growth). A poor economy can also limit the military budget of a country, making it difficult to pay recruits well, buy better equipment for the force, and expand the size of the military.⁹¹ Training may also suffer, because a sophisticated training program is expensive and requires more troops, as some must remain actively engaged while others are being trained. In Uzbekistan, the regime cannot afford to modernize its old equipment, making many reform proposals dead on arrival.⁹² At times, the army may be huge despite a poor economy, placing particularly heavy strains on the budget. In Egypt, the internal security forces have very low pay and recruiting standards—lower than the regular forces.⁹³ One observer noted that young Uzbeks joined former Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan's leader Juma Namangani's forces over the government's "because at least he pays them."⁹⁴

Not surprisingly, the quality of personnel may also suffer, as the poor pay and limited resources make other opportunities more attractive.⁹⁵ In Egypt, for example, much of the enlisted personnel is illiterate, and few have a technical education.⁹⁶ In Uzbekistan, the armed forces had difficulty assimilating U.S. military aid because they lack the technical expertise to maintain and repair the equipment.⁹⁷ Perhaps 70 percent of the trainees in the Afghan army are il-

91. For example, much of the Indonesian air force is not operational due to funding shortages. International Crisis Group, "Indonesia: Next Steps in Military Reform," p. 12.

92. McDermott, "The Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1992–2002," p. 38.

93. Kline, "Egyptian and Algerian Insurgencies," p. 127.

94. Rashid, "A Long, Hot Summer Ahead," p. 29.

95. Of course, if unemployment is high, skilled individuals may seek out the military simply because it offers gainful employment. In Iraq today, many Iraqis appear to be joining the security services for financial reasons despite the great personal risk it involves.

96. Pollack, "The Sphinx and the Eagle."

97. McDermott, "The Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1992–2002," p. 32.

literate;⁹⁸ illiteracy is also a problem in India, as the emphasis on caste for recruitment means that there are not enough literate recruits to fill out some regiments.⁹⁹ Personnel who are less educated and less motivated are less able to gather and process intelligence effectively. The challenge of integration is often particularly difficult. If the overall quality of personnel is low, both the officer corps and the NCOs will suffer accordingly as well.

Insurgents are better able to penetrate the military, both because they can bribe their way into key positions and because overall disaffection in the ranks makes penetration easier. Training may even be inhibited, as officers are reluctant to have soldiers leave their control because they are skimming off soldiers' pay and supply requisitions.

Even Saudi Arabia—by reputation, a wealthy state—has more than its share of economic problems. Despite its oil riches, overall economic development has been limited, and skyrocketing population growth puts serious strains on the country. Moreover, income distribution is heavily skewed, favoring the royal family and those connected to it.¹⁰⁰

SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND DIVISIONS

In many countries, power in all its forms is held in the hands of a relatively small group of people, who in turn exclude or actively inhibit the rise of other groups. In India, remnants of the caste system have preserved a division between the “work of the hands” and “work of the minds,” while several ethnicities are particularly prevalent in the military by tradition. Caste and subcaste often define regiments and battalions.¹⁰¹ Even many Hindu-Muslim divisions are really about caste differences.¹⁰² As a result, individuals are cut off from one another. Clan and region are also important in Uzbekistan, while in Pakistan there is a bias against the Shiite minority in education and state services.¹⁰³ Saudi Arabia, of course, is dominated by the al-Saud family, and

98. Mitch Frank, Brian Bennett, Anthony Davis, and Michael Ware, “Army on a Shoestring,” *Time Europe*, August 26, 2002, pp. 30–36.

99. Rosen, *Societies and Military Power*, p. 209.

100. Alan Richards, “Economic Reform in the Middle East,” in Bensahel and Byman, *The Future Security Environment in the Middle East*, pp. 107–117.

101. Rosen, *Societies and Military Power*, pp. 203–209. For a broader look at the persistence of caste attitudes in India, see Myron Weiner, *The Child and State in India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).

102. Cohen, *India*, p. 114.

103. International Crisis Group, “The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan,” *Asia Report*, No. 95 (April 2005), p. i.

many of its security positions are in the hands of particular tribes, particularly individuals from the Najd region.

Such domination has several pernicious effects on the military culture. The officer corps may actively disdain much of the rank-and-file if they are of a different, less-regarded, group. Promotions and rewards may also be skewed with individuals from certain groups receiving a preference, while others have a formal or informal ceiling on their rise. In addition, the quality of personnel may suffer, as certain groups may deem the military to be unwelcoming. Even without hostility, ethnic differences create more mundane problems. In Afghanistan, the problem of coordinating across multiple languages has hurt training. In India, promotion in some units depends on preserving caste ratios: if a particular regiment that is home to one caste has no vacancies for more senior positions, soldiers from that unit will not be promoted.¹⁰⁴ As a result, basic military tasks are more likely to be performed poorly. Initiative will suffer, and a garrison mentality is more likely as officers will not motivate the soldiers. In such a system, one of the hardest military tasks—integration across units and among services—is less likely to be rewarded. More generally, loyalty to the regime or membership in the right group will count for more than creativity and military excellence.

The direct political consequences of exclusion and social divisions relevant to counterinsurgency are also considerable. Politically, the military may be seen as an agent of the ruling clique, not of the nation as a whole. In addition, the military may oppose political and social reforms that disadvantage their members' privileged position.

In some countries, the military may be representative of the majority population but seen as alien by segments linked to the insurgents. The Philippines' military, for example, includes much of the population, but is not seen as representative by the Muslim minority in areas where the Abu Sayyaf Group was active.¹⁰⁵

Table 4 loosely summarizes the above points. Needless to say, the various structural weaknesses do not necessarily produce the problem in question, but the weakness does make it far more likely the problem will be present.

104. Rosen, *Societies and Military Power*, p. 212.

105. The United States has taken steps to offset the dominance of Tajiks in the Afghan military by recruiting more Pashtuns for a range of positions. Joshua Kucera, "Afghanistan Looks to Army Expansion," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, October 13, 2004; and Kenneth Katzman, *Afghanistan: Post-war Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, May 19, 2005), p. 30, Order Code RL30588.

Table 4. A Summary of How Structural Problems Create Specific Counterinsurgency Weaknesses

	Illegitimate and Repressive Regimes	Civil-Military Tension	Poor Economies	Social Discrimination
Poor intelligence flows	X	X		
Poor integration across units and services		X		
Leadership problems		X		X
Unmotivated and poor-quality soldiers	X		X	X
Lack of training, learning, and creativity	X	X	X	
Civil-military integration		X		
Corruption	X	X	X	
Insurgent penetration	X		X	
Lack of support from the population	X			X
Militaries' opposition to reform	X			X

Why the Tail Wags the Dog

The United States has few means of controlling its allies because it has few means to do so.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, Washington's very efforts to demonstrate its commitment to some of its allies and to domestic audiences worsen this problem. As Timothy Crawford contends, a firm alliance can embolden the ally to act contrary to Washington's interest. Two particular problems stand out. The first is "adverse selection": the United States attracts allies that are reckless in their policies and create insurgencies, backing them later as an unintentional reward for their policy mistakes. The second is the moral hazard problem: U.S. support enables allies to avoid useful political reforms or otherwise stay a foolish course because the regime has more resources.¹⁰⁷ When the United States pro-

106. As Mark Pollack argues, information that an agent is not following the wishes of the principal is useful only if the principal can threaten the agent with sanctions. Pollack, "Delegation, Agency, and Agenda Setting in the European Community," p. 116.

107. Timothy W. Crawford, *Pivotal Deterrence: Third-Party Statecraft and the Pursuit of Peace* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 22–23. See also Douglas MacDonald, *Adventures in Chaos: American Intervention for Reform in the Third World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).

claims an ally to be vital in the war on terrorism, and when the ally is indeed fighting insurgents who might later abet an attack on the United States, it is difficult to walk away. As D. Michael Shafer noted with regard to U.S. support for governments during the Cold War, "The more critical the situation, the less leverage the United States can muster."¹⁰⁸

One way out of the moral hazard is through what Alan Kuperman labels "restricting insurance"—the example he uses is the International Monetary Fund requirement of structural adjustments before bailing out a country.¹⁰⁹ While possible in theory, playing such a role would in practice be politically difficult for the United States. The repeated U.S. declarations that fighting al-Qaida is a "vital interest" (and the linkage of this to the country in question, which is often necessary to get a program under way for political and bureaucratic reasons at home) undermine the ability of the United States to threaten to cut support.¹¹⁰ Moreover, such declarations provide locals an incentive to exaggerate their insurgents' links to al-Qaida. Immediately after the September 11 attacks, governments around the world began declaring that the local fighters they faced had al-Qaida links as a way of legitimating their struggle in Washington's eyes.¹¹¹ Before the recent schism with the United States over the regime's abuses, the government of Uzbekistan has even stressed the dangers to U.S. military personnel as a way of pushing the United States to give more support to the government.¹¹²

Scale is another problem. As discussed above, solving many of the various military problems requires changing the broader society, economy, and political system: a daunting challenge that requires massive resources to tackle. There will be little U.S. appetite for placing pressure on allies if truly changing their security forces requires transforming them from top to bottom.

Compounding this challenge is that the United States' instrument of change is often the very regime and military forces that are themselves part of the structural problem. The United States cannot by itself foster economic devel-

108. D. Michael Shafer, "The Unlearned Lessons of Counterinsurgency," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 103, No. 1 (Spring 1998), p. 64.

109. See Alan J. Kuperman, "Suicidal Rebellions and the Moral Hazard of Humanitarian Intervention," in Timothy W. Crawford and Kuperman, eds., *Gambling on Humanitarian Intervention: Moral Hazard, Rebellion, and Civil War* (New York: Routledge, 2006). The economic analogies, including the International Monetary Fund, appear in *ibid.*, pp. 12–16.

110. Metz and Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century*, p. 19.

111. Members of the General Directorate for External Security, interviewed by the author, Paris, France, May 2005.

112. Richard Weitz, "Storm Clouds over Central Asia: Revival of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 27, No. 6 (November/December 2004), pp. 465–490.

opment in Algeria or political reform in Uzbekistan. Such measures require local regimes to take action. For many local interlocutors, reform is more threatening than the insurgency: Political reform would throw them out of power; military reform might increase the chances of a coup; economic reform would lessen opportunities for corruption; and social reform would hinder their group's hold on power. Not surprisingly, foreign leaders often turn the United States down when it presses for reform. At times, they may halfheartedly embrace reform, going through the motions (and taking U.S. money and resources) but perverting the outcome to ensure the stability of the status quo.

The United States also suffers from several "moral hazards" as it seeks to exert influence. U.S. support of a government often reduces the necessity for the regime to undertake the reforms required to gain popular support. U.S. backing comes with a degree of legitimacy as well as with financial and other resources. Thus empowered, governments can put off land reform, stop reining in corruption, and avoid other changes that would hurt the insurgent cause.¹¹³ In Uzbekistan, for example, the regime used the U.S. embrace to enhance its legitimacy even as it cracked down on dissent at home.¹¹⁴ Ironically, the United States may be tarred with the brush of a brutal ally, even if it is urging that ally to reform.¹¹⁵

Similarly, U.S. support for a military reduces the military's need to change its leaders and revise its doctrine, organization, and procedures to better fight the insurgency. Change often comes at the point of a knife: if the United States is doing the fighting for, or even with, locals, they may believe they can carry on with inefficient practices without losing.

Money transfers, one of the biggest U.S. levers and in theory one of the key ways that the United States could influence its allies, are also problematic. Denying the Pakistani security services resources means they are less able to do what the United States seeks.¹¹⁶ Indeed, in the most extreme circumstances, the local military and regime may not want to completely defeat the insurgents, for financial reasons. Kyrgyz Prime Minister Kurmanbek Bakiev, for example, declared the U.S. military presence in his country to be a "gold mine," a

113. Metz and Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century*, p. 19.

114. "Prepared Statement of Fiona Hill," reprinted in "Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Instability."

115. "Prepared Statement of Stephen Blank," reprinted in "Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Instability," p. 53.

116. Pollack identifies a similar general problem in principal-agent relationships. Pollack, "Delegation, Agency, and Agenda Setting in the European Community," p. 117.

comment that suggests just how beneficial such a presence can be to poor areas.¹¹⁷ Even without U.S. aid, war is often financially beneficial to military leaders. In Algeria, elements of the military wanted to keep the war going with the insurgents indefinitely because of these financial benefits.¹¹⁸

Must the United States Go to War with the Allies It Has?

This article has argued that U.S. allies in the struggle against al-Qaida-linked insurgencies are likely to suffer from a range of problems at both the tactical and strategic levels. These problems are not simply the result of poor training or ignorance. Rather, they are structural, growing out of the societal and political characteristics of the regimes and countries in question. Thus, when the United States relies on its allies to fight U.S. enemies, it must recognize not only their limited capabilities but also their fundamentally different interests.

To guard against some of the problems that will inevitably arise, the United States should take several steps. A first is to change the target of intelligence collection. One of the biggest problems the United States faces is that its ally can manipulate U.S. intelligence. It is the ally that gathers the intelligence, and in so doing it can both directly and indirectly shape the views of the United States toward the struggle. The ally can portray insurgents with a local agenda as part of al-Qaida or exaggerate the effectiveness of units receiving U.S. assistance in a bid to increase the size of the overall package. An obvious recommendation is to gather intelligence on the ally itself, particularly with regard to its information collection and dissemination activities. The United States must know what information is being gathered, how well it is being analyzed and disseminated, and what is being passed on to (and, more important, withheld from) the United States.

The United States must also diversify the sources of information instead of relying on the area regimes, which can easily manipulate the information. One way to gather information is to rely on third parties.¹¹⁹ The international media would be one source of information, as would independent investigative groups such as the International Crisis Group. These bodies can monitor the ally in a credible way, supplementing the overall information available. They also can do so with less risk of a backlash to the overall bilateral relationship than if an ally discovered the United States was spying on its security services.

117. Quoted in Weitz, "Storm Clouds over Central Asia," p. 519.

118. Martinez, *The Algerian Civil War, 1990–1998*, p. 232.

119. See Pollack, "Delegation, Agency, and Agenda Setting in the European Community," p. 111.

In addition to rectifying information asymmetries, the United States must reconsider how it exerts leverage over its allies and, if possible, try to minimize the moral hazard issue. To increase its chances of success, the United States must recognize that it is not always on the side of the allied government. Rather, Washington should at times act as a third party, helping fight the insurgency but also demanding reforms when possible. Aid and other assistance should be contingent when possible. Given domestic political difficulties, however, such nimbleness will be difficult.

Peacetime engagement activities such as training, military education programs, and military-to-military contacts can help change a military culture, but the effects are likely to be limited at best, as they cannot change the fundamental difference in interests. U.S. officials argue that the Georgian military did not interfere in the recent process of democratic change in part due to the influence of U.S. training and education programs.¹²⁰ The United States has made such civil-military training a core part of its efforts to engage militaries in the postcommunist world, though the long-term effects are not yet clear. The new perspectives and skills that are learned in these programs, however, often atrophy or are overwhelmed by the powerful cultural, political, and economic forces that created the dysfunctional military culture in the first place. Uzbekistan, for example, has been a member of the Partnership for Peace since 1994, yet its military culture remains brutal and corrupt.

As a result of these barriers, realistic expectations are necessary. The United States has no ready solutions for the problem of weak states, which is at the core of many of its allies' weaknesses in counterinsurgency. Diplomatic pressure and peacetime military engagement activities can help improve a government's effort against insurgencies, but their track record is likely to be spotty at best. Moreover, these efforts may take years or even generations to produce significant results. Recognizing the difficulties in this process and the likely limits will help in designing programs that are more realistic and have the proper expectations.

Implications for Iraq

The United States is likely to encounter many of the problems it has faced with other COIN partners if it transfers security responsibilities in Iraq to Iraqi forces. Iraq is a highly divided society with a weak economy, both of which are

120. Thom Shanker and C.J. Chivers, "Crackdown in Uzbekistan Reopens Longstanding Debate on U.S. Military Aid," *New York Times*, July 13, 2005.

posing the danger of massive civil strife. The Sunni insurgency, though divided, is strong numerically, and in many Shiite parts of Iraq, militias hold sway that are not under the government's control. The regime cannot deliver social services, and crime is rampant. The Iraqi government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki is far from unified, making it likely that military forces will be similarly fractionalized or view the elected leadership with contempt.

No one of these problems is inherently insurmountable, but together they will prove exceptionally troublesome in the years to come. They pose particular problems for the preferred "exit strategy" of both the Bush administration and its Democratic critics: handing over the security of Iraq to the Iraqis. If Iraq follows the experiences of the other countries examined in this article, its security forces will likely be corrupt, brutal, poorly trained, weakly led, unable to coordinate, penetrated by insurgents and militias, and out of step with national political leaders.

Such problems suggest a fundamental flaw with the preferred U.S. strategy of transferring security to Iraqi forces (unless the U.S. goal is to cynically use such a "handoff" as an excuse for cutting and running). Instead, the extreme positions may be the more realistic ones: either staying in the country with large numbers of U.S. forces for many years to defeat the insurgents or abandoning the country to its fate of strife and civil war.

Is Counterinsurgency Worth the Effort?

Americans may legitimately wonder whether the United States should still work with allies that are weak, corrupt, antidemocratic, and brutal. Is it simply better to devote resources to homeland defense and otherwise wage this fight without such unsavory partners? This is particularly true in cases where U.S. partners might still face significant political opposition even if their counterinsurgency capabilities were stronger: the "demand" for reform created by the government's brutality and incompetence is simply too strong.

Americans should keep in mind several counterarguments. First, although U.S. allies range from disappointing to abysmal, the jihadists they fight are typically far worse. The jihadists' ideals and practices are bloody and backward, and the United States can be said to be on the "least worst" side. Second, the area regimes do not want to kill Americans, and the jihadists do. Sheer self-interest dictates recognition of this difference, however distasteful to the allies. Third, the United States can push reform on its allies. As noted above, this is difficult and likely to suffer many problems, but it is not impossible.

These arguments will not hold in every case, however. Washington must be

aware that some of its allies' problems may grow despite U.S. help and that this expansion of the U.S. role, in turn, can pose a direct danger to U.S. security by raising hostility toward the United States and tarnishing its overall image. In such circumstances, U.S. resources may be better used for improving the United States' defenses or increasing its domestic capabilities rather than further expanding programs to help allies.