



FM 3-24.2: *TACTICS IN COIN*

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Editor's Note: *Although duplicate publication of articles is rarely used, we feel that in this case the importance of the counterinsurgency fight warrants the joint publication of this article in *Armor*, *Fires* and *Infantry* magazines, in order to assure this vital contribution to the global war on terrorism.*

Soldiers with A Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, patrol Narang Valley in Afghanistan May 18, 2008.

SPC Gregory Argentieri

What, another counterinsurgency manual? Didn't the Army and the Marine Corps just publish one in 2006? If I am a company commander preparing to go to Afghanistan, should I read FM 3-24 or FM 3-24.2?

In October 2008, the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command published Field Manual Interim (FMI) 3-24.2, *Tactics in Counterinsurgency*. Now an approved field manual, this unclassified manual stresses a comprehensive approach to counterinsurgency (COIN) operations by tying concepts of security, governance, economics, and information engagement together for brigades, battalions, and companies. The document brings to the forefront five key concepts to the practice of counterinsurgency by identifying COIN lines of effort (LOE), expanding upon clear-hold-build operations, discussing the importance of securing the population

during COIN, creating tactical-level planning horizons in COIN, and helping units better understand the enemy they are fighting through the components and manifestations of an insurgency. It also describes typical offensive, defensive, and stability operations in a counterinsurgency, as well as providing a framework to train and maintain Host Nation security forces. Due to a quick writing and vetting process, the manual was first designated as an FMI, or a publication that provides expedited delivery of urgently needed doctrine.

FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, did a superb job of crafting the Army's and the Marine Corps' approach to counterinsurgency from the strategic and operational level. However, the U.S. Army lacked a current, practical manual for small units to use during counterinsurgency operations. Until now, Army and Marine Corps tactical leaders had relied upon FM 90-8, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, published in 1986. However, FM 90-8 focused exclusively on combat operations against guerrilla forces, as well as missing two decades worth of doctrinal updates. Drawing from

FM 90-8, FM 3-24, David Gallula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, Roger Trinquier's *Modern Warfare*, and the military's counterinsurgency experiences in Somalia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, the Philippines and Iraq, this manual fills the doctrinal gap for the tactical leader and unit.

Many people and organizations contributed to FM 3-24.2. At the U.S. Army Infantry School, MAJ (Retired) David Frumerie, MAJ Jason Enyert, CPT Brad Velotta, CPT Stuart Chapman, and LTC David Fivecoat served as writers and editors of the manual. Organizations from across the Army assisted with significant portions of the manual, including Fort Leavenworth's Counterinsurgency Center, Fort Leavenworth's Combined Arms and Doctrine Division, Fort Leavenworth's Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, the National Training Center, the Armor Center, the Asymmetric Warfare Group, Fort Benning's Donovan Library, Fort Riley's Transition Team trainers, the U.S. Marine Corps, and tactical units both at home station and deployed. Finally, notable counterinsurgency specialists such as John Nagl, Montgomery McFate, Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbons, and Conrad Crane reviewed and provided information for significant portions of the book. Together, this collaborative effort has created a solid addition to the U.S. military's understanding of counterinsurgency.

One of FM 3-24.2's foundations is the

concept of COIN LOEs. By combining FM 3-24's logical lines of operation; FM 3-0's, *Operations*, concept of lines of effort; and FM 3-07's, *Stability Operations*, concept of stability lines of effort, FM 3-24.2 creates a tool for units to link multiple tasks and missions using the logic of purpose — cause and effect — to focus efforts towards establishing operational and strategic conditions. The COIN LOEs — establish civil security, establish civil control, support to host nation security forces, support to governance, restore essential services, support to economic and infrastructure development, and conduct information engagement — help commanders and units prioritize and synchronize actions over an extended period of time, as well as assess the effectiveness of operations. Although each LOE can contribute to the defeat of an insurgency, often civil security and civil control must be established prior to fully developing the other LOE. Since each insurgency is unique, FM 3-24.2 retains the flexibility for commanders to tailor the LOEs for their situation by combining LOEs such as economics and restoring infrastructure, or splitting a LOE apart, such as dividing rule of law from governance. The LOEs provide commanders a means to achieve unity of effort, prioritize assets, and balance their actions to secure the population, establish a legitimate local government, and defeat the insurgency. Figure 1 depicts seven counterinsurgency lines of effort.

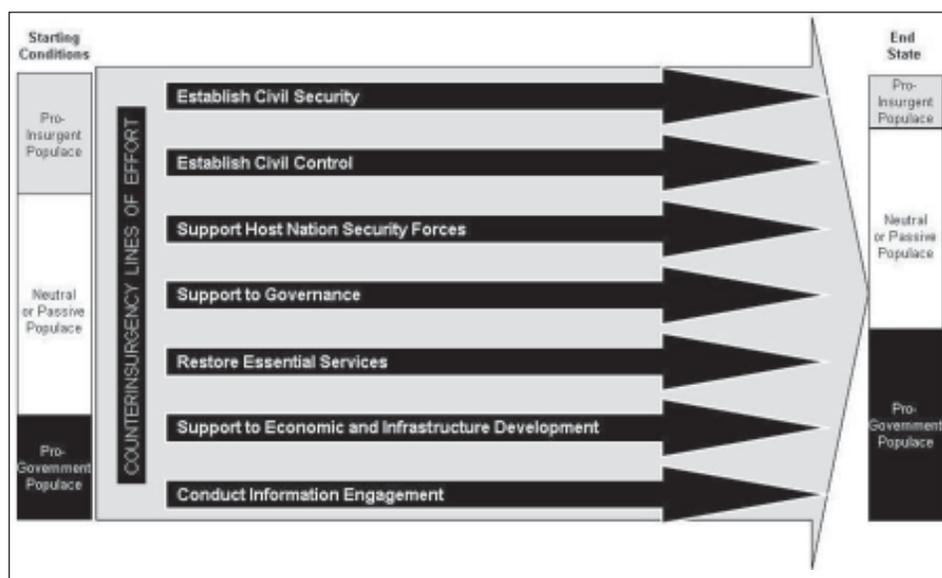
Counterinsurgency Lines of Effort

A clear-hold-build operation is a full spectrum operation that combines offensive, defensive, and stability operations in varying degrees during each phase. This type of operation was used successfully by the French in Algeria and French Indochina, where it was called *tache d'huile* (oil spot); by the British in Malaysia, where it was known as the Briggs Plan, and by U.S. forces in Tal Afar, Iraq, where it was described as a clear-hold-build operation. In the clear phase, offensive operations usually dominate; in the hold phase, defensive operations are stressed; and in the build phase, stability operations are preeminent. However, in each phase the other two operations play complementary roles. For instance, in the hold phase, the unit may focus its defensive operations on securing the population, while also conducting raids on insurgent leaders, as well as restoring a local well to provide water to the village. Figure 2 shows the change in the balance between offense, defense, and stability operations during a clear-hold-build operation.

Clear-Hold-Build Framework

Finally, the manual stresses the importance of securing the population through living forward in small bases, executing populace and resource control (PRC) operations, and conducting regular patrols to disrupt insurgent actions. This manual contends that the most important of these is properly locating bases for both U.S. and host nation security forces that provide security to the largest number of people possible, disrupt insurgent activity, and secure key locations and lines of communication. Often, these bases are located amongst the civilian population, much like a neighborhood police station. PRC operations are government actions that concentrate on protecting the populace and its material resources from the insurgents, denying insurgents' access to the population and material resources, and identifying and eliminating the insurgents while doing so. PRC operations could include enforcing curfews, establishing movement restrictions, maintaining check points, supervising a block or village committee, registering weapons, and rationing critical

Figure 1 — Seven COIN Lines of Effort



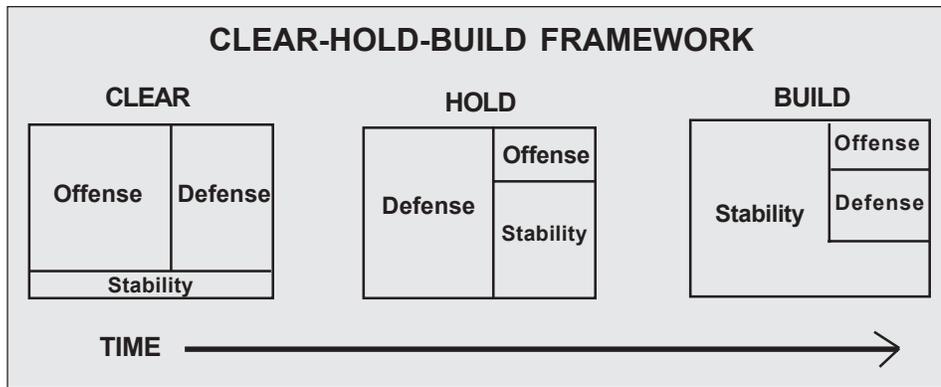


Figure 2 — Clear-Hold-Build Framework

goods. Finally, reconnaissance or combat patrols collect information and provide security by disrupting insurgent operations.

FM 3-24.2 establishes a concept for planning horizons during COIN by blending the theories of FM 5-0.1, *The Operations Process*, and FM 7-0, *Training the Force*. Using long-range, mid-range, and short-range windows, the FM proposes brigade, battalion, and company planning timelines for each planning horizon. It also suggests a quarterly operations brief as an azimuth check on the progress brigades, battalions, and companies have achieved, as well as a means to encourage learning and adaption across the unit. For example, a brigade combat team (BCT) might craft a yearlong long-range plan, a three-month-long mid-range plan, and a one week short-range plan.

Despite seven years of fighting an insurgency, the military has struggled with lumping the enemy into one large, amorphous group, be it “a few dead-enders,” former regime elements, anti-Iraqi forces, Al-Qaeda, anti-Afghanistani forces, or the Taliban. Just like politics, all insurgencies are local. Each group possesses its own characteristics and follows certain patterns. This manual helps Soldiers categorize and understand the insurgency by encouraging an analysis of each insurgent group’s components and manifestations. The three components of an insurgency — its five elements, or the five groups of people that participate in an insurgency; its eight dynamics, or eight categories that define an insurgency; and one of the six insurgent strategies that it is following — help leaders comprehend the organization that they are battling. The three manifestations of an insurgency — its tactics, strengths, and vulnerabilities — are

the visible outputs of an insurgency that provide counterinsurgent units a way to develop the insurgency’s patterns. Taken together, the components and manifestations help units to reduce the uncertainty around an elusive enemy and defeat it.

The Components and Manifestations of an Insurgency

In addition to the five key practices, the manual provides a means to understand the operational environment; describes types of offensive, defensive, and stability operations conducted during a counterinsurgency; and discusses the training and mentoring of host nation security forces. FM 3-24.2 also illustrates the challenges and difficulties of conducting a proper intelligence preparation of the battlefield during a counterinsurgency. Furthermore, the manual explains tactical site exploitation, sniper operations, base defense operations, and company

intelligence support teams. A short reading list of other counterinsurgency documents for leaders confronted with significant constraints on their time is also in the manual.

FM 3-24.2, *Tactics in Counterinsurgency*, provides brigades, battalions, and companies a practical guide to achieving a comprehensive approach to successfully waging counterinsurgency operations over a significant period of time. For tactical leaders, who may not have time to read the entire manual, focusing on the five key practices — the sections on the counterinsurgency lines of effort, clear-hold-build operations, securing the population, planning horizons, and the components and manifestations of an insurgency, should prove particularly useful. As one reviewer stated, FM 3-24.2 “will be a great benefit to units in the field.”

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Figure 3 — Components and Manifestations of an Insurgency

