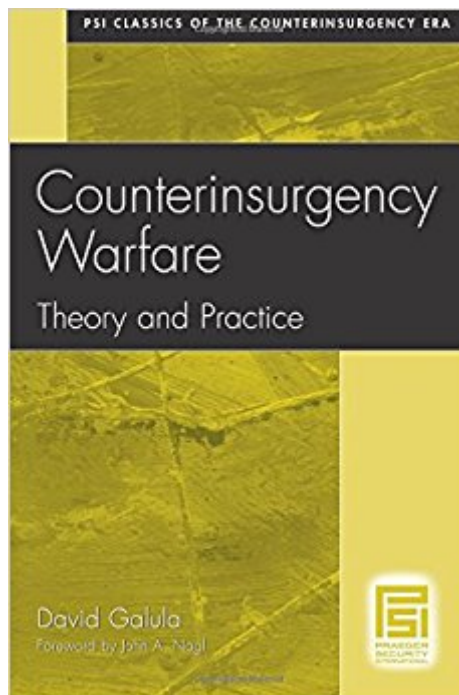




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Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory And Practice (PSI Classics Of The Counterinsurgency Era)



Synopsis

This book examines the strategy and means to defeat insurgent or guerrilla movements based on the author's first-hand experience in China, Greece, Indochina, and Algeria. This volume in the Praeger Security International (Psi) series Classics of the Counterinsurgency Era defines the laws of insurgency and outlines the strategy and tactics to combat such threats. Drawn from the observations of a French officer, David Galula, who witnessed guerrilla warfare on three continents, the book remains relevant today as American policymakers, military analysts, and members of the public look to the counterinsurgency era of the 1960s for lessons to apply to the current situation in Iraq and Afghanistan. With a new foreword by John A. Nagl, author of Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam (Praeger, 2002).

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Customer Reviews

"This is a soldier's book, written by a professional with a classical military education....It has become required reading for students of warfare generally, and especially for soldiers and policymakers dealing with the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq."-ARMY

DAVID GALULA (1919-1967) was born to French parents in Tunisia and raised in Morocco, earning his baccalaureat in Casablanca and attending the military academy at Saint-Cyr. Graduated on the eve of World War II, he saw action in North Africa, Italy, and France. An officer of the marine infantry in the old colonial army, he was assigned to China and also served with the United Nations as a

military observer in Greece and military attache in Hong Kong. Colonel Galula was stationed in Algeria at the time of the revolt by the French army. Shortly before retiring he wrote *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, while in residence at the Center for International Affairs, Harvard University.

French Colonel David Galula wrote *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, originally published in 1964, while at Harvard University's Center for International Affairs. Many of Galula's guidelines about counterinsurgency were developed from observations of the Chinese Communist Revolution, the Greek Civil War, the Malayan insurgency, the Vietnamese Revolution, and the Algerian Revolution. While Galula provides intelligent analyses, he at times makes statements that seem contradictory such as suggesting (2006, 9) that the insurgent attracts support through what he says he is going to do, rather than through what he actually does. But this is not consistent with what Galula states is the insurgent's, as well as the counterinsurgent's, goal of attracting and holding onto popular support. Mao Zedong, identified by Galula as a major authoritative source on revolutionary warfare, emphasized that it is crucially important for the insurgent to gain popular support by what he does, not just says, by acting in ways that are viewed as beneficial by the majority of the people. Another indication of Galula's fallibility was his underestimation of the favorability of conditions for the Viet Cong in South Vietnam (2006, 71). Galula points out that insurgents and counterinsurgents compete in the context of asymmetrical warfare. The initially weak insurgent force uses methods suited to its limited capabilities. The counterinsurgents, according to Galula, should use tactics that take maximum advantage of counterinsurgent strength. Although the insurgents, for example, are often highly mobile and can choose when and where to attack, the population supporting the insurgents is generally stationary and much more vulnerable. Galula claims that it is usually more effective for the counterinsurgent force to concentrate on the population, rather than focus primarily on physically eliminating the insurgents. Galula (2006, 49-60) defined victory not only as the elimination of insurgent armed forces and their organizational infrastructure, but also the isolation of insurgents from the population through the efforts of the population itself. He argues that one commander must have total control of counterinsurgent actions. Galula also says that counterinsurgent forces must constantly adapt to changing circumstances and even consider using coercive measures such as withholding jobs or food until the population in a targeted area cooperates with counterinsurgent efforts (Galula 2006, 71-72). He also asserts that the insurgent force must be denied any safe areas to regroup or organize. Counterinsurgent forces must also be aware of any divisive characteristics

of the population, economic, ethnic or religious, that could be used to the benefit of either insurgent or counterinsurgent forces. Many of Galula's ideas are reflected in Petraeus and Amos's (2006) Counterinsurgency Field Manual for the U.S. Army and Marines and were applied in Iraq as described in Chapter 9 of The Iraq War: Origins and Consequences (2010).

In "Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice", David Galula draws upon his professional experience (largely his time as a Company Commander and Battalion S3/XO in Algeria, as recounted in *Pacification in Algeria, 1956-1958*) to define a theory of counterinsurgency. Written in a similar timeframe, and shaped by almost identical experiences, to *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (PSI Classics of the Counterinsurgency Era), Galula's work has many similarities but in my view does a better overall job of both outlining a theory of counterinsurgency and offering a coherent and viable methodology of countering it. With an intellectual start point that "an insurgency is a competition between insurgent and government for the support of the population, which provides the sea in which the insurgent swims", Galula clinically describes the key features and strengths of insurgent and counterinsurgent forces and proposes clear principles for counterinsurgents. He does offer some intellectual challenges for conventionally-focused soldiers (see *Galula in Algeria: Counterinsurgency Practice versus Theory* (Praeger Security International) for an interesting examination of just how successful Galula's own operations were) but avoids some of the more dramatic and controversial prescriptions advocated by Trinquier. Although clear, straightforward and persuasive, this book isn't just full of good news - of particular importance is the observation that "the counterinsurgent is tied to his responsibilities and his past ...a counterinsurgent can seldom cover bad or nonexistent policy with propaganda" (read as "Information Operations" or perhaps even "Twitter and Facebook posts" for the modern day). Perhaps even more important is the observation that, given the disparity of resources required by a counterinsurgent to exercise its responsibilities for security and governance compared to an insurgent, "intensity of efforts and vastness of means are essential". This is sobering and unwelcome news to Western political and military leaders looking for quick, inexpensive solutions through "shock and awe" or UAV strikes against insurgent leadership. While Galula was a product of his time and focused on the insurgent/counterinsurgent dynamic of the Cold War, in my view many of his principles have far wider applicability across a range of peace support and stabilization operations as well. Every serious soldier should be at least familiar with his arguments - in many respects, I would consider this as a useful companion to the far more recent *The Utility of Force* as a means to understanding modern military and security issues.

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