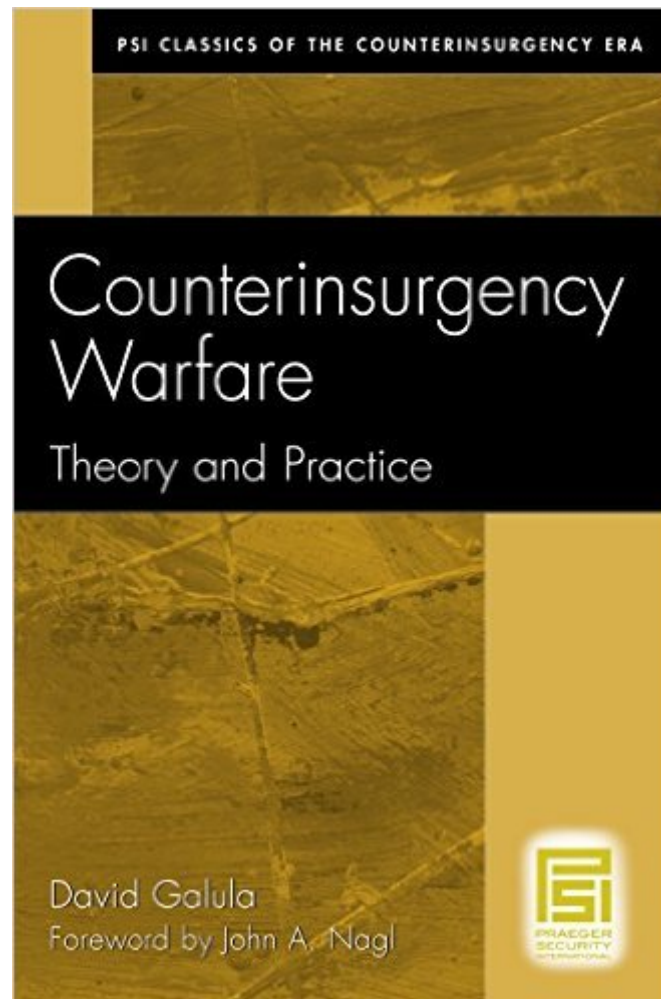


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Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory And Practice (PSI Classics Of The Counterinsurgency Era)



Synopsis

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).

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

David Galula's Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice is as relevant today as it was when it was originally published decades ago. This is the book that every general should read. To put it more succinctly, if you are a general serving in the American armed forces today and have not read this book, then you are wrong. Galula's careful study of past revolutionary warfare is prophetic of today's conflicts across the globe especially the War in Iraq. As part of a recent series of republished books on the subject of insurgencies, Galula's provides the important foundation from which to branch into more specific areas of conflict. I wish we had book at West Point when I was a cadet, and I recommend it to the Department of History and the Department of Military Science without reservation. Drawing upon decades of experience participating in counter-revolutionary warfare and studying it across the globe, Galula's analysis is tempered with a strong dose of reality. I had

difficulty sometimes thinking he was writing about today's wars when talking so eloquently about previous insurgencies that parallel today's realities. Galula's references are outstanding, his analysis is thorough, and his conclusions valid.

David Galula's account of the lessons he learned fighting in Algeria is the single best book on counterinsurgency. It heavily influenced the writing of Army/Marine Corps Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency; especially important were Galula's lessons about the primacy of political over military elements of power in a COIN campaign and the incredible importance of information operations. "Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice" should be heavily highlighted and reside on the bookshelf of every counterinsurgent.

Having lived through the 60s and Viet Nam, I can recognize much of what is in the news today - just change the names. The type of war we now face has had many names: revolutionary war, counterinsurgency, counter terrorism, guerrilla warfare, asymmetric warfare, and so on. One size does not fit all, and it would be a fool who believes that there is a one-for-one match between conflicts. It would also be a fool who ignores the practical, political, and theoretical basis for such conflicts and the extent to which they share characteristics. This book addresses more the military end. This is not in any way a criticism. This book is very well written and well worth the reading. At the time it was written, armies were attempting to build a doctrinal base to use in such conflicts. In doing so, they also concentrated on the military. Again, this is not in any way a criticism, for doing so is their job. The political aspects of such conflicts are, properly, the job of the civilian leadership. The Iraq conflict, and the war in Afghanistan, have brought the subject again to the world's attention. My personal opinion is that many are now busy re-inventing the wheel. For anyone interested in the subject, many books are available. The best of the recent publications is General Sir Rupert Smith's *The Utility of Force*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007. Carl von Clausewitz edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. *On War*. is a given, as is Sun Tzu, and Mao Tse-Tung's, *Selected Military Writings*. Peking, PRC: Foreign Language Press, 1966. Smith gives the best account of the need for combining all factors in a situation such as we find ourselves in now. Wesley Clark also does a good job of describing the complicated nature of modern conflicts. Other books are listed below, in no particular order. The (H) and (P) indicate if the book is hardcover or paperback. Thompson, Sir Robert. *Defeating Communist Insurgency, The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1966. (H) Hart, B. H. Liddell. *Strategy*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1954. (P) McCuen, John J.. *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War*.

Harrisburg, PA: The Stackpole Company, 1966. (H)Paret, Peter and John W. Shy. Guerrillas in the 1960's, Revised Edition. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher, 1962. (P)Paret, Peter. French Revolutionary Warfare from Indochina to Algeria, The Analysis of a Political and Military Doctrine. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1964. (H)Guevara, Ernesto "Che." Che Guevara on Guerrilla Warfare. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher, 1961. (H)Bern, Major H. von Dach. Total Resistance, Swiss Army Guide to Guerrilla Warfare and Underground Operations. Boulder, CO: Paladin Press, 1965. (H)Guevara, Ernesto "Che". Guerrilla Warfare, A Method. Peking, PRC: Foreign Language Press, 1964. (P)Clark, General Wesley K.. Waging Modern War, New York: Public Affairs Books, 2002. (P)(Original Source)Clark, General Wesley K.. Winning Modern Wars, Iraq, Terrorism, and the American Empire. New York: Public Affairs Books, 2003. (P)(Original Source)

This is a foundational work on the development of "Counterinsurgency Warfare," and relevant to Iraq, Afghanistan and other hotspots. Galula articulated clearly the how "Revolutionary Warfare" is asymmetric between belligerents, contrary to the balanced warfare between conventional field armies. He is masterful at describing the insurgent dynamics, and gives great insights for conducting Counterinsurgency Operations. The work primarily focuses on anti-colonial revolutions and Marxist-communist insurgencies, but falls short in addressing the fundamentalist religious based insurgency/terrorism, which was very much ongoing (Algeria) during his contemporary times. Very clear and illuminating, and a must for the student of low-intensity conflicts.

First published in 1964, this is still the best book on the subject. Not as well known as it's more famous companion: "Defeating Communist Insurgency" by Thompson, it addresses the same issues, but is much more applicable to today's conflict. If you are too busy to read it, then go right to page 51, and see how Galula learned to deal with prisoners from his time spent as a prisoner of Mao's forces in China. If some one at the Pentagon had read this, the world would never have heard of Abu Garaib. In a page and a half, Galula told us how to win the war, or, at least not to lose it. Not as "harshly to the point" as McCuen's "The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War", it is the right book at the right time. Agree with previous reviewer, try to get your hands on the Hailer Publishing softcover version as it fits right in the cargo pocket.

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