
Advanced Certificate in Urban Warfare

Counterinsurgency Tactics

Counterinsurgency (COIN) tactics are a set of strategies used by military forces to combat insurgencies, which are often characterized by asymmetric warfare and the use of guerrilla tactics. In the context of the Advanced Certificate in Urban Warfare, it is important to understand key terms and vocabulary related to COIN tactics in order to effectively counter insurgent threats in urban environments.

Asymmetric warfare: This refers to warfare between two forces that are not equal in military capability or tactical approach. Insurgents typically use guerrilla tactics, such as ambushes and hit-and-run attacks, to offset the superior firepower and technology of government or military forces.

Guerrilla warfare: This is a type of warfare in which a small, loosely organized group of irregular soldiers uses hit-and-run tactics to fight a larger and less-mobile traditional military. Guerrilla fighters often blend in with the local population and use their knowledge of the terrain to their advantage.

Insurgency: An insurgency is an organized movement aimed at overthrowing an established government or authority, often through the use of guerrilla tactics and other forms of irregular warfare. Insurgencies can be motivated by a variety of factors, including political, religious, or ideological differences.

Counterinsurgency (COIN): COIN tactics are strategies used by military forces to combat insurgencies. COIN operations often involve a combination of military, political, economic, and social measures, and are typically focused on protecting the local population and winning their support.

Clear, Hold, Build: This is a common COIN strategy that involves clearing an area of insurgent forces, holding it with security forces, and then building infrastructure and providing services to win the support of the local population.

Population-centric COIN: This is a COIN strategy that focuses on protecting and winning the support of the local population, rather than defeating the insurgents militarily. This approach emphasizes the importance of building relationships with local leaders, providing services and economic opportunities, and addressing the underlying causes of the insurgency.

Enemy-centric COIN: This is a COIN strategy that focuses on defeating the insurgents militarily, often through the use of large-scale offensives and targeted killings. This approach can be effective in the short term, but often fails to address the underlying causes of the insurgency and can lead to alienation of the local population.

Intelligence-driven operations: This is a COIN strategy that emphasizes the use of intelligence to identify and target insurgent leaders and networks. This approach often involves the use of human intelligence (HUMINT) sources, such as informants and defectors, as well as technical intelligence (TECHINT) sources, such as signals intercepts and imagery.

Hearts and minds: This is a term used to describe the efforts of military forces to win the support of the local population through the provision of services, economic opportunities, and other forms of assistance. The phrase "hearts and minds" comes from a British military campaign in Malaya in the 1950s, which aimed to win the support of the local population by addressing their economic and social needs.

Rule of law: This is the principle that all individuals, including government officials and military personnel, are subject to the law and must abide by it. In the context of COIN, the rule of law is important for establishing trust and credibility with the local population, as well as for preventing abuses of power and human rights violations.

Civil-military cooperation (CIMIC): This is the coordination and cooperation between military forces and civilian organizations, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local government agencies, in order to provide services and assistance to the local population. CIMIC can include activities such as medical clinics, infrastructure projects, and community development programs.

Psychological operations (PSYOP): PSYOP are operations that use information and propaganda to influence the emotions, attitudes, and behavior of a target audience. In the context of COIN, PSYOP can be used to counter insurgent propaganda, promote the legitimacy of government or military forces, and encourage support for COIN operations.

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs): Also known as drones, UAVs are remote-controlled aircraft that can be used for a variety of military and intelligence-gathering purposes, including surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeted killings. UAVs can be particularly useful in urban environments, where their small size and ability to hover makes them well-suited for monitoring and attacking insurgent forces.

Human terrain teams (HTTs): HTTs are teams of social scientists, cultural experts, and linguists who work with military forces to provide cultural and social context for COIN operations. HTTs can help military forces better understand the local population, identify key leaders and power brokers, and develop targeted assistance programs.

Non-kinetic operations: Non-kinetic operations are military operations that do not involve the use of force or violence. Examples of non-kinetic operations include psychological operations, civil-military cooperation, and economic development programs. Non-kinetic operations can be an important part of a COIN strategy, as they can help to win the support of the local population and reduce the appeal of insurgent groups.

Kinetic operations: Kinetic operations are military operations that involve the use of force or violence. Examples of kinetic operations include air strikes, artillery barrages, and ground combat. Kinetic operations can be an important part of a COIN strategy, as they can be used to disrupt insurgent networks, degrade insurgent capabilities, and protect the local population.

Area of operations (AO): An AO is a geographic area that has been designated for military operations. In the context of COIN, the AO is often a specific urban area or neighborhood that is being targeted for clearance and stabilization.

Indirect approach: The indirect approach is a military strategy that emphasizes the use of maneuver,

deception, and surprise to defeat an enemy, rather than relying on brute force. In the context of COIN, the indirect approach can be used to avoid engaging insurgents directly, and instead focus on protecting the local population, disrupting insurgent networks, and building relationships with local leaders.

Insurgent safe haven: An insurgent safe haven is an area in which insurgent forces are able to operate with relative impunity, often due to the support of the local population or the absence of government or military forces. Insurgent safe havens can be a significant challenge for COIN forces, as they can be used as bases for planning and launching attacks, as well as for recruiting and training new fighters.

Insurgent shadow government: An insurgent shadow government is a parallel governing structure established by insurgent forces in order to challenge the authority of the established government. Insurgent shadow governments can provide services and assistance to the local population, and can be used to undermine the legitimacy of the established government.

Insurgent financing: Insurgent financing refers to the sources of funding and revenue for insurgent groups. Insurgent financing can come from a variety of sources, including criminal activities, donations from foreign governments or organizations, and extortion of the local population. Understanding and disrupting insurgent financing is an important part of a COIN strategy, as it can help to limit the resources available to insurgent groups and reduce their ability to operate.

Insurgent propaganda: Insurgent propaganda refers to the messages and narratives used by insurgent groups to promote their cause, recruit new members, and undermine the legitimacy of the established government. Insurgent propaganda can be disseminated through a variety of channels, including print and electronic media, social media, and word of mouth. Countering insurgent propaganda is an important part of a COIN strategy, as it can help to undermine the appeal of insurgent groups and promote the legitimacy of the established government.

Insurgent recruitment: Insurgent recruitment refers to the process by which insurgent groups attract new members. Insurgent recruitment can be facilitated by a variety of factors, including economic hardship, political repression, and social unrest. Understanding and disrupting insurgent recruitment is an important part of a COIN strategy, as it can help to limit the size and strength of insurgent groups.

Insurgent training: Insurgent training refers to the process by which insurgent groups teach new members the skills and knowledge