

On The Difference in Means and the Origins of Different Wars

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Abstract: This paper considers the origins of the contemporary form of counterinsurgency and intra-state war. It argues that the current wars facing Canada and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies are likely to be of this intra-state variety, but that they are best distinguished, not by the political objectives which define their purpose, but by the peculiar nature of the tactical means employed. This paper argues that the disparity in means between insurgents and counterinsurgents in intra-state struggles produces many paradoxes that constrain the actions of the counterinsurgent and that lead one author to suggest that insurgents and counterinsurgents are waging different wars. If this difference is not properly understood, the ramifications for Canadian and NATO efforts in Afghanistan might be jeopardized.

In *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, David Galula argues that in the context of small or revolutionary wars, the insurgents and the counterinsurgents are effectively waging different wars.¹ I found this to be a fascinating idea. It struck me, but I found that it was very rarely addressed or considered in the literature.

After reading extensively on this subject, I began considering a general two-part research question: What is the origin and nature of these different wars and what are the political implications for counterinsurgency?

While the emphasis of this brief paper is on the politics and strategy of the counterinsurgency, I have endeavored to take a view which incorporates the reactive and reciprocal nature of warfare into my discussion.² By focusing on the insurgent's position relative to the counterinsurgency, it is possible to draw out some clear strategic and political implications. In this way, what Carl Von Clausewitz contended was the 'duel of wills' that is central to the permanent nature of war is purposefully incorporated into the present study.³ Indeed, little analytical work on counterinsurgency has been done with this directly in mind.⁴ To neglect the inevitable reciprocal reaction to one's policies—to fail to recognize that "the other side" might be fighting a different war—is to implicitly assume that the opponents will acquiesce to your strategy and that their criteria of success are identical to your own. As Mao Tse-tung noted in his lectures *On Protracted War*:

¹ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (London: Praeger Security International, 2006): xii.

² Edward Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press, 2001).

³ For a discussion of warfare as both a dual writ large and a process of contending will see, for example, Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret eds., & trans. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984): 75.

⁴ For two otherwise excellent studies which exhibit this trend see, for example, John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons From Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare* trans., Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2005).

“Only by ... taking an objective and all-sided view in making a study of war can we draw the correct conclusions on the question of war.”⁵

This paper argues that origin of the different wars that are being waged has their roots in the material disparity between the insurgency and the counterinsurgency. This difference, when the interactive and reciprocal nature of all warfare is borne in mind, impacts the nature of the two opponents’ strategies as well as the manner in which the alternative party’s political objectives are satisfied.

The Political Characteristics of Revolutionary Wars

Revolutionary struggle is by definition the war of the strong against the weak, the small against the large, or the dominant against the marginalized and so it is an exaggeration to say that the material difference in means between the insurgent and the counterinsurgent has not been previously recognized. This difference, however, has routinely been taken as an implicit peculiarity of revolutionary warfare with only marginal force and effect. Owing, in particular, to the overtly political nature of these struggles, a strict focus on means seems to ignore the insurgent’s substitution of the political mobilization of the people for industrial mobilization in the initial stages of insurrection.⁶ The focus of revolutionary wars largely becomes, therefore, one of contending political narratives, while differences in material means are considered secondary. Yet, as Mao Tse-tung noted in his lectures, *On Protracted War*, the insurgent’s inferiority in means actually renders this political aspect of the struggle into a necessary objective. “The mobilization of the common people throughout the country will create a vast sea in which to drown the enemy, create the conditions that will make

⁵ Mao Tse-tung, *On Protracted War* (Honolulu: The University of the Pacific Press, 2001): 12.

⁶ E.L. KatzeonBach, Jr., “Time, Space, and Will: The Politico-Military Views of Mao Tse-tung,” in *The Guerrilla and How to Fight Him* FMFRP 12-25 (U.S. Marine Corps): 13.

up for our *inferiority in arms* and other things, and create the prerequisite for overcoming every difficulty in the war.”⁷

Successful military outcomes are, for the insurgency, tied to the political mobilization of the people, yet the counterinsurgent’s material superiority also takes a secondary role, as the focus of the dominant party rests on the use of politics to separate the insurgents from the people. As General Hubert Lyautey argued of the counterinsurgency operations in French Morocco: “This country ought not to be handled with force alone. The rational method—the only one, the proper one ... is the constant interplay of force with politics.”⁸ This peculiar admixture of political activity with military operations leads to the frequent admonishment that the counterinsurgency’s political leaders and military commanders are often fighting the wrong type of war, engaging in conventional struggles when their effects will be counterproductive.⁹

Certainly such a misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the facts of a revolutionary war is dangerous, for this error places the counterinsurgent into a situation of abrogating a primary strategic responsibility. As Carl Von Clausewitz wrote:

The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesmen and commander have to make is to establish ... the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive.¹⁰

This type of error has as its foundation a simple misrepresentation of a fundamental pattern that is present in all revolutionary warfare. The root of this problem

⁷ Mao Tse-tung, *On Protracted War* (Honolulu: University of the Pacific Press, 2001): 60. Emphasis added.

⁸ Hubert Lyautey, cited in, Robert B. Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History* Vol. 1 (Lincoln: BackinPrint.com, 2002): 156.

⁹ For a journalistic depiction of this admonishment see, for example, Bob Woodward, *The War Within* (Toronto: Simon & Schuster, 2008): 3-7.

¹⁰ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret eds., & trans. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984): 88-89.

is the failure to incorporate the interactive and reciprocal nature of all warfare into the political and strategic considerations.¹¹ The crucial point, then, is that the alternative parties to revolutionary struggles are, strategically, waging different wars, one with the functional strategical impunity of weakness and the other with the heavy strategical burden of strength.

Differences in Strategy

The primary strategic difference is that the insurgency's military strategy is targeted against a clearly delimited materially and politically dominant opponent. Because of this material and political dominance of the counterinsurgency, the insurgency is compelled to remain dispersed and to wage a form of low-contrast warfare. This responsive position of the insurgency effectively occludes and shadows what Carl Von Clausewitz has called, its strategic "centers of gravity."¹² Therefore, because of its own material and political dominance, the counterinsurgency's strategy is not able to direct its military means against a highly discernable targets.¹³ This represents a fundamental weakness of counterinsurgencies and has as its root the level of disparity between the sides, cordoned off and exploited by strategy.

Psychologically, counterinsurgent forces expect victory because of their strength and their inability to find and destroy insurgent forces has a withering moral effect. Their reliance on technology and its limitations for the counterinsurgent's political morale has

¹¹ For two otherwise excellent studies which exhibit this trend see, for example, John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons From Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare* trans., Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2005).

¹² Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret eds., & trans. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984): 595-596.

¹³ Emily O. Goldman, "Thinking about Strategy Absent the Enemy," *Security Studies* 4 (1994): 40-85.

also been clearly noted by opposing insurgent forces. As Ubeid al-Qurashi, one of Osama Bin Laden aides, wrote:

The superiority of the theoretically weaker party has already been proven; in many instances, nation-states have been defeated by stateless nations ...

In Afghanistan, the Mujahideen triumphed over the world's second most qualitative power at that time ... Similarly, a single Somali tribe humiliated America and compelled it to remove its forces from Somalia. A short time later, the Chechen Mujahideen humiliated and defeated the Russian bear. After that, the Lebanese resistance [Hezbollah] expelled the Zionists army from southern Lebanon. ...

Technology did not help these great armies, even though [this technology and materiel superiority] is sufficient to destroy the planet hundreds of times over using the arsenal of nuclear...weapons.¹⁴

In contrast to the clear strategical delimitation of the counterinsurgency's centers of gravity, which an insurgency is able to exploit because of the demarcation of their adversary's material presence, the counterinsurgent is unable to do likewise. This interactive position raises some clear issues surrounding the strategical value of the insurgent's dispersion.

The Strategic Logic behind the use of Materiel Inferiority to combat Materiel Strength

Careful insurgents can act deliberately to effectively abrogate the presence of an adversary from the counterinsurgency's strategic planning. This can be seen, moreover, as a result of the correlative relationship of forces between the two parties. This notion leaves unconsidered, however, the particular logical rationale behind the use of materiel inferiority to combat materiel strength.

Stephen Biddle has argued quite persuasively that an integral part of the modern system of warfare is the development of tactics and operations that emphasize dispersion

¹⁴ Ubeid al-Qurashi, cited in, Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On war in the 21st Century* (Minneapolis: Zenith Press, 2006): 203.

and cover in order to counter the great lethality of modern weaponry.¹⁵ The potential ability and effect of this dispersive effort is prevalent in conventional warfare fought between opposing forces along exterior lines, but it is of even greater importance for the insurgency in revolutionary or small wars. The foremost need for this dispersion is that the weaker insurgent forces will often be destroyed if they confront the materially superior forces of the counterinsurgent. As Colonel C. E. Callwell noted of the counterinsurgent's position: "Since tactics favour the regular troops while strategy favours the enemy, the object to be sought for clearly is to fight, not to maneuver, to the hostile forces in open battle, to the compel them to give way."¹⁶

Insurgencies, moreover, will use the political mobilization of the people to further their military efforts and so their struggles are waged along interior lines.¹⁷ The origin of this ability is, as Mao has written, the result of a difference in means, as the insurgent is "in the position of operating on *interior lines*. All this is due to the fact that the enemy is strong while we are weak."¹⁸ With the support of the population, dispersion into the common ranks becomes both possible and strategically desirable. Most often, therefore, the insurgent does not need extensive logistical systems or heavy weaponry to challenge the strength of the counterinsurgency. As long as they maintain the active and inactive support of the local population, they will be able to disperse without chastisement from any battle that promises defeat. Similarly, at times of great local superiority they can

¹⁵ Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 2004): 28-51.

¹⁶ Charles E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Theory and Practice* (London: Bison Books, 1996, reprint of the 1906 edition): 91.

¹⁷ For my particular conception of the issue of interior and exterior lines, I am relying upon Baron Antoine-Henri Jomini's early conception. See Baron De Jomini, *The Art of War* (Radford: Wilder Publications, 2008): 54-117.

¹⁸ Mao Tse-tung, *On Protracted War* (Honolulu: The University of the Pacific Press, 2001): 65. Emphasis added.

concentrate their mass upon a decisive point and destroy the counterinsurgent position.

As Mao noted:

When the mass support is sufficiently good to block the leakage of news, it is often possible by various ruses to succeed in leading the enemy into a morass of wrong judgments and actions so that he loses his [local] superiority and the initiative. ... Having grasped this point, a force which is inferior but prepared can often defeat a superior enemy by surprise attack.¹⁹

Operationally, this fundamental difference of movement finds one of its best representations in the work of T.E. Lawrence, who argues that the Arab insurgents “were (as we might be) an influence, an idea, a thing intangible, invulnerable, without front or back, drifting about like a gas.”²⁰ Indeed, Lawrence further notes:

We [the insurgents] went about in parties, not in stiff formation, and their [the counterinsurgent’s] aeroplanes failed to estimate us. No Spies could count us, either, since even ourselves had not the smallest idea of our strength at any given moment. On the other hand, we knew them exactly; each single unit, and every man they moved. They treated us as regulars, and before venturing a move against us calculated the total force we could meet them with. We, less orthodox, knew exactly what they would meet us with. *This was our* [military and strategic] *balance*.²¹

When this operational formation is understood in relation to the counterinsurgent’s position, a clear impetus becomes strategically justifiable and it creates one of the great tragedies of the military aspects of contemporary revolutionary warfare: the counterinsurgent’s vast technological superiority, particularly in the form of strategic air forces, has made contemporary insurgents all that much more ephemeral. Not surprisingly, insurgents have refused to amass themselves to await their destruction by the counterinsurgents superior military capabilities. The sheer disproportion of the

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

²⁰ T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (London: Vintage Classics, 2008): 198.

²¹ T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (London: Vintage Press, 2008): 390. Emphasis added.

materiel means that are usually available to the counterinsurgent's forces eliminates, or, at the very least, greatly reduces the potential for traditional battlefield warfare. Effectively, the materiel capacity of the dominant side "has," as *the U.S. Counterinsurgency Field Manual* notes, "pushed its enemies to fight ... unconventionally, mixing modern technology with ancient techniques of insurgency and terrorism."²²

From this position, when strategy is conceptualized as sinew that binds the levels of a military campaign,²³ failures or limitations of counterinsurgent strategy will invariably impact the use of military means and the satisfaction of political objectives. This process gives rise, then, to two interesting aspects of counterinsurgency warfare. The first is that the type or category of war that is being waged, ranging from conventional to highly irregular, is determined by the relative difference in means. Second, one of the foremost political implications and limitations of counterinsurgent efforts emerges as a result of the relative difference in means. The greater the relative disparity, the more the counterinsurgent's political objectives are satisfied in indemonstrable ways.

The Interactive Process: the Difference in Means and the Type of War

The first ramification, then, involves the type or classification of war that is being waged. This, then, gives rise to a general strategical conundrum that the previous sections identified and which has its origins in material disparity in means between the adversaries. As Colonel Callwell noted, in times of conventional war, where the sides contend with comparable level of material means, opposing armies "are governed by the

²² *The U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007): li.

²³ For a specific definition see: Colin S. Grey, *Modern Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 17.

same [strategic] laws, and are as it were playing the same game. But in a small war it is not so. The more irregular and less organized the forces of the enemy are, the more independent do they become of strategical rules.”²⁴

A result of this interactive process between the adversaries is a proportional categorization of the type of war that is being waged relative to the difference in means. The smaller the relative gap, the more the insurgency can employ conventional methods to affect a decisive military end to the struggle, and the more it is both politically and strategically desirable to do so. This is particularly so, as these more apparent methods become the insurgency’s clearest opportunity to fulfill its broadest political objective which is political control of the population and state. The best way to conceptualize this idea is direct attention towards Mao’s three stages of insurgency and guerrilla warfare.²⁵ Thus most successful insurgencies pass through a period of *strategic defence*, to a period of *strategic stalemate*, into a period of *strategic offense*. As the *U.S. Counterinsurgency Manual* notes, “All insurgencies are different; however, broad historical trends underlie the factors motivating insurgents. Most insurgencies follow a similar course of development.”²⁶ Thus, as the insurgent’s relative means becomes commensurate with their ultimate purpose—which is political control of the population and territory of a particular area—the counterinsurgent can better identify its adversary and plan accordingly. The result of smaller difference in means, therefore, is a greater intensity of combat and, usually, wars of shorter duration. In this sense, a part of what made the early wars of European imperialism successful was greater parity of means, which prompted

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 52.

²⁵ For a discussion of these phases of guerrilla warfare see Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare* trans., Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2005): 66-94. See also Mao Tse-tung, *On Protracted War* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2001): 34-47.

²⁶ *The U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007): lii.

more decisive battlefield decisions. Although, it would be naive to say that in terms of military technology the European powers did not possess an advantage, and that modern technology has further supported the low-contrast methods of the insurgent.

This relative and proportional relationship between the difference in means and the type of war that is being waged, therefore, forms the crux of the issue. This is, as General Rupert Smith has pointed out: “The true paradox of the antithesis of industrial war [that is, revolutionary warfare] conducted by successful revolutionaries: it evolves to the point in which it merges with the conventional paradigm.”²⁷ And so, the point remains that the greater the relative material superiority of the counterinsurgency over the insurgency, the more the latter ought to adopt low-contrast means of warfare, which create the crux of the previously identified strategic dilemma.

The Political Ramifications

The second emergent issue that arises as a result of the relative disparity in means is a politically impactful paradox. Ultimately, the counterinsurgency’s dominant position places it into a position where it is required to assume political responsibility for security everywhere. As the *U.S. Counterinsurgency Field Manual* notes, “Insurgents succeed by sowing chaos and disorder anywhere; the government fails unless it maintains a degree of order everywhere.”²⁸

The greater the difference between the adversaries, the more the counterinsurgent’s success follows from the absence of insurgent attacks and is, therefore, measured in largely indemonstrable terms. This point seems peculiar, to be sure. And the source of the issue can be occluded if the reciprocal nature of the war is not

²⁷ Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008): 172.

²⁸ *The U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007): 4.

included in the political consideration. It is not the counterinsurgent's means *per se* cause its political objectives to be satisfied indemonstrably. It is its dominant position *and* the insurgent's response, which creates this situation. The insurgent who is fighting a war of weakness against strength, ought to use the methods that are most likely to achieve success.

We can presume, moreover, that once an insurgency has emerged it will hold the active and inactive support of the population. If it does not, then the issue is not really insurgency but brigandage, a plight that can clearly be dealt with militarily. As Mao noted of the indispensable relationship between the population and the insurgent, "the former may be likened to water and the latter to the fish who inhabit it. ... It is only undisciplined [insurgent] troops who make the people their enemies and who, like the fish out of its native element, cannot live."²⁹ This popular support ensures dispersion and furthers the strategic paradox.

Thus the weaker the insurgent relative to the counterinsurgent, the more the latter's success is determined by the absence of insurgent activity, because the more the other will seek to occlude its actions and its forces. In the al-Aqsa *Intifada*, for example, the use of suicide bombings as means of insurgency presented a huge strategic dilemma for the counterinsurgent forces. With almost no delimitation being provided by the nature means—of course this is not an absolute claim as some means will always be present and obviously the quantity increases on the basis of sound intelligence—it was only in the absence of a suicide attacks that the use of counterinsurgent military means could have been viewed as successful. As strategist Martin Van Creveld noted:

²⁹ Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare* trans., Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2005): 93.

The same thing has happened to the Israeli army as happened to all the rest that have tried [counterinsurgency operations] over the last sixty years. Basically it's always a question of the relationship of forces. If you are strong, and you are fighting the weak for any period of time, you are going to become weak yourself. ... The problem is that you cannot prove yourself against someone who is much weaker than yourself. They [counterinsurgent forces] are in a lose/lose situation. If you are strong and fighting the weak, then if you kill your opponent then you are a scoundrel... if you let him kill you, then you are an idiot. So here is a dilemma which others have suffered before us, and for which as far as I can see there is simply no escape.³⁰

Canada's current counterinsurgent position in Afghanistan is, then, subject to paradoxical constraints originating with the relative material superiority of their position. The clearest outcome is that logical inferences will often take the place of demonstrable events as the indicators of successful counterinsurgency. As Winston Churchill once observed: a politician needs "the ability to foretell what is going to happen tomorrow, next week, next month, and next year. And to have the ability afterwards to explain why it didn't happen."³¹ In the context of revolutionary war, this redeeming political characteristic is of essential value, as the greater the relative difference in means between the adversaries, the more the counterinsurgency's population will expect success and the more low-contrast the insurgent's methods will likely become. The more extensive this process, the more the delimitation of a clear adversary is removed from the counterinsurgency's strategical considerations and the more their use of military means becomes tied to indemonstrable events.

While the insurgent can direct its military means against one of the clearly delimited centers of gravity of the counterinsurgency, thereby satisfying its political

³⁰ Martin Van Creveld, cited in, *Interview with Martin Van Creveld*, ABC (March 20th, 2002). Available online at: <http://www.abc.net.au/foreign/stories/s511530.htm> retrieved on October 19, 2008.

³¹ Winston Churchill, cited in, Angela Partington ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996): 203.

objectives in a demonstrable way: through roadside bombs, the killing and assassination of soldier and aide workers, and the destruction of reconstruction programs. The counterinsurgency, in contrast, is constrained in its use of military means and bound by its dominant position. The foremost implication being that careful political attention must be given to the articulate presentation of the logical effect of the use of military means, despite the absence of positive correlations. It would not be difficult to reconcile in the public mind a paradox raised by the *U.S. Counterinsurgency Field Manual*: that “sometimes, the more you protect your forces, the less secure you may be.”³² Security patrols and the saturation of urban areas and rural zones with counterinsurgent troops can be connected through logical inference with the reduction in insurgent violence and the provision of security, both of which represent the two primary measures of counterinsurgent success. However, and I think this may increasingly be the case with Iraq as U.S. casualties continue to decline, the more secure the area, the more open for political interpretation, the situation becomes. Thus, as a result of the indemonstrable measurement of successful counterinsurgent operations, broadly understood as the generic provision of security, the likelihood of fundamentally misinterpreting the actual condition of the insurgency increases, resulting in calls for troop redeployment or withdrawal.³³

Yet as this paper has been arguing, the difference in means between the parties impacts the condition of the strategy and actions for the alternative sides. In a situation of great relative disparity the insurgency will likely choose low-contrast means to counter

³² *The U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007): 48.

³³ Arguably this is the outcome that is currently happening in Iraq. As US troop casualties have been reduced as a result of the ‘Surge,’ there have been increased calls, including by the democratic Presidential candidate Barak Obama, for an expedited withdraw of American forces.

the greater weight of the counterinsurgency. As the relative balance of means changes, however, so will the use of means with greater insurgent aggression being connected to a greater overall parity in means. Unless the underwriting root causes of the insurgency can be reconciled into the counterinsurgent's preferable regime type—a situation that seems unlikely in either Iraq or Afghanistan—and which can take generations, as is indicated by the long insurrection in Northern Ireland, then the insurgency can always bide its time, attacking purposefully the counterinsurgent's centers of gravity, when clear opportunities arise.

This situation certainly presents a daunting task for the Canadian Forces and the Canadian government in Afghanistan. With a history of warfare and militant resistance, where the local people have had much historical experience with small wars of weakness against strength, the likelihood of success is limited. The foremost purpose of this work, however, is to illustrate that the greater the relative difference in means, the more the counterinsurgent's strategy is abrogated and the less demonstrable the connections between the use of military means and the satisfaction of political objectives become. The counterinsurgent force's political will, then, is tied to indemonstrable measures and deliberately targeted by insurgent forces. A situation that is particularly daunting for Canada within its current war, as tactician John Poole noted, "The Afghans have learned well how to repel powerful invaders. They do so not by conventional defense, but by discouraging occupation."³⁴

³⁴ John H. Poole, *Tactics of the Crescent Moon: Militant Muslim Combat Methods* (Emerald Isle: Posterity Press, 2004): 88.

Conclusion: The Difference in Means and the Presentation of Logical Inferences

Given Galula's claim that insurgents and counterinsurgents are fighting different wars, this paper has considered the two part question: what is the nature and origin of the different wars and what are the political implications for counterinsurgency? It has argued that the origin of the difference is found in the relative disparity in material means between the insurgency and the counterinsurgency and that the difference is predominantly strategic, in that the rules which apply to one of the parties do not apply to the other. Moreover, the foremost political implications of this difference is, for the counterinsurgency, that the relationship between the use of military means and the satisfaction of political objectives becomes shadowed, as the counterinsurgency comes to rely upon indemonstrable measures of success; that is, its success is measured, not by the positive and demonstrable things it accomplishes, but largely by the absence of disruptive events and insurgent activity.