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⊟ Abstract and Keywords

This chapter examines the colonial roots of counterinsurgency practices deployed by the US after September 11, 2011 in Iraq and Afghanistan. Drawing on a broad range of primary sources produced by the US military and its officers and soldiers, the chapter argues that the counterinsurgency practices were intended as liberal forms of warfare that through the use of law, administration, and procedure intended to facilitate the conquest and management of intransigent populations in those two countries. Given the broader failure of such practices to pacify the conquered populations and the high cost—in blood, treasure, and political credibility—of maintaining such futile warfare, the US has now changed gears to counterterrorism, which is far more about direct violence than it is about imperial management and transformation of conquered populations.

Keywords: counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, US military, Iraq, liberal warfare, violence, War on Terror

Although the concept of "counterinsurgency"—asymmetric and irregular warfare—has been part of the military parlance of many modern states, the term itself was invented by Walt Rostow in 1961, when he was US President John F. Kennedy's national security advisor.[1] Throughout the decades since 1961, the term and the apparatus it signifies have been incorporated into US military practices and doctrines with varying degrees of enthusiasm. The modular set of tactics, techniques, and discourses that are variously concatenated to produce the range of different "small wars" fought by the United States since its inception have been perfected on the battlefields of colonization and decolonization by the militaries of Britain, France, and the United States itself.[2] The battlefields on which these practices have been effectuated, adapted, and institutionalized have included numerous wars, military interventions, peacekeeping operations, covert military activities, and "foreign military assistance" operations undertaken by the US and its near and far allies.[3]

Counterinsurgencies differ from conventional warfare not only in the latter's focus on battles fought on the field, but also in conventional warfare's clearly delineated set of rules of engagement and legal boundaries, however haphazardly these are enforced. Counterinsurgency, in contrast, arranges a state military (whether invading or indigenous) against irregular or guerrilla forces, and with civilian populations directly considered by both sides as foci of strategic attention.[4] I also distinguish liberal counterinsurgencies from the illiberal variants.[5] Illiberal counterinsurgents—Russia in Chechnya, or the Sri Lankan defeat of the Tamil Tigers—use kinetic, or killing force indiscriminately and very often deploy the language of sovereignty as the ultimate justification for their use of force. Liberal counterinsurgencies, by contrast, calibrate their use of force, co-opt legal and administrative apparatuses in the service of warfare, and increasingly deploy a language of humanitarianism and/or development as both the justification and impetus for war. In all counterinsurgencies, the civilian population is the prize, to be won whether by persuasion and bribery or force of intimidation and terror.[6]

Transformations in Combat in the War on Terror

After the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York and the attack on the Pentagon in September 2011, the government of the United States set about waging an indefinite war against those considered culpable for the attacks: al-Qā'ida, but also their hosts, the Afghan Taliban, and eventually even past enemy Iraq, with no connections whatsoever to the September 11 attacks.[7]

The US invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, dubbed "Operation Enduring Freedom," began with an array of tactics that today would be best categorized under the heading of counterterrorism or covert operations. These included the insertion of special operations forces primarily belonging to the CIA's militia, the Special Activities Division, soon to be joined by the US military's Joint Special Operations Forces (JSOC).[8] It also included aerial bombardment using Tomahawk Cruise Missiles launched from US navy ships, as well as the use of helicopter gunships and eventually fighter and bomber jets,[9] and provision of financial and military aid to the Afghan Northern Alliance fighters.[10] From December 2001 onwards, US Central Command (CENTCOM) forces conducted counterterror operations under the umbrella of Operation Enduring Freedom. At the same time, the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) comprised military personnel from a number of different allied countries provided military policing functions in Kabul and later throughout Afghanistan. A year later, the dual forces were joined by the reborn Afghan National Army. ISAF was brought under NATO command in 2003, operating alongside US and Afghan forces mostly in counterinsurgency mode.[11]

The invasion of Iraq in 2003, by contrast, first took shape as conventional (though radically asymmetric) warfare; but with the rapid defeat of the Iraqi military and the US takeover of Iraq's territories and major cities, and with the eventual appearance of guerrilla forces, it assumed a haphazard form of counterinsurgency, with emphasis on the killing of irregular forces.[12] The special operators of Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) under the command of General Stanley McChrystal also continued to operate in the shadows, engaging in assassination and detentions. Their most notable target had been Abu Mus'ab Zarqawi, and their detention practices in Camp Nama had come under investigative journalists' scrutiny.[13] The extraordinary escalation in irregular attacks against US forces, the slowly mounting popular domestic unease with US atrocities in Iraq (beginning with the Abu Ghraib revelations), and the dizzying rise of civilian Iraqi deaths led to a two-pronged transformation in the US military's approach to combat there.[14] The first of these transformations was the consolidation of counterinsurgency tactics in the US Army and Marine Corps' *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*.[15] The second entailed changes at policy level, with a "surge" of troops into Iraq under the command of General David Petraeus and the implementation of the tactics that had now been consolidated in the *Field Manual*.[16]

In schematic tactical terms, what the transition from conventional warfare to the "surge" entailed was an increase in number of troops to allow for "clear-hold-build" tactics: door-to-door "clearing" of abodes, streets, and cities of insurgents; establishment of small neighborhood bases to allow perpetual policing of the neighborhood by the invading force; and the calibrated distribution of aid intended to secure acquiescence, as well as construction of facilities such as roads and other infrastructure that can be used both defensively and as a means of enforcing normalcy.[17] In practice, these tactics meant a shift from battles by military forces to a focus on detention, both of combatants and civilian suspects and of civilian populations who may be inclined to support the militants.[18] The "surge" of troops accommodated not only combat activities but also the training of proxy security forces.[19]

Even as the surge was taking place, US military and civilian policymakers were planning for the withdrawal of the great majority of the US forces from Iraq, scaling back direct activities there, to allow for the consolidation of the Iraqi state's hold over the country.[20]

What this second transition entailed was a shift from counterinsurgency to counterterrorism: a radical reduction in the number of invading and occupying ground troops, a discernible shift in combat into the shadow spaces of covert and robotic wars, and a focus on special operations, remote warfare, and intelligence-gathering.[21] This switchback from "humanitarian" detentions to kinetic force was also in line with a more obviously realist foreign and military intervention policy, as embodied in the decision-making of George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations' Defense Secretary Robert Gates, and the Obama national security team. This more realist mode was best on display in the US Defense Strategic Guidance of January 2012, which, alongside announcing a "pivot to Asia," declared that "US forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations."[22]

Throughout this period, in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and in the other battlefields of the War on Terror (Yemen, Pakistan, and Somalia, inter alia), local proxies have been absolutely crucial, not only to grant permission for

operations but in fact to claim the operations as their own (as the Yemeni, Pakistani, and Iraqi militaries have done at various times), to share intelligence, and to provide the cover of plausible American deniability. US military advisors, intelligence agents, and special operators all have continued to assist the proxy forces in this work of suppression.

Iron Fist or Velvet Glove?

What is perhaps most notable about the manner in which counterinsurgency and counterterrorism have worked is the modularity of the various tactics, techniques, and technologies that can be flexibly concatenated in order to achieve the best results within a given context. The oscillation between counterinsurgency and counterterrorism strategies in war is based on a complex calculus of costs, interim outcomes, and future possibilities, not to mention ideologies, historical inertias and memories, and popular mobilization for or against the war. The spectrum along which these two forms of asymmetric warfare are located move from biopolitics to thanatopolitics. At one end is the set of techniques and tactics, that while using force, also remake living bodies and habitations and social relations, "making live and letting die" in Foucault's words; while at the other end, sovereign power allows for brutal slaughter should the state apparatuses so demand.[23]

Whereas large-scale direct counterinsurgencies are fought with large numbers of conventional troops, counterterrorism condenses the number of personnel and volume of material needed, which inevitably allows for this form of warfare to maintain a degree of invisibility from public scrutiny.[24] If counterinsurgencies provide the technical means for implementation of liberal interventionist policies, counterterrorism is the military option more congruent with "realist" policy discourses.

Counterinsurgencies integrate humanitarian or developmental apparatuses and discourses with the work of military combat. They often require large nodal military bases and more numerous and diffuse smaller ones, massive logistics operations, and extensive and visible presence of ground troops in combat, very frequently supported by fighter jets or helicopter gunships. Counterinsurgency combat operations, by virtue of their breadth and density, tend to occur door to door, and in a sense turn public and private spaces inside out.[25] As liberal counterinsurgencies require mobilization of troops, material, and resources, they need public support at home, which is often secured via information operations, appeal to law, developmental aims, discourse of democratization, and a call for good order.

In practice, this insistence on lawfulness means that new legal techniques, arenas, and languages are concocted that provide an alibi to the military and political operations that make counterinsurgency possible, but which are also the subject of contestation.[26] While the horizons of legality are expanded by the exigencies of combat, legal innovations provide new tools for counterinsurgency pacification. Among these new and revivified legal tools have been military commissions (rooted in nineteenth-century wars against Native Americans), extraordinary rendition, offshore detention (discussed later), and the category of "enemy combatant."[27]

Developmentalism, in turn, works in two registers: on the one hand, the construction of roads, electricity plants, markets, and other infrastructural projects underwrites the military efforts by being a site of military activity.[28] On the other hand, and over a longer period of time, these infrastructures act to co-opt the pacified peoples into new systems of governmentality. In addition to the construction of roads, markets, and schools that have been part of the *modus operandi* of counterinsurgents, forms of dress, gender relations, and new bureaucratic and constitutional apparatuses are other mechanisms of counterinsurgency governmentality.[29]

Knowledge production and the incorporation of colonial knowledge into apparatuses of waging war would also be significant facets of liberal counterinsurgencies. Demographics—particularly of the kind that tracks the volume of "surplus populations" and troublesome "military-aged-males"—frames the counterinsurgency episteme.[30] A kind of stultified and old-fashioned ethnography, premised on understanding of "adversary culture" provides the granular tools of knowledge-gathering about intransigent populations.[31] While in the War on Terror, this instrumental knowledge of "culture" has been transformed into the institution of Human Terrain Systems (mixed teams of military personnel and civilian research teams that gather everyday information about the populations to be pacified), today, there are calls for incorporating ethnographic and cultural knowledges into formal apparatuses of intelligence-gathering.[32]

If counterinsurgency is a mailed fist in a velvet glove, in counterterrorist activities the gloves come off. Kinetic operations—those that employ lethal force—characterize counterterrorism. These include the deployment in hundreds of countries around the world of special operations forces, often dispatched from "floating bases" on specially configured naval vessels, and engaged in kidnapping and assassinations on the one hand, and training of allied and proxy commando forces and gathering foreign intelligence on the other.[33] Unmanned aerial vehicles or drones—which are also used in counterinsurgencies and in conventional warfare—are central to counterterrorism. The chains of commands of drone and special operators bypass ordinary structures of the military and end directly in the White House or the offices of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director, and as the focus of the killings are often inaccessible and distant places, counterterrorism is lauded as "minimalist" and "nonintrusive."[34]

In what follows, I will shed light on the modular techniques and technologies that form the basis of both counterinsurgencies and counterterrorism operations, and will reflect on the role of local proxies.

Techniques and Technologies

Given the vast investments by the US military in a broad range of technologies, it is not surprising that many of these become incorporated into the US counterinsurgency and counterterrorism arsenal, used for lethal activities as well as surveillance and monitoring. Just as important, however, is the use of detention techniques, which serve punitive, performative, and pedagogic means.

Confinement and Detention Practices

One of the most distinct characteristics of counterinsurgency warfare is the prevalence of confinement as a technique of warfare, as opposed to slaughter.[35] Confinement and detention take several shapes: they include battlefield detentions in detention camps, offshore internment of suspects in liminal jurisdictional circumstances, and mass confinement of civilian populations intended to sever their support for irregular forces.

Detention camps such as Abu Ghraib, Camp Nama, Camp Cropper in Iraq, and the Bagram Airforce Base detention camp in Afghanistan, serve as holding and processing sites for persons suspected of being combatants, and significantly, also vast numbers of "military-aged males" who are often caught up in sweeps. The phrase "military-aged male" is a technical military designation that includes men of diverse age ranges, often between fifteen and sixty years old. Throughout the Iraq and Afghan wars, population sweeps in the wake of attacks on US forces produced neighborhood-wide detention of vast numbers of men. The genealogy of this mass detention of suspected combatants can be traced back to colonial and anticolonial counterinsurgencies.[36] The US itself had extensive prior experience with such detention in the context of the Phoenix Program in Vietnam, whose primary aim was to destroy the civilian support mechanism for the Viet Cong guerrillas.[37]

In both Iraq and Afghanistan, the aims of battlefield detention camps have been manifold. While they can act as punitive measures against combatants, more importantly they also provide occasions for intelligence-gathering via interrogation and surveillance, the use of combatants as potential hostages, and as holding tanks for *potential* combatants in contentious neighborhoods and towns. Also significantly, battlefield detention in liberal counterinsurgencies includes an element of "counterinsurgency inside the wire," or a complex of processes that further strengthen the hegemonic mechanisms deployed by the US military. These processes include extensive "re-education" programs meant to indoctrinate the detainees against *future* activity. Such re-education programs have included religious components that emphasize "moderate" sympathies.[38] Further, "counterinsurgency inside the wire" has incorporated a set of procedures within its release process that requires the release of a detainee to be guaranteed by a community or "tribal" leader "to assume responsibility for [the detainees'] post-release conduct."[39] The process in essence acts to diffuse the disciplinary mechanisms of detention through transforming the social environments of the former detainees, influencing "the detainees' web of relatives, friends, and tribesmen who were directly affected by their internment and who, by some estimates, included a half-million Iraqis,"[40]

In addition to camps and prisons detaining suspected combatants and suspicious civilians, modern liberal counterinsurgents have deployed the mass detention of civilians as another mechanism of control and pacification.

Such mass detention can occur in situ—with the enclavization of existing centers of habitation, or through the resettlement of civilian populations into newly created townships, entry and exit to which are monitored, and which are often encircled by barbed wire enclosures. Examples of the latter include the concentration camps of the Boer War, the New Villages of Malaya, the *centres de regroupement* of Algeria, and the strategic hamlets of Vietnam. As the technological ability to conduct monitoring and surveillance has improved and in counterinsurgencies where the population is primarily urban rather than disbursed in expanses of countryside, resettlement gives way to in situ encirclement. The encirclement of Gaza and the enclavization of the West Bank, using walls, seam zones, and other mechanisms of control is the best example of in situ mass confinement par excellence. The US has also extensively used such in situ mass incarceration in a range of insurgent cities in Iraq, especially Falluja and in the neighborhoods of Baghdad.[41]

The mass detention of civilians provides an occasion for what is called "population control;" preventing civilians from aiding the guerrillas with victuals, labeled "food control" is one of the main aims of controlling the population. Food control is effected through the confiscation or rationing of food, and destruction of agricultural products via defoliants (such as Agent Orange).[42] The mass incarceration of civilians is also seen as a means of pooling populations that could either act as hostages or as sources of intelligence about the movements and activities of guerrilla forces.[43] The longer-term effect of such concentration of populations and their detention or resettlement is social engineering on a mass scale. In many instances, land tenure and property ownership regimes have been transformed; community boundaries and class structures have been remodeled; vast populations have been brought into the field of vision of the state; and in the great majority of instances, a kind of forced urbanization has been effected.

Perhaps the most novel forms of detention in the War on Terror have been the range of practices that can be categorized as offshore detention. These include proxy detention via extraordinary rendition and detention in spaces that are made legally liminal in order to ensure invisibility and inaccessibility of detainees. The Guantánamo Bay detention center and Bagram Air Force base best fit the category of liminal spaces of detention. Because the Guantánamo Bay naval base is located in a corner of Cuba (secured by the US via colonial means in perpetuity), the US military and legal apparatuses have attempted to exempt it from *habeas corpus* claims of human rights lawyers. Although the US failed to prevent Guantánamo detainees from receiving legal representations, it succeeded with Bagram Air Force base, which was ruled outside US legal jurisdiction by the US Supreme Court.[44] While both the British and the French have used offshore prisons to confine rebel and revolutionary anticolonial leaders *after* trials, the pretrial indefinite detention that characterizes Guantánamo Bay is far rarer.[45] The US has claimed that these offshore detention sites are akin to prisoner-of-war camps. But it refuses to recognize the applicability of the Geneva Conventions to the detainees. Even more significant is both the indefiniteness of the duration of the War on Terror, and that many of the detainees were captured in places far from the battlefields of this putative war.

Extraordinary rendition—or detention by proxy—is in some ways less novel: where the tattered remnants of legal and normative prohibition on interrogation under torture have acted as an obstacle towards torturing detainees, the US has shipped these detainees to countries that have little legal or political constraints on their ability to extract information (often false and useless) from detainees placed under unimaginable physical and psychological distress.[46] The aforementioned Phoenix Program, most notorious for its use of tiger cages on Vietnamese detainees was ostensibly under the control of South Vietnamese forces, while the Israeli military has consistently refused to acknowledge that it was responsible for the Khiyam Detention Center operated by its proxy force, the South Lebanese Army.[47]

Remote Control Weaponry

Although there are indications that the US had developed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs, or drones) as early as the 1960s and used them for intelligence-gathering in the Vietnam War, the weapons were not provided extensive funding by either the Pentagon or the CIA, which favored spy satellites.[48] It was the technological advances in the Israeli use of remote control weaponry in the early 2000s that encouraged the US to accelerate the development of drones not only for reconnaissance but also for assassination purposes. The first known US use of a drone for an assassination took place in February 2002 in Pakistan.[49] Since then, up to 6,000 people have been killed by drones in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia, many of them civilians.[50] The primary US operators of assassination

drones are the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and the CIA. Both organizations intensively compete against one another for the control of the program, and although human rights organizations have demanded that the program be operated by the military for better oversight, the US military's JSOC is at least as secretive and unaccountable as the CIA, having been set up to operate like the private militia of the US executive branch.

The advocates of using drones for assassination defend it because it allows for a "smaller footprint," and claim that as a weapon it is more precise than most other forms of aerial bombing.[51] A former legal advisor to the Israeli military and current human rights law professor at Harvard has argued that "for actors committed to humanitarian ideals, the coupling of remoteness and precision [that drones represent] allows for the possibility of striking only those most 'deserving' players—political leaders, military commanders, and the like."[52]

The remote lethality of drones, however, is controversial even among those committed to liberal interventionism. It is the perfect vehicle for what Martin Shaw has called "risk transfer war," in which the danger to the lives of US military personnel is contained through displacement onto the bodies of the "enemy," whether civilian or combatant.[53]

What is perhaps most striking about both the language and practice of drone usage is the extent to which its advocates' language of "protection" and "precision" is—like so many other modular techniques and tactics of asymmetric and irregular warfare—about the calibration of the use of lethal force in order to make its violence palatable to the public constituencies at home.[54] This function is reinforced by the inaccessibility of the victims of drone attacks to reporters, and their invisibility (except as photographic negative silhouettes in the drone operators' crosshairs). Even more harrowingly, the targets of drone assassinations could be chosen not only because they are specifically named persons designated as targets on the basis of intelligence, but also on the basis of a broad profile (two or three "military-age males" in a location considered suspicious), a lethal process euphemistically designated "signature strikes."[55] These essentially extend the shadow of death to people simply suspected of nefarious activity—by virtue of their age, location, and physical appearance—without any solid evidence whatsoever.

Private Firms

Most militaries have intricate and dense webs of connections with private firms that provide technical and technological services and products to the military and are crucial to the logistics and operational activities of those militaries. In the War on Terror, logistics provision firms were the biggest financial beneficiaries of contracts; KBR Halliburton and Kuwait-based Agility received $39.5 billion and $7.2 billion respectively in contracts.[56] Most notably, these firms often employ "third-country nationals," or immigrant workers from countries that are not party to the war. The massive rise in the employment of such workers in menial jobs on military bases (engaged in cooking and cleaning, cutting hair, and driving goods vehicles) produces a hierarchy of labor in which the repressive labor practices replicate those from which migrant laborers everywhere suffer.[57]

However, the rise of private firms in waging war, intelligence-gathering, policing, security provision, and frontline activities is a much more recent affair.[58] The US government agencies' extensive use of corporate warriors employed by the likes of Blackwater (later Xe; currently Academi), Aegis Defense Services, Control Risks Group, Titan, and CACI, in both an arms-wielding capacity and as interrogators has rightfully attracted a great deal of attention. Among this group of firms, the most notorious are on the one hand Titan and CACI, and on the other hand Blackwater. While the former provided interrogators and translators broadly implicated in tortures in Abu Ghraib, the latter's warriors were engaged in a number of different scandals involving attacks on civilians in Iraq.[59] Just as significant is the gargantuan private intelligence-gathering apparatuses that serve both the government's military, intelligence, and domestic law-enforcement services and the voracious demand for private or industrial intelligence.[60]

In some ways the use of private warriors best embodies the transformation in waging war in a neoliberal age. Sovereign functions of the state, and its capacity to wield death, are outsourced: fighting is displaced onto persons who are categorized as "civilians;" and the exercise of violence is classified into a broad range of subcategories, from security detail to force protection to armed reconstruction or reconnaissance work, and, of course, the broad range of intelligence-gathering functions. This finessing of the different coercive functions means that the use of violence can be calibrated or justified in a diverse way, permitting a great deal of malleability in use. The

fluctuations in the applicability of laws and military regulations to private warriors further allows a degree of impunity, invisibility, and unaccountability to the private firms.

More fundamentally, a war fought by military warriors most brazenly normalizes the equation of violence with economic enterprise, and through the structure of the free market embeds the will to war in the largest number of people vested in the private firms. In a sense, such private firms effect the distribution of responsibility and the desire for violence to the broadest segments of the public, while at the same time, through the structures of corporate privacy, they severely limit public participation in the decision-making processes that go on within the firms. As such, private military forms most clearly reflect neoliberal ethos and practice: not the retreat of the state, but its reconfiguration as a machine whose primary function is the facilitation of enterprise.

Biometrics and Big Data

The fetishes for privatized intelligence-gathering and for the newest technology converge in the rapidly expanding commercial sector of biometrics and "big data." Biometrics allows the collection of biological markers (iris patterns, fingerprints, facial recognition software, and other distinct and unique bodily identifiers) in easily accessed digital forms.

The roots of biometrics lie in the old-fashioned identity card, used as a tool of surveillance and pacification by the French in Syria in the 1920s and by the British in Palestine in the 1930s.[61] As identity cards have become increasingly sophisticated, they have continuously incorporated advances in the science of identification.[62] In the counterinsurgency contexts, whether analogue or digital, they allow for tracking the movements of persons passing through checkpoints, and for more longitudinal or spatial mapping of vast numbers of peoples. In Falluja in Iraq, for example, the US issued identity cards or badges that listed "the kinship affiliations of the bearer, their place of work and residence, any detention history, and contain biometric data including fingerprints and iris scans."[63] This form of tracking is not only a passive means of intelligence-gathering, it also allows the counterinsurgent force to harass or intimidate. After gathering such data (and depositing them in the Biometrics Fusion Center in Virginia) the US military affixed posters in Falluja that announced, "We know where you are and what you are doing. Who will you trust now?"[64]

The information gathered via biometrics is only one category of data aggregated by "big data" technologies. Mining for big data, of course, occurs within a great many sectors (as well as academia) and essentially allows for the aggregation, manipulation, and interpretation of vast numbers of datapoints often collected through trawling the internet, multiple open or proprietary databases, or other digital or digitized resources. Where identity cards and biometrics are the perfect instruments of a politics of security, big data facilitates forecasting, prediction, and what Louise Amoore has called the "politics of possibility."[65] If a politics of security depends on a calculation of risks on the basis of statistical reasoning, big data, used in the service of security, counterinsurgency, or counterterrorism, provides the necessary mathematical underpinnings of decision-making simply to prevent even *the possibility* of risk.

The collection of vast amounts of data—texts of emails, electronic correspondence, and conversation metadata, recordings of conversations on landlines, mobile phone lines, or via software—by the National Security Agency (and its private contractors, including Booz Allen, which had employed Edward Snowden) is the most obvious and egregious example of mining for "big data."[66]

But such "big data" can also be collected by private firms on contract to various US agencies. The dizzying proliferation of "frontier consulting" firms, populated by former counterinsurgency, special operations, and intelligence operatives attests to the faith of government agencies in ever-broadening bodies of data guiding aid, foreign, and military policies. Among these firms, for example, is Caerus, founded by counterinsurgency supremo David Kilcullen, which uses big data to map a range of social and political processes in places such as Syria, Somalia, San Salvador, and Colombia.[67]

The Irresistible Rise of Proxies

If the concatenation of a series of modular technologies and techniques elides the reality of US counterinsurgency as a kind of biopolitics at the muzzle of a gun and US counterterrorism as thanatopolitics, the most important

lubricant of US action overseas has been the presence of willing and eager proxies. As an enthusiastic advocate of US empire, Robert Kaplan has frankly admitted, "Imperialism [is] less about conquest than about the training of local armies. Reliance on American techniques and weapons systems, and the relationship established between American officers and their third world protégés, helped give the US the access it needed around the globe."[68] Similarly, the best-known US counterinsurgent, General David Petraeus, has quoted T. E. Lawrence on the use of proxies: "Do not try to do too much with your own hands."[69]

More than any other political practice, the use of proxies allows for exogenous political relations—political and economic hierarchies, use of force, exploitation, ideologies, unequal access to resources, and forms of domination —to be translated and incorporated into endogenous actors and activities. Proxies provide the veil of "local" legitimacy. The most immediate form the use of proxies takes is the training of security forces—either in situ or in academies, schools, and bases in the US (and Europe).[70] Similarly, the presence of both more massive and permanent bases and the smaller lilypad variety overseas also requires the acquiescence, support, and protection of the host governments.[71] Most important, of course, is the intertwining of the national political and economic elites in the global webs of neoliberal economy, founded on capital accumulation and violence.[72]

Using local clients and training local security forces to engage in counterinsurgency under the tutelage of the metropolitan force allow for costs (in blood and treasure and reputation), responsibilities, accountability, and blame to be devolved from the metropolitan centers to the margins. Though dependence on local clients (many of whose elite are pursuing *their* own interests) is not without liabilities, it is nevertheless calculated to be a more effective and cost-efficient form of presence on asymmetric battlefields.[73]

The extent to which the US has depended on local clients has fluctuated over the course of the War on Terror. As the US has withdrawn its combat troops from Iraq—leaving behind private military contractors, special operations forces, and training and advisory personnel—its military doctrine has also concurrently shifted to emphasize "indirect" counterinsurgencies. Where the first version of the US *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* provided the guidelines for US troops pacifying intransigent populations, the updated 2014 version (whose name has changed to *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies*) now emphasizes "indirect" work from the outset, and any US military operation is seen as occurring entirely within the context of a "host nation."[74] Certainly, the activities of drones and special operations forces similarly require the acquiescence of host nations and the cooperation of their proxy forces in provision of intelligence, targeting data, and necessary diplomatic, political, and legal cover. The use of proxies reinforces the creation of interstitial spaces in which "extraterritoriality, legal and procedural ambiguity," and a calibrated visibility/invisibility create the conditions of possibility of rule from a distance, freed from demands for accountability or transparency.[75]

Conclusions

An attempt to cloak the calibrated use of force within a discourse either of humanitarian rescue, or of scientifically precise wielding of violence has been the distinguishing feature of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism warfighting by the US in the long twentieth century, but especially in the War on Terror. The convergence of neoliberal managerial innovations and military doctrine has meant the emergence of a series of modular techniques and tools that can be deployed in a range of combinations across different contexts. These include detention, the use of robotic wars, mass surveillance, and the employment of private military firms.

What characterizes the range of specific tools and technologies is their modularity, which lends them malleability and flexibility, their distribution and displacement of accountability to a range of external actors (whether private firms or local proxies), and their careful calibration of visibility and invisibility. Through these mechanisms, warfare can be waged cloaked in a discourse of legality, humanitarianism, and right, while transparency and accountability are kept to a minimum.

Perhaps most significantly, what counterterrorism and counterinsurgency warfare do is to provide technical solutions to what are ultimately political problems. By always perfecting short-term responses to fundamental questions of global inequality in power and resources, these forms of warfare make acceptable the use of violent intervention in addressing political contestation and revolt, conflicts and insurgencies. But these technical solutions also have another effect. In the new colonial context, they make governance the work of militaries. Conquered or subjugated populations are transformed into adversaries who are kept in good order through the application of

ever-increasingly refined lethal methods of control.

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Notes:

([1]) I use the terminology (counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and War on Terror) that have become predominant in the military discourse. Although I do recognize that all these terms are laden with the politics out of which they have emerged, I nevertheless use them here in order to subject them to critical analysis. On Rostow, see Milne (2008).

([2]) Gregory (2004); Feichtinger and Malinowski (2012); Khalili (2013b).

([3]) Gorka and Kilcullen (2011).

([4]) Kilcullen (2006; 2009a, 2009b; 2010); Nagl (2005); Porch (2013); US Army and Marine Corps (2007; 2014).

([5]) Khalili (2013b). The counterinsurgents themselves use the terminology "population-centric" vs "enemy-centric" counterinsurgency to distinguish between wars that incorporate the use of humanitarian and developmental practice and discourse as opposed to asymmetric warfare that has no compunctions about using violence and terror without dressing it in the language of civilization or progress.

([6]) Gregory (2006); Khalili (2013b: 206–210).

([7]) Woodward (2002).

([8]) Crumpton (2012).

([9]) Dadkhah (2008); Lambeth (2005).

([10]) Shahrani (2002).

([11]) ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom were integrated from 2008/2009 onwards.

([12]) Woodward (2004); Ricks (2006).

([13]) McChrystal (2013); Scahill (2013); McKelvey (2007).

([14]) Hersh (2004); Fay (2004); McKelvey (2007).

([15]) US Army and Marine Corps (2007); Kilcullen (2009a; 2010).

([16]) Ricks (2009); Broadwell and Loeb (2012).

([17]) Kilcullen (2008).

([18]) Khalili (2013b).

([19]) Nagl (2010); Petraeus (2006).

([20]) Woodward (2010); Gates (2014).

([21]) Khalili (2012a); Mazetti (2013).

(^{22}) Department of Defense (2012).

(^{23}) Foucault (2003: 241); Foucault (2000: 416).

(^{24}) Khalili (2012a; 2014a).

(^{25}) Khalili (2011a; 2014b); Weizman (2007).

(^{26}) Anghie (2005); Hajjar (2003; 2005); Mégret (2006).

(^{27}) Khalili (2013b: 65–100); Begg and Brittain (2006).

(^{28}) For example, health clinics can be used as a site of intelligence-gathering (as they were in Afghanistan; Barnard et al. (2008)), roads can be used for the movement of materiel; and markets are excellent spaces for measuring the success of counterinsurgency efforts (Kilcullen (2008); Khalili (2014b)).

(^{29}) Rabinow (1989: 150); Gottman (1943).

(^{30}) Therborn (2009); Khalili (2013b).

(^{31}) Johnson and Zellen (2014); Davis (2010); McFate (2005); McFate et al. (2012).

(^{32}) Gavriel (2014).

(^{33}) Khalili (2013a; 2014a).

(^{34}) Lujan (2013); Mazetti (2013); Scahill (2013).

(^{35}) Khalili (2013b).

(^{36}) Elkins (2005); Kelly (1965: 189–190); Heggoy (1972: 182); Short (1975).

(^{37}) Valentine (1990).

(^{38}) Khalili (2013b: 141–142).

(^{39}) Brooks and Miller, (2009: 130–131).

(^{40}) Azarva (2009).

(^{41}) Khalili (2011b; 2013b).

(^{42}) Khalili (2013b: 193–196).

(^{43}) Khalili (2013b: 172–212).

(^{44}) Hafetz (2011).

(^{45}) For exceptions see Horesh (2010), Khalili (2013b: 65–100).

(^{46}) Khalili (2013b: 101–138); also see The Rendition Project at http://www.therenditionproject.org.uk/.

(^{47}) Khalili (2013b: 105–115).

(^{48}) Jones (1997).

(^{49}) Sifton (2012).

(^{50}) See the data available at the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/category/projects/drones/drones-graphs/.

(^{51}) Brennan (2012); Koh (2010).

(^{52}) Blum (2012: 11).

([53]) Shaw (2005).

([54]) Khalili (2012b).

([55]) Becker and Shane (2012).

([56]) Fifield (2013).

([57]) Li (Forthcoming), Lipman (2009); Stillman (2011).

([58]) Silverstein (2000); Scahill (2007); Chatterjee (2004); Singer (2003; 2004; 2007).

([59]) Fay (2004); Kinsey (2009: 12).

([60]) Priest and Arkin (2011).

([61]) Khalili (2011b: 421). Also see Tawil-Suri (2010).

([62]) Amoore (2006); Department of Defense (2007); Graham (2009).

([63]) Khalili (2013b: 200).

([64]) Shachtman (2007).

([65]) Amoore (2013).

([66]) Belcher (2013: 165–194); Greenwald (2014).

([67]) On the work of Caerus, see Kilcullen (2013).

([68]) Kaplan (2005: 48).

([69]) Petraeus (2006: 3).

([70]) Gill (2004); Khalili (forthcoming).

([71]) Lutz (2009); Vine (2011).

([72]) Fanon (1963: 148–205).

([73]) Khalili (2013b: 246–248; forthcoming).

([74]) US Army and Marine Corps (2014).

([75]) Khalili (2010a: 78); also Khalili (forthcoming).

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