

Change No. 1

## FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5, C1

Headquarters  
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# Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies

1. Change 1 to FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5, 13 May 2014, amends text as necessary.
2. A plus sign (+) marks new material.
3. FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5, 13 May 2014, is changed as follows:

### **Remove Old Pages**

pages 1-13 through 1-14  
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4. File this transmittal sheet in front of the publication for reference purposes.

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**FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5, C1**  
**2 June 2014**

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## COMPREHENSIVE EFFORT

1-47. A comprehensive effort, at a minimum, incorporates all the capabilities of U.S. and host-nation governments, and may include intergovernmental and regional organizations, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to address the root causes of the insurgency, in conjunction with military operations aimed at the insurgents themselves. This is difficult because many organizations will be operating in the same area, some conducting combat operations and others using non-lethal methods such as education programs and humanitarian assistance. Each organization will have different perspectives or interests. Foreign area officers may be essential in ensuring these various organizations work in a comprehensive effort. Some organizations that may be part of a comprehensive effort are—

- Other governments' agencies.
- Multinational forces.
- Multinational corporations and contractors.
- Intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations.
- NGOs.
- Private sector corporations.
- Other organizations that wield diplomatic, informational, and economic power.

1-48. These various organizations may work with, in parallel to, separately from, or counter to U.S. government and civilian agencies supporting counterinsurgency efforts. Those organizations whose goals align at least partially with U.S. government goals frequently have capabilities that, if properly synchronized and coordinated, can be critical to achieving success in counterinsurgency operations. Aligning U.S. military, NGO, and intergovernmental organization capabilities requires collaboration and cooperation focused toward a common goal. This can be more difficult than working with other U.S. government agencies. Where military operations typically demand unity of command, the challenge for military and civilian leaders is to forge unity of effort among the diverse array of actors involved in a counterinsurgency. Often, the legal, cultural, and operational requirements prevent direct collaboration between U.S. land forces and non-U.S. civilian organizations. U.S. forces may encounter NGOs not aligned with any insurgent faction who are providing humanitarian assistance. These organizations can be neutral or hostile to U.S. policy goals. Commanders should handle such groups carefully and professionally. Commanders work to understand the objectives and priorities of each organization. Unity of effort between U.S. forces and host-nation forces is particularly critical. Understanding these organizations is essential to understanding the operational environment and shaping effects on organizations that are hostile or neutral to U.S. policy goals. (See JP 3-08 for more information on NGOs.)

## UNITY OF COMMAND AND EFFORT

1-49. *Unity of command* is the operation of all forces under a single responsible commander who has the requisite authority to direct and employ those forces in pursuit of a common purpose (JP 3-0). Where possible, counterinsurgency leaders achieve unity of command by establishing and maintaining formal command or support relationships. While designated officers will exercise unity of command of military forces, such relationships will not usually include nonmilitary U.S. government organizations engaged in a counterinsurgency mission. (See ADRP 5-0 for more information on unity of command.)

1-50. Unity of command of military forces is operationally desirable and important for the military to establish. However, unity of command is almost impossible to achieve among all of the various actors in a counterinsurgency. Differing political objectives, national caveats, the legal limitations on the use of force, and sensitivities about subordinating national forces to those of other states or intergovernmental organizations often preclude strong command relationships. While agreements that establish a multinational force provide a legal foundation for determining the scope and limitations on authorities, responsibilities, command, support, or other relationships, the reality might be less clear. Unity of command is one of the most sensitive and difficult to resolve issues in a counterinsurgency.

1-51. When unity of command with part or all of the force, including nonmilitary elements, is not possible, commanders work to achieve unity of effort. *Unity of effort* is coordination and cooperation toward common objectives, even if the participants are not necessarily part of the same command or organization, which is the product of successful unified action (JP 1). In a counterinsurgency operation, an example of

unity of effort could be a military commander and a civilian leader ensuring that governance and economic lines of effort are fully coordinated with military operations. Unity of effort among nationally, culturally, and organizationally distinct partners is difficult to maintain, given their different layers of command. To achieve unity of effort requires participants to overcome cultural barriers and set aside parochial agendas. It also requires that each organization understand the capabilities and limitations of the others.

## **COORDINATION**

1-52. In counterinsurgency operations, coordination efforts should include key participants from the outset. The joint commander, through the strategic concept, works with the engaged civilian organizations to build an interagency coordination plan during the joint operation planning process. Subordinate joint force commanders and Army commanders also build civilian organization participation into their operations plans. This is essential in integrating other government agencies and NGOs. Within an area of responsibility and a joint operations area, appropriate decisionmaking structures are established at combatant command, joint task force headquarters, and tactical levels in order to coordinate and resolve military, political, and humanitarian issues.

1-53. The complex diplomatic, informational, military, and economic context of insurgency and counterinsurgency precludes military leaders from exercising unity of command over civilian organizations—and they should not try to do so. Interagency partners, NGOs, and private organizations have many interests and agendas that military forces cannot control. In addition, the degree of independence of local institutions affects their legitimacy to the population. However, military leaders should make every effort to ensure that counterinsurgency actions are as well integrated as possible, taking into consideration the distinct mission, need for independence, and security requirements of other organizations. Coordination between the various actors in a counterinsurgency is essential.

1-54. U.S. government agencies should participate in coordination meetings to ensure integration with military and host-nation plans. At the joint headquarters level, the commander establishes joint interagency coordination groups. A joint interagency coordination group provides timely, usable information and advice from an interagency perspective to the commander. Joint interagency coordination groups share and integrate information and assist with synchronization, training, and exercises. Joint interagency coordination groups may include representatives from other federal departments and agencies, state and local authorities, and liaison officers from other commands and DOD components. The interagency representatives and liaison officers are the subject matter experts for their respective agencies and commands. They provide the critical bridge between the commander and interagency organizations. (See JP 3-08 for more information on joint and interagency coordination.)

1-55. Coordination between NGOs may be difficult or impossible. Direct interaction among various organizations may be impractical or undesirable because of various goals of NGOs and a NGO's desire to be seen by the society as autonomous. The differing goals and fundamental independence of NGOs and local organizations usually prevent formal relationships governed by command authority. In the absence of such relationships, military leaders seek to cooperate with other participants to contribute to achieving counterinsurgency objectives. Informal or less authoritative relationships include coordination and liaison. Basic awareness and general information sharing may be all that is possible. Nevertheless, NGOs and other organizations may resist or refuse cooperation because of the appearance of cooperating with military forces. However, government and internal agencies offer links to the various NGOs so coordination can be accomplished without directly interacting with NGOs and causing potential security issues for them.

1-56. Commanders are responsible for coordinating the activities of military forces and cooperative nonmilitary organizations in their areas of operations. To carry out this responsibility, military and civilian leaders may establish a coordinating structure, such as an area coordination center or civil-military operations center at each subordinate political level of the host-nation government. Area coordination centers and civil-military operations centers provide forums for sharing information, conducting coordination and liaison, and ensuring an effective and efficient division of labor. Active commander involvement ensures coordination, establishes liaison (formal and informal), and shares information. Influencing and persuading groups outside a commander's authority requires skill and subtlety. In some cases, informal meetings with a civilian group at a civil-military operations center will grow to an informal

lifeline to infiltrate Baghdad with foreign fighters, money, and other resources that fueled the insurgency. With the loss of Fallujah, al Qaim became al Qaeda in Iraq's newfound sanctuary.

Al Qaeda in Iraq arrived with offers of partnering with al Qaim's tribes to defeat and expel the Americans. They promised the indigenous population money and other resources for their support. As Muslims and Arabs, al Qaeda in Iraq members exhorted that it was their obligation, their Jihad, to fight the crusaders. After all, the Americans, supposedly ignorant of tribal customs, religion, and traditions, allegedly had disrespected and dishonored the people of al Qaim and a patriotic resistance had already formed in the district. The tribes of al Qaim saw the al Qaeda movement as the answer to their problem with the Americans. The tribes, together with al Qaeda in Iraq, felt that the time was ripe to rid the area of the infidel occupiers.

Al Qaim tribes varied in available resources and were incapable of defeating the American occupiers on their own. For example, the Albu-Mahal tribe, the strongest tribe in the area, organized and resourced the Hamza Battalion specifically to fight the Americans. However, it, along with the other tribal militias, lacked the weaponry, ammunition, and other equipment to win such a fight on their own. Al Qaeda in Iraq's offer was tempting and most of the tribes accepted.

As time went on it became apparent that al Qaeda in Iraq's offer was deceptive; this partnership was not what it seemed. Al Qaeda in Iraq provided weaponry and funding, but in return they demanded to lead the Jihad with the intent of first destroying and then transforming the social fabric of the tribes and al Qaim. Al Qaeda in Iraq started by taking over the smuggling routes, skimming large profits and killing those that resisted. They then imposed a radical form of Sharia on the community with fanatical punishments for transgressors. Religion was used to justify al Qaeda in Iraq's actions, which included marriages to the local women, not allowing cigarettes, the ban of music and films, and the common intimidation tactic of beheading those that resisted.

3rd Battalion 6th Marines (3/6) executed Operation IRON FIST the first week of October, attacking from east to west through the town of Sadah and eastern Karabila, ultimately stopping at the Emerald Wadi in the center of the al Qaim region. They built four combat outposts, Chosin, Iwo Jima, Belleau Wood, and Khe Sahn, and left Marines and Iraqis in place, providing a combined, permanent, persistent, presence.

The next clearing operation was conducted the first week in November by 3/6 and 2/1 commanded by Regimental Combat Team 2. This operation cleared the Husaybah, Karabilah, Sadah and Ubaydi areas of all insurgents. Immediately upon clearing the areas, 3/6 began constructing combat outposts in all of the cities.

By late November 3/6 had constructed 14 combat outposts in the areas from Husaybah to Ubaydi. Each combat outpost consisted of a U. S. Marine platoon and an Iraqi Army platoon or company. Those positions completed and reflected combined, permanent, persistent presence, where the Marines and Iraqi Army lived together and among the people.

The next step was to engage the people. Mission analysis led to assigning company areas based on the tribal distribution. The idea was to link a company with a tribe. This was not an exact science because the tribes were intermingled, but they did locate companies in areas where a majority of a tribe resided. The next step was a concerted drive to recruit tribesmen into the police force. The Marines solicited help from the Sheikhs to nominate men from their tribes, and started developing police stations near the combat outposts. This would allow the Marines and Iraqi Army forces to partner with the local police forces in those areas and further engender trust and confidence from the local people.

Moving goods across the Iraqi and Syrian border was closely connected to the local economy. Undermining this trade would jeopardize a fragile relationship that U.S. forces worked hard to develop. In fact, U.S. forces had learned from the sheikhs

that disruption of trade was one of the major grievances the locals had against al Qaeda in Iraq. Local tribes agreed to allow U.S. forces to stop and inspect all vehicles coming into the country to ensure no foreign fighters, money, or weapons were entering Iraq. The tribes also agreed to help with the inspection. New local police largely conducted these inspections with the Iraqi Army (with Marines in overwatch.) The tribes had picked the Iraqi government's side in the struggle against al Qaeda in Iraq and wanted to stop foreign fighters, money, and weapons from entering Iraq as much as the U.S. forces did.

2-11. Understanding is necessary to begin planning the initial development of measures of effectiveness and performance. The commander must understand what has happened in an operational environment and determine the nature, scope, and severity of its problems. A situation is usually more complicated than it seems when the military force first becomes involved. Understanding an operational environment is a collaborative effort of the unified action partners. These partners may include U.S. government military and civilian personnel, international civilian and military personnel, and host-nation civilian and military personnel. To the maximum extent possible, the military force and unified action partners strive to have a common situational understanding from the beginning of an operation. If the partnering agencies do not have the same situational understanding, they can quickly find themselves working at odds with each other. Commanders will rarely have enough time to fully understand an operational environment. Understanding an operational environment is a continued and iterative process that will continue throughout an operation.

2-12. An *area of operations* is an operational area defined by the joint force commander for land and maritime forces that should be large enough to accomplish their missions and protect their forces (JP 3-0). For land operations, an area of operations includes subordinate areas of operations as well.

2-13. A commander's area of operations may be relatively static, but people, weapons, commodities, and information continuously flow through an area of operations. An area of operations can cross physical structures, such as roads and rivers, and span diverse population groups. Fabricated borders that divide natural groupings can create problems in understanding an area of operations. For example, cross-border ties allow insurgents safe havens outside of a tactical unit's area of operations. Moreover, international boundaries often divide population groups. The span of an insurgency may be far larger than the defined area of operations and areas outside the area of operations may be relevant to a commander. For example, areas outside a commander's area of operations may provide a safe haven for an insurgency, or an adjacent state may support an insurgency. In an insurgency, an area of interest may be large.

2-14. The *area of interest* is that area of concern to the commander, including the area of influence, areas adjacent thereto, and extending into enemy territory. This area also includes areas occupied by enemy forces who could jeopardize the accomplishment of the mission (JP 3-0). It is the area in which events could have significant impact on areas of operations. An area of interest can be large relative to the area of operations. When defining an area of interest, commanders should consider the operational variables. (See JP 3-0 for more information on an area of influence.)

2-15. Commanders analyze operational variables to understand the operational environment in which they are conducting operations. An operational environment is not static; it continues to evolve. Introducing units into an operational environment causes shifts and changes. As a result, commanders, their respective staffs, and all Soldiers and Marines must continuously reassess an operational environment for changing conditions. Moreover, in addition to understanding U.S. interests and desired end states in an environment, a commander must understand the environment from three additional perspectives: those of the host nation, the enemy, and the population.

## POLITICAL

2-16. The political variable describes the distribution of responsibility and power at all levels of governance—formally constituted authorities, as well as informal or covert political powers. The counterinsurgent seeks to understand not just the formal political system, such as political parties and elected officials, but also the informal systems of political influence, such as ethnic groups and other centers of power. There is a connection between the political variable and the social variable. For example,

## PART TWO

# Insurgencies

Part two provides doctrine to help understand an insurgency. While the first part provides the context of an insurgency, the second part provides a discussion of an insurgency within that context. Chapter 4 provides information about insurgency prerequisites and fundamentals. It helps commanders and staffs understand why an insurgency may form and how and why it acts. Chapter 5 then provides a description of an insurgency's threat characteristics.

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## Chapter 4

### Insurgency Prerequisites and Fundamentals

4-1. Several factors are important in analyzing any particular insurgency. Commanders and staffs must perform this analysis within an insurgency's operational environment. Commanders and staffs consider when an insurgency could start or what the prerequisites are for a particular insurgency. Commanders and staffs also consider a particular insurgency's strategy and its eight dynamics. This provides a means to analyze an insurgency.

### INTRASTATE WAR

4-2. One way commanders and staffs view insurgencies is in the context of intrastate conflict. An intrastate conflict is as war or conflict between a constituted government and its people or representative factions from the people. It is a war within a state versus a war between two or more nation states. Intrastate conflict directly relates to insurgencies. Other types of intrastate conflicts are insurgencies that differ only in the amount of popular support or the amount of governmental capacity. Commanders and staffs should not only consider an insurgency as an intrastate conflict. Insurgent movements may operate in multiple countries, as their desired end state may be regional, transnational, or global. The types of intrastate conflicts include rebellions (also referred to as insurrections), revolutions, civil wars, and coup d'états.

4-3. A rebellion (also known as an insurrection) may be fomented by a group that challenges state control. A rebellion is usually manifested by acts of violence when the state is unable or unwilling to address the group's concerns. Another insurgency may use a rebellion if it can gain enough popular support to engage in large scale unrest or open conflict with the governing authority. Rebellions are forms of insurgency in which an organized group is leading the population, the causes of instability exist, and the movement enjoys some passive support among the population. Under most international laws it is a crime to incite, assist, or engage in violent actions against a constituted government. The Geneva Convention states that "Every government has a right to put down rebellion within its borders and to punish the insurgents in accordance with its penal laws." (See the final record of the Diplomatic Conference of Geneva of 1949 vol. II section B, page 121 for more information on insurrections.)

4-4. A revolution is a popular insurgency with plans to overthrow a government and transform its society and government from one form of government to another. Revolutions generally evolve from a rebellion, but in revolutions popular support comes in the form of a fully mobilized population, which differs from simply passive or active support. A fully mobilized population is a part of a revolution and it is generally

seeking fundamental lasting change in a society's political, economic, or social order. A significant distinction between a revolution and a counterinsurgency is a requirement of the host-nation military, government, and civil authorities to prepare, plan, and conduct counterrevolution, and not simply counterinsurgency. The main difference is the need to reintegrate the mobilized population and not only reintegrate members of the insurgency. Although a coup d'état can resemble a revolution in that it can quickly overthrow a government, this overthrow is generally done rapidly and secretly during a coup d'état versus a rapid fully mobilization of the population during a revolution.

4-5. Civil wars are condition-based conflicts beginning with an insurgency. Once the insurgency achieves certain characteristics of organization and resembles an alternate government, the conflict reaches the state of civil war. This is often characterized by performing tasks associated with a state and having a defined government. If the insurgency loses the ability to meet these criteria, the status or state of the insurgency is no longer that of a civil war. The insurgent movement may attempt to gain outside recognition by calling the conflict a civil war, as a civil war tends to afford international recognition and legal implications as a competing group and not an illegal movement. According to the Geneva Convention, the criteria of a civil war is "that the insurgents must have an organization purporting to have the characteristics of a State; that the insurgent civil authority must exercise de facto authority over persons within a determinate territory; that the armed forces must act under the direction of the organized civil authority and be prepared to observe the ordinary laws of war; that the insurgent civil authority must agree to be bound by the provisions of the Convention." (See the final record of the Diplomatic Conference of Geneva of 1949 vol. II section B, page 121 for more information on civil wars.)

4-6. Recognized antigovernment elements in a civil war may be classified as belligerents and not insurgencies. A belligerent, though generally a sovereign state, can be a non-sovereign state if it is recognized by the international community (by two or more states or organizations like the United Nations), organized, and is providing services to the population within its controlled areas. In the case where antigovernment forces meet the criteria of a state during a civil war, they achieve sufficient international recognition, and they may achieve belligerent status rather than insurgent status. Although status may change, counterinsurgency operations, by government forces, generally remain the same at the theater through lower tactical levels. The difference between a group being classified as an insurgency or a belligerent can affect the overall status of U.S. involvement, as a belligerent has international recognition.

4-7. +A faction that employs a coup d'état seeks to overthrow the governing authority by a quick decisive action by an internal faction within the government. Usually, this is the military or part of the security apparatus. A coup d'état may or may not result in an insurgency, as part of society may reject the change. Moreover, it is possible for an active insurgency to use a coup d'état to seize control over a government. With a coup d'état, a small group can kill or remove a leader and the leadership's supporters and assume control of a state. The main point of a coup d'état is that it is a means to change a regime by actors who are part of the government.

4-8. Intrastate conflicts present different challenges than interstate wars, since they often take place among the population and, therefore, human rights violations and sectarian violence are more likely. Secondly, intrastate conflicts can spread to adjacent countries that have governments or portions of the population that share beliefs or goals with one side or the other.

4-9. The nature of an intrastate conflict is a grievance between segments of a state's population with its constituted government. There can be a single root cause or a variety of causes perceived as so severe that they impact the population's social contract with its government. There are many likely contributors to intrastate conflicts, including perceived weak, illegitimate, corrupt, or overly oppressive governments, ethnic or racial tensions, religious conflicts, economic stresses, or a need for land reform. Often an intrastate conflict causes the formation and growth of insurgencies and other intrastate conflicts. Commanders and staffs must understand the nature of intrastate conflicts even if they are poorly defined. If a commander and staff misdiagnose an intrastate conflict, they can fail to properly identify and address the root cause of instability and the nature of the threat.



financial aid to an insurgency. In such cases, commanders and staffs need to determine possible means to undermine this support. For example, the use of counter threat finance may prevent this funding. On the other hand, resourcing can be local. Insurgencies can have access to black markets or other resources that they can use to buy weapons. In these cases, stopping these transactions may be an effective means of blocking insurgent resources.

4-26. An insurgency with state sponsorship has important advantages and disadvantages. State sponsorship can offer resources, sanctuary, and training. These are important advantages for any insurgency because they offer an insurgent group the ability to organize and become tactically and operationally more effective. On the other hand, state sponsorship can undermine the support of the local population. An insurgency that depends on outside state support can be perceived as artificial and may not have deep support from the local population. While recruits may join an insurgency by increased resources, recruits attracted because of the possibility of wealth may be less effective. However, if an insurgency uses outside support to build a political base before starting military operations, insurgents mitigate these risks. For the counterinsurgent, understanding the nature of state support allows the commander and staff to undermine that support before an insurgency begins.

4-27. A group that already has resourcing could potentially become an insurgency. Groups tied to black markets, such as those selling drugs, may seek to resist or nullify the government's ability to stop their activities. While they may exploit the population and create a root cause, the protection of their resources is the essential reason for the development of their insurgency. The means for an insurgency can play an interrelated role with the motive and opportunity.

4-28. When commanders and staffs desire an additional method of analysis other than opportunity, motive, and means, the prerequisites of an insurgency can be represented as a vulnerable population, leadership for direction, and a lack of government control. A population is vulnerable if the people have real or perceived grievances that insurgents can exploit. Moreover, there must be an insurgent leadership element that can direct the frustrations of a vulnerable population. The insurgency must act on real or perceived lack of governmental control, which can allow insurgents to operate with little or no interference from security forces or other agencies. This means that the government is not providing for the people. This may refer to inadequate services or an overly harsh and repressive government. When all three exist in an area, an insurgency can operate with increased freedom of movement, gain the support of the people, and become entrenched over time.

## **INSURGENCY FUNDAMENTALS**

4-29. Few insurgencies fit neatly into a rigid classification. However, insurgencies do have common characteristics that can provide a basis for building a more accurate picture of an insurgency and help commanders understand the situation. The fundamentals of insurgencies help commanders and staffs analyze insurgent strategies, objectives, and tactics. Each fundamental is important independently, but analyzing the interactions and relationships between the fundamentals as a whole is the key to understanding an insurgency. The two insurgency fundamentals are—

- Insurgent strategies.
- Dynamics of insurgency.

## **INSURGENT STRATEGIES**

4-30. An insurgency's strategy is determined by its own ends, ways, and means. There are a range of ends an insurgency might seek, to include replacing the state, separating from the state, changing the policy of the state, nullifying state control in an area of a state, and securing a place in a state's political system. These basic ends will influence the ways an insurgency uses. However, that influence is not deterministic, and the way an insurgency fights is also influenced by its resourcing. In addition, the relationships between an insurgency's ends, ways, and means is also influenced by numerous important variables. Those variables include but are not limited to—

- How an insurgency gains legitimacy and controls a population.
- Whether the insurgency is political centric, violence centric, or economic centric.
- The relationship of the insurgency to the economy.

- Organization.
- Sense of time.
- Adaptability.

### **Insurgent Legitimacy and Control**

4-31. How an insurgency gains legitimacy and controls a population within a society helps determine strategic behavior. Some insurgencies have a clear political message and bring that message to their society. Others may try to use economic black markets and the wealth that comes from them to make their population dependent on the insurgency. Others may try to use coercion to control their society. Most will use a combination of many different methods. However, how an insurgency controls the local population or tries to gain legitimacy helps determine that insurgency's strategic behavior.

### **Political, Economic, and Violence-Centered Insurgencies**

4-32. +All insurgencies have a political aim which may be to change their society or simply to protect a black market. While all insurgencies involve violence, politics, and economics, some insurgencies are focused on politics, some are focused on violence, and some are focused on economics. This can change over time. Many insurgencies develop well defined political goals which shape their strategy and an infrastructure to promote and refine them. In these insurgencies, the role of violence is probably secondary to the role of building political support. In this case an insurgency's aims are more likely to be changing policy, fighting into the state's political system, or replacing the state. Violence is likely to be more organized as the political support grows for an insurgency. Other insurgencies are focused on violence, lacking the ability or incentive to build a political infrastructure and gain wide political support. These types of +insurgencies are more likely to develop networked organizations with connections to criminal organizations or other insurgent groups with similar interests. Finally, an insurgency may be focused on economics. These insurgencies are likely to want simply to stop state interferences with their activities. As such, these insurgencies may limit the use of violence, unless the state attempts to interfere with their economic base, whether in the legitimate economy or in black or gray markets.

### **The Relationship of an Insurgency to the Economy**

4-33. Commanders and staffs must understand the relationship of the insurgency to the economy to understand an insurgency's strategic behavior. An insurgency could have little dependence on the local economy and receive all its support from the outside. Insurgents could also gain resources from the formal economy in which they operate and sustain themselves through kidnapping or theft. An insurgency could also maintain an economic base on the black market, or it could control a war economy. In all cases, an insurgency's relationship with the economy will affect its behavior. For example, if it is dependent on outside support, the aims of its outside support will influence the insurgency's behavior. Moreover, outside support influences tactical and operational behavior. An insurgency that does not depend on the local population is more likely to use violence against the population. (See paragraphs 2-25 through 2-31 for more information the economic variable.)

### **Insurgent Organizational Structure**

4-34. The organization of an insurgency is also important. Insurgent organizations can be conceptualized along a continuum from a formal and hierarchical structure to a networked structure. This structure affects organization because it affects control over actions and the scale of tactical actions. Without a hierarchical structure, it is difficult to control individuals or groups within an insurgency. This leads to attacks that can affect the legitimacy of an insurgency. Moreover, while a networked organization may use terrorist tactics, it is also difficult for a networked insurgency to mass combat power. It is also difficult to negotiate a settlement with a networked insurgency because no single person or small group is in charge. A networked insurgency changes the dynamics of individuals in an insurgency, as no one is likely to be essential to the continuation of a networked insurgency. A hierarchical insurgency may be easier to penetrate than a networked insurgency, as a few individuals may be essential to the insurgency and control the actions of members of the insurgency. (See paragraphs 4-88 through 4-103 for more information on a networked insurgency.)

planning. Commanders and staffs must understand the connections between a physical environment and its effect on an insurgency. (See chapter 2 for more information on a physical environment.)

### **Fifth Dynamic—External Support**

4-62. Historically, insurgencies are less likely to succeed without some form of external support. This support can be in the form of—

- Moral support.
- Political support.
- Resources, such as money, weapons, food, advisors, training, and foreign fighters.
- Sanctuary, such as secure training sites, operational bases over a border, or protection from extradition.

4-63. Governments providing support to an insurgency normally share interests or a common ideology with the insurgency. Ethnic enclaves or diasporas in third-party countries can provide significant support, even if a country's government is not actively supporting an insurgency. For example, global diasporas can provide significant resources for an insurgency, even if no government is providing active support. (See FM 3-05, chapter 2, for more information on unconventional warfare.)

4-64. +However, with external support comes a degree of dependency on that support. Limiting access to external support is a possible means of influencing or changing the actions of an insurgency. Limiting external support provides one means to affect an insurgency indirectly. External support can help to shape an insurgency and the outcome of an insurgency. In the case of the insurgency in Sri Lanka, external support was essential to the success of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Large diasporas provided the Liberation Tigers of Tamil sanctuary and resources. This allowed them to gain dominance over other insurgent groups and to wage a long and bloody insurgency against the government of Sri Lanka.

### External Support for the Tamil Tigers

Eleven years of discrimination by the Sinhala majority against the Tamil minority reached a breaking point in Sri Lanka during the Black July riots of 1983. Soon after, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam emerged as the most capable Tamil insurgent group, prepared to wage a campaign of violence and terror against the Sri Lankan state and non-Tamil civilians. The operational environment was complex, with insurgents fighting insurgents while also fighting the government, as occurred with Sunni and Shia groups in Iraq. At various stages of the conflict, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam fought against the Sri Lankan state but also against other antigovernment insurgent groups. The most prominent of these groups was the Janatha Vimukthi Perumana, a Marxist-Leninist group that blended violence and left-wing politics before laying down its arms in the mid to late 1990s.

This case illustrates the importance of non-state actors in an operational environment. While the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam was indeed a non-state actor in its own right, the group relied on its global diaspora for a range of support activities. Following the ethnic riots of 1983, thousands of Tamil refugees fled overseas to India, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. This sowed the seeds for the Tamil diaspora and the transnational nature of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's insurgency. The global diaspora was a major part of the organization's fundraising and propaganda network. Furthermore, the transnational diaspora network provided funding and weaponry to sustain the Tigers for most of the group's existence.

In addition to enjoying the largesse of a well-organized and entrepreneurial diaspora, the insurgents relied on co-ethnics in India for sanctuary, which was essential in the group's early years. Since the Tamils effectively controlled the Jaffna peninsula in the northeast of the country, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had a home base from which it could train, plan, and execute attacks against the military. Furthermore, across the Palk Straits in Tamil Nadu, India, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam was able to rely on the support—both active and passive—of thousands of ethnic Tamils who sympathized with the group.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam took advantage of the benefits of globalization, developing a truly global network of contacts abroad, and soon engaged in weapons procurement activities throughout East and Southeast Asia, in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ukraine, the Balkans, Lebanon, and other well-known arms markets. At various points throughout the insurgency, the Tigers collaborated with other terrorists groups as diverse as the Revolutionary Armed Forces Colombia, the African National Congress in South Africa, Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Hezb-i-Islami Gulbuddin in Afghanistan, the Japanese Red Army, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. In 1996, the insurgents acquired U.S. Stinger-class missiles from the Kurdistan Worker's Party and used these weapons two years later to shoot down a Sri Lankan civilian Lionair jet.

Over time, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam distinguished itself as perhaps the most lethal insurgent force in modern history. By the mid-late 1990s, the group boasted a navy, an air force, and an elite suicide commando unit used to assassinate several heads of state and numerous counterinsurgency force commanders. As a pioneer of suicide techniques, the Tamil Tigers devoted significant resources to two operational wings that functioned as suicide strike teams, the Black Tigers and the Sea Tigers. A "no-holds barred" approach to the conflict led the counterinsurgency force and the insurgents to routinely and systematically slaughter each other, while also destroying Sri Lanka's infrastructure and displacing much of its civilian population.

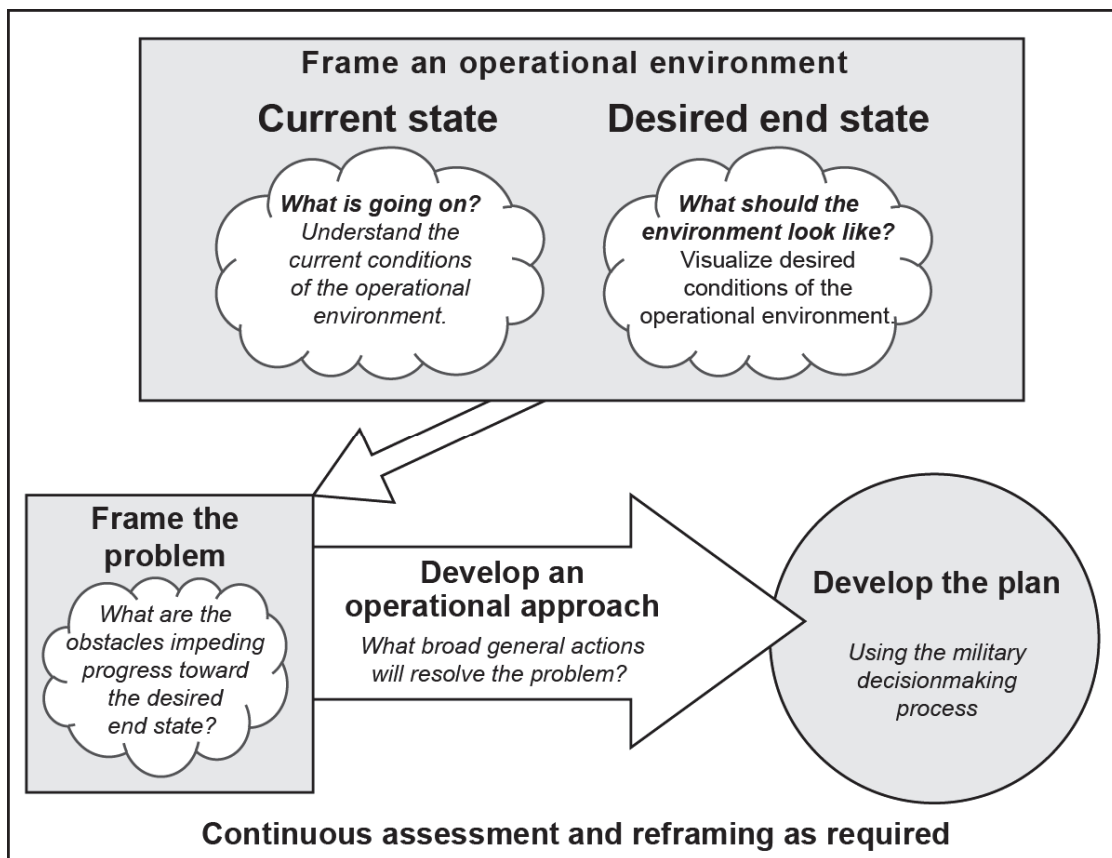


Figure 7-1. Design concept

7-15. By definition, design is iterative, and reframing the problem as necessary is essential. Reframing the problem involves revisiting earlier hypotheses, conclusions, and decisions that underpin the current operational approach. Reframing can lead to a new problem statement and operational approach, resulting in an entirely new plan. By their nature, counterinsurgency efforts require repeated assessments from different perspectives to see the various factors and relationships required for adequate understanding. Assessment and learning enable incremental improvements to the operational approach. The goal is to understand the problem, to construct a reasonable explanation of observed events, and to subsequently construct a framework within which to solve the problem. The essence of this is determining the mechanism or combination of mechanisms necessary to achieve success. These mechanisms may not be military activities, or they may involve military actions in support of nonmilitary activities. Once commanders understand the problem and what needs to be accomplished to succeed, they identify the means to assess effectiveness and the related information requirements that support assessment. This feedback becomes the basis for learning, adaptation, and subsequent reframing. (See ADRP 5-0 and MCWP 5-1 for more information on design and reframing.)

7-16. In an ideal world, a commander engaged in counterinsurgency operations would enjoy clear and well-defined goals for the campaign from the beginning. However, the reality is that many goals emerge only as the mission develops and goals can change as a result of interacting with an environment. For these reasons, counterinsurgents usually seek to achieve a combination of defined and emerging goals. Likewise, the complex problems encountered during counterinsurgency operations can be so difficult to understand that a clear operational approach cannot initially be developed and some assumptions must be made during problem framing. Often, the best choice is to create iterative solutions (also known as discovery learning) to better understand the problem. The use of design and the planning process allow commanders and staffs to learn and achieve greater understanding as they interact with the environment. As this interaction with

the population and insurgents occurs, it will reveal the validity of planning assumptions, test the strengths and weaknesses of designs, inform the operational approach, and provide guidance to further planning and engagement. Other considerations include:

- Systems thinking.
- Continuous assessment.
- Structured learning.

7-17. Systems thinking involves understanding a problem in terms of systems and how they relate to, and influence, each other. For counterinsurgents this includes not only how the various systems in an insurgency interact, but how they interact and affect the various systems in the operational environment. Additionally, systems thinking should drive commanders and staffs to develop an understanding of how their lines of operations and lines of effort relate and influence each other. (See paragraphs 4-88 through 4-103 for more information on networked insurgencies.)

7-18. Continuous assessment is essential to learning and adapting within the inherent complexity of counterinsurgency operations. No design or model completely matches reality, and reasonable and feasible solutions at one moment can become ineffective at the next moment due to changes in the situation. The object of continuous assessment is to identify where and how the actions and activities of the counterinsurgent are working or failing and to consider adjustments to design and the operational approach. (See chapter 12 for more information on assessments.)

7-19. The objective of structured learning is to develop a reasonable initial design and then learn, adapt, and iteratively and continuously improve the initial plan as more about the dynamics of the counterinsurgency problem become evident. The operational approach and framing of the problem can be thought of as models. In counterinsurgency, these models must always be tested to determine how well they match reality. In other words, counterinsurgents may believe they have an understanding and general idea of how to solve a problem, but they review that belief to ensure it is still valid at any given time. Counterinsurgents must understand the actual problem to ensure that tactical actions have an effect on the environment.

## CENTER OF GRAVITY

7-20. An important element of conceptual planning is center of gravity analysis. The center of gravity is important in understanding both the environment and the enemy. A *center of gravity* is the source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act (JP 5-0). A center of gravity construct is useful as an analytical tool to help counterinsurgency forces analyze the insurgency's sources of strength as well as its weaknesses and vulnerabilities. Centers of gravity may change over time, they may be different at the operational and strategic level, and they could be different from location to location. (See JP 2-01.3 for more information on centers of gravity.)

7-21. In an insurgency, the population is not necessarily the center of gravity for an insurgent. A center of gravity could be external support from another country, it could be a group of core leadership or believers, or it could be a host of other factors or vital functions. Center of gravity analysis begins with the understanding that every environment is unique, and a center of gravity analysis must not begin with a preconceived center of gravity.

7-22. Counterinsurgents must understand their own center of gravity and that of the host nation. In many cases, political support is the strategic center of gravity for the U.S. Some tactical actions, such as war crimes, can undermine political support for the counterinsurgency. Host nations may also have a wide range of centers of gravity. Operational and tactical leaders must plan and execute operations that do not undermine the host nation's center of gravity.

## LINES OF OPERATION AND EFFORT

7-23. Lines of operation and effort are important planning tools to move conceptual planning into detailed planning. These planning tools help describe how a military force will turn a commander's understanding of the current situation into a desired end state. An *end state* is the set of required conditions that defines achievement of the commander's objectives (JP 3-0). The primary source for any commander's end state is

the mission the commander received. The use of conceptual planning helps commanders visualize how to generate the conditions that achieve that end state. Conceptual planning also allows commanders to determine if the dictated end state is achievable, if additional resources are necessary, what level of risk must be accepted, and if modification of the mission and expectations is required. The end state may change as the situation changes. Lines of operations and effort help provide the detail necessary to turn the commander's visualization and the operational approach (how to move from the current situation to the desired end state) into a detailed plan.

7-24. A *line of operation* is a line that defines the interior or exterior orientation of the force in relation to the enemy or that connects actions on nodes and/or decisive points related in time and space to an objective(s) (JP 5-0). Lines of operation are normally associated with the spatial aspects of a tactical problem. Lines of operation are useful, especially when addressing the physical aspects of counterinsurgency, such as infrastructure protection, control of movement, and locating and engaging insurgent forces. Lines of operation and lines of effort can be used separately or in combination.

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In Service-level doctrine, United States Marine Corps doctrine does not make a distinction between lines of effort and lines of operation. MCDP 1-0 states that, "A line of operations helps define the orientation of the force. In conventional operations, lines of operations connect actions related in time and space to an objective. During counterinsurgency or other irregular warfare operations, lines of operations, for example, could focus on major stability-related objectives, such as security, restoration of essential services, and training host-nation military and police forces. In either case, lines of operations reinforce the idea of the single battle, since success or failure in any line of operations will have an impact on the other lines of operations."

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7-25. A *line of effort* is, in the context of joint operation planning, using the purpose (cause and effect) to focus efforts toward establishing operational and strategic conditions by linking multiple tasks and missions (JP 5-0). Because counterinsurgencies are often more oriented towards an intended outcome or purpose than an enemy force, counterinsurgency operations generally use lines of effort. If a line of operation is spatially oriented, then that line of effort is purpose oriented and is appropriate when positional references to an enemy or adversary are not the determining factor in friendly action. Because counterinsurgency operations involve many nonmilitary factors, lines of effort may form a way to link tasks, effects, conditions, and the desired end state. Lines of effort help commanders visualize how to integrate their military capabilities into the efforts of the rest of the unified action community. (See JP 5-0 for more information on lines of effort.)

7-26. +Lines of effort are important tools to link conceptual planning to detailed planning. They are an essential means that commanders can use to arrange tactical events in time, space, and purpose. The benefits of using this type of framework include—

- Aiding the commander in visualizing, describing, and directing operations toward a definitive end state.
- Unifying the efforts of joint, interagency, multinational, host-nation government, and host-nation security forces toward a common purpose.
- Allowing commanders and staffs to synchronize activities along all lines of operation and effort to gain unity of effort.
- Ensuring all efforts converge on a well-defined, commonly understood end state.
- Combining the effects of long-term operations with short-, mid-, and long-term goals.
- Helping commanders identify missions, assign tasks, allocate resources, and assess operations.
- Enhancing mutual support between echelons and adjacent organizations.

7-27. Lines of effort depict how the actions of a counterinsurgent, over time, achieve the end state visualized by the commander. In a counterinsurgency, lines of effort must also be nested into the actions and activities of the host nation. From the tactical level to the strategic level, the goal of the counterinsurgent may be to support the host nation, depending on the operational design of the counterinsurgency. While that may require some tactical actions that do not involve host-nation forces, the overall effort must be to support the host nation's efforts at all levels. The counterinsurgent forces support and integrate their efforts with the efforts of the host nation's strategic and operational approaches.

7-28. Commanders and staffs must consistently question and evaluate lines of effort as part of the operations process. As assessment indicates changes to the situation (sudden opportunities to exploit, failure of certain activities, new actors, and an actual change to the end state) the tasks and objectives of various lines of operation and effort may no longer be relevant or appropriate. Worse, they can trap the commander into a preconceived notion that accomplishment of various tasks will result in a successful completion. Lines of operation and effort are useful means to help plan activities, but they are not measures of mission success. All leaders must guard against the assumption that their actions are relevant because they support any particular line of operation or effort. The underlying assumptions behind the tasks and objectives of any detailed plan must be constantly questioned and evaluated. Just because counterinsurgents take an action, that does not make that action relevant.

7-29. The effects of actions in one line of effort are not contained to only that line. For example, the commander could have a line of effort to support the rule of law and a line of effort to support economic development. However, a working legal system has a direct effect on the economic system. A system in which contract law is enforced, for example, will have a much wider range of economic activity than a system where contract law is not enforced. In this example, progress in the support economic development line of effort may be hindered by struggles within the support rule of law line of effort. The use of systems thinking allows commanders and staffs to use lines of operation and effort not only for planning and conceptualization, but also for visualization of how they relate and influence each other.

7-30. Figure 7-2 illustrates one example of lines of effort in a counterinsurgency. However, while this is an example that may apply well to a counterinsurgency after large-scale combat operations, it may not apply well to other counterinsurgency operations. The U.S. could be providing only enablers for a counterinsurgency effort. For example, U.S. forces might be combining capabilities such as counter threat finance, signals intelligence, and a direct action force to enable the host nation by stopping the insurgency from attaining the means to fight, providing intelligence on an insurgency's communications, and providing a means to neutralize insurgent leadership. The host nation may have the capability to handle basic functions such as governance. When designing lines of effort for a counterinsurgency, the context the counterinsurgent is operating in is not important. If commanders and staffs reduce lines of effort to some standard solution set, they are no longer using the tool, but they are being used by the tool. This illustrates that complex problems in counterinsurgency require critical thinking and defy solution by checklist and battle drill methodologies. When commanders and staffs use them properly, and when they are tied to operational and strategic purposes, lines of operation and effort are means to help commanders and staffs perform successful counterinsurgency operations. Figure 7-2 provides examples of possible tasks on each line of effort. However, commanders and staffs must remember that these are sample lines of effort and sample tasks on the lines of effort. Just as the individual lines of effort must meet the situation commanders and staffs find themselves in, tasks on a lines of effort must fit an operational environment and its desired end states. (See figure 7-2.)



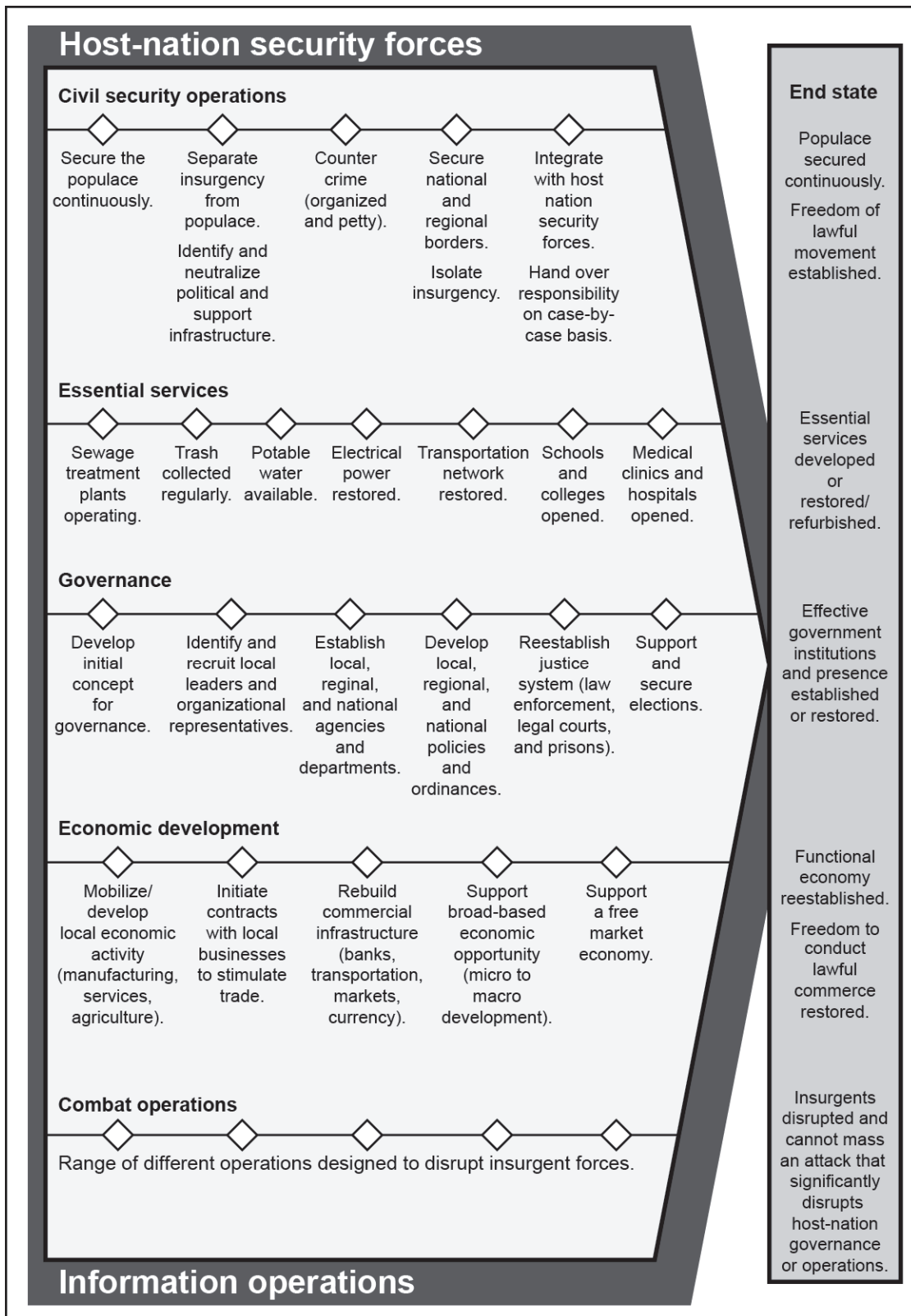


Figure 7-2. Sample of individual lines of effort

## DEVELOP SIMPLE, FLEXIBLE PLANS THROUGH MISSION ORDERS

7-31. Effective plans and orders are simple and direct. During insurgency and counterinsurgency operations, not all participants will understand military language and terms. Staffs must be careful to prepare clear, concise orders that communicate to all organizations involved a clear understanding of the operation using operational terms and symbols that are understood by all or enabling understanding through liaisons or other coordination means.

7-32. Flexible plans help participants adapt quickly to changing circumstances. Commanders and planners build opportunities for initiative into plans by anticipating events. This allows them to operate inside of the enemy's decision cycle or to react promptly to deteriorating situations. Identifying decision points and designing branches ahead of time—combined with a clear commander's intent—help create flexible plans.

7-33. Commanders stress the importance of using mission orders as a way of building simple, flexible plans. *Mission orders* are directives that emphasize to subordinates the results to be attained, not how they are to achieve them (ADP 6-0). Mission orders clearly convey the unit's mission and the commander's intent. Mission orders provide subordinates information on what to do and the purpose of doing it, without prescribing exactly how to do it.

7-34. +Commanders must also give guidance concerning risk when they issue mission orders. It is the responsibility of commanders and staff to assess tactical and operational risk. Moreover, they should ensure their forces are using techniques that take safety into account. That said, tactical initiative that supports mission accomplishment should never be sacrificed because of safety. An over focus on safety undermines the needed aggressive behavior to attack the enemy and take the needed risk to maintain contact with the population. However, informing decisionmakers of hazards, recommended controls (resources), and residual risk allows responsible individuals to weigh benefit against risk, direct resources to best mitigate the risk, and employ forces in the most efficient manner. (See ATP 5-19 for details on the risk management process and processes for integrating the process in both deliberate planning and under real-time constraints.)

## TRANSITIONS

7-35. Transitions are fundamental to the planning and execution of any line of operation or effort. Transitions may occur as a result of both success and failure in terms of friendly actions, host-nation actions, and adversary actions. There are four types of transitions in counterinsurgency operations:

- Transitions between changes in the environment.
- Transitions between phases.
- Transitions between units in an area of operations.
- Transitions of responsibilities to host nation or other agencies.

7-36. Transitions are critical events. They are critical because they represent significant changes to the situation and because a failure to properly execute them can stall or even negate progress. Whatever their nature, transitions are milestones that require reassessment. Even if a transition is a result of success, such as moving forward in phases, it is a cause to assess whether the basic assumptions and plans associated with the next phase are still appropriate and relevant. In counterinsurgency, in addition to possible transitions due to enemy actions, the commander and staff base transitions on changes in the population's perception of legitimacy.

Because transitions are based on the conditions of an operational environment, they must be a part of both the planning process and based on assessments of an operational environment. Transitions in counterinsurgency are essential because they generally measure progress towards the desired end state. However, the commander must link transitions to an assessment process that allows that commander to attain situational understanding. A transition to another phase or a transition to the host nation not linked to the assessment process can undermine the achievement of the end state. For example, a transition to a host-nation agency before that host-nation agency is ready to assume responsibility may ultimately have the effect of undermining the legitimacy of the host nation as the host nation fails to meet the basic expectations of the population.