

## **The other side of the COIN: counterinsurgency and community policing<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

*This essay outlines the current counterinsurgency model, with an emphasis on its domestic application in the United States. It shows that many contemporary counterinsurgency practices were developed by police agencies inside the U.S., and illustrates the transfer of theory, strategy, and technique from domestic police to the military - and back. The essay also examines the state's use of non-governmental or nonprofit agencies, as one element of counterinsurgency strategy, to channel and control political opposition. The conclusion briefly considers the strategic implications for social movements, especially as we learn to recognize and respond to political repression.*

### **Introduction: expect repression**

Oppositional political movements inevitably face - and therefore ought to expect - repression at the hands of the state. But, while quick to condemn the most obvious and violent manifestations of this repression, especially when directed against peaceful groups, the institutionalized left has been slow to grasp the strategy underlying the state's approach.

We tend to characterize repression as the state's response to crisis, rather than seeing it also as a means to preserving normalcy. Hence, it has been very difficult to recognize it in quiet times, and when it does appear it seems like an exception, an excess, a panicked over-reaction.

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But repression does not always come dressed up in riot gear, or breaking into offices in the middle of the night. It also comes in the form of the friendly "neighborhood liaison" officer, the advisory boards to local police departments, and the social scientist hired on as a consultant. Repression is, first and foremost, a matter of *politics*: it is the means the state uses to protect itself from political challenges, the methods it employs to preserve its authority and continue its rule. This process does not solely rely on force, but also mobilizes ideology, material incentives, and, in short, all of the tools and techniques of statecraft. We have to understand repression as involving both coercion and concessions, employing violence and building support, weeding opposition and seeding legitimacy. That is the basis of the counterinsurgency approach.

This essay outlines the counterinsurgency model ("COIN" in the military jargon), with an emphasis on its domestic application, especially in the criminal justice context. The evidence shows that, despite the term's association with colonialism and Latin American "dirty wars," many contemporary counterinsurgency practices were developed by police agencies inside the United States and continue to be used against the domestic population.

The argument proceeds through five stages. Part one describes the counterinsurgency approach as it is presented in military documents and the professional literature, especially the new U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM 3-24) and recent studies produced by the Rand Corporation.<sup>3</sup> The second part illustrates the transfer of COIN theory, strategy, technique, and personnel from the military to the police, and *vice versa*. The third shows specifically how anti-gang efforts in American cities are shaping and being shaped by military COIN operations abroad. Part Four explains the state's use of non-governmental or nonprofit agencies, alongside military and police action, to channel and control opposition. And finally, the conclusion considers some implications for social movements, in particular those of the left, in their efforts to overcome repression and achieve political change.

In this context, the title - "The Other Side of the COIN" - has three distinct meanings, which correspond to the main themes of my argument. First, it refers to the strategic pairing of direct coercion and subtle legitimacy-building activities. Second, it points to the joint development of military operations overseas and police control domestically. And third, it reminds us that when the authorities turn

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<sup>3</sup> It's important to recognize the limits of the official documents. The practice of COIN often diverges from the doctrine, and sometimes diverges very sharply. Imperfect adherence to the counterinsurgency model may indicate institutional inertia, internal disagreements, inter- or intra-agency rivalry, limits of capacity and competence, a lack of political will, or any number of other real-world operational or organizational factors. But it may also point to the ideological constraints shaping the guiding documents. Admonishments to operate within the law and to demonstrate a respect for human rights, for example, are compulsory in official publications and should be met with skepticism.

to counterinsurgency it is because they fear that insurgency is brewing. Wars - especially revolutionary wars - have two sides.

The state understands that there is a war underway. It is time that the left learns to see it.

## **Part One: repression, counterinsurgency, and the state**

### **Some definitions**

One of my objectives in this paper is to broaden and deepen our understanding of repression. I hope to show how repression functions in the course of the normal operations of the liberal state, and to demonstrate its effects in contexts that are not usually thought of as repressive, or even necessarily as political. At the same time, however, I am not seeking to *redefine* "repression," but simply to apply the standard definitions with greater consistency; so I am employing the term in its usual political sense, referring to the "process by which those in power try to keep themselves in power by consciously attempting to destroy or render harmless organizations and ideologies that threaten their power" (Wolfe 1978, 6).<sup>4</sup>

"Counterinsurgency" is not simply synonymous with "repression," but has a narrow, technical meaning, which of course relies on the definition of "insurgency." U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, explains:

[An] insurgency [is] an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict. . . . Stated another way, an insurgency is an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control.

The definition of counterinsurgency logically follows: "Counterinsurgency is military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency." (FM 3-24, 2006, 1-2).

### **Ends and means**

"Counterinsurgency," then, refers to both a type of war and a style of warfare. The term describes a kind of military operation outside of conventional army-vs.-army war-fighting, and is sometimes called "low-intensity" or "asymmetrical" combat. But counterinsurgency also describes a particular perspective on *how* such

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<sup>4</sup> I focus here on state repression, though of course other powerful actors engage in repressive activities as well. For example, *The Nation* reports that the mercenary firm Blackwater offered to infiltrate animal rights groups on behalf of the genetic-engineering behemoth Monsanto (Scahill 2010).

operations ought to be managed. This style of warfare is characterized by an emphasis on intelligence, security and peace-keeping operations, population control, propaganda, and efforts to gain the trust of the people.

This last point is the crucial one. As FM 3-24 declares: "*Legitimacy is the main objective.*" (FM 3-24, 2006, 1-113).

The primary aim of counterinsurgency is political. That's why, in the context of the American occupation of Iraq, we heard career officers arguing that "victory in combat is only a penultimate step in the larger task of 'winning the peace'." (Gage 2003, 1). And it's the need for legitimacy that they're referring to when they say that "Military action is necessary . . . but it is not sufficient. There needs to be a political aspect" (General David Petraeus, quoted in *BBC News* 2007).

The political ends rely in large part on political means. As David Gompert and John Gordon (2008: 76) from Rand Corporation write:

In COIN, the outcomes are decided mainly in the human dimension, by the contested population, and the capabilities of opposing armed forces are only one factor in determining those outcomes. The people will decide whether the state or the insurgents offer a better future, and to a large extent which of the two will be given the chance.

The Rand report is titled, appropriately, *War by Other Means*. War, as Clausewitz observed, is politics by other means. And politics, as Foucault reasoned, is war by other means (Foucault 2003, 15-6). But in counterinsurgency, the means are not so "other." In COIN, war-fighting is characterized by the same elements as state-building - establishing legitimacy, controlling territory, and monopolizing violence (Weber 2004, 33).

Consequently, the "newness" of counterinsurgency is in some respects debatable. Clearly there is nothing new about repression. And the combination of force and legitimacy is a lot of what makes a state a state. But, as one participant in a 1962 Rand symposium on counterinsurgency recalled, at that time there was already a distinctive COIN perspective emerging - and it was a minority view:

Probably all of us had worked out theories of counterinsurgency procedures at one time or another, which we thought were unique and original. But when we came to air them, all our ideas were essentially the same. We had another thing in common. Although we had no difficulty in making our views understood to each other, we had mostly been unable to get our respective armies to hoist in the message." (Frank Kitson, quoted in Hosmer, 2006, iv).

Clearly, then, *something* was new.

What sets COIN apart from other theories of repression, I believe, is the self-conscious acknowledgement that the state needs legitimacy to stabilize its rule, and that under conditions of insurgency its legitimacy is slipping. In other words, from the perspective of counterinsurgency, resistance is not simply a matter of the population (or portions of it) refusing to cooperate with the state's agenda; resistance comes as a consequence of the state failing to meet the needs of the population.

It is possible, therefore, to see COIN as representing a "liberal" or even "radical" politics (Slim 2004, 3, and Sewall 2007, xxi). Yet such apologetics miss the larger point. As a matter of *realpolitik* the authorities have to respond in some manner to popular demands; however, COIN allows them to do so in a way that at least preserves, and in the best case amplifies, their overall control. The purpose of counterinsurgency is to prevent any real shift in power.

Counterinsurgency is all about preserving (or reclaiming) the state's authority. Violence and territory are inherent to the project, but it is really legitimacy -- "the consent of the governed," "societal support" -- that separates the winners from the losers (FM 3-24, 2006, 1-113 and 1-115). As Gompert and Gordon put it: "The key in COIN is not to monopolize force but to monopolize *legitimate* force" (Gompert and Gordon 2008, xxxvii).

The strictly military aspects of the counterinsurgency campaign are, of course, necessary; but so are the softer, subtler efforts to bolster public support for the government. Both types of activities have to be understood as elements of political power.

### *Theories of repression*

Because they see insurgency as primarily a crisis of legitimacy, the Rand researchers argue that, conceptually, the "War on Terror" has been a mistake: first, because it identified "terror" as the problem; and second, because it proposed "war" as the solution.

The idea of GWOT [the Global War on Terror] . . . has fixed official U.S. attention on terrorists, with insufficient regard for the hostility that exists among vastly larger numbers of Muslims. . . . The indelible image of jihadists scheming alone in remote mountain caves is less the reality of Islamic insurgency than is far larger numbers of jihadists moving freely among Muslim populations. . . . [T]error inspired by Islamic extremism is part of a larger pattern of Muslim 'resistance' that has significant popular appeal. . . . [Therefore,] terrorism cannot be defeated unless the insurgencies in which it is embedded are successfully countered.

Thus, the solution requires, not just military might, but "intelligence, political action, civil assistance, and other nonmilitary means that might curb Islamic militancy more effectively and at less cost and risk" than simple combat (Gompert and Gordon 2008, 6-8).

### **Stages of insurgency**

In its adoption of COIN theory, it seems that the U.S. is slowly re-learning the lessons of the British colonial wars. In 1971 British brigadier Frank Kitson looked back on his efforts at holding the empire together in places like Kenya, Cypress, and Northern Ireland. He observed:

Looking in retrospect at any counter-subversion or counter-insurgency campaign, it is easy to see that the first step should have been to prevent the enemy from gaining an ascendancy over the civil population, and in particular to disrupt his efforts at establishing his political organization. In practice this is difficult to achieve because for a long time the government may be unaware that a significant threat exists, and in any case in a so-called free country it is regarded as the opposite of freedom to restrain the spread of a political idea (Kitson 1971, 67).

Concerns with liberty aside, Kitson recommended that the government act to restrict the spread of ideas, prevent radicals from achieving influence, and disrupt their efforts to establish oppositional organizations.

*War by Other Means* offers a similar analysis. According to Gompert and Gordon, revolutions (and thus counter-revolutions) go through three stages: a proto-insurgency, a small-scale insurgency, and major insurgency.<sup>5</sup> At first, in the "proto-insurgency stage" the movement is:

small, narrowly based, vulnerable, and incapable of widespread or large-scale violence. Proto-insurgents may be barely noticeable, not seen as having the potential to inspire insurgency, or dismissed as criminals or inconsequential crack-pots. Therefore, during proto-insurgency, the most important aspect of COIN is to understand the group, its goals, its ability to tap popular grievances, and its potential. In turn, shaping the proto-insurgency's environment, especially by improving governance in the eyes of the population, may deny it wider support. . . .

In the second stage, as "a small-scale insurgency" the movement begins "attracting followers beyond its original cadre," and it may "commit more daring and destructive acts against the state, not (yet) with a view toward replacing it, but to demonstrate its capabilities, be taken seriously by the population, and recruit." For the government, therefore, "shaping political and economic conditions to head off popular support for the insurgency is imperative." Direct military intervention is *not* recommended: "As long as the insurgency is still small, action against it can and should remain a police and intelligence responsibility."

If the movement survives, it may develop into a "major insurgency." While it is still "essential" that the state gain information on the movement and intervene to shape social conditions, at this stage, "forceful action against the insurgents by regular military units may be unavoidable." (Gompert and Gordon 2008, 36-7).

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<sup>5</sup> The report also considers a final possibility -- *foreign military intervention*.

## The social science of repression

Rand advocates early, preemptive action short of direct military force. The problem is that at the first stage subversion is not obvious and the state may not know that a threat exists. Worse, the real threat must be understood as extending beyond the insurgents themselves - the militants, radicals, and subversives - to include the grievances they seek to address and the social conditions that produce those grievances.

To meet the challenges of counterinsurgency, the security forces have had to shift their understanding of intelligence. Since the cause of the conflict is not just a subversive conspiracy, but necessarily connects to the broader features of society, the state's agents cannot simply ferret out the active conspirators, but need to aim at a broad understanding of the social system. The U.S. Army Field Manual on *Counterinsurgency*, FM 3-24, incorporates this perspective arguing that strategists "require insight into cultures, perceptions, values, beliefs, interests and decision-making processes of individuals and groups." (FM 3-24, 2006, 3-2).

This sort of intelligence work is concerned with questions that are primarily sociological. And so, a great deal of FM 3-24 is concerned with explicating basic social-science terms like "group," "coercive force," and "social capital." In fact, the entirety of Appendix B is devoted to explaining "Social Network Analysis and Other Analytic Tools." It offers this picture of how such analysis is practiced:

[A] social network is not just a description of who is in the insurgent organization; it is a picture of the population, how it is put together and how members interact with one another. . . . To draw an accurate picture of a network, units need to identify ties among its members. Strong bonds formed over time by family, friendship, or organizational association characterize these ties. Units gather information on these ties by analyzing historical documents and records, interviewing individuals, and studying photos and books (FM 3-24, 2006, B-47 and B-49).

The security forces can no longer focus narrowly on the hunt for subversives or terrorists, but must also collect information on the population as a whole. This changes, not only the *type* of information they're seeking, but also the *means* they use to collect it. A Rand report on information warfare in counterinsurgency emphasizes:

Even during a security operation, the information needed for counterinsurgency is as much or more about context, population, and perceptions as it is about the hostile force. . . . [O]nly a small fraction of the information needed would likely be secret information gathered by secret means from secret sources (Libicki 2007, 133).

The report suggests a few specific mechanisms for collecting broad-based information: tracking cell phone use, conducting a national registry-census, installing vehicle- and weapon-mounted video cameras, and analyzing internet sites (in particular, creating a "national Wiki (where citizens describe their community)") (Libicki 2007, 9).

The U.S. government's mapping of the American Muslim population should be viewed in this light. In 2002 and 2003, the Department of Homeland Security requested - and received - statistical data, sorted by zip code and nationality, on people who identified themselves as "Arab" in the 2000 census. And in February 2003, FBI director Robert Mueller ordered all 56 Bureau field offices to create "demographic" profiles of their areas of operation, specifically including the number of mosques. One Justice Department official explained that the demographics would be used "to set performance goals and objectives" for anti-terror efforts and electronic surveillance (Isikoff 2003).

Civil liberties groups compared the program to the first steps in the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II (ACLU 2003) - a notion that seems less than hyperbolic if we recall that, during this same period, 700 Middle Eastern immigrants were arrested as they complied with new registration rules. More than 1200 were detained without explanation or trial following the September 11 attacks, and thousands more were "interviewed" under FBI orders (Heymann 2006).

Years later, in 2007, the LAPD began planning its own mapping program, dressed in the rhetoric of community policing. As the *L.A. Times* reported, the "Los Angeles Police Department's counter-terrorism bureau proposed using U.S. census data and other demographic information to pinpoint various Muslim communities and then reach out to them through social service agencies" (Winton 2007).

Deputy Police Chief Michael P. Downing, head of the counterterrorism unit, explained:

While this project will lay out geographic locations of many different Muslim populations around Los Angeles, we also intend to take a deeper look at their history, demographics, language, culture, ethnic breakdown, socioeconomic status and social interactions. . . . It is also our hope to identify communities, within the larger Muslim community which may be susceptible to violent ideologically based extremism and then use a full spectrum approach guided by intelligence-led strategy (Winton 2007).

The FBI, meanwhile, has sent infiltrators into mosques throughout the country to root out - or sometimes, to set up - terror cells (Markon 2010).

## **Intelligence and coercion**

"Why collect such information?" the Rand researchers ask.

The answer they provide is quite revealing. Properly analyzed, the information can be used in five types of activity: (1) police and military operations "such as sweeps, roadblocks, or arrests"; (2) assessments of progress in the counterinsurgency campaign ("How many people have been hurt or killed in the war; what kind of crimes are being committed; who is getting employment and where; and who is staying put or leaving the country?"); (3) "the provision of public services, whether security and safety services (e.g., an efficient 911 system) or social services (e.g.,



health care, education, and public assistance); (4) identifying insurgents ("distinguish those willing to help from those eager to hurt"); and, (5) the coercion of individuals for purposes of winning cooperation and recruiting informants: "information about individuals may be necessary to persuade each one to help the government rather than helping the insurgents."

This last point shows something of the recursive relationship between intelligence and coercion. In an insurgency, both sides rely on the cooperation of the populace; therefore they compete for it, in part through coercive means. As Rand researcher Martin Libicki writes: "Those uncommitted to either side should weigh the possibility that the act of informing or even interacting with one side may bring down the wrath of the other side." Whoever is best able to make good on this threat will, Libicki argues, receive the best information: "The balance of coercion dictates the balance of intelligence." (Libicki 2007, 21-3).

### **"Disruption mode"**

Of course, the better the intelligence, the more effective the use of force can be. And the purpose of identifying the insurgent network is to disrupt it.

Consider the police efforts to frustrate protests against the 2008 Republican National Convention: A year in advance of the demonstrations, police informants began attending protest planning meetings around the country, while local cops and the FBI kept anti-RNC organizers under intense surveillance - following them, photographing them, going through their garbage (Shulz, September 1, 2009, "Assessing"). Among the organizations targeted were Code Pink, Students for a Democratic Society, the Campus Anti-War Network, and most famously, "The RNC Welcoming Committee" (which later produced "the RNC 8" defendants) (Boghossian 2010).

Simultaneously, the Minnesota Joint Analysis Center invested more than 1,000 hours coordinating with other "fusion centers" around the country to collect, analyze, and disseminate information on suspected anti-RNC activists. The fusion center drew its information from a staggering array of sources, using law enforcement and Defense Department databases, as well as DMV records, court document, and information provided by private businesses (Shulz, September 1, 2009, "Assessing"; Shulz, September 1, 2009, "What").<sup>6</sup>

In the days before the convention, police used this information to mount raids of activists' homes and meeting places, seizing banners, political literature, video

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<sup>6</sup> Fusion Centers are multi-agency bureaus that compile, analyze, and re-distribute information. The ACLU warns that the arrangement can sidestep legal restrictions on data collection and that it monitors the everyday behavior of large numbers of innocent people (German and Stanley 2007; German and Stanley 2008).

equipment, and computers (Boghossian 2010). By the Convention's close, more than 800 people had been arrested, many rounded up *en masse* (Shulz, September 1, 2009, "Assessing"). The majority - 584 - were released without charges, or had their cases dismissed. Only ten arrests resulted in felony convictions (Gornun 2010).

But the conviction rate may be beside the point. One commander stated frankly that the police were acting in "disruption mode" (Shulz, September 2, 2009).

## **Part Two: military/policing exchanges**

### **The community policing paradigm**

In my book *Our Enemies in Blue*, the chapter titled "Your Friendly Neighborhood Police State" is devoted to the argument that the two major developments in American policing since the 1960s – militarization and community policing – are actually two aspects of a domestic counterinsurgency program. I summed up the idea with a simple equation: "Community Policing + Militarization = Counterinsurgency" (Williams 2004, 255).

In the last few years, the counterinsurgency literature has made this point explicit. For example, *War by Other Means* lists, among the law enforcement "capabilities . . . considered to be high priority" in COIN: "well-trained and well-led community police and quick-response, light-combat-capable (constabulary) police" (Gompert and Gordon 2008, xlv). Similarly, a Joint Special Operations University report, *Policing and Law Enforcement in COIN: The Thick Blue Line*, purports:

The predominant ways of utilizing police and law enforcement within a COIN strategy . . . consist of the adoption of the community-policing approach supported by offensive-policing actions such as paramilitary operations, counter guerrilla patrolling, pseudo operations [in which state forces pose as insurgent groups], and raids (Celeski 2009, 40).

The advantages the state receives from each aspect are fairly clear: Militarization increases available force, but as important, it also provides increased discipline and command and control. It re-orders the police agency to allow for better coordination and teamwork, while also opening space for local initiative and officer discretion.

Community policing, meanwhile, helps to legitimize police efforts by presenting cops as problem-solvers. It forms police-driven partnerships that put additional resources at their disposal and win the cooperation of community leaders. And, by increasing daily, friendly contacts with people in the neighborhood, community policing provides a direct supply of low-level information (Rosenau 2007). These are not incidental features of community policing; these aspects speak to the real purpose.

In fact, Rand goes so far as to present community policing as its *paradigm* for counterinsurgency:

[P]acification is best thought of as a massively enhanced version of the 'community policing' technique that emerged in the 1970s. . . . Community policing is centered on a broad concept of problem solving by law enforcement officers working in an area that is well-defined and limited in scale, with sensitivity to geographic, ethnic, and other boundaries. Patrol officers form a bond of trust with local residents, who get to know them as more than a uniform. The police work with local groups, businesses, churches, and the like to address the concerns and problems of the neighborhood. Pacification is simply an expansion of this concept to include greater development and security assistance (Long 2006, 53).

The military's use of police theory - in particular the adoption of a "community policing" perspective - shows a cyclical exchange between the various parts of the national security apparatus.

### **The cycle of violence: imports and exports**

Domestically, the unrest of the 1960s left the police in a difficult position. The cops' response to the social movements of the day - the civil rights and anti-war movements especially - had cost them dearly in terms of public credibility, elite support, and officer morale. Frequent and overt recourse to violence, combined with covert (often illegal) surveillance, infiltration, and disruption, had not only failed to squelch the popular movements, it had also diminished trust in law enforcement.

The police needed to re-invent themselves, and the first place they looked for models was the military. The birth of the paramilitary unit - the SWAT team - was one result (Center for Research on Criminal Justice 1975). A new, more restrained, crowd control strategy was another (McPhail 1998). Military training, tactics, equipment, and weaponry, made their way into domestic police departments - as did veterans returning from Vietnam, and, more subtly, military approaches to organization, deployment, and command and control. Police strategists specifically began studying counterinsurgency and counter-guerilla warfare (Gates 1992; Lawrence 2006).

At the same time, and seemingly incongruously, police were also beginning to experiment with a "softer," more friendly type of law enforcement - foot patrols, neighborhood meetings, police-sponsored youth activities, and attention to quality-of-life issues quite apart from crime. A few radical criminologists saw this for what it was - a domestic "hearts and minds" campaign. As *The Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove* pointed out:

Like the similar techniques developed in the sixties to maintain the overseas empire (on which many of the new police techniques were patterned), these new police strategies represent an attempt to streamline and mystify the repressive power of the state, not to minimize it or change its direction. The forms of repression may change, but their functions remain the same" (Center for Research on Criminal Justice 1975, 30).

Both militarization and community policing arose at the same time, and in response to the same social pressures. And, whereas the military largely neglected COIN in the period following defeat in Vietnam, the police kept practicing, and developing, its techniques. Decades later, facing insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, the military turned to police for ideas (Beers 2007).

The lines of influence move in both directions.

### **Statistical control**

Among the police innovations that COIN theorists recommend for military use are: the Neighborhood Watch, embedded video, computerized intelligence files, and statistical analysis (Celeski 2009; Libicki 2007; Calese 2004). The last pair are particularly interesting.

In *Byting Back*, Martin Libicki explains the utility of statistical analysis programs, pointing to New York's Compstat (computerized statistics) system as an example (Libicki 2007). By compiling crime reports, analyzing the emerging statistics, and presenting the information on precinct-level maps, Compstat enabled police administrators to identify high-crime areas, deploy their officers strategically, and measure the progress of their efforts. Though its effect on actual *crime* is debatable, Compstat certainly served as the organizational keystone for the NYPD's city-wide crackdown during the Giuliani years (Harring and Ray 1999). Since that time, other departments around the country have adopted similar systems (Parenti 1999).

The Los Angeles Police Department's system was proposed by Shannon Paulson, a police sergeant and a Navy intelligence reservist; it was implemented under Chief William Bratton, who had previously introduced Compstat in New York. In L.A., street cops carry a checklist of 65 "suspicious activities" - behaviors such as taking measurements, using binoculars, drawing diagrams, making notes, or expressing extremist views. Officers are required to file reports whenever they see such things, even if no crime has been committed. The "Suspicious Activity Reports" are then routed through the nearest fusion center, the Joint Regional Intelligence Center, where they are compiled, analyzed, and shared with other agencies - including local and national law enforcement agencies, the military, and private corporations. The LAPD, along with the U.S. Directorate of National Intelligence, are hoping to replicate this system in 62 other cities around the country, beginning with Boston, Chicago, and Miami (Gorman 2008; Meyer 2008; German and Stanley 2007; German and Stanley 2008).

## **Biometric identification**

Computer networks are also being used by the military to identify and track insurgents: "Snake Eater," a variation of the system developed for the Chicago Police, "has been adapted by Lockheed-Martin for the U.S. Marines in Anbar province, apparently to good effect" (Libicki 2007, 25). The Snake Eater kit includes mobile fingerprint, iris, and retina scanners, a digital camera, a GPS system, and a laptop computer capable of linking to a database of the local population (Gonzalez 2009). Likewise, following the siege of Fallujah, the city's entire population was fingerprinted, retina-scanned, and issued identity cards required for travel or to receive government services. And since 2007, biometric readers have been used at military checkpoints in Baghdad to control movement between ethnic enclaves (Graham 2010). Of course, the military has been preparing for this sort of operation for a long time: 1999's "Urban Warrior" training exercises included the biometric scanning of "resistance fighters" - in Oakland, California (Graham 2010).

## **Part Three: gang wars**

### **From California to Afghanistan**

A decade after Urban Warrior, marines were still refining their skills in California's cities. In the summer of 2010, seventy marines from Camp Pendleton spent a week accompanying Los Angeles police in preparation for deployment to Afghanistan. The marines wanted to learn the basics of anti-gang investigations, standards of police professionalism, and techniques for building rapport with the community (Watson 2010).

A *New York Times* profile of Marine Captain Scott Cuomo gives some idea of what he learned in L.A., and how he applied it in Afghanistan:

The same Marines patrolled in the same villages each day, getting to recognize the residents. They awarded the elders construction projects and over hours of tea drinking showed them photographs they had taken of virtually every grown male in their battle space. 'Is this guy Taliban?' the Marines asked repeatedly, then poured what they learned into a computer database (Bumiller 2010).

After a couple months, their efforts paid off. A villager identified a suspect, and the marines raided his house, arresting him and seizing weapons and opium. They placed the man, Juma Khan, in "a holding pen the size of a large dog cage" and interrogated him for two days. The marines then tried him, and found him guilty of working with the Taliban. But, under an agreement with local elders, once Khan swore allegiance to the new Afghan government, he was released as a free man - or not quite. In exchange for his freedom, and a job cleaning a nearby canal, Khan will be supervised by a group of elders, who in turn report to the American military.

And he will himself become an informer, meeting regularly with the marines and answering their questions about his neighbors and friends (Bumiller 2010).

### *From Afghanistan to California*

These military lessons, adapted from domestic policing and battle-tested overseas, are now being cycled back into the homeland. Since February 2009, combat veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan have been serving as advisors to police in Salinas, California, with the stated aim of applying counterinsurgency tools to local anti-gang efforts. Along with their expertise, the military advisors also arrive with software, including a computer program that maps the connections between gang activity, individual suspects, and their social circles, family ties, and neighborhood connections (Vick 2009).

As Salinas Chief of Police Louis Fetherolf proudly notes:

Our work with staff from the U.S. Navy's - Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) [is] a first-of-its-kind collaboration. . . . Faculty at NPS are experts in examining violent groups around the world, including terrorists, insurgents and revolutionaries. By examining these violent groups they have developed a counterinsurgency model, which relies largely on social network analysis to determine how best to disrupt their violent actions and, more importantly, address the reasons for their violent behavior in the first place. NPS and SPD are working together to determine the applicability of the counterinsurgency model to violent domestic groups such as our street gangs (Fetherolf, October 2009, 9).

In Salinas, the police-military partnership is occurring simultaneously with a renewal and expansion of the SPD's community policing philosophy (Fetherolf, July 2009). The new community focus (encouraged by the Naval advisors) includes Spanish language training, a "Gifts for Guns" trade-in event, an anonymous tip hotline, senior-citizen volunteer programs, a larger role for the Police Community Advisory Council, and programs that provide "more youth in the community alternatives to gang lifestyles and in the process develop a growing pool of home-grown, future police officers" (Fetherolf, October 2009, 33-4).

Salinas police have also initiated partnerships with other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, including the Marshals, the ATF (Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms), the FBI, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Fetherolf, October 2009). The most spectacular product of these partnerships, so far, was a set of coordinated raids on April 22, 2010, codenamed "Operation Knockout."

The raids - coming after months of investigation by Salinas Police, the Monterey County Drug Task Force, the ATF, and the FBI - mobilized more than 200 law enforcement agents and resulted in 100 arrests, as well as the confiscation of forty pounds of cocaine, fourteen pounds of marijuana, and a dozen guns (Reynolds, April 23, 2010).

Operation Knockout was intended, not only to disrupt the targeted gangs, but to

serve as a warning to others. Deputy Police Chief Kelly McMillin said: "We're going to follow quickly with call-ins of specific groups that we know are very active. . . . We are going to tell them that what happened on the 22nd could very well happen to them" (Reynolds, April 24, 2010).

The SPD's agenda for the future remains ambitious, illustrating an emerging, multi-faceted intelligence-sharing network. It includes plans to expand the city's video surveillance and gunfire-triangulation system, to adopt Compstat, to connect to the regional law-enforcement database COPLINK, and to create "a centralized information center (Fusion Center) in Salinas for the purpose of gathering and sharing information from Federal, State and local sources" (Fetherolf, October 2009, 10).

Leonard A. Ferrari, provost of the Naval Postgraduate School, is enthusiastic about Salinas' potential. "The \$1 trillion invested so far in Iraq and Afghanistan could pay a dividend in American streets," he told the *Washington Post*. The Salinas approach, he suggested, could become "a national model" (Vick 2009).

### **Ceasefire, Compstat, COIN**

In fact, the Salinas collaboration, "Operation Ceasefire," is *already* part of national model, following a strategy developed in Boston under the same name. In 1996, Boston's Ceasefire began with a focus on illegal handguns, but soon broadened its attention to include the gangs that used them. In response to ongoing gang conflict, the Boston Police Department convened a working group consisting of law enforcement officers, social workers, academics, and members of the Black clergy (Kennedy 2001; Braga and Winship 2005; Braga and Kennedy 2002).

Researchers working with police created a list of 155 murders, mapping the crimes geographically and demographically. They examined the criminal records of both the victims and (where known) the assailants. Using this information, they created a map of various gangs, their territory, and conflict points (Kennedy 2001; Kennedy 1997).

Prioritizing the likely trouble-spots, police officers then sat down with gang members and gave them a clear choice: If there was gang violence in their area, both the cops and the district attorney were going to hit with everything they had:

They could disrupt street drug activity, focus police attention on low-level street crimes such as trespassing and public drinking, serve outstanding warrants, cultivate confidential informants for medium- and long-term investigations of gang activities, deliver strict probation and parole enforcement, seize drug proceeds and other assets, ensure stiffer plea bargains and sterner prosecutorial attention, request stronger bail terms (and enforce them), and even focus potentially severe Federal investigative and prosecutorial attention on, for example, gang-related drug activity (Kennedy 1998, 5).

On the other hand, if the gang members wanted to clean up their act, the police

would help them do so. Because of their coalition work, the cops came with offers of job training, drug counseling, and other services (Braga and Winship 2005; Kennedy 2001; Braga and Kennedy 2002). In this respect, Operation Ceasefire grew directly from the Boston Police Department's pre-existing community policing programs.

Over time, ceasefire developed four levels of intervention:

*Level One* was a warning, through forums or other means, to a particular group or groups to stop the violence.

*Level Two* was near-term street enforcement[:] . . . heavy police presence, drug market disruption, warrant service, misdemeanor enforcement, and similar actions. . . .

*Level Three* was a large, interagency, heavily coordinated operation . . . that was readily apparent to the target group. . . .

*Level Four* . . . was for those groups that were both violent and deemed essentially unsalvageable: *undercover, gangwide investigations* making heavy use of Federal sanctions and designed . . . *to permanently dismantle the group* (Kennedy 2001, 42-3, emphasis added).

The strategy worked through direct deterrence, denying the benefits of violence and raising the costs. As importantly, "Those costs were borne by the whole gang, not just the shooter" (Kennedy 1998, 6). So the cops could begin applying meaningful pressure before identifying a suspect, and the gang had an incentive to keep their members under control and maintain the peace.

The key elements of Operation Ceasefire - social network analysis, community partnerships, inter-agency cooperation, and a direct approach to deterrence - were quickly replicated and taken further in other cities, intersecting trends like zero-tolerance policing and the Compstat program. A report from the Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Service, *Street Gangs and Interventions: Innovative Problem Solving with Network Analysis*, provides a case study illustrating the result:

In the mid-1990's Newark's police were being remolded according to the pattern set by Giuliani's New York. The director of the Newark Police Department, Joe Santiago, introduced a Compstat system and, in 1996, proposed a partnership with Rutgers University professor George Kelling -- famous as one of the authors of the "Broken Windows" theory underlying police zero-tolerance campaigns (Wilson and Kelling 1982). This partnership coalesced as the Greater Newark Safer Cities Initiative (GNSCI) (McGloin 2005).

Slowly, Santiago built a working group including cops, scholars, social workers, the clergy, and even public defense attorneys. It began by focusing on a small number of repeat offenders, using the same deterrence model developed in Ceasefire. Then, in 2003, GNSCI turned its attention to gangs, leading it to look beyond the city limits. The North Jersey Gang Task Force was born.

Coordinating with law enforcement agencies statewide, the Rutgers researchers began to collect a wide array of data on gang membership, recent crimes,



recruitment practices, family ties, and so on - as well as "information on the criminal histories of all identified gang members." Once the data was assembled, the researchers, following Boston's example, used it to map gang territory and perform a social network analysis, illustrating rivalries and alliances, and identifying likely sites for conflict. They then took the analysis to the individual level charting the connections between gang members and others who associate with them. By diagramming these relationships, researchers were able to distinguish between core members and those only marginally involved (McGloin 2005, 14-18).

Such information was crucial for making both tactical and strategic decisions. Police could approach individual members differently, based on their role in the gang and their level of commitment. They could also identify the pressure points and know where to strike for maximum effect.

Network analysis also allows one to identify people who hold structurally important positions within the gang networks. Cut points, people who are the only connection among people or groups of people, may be ideal selections for spreading a deterrence message or for affecting the structure and organization of the street gangs (McGloin 2005, 18).

Unlike Boston, where the focus was strictly on stopping gang *violence*, in New Jersey the aim was to disrupt the gangs themselves.

### **Carrots and sticks, hearts and minds**

Operation Ceasefire and its progeny work chiefly through a "Cost/Benefit" approach to counterinsurgency: The government provides an admixture of incentives and deterrents to shape the choices of the rebels, their supporters, and the population as a whole. Simply put, the state creates a strategy to raise the costs associated with continued resistance and to reward cooperation. If the government can bring more force to bear and offer better rewards than the insurgents, rational self-interest should (in theory) lead people to side with the state rather than the rebels (Gompert and Gordon 2008). Ceasefire applied this same thinking to urban gangs.

At the same time, in developing Ceasefire, the police made sure to align other sources of legitimacy - social services, community organizations, the clergy - with its efforts, thus simultaneously increasing its leverage and heading off potential resistance. For example, in Boston, the Ceasefire coalition included Black ministers who had been vocal critics of the police. These men of the cloth began advising the cops in their anti-gang work, and eventually "sheltered the police from broad public criticism" (Braga and Winship 2005, 6).

The other major approach to COIN - the older and more famous "hearts and minds" strategy - operates by a somewhat different logic, focusing on "the problems

of modernization and the insurgent need for popular support." As Rand explains, the aim was to rebuild public confidence in the government by instituting reforms, reducing corruption, and improving the population's standard of living (Gompert and Gordon, 2008, 25).

We can see the "Hearts and Minds" approach employed in a separate domestic experiment - the federally-funded "Weed and Seed" program.

### **Weed and Seed: Clear-Hold-Build**

Weed and Seed was conceived in 1991, and gained prominence a year later as part of the federal response to widespread rioting after the acquittal of four Los Angeles cops who had been videotaped beating Black motorist Rodney King. Since that time, it has been implemented in over 300 neighborhoods nationwide.

The Department of Justice describes the project:

The Weed and Seed strategy is based on a two-pronged approach:

1. Law enforcement agencies and criminal justice officials cooperate with local residents to 'weed out' criminal activity in the designated area.
2. Social service providers and economic revitalization efforts are introduced to 'seed' the area, ensuring long-term positive change and a higher quality of life for residents" (Community Capacity Development Office 2005, 1).

In terms of strategy, Weed and Seed closely resembles the military's "Clear-Hold-Build." As FM 3-24 elaborates: "Create a secure physical and psychological environment. Establish firm government control of the populace and area. Gain the populace's support" (FM 3-24, 2006, 5-50 and 5-51).

*Clearing* and *holding* refer to the removal and exclusion of hostile elements. *Building*, on the other hand, means both, literally, repairing infrastructure and, more metaphorically, gaining trust and winning support. However, even *building* includes an element of force:

Progress in building support for the HN [Host Nation] government requires protecting the local populace. . . . To protect the populace, HN security forces continuously conduct patrols and use measured force against insurgent targets of opportunity. . . . Actions to eliminate the remaining covert insurgent political infrastructure must be continued. . . (FM 3-24, 2006, 5-70).

The domestic analogy is pretty straightforward. One police chief described the role of paramilitary units in his community policing strategy:

[The] only people that are going to be able to deal with these problems are highly trained tactical teams with proper equipment to go into a neighborhood and clear the neighborhood and hold it; allowing community policing officers to come in and start turning the neighborhood around (Kraska and Kappeler 1999, 473).

In such campaigns, the relationship between community policing and

militarization is especially clear. They're not competing or contradictory approaches. They work together, simultaneously or in series. One does the weeding; the other, the seeding. The implications are not lost on those subject to this sort of campaign. "They're gunning for us," Omari Salisbury, a Seattle teenager, said when he heard about Weed and Seed. "They're gunning for Black youth" (Lilly 1992).

### **Gang politics**

Gang suppression has to be viewed, not only in terms of crime, but also in terms of politics.

This is true in two respects. First, police are not only (or even mainly) fighting crime, enforcing the law, or preventing violence - they are also disrupting and disorganizing an incipient political force, striking against it before it can become a real nexus of resistance. A growing body of literature now specifically argues that gang violence should be treated as a type of insurgency (Manwaring 2005; Long 2010; Sullivan 2009; JP 3-24, Appendix A). And, by applying the techniques and analysis of counterinsurgency to counter-gang campaigns, the state tacitly admits that there is a political dimension to what is ordinarily presented as pure criminality. Insurgency and counterinsurgency are, together, a struggle over legitimacy. By applying the COIN framework domestically, the government concedes that its legitimacy is being challenged and that the challengers (however localized and weak) are rivals, or potential rivals, with independent claims to legitimacy and distinct spheres of influence.

Second, the gangs are sometimes self-consciously engaged in political action. As John Sullivan, an L.A. County Sheriff's Deputy, writes in one Rand report:

[S]ome [gangs] have begun to adopt varying degrees of political activity. At the low end, this activity may include dominating neighborhood life and creating virtual 'lawless zones,' application of street taxes, or taxes on other criminal actors. Gangs with more sophisticated political attributes typically co-opt police and government officials to limit interference with their activities. At the high end, some gangs have active political agendas, using the political process to further their ends and destabilize governments (Sullivan 2001, 102).

Among the examples Sullivan cites are the Gangster Disciples, a gang with 30,000 members in 35 states. In addition to employing themselves in the drug trade, "GD members infiltrate police and private security agencies, sponsor political candidates, register voters, and sponsor protest marches" (Sullivan 2001, 113-4). Other gangs have been active in resistance against gentrification, loan sharks, slum lords, price gouging, and police brutality (Jankowski 1991).

Historically, the Black Panther Party recognized the political potential of gangs. In Philadelphia, in the late 60s, the Panthers organized a series of gang conferences and tried to use negotiations to quell neighborhood violence. The Panthers also

directed some of their public education and recruitment efforts toward gang members. Some gangsters did enlist to help in the Panthers' free breakfast program, and a few went on to become full Party members (Dyson 2007). Most strikingly, the Los Angeles chapter was formed by a former gang leader, Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter of the Slauson Renegades (Jeffries and Foley 2007).

### **Anti-gang politics**

Facing these challenges, police anti-gang campaigns typically combine a variety of elements analogous to those in counterinsurgency: the creation of databases listing suspected gang members; the mapping of the social environment, illustrating connections between gang members, associates, families, *etc.*; the development of community contacts, especially with local leaders. These intelligence efforts are then paired with a campaign of persistent low-level harassment -- stops, searches, petty citations, and the like. Each instance of harassment offers police the opportunity to collect additional information on the gang network while at the same time creating an inhospitable environment for those associated with gang activity.

For example, the main group responsible for such work in Salinas is the Monterey County Gang Task Force, called "The Black Snake" by youths in the community. The Task Force has 17 members, drawn from local police and sheriffs departments, the California Highway Patrol, and the state Department of Corrections. Wearing distinctive black uniforms and driving black cars, Task Force members conduct mass-arrest "round-ups" (Salinas Police Department 2010, 4), make random traffic stops, and regularly search the homes of gang members on parole or probation (Kraft 2010). The sheer volume of such activity is astonishing: Since it was formed in 2005, the Task Force has been responsible for 21,000 vehicle or pedestrian stops, 5,000 parole and probation "compliance" searches, and 2,800 arrests (Long 2010).<sup>7</sup>

Such anti-gang efforts are always implicitly political, especially as they become permanent features of life in poor Black and Latino communities. Though ostensibly aimed at preventing gang violence, counter-gang campaigns inevitably lead police to monitor the community as a whole. A Fresno cop explains the intended scope of his department's gang files: "If you're twenty-one, male, living in one of these neighborhoods, been in Fresno for ten years and you're *not* in our computer—then there's definitely a problem." (Parenti 1999, 111, emphasis added). Disproportionate attention, especially when paired with lower - or "zero" - tolerance for disorder, then contributes to higher rates of arrest and incarceration (Greene and Pranis 2007).

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<sup>7</sup> Regardless, the rate of violent crime has not appreciably decreased (Long 2010).

Sometimes officials extend enforcement by securing gang injunctions, special court orders prohibiting activities that would otherwise be legal - barring alleged gang members from appearing together in public, restricting the clothing they can wear, and subjecting them to a nighttime curfew (Critical Resistance 2011; Barajas 2007). At a broader level, the police will often engage in efforts disruptive of ordinary social life in gang-affected areas, such as cordoning, saturating, or sweeping select locations (*e.g.*, parks, streets, or bars) or targeted events (ballgames, parties, car shows) (Padilla 1992; Sheldon 2001).

In the most advanced campaigns, police sometimes take the further step of strategically *causing* gang conflict. Following the 1992 Los Angeles riots, for example, police did what they could to wreck a city-wide truce between the Bloods and the Crips. The cops did not only attack negotiating meetings and inter-gang social events, but also engaged in some underhanded tactics to create friction: covering one gang's graffiti with another's, or arresting a Blood only to release him deep in Crip territory. This occurred, not only in a context of widespread anger and recent unrest, but also at a point in which the gangs themselves were becoming increasingly politicized (Davis 1992; Klein 1995; Spergel 1995).

Mike Davis described the government's response to the riots in military terms:

"In Los Angeles I think we are beginning to see a repressive context that is literally comparable to Belfast or the West Bank, where policing has been transformed into full-scale counterinsurgency . . . against an entire social stratum or ethnic group" (Davis 1992).

## **Part Four: preserving order, preventing change**

### **Hard and soft**

I began this paper by outlining, in some detail, the basic principles of counterinsurgency theory, the intelligence needs that accompany it, and its direct application in both (foreign) military and (domestic) policing contexts. I've explained the basics of Social Network Analysis, and the process by which its insights into both insurgent organizations and the surrounding population are translated into direct coercion and bids to win popular support. I have suggested that if the left wants to understand the repression it faces, it should study the ways the U.S. government responds to forces as varied as the Taliban, the Gangster Disciples, and the RNC 8. And I have stated, emphatically, that it is the *political* dimension of insurgency and counterinsurgency that really counts.

And yet, thus far, I have focused chiefly on the "hard" side of repression - the direct coercion, the forceful disruptions, the criminalization and incarceration, the violence. Now we need to look at the "soft" side - the strategic use of concessions, the promise of representation and access, the co-optation of leadership, and,

comprising all of these, the *institutionalization* of dissent.<sup>8</sup> These elements represent, at this point, the state's most typical response to opposition from the left. And, by these means, the state does not only achieve control and exercise power *over* the organizations of the left, but *through* them.

### Stages and strategies

In its earlier stages, repression may be hard to recognize for exactly the same reasons that a proto-insurgency is - because everything seems normal. We should remember, however, that the authorities aren't just *preparing* for unrest, they're actively *preempting* opposition. They do that by broadly monitoring the community, building alliances, channeling political efforts into projects they can control, and disrupting networks and social ties that might otherwise form the basis for resistance.

Of course, as COIN moves into its later stages it will become increasingly military in character. Both the overt use of force and covert surveillance, infiltration, and disruption will increase. Emergency powers may be granted, civil liberties suspended, and the life of the overall population increasingly restricted. (FM 31-20-3, 3-23).

But as the crisis progresses to higher levels, the work of lower stages continues. Smart revolutionaries don't *stop* organizing as they escalate their tactics; they use their actions to help build their organizations. Likewise, the security forces do not cease their efforts at intelligence gathering or alliance building, but use those efforts in support of their more bellicose activities.

Of course, the aim of any counterinsurgency campaign is a return to normal - that is, to the lowest level of manageable conflict (Galula 1965). In effect, this is a return to the proto-insurgency stage: Opposition is either channeled into safe, institutional forms, or suppressed through normal police and intelligence activity (Celeski 2009).

The British strategist Frank Kitson summarizes the overall process:

In practical terms the most promising line of approach [in COIN] lies in separating the mass of those engaged in the [revolutionary] campaign from the leadership by the judicious promise of concessions, at the same time imposing a period of calm by the use of government forces. . . . Having once succeeded in providing a breathing space by these

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<sup>8</sup> "Institutionalization . . . is composed of three main components: First, the *routinization* of collective action. . . . Second, *inclusion* and *marginalization*, whereby challengers who are willing to adhere to established routines will be granted access to political exchanges in mainstream institutions, while those who refuse to accept them can be shut out of conversations through either repression or neglect. Third, *cooptation*, which means that challengers alter their claims and tactics to ones that can be pursued without disrupting the normal practice of politics" (Meyer and Tarrow 1998, 21, emphasis in original).

means, it is most important to do three further things quickly. The first is to implement the promised concessions. . . . The second is to discover and neutralize the genuine subversive element. The third is to associate as many prominent members of the population, especially those who have been engaged in non-violent action, with the government. This last technique is known in America as co-optation. . . (Kitson 1971, 87).

Byman argues similarly:

The ideal allies for a government implementing control are, in fact, nonviolent members of the community the would-be insurgents seek to mobilize. . . . If regimes can infiltrate - or, better yet, cooperate with - mainstream groups they are often able to gain information on radical activities and turn potential militants away from violence (Byman 2007, 24).

Broadly speaking, counterinsurgency offers two approaches to dealing with opposition, and they must be used selectively. Some adversaries, especially moderates, may be co-opted, bought off, and appeased. Others, the more recalcitrant portion, must be forcefully dis-organized, disrupted, deterred, or destroyed. The balance of concessions and coercion will be apportioned accordingly. Some adversaries win new posts - offices in a "reformed" administration, or jobs in "responsible" nonprofits, labor unions, or progressive think tanks. They gain access, inclusion, or representation in exchange for working within the existing institutional framework. The others will face harsher outcomes - including, for example, imprisonment, exile, or assassination. Whatever the approach in a particular case, the important thing is that the opposition is neutralized - rendered harmless, made controllable, and exploited as either the object or the tool of state power.

### **"Force multipliers": the military-NGO complex**

Counterinsurgency theory places a heavy emphasis on shaping the social environment in which the population lives and resistance develops. One way governments exercise this influence is with their money. As FM 3-24 explains:

*Some of the Best Weapons for Counterinsurgents Do Not Shoot. . . .* Counterinsurgents often achieve the most meaningful success in garnering public support and legitimacy for the HN government with activities that do not involve killing insurgents. . . . [L]asting victory comes from a vibrant economy, political participation, and restored hope. Particularly after security has been achieved, dollars and ballots will have more important effects than bombs and bullets. . . . 'money is ammunition.' (FM 3-24, 2006, 1-153, emphasis in original).

Foreign aid has thus often been criticized as an instrument of imperialism, even when the funds are distributed indirectly through nongovernmental or nongovernmental humanitarian organizations (NGOs or NGHOs) (Roy 2004; Ungpakorn 2004; Engler 2010; Petras 1999).

As the U.S. began its war against Afghanistan in October 2001, Colin Powell - the former General, the founding Chairman of the nonprofit America's Promise Alliance, and, at the time, the Secretary of State - managed to embarrass NGO leaders with his praise for their work. Speaking at the National Foreign Policy

Conference for Leaders of Nongovernmental Organizations, he said: "[J]ust as surely as our diplomats and military, American NGOs are out there serving and sacrificing on the front lines of freedom. . . . [NGOs] are such a force multiplier for us, such an important part of our combat team" (Powell 2001).

Later, guidelines negotiated by representatives of the military and the major humanitarian groups discouraged any repetition of Powell's gaffe, specifying that "U.S. Armed Forces should not describe NGHOs as 'force multipliers' or 'partners' of the military" (U.S. Institute of Peace, no date). FM 3-24 managed to retain Powell's meaning while avoiding the offensive language: "Many such agencies resist being overtly involved with military forces," it cautions; but then: "some kind of liaison [is] needed. . . to ensure that, as much as possible, objectives are shared and actions and messages synchronized." (FM 3-24, 1-122).

The Rand study *Networks and Netwars* outlines "a range of possibilities" for the military's use of international nonprofits:

from encouraging the early involvement of appropriate NGO networks in helping to detect and head off a looming crisis, to working closely with them in the aftermath of conflicts to improve the effectiveness of U.S. forces still deployed, to reduce the residual hazards they face, and to strengthen the often fragile peace (Arquilla and Ronfeldt 2001, x).

One result of this perspective is that aid money, and thus NGO attention, increasingly follows the state's priorities - and its military's priorities in particular (Grain 2009). For instance, in 2010 the U.S. awarded \$114 million to aid groups working in Yemen, with the stated goal of "improving the livelihood of citizens in targeted communities and improving governance capabilities" (Rieff 2010). This supposedly humanitarian assistance came alongside \$1.2 billion in military aid, clandestine military and intelligence activity, and a CIA assessment that the Al Qaeda affiliate in Yemen represents the largest threat to United States' global security (Miller and Finn 2010; Zelin 2010).

Meanwhile, the Defense Department now controls 20% of the U.S. government's budget for Official Development Assistance (Grain 2009). "[D]evelopment priorities follow the battle space," David Rieff writes in *The New Republic*. "[D]evelopment is a continuation of war by other means" (Rieff 2010).

### **The Marshal Plan**

The domestic counterpart to the nongovernmental "force multiplier" is the community policing "partnership." We've seen nonprofit funding tied to the criminal justice agenda in the Weed and Seed program; the use of social services and Black Churches to create "the 'network of capacity' necessary to legitimize, fund, equip, and carry out" Boston's Operation Ceasefire (Braga and Winship, 2005, 4-5); the collaboration of social workers, the clergy, and public defense attorneys for similar ends in Newark; police-sponsored youth and elders programs



in Salinas; and, in Los Angeles, the government's use of social service agencies to gain access to Muslim communities suspected of breeding terrorists.

But sometimes police-led partnerships go further, using progressive nonprofits to channel and control political opposition, moving it in safe, institutional, and reformist directions, rather than toward more radical or militant action. For example, consider the efforts of liberal nonprofits to contain community anger after transit police shot and killed an unarmed Black man in Oakland, California:

Oscar Grant was killed on January 1, 2009. A week later, on January 7, a protest against the police turned into a small riot (Ciccariello-Maher, January 9-11, 2009). Organizers with the Coalition Against Police Executions (CAPE) -- a group largely composed of local progressive nonprofits and Black churches -- denounced the violence. One CAPE leader said that he wept watching the riots on television, feeling that years of hard work were being "destroyed by anarchists" (Ciccariello-Maher, January 16-18, 2009).

But - likely because of the revolt - the cop in the case, Johannes Mehserle, was arrested and charged with murder. Before the riots there had been no statement of concern from the mayor's office, no Justice Department investigation, and no arrests. In fact, the transit agency - for whom Mehserle worked - had not even interviewed him about the incident. "The rebellion was really about the fact that nothing was being done," George Ciccariello-Maher explains. "If there's one lesson to take from this, it's that the only reason Mehserle was arrested is because people tore up the city. It was the riot - and the threat of future riots" (Ciccariello-Maher, October 23, 2010).

In an effort to re-assert its leadership, CAPE organized another demonstration for January 14. Speakers included Mayor Ron Dellums, the rapper Too \$hort, and representatives of various nonprofits - all of whom urged the crowd to remain peaceful. Furthermore, CAPE's designated marshals, operating under the supervision of a private security guard, surrounded the demonstration while unidentified informants mingled in the crowd to look for troublemakers (Ciccariello-Maher, January 16-18, 2009).

Despite the tight control, things did not go as planned. When the speeches were over, much of the crowd refused to leave. Organizers announced that police would intervene if the group would not disperse; but rather than wait, CAPE's own marshals formed a line and began pushing people off the streets. The crowd - now very angry - started breaking windows. The security team, after consulting with police, withdrew from the area and left it to the cops to handle the crowd. The police fired teargas and made arrests (Ciccariello-Maher, January 16-18, 2009; Advance the Struggle 2009).

Future demonstrations, beginning on January 30, were likewise handled with threats, arrests, and violence (Raider Nation Collective, May 2010; Ciccariello-

Maher, February 3, 2009). At the same time, and in keeping with the COIN model, local, state, and federal agencies all undertook extensive intelligence operations targeting protest organizers - monitoring websites, videotaping crowds, sending plainclothes officers into the demonstrations, and infiltrating planning meetings (Winston, December 15, 2010; Winston, December 16, 2010; Winston, January 6, 2011; Winston, January 7, 2011; Winston, January 27, 2011).

"If we learned on January seventh that our power was in the streets," Ciccariello-Maher concludes, "what we learned on the fourteenth is that the state was going to counter-attack. . . . The state didn't counterattack by force at first; the state counter-attacked through these institutions, the nonprofits" (Ciccariello-Maher, October 23, 2010).

### **No justice, Urban Peace**

A year later, the process repeated itself. As Johannes Mehserle's trial approached, Nicole Lee, director of the nonprofit "Urban Peace Movement," circulated an email focused, not on winning justice, but on preventing violence should justice be denied. Titled "Bracing for Mehserle Verdict: Community Engagement Plan," the June 23, 2010 memo offered two sets of instructions:

1) Organizations, CBO's [Community-Based Organizations], and Public Agencies should be thinking of ways to *create organized events or avenues for young people and community members to express their frustrations with the system* in constructive and peaceful ways. If people have no outlets then it may be easier for folks to be pulled toward more destructive impulses.

2) We need to *begin 'inoculating' our bases and the community at-large so that when the verdict comes down, people are prepared* for it, and so that the 'outside agitators' who were active during the initial Oscar Grant protests are not able to incite the crowd so easily" (Lee 2010, emphasis in original).

The memo listed several talking points, which served the state's interests so well that the City of Oakland ran an edited version on its webpage (Raider Nation Collective, July 2010).

Around the same time, another organization, ironically named "Youth Uprising," sponsored a public service announcement centered on the slogan, "Violence is Not Justice." The video includes local rappers, civil rights attorneys, school administrators, representatives from nonprofits, a police captain, and the District Attorney of San Francisco - all urging a peaceful response to the verdict (Youth Uprising 2010).<sup>9</sup>

Religious leaders also got into the act, using the pulpit to ask people to remain

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<sup>9</sup> The organization's website, YouthUprising.org, presently quotes Attorney General Eric Holder, saying the group is a "perfect example of what we need to be doing around the country" (viewed October 14, 2010).

safely at home when the verdict was announced (Ciccariello-Maher, June 29, 2010).

The pacifying efforts, though broadly distributed, were centrally coordinated. Shortly before the trial, the mayor and police held a meeting with several Bay Area nonprofits. The topic, of course, was the prevention of riots (Ciccariello-Maher, June 29, 2010).

In practice, avoiding unrest became the primary focus of the institutionalized left; CAPE's stated goal, the prevention of police brutality, receded into the background. If anything, by condemning the rioters and cooperating with the cops, liberal leaders helped to legitimize the police counter-attack and made further brutality more, not less, likely.

In the end, Officer Mehserle was convicted, but of a lesser charge - manslaughter, rather than murder. And, when the verdict was announced, rioting did ensue (Ciccariello-Maher, July 12, 2010). Hundreds of people, mostly young people of color, braved not only the clubs and the tear gas of the police, but also the condemnation of their purported community leaders.<sup>10</sup>

### **Advance the Struggle**

In their published analysis of the Oscar Grant crisis, the revolutionary group Advance the Struggle argued that, by trying to de-fuse popular anger, "Bay Area nonprofits effectively acted as an extension of the state" (Advance the Struggle, 2009, 8-9).<sup>11</sup>

Had the rage over Grant's murder not been channeled into ritualized protest, had the leaders not been more concerned with controlling the community response than in confronting injustice, had the organizing not been, in a word, institutionalized - it is hard to know what might have been possible.

Advance the Struggle contrasted the trajectory of events in Oakland with those of Greece, just a few weeks before the Grant killing:

There, the police murder of a 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos triggered reactions which, very quickly, evolved from protests to riots to a general strike in which 2.5 million workers were on strike in December 2008. Within days the killer cop and police accomplices were arrested, but even this concession didn't trick the movement into subsiding.

The police murder set off the uprising, but the participants connected the murder with the issues of unemployment, neo-liberal economic measures, political corruption, and a failing education system. Aren't we facing similar problems in Oakland...? (Advance the Struggle

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<sup>10</sup> A few months later, radicals in Seattle reported a similar dynamic, co-opted community leaders suppressing unrest after police killed a Native American man. (Nightwolf and Mamos 2010.)

<sup>11</sup> For similar critiques of the role non-profits play in managing political struggle, see Incite 2007.

2009, 22. Paragraph break added for emphasis.)<sup>12</sup>

Of course there are differences between Oakland and Athens - differences of geography, history, and political culture. The type of insurrection unleashed in Greece may not, at present, be possible in California. But that is not an *objection* to the radical analysis; it is, instead, *the premise*. The political environment in Oakland has been shaped in such a way so as to sharply limit the possibilities of struggle. And the institutionalization of conflict in professionalized nonprofits is an important part of that restrictive context. There is no guarantee that things would have gone further had the nonprofits not intervened, or that greater conflict would have won greater gains. But their intervention certainly helped to contain the rebellion, and closed off untold possibilities for further action. That is, quite clearly, what it was intended to do.

### **Conclusion: resisting repression**

I began this essay by suggesting that a great deal of political repression goes unrecognized, and that the left needs to revise its understanding of repression if it is to resist it effectively. This need has developed alongside - in some respects it is a reflection of - similar changes in the thinking of our adversaries.

With the emergence of the counterinsurgency model, the state has ceased to view subversives in isolation from the society surrounding them. Increasingly, it has directed its attention - its intelligence gathering, its coercive force, and its alliance building - toward the population as a whole. Repression, in other words, is not something that happens solely, or even mainly, to activists; and it not just the province of red squads, but of gang enforcement teams, neighborhood liaison officers, and even police advisory boards. It comprises all those methods - routine and extraordinary, coercive and collaborative - used to regulate the conflict inherent in a stratified society. Our task is to decipher the politics implicit in these efforts, to discern the ways that they preserve state power, neutralize resistance, and maintain social inequality.

Our further task is to respond. As repression is primarily a political process, any adequate response must take - at least in part - a *political form*. It will not be enough, as is usual, to put the case before a jury, or adopt strict secrecy in the name of some cloak-and-dagger notion of "security culture." Such things must be done at times, but both these responses, though in very different ways, treat repression chiefly as a legal, and thus technical, problem. They are also entirely defensive. While such devices may protect the individual or small group with greater or lesser

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<sup>12</sup> The cop who shot Grigoropoulos was convicted and sentenced to life in prison. (Associated Press 2010)

efficacy, they do not generally touch - or even attempt to touch - the overall *system* of repression, to say nothing of the social iniquities that system maintains.

Whatever defensive measures may be necessary, an effective response to repression must also involve an offensive component - an attack against the apparatus of repression, which will (if successful) leave the state weaker and the social movement stronger. This outcome, of course, should be the aim from the start.

It is, in a sense, misleading to speak solely in terms of *responding* to repression. Repression exists already. It intervenes preemptively. It forms part of the context in which we act. Oppositional movements cannot avoid repression; the challenge, instead, must be to overcome it.

When facing counterinsurgency, we need to learn to think like insurgents: The antidote to repression is, simply put, *more resistance*. But this cannot just be a matter of escalating tactics or increasing militancy. Crucially, it has to involve broadening the movement's base of support. We have to remember that an insurgency is not just a series of tactical exchanges with the state. It is, instead, a contest for the allegiance of the population. For the rebels, no less than for the authorities, "*Legitimacy is the main objective.*"

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