

THE FUTURE OF INSURGENCY

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FOREWORD

Security professionals and strategists are discovering the post-cold war world is as rife with persistent, low-level violence as its predecessors. In fact, many regions are experiencing a rise in the amount of conflict in the absence of restraints previously imposed by the superpowers. Since frustration in many parts of the Third World is actually increasing, insurgency--the use of low-level, protracted violence to overthrow a political system or force some sort of fundamental change in the political and economic status quo--will be an enduring security problem.

Unfortunately, most existing doctrine and strategy for dealing with insurgency are based on old forms of the phenomenon, especially rural, protracted, "people's war." But as this type of insurgency becomes obsolete, new forms will emerge. It is important to speculate on these future forms in order to assist in the evolution of counterinsurgency strategy and doctrine.

In this study, Dr. Steven Metz uses a psychological method of analysis to argue that two forms of insurgency, which he calls the "spiritual" and the "commercial," will pose the greatest intellectual challenges to security professionals, military leaders, and strategists. The specific nature of such challenges will vary from region to region.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer this study as a foundation for future analysis and recommendations on the development of doctrine, force structure, and strategy for countering insurgency.

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SUMMARY

Insurgency will persist even after the end of the cold war. But as insurgent strategists recognize the bankruptcy of old techniques, especially protracted, rural "people's war," they will innovate. It is vital for those interested in preventing or controlling insurgency to think creatively, speculate on the new forms that will emerge, and craft new frames of reference to serve as the foundation for strategy and doctrine.

The key to post-cold war insurgency is its psychological component. The greatest shortcoming of Third World states (including most of the former Soviet bloc) is their inability to meet the psychological needs of their populations, especially a sense of meaning during the stressful periods of rapid change associated with development. This shortcoming will generate frustration and discontent which can be used by insurgent strategists.

Two forms of insurgency are likely to dominate the post-cold war world. *Spiritual* insurgency is the descendant of the cold war-era revolutionary insurgency. It will be driven by the problems of modernization, the search for meaning, and the pursuit of justice. The other form will be *commercial* insurgency. This will be driven less by the desire for justice than wealth. Its psychological foundation is a warped translation of Western popular culture which equates wealth, personal meaning, and power.

The dominance of one of these two forms will vary from region to region. Latin America is likely to suffer more from continued and expanded commercial insurgency than from spiritual. Sub-Saharan Africa will be particularly prone to insurgency. Initially the spiritual form will be pervasive, with the potential for commercial insurgency to develop later. The likelihood of spiritual insurgency is also high in the Middle East (including Arab North Africa). The Asia/Pacific region and the former Soviet bloc will probably experience both spiritual and commercial insurgency.

THE FUTURE OF INSURGENCY

Introduction.

Writing in 1970, Richard H. Sanger suggested that the modern era has experienced seven great waves of revolts from the English Revolution of 1648-88 to the cyclone of violence that swept the Third World after World War II.¹ Today, this assessment is still accurate, but incomplete. We now stand on the cusp of the eighth wave of modern revolt.

There will be many forms of low-level, protracted violence as the post-cold war global security system coalesces. Of these, insurgency--the use of low-level, protracted violence *to overthrow a political system or force some sort of fundamental change in the political and economic status quo*--will certainly persist. After all, it has been one of the most pervasive types of conflict throughout history and today is epidemic.² For many countries of the world, simmering internal war is a permanent condition.³ As long as there are people frustrated to the point of violence but too weak to challenge a regime in conventional military ways, insurgency will persist. It will, however, evolve from its cold war form.

A number of factors will drive or force the evolution of insurgency. Internationally, the most obvious is the demise of the Soviet Union and its proxies. This dried up the assistance, training, inspiration, and ideological unity which, during the cold war, sustained insurgencies.⁴ Insurgents will still search for outside assistance in the post-cold war world, but the source and motives of outside supporters will be more complex than during the cold war. Ironically, the revitalization of the United Nations may serve to make insurgency more attractive to frustrated power seekers. At the height of the cold war, insurgency tended to be a win or lose proposition. But with U.N. activism in settling internal conflict, insurgents may see the possibility of making gains short of outright victory through a U.N. mediated peace.

Within Third World states, escalating urbanization, population growth, ecological decay, and the explosion of communication technology will change the nature of insurgency. The growing economic cost of insurgency is also an important factor. With the decline of outside patrons to supply insurgents, they are forced to purchase arms and other supplies. To do this they develop other funding sources whether cocaine trafficking for Peru's *Sendero Luminoso* or the diamond trade for Angola's UNITA.⁵ Perhaps the most important change--and one easily overlooked--is the improving counterinsurgency capabilities of many Third World regimes. After nearly four decades of successful revolutionary insurgencies, counterinsurgent strategists appear to have caught up and even surpassed their antagonists.

Sensing that insurgency will evolve is easy. Charting the direction of this change is more complex. Traditionally the evolution of insurgency is like that of a species. Through success, one variant became dominant and was emulated. By the 1960s, this was rural, protracted, "people's war." Then, as emulators of that variant failed, insurgency variegated waiting for a new dominant form to emerge. That is where we are today. None of the old models, whether Maoist people's war, Cuban-style *focquismo*, or urban insurrection in the Russian, Nicaraguan, or Iranian fashion, are dominant. Edward Luttwak noted that since strategy pits two thinking antagonists in conflict, success has a finite lifespan.⁶ The chance of failure increases as the other antagonist begins to understand and counter successful techniques, approaches, and stratagems. Today, the methods that generated revolutionary success from Algeria to Angola are obsolete. But insurgent strategists are both intelligent and creative. They will innovate. The question is: How?

The Context.

Insurgency is born, lives, and dies in a specific strategic, historical, and psychological context. In the broadest sense, its environment is the Third World. Knowing this is only of limited help to the analyst. The "Third World" is a monumentally diverse place. It includes the vast majority of all humans and states, each unique in a number of ways. This makes generalizations difficult and dangerous, but not necessarily worthless. There are common structural, institutional, and psychological features which combine to form the preconditions for insurgency (although not necessarily the causes). These include the macro-level maldistribution of wealth, un- and underemployment, poverty, anxiety and confusion generated by rapid modernization, the collapse of traditional social structures, corruption, factionalization, and inefficiency within the regime, frustration brought about by unrealistic expectations concerning the government's capabilities, repression, weak or nonexistent national identity, and inadequate political mechanisms for peaceful change.

During the 20th century, all of the inherent weaknesses and problems of the Third World have been exacerbated by the destabilizing influence of modernization and development. Americans instinctively consider modernization and development good. In the long run, they are. But in the short term, they create and amplify tensions and conflict. Thus, rapid economic growth "is a profoundly destabilizing force," and the transformation of culture and society that accompanies development often spawns disturbances of one kind or the other.⁷ "Modernization," Samuel P. Huntington explained, "is a multifaceted process involving changes in all areas of human thought and activity. . . . At the psychological level, modernization involves a fundamental shift in values, attitudes and expectations."⁸ During modernization knowledge expands,

physical mobility increases, and all patterns of life change dramatically. This generates security problems when the pace of social change outstrips the development of political institutions through which the newly mobilized population can seek redress of problems. And, clearly, the quicker the change, the greater the instability and the propensity for violence.

Ironically, the increasing capacity of Third World governments to provide goods and services to their populations can also lead to violence. In premodern or traditional states, people expected little tangible rewards from governments except physical protection and, in some cases, construction and maintenance of basic public works such as irrigation canals. Other than that, the government's primary job was to appease the gods--a task with few discernible standards of measurement. During modernization, governments began to provide more tangible goods and services, and thus increased the expectations of their populations. Often, expectations rose faster than a government's ability to meet them, thus generating what Ted Robert Gurr labeled "relative deprivation."⁹ This is an important precondition for political violence, and again is exacerbated by radical improvements in electronic communications and transportation.

Psychologically, modernization tends to destroy traditional value systems without a fully developed and appealing replacement. This often leads to some degree of anomie--a widespread sense of normlessness bordering on moral chaos. The tangible outcomes are frustration and a propensity to look toward ideologies, some of them violent, for alternative value systems. Given this, a full understanding of the nature of insurgency must be grounded in the psychology of value systems and personal meaning. Viktor E. Frankl, one of the pioneers in this field, wrote, "Man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life. . ."¹⁰ He concluded that the absence of a sense of meaning can only be ameliorated by action or suffering--both part of the psychological context of insurgency.

During the post-World War II wave of insurgency Frantz Fanon described the "cultural estrangement" felt by colonial people and their search for new myths to construct a system of meaning. Intellectuals such as Georges Sorel had earlier noted the psychologically liberating effects of violence but Fanon, who was formally trained as a psychiatrist, was especially astute in placing this in the context of the modern Third World. "At the level of individuals," he wrote, "violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority and restores his self-respect."¹¹ Today, colonialism is gone but the search for meaning and its violent expression is unabated. From Iran to Sri Lanka to Peru, revolution and personal meaning are inextricably linked. Witness the resurgence of religious fundamentalism (Islamic and others) and of atavistic forms of identity such as ethnicity. The world is also swept by a type of nationalism less like the American variant which grows from shared interests and

values than the Fascist or Nazi form where some sort of metaphysical or spiritual bond--whether ethnic, racial, or religious--defines the polity.

There are groups in nearly every Third World state who associate modernization with frustration. Just as the Nazis looked to mythical early German heroes and Mussolini's Fascists pursued the glory of Rome, these groups often seek a new framework of identity and personal meaning in their nation's pre-modern past. For instance, Michael Radu argues:

Even in Latin America, the trend seems to be toward a nostalgia for the pre-Colombian past. The Mexicans' love affair with the Aztecs and their sentimental preference for Cuauhtémoc over Cortés is a symbolic reminder of this trend; the obsession of white, middle-class, educated young Uruguayans, Peruvians, and Argentinians with Túpac Amaru, a defeated Indian chief of eighteenth century Peru, is another; and Sendero Luminoso's profoundly reactionary politico-economic program is centered on a return to the pre-Colombian "golden age" of the Tehuantsincho, the Inca Empire.¹²

And, in Guatemala, there has been a resurgence of a native Maya movement with congressional approval of a standardized Maya alphabet.¹³ Similar things are happening throughout the Third World. Admittedly these appeals to a mythical past may not accurately reflect the objectives of the insurgent elite. The white and *mestizo* leaders of Sendero Luminoso, for instance, have no intention of actually returning to Inca socialism, yet find it a valuable tool for mobilizing Indian support.

Before the modern era, there was an unspoken contract between the state and its population defining the obligations of each. Outside of theocracies, the state provided basic needs, especially protection, and people sought meaning through other organizations, usually family, village, tribe, clan, or church. As an aspect of modernization, the state assumed growing responsibility for higher level needs such as psychic fulfillment and personal meaning. In recognizing this the Fascists, Nazis, and even Bolsheviks were ahead of their time. Today, many Third World states are being asked to provide these higher level needs, but are unable to do so. This lays a foundation for insurgency and provides the opportunity for insurgent strategists to provide the other elements of the equation such as a unifying ideology, leadership, and weapons.

The global electronics revolution also exacerbated frustration among the citizens of the Third World. As Gurr demonstrated, it is not absolute poverty or deprivation that leads to political violence, but *relative* deprivation. Through television, movies, and increased literacy, the "blissful ignorance" that kept a repressive peace in much of the developing world was shattered. All of a sudden, the poor (and even the

not-so-poor) with access to Western entertainment recognized the extent of their deprivation. In the Third World (as in the West), personal satisfaction was defined by material possessions. Naturally, the government was expected to meet these new demands. When weak and poor regimes could not do so, another stone was laid in the foundation of insurgency. Victor Perera's description of young Guatemalans living in a city garbage dump is accurate throughout the Third World:

Jazz, Hollywood, baseball, half-eaten Big Macs in plastic containers, TV reruns in shop windows are most of what they know of gringo culture, refracted through the glittering shards of a thousand spent and shattered dreams.¹⁴

Exploding populations and rapid urbanization have made the demands spawned by Western entertainment exceedingly difficult for governments and economies to satisfy. In the Third World, urbanization has been much more rapid than during the earlier process of modernization in North America and Europe, thus amplifying the immiserization of those newly arrived in the cities.¹⁵ Usually they find very limited economic opportunities and an infrastructure unable to provide adequate housing, medical care, transportation, or even potable water and sewer facilities. Rapid urbanization also contributes to environmental decay. In the cities of the Third World, the air and water are often dangerously polluted. In the countryside, deforestation contributes to drought, desertification, soil erosion, declining fertility and, subsequently, further urbanization and immigration by people unable to eke out a living through farming. At the same time, the decline of labor-intensive industry limits economic opportunities in the cities. The tangible outcome is the horrendous slum belts populated by the un- or under-employed circling many Third World cities, all of which are incubators for political violence. Demographic trends exacerbate this. By some estimates, more than 50 percent of the citizens of the Third World are under 15 years old.¹⁶ It is during late adolescence and early adulthood that people are most amenable to extremism, thus providing an endless sea of potential recruits for insurgent leaders. Ominously, there is no sign that this will end soon.

All of this misery and frustration is made even more explosive by the widespread availability of arms. Through the playing-out of the cold war in the Third World, and through the desire of weapons manufacturers to sell their goods, there is a global profusion of arms useful to insurgents from the omnipresent AK-47 to the shoulder-fired anti-air missiles, rocket propelled grenades, and night vision goggles. During the cold war a number of states deliberately engineered Third World insurgencies as part of their national security strategies. This included both the superpowers and smaller states such as South Africa, Iran, Pakistan, Nicaragua, and Cuba. The result is a proliferation of not only the physical legacy of the cold war--arms--but also of the knowledge of how to foment, organize, and

sustain insurgency. Neither the physical nor intellectual legacy of the cold war will disappear soon.

Finally, the physical enlargement of the Third World changed the context of insurgency. Put simply, much of what was once labeled the "Second World"--the former Soviet bloc--became part of the Third World. This means that regions which once seemed immune to insurgency are now either susceptible or, as in the cases of Georgia, Tajikistan, and, of course, Bosnia, experiencing it.

New Forms.

The tendency toward variegation in insurgency existed even during the height of the cold war. Marxism simply served as an artificial homogenizer partially overcoming local peculiarities. Insurgents usually adopted Marxism because of their need to attract external support and to construct a common ideological lexicon for various elements of the insurgent coalition. But Marxism's importance was always overestimated by opponents of insurgency, whether the United States or Third World governments. Although the ideological predilections of a revolutionary leadership had some utility for determining the overall strategic significance of the revolt, it was usually not vitally important for the course of an insurgency itself, and now is wholly irrelevant.

Analysts of insurgency have long recognized that ideological rhetoric provides a poor tool for categorizing and understanding insurgency. In response, they crafted other analytical frameworks. Most of these relied on one of two variables: the *goals* of the insurgency, or its *strategy*. More sophisticated schemas combined the two.¹⁷ But both of these variables generate analytical problems. Frameworks based on the goals of insurgents assume a Western, linear, and proto-Marxist notion of development. A revolutionary insurgency is thus one seeking socialism; a reactionary opposes the Western model of development. This means that a framework based on this variable is only as valid as the model of development it assumes. Using the insurgents' strategy is equally problematic, in large part because the strategy reflects the external training and sponsors of the insurgent leadership.

In an attempt to bypass this Western bias and understand insurgency the way its proponents do rather than the way we would if we were in their position, this study examines insurgency using an essentially psychological framework. I assume that it is not a particular social, political, and economic system or condition that sparks insurgency, but a particular way of *understanding* this system or condition. Phrased differently, it is not repression, poverty or misery as we *define it* that inspires insurgency, but as the insurgents define it. Psychological factors rather than structural ones are preeminent.

Using this psychological approach, then, what forms will insurgency take in the post-cold war international system? Of course every insurgency will be unique, reflecting the history, geography, and culture of the society in which it occurs. Still, there are likely to be two dominant forms. One can be called *spiritual* insurgency. This is the descendant of the cold war-era revolutionary insurgency. It will be driven by the problems of modernization, especially anomie, the search for meaning, and the pursuit of justice. The other form will be *commercial* insurgency. This will be driven less by the desire for justice than wealth. Its psychological foundation is a warped translation of Western popular culture which equates wealth, personal meaning, and power.

Spiritual Insurgency and the Search for Meaning. Spiritual insurgency is the evolutionary descendant of traditional revolution. Its predecessors are not only the Marxist insurgencies of the cold war, but also the slave and peasant rebellions that occurred throughout recorded history. But these past rebellions were essentially about power. Rebellious peasants and slaves seldom questioned the basic sense of personal meaning defined by their culture. What will distinguish many post-cold war spiritual insurgencies is an explicit linkage to the search for meaning. Anomie as much as poverty or repression, the desire for a more broad-based sense of fulfillment rather than the simpler needs-based motives of past popular uprisings, will drive insurgents.

This is not totally new. There was usually some spiritual element in traditional revolutions. While most peasant rebellions were inspired by specific local grievances, they "often included millenarian elements, views of the apocalypse, messianic upheavals offering the anticipation of a world purged of wickedness and suffering. . ." ¹⁸ Even during the cold war, the spiritual content of insurgency was important. Part of the appeal of Marxism was that it served many of the same psychological functions as religion during a time of widespread secularization. ¹⁹ Successful Marxist revolutionaries from Lenin to Kim Il Sung created personality cults to provide a framework of personal meaning for their followers. In the future, the spiritual dimension will markedly increase in importance, amplifying an aspect of insurgency that was there all along.

At least two psychological factors undergird the relationship of insurgency and the search for meaning. One is the linkage between violence and liberation observed by Fanon. Participation in political violence is a spiritually liberating event by someone who feels abused, repressed, or alienated by a socio-political system. By viewing themselves as agents of justice struggling against injustice, political violence gives meaning to the lives of its advocates. For the first time in their lives, revolutionaries find that they are taken seriously by the system. As rebels they may live in danger, but at least

they are not insignificant, a condition which many find far worse than danger. The second factor deals with tolerance of psychological stimuli. Modernization forces an increase in this. Stimulation becomes like an addictive drug where ever larger amounts are needed to satisfy the individual. Violence can provide such satisfaction. And, unlike street crime, political violence can provide stimulation in a morally uplifting way.

The essence of spiritual insurgency is rejection of a regime and, more broadly, of the social, economic, and political system associated with that regime. In most cases, this system is derived from the Western model. Insurgents often blame imported Western ideas and practices--borrowed and imperfectly applied by the local elite--for the discontent, misery, and frustration which accompanies modernization. While direct colonialism has ended, theorists of spiritual insurgency see a form of cultural and economic imperialism every bit as insidious and exploitative as the old form. Spiritual insurgents thus use discontent with what they consider the alien Western ideas of their elite to mobilize support, but must offer alternative ideas and practices. Often they look to their nation's past for these things and to create a more "authentic" model of development based on a fictional or mythical notion of history. The violent and extremist forms of Islamic fundamentalism provide the clearest contemporary example of this sort of rejection of Western culture, but the same phenomenon is occurring throughout the Third World. Most ongoing insurgencies have some nativist element, and this is likely to continue and grow.

In the future, some spiritual insurgencies will accept the political boundaries of their nations, but simply seek to replace their regime and elite and thus alter the social, political, and economic system into one deemed more authentic and just. Other spiritual insurgents will reject the composition of the nation itself, and seek secession or partition based on ethnicity, tribalism, religion, or some other atavistic or primal form of identity. The post-cold war era has seen the failure of a whole plethora of unifying ideologies. This includes not only Marxism, but also others such as Pan-Arabism and Pan-Africanism. This failure spawned the resurgence of nativist ideologies based on primal identities such as ethnicity or religion. This, too, is not a new phenomenon. Many cold war insurgencies, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, had ethnic overtones. What precisely has changed then? One thing is the collapse of limitations or constraints on primal conflict imposed by the cold war. Russians are no longer able to, or are interested in, controlling the monsters they helped unleash. In fact, for Russia, exploiting ethnic conflicts as a means of consolidating regional influence has a long tradition.²⁰ Today, according to John P. Hannah, this is continuing in Georgia, Moldova, and Azerbaijan.²¹ Although originating at the periphery of Russia, this process spread to the Third World during the cold war, thus exacerbating long-standing enmities. Similarly, the United States has only sporadic concern with regional conflicts born of the cold war. A

second change is the amplification of primal conflict due to the strains of modernization. Throughout the Third World "ethnic identity is strongly felt, behavior based on ethnicity is normatively sanctioned, and ethnicity is often accompanied by hostility toward outgroups."²² These primal schisms will shape insurgency for the next few decades.

One of the crucial interfaces for spiritual insurgency is between political violence and religion. Development was long associated with secularization, but throughout the world, the strains of modernization spawned a religious renaissance. Sometimes this takes militant or violent forms. Of the religious movements connected to political violence, Islamic fundamentalism receives the most attention, but there is a plethora of similar phenomena from liberation theology in Latin America and the Philippines to militant Sikhism in India. Religion is especially important as a vehicle for defining the concept of justice which is itself central to spiritual insurgency. In cultures as diverse as those of Peru, Sri Lanka, and Lebanon, justice plays an integral role in the construction of an ideological framework for political violence and thus is a recurring theme in revolutionary ideologies. This is an easy connection. Because the notion of justice implies *punishment*, it can be used to validate violence. And all the world's great religions deal with justice in some form. This can be distorted by revolutionary and terrorist leaders, whether Muslim, Christian, or any other religion, to justify their actions.²³

Revolutionary leaders--at least the skillful ones--interweave the notion of justice and personal meaning. For their followers, the pursuit of social justice becomes a way to define personal meaning. Yasser Arafat, for example, argued in the 1960s:

The UN charter gives all peoples the right to self-determination. Not only are we deprived of this right, but of our country itself. So every Palestinian, wherever he is, is a victim of the same injustice practiced against him. This feeling was the common motive for all Palestinians to regain their identity, their nationality, and their homeland through armed struggle.²⁴

In summary, most Third World nations have attempted an emulative form of development for the past several decades. Most emulated the West and pursued either a capitalist or mixed economy, while some emulated the Soviet Union or China. Most have been at least partial failures, unable to stem the increasing misery of their expanding populations and, many cases, actually adding to it through corruption, inefficiency, and ill-conceived policies. The people of the Third World often associate their discontent with what they see as the misguided models of development. At the same time, the people of the Third World are searching for new frameworks of personal meaning to replace

obsolete traditional ones. As universalist ideologies such as Marxism and radical Pan-Arabism failed, people looked to nativistic frameworks. This, in combination with a stress on the concept of justice with its implication of punishment for the unjust, oppressive, and corrupt, creates the environment for revolutionary violence. For insurgent leaders, the struggle is actually about power. They want it but do not have it. For their followers, however, the struggle is about personal meaning, the amelioration of discontent, and the punishment of injustice.

Commercial Insurgency and the Search for Wealth. In the pursuit of personal meaning in the developing world, there is an alternative to violent nativism or other forms of spiritual insurgency. When the discontented define personal meaning by material possessions rather than psychic fulfillment, they create the environment for commercial insurgency. This was made possible when Western materialism penetrated nearly every corner of the Third World via electronic communications and widespread travel. Commercial insurgency is a quasi-political distortion of materialism. When relatively unsophisticated and discontented audiences (whether in the Third World or the inner cities of the West) are bombarded with Western or Western-style advertising, it is easy for them to associate the personal satisfaction evident among the actors and models who populate the commercials, television programs, and movies with their material possessions. Personal meaning is thus defined as owning a flashy car, clothes, and audio and video equipment. When the citizens of the Third World contrast this artificial image of Western life with their daily existence, the result is frustration and discontent. This can inflame the revolutionary impulse when the poor of the Third World recognize that the lives of their own indigenous elites appear closer to the idealized Western lifestyle than to their own, and when they expect their government to ameliorate the ensuing frustration.

The quickest and easiest path to material possessions and the satisfaction they appear to bring is crime. And, since the discontented of the Third World feel little attachment to the dominant system of values in their societies anyway, moral restraints on criminal activity are limited. In situations of perceived deprivation and frustration--and again this holds for American inner cities as well as the Third World--the possession of wealth and power is more important than the techniques used to acquire them. In this psychological context, commercial insurgency is essentially widespread and sustained criminal activity with a proto-political dimension that challenges the security of the state. In the modern world, its most common manifestation is narco-insurgency, although it may also be based on other forms of crime, especially smuggling. The defining feature is expansion of the criminal activity into a security threat, especially in the hinterlands where government control is limited.

This has a very long history. Its antecedents are the

eternal problems of banditry and piracy. Despite contemporary arguments that the "war on drugs" is not an appropriate conflict for modern militaries, it is likely that armies and navies throughout history have spent more time fighting banditry and piracy than any other kind of security threat. Banditry and piracy were traditionally seen as security threats not only because of the tangible danger they posed to commerce and public order, but also because of what they might become. As Eric Hobsbawm pointed out in his classic work on social banditry, it often served as a precursor for revolution by illustrating the weakness of the regime and galvanizing discontent.²⁵ And, according to Desai and Eckstein, "The line between the criminal activity of rural bandits (who defy established authority) and their political mobilization (in attempts to alter or destroy such authority) has always been thin and has often been crossed."²⁶

The same relationship holds in modern developing societies. Organized criminals find that in order to mobilize sufficient power to resist the state, they must move their organizations beyond pure criminalism with its limited appeal to most citizens and add elements of political protest. In this way, they legitimize their activities in the eyes of many people not otherwise inclined to support them but who are frustrated by the existing politico-economic system. From Robin Hood through "Pretty Boy" Floyd to Carlos Lehder and Pablo Escobar, criminals have swathed themselves in vaguely populist, anti-establishment political rhetoric to generate sympathy or outright support. Their immediate followers find personal meaning through wealth, and their sympathizers find fulfillment through seeing the regime made to look impotent and helpless.

Today, a number of Third World regimes face severe security threats from commercial insurgencies or, as in Peru and Colombia, from the marriage of spiritual and commercial insurgencies. Given their vast wealth, commercial insurgents are often able to match the technological sophistication of the government's counterinsurgent forces as they purchase items such as rocket propelled grenades and night vision goggles. They also weaken governments through bribes and corruption. Furthermore, they have developed extensive international linkages, making them an even more persistent and formidable foe. While commercial insurgents may not seek the outright capture of political power like traditional revolutionary insurgents, they can pose serious security threats. Just as simple illnesses such as mumps or measles can kill someone already stricken with another disease, commercial insurgency can prove deadly to regimes weakened by other forces.

Regional Patterns.

To this point, I have focused on generalities, on a macro-level paradigm of the ongoing variegation of insurgency.

Yet it is obvious that insurgency is characterized by region-specific patterns derived from tradition, history, culture, and economics. The nature of regimes, their security forces, and counterinsurgency strategies also varies from region to region. International relations are also important since the presence or absence of external sponsors can influence an insurgency's chance of success. So while all regions of the Third World will experience both spiritual and commercial insurgency, the proportions between the two forms will vary as will the strategic challenges posed by each form.

In general, spiritual insurgency will predominate in regions composed of states that are heterogenous in primal identity such as ethnicity, race, tribe, clan, or religion. Spiritual insurgency will be especially common where there are extensive cultural differences or variation in primal identity between the elite and nonelite. Put simply, stark differences between groups help overcome natural constraints on violence by dehumanizing of the enemy. To the extent that differences are based on more than simply wealth and power, violence is easier. Moreover, spiritual insurgency will occur where whatever model of development the elite attempted has clearly failed, thus leading to anomie and a sense of moral and spiritual decline. By contrast, commercial insurgency will largely be determined by geography. For organized crime to grow to the point that it poses a security threat rather than simply a challenge to law and order, there often is some sort of geographic factor which allows the accumulation of extensive wealth by the criminal organization. Additional preconditions include weak legal and criminal justice systems, security apparatuses which do not consider commercial insurgency a security threat, and a tradition of both organized crime and political violence. The geographic factor may be a climate amenable to the production of drugs as in Peru's Upper Huallaga Valley or Southeast Asia's Golden Triangle, or location on a logical route for drugs. The geographic factor may also be a location and topography that contribute to nondrug related criminal activity such as smuggling. This geographic limitation, however, is not absolute. Some forms of criminal activity which can support commercial insurgency such as arms trafficking can occur almost anywhere, especially in the electronic age when the need for local communications and banking centers is limited.

Latin America. Latin America is likely to suffer more from continued and expanded commercial insurgency than from spiritual. With a few exceptions, Latin American nations do not have the ethnic, racial, or religious schisms that characterize many other parts of the Third World. Recent positive developments including the emergence of democratic political systems and the resuscitation of the region's economy after a decade of stagnation have, at least temporarily, ameliorated some of the class conflict that undergirded past insurgency. The strategic situation in Latin America makes external sponsorship of an insurgency unlikely. In addition, Latin America's long tradition of revolutionary insurgency forced the region's militaries to

develop extensive counterinsurgency and counterterrorism skills. These will make it difficult for future insurgents to guide their movements through the vulnerable gestation period.

Still, there is at least the potential for the re-emergence of widespread spiritual insurgency in Latin America. Population pressures will mount, urbanization will continue to concentrate discontent, and economic stagnation could return, thus increasing discontent and intensifying the search for personal meaning. And, spiritual insurgency is likely to persist in ethnically divided nations such as Peru and Guatemala where existing insurgencies are built on the split between Indians and *mestizos*. Even among non-Indian provincial elites in Peru, there is a tradition of *indigenismo*, or glorification of Indian customs and traditions, which provides an ideological foundation for spiritual insurgency.²⁷ Bolivia and Mexico also have unassimilated or partially assimilated Indian populations with a limited role in the existing economic and political system and a tradition of support for political violence. Spiritual insurgency may also emerge in racially heterogeneous states like Brazil and most of those along the Caribbean littoral. Finally, a reactionary form of spiritual insurgency could coalesce in the most rapidly developing Latin American nations, especially Mexico, where institutionalized glorification of the pre-Colombian past could provide an ideological foundation for insurgent strategists.

Commercial insurgency, however, is likely to remain the more persistent problem for Latin America. In a sense, the region is a victim of geography. Not only does it have the proper climate and topography for the production of coca, marijuana, and opium, but it is also located near the North American drug markets and has a web of economic and personal connections with the United States. The geography of countries like Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, and Colombia also makes it difficult for the state to fully control the hinterland regions. This often gives organized crime time to gestate and grow before it is recognized as a security threat. And, in both Peru and Colombia, the blending of narco-insurgency, traditional rural communist revolution, and, in Peru, racially-based spiritual insurgency is a particularly insidious tendency.

The major determinant of the extent of insurgency in Latin America will be the ability of the governments there to sustain the construction of democracy and economic growth, and to control corruption and military involvement in politics. None of these will be easy tasks in a region where democracy and economic growth are precarious and corruption and military involvement in politics--as well as revolution--are long-standing traditions. In addition, the ability of the United States to successfully control its demand for narcotics will play a major role in determining the extent of insurgency in Latin America.

Sub-Saharan Africa. Geography, population growth, urbanization, endemic corruption, governmental inefficiency, and

economic stagnation make Sub-Saharan Africa prone to insurgency. With the possible exception of South Africa and Zimbabwe, African militaries have not proven effective at counterinsurgency. The governments of Sudan, Angola, and Mozambique, for instance, have been unable to defeat relatively weak insurgencies and the Marxist regime of Ethiopia suffered outright defeat. Furthermore, the tendency of neighboring states to provide assistance and sanctuary to African insurgents makes them difficult to defeat.²⁸ The weakness of state institutions, the personalization of politics, the pervasiveness of cultures with a strong spiritual content, and, most of all, ethnic and tribal heterogeneity open the way for the spiritual form of insurgency. Most Sub-Saharan African states were European colonies until recently. As documented by writers such as Joseph Conrad, Frantz Fanon, and Kwame Nkrumah, this exacerbated the search for a structure of identity among Africans. In fact, many African insurgencies of the past such as the Mau Mau revolt in Kenya, the Simba movement in Congo (now Zaire), and the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) had strong mystical or spiritual dimensions.

As Huntington pointed out, one indicator of development is the strength and number of political institutions. By this standard, most African nations are particularly underdeveloped.²⁹ This gives charisma an important role in politics. In fact, the dominant political form in Sub-Saharan Africa for the past few decades has been "personal rule."³⁰ This means that spiritual insurgencies which do develop will likely be built around a charismatic leader. Spiritual insurgency in Sub-Saharan Africa will likely take one of two forms. One is separatist or secessionist violence based on ethnicity, tribalism, or religion. This has traditionally been the most common pattern in the region. The second form is urban insurgency with a spiritual dimension, for in urban areas the search for personal meaning is most intense. While Africans who migrate to the cities tend to retain contacts with their traditional villages to a much greater extent than in other parts of the Third World, the sense of moral dislocation and frustration felt by new urban dwellers is acute. In combination with the strains of rapid urbanization, government corruption and bureaucratic inefficiency, this will create all the preconditions for spiritual insurgency. All that is missing is a dedicated and skilled insurgent leadership. Eventually, one will appear.

Despite a long tradition of smuggling, Sub-Saharan Africa has not seen widespread commercial insurgency. With the exception of some drug smuggling rings headquartered in Nigeria, African criminals have not developed the extensive organization and quasi-political agenda that defines commercial insurgency. Still, they could. Many African nations have rugged hinterlands where government control is minimal or nonexistent, and many African societies, especially those in the traditional trading zones along the Atlantic and Indian Ocean coasts, have the same sort of strong entrepreneurial traditions that made Colombia fertile ground for commercial insurgency. In much of the continent,

smuggling of goods such as ivory and rhinoceros horn spawned an intricate criminal network with ties to the Asian underworld. This suggests that it may be simply a matter of time before the agricultural and industrial processes of narcotics production are learned by African farmers and commercial insurgency spreads to the region.

In general, Sub-Saharan Africa is ripe for insurgency. In fact, no nation is immune. The region is composed of relatively weak states, heterogenous societies, and nations with exploding populations, economic stagnation, and rapid urbanization. As part of the legacy of the cold war, Africa is full of experienced insurgents. All of this does not bode well for the future stability of the region.

Middle East. The likelihood of spiritual insurgency is also high in the Middle East (including Arab North Africa). It is composed of many ethnically heterogenous states where discontent and frustration are high. "Across the Middle East," Augustus Richard Norton writes, "there is growing evidence of widening dissatisfaction with the reigning regimes."³¹ More importantly, Islam provides an existing coherent ideological alternative to both Western-oriented models of development and Marxism.³² Islam's emphasis on justice and the state's duty to pursue it has historically provided a powerful forum for reform and protest.³³ This is especially true of *shi'ia* Islam which is imbued with the concepts of the repression and suffering of believers. Furthermore, *shi'ism's* use of a type of clergy provides a counter-elite which, as the Iranian revolution showed, can focus, politicize, and organize discontent.

Much of the resurgence of Islam in recent decades has been driven by a search for authenticity outside the framework of Western liberalism.³⁴ Equally important, Islam does not recognize the separation of church and state integral to Western liberalism, but assumes the state is "only the political expression of an Islamic society."³⁵ Since Islam defines governments who do not rule according to the *sharia* or Islamic law as illegitimate, it can be made to justify the violent overthrow of a regime deemed unjust or unIslamic. In the words of Ruhollah Khomeini:

Both law and reason require that we not permit governments to retain [a] non-Islamic or anti-Islamic character. . . We have in reality, then, no choice but to destroy those systems of government that are corrupt in themselves and also entail the corruption of others, and to overthrow all treacherous, corrupt, oppressive, and criminal regimes.³⁶

This political dimension of Islam greatly simplifies the job of mobilization for potential insurgents since their recruits are already familiar with the key concepts used to construct the revolutionary ideology. Unlike cold war era Marxist

revolutionaries, Islamic insurgents need expend little effort "educating the masses." All insurgents need to do is somehow cast their struggle as a *jihad*, a notion which literally means "exertion in Allah's cause" but which has been used throughout the history of Islam to justify the use of violence against heretics or nonbelievers. Of course this alone is not sufficient to inspire an insurgency. From the Omani insurgents of the 1960s and 1970s to modern demagogues such as Saddam Hussein and Muammar Qaddafi, Arab radicals have found that *jihad* cannot spark widespread and protracted violence unless it is used in conjunction with other factors such as widespread discontent. But if these other factors obtain, *jihad* can be an important element of a spiritual insurgency.

Furthermore, the overall militarization of the Middle East facilitates insurgency. Both weapons and military expertise are common. Especially germane for insurgency was the involvement of many young Muslims in the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan. It fostered not only the development of insurgent skills, but also the sort of ideological framework necessary for spiritual insurgency. According to Hamid Gul, a retired Pakistani general,

The Afghan jihad. . . became an ideological obsession among Islamic youth who were studying in the United States and Europe. They had liberal ideas, but they saw that Western liberalism was not the answer for what they were looking for. They tried to discover themselves. The instrument for discovery was the jihad.³⁷

In many parts of the Middle East, these veterans of the Afghan war form a potential (or actual) insurgent cadre.

There are, however, several constraints on the spread of spiritual insurgency in the Middle East. Most important is the relative effectiveness of the regimes. Many governments have taken steps to avoid being perceived as "un-Islamic" even if not reverting to the extremism of the Iranian and Sudanese regimes. In addition, the security forces of most Middle Eastern states are more effective than their counterparts in Sub-Saharan Africa. This includes intelligence agencies, security police, and militaries. Urbanization in the Middle East has concentrated frustration and discontent in the cities. From the Battle of Algiers through Marighella's movement in Brazil to the terrorist campaign in Belfast, urban insurgency has historically proven more susceptible to repression by an effective state than rural insurgency or rural insurgency with an urban element.³⁸ This is largely due to the difficulties of raising and maintaining a large insurgent force in an urban environment. As Aaron Karp notes, "Without territory, a group can neither acquire nor keep large weapons inventories."³⁹ Rebels who attempt a rural strategy in response to the effectiveness of the security forces in the cities find that the inhospitable climate prevents them from organizing large forces.⁴⁰ Spiritual insurgency is thus likely to

remain a serious threat in the Middle East, but not one likely to bring down regimes which avoid internal factionalization and conflict.

The effectiveness of the security apparatus also limits the growth opportunities for commercial insurgency in the Middle East. The region's geography is unpropitious since the hinterlands tend to be uninhabitable or arid. This means that the widespread production of narcotics only occurs with the tacit or explicit support of the government as in parts of Lebanon and Afghanistan. Other forms of commercial insurgency may emerge sporadically, especially those based on the smuggling of arms. Overall, the Middle East has the potential for insurgency, but to a much smaller degree than Sub-Saharan Africa, where it is almost inevitable.

Asia. Like the Middle East, Asia is ripe for spiritual insurgency. It includes many heterogenous societies, and is experiencing the precipitous erosion of traditional life. South Asia in particular "is in danger of being overwhelmed by ethno-religious conflict."⁴¹ In heterogenous nations such as India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and China, spiritual insurgency may take religious or ethnic forms as the worldwide wave of nativistic religious movements spawns things like militant Hinduism.⁴² It could also blend the two. Insurgencies can be separatist as in the ongoing conflicts in Sri Lanka, eastern and northwestern India, and the southern Philippines. Often these movements seek autonomy for a religious group, thus attracting outside support as in Jammu and Kashmir where Afghan *mujahadin* are fighting alongside Muslim separatists.⁴³ Or they could, in predominately Islamic nations, seek to replace regimes utilizing a proto-Western model of development with one more like that of Iran or Sudan. In the rapidly developing nations of the Pacific rim such as Thailand, Singapore, Taiwan, and Malaysia, spiritual insurgency could emerge if economic growth, which has deflected internal tensions, stalls. Insurgent strategists would then attempt to mobilize the discontented and frustrated by emphasizing the uneven distribution of the rewards of economic development. To do this, they would craft a revolutionary ideology claiming to seek a more "authentic" model of development to replace the proto-Western one. This would not be difficult since throughout Asia a deep spiritual tradition--be it Islamic, Hindu, or Buddhist--helps create fertile ground for spiritual insurgencies.

Since Asia contains all but one of the remaining Marxist states, there is also the potential for a form of spiritual insurgency that would pit Western-oriented, democratically inclined rebels against tottering totalitarian states. The predecessor of such movements would be the American and French revolutions rather than traditional peasant revolts or the communist insurgencies of the 20th century. In such a movement, personal meaning would be defined in terms of freedom rather than by justice or some other spiritual concept. These insurgents

could probably count on some kind of external support, thus making them especially difficult to counter.

Parts of Asia also contain the preconditions for commercial insurgency. Forms of it already exist in the Golden Triangle region of Myanmar, Thailand, and Laos. The Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia also have appropriately uncontrollable hinterlands. If Latin American nations ever come to grips with their domestic drug producers, Asian heroin may see a resurgence.⁴⁴ Then other Asian nations may find themselves confronting serious commercial insurgencies.

Former Soviet Bloc. Finally, the amorphous area known as the former Soviet bloc is ripe for insurgency in both its spiritual and commercial forms. Spiritually, the framework for personal meaning and social organization engineered by the communist regimes is shattered. Throughout the region, anomie or near-anomie reigns. On top of this, ethnic and religious tensions suppressed by the communist regimes are boiling over. The militarization of the former Soviet bloc means that a large proportion of the male population has some military training, and that there are huge amounts of arms throughout the region. All of these things create the proper environment for spiritual insurgency, particularly its nativistic separatist/secessionist variant.

Commercial insurgency is a possibility for the future. The former Soviet bloc is experiencing a wave of organized crime arising from the weakness of law enforcement systems and, as in the United States during Prohibition, from an inability of the legitimate economy to meet consumer demands. The geography of much of the region, however, is not amenable to organized crime growing into commercial insurgency as it did in South America. In this, the former Soviet bloc is more like the United States of the 1930s than Colombia of the 1970s.

The former Soviet bloc is in the process of bifurcation. Some parts are, with uneven success, becoming part of the developed world. Most of eastern Europe is not likely to experience insurgency. But other parts are becoming part of the Third World. Those sections--especially the ones that are ethnically or religiously heterogenous--will probably face it in the near future.

Conclusions.

The preeminent task of those who would use insurgency as a roadway to power is mobilization of support. It takes a powerful incentive for people to place themselves in serious danger, whether as active participants in an insurgency or passive supporters. In the modern world, this incentive is often discontent and frustration born of a failed search for personal meaning. When large numbers of people define personal meaning

through psychic fulfillment, the outcome may be spiritual insurgency. When people define personal meaning materially, the outcome may be commercial insurgency.

The end of the cold war changed the normative structure of international politics. The United Nations and the values it represents are experiencing a renaissance. This has eroded the international support network for insurgency, and thus made it less likely to actually overthrow a regime. In addition, most Third World regimes appear stronger than in previous decades and their security forces more effective. The democratic revolution in the Third World deflated a number of insurgencies and, so long as it lasts, helps forestall the emergence of new ones. But trends indicate that Third World regimes will face escalating challenges. As they fail to meet these challenges, insurgencies will appear. The most likely result is a spate of stalemates as regimes are unable to prevent the rise of insurgencies or to fully defeat them once they appear, but insurgents are unable to seize power without external support or the internal collapse of the regime.

All this could change if insurgent movements are able to find external sponsors and to cooperate as they did during the cold war. This will be difficult given the nativistic nature of many forthcoming insurgencies, but not impossible. International politics occasionally spawns unusual, even bizarre alliances. It is possible, then, that insurgency may again become part of interstate conflict, a form of indirect aggression made attractive by the inability of states to use conventional military power. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction may be the trend that leads to this. In a nuclearized world, indirect aggression--including the creation and sponsorship of insurgencies--would be infinitely safer for aggressive states than more conventional uses of military force.

Frustration and discontent will persist and even increase in the Third World. So will the physical equipment and skills needed to make insurgencies. What the counterinsurgent strategists of the world must now do is recognize that much of their understanding of insurgency is dated and rapidly approaching obsolescence. After all, insurgency itself will continue to change. It is not difficult to imagine additional forms emerging further in the future. For example, what can be called "neo-inclusionist" movements could arise in opposition to exclusionist governments based on ethnic, tribal, or religious identities. The evolution of insurgency thus demands great mental flexibility on the part of those who oppose it. New forms require new mental constructs. To date, these have not appeared.

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socio-economic groups, heroin could serve as something of a surrogate for crack if the sources of cocaine dried up.

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The Naga insurgency, which spans the Indian states of Nagaland, Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, as well as the upper Sagaing region of Myanmar, has long been considered the "mother" of insurgencies in the region due to its military and political strength. Although the government ended outright hostilities with the major Naga armed groups in 1997, progress in the major peace talks has been hampered by factionalism, ambiguous ceasefire rules and lingering questions surrounding the fate of ethnic Nagas beyond Nagaland itself. Dr Alex Waterman is a postdoctoral Research Fellow in Security, Terrorism & Insurgency at the University of Leeds and northeast India contributor to the IISS Armed Conflict Database (ACD). An insurgency is a rebellion against authority (for example, an authority recognized as such by the United Nations) when those taking part in the rebellion are not recognized as belligerents (lawful combatants). An insurgency can be fought via counter-insurgency warfare, and may also be opposed by measures to protect the population and by political and economic actions of various kinds, as well as propaganda aimed at undermining the insurgents' claims against the incumbent regime. As a concept