

Hearts and minds strategies are more effective than repression in reducing VEO activity.

104; 174

General Description of the Literature:

Many political scientists and government leaders have argued the need for hearts and minds strategies, instead of repression, to reduce VEO activities. Much of the theoretical work is in the context of counterinsurgency and the results of empirical studies are mixed. McFate (2005) writes that political power is the main issue in an insurgency and therefore military strategy alone cannot appease the problem. The 2006 Counterinsurgency Field Manual claimed that the best method of counterinsurgency is to reach out to the hearts and minds of the people while using minimal force (Dickinson 2009). Additionally, in 2009 President Obama declared that “by mobilizing and organizing and changing people’s hearts and minds, you then change the political landscape” (Dickinson 2009, 1).

McAlexander (2006) argues that wars of today have a new face, that they are essentially “wars of ideas,” involving insurgencies that need to be defeated not through conventional battle, but instead, through the government’s ability to garner popular support against such groups. The government must do this by offering incentives and benefits to the people that are more attractive than those offered by the insurgencies. Kalyvas (2006) argues that popular support for both the rebels and the government can change depending on the coercive methods; therefore, the government must constantly compete with VEO’s for the people’s support. Lennon (2003) defends the hearts and minds approach by describing how Israel’s military assets have not been able to deter and prevent terrorist attacks. Still, Lennon states that in order to find the solution to ending terrorism, one must resort to offensive military action.

Several other authors are skeptics of the H&M theory. Leites and Wolf (1970) argue that the H&M approach is overrated since it tends to only reduce the demand for insurgency rather than the supply. Race (1972) argues that economic aid intended to reach the H&M of people often fails unless the government offers a redistribution of wealth to the population that is already marginalized under the current government. Biddle (2006) argues that the external effort to reach the H&M of the local population often fails because the incentives fail to address the core grievances of the population.

Detailed Analyses

104: *Hearts and minds strategies are more effective than repression in reducing VEO activities.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: There is both positive and negative empirical evidence relating to this hypothesis. Sunderland (1964; see also Thompson 1966) argues in favor of the H&M approach through the example of the Malays, claiming that the hearts and minds of the people were won through positive political policy, words, and deeds. The government had to make garnering popular support and winning the hearts and minds of the people their number one priority. McAlexander (2006) looks at two case studies, Malaya (1945-1960) and Vietnam (1964-1972) and measures how successful a third party was in garnering popular support of the people towards a predetermined objective. The study emphasized the importance of having contact with the population in order to gain knowledge of existing grievances, so that the government can build credibility and tend to grievances before the terrorist group tries to coerce the population. Race’s study (1972)

indicates that using monetary incentives to capture the hearts and minds of people is ineffective unless the government also offers a redistribution of wealth.

There is more quantitative support suggesting repression against VEOs has a negative impact. Lafree, Dugan and Korte (2009) argue that repression against VEOs in the Northern Ireland context actually built public support for the terrorists. Lafree, Dugan and Korte (2008) also report that indiscriminate violence (involving civilians) works in favor of VEOs in the long run.

Therefore, according to the literature, the hearts and minds approach applies significantly to the influence of VEOs, mostly because popular support is something that VEOs thrive on; and therefore taking this resource away from the insurgent groups proves to be an effective method in reducing VEO activity. Although there were mixed reports as to the degree of applicability of the H&M approach, overall the approach seemed to decrease violent activity rather than increase such activity. The literature generally addresses the hearts and minds approach and repression separately. There is a lack of literature comparing the two approaches, to determine which one is more effective. The score below is given in light of the relative analysis.

Empirical Support Score: 3 = Multiple qualitative and/or quantitative studies with mixed results (i.e. some in favor, some against the hypothesis), but more positive than negative findings.

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: These studies were performed on VEOs and the findings are, therefore, directly applicable to government efforts to influence VEOs.

Applicability Score: Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs.

174: Population centric counterinsurgency (living in population and protecting them) is more effective than other counterinsurgency measures at reducing VEO activity.

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: McFate (2005) argues that in order to defeat the insurgencies, the coalition forces must gain a cultural and social understanding of culture and population. He stresses the importance of understanding the local society and that it is necessary for this understanding to be holistic, deep and thorough. He states that “understanding and working within the social fabric of a local area is initially the most influential factor in the conduct of counterinsurgency operations” (McFate 2005, 37). McAlexander’s study (2006) emphasized the importance of having contact with the population in order to gain knowledge of existing grievances, so that the government can build credibility and tend to grievances before the terrorist group tries to coerce the population. However, neither the study nor the anecdote compares population centric COIN with other COIN approaches and the score below accounts for this.

Empirical Support Score: 1 = Anecdotal support only for the hypothesis

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: The evidence presented is directly in the context of VEOs.

Applicability Score: Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs.

General Comments:

McAlexander claims that even though winning hearts and minds of the people will not necessarily guarantee success in the putative Global War on Terrorism, the US will not be able to achieve success without it. There are two different ways that governments can attempt to win the hearts and



A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BASED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

minds of the people: through cultural and societal understanding, and through monetary aid. The former is essentially when a government attempts to learn about the culture of the population so that they can better cater to the people's needs, while the latter deals with the government offering the people monetary assistance in order to cater to their grievances.

Bibliography:

- Berman, Eli, Jacob Shapiro, and Joseph Felter. 2008. "Can Hearts and Minds Be Bought? The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq." National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper No. 14606. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w14606>.
- Biddle, Stephen. 2006. "Seeing Baghdad Thinking Saigon." *Foreign Affairs* 85: 2-15.
- Dickinson, Elizabeth. 2009. "A Bright Shining Slogan: How 'Hearts and Minds' Came to Be." *Foreign Policy*. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/08/13/a_bright_shining_slogan.
- Kalyvas, Stathis. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lafree, Gary, Laura Dugan, and Raven Korte. 2009. "The Impact of British Counterterrorist Strategies on Political Violence in Northern Ireland: Comparing Deterrence and Backlash Models." *Criminology* 47(1): 17-45.
- Leites, Nathan, and Charles Wolf. 1970. *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts*. Chicago, IL: Markham Publishing Company.
- Lennon, Alexander T. 2003. *The Battle for Hearts and Minds: Using Soft Power to Undermine Terrorist Networks*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- McAlexander, Joseph C. 2006. *Hearts and Minds: Historical Counter-insurgency Lessons to Guide the War of Ideas in the Global War on Terrorism*. In partial fulfillment of the graduation requirements. Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.
- McFate, Montgomery. 2005. "Anthropology and Counterinsurgency: The Strange Story of Their Curious Relationship." *Military Review* 85: 24-38.
- Race, Jeffery. 1972. *War comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Sunderland, Riley. 1964. "Winning the Hearts and Minds of the People: Malaya, 1948-1960." Santa Monica, CA: RAND.
- Thompson, Robert. 1966. *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*. New York, NY: Praeger.