

The COIN Graduate Seminar

John P. Sullivan and Adam Elkus

Military analysts and pundits have often dubbed counterinsurgency the “graduate level of war.” Dissenters protest that full spectrum operations—with their mixture of conventional and irregular warfare—are truly the graduate level of conflict. We do not take a position on this debate, as we honor the contributions of both conventional and unconventional soldiers. However, it is indisputable that irregular warfare—like any form of human conflict—is immensely complex. Approaching it requires a holistic—if not eccentric—approach that defies the simplistic political debates and strategic orthodoxies commonly found in popular discussions of issues such as Iraq and Afghanistan. But this begs the question of how we would ideally advance the discussion to something more nuanced. If counterinsurgency is truly the “graduate level” of war, it needs its very own Graduate Seminar.

What readings and films would we assign to students in the Seminar? We’ve outlined everything below under the “Syllabus” heading. The material here, though exhaustive, is by no means comprehensive. We have opted to emphasize the diversity of intellectual approaches involved in conceptualizing war and power as well as more recent military irregular warfare research. Our aim is to engage the entire spectrum of irregular conflict, from counter-terrorism to speculations about the future of war.

Some of our readings and films—drawn from the humanities and popular culture—may strike the reader as odd choices, but our eclecticism is intentional. “Out of the box” thinking is often praised but rarely honored due to institutional, political, and intellectual cultures that police discourses and close minds. Likewise, we have also included military theorists whose ideas have sparked controversy. Even if one violently disagrees with certain theories of war and peace, it is important to engage with their arguments. Given the sheer amount of material, readings and passages from each book would be selected to provide a comprehensive approach. The first unit, counterterrorism, covers operational, political, legal, and cultural issues associated with CT. The second unit, counterinsurgency, examines both classical and modern counterinsurgency theory. It also examines case studies of insurgencies and counterinsurgencies, looking at contemporary successes and failures. The third unit, criminal insurgency, examines insurgencies waged by gangs, cartels, and other criminal actors. Lastly, the fourth unit, future warfare, engages speculation about the future of conflict through study of past and present predictive literature. We offer this list for discussion and debate.

Syllabus

Unit 1: Counterterrorism

Boaz Ganor, *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle*, Piscataway: Transaction Books, 2005, Carolyn Nordstrom and JoAnn Martin, *The Paths to Domination, Resistance, and Terror*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, Martin Dillon, *The Dirty War: Covert Strategies and Tactics Used in Political Conflicts*, New York: Routledge, 1990, William H. McRaven, *Spec Ops: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare*, New York: Presidio Press, 1995.

Intelligent discussion of counter-terrorism presupposes knowledge of basic operational art, political and ethnical dilemmas, and battlespace dynamics. Ganor's book provides a panoramic view of the tactical and operational challenges associated with counter-terrorism, making it an excellent introduction to the field. Nordstrom and Martin cover political and ethnical issues associated with suppression of violent unrest from an anthropological perspective. Of special importance is their analysis of IRA graffiti and murals as strategic communication. McRaven analyzes the elements of special operations and provides helpful case studies. Why is this important? Terrorism (especially the armed assault) is a form of special operations warfare, and many of the battlefield principles McRaven describes will be faithfully followed by both terrorists and counter-terrorists in battle.

Mark Juergenmeyer, *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008, and Yaroslav Trofimov, *The Siege of Mecca: The Forgotten Uprising in Islam's Holiest Shrine and the Birth of Al Qaeda*, New York: Doubleday, 2007.

Many terrorists are explicitly challenging the secular state through propaganda and violence. Juergenmeyer, the author of *Terror in the Mind of God*, surveys the global range of religious movements against secular states. His book provides plenty of non-Middle Eastern case studies, a rarity in an overwhelmingly Islamist-centric field of study. Trofimov's book is a gripping case study that examines crucial event in the formation of radicalism in Saudi Arabia—the siege of Mecca in 1979. Trofimov rightly considers the religious extremists who captured the Muslim holy site to be Al Qaeda's predecessors.

Thomas R. Mockaitis, *The New Terrorism: Myths and Reality*, Palo Alto: Stanford Security Studies, 2008, Chet Richards, *Neither Shall the Sword: Conflict in the Years Ahead*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Defense Information, 2006, Stephen Flynn, *The Edge of Disaster: Rebuilding a Resilient Nation*, New York: Random House, 2007.

In a strong nation, counterterrorism strategy must always be subjected to rigorous analysis and skepticism. Mockaitis attacks those who would formulate today's terrorism struggle as something unprecedented and offers his own common-sense alternative. He sometimes can be unduly orthodox in his conceptualization of terrorism, but is always lucid and clear. Richards also provides a critical exegesis of counterterrorism strategies

since 9/11, with a less polemical and more analytical focus. Flynn looks at massive holes in our infrastructure and emergency response, advocating a more proactive focus on reinforcing resilience.

Philip Bobbitt, *Terror and Consent: The Wars for the Twenty-First Century*, New York: Knopf, 2008.

Terror and Consent's core—and controversial—argument: the “war on terror” is the correct term for our current struggle. But our war must be waged within the bounds of the law. Bobbitt draws from an eclectic range of influences in his discussion of grand strategy, offering plenty of evidence to supplement his more theoretical arguments.

Moises Naim, *Illicit*, New York: Doubleday, 2005.

How do terrorists finance their operations? Once every aspiring terrorist flocked to a state sponsor the way a grad student angled for a hefty student loan. No more--the brave new world of contraband created by globalization has freed terrorists from their dependence on state sponsorship. Moises Naim, the editor of *Foreign Policy* magazine, is your best guide to the murky world of drug dealing, human trafficking, *hawala*, and Swiss Bank accounts. His short book is a masterful study of the dark side of globalization.

Anne L. Clunan, Peter R. Lavoy, Susan B. Martin (Eds), *Terrorism, War, or Disease? Unraveling the Use of Biological Weapons*, Palo Alto: Stanford Security Studies, 2008, Jonathan B. Tucker, *War of Nerves: Chemical Warfare from World War I to Al-Qaeda*, New York: Anchor Books, 2006, Sidney D. Drell, Abraham D. Sofaer, and George D. Wilson (Eds), *The New Terror: Facing the Threat of Biological and Chemical Weapons*, Palo Alto: Hoover Press, 1999, Graham Allison, *Nuclear Terrorism: The Ultimate Preventable Catastrophe*, New York: Macmillan, 2005.

No survey of counterterrorism would be complete without a look into the world of Dr. Strangelove: chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Clunan, Lavoy, and Martin's edited compilation focuses on the social context behind usage of biological weapons, a rarity in a field overwhelmingly focused on technical details. Of special interest to the practitioner is *Terrorism, War or Disease's* focus on false allegations of bioweapon usage, a tactic sure to be employed in the “war of ideas.” Tucker offers a parallel history of chemical weapons in all their gory details. Drell, Sofaer, and Wilson's compilation emphasizes policy responses to biological and chemical weapons and means of preventing their usage, while Allison examines how security authorities can best prevent the nightmare of nuclear terrorism.

Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, New York: Zone Books, 2006, Paul Virilio, *The Information Bomb*, New York: Verso, 2005, Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art In the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008, Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004, and Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, New York: Penguin, 2005.

There are plenty of books on terrorist utilization of the media, but it is more important to understand the media itself in order to come to grips with the contemporary information war. These works offer a history of media and a critique of its explanatory and artistic power. Debord's book, admired by both "adbusters" and admen alike, examines how spectacles can seize public attention and change public opinion. While the terminology is dense (and very French), there are some valuable insights. Similarly, Postman and Benjamin offer critiques of technology's corrupting power on art and public discourse, although Benjamin is more measured and willing to consider a technology's humanizing effects on human society. Virilio offers a splenetic critique of modern media that nonetheless illuminates some interesting perspectives on the role of media in war. McLuhan, who famously coined the term "the medium is the message," has written a crucial history of the media—and what it may evolve into. Unlike the other authors referenced in this list, McLuhan has an optimistic view of media and technology as an emancipating force.

Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*, San Diego: Harcourt Trade, 1974, *On Revolution*, New York: Penguin Classics, 1990, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, San Diego: Harcourt Trade, 1974.

These essential works of political philosophy are the theoretical "trinity" of advanced studies of instrumental violence. Arendt was a thoughtful philosopher who wrestled deeply with the philosophical, social, and political context of violence and oppression. One of her most provocative insights was that violence occurred in the absence of politics. The goal of counter-terrorism (and policing in general) should be to build a space where political and cultural exchange can continue.

John Malkovitch, *The Dancer Upstairs* (2003), Hiroyuki Okiura, *Jin-Roh: The Wolf Brigade* (1999), and Andrzej Wajda, *Ashes and Diamond* (1961).

Malkovitch's *The Dancer Upstairs* chronicles a Latin American police unit's attempts to suppress a terrorist group modeled after the Peruvian Shining Path. This dark film amply demonstrates how even a small number of men can cause a free society to become consumed with fear. Of special note is the rigorous intelligence-collecting procedures depicted: the unit even scourges through trash to find the culprits. *Jin-Roh: The Wolf Brigade* is a Japanese film about a paramilitary unit of Tokyo counter-terrorism operatives working to suppress a group of leftist radicals. In the process they become entangled in a conspiracy against other elements of the Japanese security infrastructure, evoking parallels to French OAS. The film stands as an ample warning of the consequences of security diverging from the public interest. *Ashes and Diamond* chronicles a Polish activist's successful assassination of a local Communist party leader. The assassin's charisma practically bursts out of the screen, and the actor who portrayed him is regarded as Poland's James Dean. The assassin's dark magnetism reminds us that those who strike at power have a primal attraction that is just as important as ideology in attracting followers.

Unit 2: Counterinsurgency

David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, Westport: Praeger, 2006. Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*, Westport: Praeger, 1967, Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*. Westport: Praeger, 2006.

Galula, Thompson, and Trinquier's classic books constitute modern counterinsurgency theory's intellectual foundations. Their insights, forged in the fire of postwar counterinsurgencies in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, have many lessons for current practitioners. However, it is important not to treat their works like biblical scripture, as the operational context of insurgency has changed much since these soldiers laid down their rifles.

John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife is Nagl's retrospective look at past insurgencies and the strategies employed to fight them. This book is crucial to understanding how reformers within Army and Marine Corps revamped counterinsurgency doctrine in Iraq and beyond, as it signals the moment when counterinsurgency theory began to dominate military intellectual circles. Perhaps future counterinsurgents may look back to Nagl's book to reinvigorate their efforts just as Nagl did to Galula and Thompson.

Ernesto Che Guevara, *Guerilla Warfare* (Authorized Edition), New York: Ocean Press, 2006, Mao Tse Tung, *On Guerilla Warfare*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000, Vo Nguyen Giap, *How We Won the War*, Philadelphia: Recon Publications, 1976, John Lacey (Ed), *The Canons of Jihad*, Annapolis: US Naval Institute Press, 2008.

Know your enemy and the strategies he employs against you. These books show how insurgents and irregular warriors from Che to Bin Laden have conceptualized asymmetric warfare. There is an interesting commonality in operational methods if not ideological approaches from old-style left-wing revolutionaries to modern Islamists.

Steve Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency*, Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007. Metz breaks from the classical school of insurgency analysis, looking at the influence of crime and ethnic conflict on a more fragmented insurgency and its impact on US grand strategy. He suggests that this new form of insurgency poses unique policy challenges that complicate current US strategy toward collapsing states.

John Antal, Bradley Gericke, (Eds): *City Fights: Urban Combat from World War II to Vietnam*, New York: Ballantine Books, 2003, Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums*, New York: Verso, 2007, Saskia Sassen, *The Global City*, Princeton: Princeton University Press,

2001, *Territory, Rights, and Assemblages*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006, Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*, Orlando: Harcourt Inc, 1989, Manfredo Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture*, New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1976, Scott Campbell and Susan S. Fainstein (Eds) *Readings in Planning Theory*, Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing, 2003, and Jan Lin and Christopher Mele, *The Urban Sociology Reader*, New York: Routledge, 2005.

With urban areas rapidly expanding across the globe, it is more important than ever to understand the nature of the city. Mumford, Tafuri, Campbell and Fainstein, and Lin and Mele focus on the modern city's past, examining the social, artistic, political, and institutional forces that willed the metropolis into being. Davis and Sassen look at the modern city itself, with Davis examining the modern slum empires of the Third World and Sassen looking at the glittering "global cities" as centers of commerce and culture. Finally, Antal and Gericke give us a useful compilation of case studies on conventional and unconventional urban warfare in the 20th century. If there is one criticism that can be offered of Antal, it is that insurgency-oriented case studies are far and few between in his book, but the contributors make up for this oversight by looking at little-studied urban battles such as events from the 1947 Israeli War of Independence.

Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, New York: Vintage Books, 1973, Edwin L. Armstead, *Information Operations: The Hard Reality of Soft Power*, Dulles: Brassey's, 2004, Michael Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003.

Understanding propaganda and the full spectrum of information operations is crucial for COIN. Without a firm command of the information landscape, COIN practitioners will be outgunned by insurgent and terrorist opponents and undercut domestically. All these books offer intriguing perspectives on the mechanics of propaganda and the spectrum of information warfare, as well as how propaganda interfaces with conspiracy theories. Barkun's work is of particular interest, as he argues that modern conspiracy theories are forming together into a kind of super-theory he calls the "conspiratorial milieu." Not surprisingly, Barkun notes that the Internet and globalization have facilitated the convergence of UFO enthusiasts and grassy-knoll theorists.

Anna Politkovskaya, *A Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches from Chechnya*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

A case study in how *not* to conduct COIN. Politkovskaya details a litany of horrors from Russia's counterinsurgency against Chechen rebels. Practitioners should read Politkovskaya's memoir as a cautionary tale and evidence that force alone is a poor means to wage counterinsurgency.

H. John Poole, *Tactics of the Crescent Moon: Militant Muslim Conflict Methods*, Emerald Isle: Posterity Press, 2001, Zaki Chehab, *Inside the Resistance: The Iraqi Insurgency and the Future of the Middle East*, New York: Nation Books, 2005, Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007,

Bernard Rougier, *Everyday Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam Among Palestinians in Lebanon*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007, Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

COIN requires cultural intelligence on the enemy, and these books provide detailed case studies on Islamist insurgent operations, political motivations, and relationships to surrounding populations. Olivier Roy, in particular, looks at the fragmentation of Islam and the struggle of neo-traditionalists to use globalization's tools while avoiding being corrupted by its Westernizing force. He is at his most insightful when he describes Europe's complicated situation with its Muslim diaspora—a controversial issue that continues to confound policymakers.

Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Future of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*, New York: Viking, 2008, Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed Swords: Pakistan, Its Army, and the Wars Within*, London: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Central Asia is a battleground region wracked by Islamist insurgency, corruption, and nuclear stalemate. It is more important than ever to understand the strategic, culture, and political context of the “Great Game” as we continue our involvement in Afghanistan. Nawaz's book is a solid overview of the influences of an army in fragile states. As Pakistan degenerates into liquid war, understanding the three-way struggle between its government, security sector, and fractious array of non-state actors becomes more crucial than ever. Rashid also provides a provocative exposition of the failure of US strategy in Central Asia.

Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1967, Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1965.

Colonialism left wounds on the Third World that have yet to heal (if ever). To avoid being perceived as yet another colonizer, COIN practitioners would do well to read the major anti-colonialist texts of the 60's. Memmi's book is a more measured sociological study of colonialisms' effect on the colonized, while Fanon famously provides the intellectual and ideological basis for armed revolt. Jean-Paul Sartre's introduction is an important document in insurgent literature, as Sartre's eloquent (and disturbing) justification for violence is unknowingly aped by modern insurgents every time they post a digital communiqué to YouTube.

Siegfried Giedion, *Space, Time, and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986, Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003, *The Production of Space*, New York: Blackwell Publishing, 1993, Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.

A key aspect of urban operations is architectural and social space, the knowledge of which provides key operational advantages. The IDF, for example, has created an innovative method of by studying architecture theory, avoiding the pitfalls of insurgent

traps and giving them lethal surprises. These books focus on the social context of space and time in architecture, with Lefebvre's book venturing into a metaphysical critique of social space.

Peter Uvin, *Human Rights and Development*, Sterling: Kumarian Press, 2004, James Traub, *The Best of Intentions: Kofi Annan and the UN in the Era of American World Power*, New York: Picador, 2007, Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004, Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why The Poorest Countries Are Failing And What Can Be Done About It*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Working with international organizations and NGOs is a given in any stability operation. These studies contain skeptical analyses of international organizations, and explain why they fail to do their jobs so often. Uvin, Traub, Barnett, Finnemore, and Collier offer ultimately sympathetic looks at the problems of international aid, humanitarianism, and the responsibility to protect. The takeaway message? International organizations need to be more responsible to their subjects (the global populace) instead of the unelected elites who run and staff them.

Jonathan Spence, *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan*, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997, Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, New York: Penguin Classics, 1986, Josephus, *The Jewish War*, New York: Penguin Books, 1981.

Insurgency is an extremely old phenomenon with worldwide significance. Spence looks at the Taiping rebellion, arguably the most deadly insurgency in history. A group of religious fanatics challenged the Chinese state, and the ensuing conflict killed 20 to 30 million Chinese. In the same vein, Josephus' classic account of the Jewish revolt against the Romans is a valuable look at the first major insurgency in the Middle East—a story with thought-provoking parallels to present times. And Burke's famous critical review of the French Revolution demonstrates in disturbing detail how the rhetoric of revolution often conceals the depravity of terror.

Akira Kurosawa, *The Seven Samurai* (1954, Gille Pontecorvo, *The Battle of Algiers* (1967), *DMZ*, New York: DC Comics, 2007.

Kurosawa's *The Seven Samurai* is a classic Samurai epic with great relevance to modern COIN—the Samurai turn a disorganized rabble of victimized peasants into a disciplined fighting force that can resist heavily armed bandit raiders. The comic book series *DMZ* chronicles an urban insurgency on American soil—with New York as the battle's chaotic center of gravity. Most importantly, *DMZ* is told from the perspective of a journalist, whose indie-blogging comes to have a strategic impact on the conflict. *The Battle of Algiers* is a classic film on insurgency, worth watching over and over again for lessons in combating insurgency and terrorism. The most important lesson of the film is that wanton force without civil affairs outreach can win the battle but lose the war—the French crush the Algiers cell but they lose Algeria as a whole.

Unit 3: Criminal Insurgency

Misha Glemny, *McMafia*, John M. Hagedorn, *Gangs in the Global City: Alternatives to Traditional Criminology*, Max G. Mainwaring: *Street Gangs: The New Urban Insurgency*, Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2007, Robert J. Bunker (Ed.), *Criminal States and Criminal Soldiers*, New York: Routledge, 2008, *Networks, Terrorism and Global Insurgency*, New York: Routledge, 2005, Michael R. Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi, *A General Theory of Crime*, Stanford University Press, 1990, Antonio Nicaso and Lee Lamothe, *Angels, Mobsters, and Narco-Terrorists*, Wiley, 2005.

The global underworld is fast becoming a criminal empire with the power to challenge the state. Glemny, Nicaso and Lamothe focus on the global growth of massive organized crime cartels and syndicates, while Mainwaring and Bunker focus on the mechanics of criminal-terrorist strategic interaction and the emergence of criminal actors with the power to challenge the state. Gottfredson and Hirschi provide a general theory of crime, as well as a critical overview of the major theoretical schools of criminology. Hagedorn's *Gangs in the Global City* utilizes new advances in political economy to provide an alternative to traditional schools of criminology.

Joanna Burke, *Fear: A Cultural History*, Berkeley: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2005, Barry Glassner, *The Culture of Fear*, New York: Basic Books, 1999, and Charles Mackay, *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, Boston: L.C. Page and Company, 1932.

Understanding popular fears and dealing with them is an important aspect of policing. Glassner's book examines the role of the media in creating fake scares that whip up popular fear in order to increase ratings, Burke creates a historical genealogy of fear itself, and Mackay's famous text on scams, hoaxes, and popular fears has ample parallels to the manufactured crazes, memes, and conspiracies of today.

Mark Bowden: *Killing Pablo: The Hunt for the World's Greatest Outlaw*, New York: Penguin USA, 2002, Marcos Palacios and Richard Stoller, *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Columbia 1875-2002*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. Bowden chronicles a tactical success—the hunting and killing of Pablo Escobar, one of the most dangerous criminal insurgents in modern history. Palacios and Stoller look at strategic failure in the Colombian state's degeneration into violence. We can kill as many Pablos as we want, but the conditions that make cartels and militias powerful will not be willed away by guns alone.

Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1984, Steven Strogatz, *Sync: The Science of Spontaneous Order*, New York: Hyperion, 2003, Steven Johnson, *Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities, and Software*, New York: Scribner, 2001.

Even without explicit direction, crowds are dangerous threats to civil order. A peaceful protest, disturbed by one provocateur, can easily degenerate into a massive riot. The philosopher Canetti looks at crowds throughout history, utilizing a combination of crowd psychology, anthropology, and philosophy. Strogatz and Johnson's works are also important for understanding self-organizing human systems, as technology is enabling complex adaptive "smart mobs" to potentially disrupt urban centers.

William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999, Jean-Francois Bayart, Stephen Ellis, and Beatrice Hilbou, *The Criminalization of the State in Africa*, Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 1999.

Reno, Bayart, Ellis, and Hilbou examine how weak states can become so infested with corruption that crime becomes the reason d'être of the state itself. Important for understanding why Mexico and many African states are so stricken with crime, disorder, and corruption. Reno's text, in particular, is a classic in the "failed state" literature. Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future of Los Angeles*, New York: Verso, 1990, Steven P. Erie, *Globalizing L.A.: Trade, Infrastructure, and Regional Development*, Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2004, James Diego Vigil, *A Rainbow of Gangs: Street Cultures in the Mega-City*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002.

One way to understand policing and governance challenges is through differing—and critical approaches—to the study of Los Angeles, one of America's largest and most diverse cities. Davis' approach, though immensely critical, uncovers the dark side of Los Angeles' glamour. Vigil's expansive look at LA gangs is also important for understanding the diverse context of modern crime. Erie offers a purely economic and developmental analysis of modern Los Angeles, giving the reader a basis for understanding how economic change has contributed to the governance challenges Davis and Vigil chronicle.

Dilip K. Das and Arvind Verma, *Police Mission: Challenges and Responses*, Lanham: Scarecrow Press 2003.

A must-read for anyone seeking to construct, reform, or lead a police force. Das and Verma examine the history of policing and evaluate differing police management styles by region. This book will be of special interest to COIN practitioners seeking to build or rebuild foreign police forces.

J. Paul de B. Taillon, *Hijacking and Hostages: Government Responses to Terrorism*, Westport: Praeger, 2002.

Hijacking and hostage situations are immensely difficult and stressful situations with the potential for immense political and political consequences. Taillon comes to the rescue with a series of case studies on the best and worst government hostage responses by both law enforcement and military units. Despite the shift towards suicide bombing by many terrorist organizations, the grisly massacre at Beslan is disturbing evidence that this tactic will continue to be employed by non-state actors.

Tropa De Elite (2007), *The Untouchables* (1987), and *Manda Bala* (2007).

Brazil, a hotbed of corruption, crime, and vicious urban warfare between heavily armed special operations police and AK-toting gangsters, is a preview of a possible future for American urban centers. *Tropa De Elite* (*The Elite Squad*) is about BOPE, a Brazilian military police special operations unit confronting gangsters and their well-bred sympathizers. The film leaves no one in Brazilian society unscathed, attacking the corrupt municipal government, the fashionably left-leaning university students whose addictions finance the gangs; the horrific gangs themselves, and BOPE itself—depicted as a brutal instrument of repression against the residents of the *favelas*. A related Brazilian film, *Manda Bala* (*Send a Bullet*), is a case study in violence and corruption's effect on day-to-day life in Brazil. Like *City of God*, it follows a series of multiple stories that coalesce together to form a greater meaning. Brian De Palma's *The Untouchables* is a glimpse at America's first great criminal insurgency—Al Capone's effort to take power through corruption and violence and the Chicago Police's desperate struggle to stop him.

Unit 4: Strategy and Future War

Arquilla and Ronfeldt (Eds): *Networks and Netwars*, Santa Monica: RAND, 2001, Wim van De Donk, Brian D. Loader, Paul G. Nixon, and Dieter Rucht, *Cyberprotest: New Media, Citizens, and Social Movements*, New York: Routledge, 2004, Howard Rheingold, *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution*, New York: Basic Books, 2002.

John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt provide an excellent overview of how network forms of organization empower groups to wage “netwar”—a mixture of social, political, military, and instrumental conflict on a global scale—against the state. The following books focus on the impact of technology on business and activism. De Donk, Loader, Nixon, and Rucht have a useful set of case studies on activist groups' usage of the Internet and other forms of new media—and the efficiency of their results. Rheingold looks at the emergence of “smart mobs”—self-organizing groups empowered by technology.

Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1971, Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989, Frederick W. Kagan, *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy*, Encounter Books, New York: 2006.

Institutional cultures have an outsized impact on defense theory, policy, and decision-making. Builder and Kagan's books take a critical look at how these biases handicap decision-making and analysis. Allison uses the Cuban missile crisis as a frame for the examination of national security analysis and tough choices under extreme pressure. All of these works are crucial steps towards stepping out of one's institutional paradigm to a wider appreciation of different styles and methodologies in national security analysis and doctrine.

F.G. Hoffman, *Hybrid War*, Washington, D.C.: Potomac Institute, 2007.

Hoffman rejects the simplistic dichotomy between conventional and irregular warfare that preoccupies modern debate over defense strategy. Future war will blur the two together, he predicts—and future warriors must be able to rapidly shift from blazing away at the enemy with everything they have to building schools and handing out aid to starving children.

David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1993, H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: McNamara, Johnson, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Lead Us Into Vietnam*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1998.

Hubris, big ideas, and groupthink can lead a nation into disaster. Vietnam is a case study of poor national security decision-making's devastating effects on national security. Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest* is a scathing study of the collective arrogance and incompetence of a group of national security policymakers assumed to be the wisest and most sober men America had to offer. McMaster, in contrast, focuses on the military men who enabled them instead of critically examining their fallacious ideas.

John Keegan, *Intelligence in War: The Value—and Limitations—Of What The Military Can Learn About The Enemy*, New York: Vintage Books, 2002, Robert M. Clark, *Intelligence Analysis: A Target-Centric Approach*, CQ Press, 2007, Jennifer E. Sims and Burton Gerber (Eds), *Transforming U.S. Intelligence*, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005, Mark M. Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2006, Abram N. Shulsky and Gary J. Schmitt, *Silent Warfare: Understanding the World of Intelligence*, Potomac Books, 2002.

Intelligence is the lifeblood of counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations. Without it the warfighter or police officer is essentially shooting while blindfolded. But getting good intelligence is always an extremely difficult process with strategic and ethical pitfalls. Keegan, Clark, Lowenthal, and Shulsky and Schmitt provide general overviews of the intelligence process, and Sims and Gerber's compilation outlines productive ways to improve American intelligence.

Antulio Echevarria, *Imagining Future Warfare, The West's Technological Revolution and Visions of War to Come 1880-1914*, Westport: Praeger Security International, Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, New York: Verso 2005, Robert Cowley (Ed), *The Collected What If? Eminent Historians Imagine What Might Have Been*, New York: Putnam, 2001.

As Yogi Berra said, the future ain't what it used to be. From generation to generation, the visions of the future shift due to social, political, and cultural contexts. In order to evaluate claims about the future, it helps to understand how theorists have conceptualized it. Echevarria looks at how 19th Century military theorists—civilian and military—conceptualized war and how their predictions meshed with reality. Jameson looks at

science fiction's social, ideological, and political context, a necessity when examining future visions and science fiction views of the future. Cowley's contributors put forth a series of historical counterfactual, illustrating the powerful impact of chance in history.

Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument With Historical Illuminations*, New York: Basic Books, 2006, David Rieff, *At the Point of a Gun: Democratic Dreams and Armed Intervention*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005, Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, Kenneth Roth and Minky Worden (Eds), *Torture: Does It Make Us Safer? Is It Ever Ok?*, New York: The New Press, 2005, Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Phillipe Bourgois, *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2004, Steve Tsang, *Intelligence and Human Rights in The Era of Global Terrorism*, Palo Alto: Stanford Security Studies, 2008.

While one cannot call war "civilized" in any sense of the word, war without ethics is pure savagery. These books examine the ethical, social, and political context of war, terrorism, and insurgency. Walzer's book has become a classic in political science on "just war theory," whereas Rieff casts a critical eye on humanitarian intervention. Tsang's edited compilation tackles the question of human rights and ethics in intelligence, and will be of great use to those writing about or planning intelligence operations. Roth and Worden's anthology takes a powerful stance against torture—a stance that is sadly needed in an era where the fallacious notion of the "ticking time bomb" provides a justification for human rights abuses. Perhaps the most interesting text is Todorov's study, which examines the ideological and social contexts of the conquest of the Americas and the ways in which colonists constructed the natives as "Other."

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995, Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, New York: Penguin Classics, 1972, Antoine-Henri Baron De Jomini, *The Art of War*, Mineola: Dover Publications, 2007, Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, Sun Tzu, *The Art of War: Complete Texts and Commentaries*, Boston: Shambhala, 2003, B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, New Haven: Meridian, 1991.

Few of these works require any introduction and are essential classics in political science and war. While Clausewitz, Machiavelli, and Sun Tzu aren't infallible, their works have stood the test of time because of their common sense and willingness to see the world as it is rather than how it should be. Read them carefully, however, because many of these thinkers have been maliciously misinterpreted—with disastrous results.

Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

The *Social Theory of International Politics* is considered the founding document of the constructivist paradigm in international relations. Wendt created a radical synthesis of international relations theory and philosophy, which defied the realist and liberal paradigms of the day. His thesis? States' beliefs, culture, domestic politics, and norms are

a better predictor of their behavior than military might or multilateral cooperation. Essential when understanding the Arab world, where responses to Israel and the United States have flouted traditional realist and liberal explanations.

Lucien King (Ed), *Game On: The History and Culture of Videogames*, London: Laurence King Publishing, 2002.

Videogames and virtual worlds present a new operational space that is already being utilized by terrorists and insurgents for training and propaganda. King's edited compilation mixes history and theory with personal accounts of life in a new digital age. The theoretical and personal perspectives collected here can bring non-digital natives up to speed on the rules, social context, and future of video games and virtual worlds.

Ray Kurzweil, *The Age of Spiritual Machines: When Computers Exceed Human Intelligence*, New York: Penguin Books, 1999, Susan Blackmore, *The Meme Machine*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, Gregory Stock, *Redesigning Humans: Our Inevitable Genetic Future*, Houghton Mifflin, 2002, Michael Ruse (Ed), *The Philosophy of Biology*, Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2007, Janine M. Benyus, *Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature*, New York: Perennial Books, 2002.

These books, many by professional futurists, examine coming changes in science that could totally change the basis of strategy. Intelligent robots, memes as cultural replicators, and designer humans all could have drastic impacts on future war and society. Kurzweil's *Spiritual Machines* predicts artificial intelligence eclipsing human intelligence, Blackmore points the way to a future of cultural replicator driven natural selection, Stock looks at the potentials and pitfall of genetic engineering, and Benyus examines the phenomenon of biomimicry. Grounding the discussion is Ruse's edited collection of scientific and philosophical discourse on biology, evolution, and bioethics.

John Robb, *Brave New War*, Hoboken: Wiley, 2007.

Robb is undeniably controversial, yet he has profoundly influenced discourse on future warfare and his ideas must be reckoned with. Robb looks at the evolution of what he calls a new, networked form of terrorism and forecasts a future of "super-empowered" individuals wreaking havoc on "brittle" security systems and nodes.

William Gibson, *Neuromancer*, New York: Ace Books, 1984.

There is no shortage of science fiction, but science fiction that could provide an interesting fictional counterpoint to discussions of future warfare is admittedly far and few between. William Gibson has always been a welcome exception to this unfortunate trend. Military futurists should check out his novel *Neuromancer*, which has been called "the bible of cyberpunk." As the Internet continues to expand its reach over everyday life, the anarchic cyberslum warfare Gibson depicts edges closer to becoming a reality.

Conclusion

Civilian, soldier, police officer, and policy-maker alike are all students in an evolving field of warfare that has vital implications for the security and continued vitality of our nation. To this end, this won't—and should not be—the only graduate seminar. Future graduate seminars will cover topics as varied as operational art, the decline of the state, and expeditionary policing. In the interests of providing a panoramic view at the world of irregular warfare, the full range of literature in each area has been trimmed, and future graduate seminars will also cover them in more detail.

John P. Sullivan is a career police officer. He currently serves as a lieutenant with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department where he is assigned to the Emergency Operations Bureau. He is a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies on Terrorism (CAST). His research focus is on counterinsurgency, intelligence, terrorism, and urban operations. He is co-editor of Countering Terrorism and WMD: Creating a global counter-terrorism network (New York: Routledge, 2006).

Adam Elkus is an analyst specializing in foreign policy and security. His articles have been published in Defense and the National Interest, Foreign Policy in Focus, Athena Intelligence, and other publications. His work has been cited in reports by the Center for Security Policy and highlighted by the Arms Control Association and the Project on Defense Alternatives.

[SWJ Magazine](#) and [Small Wars Journal](#) are published by Small Wars Journal LLC.

COPYRIGHT © 2008 by Small Wars Journal LLC.

Permission is granted to print single copies for personal, non-commercial use. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution – Non-Commercial – Share Alike 3.0 [License](#) per our [Terms of Use](#). We are in this together.

No FACTUAL STATEMENT should be relied upon without further investigation on your part sufficient to satisfy you in your independent judgment that it is true.

Contact: comment@smallwarsjournal.com

Visit www.smallwarsjournal.com

Cover Price: Your call. [Support SWJ here.](#)