

# Master the Art of Counterinsurgency: Uncover the Secrets of Field Manual FM 24, FM 90, and FM 98

In the labyrinthine world of counterinsurgency warfare, where conventional tactics often fail, a comprehensive understanding of unconventional strategies is paramount. Enter Field Manual FM 24, FM 90, and FM 98, the seminal trilogy that has shaped the doctrine and practice of counterinsurgency operations for decades. This in-depth analysis will delve into the intricacies of these manuals, providing an invaluable resource for military professionals, policymakers, and anyone seeking to comprehend the complexities of irregular warfare.

## Field Manual FM 24: Counterinsurgency Operations

Published in 2009, Field Manual FM 24 laid the foundation for modern counterinsurgency doctrine. It defines counterinsurgency as "operations designed to defeat insurgency and establish a legitimate government that satisfies the needs of its people." The manual emphasizes the importance of understanding the local population, building relationships with the indigenous people, and using a comprehensive approach that combines military, political, economic, and social measures.

## Key Concepts

- **Clear, Hold, Build:** A three-phased approach to counterinsurgency operations involving securing territory, establishing governance, and fostering development.

- **Population-Centric Operations:** Focusing on winning the support and trust of the local population, who are seen as the ultimate objective.
- **Insurgent Networks:** Recognizing the importance of disrupting and dismantling insurgent networks, including political, financial, and logistical support.
- **Partnerships:** Emphasizing the need for collaboration with host-nation forces, international organizations, and local communities.

## Field Manual FM 90: Civil Affairs Operations

Field Manual FM 90 provides a framework for civil affairs operations, which are essential for supporting counterinsurgency efforts. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of civil affairs units in providing essential services, promoting economic development, and facilitating the transition to stable governance.



## Field Manual FM 3-24.2 (FM 90-8 FM 7-98) Tactics in Counterinsurgency April 2009

by United States Government US Army

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## Key Concepts

- **Civil-Military Coordination:** Ensuring seamless coordination between military and civilian agencies to effectively address the needs of the local population.
- **Stability Operations:** Conducting a wide range of activities, such as infrastructure repair, humanitarian assistance, and security sector reform, to help stabilize the host nation.
- **Engagement with Local Leaders:** Establishing relationships with local leaders, including tribal elders, religious leaders, and community activists, to understand their needs and mobilize their support.
- **Rule of Law Promotion:** Supporting the development and implementation of a fair and impartial legal system, which is crucial for fostering stability and reducing corruption.

## Field Manual FM 98: Psychological Operations

Field Manual FM 98 provides guidance on psychological operations (PSYOP), which are designed to influence the attitudes and behaviors of target audiences. In counterinsurgency operations, PSYOP aims to undermine insurgent support, promote cooperation with government forces, and encourage defection or surrender.

## Key Concepts

- **Strategic Communication:** Developing and disseminating messages that resonate with target audiences, shaping perceptions and

influencing behavior.

- **Information Operations:** Controlling the flow of information to counter insurgent propaganda, disseminate accurate information, and promote desired narratives.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Understanding and adapting to the local cultural context, ensuring messages are relevant and effective.
- **Non-Lethal Measures:** Employing non-lethal methods, such as loudspeakers, leaflets, and social media, to minimize civilian casualties and foster cooperation.

## Practical Applications and Case Studies

The principles outlined in Field Manual FM 24, FM 90, and FM 98 have been successfully implemented in numerous counterinsurgency operations around the world. Notable examples include:

- **Afghanistan:** The U.S.-led counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan incorporated elements of all three manuals, focusing on population-centric operations, civil affairs engagement, and PSYOP to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people.
- **Iraq:** The Iraq War also saw the application of counterinsurgency doctrine, particularly in the areas of stability operations and psychological operations, aiming to rebuild infrastructure, promote economic development, and counter insurgent propaganda.
- **Colombia:** In the long-running Colombian conflict, a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy that drew heavily on the principles of FM 24, FM 90, and FM 98 successfully weakened insurgent groups and promoted stability.

Field Manual FM 24, FM 90, and FM 98 are indispensable resources for understanding the complexities of counterinsurgency operations. Their emphasis on population-centric approaches, civil affairs engagement, and psychological operations provides a robust framework for defeating insurgencies and establishing stable, legitimate governments. By mastering the principles outlined in these manuals, military professionals, policymakers, and anyone involved in counterinsurgency efforts can effectively navigate the challenges of irregular warfare and achieve lasting success.



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