THE ROLE OF OUTSIDE STATES IN SHAPING THE
ENTRANCE INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH INSURGENTS

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By

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ABSTRACT

This project analyzes the relationship between outside support provided to counterinsurgents and negotiated settlements in insurgencies. I hypothesize that outside support to counterinsurgents is associated with the entrance into negotiations with insurgents. To test my hypothesis I analyze four cases: the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the Russian intervention in Tajikistan, Vietnam’s intervention in Cambodia, and United States support to the government of El Salvador. My analysis partly supports my hypothesis. Outside states supporting insurgencies are associated with local governments limiting their objectives in insurgencies, and in reaching a stalemate leading to negotiations. However, there is less of an association between outside support and a local government addressing the underlying causes of insurgencies.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

This project examines the relationship between outside support provided to counterinsurgents and negotiated settlements in insurgencies. This research identifies factors that are associated with outside actors influencing the entrance into negotiations with insurgents. Insights gained from this analysis will then be used to identify potential policy recommendations for states involved in supporting a counterinsurgency that desire to end the conflict through negotiations.

Insurgencies often do not end in a clear victory for either the insurgent or the counterinsurgent. Some type of negotiated settlement with concessions made by the counterinsurgent and/or insurgent is a common outcome in insurgencies.\(^1\) A recent RAND report identified that over half of insurgencies (40 of 73 over a 64 year time period) ended through negotiations.\(^2\) These negotiations resulted in one of three possible outcomes as of the date of the publication; a government victory, government loss, or mixed result.\(^3\)

Additionally, counterinsurgents are often aided with foreign support. The same RAND report identified 30 of 89 insurgencies where outside intervention on the side of the government was identified.\(^4\) Outside intervention came in one of two forms; direct support or indirect support. Indirect support involved outside states providing financing, material aid, or advisors to the local government. Direct support included the same

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\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Ibid.

\(^4\) Ibid., 49.
types of aid found in indirect support with the addition of ground forces fighting alongside, or in place of, local forces.\textsuperscript{5}

Considering that states embroiled in insurgency are often aided by outside support, and that negotiated settlements are a common outcome in insurgencies, this leads to the main question of this research: can outside states supporting a counterinsurgency influence the entrance into negotiations?

**Hypothesis:** *Outside support to counterinsurgents is associated with the entrance into negotiations with insurgents.*

**Importance/Contribution**

The main focus of this research is on ways in which outside states supporting a counterinsurgency have influenced the entrance into negotiations with insurgents. This may help states supporting a counterinsurgency identify conditions that can lead to negotiation as a means of ending an insurgency.

This issue is particularly important with respect to the US involvement in Afghanistan. A decisive victory over the Taliban is no longer a US objective in Afghanistan. The current US strategy is to degrade the Taliban and deny them the ability to overthrow the Afghan government.\textsuperscript{6} Additionally, President Obama has announced his intent to begin withdrawing US forces in July 2011.\textsuperscript{7} Fighting with limited objectives and limited means suggests that a political solution to the Taliban insurgency will likely be necessary. In January 2010, Afghan President Hamid Karzai established a High Peace Council to open negotiations with the Taliban. In October 2010, NATO

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid.


forces gave safe passage to senior Taliban leaders to Kabul to meet with that Peace Council. Additionally, U.S. Ambassador Karl W. Ikenberry recently said that U.S. funds will be used to support discussions and reconciliation programs with insurgents. Identifying ways in which the United States can influence the Taliban and Afghan government to enter into negotiations is an important issue for policymakers.

This research will also contribute to the existing literature on negotiations and insurgencies. While significant work has been done on negotiating with insurgents in general, relatively little attention has been paid to how outside states can influence the settlement process. For example, Daniel Byman explores the conditions and challenges surrounding negotiations in his article Talking with Insurgents: a Guide for the Perplexed. Navin Bapat seeks to develop an explanation of the timing of negotiations in Insurgency and the Opening of Peace Processes. And in “Conciliation as a Counter-Terrorist Strategy” Peter Sederberg analyzes the conditions and factors in negotiating with terrorists. Few works that I have identified explore how outside states in particular can contribute to the beginning of negotiations. One book, Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars, by Barbara Walter, does look at how outside states influence successful negotiations in insurgencies. Her argument is that a third party’s greatest contribution to a successful settlement comes in enforcing and verifying demobilization. Her work focuses primarily on the aftermath and

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8 "Lunch with the Taliban," The Economist, 30 October 2010, 39-41.
14 Ibid., 160.
implementation of settlements, not the entrance into negotiations. This research builds on works such as these by exploring how outside states in particular can shape the entrance into negotiations.

Hypotheses and Methodology

The central hypothesis of this research is that outside states supporting a counterinsurgency is associated with the beginning of negotiations with insurgents. Four cases are analyzed in the context of three sub-hypotheses.

**Sub-hypothesis One:** *Outside support is associated with local governments limiting their objectives.*

**Sub-hypothesis Two:** *Outside support is associated with stalemate.*

**Sub-hypothesis Three:** *Outside support is associated with local governments addressing the underlying causes of the insurgency.*

To test this hypothesis I conducted a qualitative analysis of four cases using both within-case analysis and cross-case comparison. The purpose of the within-case analysis is to explore the factors contributing to the beginning of negotiations in the insurgency. The cross-case analysis examines the similarities and differences among the cases and isolates the presence of outside support as a factor in influencing the entrance into negotiations.

The independent/explanatory variable is the presence of outside support to a counterinsurgent. Outside support is categorized as either indirect or direct. As noted earlier, indirect support involves outside states providing financing, material aid, or advisors to the local government. Direct support includes the same types of aid found in indirect support with the addition of ground forces fighting alongside, or in place of,
local forces. Additionally, outside support often varies over time, so individual cases are divided into separate time periods when the type or level of aid changed.

The dependent variable is whether an attempt was made to end the conflict through negotiations. An attempt to end a conflict through negotiations is defined as any meaningful attempt by both sides to end the conflict through a bargaining process. This is determined through analyzing the individual cases looking for actions or statements that suggest that the local government and/or supporting state desired to end the conflict through a bargaining process. This attempt may have occurred at any point during the insurgency, and does not necessarily result in an end to violence.

Cases are selected using the most similar systems method where cases are selected that have a similar value for the independent variable. By selecting cases with a similar variable for the independent variable being tested, alternative or confounding explanatory variables can be controlled for.

I have identified several confounding explanatory variables: the length of the insurgency, the availability of sanctuary for an insurgent, the use of population centric COIN, and the legitimacy of the local government. Each of these variables (excluding length) will be evaluated on a three point scale of low, medium, or high. Determination of this value will be made based on a subjective analysis of the individual cases. Based on these criteria, the following cases have been selected: Afghanistan 1979-1992, Cambodia 1978-1992, Tajikistan 1992-1997 and El Salvador 1979-1992.

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<th>Length</th>
<th>Insurgent Sanctuary</th>
<th>Pop Centric COIN</th>
<th>Local Govt. Legitimacy</th>
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Key Concepts

*States and insurgents must first recognize each other’s right to exist*

One challenge to entering into negotiations with insurgents is that both the state and insurgent must first recognize the other’s right to exist as a precondition for talks to begin.17 States often refuse to recognize insurgents as legitimate actors. Instead, insurgents are often labeled as either criminals or terrorists.18 Once these groups have been labeled as illegitimate, governments have a more difficult time entering into negotiations with insurgent groups. This is in contrast to more traditional conflict between states. During interstate disputes both sides often already recognize the other as a legitimate actor. This makes it easier for two states to enter into negotiations to resolve a dispute.19

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18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
Reaching the point where a state is willing to recognize and bargain with insurgents faces several challenges. First, formally recognizing an insurgent group may be perceived as rewarding violence.\(^{20}\) Second, recognition may be perceived by the insurgents as a victory and encourage the continued use of violence. Third, because insurgents typically desire greater legitimacy, recognition may strengthen their movement. Finally, there is the danger that insurgents may use the potential for negotiations as a means for recognition and greater legitimacy, with no intent to engage in any meaningful dialogue.\(^{21}\)

*States must recognize that they cannot defeat the insurgency*

Another challenge is for governments to recognize when victory over insurgents is not possible and a negotiated settlement is necessary.\(^ {22}\) Governments typically prefer to defeat insurgents outright. However, counterinsurgencies are often fought with limited means and governments may not possess the resources to win. For governments that misinterpret their own strength relative to insurgents it can be difficult for them to admit that they cannot win.\(^ {23}\)

*Stalemate is a precondition for negotiations*

Another precondition necessary for negotiations to begin is stalemate.\(^ {24}\) Insurgents and counterinsurgents must both perceive that they can neither win nor lose and that the continuation of conflict is mutually harmful.\(^ {25}\) Reaching this point in an insurgency is difficult. Insurgencies often begin with government holding the upper


\(^{21}\) Ibid., 130.


\(^{23}\) Ibid.


hand. In this position, counterinsurgents see no need to bargain with insurgents. They will instead pursue a strategy of complete victory. This early period, when insurgents are at their weakest, is also when they are most willing to negotiate. If insurgencies can survive this initial period, and demonstrate their staying power, they are more likely to perceive that they can continue the struggle and outlast the government. As insurgents perceive the balance of power shifting in their favor, they become less willing to negotiate with the government. On the other hand, as insurgent willingness to negotiate diminishes, governments may become more open to a settlement as they perceive their relative power declining. This paradox makes it difficult for states and insurgents to reach a stalemate necessary for negotiations.

The presence of outside support to a counterinsurgent alters the balance and perceptions of power between the insurgents and government. This support has been used to pressure insurgents into altering perceptions of their ability to prevail over the government. Doing so has made insurgents more willing to negotiate. At the same time, outside support increases the strength and belief of the local government that they can prevail over insurgents. In the absence of outside influence, an increase in power makes it less likely that a government would be willing to negotiate. Outside states that desire an end to a conflict short of a complete victory have used the dependence on their presence to alter the government’s perceptions of ultimate victory. This has resulted in states entering into negotiations despite a relative military superiority.

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26 Ibid., 706.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid., 704.
31 Ibid., 706.
Counterinsurgents must address the underlying causes of an insurgency

Insurgencies are distinct in that they are driven by their ideological content, or political goals. The nature of their political goals is important because they must coincide with the desires of the people in order to succeed.\textsuperscript{32} Insurgency has thus been defined as “a struggle between a nonruling group and the ruling authorities in which the nonruling group consciously uses political resources and violence to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics.”\textsuperscript{33} Support from the population is essential, as the people provide the insurgent with shelter, food, intelligence, and manpower.\textsuperscript{34} Mao Tse-tung wrote that, “without question, the fountainhead of guerrilla warfare is in the masses of the people, who organize military units directly from themselves.”\textsuperscript{35}

Counterinsurgency doctrine has identified the population as the center of gravity in an insurgency.\textsuperscript{36} The objectives of a counterinsurgent are twofold; to build the legitimacy of the local government, and to separate the insurgents from the population. Addressing the central grievances of the population that drive the insurgency is one of the more effective ways to mitigate an insurgent’s strength.\textsuperscript{37}

Outside support to a counterinsurgent has influenced the local government to take action to address the underlying causes of an insurgency. This has been done in

two ways. First, outside actors have helped governments adopt a counterinsurgency strategy that is centered on protecting the population and separating them from the insurgents. Second, outside states have influenced governments to adopt political reforms that address the central grievances of the people. These actions have weakened insurgent groups and helped pave the road for negotiations.

Roadmap

Chapters two through four analyze the four sub-hypotheses of this research. Chapter two looks at how outside support is associated with local governments limiting their objectives. Chapter three explores how outside support is associated with stalemate. Chapter four analyzes outside support’s association with local governments addressing the underlying causes of an insurgency. Chapter five looks at alternative explanations, and chapter 6 identifies policy implications and recommendations.

Summary of Findings

Two of the sub-hypotheses are supported by three of the four cases analyzed. The first is outside support is associated with local governments limiting their objectives; this is supported by the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the Russian intervention in Tajikistan, and Vietnam’s intervention in Cambodia. The case of El Salvador contradicts this sub-hypothesis. The second is that outside support is associated with stalemate; this is supported by the Tajikistan, El Salvador and Afghanistan cases, while the Vietnam case contradicts this sub-hypothesis. The final sub-hypothesis is outside support’s association with local governments addressing the underlying causes of an insurgency; the results of the cases analyzed are mixed.

Chapter 2
This chapter explores the first sub-hypothesis: that outside support is associated with local governments limiting their objectives. Two preconditions necessary for negotiations to take place were identified in the key concepts section: recognizing the insurgents as legitimate actors, and reaching an achievable balance of means and goals. Each of the cases is examined to identify if these preconditions were present, and whether the case resulted in negotiations. Three of the four cases analyzed support this hypothesis. The cases of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and Russian intervention in Tajikistan demonstrate how an outside state influenced a local government to modify objectives leading to negotiations. The case of Vietnam’s intervention in Cambodia demonstrates that an unwillingness to modify objectives prevented a political solution. Finally, the case of El Salvador contradicts the previous cases.

Sub-hypothesis One: Outside support is associated with local governments limiting their objectives.

Soviet influence shapes political objectives in Afghanistan

From the beginning of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1978 the Soviet objective had been to maintain a “friendly” communist government in Kabul. To accomplish this objective the Soviets had employed a three part strategy. The Red Army was deployed to secure key locations including major transportation routes, cities, and air bases. This would take pressure off of the beleaguered Afghan Army and provide them with breathing space to rebuild with Soviet material and military aid. Once

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capable, the Afghan Army, with Soviet assistance, would then be used to defeat the Mujahedeen and secure the rest of the country.\(^\text{39}\) However, by 1986 this strategy had failed to secure any sizable portion of the country. Discussed further in chapter three, the Soviet Union and Mujahedeen had reached a stalemate in the insurgency.

With the Red Army unable to secure the country and accomplish its goals in Afghanistan Gorbachev decided to modify Soviet objectives. During the same 13 November Politburo meeting it was concluded that the Soviet strategy would be to make Afghanistan a “neutral” country.\(^\text{40}\) This new objective was intended to provide a condition that the United States and the Mujahedeen would be willing to accept.\(^\text{41}\) The Politburo also recognized that in order to bring the war to a close it was “necessary to more actively pursue a political settlement.”\(^\text{42}\) Efforts would be made to reach out to members of the Mujahedeen so that a negotiated settlement to the war could be reached. Maintaining a neutral government in Afghanistan and ending the war through a political settlement was not a strategy that was embraced by the communist government in Kabul. Afghanistan’s ruler, Barak Karmal was unwilling to support Soviet efforts to negotiate with the Mujahedeen. Karmal failed to implement political reforms intended to broaden his political base in Afghanistan. These reforms had been stressed to him by the Kremlin as a means to make negotiations more attractive for the


\(^\text{42}\) "Documents on the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan,” 179.
Mujahedeen. Karmal also warned Gorbachev that if the Red Army eventually withdrew from Afghanistan the situation would deteriorate and the Soviets would be forced to intervene again. Unwilling to go along with the Soviet strategy, Karmal was forced to resign in May 1986. He was replaced by Mohammad Najibullah who was more receptive to a political solution and the withdrawal of Soviet forces. Gorbachev said of Najibullah that “he believes that the activation of measures directed toward national reconciliation … is a pressing task.”

This case demonstrates how an outside state supporting a counterinsurgency can shape the political objectives of the local government. The decision to pursue a more limited objective of a neutral government in Kabul, and to seek negotiations with the Mujahedeen was made by the Soviet Politburo. Although this strategy was initially opposed by the Karmal government in Kabul, the Soviet Union was able to use its leverage to force him to resign and shepherd in a new government more receptive to political reform and negotiations.

**Russian influence shapes political objectives in Tajikistan**

Throughout the five years of the insurgency in Tajikistan, the local government was dependent on outside support for its survival. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the former Soviet states in Central Asia had few military resources of their own and little tradition of governance. When fighting broke out in Tajikistan in 1992, the local government had little ability to deal with the challenge. Interested in maintaining a

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44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
buffer to protect their southern border, Russia and Uzbekistan intervened to support the People’s Front of Tajikistan (PFT).\textsuperscript{48} By mid-1996, the preponderance of the soldiers in Tajikistan were from the Russian Federal Border Service and the 201\textsuperscript{st} Motorized Division.\textsuperscript{49} Throughout the insurgency, Russia remained the guarantor of the Tajik government of Emomali Rahmonov in both military and economic terms.\textsuperscript{50}

As early as 1993, Russia had contemplated negotiations as a possible way to end the conflict. However, they were not yet willing to pressure the Rahmonov government to accept a power sharing arrangement with the United Tajik Opposition (UTO).\textsuperscript{51} By 1995 the UTO was achieving a number of military successes against the Tajik and Russian forces.\textsuperscript{52} With the insurgents supported by sanctuary in Afghanistan the Russians and Uzbeks were unable to defeat the opposition militarily.\textsuperscript{53} Additionally, Rahmonov’s government was beginning to splinter apart as a result of internal tribal differences.\textsuperscript{54} With the Taliban takeover of Kabul in 1996, and concerns of Islamic fundamentalism spreading to Tajikistan, Russia began to seek a political solution to the insurgency. Russia and Uzbekistan pressured Rahmonov to accept compromises and enter into negotiations with the UTO.\textsuperscript{55} Through Russian influence, Rahmonov agreed

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[49]{Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Cases Studies (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2010), accessed November 15, 2010, \url{http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG964z1.html}.}
\footnotetext[51]{Ibid.}
\footnotetext[52]{Ibid., 190.}
\footnotetext[53]{Ibid.}
\footnotetext[54]{Kirill Nourzhanov, "Saviors of the Nation or Robber Barons? Warlord Problems in Tajikistan," 121.}
\footnotetext[55]{Ibid., 199.}
\end{footnotes}
to the return of opposition supporters, legalization of political parties that made up the UTO, integration of UTO armed forces into the military, and a promise to grant 30% of government posts to the UTO.\textsuperscript{56} These measures helped pave the way for the signing of a peace accord in June 1997, ending the fighting.

\textbf{Objectives remained consistent in El Salvador}

During the insurgency in El Salvador, the Salvadoran government received limited military and financial aid from the United States in the fight against the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). The military aid consisted of 55 Special Forces soldiers deployed to El Salvador to train and assist the Salvadoran Armed Forces.\textsuperscript{57} These Special Forces soldiers trained the Salvadoran Army in counterinsurgency tactics, including the need to focus on securing and protecting population centers as well as in offensive operations against the FMLN in the countryside.\textsuperscript{58} The financial aid varied but increased from $264 million in 1982 to an estimated $558 million in 1987.\textsuperscript{59} In total the United States provided El Salvador with $6 billion in aid during the insurgency.\textsuperscript{60} This aid was used to reform and improve the armed forces, to support democratization programs and elections, judicial reform, and to support land redistribution programs.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{56} Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, \textit{Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Cases Studies}, 202.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} Benjamin C. Schwarz, \textit{American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador: The Frustrations of Reform and the Illusions of Nation Building}, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation), 2, accessed April 1, 2011, \url{http://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/2006/R4042.pdf}.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
The objective of the United States in El Salvador was to prevent a communist regime such as the FMLN from taking over the country.\textsuperscript{62} The policy of supporting a democratic government in El Salvador remained consistent throughout the insurgency. Discussed in chapters three and four, negotiations came after a weakening of the insurgents’ military capabilities, and after the government demonstrated a greater willingness to enact reforms addressed at alleviating the central grievances of the population.

**Vietnam was unwilling to modify objectives in Cambodia**

Much like the Tajik government and Russia, the government of Cambodia during the 1978 to 1992 insurgency was dependent on outside support for survival. The Vietnamese had up to 200,000 soldiers deployed to Cambodia during the insurgency supporting a local military that numbered no more than 45,000 by the end of the conflict.\textsuperscript{63} The Vietnamese forces were originally deployed to secure cities and major transportation networks. As the Khmer Rouge resistance intensified in 1983 the Vietnamese military was deployed in large offensive operations along the border with Thailand in an effort to clear out the rebel strongholds.\textsuperscript{64} Unlike in the Tajikistan or Afghanistan case, Vietnam was unable to reach negotiations with the insurgents. The opposition in Cambodia was comprised of a number of groups, but dominated by the ousted Khmer Rouge regime.\textsuperscript{65} Having invaded Cambodia to remove the Khmer Rouge, Vietnam was unwilling to countenance any solution that would involve their return to power. As early as 1980, Vietnam began searching for an exit strategy to

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 1.  
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 31.  
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 26-29.  
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 27.
Cambodia. International actors, including the United States, insisted that any political solution should involve the Khmer Rouge. Unwilling to accept such a compromise, Vietnam remained embroiled in Cambodia until the high political and material costs of the conflict prompted a complete withdrawal in 1989.

This case provides two illustrative points. First, Vietnam was unwilling to recognize the Khmer Rouge as a legitimate actor in Cambodia. The failure to accept the Khmer Rouge as part of any solution prevented Vietnam from finding a political solution to the conflict. Second, Vietnam failed to find an appropriate balance of means and ends. Despite Vietnam’s failure to defeat the insurgents militarily, the government of Vietnam did not modify their objectives in relation to the Khmer Rouge’s position in a future Cambodia.

Chapter 3

This chapter explores the second sub-hypothesis: that outside support is associated with stalemate. Stalemate was identified as a precondition necessary for negotiations in the key concepts section. Each of the cases is analyzed to determine whether a military stalemate was present, and if that stalemate preceded negotiations. Three of the four cases analyzed support this hypothesis. In Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and El Salvador, the counterinsurgents and insurgents had reached a stalemate prior to negotiations. One case, Vietnam, contradicts the other cases. In Vietnam, a stalemate between the counterinsurgents and insurgents was not followed by negotiations.

Sub-hypothesis Two: Outside support is associated with stalemate.

Russian intervention in Tajikistan contributed to a stalemate that preceded negotiations.

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66 Ibid., 28.
67 Ibid., 31.
Throughout the conflict in Tajikistan the balance of power between insurgent and counterinsurgent shifted several times. At the onset of the insurgency the balance was clearly on the side of the insurgents. In the summer of 1992, the UTO took control of Dushanbe, forced the government out, and established a new regime. Within months, the balance shifted back in favor of the government with the intervention of Russia and Uzbekistan. After an intense period of fighting, the UTO was dispersed into the countryside or across the border into Afghanistan. With the Russian forces holding the upper hand in Uzbekistan, the UTO shifted toward seeking a compromise for lack of any prospects of complete victory. At the same time, because of the insurgents’ sanctuary in Afghanistan, it was unlikely that Russia would be able to destroy the UTO. This condition of stalemate preceded the negotiations in 1997.

Soviet intervention in Afghanistan contributed to a stalemate that preceded negotiations.

During a 13 November 1986 Politburo meeting Deputy Defense Minister General Akhrome’ev stated that, “Our army has fought for five years. It is now in a position to maintain the situation on the level that it exists now. But under such conditions the war will last for a long time.” Despite five years of war the Soviet Union had failed to secure a sizable portion of the country. In the north and northeast of the country the government’s presence varied from 10% to 60% of provinces. In the south and

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68 Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Cases Studies*, 200.
70 Ibid., 7.
71 Tetsuro Iji, “Cooperation, Coordination and Complementarity in International Peacemaking: The Tajikistan Experience,” 190.
72 Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Cases Studies*, 201.
southwest it was barely visible at all.\textsuperscript{74} Between 1980 and 1986 the Red Army along with Afghan security forces cleared between 1,000 and 1,800 villages per year. Lacking sufficient forces to hold these areas after clearing them, on average only 300 remained within the government’s control one year later.\textsuperscript{75} The inability of the Soviet’s to secure the country, and the prospects of a long war contributed to Gorbachev’s decision to seek a political settlement in 1986.\textsuperscript{76}

The Soviet Union in conjunction with the Najibullah government also enacted a series of measures that reduced the strength of the insurgency. Following the Politburo decision of 1986 to seek an end to the conflict through negotiations, President Najibullah began a program of National Reconciliation.\textsuperscript{77} Part of the National Reconciliation program was opening lines of communication with mujahedeen commanders, former political figures, and negotiating deals with tribal chiefs.\textsuperscript{78} Tribal leaders and mujahedeen commanders were offered greater autonomy and material aid from the government. Former mujahedeen were also allowed to enroll in local militias and provided with salaries.\textsuperscript{79} These offers incentivized many mujahedeen to participate in the National Reconciliation. By 1989 it is estimated that as many as 70% to 80% of mujahedeen had ceased military operations against the government, 25% of armed groups had signed reconciliation agreements, and 40% had agreed to cease fires.\textsuperscript{80} It is also estimated that only 12% of mujahedeen completely rejected any reconciliation.

\textsuperscript{74} Anton Minkov and Gregory Smolyenc. *3-D Soviet Style: Lessons Learned from the Soviet Experience in Afghanistan*, 185.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 194.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.
In addition to the National Reconciliation the Afghan Security Forces had gradually been rebuilding since 1979. Afghan Security Forces strength went from a low of 40,000 in 1979 to 292,000 in 1988.\textsuperscript{81} The National Reconciliation and expansion of the Afghan Security Forces were mutually reinforcing and contributed to a weakening of the Mujahedeen. However, unable to eliminate the mujahedeen sanctuary in Pakistan the Soviet and Afghan forces remained unable to win a decisive victory.

**Stalemate in El Salvador led to negotiations**

Throughout the insurgency in El Salvador the government was unable to achieve a military advantage over the insurgents. Throughout the war in El Salvador, the rebels operated from bases in the mountainous area bordering Honduras, in rugged areas surrounding the Guazapa and San Vicente volcanoes, and along the coast of Usulatan.\textsuperscript{82} These remote regions, removed from the major population centers provided the insurgents with an internal sanctuary. Despite large scale military operations intended to clear the insurgents from the countryside, the Salvadoran military was never able to deprive the rebels of their sanctuary.\textsuperscript{83}

**Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia contributed to a stalemate that did not result in negotiations**

In September 1978, 200,000 Vietnamese soldiers invaded Cambodia to oust the Khmer Rouge government. Overwhelmed, the Khmer Rouge were quickly routed and fled into the highlands.\textsuperscript{84} In 1980, the Khmer Rouge, supported by other groups, took

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 178.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{84} Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Cases Studies*, 26.
up armed resistance to the Vietnamese and their client regime. In 1984-1985 Vietnam deployed a massive force which succeeded in driving much of the resistance out of Cambodia. Until 1989, the Vietnamese maintained the upper hand in the conflict, controlling the country wherever their forces were deployed. In 1989, after a decade of war at considerable cost, Vietnam decided to abandon the country. The forces of the proxy government left behind to control the country proved inferior to the Khmer Rouge. The conflict ended in 1991 through a peace accord calling for elections to be held in 1993.

This case demonstrates that even when counterinsurgents possess a preponderance of military power, it is still no guarantee of ultimate victory.

Chapter 4

This chapter explores the third sub-hypothesis: that outside support is associated with local governments addressing the underlying causes of the insurgency. Addressing the central grievances of the population is identified as an important component of counterinsurgency doctrine in the key concepts section. Each case is analyzed to identify efforts made by the government to address the underlying causes of the insurgency, and whether those efforts preceded negotiations. The results of this analysis are mixed. In the case of Tajikistan reforms were enacted intended to address the underlying causes of the insurgency and that case did end in a settlement. In Afghanistan attempts were made to institute reform, however they were mostly unsuccessful and the government was still able to enter negotiations with the

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85 Ibid., 27.
86 Ibid., 30.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid., 31.
insurgents. In El Salvador, despite pressure from the United States, the local government did not enact successful reforms for most of the insurgency. And in Cambodia, the local government did not enact any meaningful reforms.

**Sub-hypothesis Three:** *Outside support is associated with local governments addressing the underlying causes of the insurgency.*

**Tajikistan 1992-1996:** An unpopular government and poor counterinsurgency fuel the conflict

From 1992 to 1996 the insurgency was fueled by Tajik government policies, coupled with a brutal counterinsurgency campaign. After being installed as President in 1992, Rahmonov sought to consolidate power by installing members of his own Kolubi tribe to government posts. Tajikistan is a patchwork of different ethnic groups from different regions of the country. The insurgency was largely an ethnic conflict between these different groups. The “Kolubisation” of the government contributed to fears among the tribes that they were being excluded from the government. The government’s power was gradually splintered as tribes that had once been allied with Kalubi removed their support.

The fighting during this period was characterized by brutality and violence. The Russian and government forces and the opposition UTO all used violence as a means to achieving success. In 1992, the government offensive is estimated to have killed

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89 Kirill Nourzhanov, "Saviors of the Nation or Robber Barons? Warlord Problems in Tajikistan," 120.
90 Ibid., 112.
91 Ibid., 120.
92 Ibid., 121.
93 Ibid., 112.
over 50,000 people.\textsuperscript{94} In 1993, forces allied with Rahmonov drove some 90,000 people into exile.\textsuperscript{95} At the same time, the government made little effort to provide basic services or protection to the population.\textsuperscript{96} This violence and neglect alienated the people from the government and encouraged them to use violence in retaliation.\textsuperscript{97}

Political reform eventually opened the door for negotiations. In 1996, increasing opposition demonstrations pressured the government into enacting changes to the government leadership.\textsuperscript{98} After the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, Russia put increasing pressure on the government to make significant reforms. Through efforts to include more members of the opposition into the government, curb the extensive use of violence, and improve government services, the Rahmonov government was able to convince the opposition to come to the bargaining table.\textsuperscript{99}

**Afghanistan: Government reform and Soviet counterinsurgency tactics fail to secure local support**

The insurgency in Afghanistan was fueled by resentment toward the government’s attempts to impose socialist reforms on the country. After taking office in 1978, Afghan President Nur M. Taraki announced a series of socialist reforms including sweeping land reform, women’s emancipation, and a restructuring of the traditional Afghan social structure.\textsuperscript{100} The reforms proved highly unpopular among large segments of the population and armed resistance shortly emerged to challenge the

\textsuperscript{94} Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Cases Studies*, 199.
\textsuperscript{95} Kirill Nourzhanov, "Saviors of the Nation or Robber Barons? Warlord Problems in Tajikistan," 118.
\textsuperscript{96} Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Cases Studies*, 201.
\textsuperscript{97} Kirill Nourzhanov, "Saviors of the Nation or Robber Barons? Warlord Problems in Tajikistan," 113.
\textsuperscript{98} Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Cases Studies*, 202.
\textsuperscript{100} Lester W. Grau and Mohammad Yahya, "The Soviet Experience in Afghanistan."
Large portions of the Afghan Army deserted or moved over to the resistance. By the end of 1978 the Afghan Army had shrunk from 90,000 to 40,000 soldiers.¹⁰²

From the first year of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the Soviet Politburo recognized that the ambitious reforms of Taraki were behind the insurgency. A Soviet Central Committee report from April 1979 attributes the insurgency to, “the miscalculations and mistakes of the Afghan leadership.”¹⁰³ One of the immediate goals of the Soviet Union was to replace Taraki with Babrak Karmal, who was believed to be more reliable leader.¹⁰⁴ Throughout the war the Soviet strategy did involve efforts to address the grievances of the population. In 1980 the Afghan government established a Loya Jirgha, or assembly of tribal chiefs, as a state institution.¹⁰⁵ This was intended to bring the tribal structure into the government. The Afghan government also tried to integrate religious leaders. This was done through conferences, reconstructing mosques and distributing grants to pilgrims.¹⁰⁶ By 1987 16,000 religious leaders were receiving benefits from the central government. However, the vast majority of religious leaders remained outside of the state structure.¹⁰⁷ The Soviets also introduced a program called Agitprop. Agitprop units consisted of doctors, nurses, entertainers and political activists who would tour villages providing medical and financial assistance to locals.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰¹ Ibid.
¹⁰² Ibid.
¹⁰³ “Documents on the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan”, 68.
¹⁰⁴ Anton Minkov and Gregory Smoly nec. 3-D Soviet Style: Lessons Learned from the Soviet Experience in Afghanistan, 174.
¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 192.
¹⁰⁶ Ibid.
¹⁰⁷ Ibid.
¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 193.
Much of the good will gained from Soviet and Afghan efforts to broaden the participation of tribal chiefs and religious leaders in government, or to distribute aid through Agitprop teams was lost in the brutal military campaign of the Red Army. During the course of the war the Soviet Union killed an estimated 1.3 million people and forced a further 5.5 million out of the country as refugees.\(^\text{109}\) This was a largely the result of the Soviets military strategy that relied on massive firepower. Air strikes, helicopters, artillery, and armor preceded military advances. Ground forces would then overrun the contested area firing indiscriminately until the area was secured.\(^\text{110}\) The Soviets also used forced depopulation as a means to prevent the Mujahedeen from gaining control of territory. Villages were razed, fields cleared, and livestock slaughtered.\(^\text{111}\) These brutal tactics further alienated the population from the government, and contributed to the insurgents’ support.\(^\text{112}\)

**Cambodia: Counterinsurgency strategy fuels the insurgency**

Throughout the duration of Vietnam’s involvement in Cambodia, the Vietnamese government executed a brutal counterinsurgency that eroded their support and aided the insurgents.\(^\text{113}\) Following Vietnam’s invasion in 1978, the people of Cambodia largely welcomed their arrival and the removal of the Khmer Rouge regime.\(^\text{114}\) Over the next year, however, popular support began to diminish as the government proved unable to protect the Cambodian people from insurgent violence, or to deal with a

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\(^{109}\) Lester W. Grau and Mohammad Yahya, "The Soviet Experience in Afghanistan."

\(^{110}\) Ibid.


\(^{112}\) Ibid., 189.

\(^{113}\) Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Cases Studies*, 25.

\(^{114}\) Ibid., 27.
devastating food shortage. In 1984, Vietnam launched a major offensive to drive the Khmer Rouge out of Cambodia and secure the border. Using massive, indiscriminate firepower and conscripted Cambodians for construction projects, the population increasingly opposed the government and Vietnamese forces.

El Salvador: The United States in unsuccessful in influencing reform

One of the causes of the insurgency in El Salvador was an inequitable distribution of land and wealth. In 1980 over 70% of land in El Salvador was owned by 1% of the population. As a result of this El Salvador operated within a feudal system, where a small ruling elite presided over a large impoverished majority. El Salvador also suffered from a brutal military and corrupt government. In 1981 it is estimated that there were 10,000 political murders committed by the Salvadoran military.

The United States attempted to help El Salvador defeat the insurgency by making aid conditional on reforms aimed addressing the grievances of the population. In 1984 a National Bipartisan Commission on Central America emphasized the need for economic, social, and political developments as the key to defeating the insurgency. That report also recommended that future aid be made conditional on progress made by the government of El Salvador to enact reforms in those critical areas.

The American effort was successful in improving the human rights record of the Salvadoran military. The number of political murders declined from 10,000 in 1981 to

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115 Ibid., 28.
116 Ibid., 30.
117 Benjamin C. Schwarz, American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador: The Frustrations of Reform and the Illusions of Nation Building, 44.
118 Ibid. 9.
119 Ibid., 23.
120 Ibid., 11.
121 Ibid.
108 in 1990. However, in the area of land reform, pressure from the United States was less successful. Partially funded and supported by the US Agency for International Development the Salvadoran government established an office to oversee the redistribution of land. The intent of the program was to redistribute one-half of the country’s farmland to one-half to two-thirds of poor rural inhabitants. With little support, even opposition, from the government the program was largely unsuccessful. After ten years only 20% of land had been transferred to new owners.

Chapter 5

Alternative explanation I: Support to insurgents from outside states is associated with negotiations

The first alternative explanation is that support to insurgents from outside states is associated with negotiations. Bard O’Neill identifies four types of external support to insurgents: moral support, political support, material support, and sanctuary. Sanctuary can play a vital role in insurgencies as it provided insurgents with a safe haven from which to organize military operations against counterinsurgents, and a base to fall back to if they are unsuccessful in a campaign. The importance of sanctuary or other types of external aid for insurgents varies from case to case. In all of the cases analyzed the insurgents were receiving some type of external aid. In Tajikistan, the UTO had at least moral support from Iran as well as sanctuary in Afghanistan. In El

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122 Ibid., 23.
123 Ibid., 45.
124 Ibid.
125 Ibid., 48.
126 Bard E O’Neill, Insurgency and Terrorism, from Revolution to Apocalypse, 142-145.
127 Ibid., 146
128 Tetsuro Iji, "Cooperation, Coordination and Complementarity in International Peacemaking: The Tajikistan Experience," 192.
Salvador, the FMLN was receiving material support from states such as Cuba and had sanctuary in neighboring Honduras.\textsuperscript{129} In Afghanistan, the Mujahedeen received financial and material support from the United States, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Iran, and had sanctuary in Pakistan.\textsuperscript{130} In Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge received material support and sanctuary in Thailand.\textsuperscript{131}

External states supporting insurgents may influence insurgents to enter into negotiations. This could come in the form of direct pressure from external states on insurgents to accept a negotiated end. For example, Iran had pressured the UTO to accept a political solution prior to negotiations with the Tajik government.\textsuperscript{132} Or, the removal of external support may weaken an insurgency and influence insurgents to accept a negotiated end. In El Salvador, the end of the Cold War, and the subsequent drying up of foreign aid preceded the FMLN entering into negotiations.\textsuperscript{133} And in Afghanistan, after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union much of the external aid to the Mujahedeen was lost, however they still maintained a sanctuary in Pakistan.\textsuperscript{134} If an association exists between outside states supporting insurgents and negotiations in insurgencies is a question that could benefit from further research.

\textbf{Chapter 6}

\textsuperscript{129} Angel Rabasa, Lesley Anne Warner, Peter Chalk, Ivan Khilko, and Paraag Shukla, \textit{Money in the Bank—Lessons Learned from Past Counterinsurgency (COIN) Operations}, 42.

\textsuperscript{130} Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, \textit{Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Cases Studies}, 12-13.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 27.

\textsuperscript{132} Tetsuro Iji, "Cooperation, Coordination and Complementarity in International Peacemaking: The Tajikistan Experience," 192.


\textsuperscript{134} Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, \textit{Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Cases Studies}, 17-18.
Policy Implication I: Insurgencies have entered negotiations when outside states are able to leverage their support

This research suggests outside states supporting a counterinsurgency are able to influence a local government to seek negotiations when the outside state can leverage its support to achieve political and military change. In the cases of the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan, and Russia's intervention in Tajikistan, the local governments were dependent on outside support for their survival. In these cases, first the Soviet Union and later Russia were able to influence the local government to pursue reforms aimed at addressing the underlying causes of the insurgency, and to accept a political solution to the conflict. This may have been possible not just because the local governments relied on the Soviet and Russian governments for their existence, but also because the continuation of aid was not a certainty. During a visit to Moscow in 1987, Najibullah was told he had twelve months before Soviet forces would begin leaving the country.\textsuperscript{135} In contrast the government of El Salvador doubted the sincerity of threats that aid would be removed if they failed to enact reform. In the context of the Cold War, the government of El Salvador didn’t believe that the United States would abandon an aid program intended to prevent the spread of communism in Latin America.\textsuperscript{136} After the collapse of the Soviet Union the Salvadoran government may have calculated that the United States no longer had a compelling reason to continue providing aid.\textsuperscript{137} By 1992 El Salvador began to implement real political and economic reforms.\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{135} Lester W. Grau and Mohammad Yahya, "The Soviet Experience in Afghanistan."
\textsuperscript{136} Benjamin C. Schwarz, American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador: The Frustrations of Reform and the Illusions of Nation Building, 61-62.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 83.
\textsuperscript{138} Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Cases Studies, 41.
Policy Implication II: Insurgencies that have ended in negotiations have not had a high ratio of counterinsurgents to insurgents.

The findings from this research suggest that the number of counterinsurgents necessary for negotiations is less than what is needed to win an insurgency. Contemporary counterinsurgency theory has established a variety of ratios for forecasting force requirements in insurgencies. The U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual establishes a ratio of 20 counterinsurgents per 1,000 residents as the minimum force ratio for effective COIN operations. Other sources recommend counterinsurgent force ratios based on the number of insurgents. David Galula recommends a ratio of 10 to 20 counterinsurgents for every one insurgent. Applying the ratio of 20 counterinsurgents per 1,000 residents to Tajikistan leads to the need for 140,000 counterinsurgents to secure the country. However, Russia had no more than 30,000 soldiers in Tajikistan during the course of the insurgency. Yet Russia was still able reach a balance of power suitable for negotiations. Identifying a suitable ratio of counterinsurgents per residents in order to reach a negotiated end in an insurgency is beyond the scope of this paper. This is potentially an issue that future research can explore in greater detail.

Policy Recommendation I: Aid should be made conditional:

In order for a state supporting a counterinsurgency to influence a government to pursue reforms aimed at addressing the root causes of the insurgency, or to seek a negotiated settlement, aid should be made conditional and backed up by credible

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140 David Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare, 21.
141 Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Cases Studies, 204.
threats to remove it if certain steps are not reached. States should set timelines for when certain reforms need to be reached, and if they are not it should be made clear that a local government will lose at least part of the aid it is receiving.

Policy Recommendation II: States seeking to end an insurgency through negotiations do not need large forces to achieve a favorable balance of power:

In Afghanistan, a country with an estimated population of 30 million, accepting a ratio of 20 counterinsurgents per 1,000 residents would suggest that 600,000 counterinsurgents are needed to secure the country. Also, there are an estimated 25,000 Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan. Applying a ratio of between 10 and 20 counterinsurgents for every one insurgent suggests that between 250,000 and 500,000 counterinsurgents are needed. NATO and Afghan Security forces currently number approximately 400,000. This number falls in between the 250,000 to 500,000 counterinsurgents prescribed by the counterinsurgent to insurgent ratios, and 200,000 short of the counterinsurgent to resident ratio. This research suggests that 400,000 NATO and Afghan counterinsurgents may be a sufficient number in order to reach a negotiated settlement with the Taliban. During the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan the Red Army numbered no more than 120,000. Afghan Security forces during the Soviet intervention numbered 292,000 by the end of the conflict. With a total of

412,000 counterinsurgents in Afghanistan the Afghan government was able to enter negotiations with the Mujahedeen.
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