the U.S. military withdraws, he believes that the warlords will take over. He questions the quality and reliability of the Afghan army, in whose ranks drug use and corruption are rife. Moreover, Afghan soldiers have occasionally opened fired on U.S. and ISAF soldiers, bringing into question their long-term loyalty to the new regime. Despite the substantial cost in blood and treasure, Hastings avers that the United States was getting its ass "kicked by illiterate peasants who made bombs out of manure and wood." His pessimism, though, is arguably overstated. To be sure, gauging progress in a guerrilla war is inexact due to the tenuous quality of the metrics used to measure success. Nevertheless, according to a 2011 survey conducted by the Asia Foundation, the proportion of respondents expressing some level of sympathy for the insurgents groups reached its lowest level that year (29 percent). Moreover, despite serious concerns about government corruption, security, and economic future, nearly half of all Afghan respondents said that their country was moving in the right direction according to the Asia Foundation. Considering the daunting challenges of building a functioning state and civil society in the tribal and war-torn country, problems are to be expected. Still, the U.S. mission in Afghanistan is far from accomplished and Hastings provides a window to view it warts and all. PRISM

Galula in Algeria: Counterinsurgency Practice versus Theory

By Grégor Mathias
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REVIEWED BY RILEY M. MOORE

With the outbreak of insurgency in Iraq (followed by Afghanistan), an urgent requirement emerged for concise and easily comprehensible answers to the complex question of how to counter an insurgency. In the midst of two wars, with no time or current doctrine and with a Presidential mandate for solutions, strategic thinkers and generals were desperately searching for a foothold to halt what seemed to be the inevitable descent into chaos in Iraq. The works of David Galula played a significant role in fulfilling that mandate. Touted by General David Petraeus and other military leaders—General Stanley McChrystal, for instance, claimed to keep Galula's publications on his nightstand to read every night—Galula's work has been influential in forming current U.S. counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine. Indeed, his influence on Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, which was authored under the leadership of General Petraeus, is undeniable.

Amidst his notoriety and acclaim, there is a limited amount of information about who exactly David Galula was and how his military record measures up—specifically his successes

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and failures. Grégor Mathias has finally shed light on Galula's previously opaque personal history. He juxtaposes Galula's eight principals from *Counterinsurgency Warfare* and his success in applying these theoretical constructs in Algeria in methodical detail. Through Mathias's exhaustive research and primary source evidence, the real historical narrative of Galula in Algeria has now been brought to light. After examining all eight principals as applied by Galula in Djebel Aïssa Mimoun in Algeria (the district he commanded), the results were abysmal.

Particularly salient steps to current U.S. COIN doctrine are the second, "Assign sufficient troops to oppose the insurgent's comeback and install these troops in each village," and the fourth, "Destroy the local insurgent political organizations."

Galula's second step is interesting because this is where "[he] practiced the ink-spot strategy. . . . The ink spot refers to the idea of creating military posts that are gradually extended with economic and social development (markets, clinics, schools) and the establishment of local government, control of the populace, elimination of adversaries, and arming supporters before moving on to another region" (p. 23). This obviously sounds familiar to us all by now. It is commonly and simplistically referred to as "clear, hold, and build" in Afghanistan. By no means was this a new strategy; in fact, it was not even original to Galula. As Mathias points out, it was "invented by Marshall Gallieni in Tonkin from 1892 to 1896 and developed by Marshall Lyautey in his article '*Du rôle colonial de l'armée*' (The Army's role in the Colonies) in the journal *Revue des Deux mondes*" (p. 23). Galula's experience in applying this strategy was the primary point of influence on current U.S. doctrine; therefore, one would assume that it would have been further investigated before it became the centerpiece of American strategy. Unfortunately, if we had looked deeper, as this book does, we would have realized that Galula's application of this was not successful. Although the platoons' presence in Djebel Aïssa increased security, it did not prevent or slow down the insurgent political cadre from exerting effective control over the population.

Similarly, when examining the forth step, we realize that although there was initial success in the implementation of this principle, it was short lived. However, at the time Galula continued to publicize his self-proclaimed successes. Indeed, he wrote in *Lettre d'informations* that:

> [I]*n four purged villages, five members of the OPA* [insurgent political organization] *were killed, two imprisoned, 30 members were arrested and released on conditional liberty, and several became councilmen or* harikis. . . . *The community work is done voluntarily and without coercion. . . . It is east to evoke Sisyphus when speaking to the destruction of rebel cells. On the contrary, if this operation is properly conducted, it is irreversible.* [p. 39]

Galula had successfully decapitated the OPA, but its demise was far from imminent. Subsequent to Galula's promotion to the Division of Information in Paris and his departure from Djebel Aïssa Mimoun, the insurgents were able to adapt and were ultimately successful in their campaign.

This begs the question of why Galula was promoted if he failed. Mathias articulates the answer. Galula published his work

from Algeria in such a manner that it was easily comprehensible and undeniably successful. He wrote extensively in the public media and made sure his commanders were well informed about his success in the field. As Mathias points out in his discussion of one of Galula's failed steps, he "exaggerated his operations in giving a quantitative account in terms of populations and numbers of peoples treated by the AMG [*assistance medical gratuite*]" (p. 93). With advancement and personal gain in mind, he resorted to inflating his achievements. Although he experienced short-term success, this approach was unsustainable and ultimately led to the failure of his strategy.

Galula's failure continues to become clearer as Mathias provides further context for his exploits in Algeria. For instance, it is not evident how short a period these operations were conducted over. Galula states, "I set out to prove a theory of counterinsurgency warfare, and I am satisfied that it worked in my small area. What I achieved in my first six or eight months in Djebel Aïssa Mimoun was not due to magic and could have been applied much earlier throughout Algeria" (p. 96). However, Mathias counters this claim by rightly asserting that "In reality, Galula's activities at Djebel Aïssa Mimoun lasted a short time, just over 14 months, from August 1956 to October 1957. Over this period, a month was taken up in policing Tizi Ouzou, where he was cited for having contributed to the arrest of 27 rebels. *The period was too short to reasonably expect the subdistrict be pacified* [emphasis added]" (p. 96). This now makes all the more sense when looking at Galula's *Pacification in Algeria*. He makes no mention of his activities from 1958 to 1962, a span that was spent at the Division of Information in Paris. Galula's experience was limited not only in scope but also in time.

Exploring further into Mathias's work, it becomes apparent that Galula's theories were not original to any degree. They were paraphrased or truncated theories and thoughts from contemporary revolutionary war thinkers of the time. Indeed, when looking at Galula's *Pacification in Algeria*, he cites only one author, which as Mathias points out, is really quite puzzling given the numerous published works on the topic during that time. More startling is the fact that when Galula published his two books, he was a researcher at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard (1962–1963). How would a bibliography not be among his duties at that time? According to Mathias, "The apparent simplicity of Galula's counterinsurgency doctrine actually issues from the lack of bibliographical references to works of other thinkers. . . . Moreover, he deliberately avoids citing a number of references such as British general R. Thompson, the architect of the antiguerilla war in Malaya (1948–60)" (p. 97).

Galula's simplicity served as the impetus for his rediscovery by contemporary U.S. strategists and generals grasping for doctrinal synthesis of simple solutions for complex problems. The fact is there are no simple solutions to complex issues—particularly in counterinsurgency. That said, as previously stated, these decisions were made in a compressed timeframe and at a critical juncture.

Through the years, there have been minimal challenges to Galula's claims of his reported successes. He remained unchallenged throughout the U.S. war in Vietnam despite the fact that the RAND Corporation incorporated his work into its study to establish a COIN doctrine for that conflict. With his contemporary rediscovery, he went largely unchallenged until recently. This book represents the most concerted effort in questioning his claims

and ideas. We must continue to challenge our assumptions in stability operations writ large. We cannot simply apply Galula's "eight principals" of *Counterinsurgency Warfare* to any given operation. But this is what we have ostensibly done in Iraq and Afghanistan given the undeniable influence of Galula's work on Field Manual 3-24. Take the example of "force ratio" in the manual where there is an actual minimum ratio force for success in COIN operations across the board. Such simplistic constructs, which have been used in a "plug and play" fashion, have hamstrung critical thinking in Iraq and Afghanistan. This search for a blueprint solution is emblematic of the historic rigidity in U.S. doctrine.

This book should be a mandated accompaniment for subsequent reading with any of David Galula's work. It is straightforward and meticulously sourced, and it ultimately "prepares the battlespace" for understanding the work and life of Galula. There is no doubt that Galula's work should be taken under consideration when considering solutions in a given COIN operation. With that said, it cannot be the only source. There is not one answer to a hundred different questions. We should bear that in mind when taking a strategic view of perceived challenges in the future. We must be ready for COIN operations, but not every threat will be unconventional just as not every threat will be conventional. Hopefully, *Galula in Algeria* will be one of many works that challenge current COIN doctrine and compel us to keep all tools sharp in the U.S. strategic bag of options. PRISM