



## Anglo-American ‘counterinsurgency’ planners bring permanent wars back home

By an AAS Team

“Coronavirus is threatening to ignite a tinderbox of grievances in the US. The growing *parallels with Iraq, Lebanon and Somalia* are real and disturbing.... If the first wave of the coronavirus tsunami was its health effect, the second—economic devastation—may be worse. But there is a third wave coming: the possibility of *armed conflict towards the end of this year*, when the combined health and economic impacts of the crisis will peak amid the most violently contested presidential election in memory.”<sup>1</sup> (Emphasis added.)

This warning—or, was it a threat?—is not the latest bulletin from the Christchurch mass shooter or the Boogaloo Bois armed activists, about whose agitation for “civil war” in the USA the AAS has written.<sup>2</sup> Rather, it appeared in the *Australian* on 30 May 2020 in a column by the paper’s contributing editor for military affairs, David Kilcullen, an Australian Defence Force reserve lieutenant colonel with a PhD in politics (specialisation: anthropology/ethnography) who resides in the United States. For three decades, Kilcullen has been at the centre of the Anglo-American policy of perpetual war, both its theory and the implementation, which has brought nothing but disaster to the countries involved.

Now, the military-strategic apparatus responsible for so much death and misery in the countries Kilcullen named, and many others, is preparing to apply its formulas back home. Kilcullen’s expertise is “counterinsurgency”, in the form he and others developed in the “War on Terror” period after 9/11 and honed in Iraq and Afghanistan, where Kilcullen deployed. The techniques he practiced there are emerging as preferred methods for governments to put down political opposition and mass unrest during a worsening economic crisis.

Kilcullen is both an offspring and an operative of the Anglo-American war party, which encompasses both the American “neoconservatives” who engineered and led the illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003 and “liberal interventionists” in the Tony Blair mould, who are their allies. Thus the war party cuts across political party lines; Kilcullen, having been seconded to the US Government as an advisor, was active under both the George W. Bush and the Barack Obama Administrations (2001-09; 2009-17).

The teams of which Kilcullen has been a part are a military-strategic arm of the Anglo-American financial Empire, centred in the City of London and Wall Street, whose leaders imagine their power to be permanent. When their system is shaky, as it has been off and on since at least the Wall Street crash of 1987, then the military’s job in the international arena is to crush potential leaders of an alternative system, one that would put the interests of nations and their populations above those of the financiers. This motive underlies the dedication of leading circles in the Anglo-American establishment, ever since what should have been the end of the Cold War in 1989-91, to the 1992 “Wolfowitz Doctrine”. Formulated by then-Under Secretary of Defence for Policy



Australian counterinsurgency expert David Kilcullen (left) in Iraq in 2007, in his role as adviser to Gen. David Petraeus, commander of coalition forces in Iraq. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Paul Wolfowitz, who held that position in the George H.W. Bush Administration (1989-93), it said that no country outside the USA with its NATO allies should ever be allowed to achieve the degree of power formerly possessed by the Soviet Union, which had just disintegrated.

The Wolfowitz Doctrine’s one-empire model became the basis for regime-change wars around the world,<sup>3</sup> often using the War on Terror as a pretext, and for cranking up hostile postures against Russia and China. The domestic correlate of the Wolfowitz Doctrine is a desire to suppress any opposition to the financial oligarchy and the brutal austerity it imposes against the population’s living standards (in favour of bankrupt, speculation-ridden markets and banks). Measures range from mass surveillance of people’s communications and movements, up to police-state rule and provocations to justify it.

### From ‘Counterterrorism’ to ‘Counterinsurgency’

A graduate of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, David Kilcullen served in almost every theatre of the War on Terror. His 21 years on active duty in the Australian Defence Force included peacekeeping operations in East Timor, Bougainville and the Middle East, as well as a posting to Indonesia for language study in the 1990s. With his PhD dissertation in politics completed in 2000 on the Indonesian guerrilla warfare experience, Kilcullen gained the reputation of an expert in irregular warfare, and in 2004, as a senior analyst at the Australian Office of National Assessments, he co-wrote the Australian Government’s 2004 Terrorism White Paper.

His writings, according to a profile in the *New Yorker*,<sup>4</sup> brought Kilcullen to the attention of Paul Wolfowitz in 2004, who was back at the Pentagon as Deputy Secretary of

1. David Kilcullen, “[Land of the hateful, fearful, heavily armed](#)”, *The Australian*, 30 May 2020.

2. “What is the ‘Third Force’ fuelling US unrest?”, AAS, 10 June 2020.

3. Former NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe Gen. Wesley Clark describes being briefed in 2001 at the Pentagon (then under Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld with Wolfowitz as his deputy) on a memo of plans to “take out seven countries in five years”. [Clips from his 2007 interview](#) with Amy Goodman of Democracy Now! are on YouTube.

4. George Packer, “[Knowing the Enemy: Can social scientists redefine the ‘war on terror’?](#)”, *The New Yorker*, 18 Dec. 2006.

Defence under the younger President Bush. Accordingly Kilcullen was seconded to the US Department of Defence, where he co-authored the counterterrorism section of the 2006 Quadrennial Defence Review.

Henry Crumpton, a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) covert operations specialist who had headed the CIA's Counter-Terrorism Centre in 1999-2001, recommended Kilcullen to the US State Department, where he was hired to work alongside Crumpton. The ex-CIA man himself was the State Department's coordinator for counterterrorism, while Kilcullen became special advisor to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on counterinsurgency. Working this State Department job in 2005-06, he deployed in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Horn of Africa and Southeast Asia.

Kilcullen's next American assignment was as advisor to Gen. David Petraeus as commanding general of the Multi-National Force-Iraq. In that capacity he helped to design the so-called "surge" of 2007, when Bush sent an additional 20,000 troops into Iraq.

Wolfowitz and other neocons were advocates of big-bang invasions in their overseas wars. The initial 2003 invasion of Iraq was named "Operation Shock and Awe", to denote the use of overwhelming force. At the same time they were building up a long game—"the long war", they call it—through the kind of operations Gen. Petraeus specialised in: "counterinsurgency".

Before travelling to Iraq with him, Kilcullen worked on the team Petraeus headed from his position in charge of the Army Combined Arms Centre at Ft. Leavenworth (2005-07), which wrote the US Army's new, updated *Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency* for the post-9/11 era. Also in that decade, Kilcullen's work was heavily promoted by the UK's International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), which published his 2006 article "[Counterinsurgency Redux](#)" and hosted him to talk about his 2009 book, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*.<sup>5</sup>

Kilcullen's article "[Countering Global Insurgency: A Strategy for the War on Terrorism](#)", first published in November 2004, set forth the argument for a "counterinsurgency" program, rather than merely "counterterrorism". He summarised: "This paper explores the nature of the War on Terrorism. It argues that the War is fundamentally a counterinsurgency, against a globalised Islamist insurgent movement that currently uses terrorism as its preferred tactic. Thus, traditional counterterrorism approaches are less relevant to the war than those of counterinsurgency. But classical counterinsurgency is designed to defeat insurgency in a single state, and is thus inadequate for defeating a globalised insurgency. Therefore, a viable long-term strategy for this war demands re-thinking classical counterinsurgency theory.... a re-evaluation of counterinsurgency theory based on complex systems analysis".

Kilcullen's 2004 paper became the Bible of these principles. In it, he called to "defeat or marginalise the insurgent's strategy, rather than to 'apprehend the perpetrators' of specific acts". This may mean, explained Kilcullen, taking on an entire society, because the grievances of "insurgents" (such as Iraqis opposed to the foreign occupation of their country) "are often seen as legitimate" by "mainstream society". Through the "lens of counterinsurgency", interventions such as the occupation of Iraq—"viewed with suspicion by some" as being unrelated to anti-terrorism goals—appear quite sensible, Kilcullen asserted.

5. Michele Steinberg, "[The British Plan: Bury US in Afghan 'Graveyard of Empires'](#)", *EIR*, 2 Oct. 2009.

Kilcullen talked about rehabilitating counterinsurgency methods that had gotten a bad name from their debacle in Vietnam. He said that his "counterinsurgency redux" would resemble a "global Phoenix Program", referring to the CIA's efforts to destroy the support for Viet Cong guerrillas within the South Vietnamese population. The Phoenix Program is notorious for killing tens of thousands of civilians, but Kilcullen claimed that "contrary to popular mythology, this was largely a civilian aid and development program, supported by targeted military pacification operations and intelligence activity to disrupt the Viet Cong Infrastructure".<sup>6</sup>

Not only the discredited counterinsurgency techniques of Vietnam were to be revived, but Kilcullen emphasised studying the British and Dutch colonial and post-colonial experience in Malaya, Indonesia, and elsewhere. While sporting new, more complex "systems analysis" techniques of the computer age, Kilcullen's counterinsurgency makes no secrets of its roots in the brutal population-control methods of the old British Empire. He regularly cites Gen. Frank Kitson, who perfected the technique of fanning internecine strife through creation of what he called "gangs and pseudo-gangs", in murderous British counterinsurgency wars against nationalist movements in Kenya, Malaya, Cyprus, Oman and Yemen in the 1950s and 1960s.

"Global counterinsurgency", according to Kilcullen, requires not only high-tech profiling of online social networking, but also a reintegration of sociology and anthropology into military operations. "This is fundamentally about the broken relationship between the government and the discipline of anthropology", he told George Packer in 2006 (Note 4). "What broke that relationship is Vietnam. And people still haven't recovered from that." Thus Kilcullen and his co-thinkers invoke the historical experience of thorough *cultural* warfare, starting with inside-out knowledge of family and other social relations within a population that may harbor "insurgents". Likewise inherited from British Intelligence operations in the colonies, this approach was pioneered earlier by the Venetian Republic (actually a financier-based empire), whose centuries-long power relied on in-depth cultural intelligence on the regions it dominated. Kilcullen et al. cite not only Kitson, but also Adda Bozeman (1908-94), a Latvian-born American political scientist, author of the books *Politics and Culture in International History* and *Strategic Intelligence and Statecraft*. At a 1986 round table on terrorism, seminal for the ultimate revival of counterinsurgency two decades later, Bozeman called for following "Venetian guidelines" in American Intelligence.<sup>7</sup>

### 'Success'—in ways not advertised

The counterinsurgency programs of the Vietnam War and their revived, post-9/11 form have in common their utter failure to end the conflicts. In Vietnam, as the *Christian Science Monitor* reported in 1971, "many who have gone to prison as active supporters of neither the government nor the Viet Cong come out as active backers of the Viet Cong and with an implacable hatred of the government."<sup>8</sup>

The results of the Anglo-American-led 2003 invasion of Iraq, both its "shock and awe" and its counterinsurgency components, were no better—if the goal were genuinely to achieve peace and stability. Many post-9/11 "unlawful

6. David Kilcullen, "[Countering Global Insurgency](#)", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2005; revised version of the 2004 article.

7. Uri Ra'anan, et al., *Hydra of Carnage: International Linkages of Terrorism* (Lexington Books, 1986).

8. Quoted in Douglas Valentine, *The Phoenix Program: America's Use of Terror in Vietnam* (NY: William Morrow, 1990).

combatants" thrown into CIA "black site" prisons in Iraq and Afghanistan experienced a transformation like that of the civilians who came to back the Viet Cong, only this time the result was not a victorious people's militia, but the emergence of the Islamic State terrorist movement (ISIS).

Following the invasion of Iraq, a number of Saddam Hussein's army officers held for "de-radicalisation" at the notorious Camp Bucca detention centre and other US-controlled prisons teamed up with Islamist radicals jailed alongside them. "The prisons became virtual terrorist universities", US military veteran Andrew Thompson recalled. "Nine members of the Islamic State's top command did time at Bucca", the London *Independent* subtitled its article citing Thompson.<sup>9</sup>

These results were no deterrent to continuation of the renewed Anglo-American counterinsurgency policy into the 2010s, in Afghanistan. The counterinsurgency-based "long war" was becoming perpetual war.

President Barack Obama's February 2009 announcement of a planned 17,000-troop increase in the American deployment in Afghanistan was the first sign of continuity under his Administration of the Bush-Cheney overseas war policy—the "liberal interventionist" counterpart to the neo-conservative war-mongers. When Gen. Stanley McChrystal later that year spearheaded a plan for an even greater, long-term "peacekeeping" presence, featuring updated counterinsurgency methods, its biggest booster was Sir Sheard Cowper-Coles, the British diplomat handling Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>10</sup> Cowper-Coles called, in a September 2019 speech at the IISS, for "an enduring, long-term commitment" of American and British forces because Afghanistan as a state "has never existed in modern times without massive foreign subvention".

Kilcullen was on hand as counterinsurgency advisor to NATO and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan in 2009-10. There he organised the ISAF Counterinsurgency Advisory Assistance Team, working as an advisor to ISAF Commander Gen. McChrystal and on the Afghanistan program of the Pentagon's Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

In subsequent years he has worked for an array of think tanks and universities, including as a senior fellow and advisory board member for the Centre for a New American Security (CNAS) in Washington. That liberal interventionist think tank was headed in 2018-19 by Victoria Nuland, who had earned her foreign policy spurs as an aide to neocon Vice President Dick Cheney in the George W. Bush Administration and gained notoriety as assistant secretary of state under Obama, for her role in the US/EU/NATO-backed overthrow of Victor Yanukovich, the elected President of Ukraine, in 2014.

9. "Camp Bucca: The US prison that became the birthplace of Isis", *Independent*, 4 Nov. 2014.

10. A key British foreign affairs and intelligence figure, Cowper-Coles headed the Hong Kong Department of the British Foreign Office until the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997. As Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (2003-07), he played a decisive role in shutting down the British Serious Fraud Office investigation of the "al-Yamamah" arms-for-oil deal between Saudi Arabia and British arms company BAE Systems. Al-Yamamah generated a slush fund of US\$100 billion, used to finance the Afghan mujahedin networks that gave rise to al-Qaeda. Cowper-Coles was British Ambassador to Afghanistan (2007-09) and the Foreign Secretary's Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan (2009-10). In 2007 Afghan President Karzai expelled two MI6 agents caught funding the Taliban, one of them a close associate of Cowper-Coles. After leaving the Foreign Office, Cowper-Coles became a senior executive at BAE and later an advisor to the CEO of another elite British company, HSBC Group.



US de-radicalisation camps were "virtual terrorist universities"

INDEPENDENT

## Camp Bucca: The US prison that became the birthplace of Isis

Nine members of the Islamic State's top command did time at Bucca

Terrance McCoy | Tuesday 4 November 2014 16:31 |

### War-gaming the home front

From early on, the counterinsurgency principles outlined above have been developed for domestic application against organised political opposition. In his 2004 paper, Kilcullen blurred the lines between terrorism and political activism, effectively broadening the working understanding of terrorism to include the latter. Defining "insurgencies" like Islamist jihad as "a popular movement that seeks to overthrow the status quo through subversion, political activity, insurrection, armed conflict and terrorism", he described insurgent movements as "grass-roots uprisings that seek to overthrow established governments or societal structures". Many, he said, "draw their footsoldiers from deprived socio-economic groups and their leadership from alienated, radicalised elites". This view of insurgency and terrorism encompasses any movement trying to organise opposition to their government, no matter how awful the latter's policies may be.

An inflection point in planning for the domestic application of counterinsurgency techniques came with the global financial-economic crisis of 2008, brought on by the rampage of financial speculation throughout globalised markets.

It was in 2008 that the Strategic Studies Institute at the US Army War College issued a paper by Nathan Freier, titled "Known Unknowns: Unconventional 'Strategic Shocks' in Defence Strategy Development". In the section "Violent, Strategic Dislocation Inside the United States", Freier wrote in terms eerily foreshadowing today's situation: "Widespread civil violence inside the United States would force the defence establishment to reorient priorities ... to defend basic domestic order and human security. Deliberate employment of weapons of mass destruction or other catastrophic capabilities, unforeseen economic collapse, loss of functioning political and legal order, purposeful domestic resistance or insurgency, pervasive public health emergencies, and catastrophic natural and human disasters are all paths to disruptive domestic shock." The report suggested that under dire conditions the Department of Defence would have to take over the government, becoming "an essential enabling hub for the continuity of political authority".

British researcher Dr Nafeez Ahmed, well known for his work exposing British Intelligence promotion of Islamist terrorism, wrote important articles in 2013-14 on the Pentagon's preparations for such a domestic role.<sup>11</sup> His 2013

11. "Pentagon bracing for public dissent over climate and energy shocks", *Guardian*, 14 June 2013; "Pentagon preparing for mass civil breakdown", *Guardian*, 12 June 2014.

article cited a report in the *Long Island Press*, that the search for the Boston Marathon bombers in May 2013 had brought to light changes in US Defence Department regulations, under which “federal military commanders have the authority, in extraordinary emergency circumstances where prior authorisation by the President is impossible and duly constituted local authorities are unable to control the situation, to engage temporarily in activities that are necessary to quell large-scale, unexpected civil disturbances.”

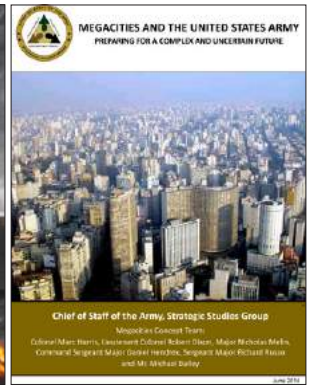
Suzie Dawson, the New Zealand activist and researcher, described in a 2016 article how American police forces were being militarised, especially since the 2014 riots in Ferguson, Missouri after the fatal shooting of Michael Brown, a young African-American, by police.<sup>12</sup> The Law Enforcement Support Office of the Pentagon’s Defence Logistics Agency funnels surplus military-grade weaponry and other equipment to local police departments, from night-vision devices to tank-like vehicles.

Special Department of Defence programs with potential domestic application were instituted during the counterinsurgency revival:

**Human Terrain System.** The HTS was initiated in 2006 and lasted until 2014. It was established, in part, based on the recommendations of Montgomery “Mitzy” McFate, a contemporary and colleague of Kilcullen and a fellow anthropologist, who became its senior social scientist.<sup>13</sup> She had co-authored a 2005 article, criticising deficiencies in the American military’s “understanding of the local population and culture” in areas where it was operating. Initially run by the British arms-industry giant BAE as a private contractor, HTS was subsequently handed off to the US Army Training and Doctrine Command. The program sought to recruit anthropologists, sociologists and other social scientists directly into military operations.

McFate was seen at the time as one of a cohort of young British experts, including Kilcullen, imported to bring counterinsurgency methods to the US military (Note 5). Though American-born, McFate was “British” because of her BAE association and having researched her doctoral dissertation, on “cultural narratives” in the Irish Republican Army’s insurgency, by embedding first with the IRA and then with British counterinsurgents. (Ireland’s “Troubles” of the 1960s-1990s were the venue through which Gen. Frank Kitson reimported his counterinsurgency methods to the UK.)

Nafeez Ahmed highlighted in his 2014 article, that one of the many professional anthropologists appalled by the HTS (in 2007 the American Anthropological Association condemned its practices as “unacceptable”)—and in this case, one who had gone to work for HTS at Petraeus’s Fort Leavenworth bailiwick—had reported on the program’s war-gaming of scenarios for action against protesters inside the United States. He quoted an article by Prof. David Price, author of *Weaponising Anthropology: Social*



The US Army’s 2014 report *Megacities and the US Army* and accompanying training video said that cities of 10 million or more people, with old impoverished neighborhoods and modern high-rises in dense proximity, will inevitably become urban warfare battlegrounds. The report gave “case studies” from around the world, including New York City. Photos: Screenshot

*Science in Service of the Militarised State*, on whistleblower John Allison’s witnessing war-game scenarios of Army action against environmental protesters in rural Missouri, under which “the local population was seen from the military perspective as threatening the established balance of power and influence, and challenging law and order.”<sup>14</sup>

**Minerva Research Initiative.** Launched by the Pentagon in 2008, Minerva is a partnership with universities to model “the dynamics of social movement mobilisation and contagions”, as related to areas of national security significance. Managed by the US Army Research Office, the project “conflates peaceful activists with supporters of political violence”, Nafeez Ahmed wrote in his 2014 article. Social and behavioural scientists research civil unrest, from examination of twitter posts to studying the emotions of activists, to identify causes of “social contagion” and how to quell grassroots uprisings.

In 2011 Mitzy McFate assumed the related Minerva Chair of Strategic Research at the US Naval War College.

## Megacities

In 2014 the US Army Strategic Studies group issued a new report, with an accompanying video, on conflicts of the future that would require counterinsurgency interventions. The result of a year-long research project, *Megacities and the US Army: Preparing for a complex and uncertain future*, presented the military as being in a period of transition after a decade at war, and needing to prepare to “defend the Nation and its interests at home and abroad, both today and against emerging threats”. (Emphasis added.)

The *Megacities* report discussed cities in Iraq and Afghanistan as indicative of future urban theatres of war in which the Army must prepare to operate, except the new ones will be bigger. The battleground of the future, as the report portrays it, are megacities of over 10 million people, with growing, crowded populations and great stress on resources. “Future Army missions, as they have in the past, will be centred around actions to influence people. And most of the world’s population will be in urban areas”, wrote then-Chief of Staff of the US Army Gen. Ray Odierno in the introduction. The report cited think-tanker Robert Kaplan: “Crowded megacities, beset by poor living conditions, periodic rises in the price of commodities, water shortages, and unresponsive municipal services, will be fertile petri dishes for the spread of both

12. “Understanding World War III”, October 2016. Dawson’s article reported on the preparation of contingency plans for imposing martial law in New Zealand.

13. “An Organisational Solution for DOD’s Cultural Knowledge Needs”, *Military Review*, July-August 2005.

14. David Price, “Human Terrain Systems Dissenter Resigns, Tells Inside Story of Training’s Heart of Darkness”, *Counterpunch*, 15 Feb. 2010.

democracy and radicalism”.

The Army report lamented that megacities are blind spots for the US military, from which “a strategic surprise could emerge”. It then presented “case studies” of Dhaka, Bangladesh; Lagos, Nigeria; Bangkok, Thailand; Mexico City, Mexico; Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, Brazil; and New York City.

The video, just five minutes in length, was obtained and posted by the Intercept in 2016 and can still be viewed on that site.<sup>15</sup> Produced for an Advanced Special Operations Combating Terrorism course at the Pentagon’s Joint Special Operations University, it depicts “urban hellscapes” populated by wild youth, a poor underclass, criminal syndicates and hackers. “These are the future breeding grounds, incubators, and launching pads for adversaries and hybrid threats”, the narrator says, as images of masked rock throwers and riot cops flash on the screen. “We are facing a threat that requires us to redefine doctrine and the force in radically new and different ways”.

The training film states that the deployment of US forces into eruptions of urban warfare in megacities is inevitable.

In 2016 Col. Patrick N. Kaune of the US Army War College’s Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism published a progress report in pamphlet form, *Analysis of US Army Preparation for Megacity Operations*, which recommended commencement of megacity training for Army recruits. It should feature “teachable moments from operations in Fallujah and Baghdad” in Iraq, and training in cyber operations, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, and blending of “police, infantry and military special forces” functions. Throughout, Kaune invoked the expertise of Kilcullen on the nature of cities and his systems “control theory” of how to approach them militarily.

### Application in Australia

The counterinsurgency doctrine in action is clearly seen in Australia, starting with the *Security Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Act 2002*. That legislation redefined acts that were already illegal, from murder to kidnapping and arson, as “terrorism”. Constitutional law professor George Williams observed that in its first draft, “The section could have extended to protest by farmers, unionists, students, environmentalists and online protesters engaged in hacktivism.”<sup>16</sup>

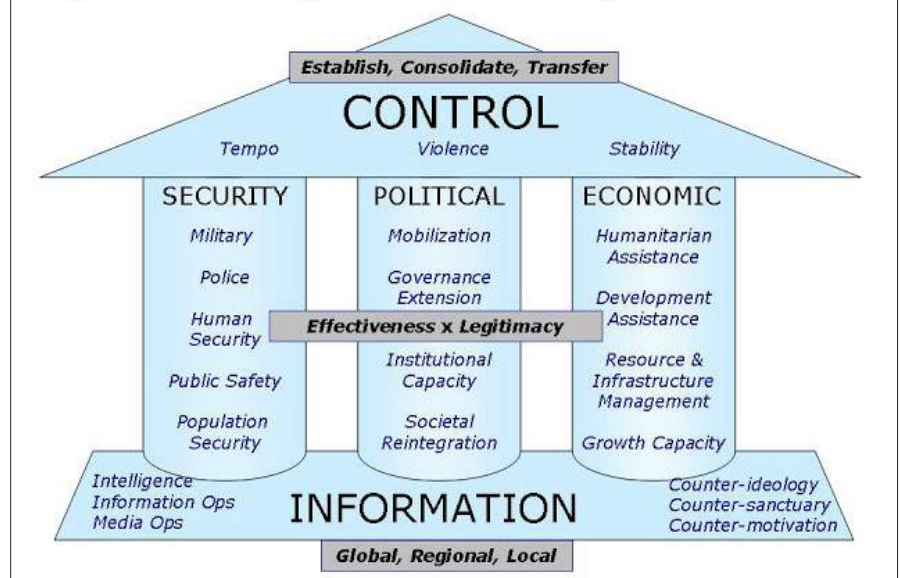
The Act also criminalised any action that “seriously interferes with, seriously disrupts, or destroys” a “financial system”, banking or insurance system. “Financial stability” is enshrined in globally enforced banking regulations, which consistently put the banking system ahead of the public welfare of citizens.

Subsequent laws followed suit. The *National Security Legislation Amendment (Espionage and Foreign Interference) Act 2018* criminalised the possession of information “likely to cause harm to Australia’s interests” and broadened the definition of national security to include “economic” interests and the security of critical infrastructure.

15. “Pentagon Video Warns of ‘Unavoidable’ Dystopian Future for World’s Biggest Cities”, 13 Oct. 2016.

16. “One year on: Australia’s legal response to September 11”, *Alternative Law Journal* (U. of New South Wales, 2002).

Figure 2 – Inter-agency Counterinsurgency Framework



Kilcullen’s “Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency” Photo: Speech by David Kilcullen, US Government Counterinsurgency Conference, Washington, DC, 28 September 2006.

A 2018 amendment to the *Defence Act 1903* expanded the Australian Defence Force’s powers to intervene domestically.

### Across the Five Eyes: the cyber dimension

At the base of Kilcullen’s “three pillars” model of inter-agency counterinsurgency operations is “Information”.<sup>17</sup> The three pillars are security, political and economic interventions, and the roof is “Control”. Nothing can be accomplished without information, says Kilcullen. Information includes intelligence collection and analysis, media operations, and measures to counter insurgent motivation, sanctuary and ideology. In practice this means electronic surveillance, disruption of target communications, information warfare such as planted stories, and infiltrating grass roots movements with fake social media accounts. The aim, Kilcullen explained, is to dismantle what he called “insurgent ecosystems”, unit by unit.

The inter-agency approach is being adopted across member nations of the Five Eyes intelligence alliance (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK, USA). The Fusion Doctrine for national security, adopted by the UK in 2018, merged state and corporate spying on the population. It requires every government agency, down to teachers and social workers, to report on suspicious activity. Social media is increasingly deployed to control public opinion, with fake news cleverly planted so people think they have discovered the truth themselves.

Suzie Dawson has documented the transformation of intelligence collection in her country, New Zealand.<sup>18</sup> Much of it has been outsourced to private contractors, and the intelligence product is fed, wholesale, into the global Five Eyes network. Spy agencies have become focused on political dissidents, whistle-blowers, and anyone else (such as Dawson herself) who threatens to disrupt or expose the establishment’s agenda.

In the age of social media, smart phones and facial recognition technology, the capabilities of modern security

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17. David Kilcullen, “Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency”, lecture at US Government Counterinsurgency Conference, 28 Sept. 2006.

18. “They spy with their little eye”, Consortium News, 18 Jan. 2019.

relations with both Russia and China. Many of Bolton's fellow Republican members of the neoconservative war party joined the "Anyone but Trump" camp in 2016 and have not wavered from that hatred of the President. More recently a group of Republicans who worked for the late Senator John McCain have launched the Lincoln Project, a well-funded campaign targeting Republican and independent voters to defeat Trump in the November 2020 election.

McCain, a former Republican presidential nominee who had been a prisoner of war in North Vietnam for six years, battled with Trump during the first 18 months of Trump's Presidency, before succumbing to cancer in August 2018. Two of McCain's long-time political aides, Steve Schmidt and John Weaver, are co-founders of the Lincoln Project. A third founder and Republican campaign strategist, Rick Wilson, has written a book called *Everything Trump Touches Dies*.

A recent Lincoln Project ad read: "Today, we find ourselves divided again—sectionalism in the country and factionalism in government has led to ever uglier examples of how our political system is failing. President Donald Trump and those who sign on to Trumpism are a clear and present danger to the Constitution and our Republic. Only defeating

so polarising a character as Trump will allow the country to heal its political and psychological wounds and allow for a new, better path forward for all Americans."

In a 7 June 2020 interview with CNN, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of State Colin Powell, a Republican who served under President George W. Bush, announced he would vote for the presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden because Trump has "drifted away" from the Constitution.

These high-profile defections have driven Trump to redouble efforts to energise his political base, at no small risk. He staged an indoor campaign rally on 20 June in Tulsa, Oklahoma in the midst of a local surge in COVID-19 cases, demanding that attendees sign a written waiver in advance that they would not sue the campaign if they fell ill. Attendance was far below Trump's expectations.

Trump has shifted the Republican National Convention, upcoming in August, from North Carolina (where the governor would not promise to "re-open" for such a large gathering in a closed stadium) to Jacksonville, Florida and has announced plans to bring 50,000 supporters to the venue, regardless of how the pandemic has developed by then.

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## Anglo-American 'counterinsurgency' planners bring permanent wars back home

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agencies make the infamous East German Stasi secret police look like amateurs. Occupy Wall Street activist Michael Gould-Wartofsky has described the control of information in the USA through "an integrated series of platforms that spans both the public and the private sector".<sup>19</sup> This includes the Domain Awareness System (DAS), a surveillance system created by Microsoft in partnership with the New York Police Department and Federal intelligence agencies, which collects and analyses New York data streams in real time and is provided to police helicopters and officers via hand-held devices. Another example is InfraGard, a public-private partnership between the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and American businesses, founded in 1996 to defend critical US infrastructure from physical or cyber-attack through information sharing. By 2012 the FBI had enlisted 55,000 partners.

### Colonial-style provocations

In his 2006 article for the IJSS quarterly *Survival*, Killeen stated that in modern conflicts, "The counterinsurgent, not the insurgent, may initiate the conflict and represent the forces of revolutionary change." The examples he gave of where "the government or invading coalition forces initiated the campaign" included Afghanistan and Iraq. He expanded this idea: "Politically, in many cases today, the counterinsurgent represents revolutionary change, while the insurgent fights to preserve the status quo of ungoverned spaces, or to repel an occupier—a political relationship opposite to that envisaged in classical counterinsurgency." A task like "weaning ... fighters away from extremist sponsors, while simultaneously supporting modernisation", he continued, "somewhat resemble[s] pacification in traditional counterinsurgency. But it also echoes colonial campaigns".

That is a chilling, direct borrowing from Kitson, whose murderous "gangs and pseudogangs" (also called "gangs and countergangs") were motivated by similar calculations in colonial and immediate post-colonial times.

While political activism that genuinely threatens the establishment agenda is suppressed, diversions may be created through gang/countergang operations to whip up chaos in the streets. The outbreak of such violence may serve as needed, to justify the use of counterinsurgency tactics in "megacities", and in other American, British or Australian cities.

There is a much better solution for the current crisis. Only if citizens' movements and governments address and solve the underlying economic disintegration with real economic development policies, can we be saved from fascist crackdowns.

### Additional reading

(Items appeared in the AAS, except as otherwise noted.)

*Background on Gen. Frank Kitson and British counterinsurgency methods:*

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