The interest in the topics of insurgency and counterinsurgency has been far from consistent. Several times insurgency has been declared dead and buried; Steven Metz wrote in 1995 that ‘[t]he insurgents of the world are sleeping’ (Metz 1995: 1). Walter Laqueur concluded in 1998 that ‘[g]uerrilla war may not entirely disappear but, seen in historical perspective, it is on the decline’ (Laqueur 1998). The interest in counterinsurgency has suffered a similar fate. Preferably forgotten after the Vietnam War, after the recent spike in interest, it has now again been declared beyond its peak and even useless for explaining current violence.

Not only has the interest in the topics come and gone, the level and content of debate has also been subject of harsh criticism. David Kilcullen, who is a contributor to this volume, has contended that ‘[c]lassical counterinsurgency … constitutes a dominant paradigm through which practitioners approach today’s conflicts – often via the prescriptive application of “received wisdom” derived by exegesis from the classics’ (Kilcullen 2006–7: 111). Moreover the distinguished military historian Martin van Creveld rejected the whole notion of counterinsurgency which, he argues, amounts to little on the grounds that since 99 per cent of it has been written by the losing side it is of little real value (van Creveld 2006: 268; Peters 2007; Duyvesteyn 2011).

This unsteady interest in and harsh criticism of insurgency and counterinsurgency studies is in many respects surprising. Not only do we know that the majority of wars in the international system since 1815 are of an intra-state, as opposed to an inter-state, variety; importantly, these wars have often been fought in an irregular manner (Kalyvas 2007). After the end of the Cold War, the many conflicts that emerged, such as in the Balkans, East and West Africa, were all fought predominantly using indirect strategies of attack. The most notable exception has been the confrontation between Ethiopia and Eritrea between 1998 and 2000, where trench warfare occurred (repeating a pattern set in the Iran–Iraq War in the 1980s).

Given this background, the study of insurgency and counterinsurgency in the academic fields of military and strategic studies has been a rather marginal enterprise. There is hardly a consistent body of scholarship devoted to these topics. Roughly since Clausewitzian times until the 1960s, guerrilla warfare and insurgencies were often viewed as peripheral to mainstream military conflict, which was centred around conventional inter-state war in which military assets were mobilised in pursuit of political objectives by rival states in an anarchic international system. During the period of the Cold War insurgencies were viewed by many analysts as dark, even
exotic phenomena which did not fit easily into strategic classification centred on theories of nuclear deterrence. At the same time the body of strategic thought forged during the Cold War era became increasingly abstract and ahistorical and imprisoned by a technological determinism. By the time the Cold War came to an end, nothing short of an ‘existential crisis’, in the words of Hew Strachan, had emerged within strategic studies. It was out of this crisis that insurgency (which now replaced the rather dated term ‘low intensity conflict’) became subsequently catapulted onto the central plane of strategic studies as many Western states found themselves involved in a range of military conflicts around the world resulting from ethnic and clan conflicts in weak or ‘failing’ states (Strachan 2008). While devising answers to these security challenges, most states involved largely overlooked the relevance of insurgency and counterinsurgency thought.

In recent years, however, and more specifically since the insurgency in Iraq from 2003, academic interest in insurgency and counterinsurgency has substantially increased. These topics have become dominant themes on the security agenda, replacing peacekeeping, humanitarian operations and terrorism as key concepts. Apparently, ‘more has been written on [counterinsurgency] … in the last four years than in the last four decades’ (Kilcullen 2006–7: 111). In these last few years, a growing body of strategic theorists has recognised that insurgencies are an inextricable part of mainstream strategic studies. In 1999 Colin Gray observed in a major textbook that ‘small wars and other savage violence’ are ‘part of the same empirical and intellectual universe which includes Western strategic experience’ (Gray 1999: 293; Strachan 2008). Since the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq started to provide unforeseen challenges, the discussion about insurgency and counterinsurgency re-emerged with force. Not only for its historical notoriety but also because of its academic significance and necessity, this fickle attention for the topics seems unjust. The aim of this volume is to demonstrate the rich thinking that is available in the area of insurgency and counterinsurgency studies and act as a further guide for study and research.

The historical evolution of ‘people’s war’, guerrilla and insurgency

The general analytical surveys of insurgency usually emphasise both the range and diversity of these conflicts and the relatively small number that have succeeded on their own in overthrowing state power and achieving any form of major political transformation. Stretching back to guerrilla conflicts in the Ancient World such as those of the Jewish guerrillas against Roman rule in Judea or the Gallic guerrillas against Caesar in Gaul, most guerrillas failed in the end to overthrow states on their own and required help in some form from external regular forces (Ellis 1995). Guerrilla conflict has tended to wax and wane in its political and strategic saliency, in part because – for long periods of ancient and early modern history – the exact differences between regular and irregular military formations were not especially clear and on occasions blurred. With the end of the Ancient World for instance the gap between regular uniformed armies and those of guerrilla narrowed in the European Middle Ages as the armed forces of medieval monarchical states and those of irregular military formations was not especially wide. With the ‘military revolution’ of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this gap proceeded to increase once more as the seventeenth-century nation-states’ armies underwent what J.R. Hale has termed a ‘military reformation’ in the terms of increased technological sophistication; by the following century, this would be accompanied by growing professionalism in terms of organisation, drill, uniforms and structures of command (Hale 1985; see also Arnold 2002; Ellis 1995; Anderson 1988; Duffy 1987).

In the nineteenth century a considerable number of guerrilla struggles were waged on the borders and frontiers of European colonial empires. The very term ‘small wars’ only really
entered into general strategic parlance through the writings of Colonel Charles Callwell in the 1880s and 1890s, especially his book published by the British War Office in 1896: *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*. The term had actually been used much earlier in European military writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but this debate did not have much impact on wider military and strategic thinking – perhaps because of the very negative effect of the guerrilla in Spain against the French occupying force between 1808 and 1813 from which the word guerrilla (Spanish for ‘small war’) derives (Laqueur 1977: 100).

The Spanish guerrillas or *partidas* proved highly ill disciplined and were prone as much to banditry as attacking the French. Though they did help to tie down French occupying forces they helped to undermine the Spanish regular army as many troops deserted to the *partidas* (Esdaille 1988: 250–80). They hardly served as a major model for insurgency in the nineteenth century and Callwell’s book focused more on colonial rebellions that had emerged in various parts of the European colonial empires in the years following the Indian ‘Mutiny’ of 1857. His book was especially notable for focusing on principles of mobile warfare which would soon be tested in campaigns by Britain in South Africa against the Boers between 1899 and 1902 and by the United States in Cuba and the Philippines between 1895 and 1902 (Beckett 2001: 35–7).

Callwell’s conceptualisation of ‘small war’ however lacked any really dynamic features. He failed to see it as expanding to a conventional level and he preferred to make a rather more static three-fold classification of ‘small wars’ into: (1) campaigns of conquest and annexation; (2) campaigns for the suppression of insurrection and lawlessness; and (3) campaigns to avenge a ‘wrong’ or to ‘overthrow a dangerous enemy’ (Callwell 2010: 21–5). This static dimension to his discussion was in part a product of the fact that he set himself the relatively limited task of providing a ‘tactical textbook’ as well as the fact that he wrote at a time when neither the legitimacy nor durability of European imperial power was in any serious doubt. The book though was useful for the way it pointed to the problems presented to incumbent forces by the difficulties of terrain and climate which in effect acted as a form of force multiplier for indigenous guerrilla forces; in turn they made offensive action essential in order to secure a decisive military victory. Callwell had no real grasp of ‘protracted war’ by guerrilla forces which he felt were always liable to rapid collapse should their leaders or ‘chiefs’ be removed or incapacitated (Callwell 2010: 88).

The onset of two world wars in the first half of the twentieth century ensured that this marginalisation of debate on insurgency would continue well into the 1950s when the onset of ‘wars of national liberation’ began to exercise the minds of strategic planners and military theorists in various Western states. By this time some major developments had occurred in the very conceptualisation of insurgency by the expansion of guerrilla conflict in various parts of what would become known as the developing world in the decades after the First World War.

Before the twentieth century guerrilla conflict was often linked to reactionary or even counter-revolutionary movements – as in the case of the revolt in the Vendée in the 1790s – and did not have anything like the same meaning as ‘people’s war’ (Joes 1998; Laqueur 1977: 22–9). This latter term evolved only slowly in the course of the nineteenth century since it was avoided by many of that century’s most notable revolutionary thinkers such as Marx and Engels who were sceptical that there could be anything like a proper ‘people’s war’ in industrialised Europe. Both revolutionaries effectively started with Clausewitz’s argument that guerrilla should at best be seen as an adjunct to conventional war, leading them to emphasise the idea of mass revolutionary insurrection on the French revolutionary model in order to ensure the moral rather than the military collapse of state power (Beckett 2001: 14; Ibrahim 2004: 114).

Indeed there were only a few scattered efforts before 1914 to link guerrilla warfare to revolution. In Italy the Piedmontese and Italian nationalist Giuseppe Mazzini saw guerrilla conflict as
aiding an insurrection against Habsburg rule but the most sophisticated treatment of this idea was probably by the lesser known figure of Carlo Bianco, an Italian revolutionary who rather misleadingly interpreted the guerrilla conflict in Spain against Napoleon as a model for insurgent warfare against the Habsburgs. Bianco envisaged small guerrilla units of 10–50 rebels in the early stages of this struggle, gradually widening to encompass a popular insurrection that would eventually include flying columns and a regular revolutionary army (Ibrahim 2004: 116). These ideas did not get far in the middle years of the nineteenth century when the Piedmontese state was wary of using even small bands of popular militias and Mazzini preferred to leave the whole issue of social revolution until after Italian unification (which would not occur through an insurgent people’s war as Garibaldi and his followers had hoped).

So the idea of ‘people’s war’ really had to wait until the twentieth century before it could become part of strategic parlance. There are some surprising features to this, since the concept of popular sovereignty and the very invention of the idea or fiction of the people as a decisive political force stemmed from the English revolution of the 1640s. In a rather more attenuated form it had been embodied in the revolutionary settlement in America in the 1780s so that, as a political concept, popular sovereignty was hardly new by the mid to late nineteenth century (Morgan 1989). However, outside the Atlantic littoral of the English-speaking proto-democracies the term was still an unfamiliar one that threatened established and hierarchical elites resting on traditional forms of dynastic power, especially following the demise of radical liberalism in the decades after the Napoleonic wars. The nineteenth century has often been rather inaccurately termed an ‘age of revolutions’, for most of the revolutions that did occur during this period such as those of 1830 and 1848 failed to achieve long-term political transformation of states and certainly failed to secure the wide-ranging social revolutions that would occur in Mexico after 1910, Russia after 1917 and China after 1949. To this extent the real turning point for revolutionary ‘people’s war’ was the end of the First World War when the collapse of four empires in Europe created the opening and opportunities within international politics for revolutionaries to seize and hold power (Hobsbawm 1994: 54–84; Hall 1996: 67–110). Even then, though, ‘people’s war’ did not make that many advances in the interwar period with perhaps the most notable insurgent achievement being the liberation of southern Ireland in the early 1920s from British rule while elsewhere rebellions in North Africa, the Middle East and India were crushed. Even in China Mao Zedong was largely unsuccessful in the 1930s in implementing his guerrilla war theories and it would not be until the Japanese invasion after 1937 and the advent of the Second World War that the real break came in the evolution of Maoist protracted war (Porch 2001: 199–201).

We should in any case be wary of allowing the concept of ‘people’s war’ to be completely dominated by Maoist concepts of protracted guerrilla warfare which some recent scholars of insurgencies and ‘post Maoism’ have been inclined to do (Ellis 1995: 11; Taber 1970; Clapham 1998: 2; Mackinlay 2009. See also Rich 2010 for criticisms of this approach). This will be further discussed below. Historians of insurgencies have paid far too little attention to the trinitarian features of military conflict originally identified by Clausewitz: people, state and army (Duyvesteyn 2005). The term ‘people’s war’ tends to obfuscate this division and leads to the rather false assumption that the ‘people’ have in some way become mobilised into a popular mass army operating against in many cases a foreign or colonial regime.

This mobilisation obviously depended upon different kinds of political processes in the societies concerned, rendering periodisation and generalisation difficult, not least because the wars concerned were subject to varying degrees of external intervention by other states (Laqueur 1977: 279). There has been a tendency in some historical writing on insurgency (such as those of Walter Laqueur) to resist any serious generalisation and to ascribe guerrilla war to the combination of a number of chance factors.
However, there is still a considerable need in this area for the application of an historical sociology that can begin to unravel differing political responses to processes of modernisation and economic transformation resulting from the increasing integration of these societies into a global market economy. The study of the various examples of ‘people’s war’ such as Mexico in the early twentieth century following the revolution of 1910, China under Mao in the 1930s and 1940s, Vietnam from the 1950s through to the mid 1970s, Cuba with the Castro revolution of 1959 and Algeria during the war against the French from 1954 to 1962 suggests a varying pattern of conflict in which the ‘the people’ may become mobilised into a revolutionary political party operating alongside of, or in some cases in competition with, an army. The model of the revolutionary party took a number of differing forms but it was strongly shaped in the decades after 1917 by that of the Soviet model forged by Lenin and later Stalin: more re-evaluation of this model is needed though by a closer examination of the military ideas of Trotsky and the mobilisation of the Red Guards by the Bolsheviks in what was really a military coup d’état in October 1917 (see in particular Nelson 1988).

In some senses a process of evolutionary mutation had occurred within revolutionary theory leading to a shift from a dominant ‘Parisian paradigm’ of the nineteenth century anchored in the French revolution to a ‘Comintern paradigm’ following the Russian revolution of 1917 to a ‘guerrilla’ or ‘people’s war paradigm’ following the 1949 Chinese Communist revolution (Johnson 1973: 111). The ‘guerrilla paradigm’ actually had quite a short life since by the late 1960s it was evident that not all revolutions would be based on people’s war while attempted ‘people’s war’ did not in all cases lead to revolution. In addition a more hard-nosed realist view indicated that the ‘people’s war’ discourse was in a very real sense a cover for China’s own efforts to impact on international politics and which declined as these objectives became increasingly pragmatic in the 1970s following the Nixon visit (Johnson 1973: 103).

Moreover the number of successful cases of ‘people’s war’ has proved rather slim. Looking from the early twentieth century onwards it is evident that in some cases, such as that of Mexico, the peasant rebellions led by Zapata and Pancho Villa failed to lead to the creation of a successful revolutionary party and ended up as an anachronistic rebellion overridden by urban political machines controlled by the middle class. Likewise in Algeria the counterinsurgency waged by the French succeeded in isolating the exiled Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) revolutionary party leadership from support at the local level and left it weak by the time of independence in 1962, leading within three years to a coup that secured military control of the new postcolonial state (Wolf 1971: 276–302).

It is really the examples of China and Vietnam which have provided the strongest examples for ‘people’s war’ directed by a revolutionary party that maintained close links with the different peasant groups in the countryside – with Mao emphasising in particular the centrality of the ‘middle’ and ‘poor’ peasantry in the building of a revolutionary party to confront both the rival Kuomintang and, after 1937, the invading Japanese army. The three-phased model of Maoist ‘protracted war’ went on to become something of an ideological icon for radical guerrilla theorists in the 1960s and 1970s (Ranger 1985). Indeed some analysts detected a distinct ‘model’ of guerrilla warfare centred on basic Maoist precepts of peasant support, protracted war, national appeal, leadership, organisation and the breakdown of the opposing regime. Such a model could, it was predicted, be extended on a global basis even if it did not always come accompanied by a ‘Communist’ label (Girling 1969).

The Maoist model looked as follows: the insurgent uses guerrilla terrorism and other tactics as the main means to wage a political-strategic battle aimed at the political leadership of a state. Mao Zedong conceptualised an insurgency strategy, or revolutionary war, as he termed it, as a three-stage process (Mao 2005). In the first stage, a small dedicated group of fighters carries out
short and sharp hit-and-run actions to create liberated areas in the countryside where government control is absent. By provoking the government to strike back hard, the fighters hope to win supporters and by using propaganda tools they aim to increase their numerical strength. In the second phase the liberated areas should be extended into liberated zones, which can be linked up. In the last and final phase, a conventional confrontation should be sought with the remaining government forces to defeat them on the battlefield.

Subsequently, two important deviations were proposed. First, Che Guevara stated that a small dedicated cadre could compensate for the long-drawn-out process of political and military mobilisation of the peasant masses (Guevara 1969). The theory was broadly derived from the Cuban guerrilla experience of fighting against the forces of the corrupt Batista regime in Havana between 1954 and 1959 (Debray 1980; Debray et al. 1969). Even before its popular theorisation by Regis Debray, it is evident from Guevara’s own popular book on the subject that the guerrilla ‘column’ would undergo some form of inevitable expansion as it gained new followers – a process Guevara metaphorically compared to a beehive releasing a new queen after it has reached a certain size to form a new colony (Guevara 1969: 22). Debray’s foco strategy was based on effectively reversing the relationship between peasants and revolutionary party as the guerrilla army itself now took on a ‘vanguard’ role in political mobilisation. The foco concept appealed to Guevara as a means of speeding up peasant-based insurgencies throughout Latin America and the Third World as part of a global strategy of promoting social revolution against Western influence and control.

Guevara’s ideas on guerrilla acquired mythical status amongst some discussion on insurgency and revolution in the 1960s and early 1970s. In one short book, for instance, published as part of popular student series by Fontana in 1970, Andrew Sinclair rather foolishly claimed that Guevara’s Guerrilla Warfare was more immediately influential than Marx’s Communist Manifesto and that Guevara himself was ‘the Garibaldi of his age, the most admired and loved revolutionary of his time’ (Sinclair 1970: 44, 92). The problem with this assessment was that it confused Western student admiration for a romantic figure (whose picture often adorned campus dormitories) for real political and strategic influence at the local level in Third World insurgencies.

Guevara, in the initial stages of the Cuban revolution, called for a guerrilla army to be the foundation for an ‘armed democracy’. Guevara himself along with Regis Debray was largely responsible for forging a myth of a peasant-based revolution at a time when this was beginning to run into conflict with the dominant line in the Popular Socialist Party (PSP) in Cuba which was one of ‘unity’ and ‘mass action’ that involved the urban population as well (Suarez 1967: 41–2). Guevara’s concept of peasant based revolution contained strongly romantic features that linked it with Maoist guerrilla ideas in its rejection of cities as terrains for insurgent struggle. The approach reflected deeper divisions within Marxist and radical thought over the nature of peasants and rural peoples who had been traditionally dismissed by Marx, Engels and Lenin as backward and superstitious. In reaction to this and to the perceived failures of the Soviet system, a newer body of left-wing thought veered in the 1960s back towards glamourising the rural peasantry at a time when they were fast being eclipsed in many developing states by rapid urbanisation and a drift of the rural poor and landless into urban shanty towns (Oppenheimer 1969: 36–49). In any event, the Guevarist and foco model of insurgency proved to be relatively short-lived given Guevara’s own disastrous expedition and death in his Bolivian adventure in 1967. The same year a similar foco concept was applied by the Sandinista (FSLN) rebels in the northern Pancazan mountains of Nicaragua with similarly disastrous results. The Nicaragua debacle prompted a political debate within the FSLN and a gradual shift towards a more popularly based strategy of urban insurrection which would eventually lead to the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in 1979 (Zimmermann 2000: 99–100, passim).
The second deviation from the Maoist model was proposed by two South American theorists of urban guerrilla warfare, Carlos Marighella and Abraham Guillén, who argued that in states where the majority of the population lived in cities the central focus of revolutionary people’s war had to lie in urban guerrilla warfare. As Matthew Carr has recently argued, there was a strongly romantic tone to this approach from theorists who had a rather poor understanding of the problems that accompanied urban insurgent warfare. Marighella was a long-standing Brazilian revolutionary activist who finally broke with the Communist Party in 1967 before being cornered and killed by the police. His mini-manual showed a poor understanding of just how far states in South America could go in isolating urban guerrillas (Marighella 2002). Guillén, by contrast, could at least claim to have rather more strategic expertise being a veteran of the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s, though he recognised that urban guerrilla warfare would be different to the sieges of cities like Stalingrad, Warsaw and Berlin in the Second World War. He focused instead on the need for urban guerrilla formations to be highly mobile and to strike at the government’s fixed positions and then melt away into the urban metropolis: a prognosis that has been to a considerable degree borne out by warfare in cities such as Mogadishu and Baghdad with only a few cities being subject to full-scale conventional bombardment such as Grozny by the Russian army in the Second Chechen War of 1999–2000 (and still employing a doctrine indeed derived from the Second World War experience).

One of the central problems in any case with urban insurgency has been its high propensity to lapse into either random terrorism or gangland warfare. In the case of the former urban guerrilla warfare really ends up as an extension of the old anarchist ‘propaganda by deed’ concept of the late nineteenth century. It is not surprising that most major strategic theorists have never rated urban insurgency very highly as a major strategy of revolutionary overthrow of states (Oppenheimer 1969). Marighella imagined that urban insurgency would provoke the establishment to use repression which would create a support base for the cause of the activists. He still saw urban insurgency as subordinate to rural guerrilla warfare though he was not averse to the use of terrorism in order to sustain it: a perception that was well brought out in the urban terrorist campaign waged by the FLN in the so-called ‘Battle of Algiers’ in 1957 which would in the end be decisively defeated by the French Paras under General Massu – a struggle that would be captured in the epic film by Gillo Pontecorvo in 1966, The Battle of Algiers. The same pattern would be demonstrated on an even more dramatic scale in Uruguay in the early 1970s as the constitution of a liberal democratic state was suspended as the Uruguyan state resorted to a ruthless counterinsurgency strategy to isolate and defeat the urban insurgency of the Tupamaros guerrillas (Carr 2011: 143–55).

It is fair to conclude that there is a high propensity for campaigns of urban guerrilla warfare to regress into terrorist movements given the difficulties of sustaining an insurgent network in the highly policed urban terrain. Few of the insurgent campaigns that are examined in this volume really fit into a specifically urban form of insurgency and most are still pivoted upon military action in a rural terrain, with urban insurgent activity in a supporting role. As Andy Mack has pointed out ‘urban guerrilla warfare’ as a whole remains a shadowy military construct based on an essential ‘non strategy’ that is often fatally orientated towards challenging its enemy at his strongest rather than weakest points (Mack 1974). As a distinct ‘strategy’ moreover it has been generally eclipsed in the last two decades by the emergence of two other forces that have emerged in the post-Cold War global order: globalised insurgency which has often chosen to hide terrorist networks within urban locations and international drug gangs which have also taken on many of the features of urban insurgent formations. The latter type of formations deserve in particular much more serious analysis as the Chapter 4 by Robert Bunker in this volume indicates.
Returning to the theme of the Maoist domination of guerrilla insurgencies in the twentieth century it was clear that by the middle 1970s, in the case of Vietnam, basic Maoist precepts were partially followed as the war escalated in many areas to a conventional level, leading to huge losses for both the NLF National Liberation Front and the North Vietnamese Army under Giap in the 1968 Tet Offensive and the 1975 invasion of the South leading to the collapse of the South Vietnamese regime. Maoist guerrilla theory had been forged at a time when the insurgency in China had been a largely localised affair despite the Japanese invasion in 1937 and later Soviet intervention in Manchuria in 1945. By the late 1960s Maoist-type insurgencies appeared to be increasingly on the decline in what had by then come to be called the ‘Third World’. Modernisation and urbanisation had in many cases led to an undermining of the peasantry while in other cases various models of land reform took the heat out of Maoist precepts of peasant-based protracted war. Only in rather more remote terrains such as the highlands of Peru or the mountainous regions of Nepal would Maoist warfare still form the guiding political ideology of rural insurgency, while Maoism as a general force in international politics underwent a serious decline following the political transformation in China in the late 1970s following the rise of Deng Xiaoping.

The radical identification with peasant based insurgency did not in any case survive for much longer, with its last real testing grounds being Southern Africa in the course of the 1970s as the surviving European colonial regimes of Mozambique, Angola and Rhodesia – together with the more complicated case of South Africa – came under growing pressure from a variety of guerrilla formations with a range of political ideologies. Significantly none adopted any form of foco model and the guerrilla insurgencies such as FRELIMO in Mozambique, the rival UNITA and MPLA movements in Angola and ZAPU and ZANU-PF in Rhodesia in the 1970s can now be seen as the last phase of rural insurgency geared to promoting an anti-colonial social revolution. The insurgencies did much to hasten the demise of the colonial regimes in the region though it is hard to see them following any specifically Maoist strategy in the process. As Terence Ranger has pointed out in one of the best studies of this pattern of insurgency in Rhodesia, much of the insurgency was fomented by a radicalisation of peasant consciousness in response to the settler expropriation of land that stretched back in many instances to the 1940s (Ranger 1985).

The transfer of power in Rhodesia in 1980 following the election victory of Robert Mugabe’s ZANU-PF thus marks a major watershed in the rural insurgencies, though one that was not really recognised as such at the time. Rhodesia was really among the last major rural anti-colonial insurgencies and thereafter any such rural insurgencies became increasingly disconnected from the concept of revolutionary warfare. Indeed with the beginning of Mujahideen resistance (with CIA and Pakistani ISI support) in the early 1980s to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979 it is possible to see the emergence of a different pattern of rural insurgency driven by an Islamist ideology which rejected the Western revolutionary tradition from 1789 and sought a reactionary restoration of a medieval social order rooted in an imagined Islamic golden age set in the past.

However, following the withdrawal of the United States from South Vietnam (and the collapse of that state two years later) there was a temporary lull. Apart from engagement in the El Salvadorian insurgency in the mid 1980s, the United States resumed its active engagement in ‘low intensity conflict’ with its short-lived and rather disastrous engagement in Somalia at the ‘Battle of Mogadishu’ in 1993. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, there has been a renewed intensification of insurgency warfare across the globe in a more complex international environment that is no longer marked by earlier superpower rivalries of the Cold War or the anti-colonial insurgencies within declining European empires.
Insurgency and counterinsurgency

The rise of counterinsurgency

Like insurgency, the strategy behind counterinsurgency also has deep roots in military and strategic thought and practice, though one that has been rather more closely linked to individual ‘national’ traditions. For traditional militaries it has always been a form of war which has been seen as difficult and complex.

In a general sense occupying armies or militaries that are faced with sporadic small-scale attacks from guerrilla formations have a series of basic choices. At the crudest level they can seek to dry up any local or popular support for these guerrillas by massacring the populations or driving them into enclaves where they can be more closely monitored or controlled. However, most imperial armies of occupation discover that there are limits to such a strategy if they are going to need this population to make the land under their control economically productive or the basis for a colonial society. Thus from the time of the Romans some form of political deals or treaties have been brokered with the leaders of the subjugated population in order to neutralise the insurgency by political rather than straightforward military means. This is a broad historical consideration that needs to be taken into account when measuring the success of liberal democratic regimes in exiting out of insurgent conflicts through pacted deals with insurgent groups compared to more authoritarian regimes which might often end up being able to do the same thing. Clearly not all of the latter can easily do so – as evidenced by the desperate desire by the Salazarist regime in Portugal to hang on to its colonies in Mozambique, Guinea Bissau and Angola in the 1960s when any serious military assessment would have told it that they were lost. But many others will (such as the authoritarian powers taken by the new Fifth French Republic under de Gaulle to exit out of Algeria in 1962) suggesting that analysts need to avoid any simple linkage between a domestic democratic political culture and an adroit management of foreign insurgent conflicts.

One of the most intensely political forms of counterinsurgency in the post-1945 period was that defined by the counterinsurgent French strategists as guerre révolutionnaire. It was heavily shaped by the experience of the French army following its defeat in 1940 and again at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. The linkage of guerrilla warfare with social revolution had emerged in China in the 1930s and been termed ‘revolutionary warfare’ by Mao Zedong in 1936. The concept of warfare being pursued to attain a new social order was taken up by the Vietminh in Vietnam after 1945 and in turn was picked up by French officers captured by the Vietminh after 1949: these officers were able, on their return to France, in the early 1950s, to make it a central part of French strategic vocabulary in a manner that stood in marked contrast to the less politicised approach of British and American strategic theorists (Fall 2005: 370). The French approach would be taken to its extremes in the debacle of Algeria over the period 1954–61 in which the French Fourth Republic would itself collapse following a coup by a group of French officers willing to sacrifice French democracy for the preservation of L’Algerie Française.

Post-1945 French theorists such as Beaufre, Trinquier and Galula were not, it has to be said, the sole originators of French counterinsurgency strategy: this had roots almost as deep as those of the British in the form of the tache d’huile or ‘oil spot’ strategy of great colonial pacifiers such as Lyautey and Gallieni in the nineteenth century. The concept of ‘pacification’ was always very prominent in French counterinsurgency theory, reversing the conventional strategic assumption that military conquest brings political concessions or surrender by the conquered party. Here pacification through political support gained by administrative work at the local level secures successes at the tactical military level (de Durand 2010: 13).

By contrast, the British approach has remained dominated since the 1950s insurgencies in colonial arenas such as Malaya and Kenya by the idea of ‘minimum force’ and reliance where
possible on conventional civil and policing structures. The approach is taken by some analysts to describe more or less at face value the operation of British contemporary counterinsurgent doctrine based on the 2001 army manual *Counterinsurgency Operations* (Alderson 2010: 29). The minimum force ‘philosophy’ has roots in the Victorian reverence for English common law and can also be traced to a Protestant and Church of England championing of individual liberty against the power of the state. For some writers such as Tom Mockaitis the minimum force concept has demonstrated the comparative successes of British counterinsurgency to that of the United States which, with the notable exception of the campaign against the Huk guerrillas in the Philippines, became bogged down in a counterinsurgent war in Vietnam marked by continuous military escalation in the late 1960s and early 1970s in an apparent bid to drive the North Vietnamese enemy to the negotiating table and where none of the basic precepts of minimum force applied (Mockaitis 1990).

Critics of the minimum force approach, however, have pointed to several examples where the philosophy was clearly abandoned, such as the Amritsar Massacre of 13 April 1919 in the Jallianwala Bagh where a party of unarmed Sikhs, including women and children, were shot down by Indian army soldiers led by Brigadier General Rex Dyer (Lloyd 2010). At best the term ‘minimum’ in ‘minimum force’ is a relative concept and can be interpreted in a multitude of different ways by local commanders. Overall it was part of a Victorian mythology of empire and made general sense when running such a vast and disparate edifice as the British empire in the nineteenth century when the actual forces to hand to quell any insurrection were often only tiny (Lloyd 2010; Marshall 2010). It has come to mean rather less in the course of the twentieth century with the retreat from empire and the lurch into more modern forms of counterinsurgent campaign with increasingly sophisticated military technology. Moreover the British government in the period after 1945 chose to exclude the operation of international law from colonial counterinsurgencies and this in some cases encouraged random acts of torture, murder and beatings of prisoners which did much to undermine the strict enforcement of minimum force (Thornton 2004, 2009; Bennett 2007; Elkins 2005).

It is possible to investigate the comparative importance of these various historical legacies of the various national traditions in insurgency and counterinsurgency: it seems from this sort of exercise for instance that there is now relatively little to find from the French tradition of *guerre revolutionnaire* on contemporary French thinking. Though the writings of the French officer David Gallula, especially in his book *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, may be considered far more influential in the way they emphasised that the ‘rules’ of revolutionary war favoured the insurgents and counterinsurgents had to be prepared to do a variety of ‘non military’ tasks in order to win over the broad bulk of the civilian population to their cause.

In time, this approach, together with the work of other British military strategists such as Robert Thompson and Frank Kitson, would exert some influence on US strategic debate in the decades after the Vietnam debacle. At a general strategic level, however, the US military withdrew from any engagement in insurgent conflicts in the decade after the defeat in Vietnam in 1975, though this did not stop thinking continuing at the academy level and in military colleges. As John Nagl has graphically argued in his *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* there were powerful constraints against developing an organisational learning culture that would engage with lessons learned from the Vietnam conflict. Such learning could only really develop within a new educational culture that, Nagl argued, needed to be fostered to engage with new ideas and values that would be confronted in a new post-Cold War era (Nagl 2005). These issues would become increasingly pertinent by the 1990s as the end of the Cold War saw the emergence of a range of insurgent conflicts in the developing world, as well as in parts of Europe such as the Balkans as the state of Yugoslavia disintegrated into violent civil war. These conflicts fuelled a new set of
debates both within military and academic circles which have had a major impact on the way insurgent and counterinsurgent conflicts can be understood.

**Concepts and recent debate**

Insurgency and counterinsurgency can, and have been, conceptualised in many different ways. Insurgency can be seen as a tactic of warfare – where it is often used synonymously with guerrilla – or alternatively, it is seen as a type of strategy to conduct war. These approaches differ based on the level of strategy on which it is placed. Generally seen, over the course of modern history insurgency has been elevated from a tactic to a strategy. More recently, a reverse development seems to be taking place, where insurgency is stripped of its strategic dimension and reduced to a tactic, as will be elaborated in several contributions in this volume.

When conceptualising insurgency as a tactic, the activity has an extremely long pedigree in warfare. Guerrilla methods are aimed at striking the opponent where he least expects it. The main idea behind it is to avoid the enemy strengths and concentrate on his weaknesses. An ideal type insurgency struggle would look, in the words of Stathis Kalyvas, as follows:

> The state (or **incumbents**) fields regular troops and is able to control urban and accessible terrain; while seeking to militarily engage its opponents in peripheral and rugged terrain; challengers (rebels or **insurgents**) hide and rely on harassment and surprise. Such wars often turn into wars of attrition, with insurgents seeking to win by not losing while imposing unbearable costs on their opponent.

*(Kalyvas 2007: 428, italics in original)*

When insurgency is conceptualised as strategy, the relevant history is more recent. When guerrilla tactics developed into a more comprehensive strategic approach at the start of the twentieth century, the term insurgency has been applied. Mao Zedong is generally credited as the *actor intellectualis* of this development. The strategic approach to insurgency can currently be found in the American *Counterinsurgency Field Manual FM 3–24*, which defines the concept as

> an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict ... [in other words] an organized protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control.

*(US Army and Marine Corps 2007: 2)*

There has been large scale debate, which will be further elaborated on in this volume, about the development of insurgency and insurgency thinking over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Steven Metz and Bard O’Neill, among others, have previously suggested that in order to understand modern insurgency we have to take a closer look at the changing nature of the actors, the issues of contention and the instruments used in these struggles (Metz 2007–8; O’Neill 2005; Metz and Millen 2004; Mackinlay 2009, 2002; Clapham 1998; Metz 1994).

The actors have not only changed in shape but also in number. No longer does an insurgent fit the typology of an independence movement in the context of a decolonisation struggle. Other actors, such as non-governmental organisations, diaspora groups, criminal gangs and virtual audiences complicate the picture these conflicts present. Most of these actors are argued...
to not be bound by territory (Mackinlay 2009). Some actors work pragmatically together in so-called ‘federated insurgent complexes’ to describe the overlapping and unclear nature of the actor(s) (Brennan 2005).

Motivations are argued to have shifted from nationalism, decolonisation, liberation and revolution to, most importantly, the Salafist jihad. Bard O’Neill has proposed the most elaborate list of possible motivations of insurgency campaigns: anarchist, egalitarian, traditionalist, pluralist, apocalyptic-utopian, secessionist, reformist, preservationist and commercialist (O’Neill 2005). More recently, John Mackinlay has introduced the concept of post-Maoist insurgency. He shares with David Kilcullen the idea that insurgency has morphed from purely national struggles into a global undertaking (Mackinlay 2009, 2002; Kilcullen 2005; Hoffman 2007). While Maoist insurgencies were characterised, among others, by a clear ideology, a national state being the target of violence, with a binary view of the audiences involved, post-Maoism relies on multiple audiences, a multiplicity of actors and a proliferation of communications and virtual communities (Mackinlay 2009). Global insurgency does not display a centre of gravity that can be targeted by military and political instruments as such.

Apart from motivation, the means have also been argued to differ to such an extent that past insurgency campaigns have become incomparable. First, mobilisation is said to occur largely through the Internet, the so-called cyber-mobilisation or electronic ‘lêvee en masse’ (Kurth Cronin 2006: 77). The Internet in this regard provides a virtual base area, where the insurgent can group, develop and plan actions. Second, the role of the media and the influence it exerts on the multiple audiences involved has changed (Norris et al. 2003). While the media is an indispensable tool in both insurgency and counterinsurgency, the all-pervasiveness of the modern media has given this kind of struggle a whole new quality. Third, a popular instrument these days to fight insurgency in such conflicts as Iraq, Afghanistan and the Palestinian territories has been the suicide bomb (Pape 2005; Bloom 2005; Atran 2006). This coincides with a reluctance to accept casualties in Western states. Jeffrey Record even talks about ‘Force-Protection Fetishism’ (Record 2000; Freedman 2006; Luttwak 1995). Fourth, another means which features prominently on the security agenda is the category of nuclear, bacteriological, chemical and radiological weapons.

The context is certainly also subject to change. First, several scholars stress the transnational nature of modern insurgencies as a significantly new feature; traditionally ‘each movement operated in its own country, emulation typically happened after the event, and direct cooperation between movements was rare’ (Kilcullen 2006–7: 114). Nowadays, the transnational nature of insurgency is a constituent component of insurgency. Second, the social context of insurgency has been interpreted more widely. While ‘insurgency does have an important political component … [it] is only part of the picture. Insurgency also fulfils the economic and psychological needs of the insurgents’ (Metz 2007). There is increasing overlap between insurgency and criminal activity. Third, the geographical context differs from past experiences, the urban backdrop as opposed to a rural one is now dominant (Kilcullen 2006–7: 114; cf. Kalyvas 2004). As Frank Hoffman argues, ‘distance is exchanged for density. Urbanisation presents an environment with populations and infrastructures so dense that law enforcement, intelligence, and conventional military assets may not be as effective’ (Hoffman 2007: 76). This development is not surprising. The population, as is claimed in key counterinsurgency texts, forms the centre of gravity and today the majority of the world’s population lives in urban centres.

A note of caution is warranted at this stage. All these claims to insurgency being completely different from the past disregard important continuities but also the fact that not only insurgency has changed but also the world around us. Increased international communication, for example, not only influences insurgency struggles but has brought a new quality to daily life. In other
words, it would be highly surprising if insurgents had not adopted this feature of twenty-first century society (Duyvesteyn 2004). There is important continuity in regard to the essence of these conflicts.

Similarly, in order to conduct counterinsurgency, the political nature of the insurgency challenge remains a dominant theme. The nation state, as central building block in international affairs, continues to form an important focal point. In the words of Sarah Sewall: ‘There are important differences in the analogy between counterinsurgency and an effort to defeat Al Qaeda and its allies, but the overall strategic problem is uncannily parallel: sustaining the statist norm in the face of radical and violent revolutionaries’ (2007: xlii).\(^{11}\)

Commensurate with discussions about insurgency, counterinsurgency can also be defined as a set of tactical tools or alternatively as an overarching strategy to defeat an opponent. The American Field Manual FM 3–24 describes counterinsurgency as ‘military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency’. By listing all the instruments of state it seems to imply a technique rather than a strategy but the overall Field Manual follows the strategic approach.

Alternatively, experts have conceptualised counterinsurgency as a tactic or technique of warfare. An optimal mixture is sought of coercive and conciliatory means, most often according to a prescriptive list. David Ucko argues in this volume (Chapter 6) that counterinsurgency, like insurgency, is not a strategy, but a description of a strategic end-point, either to mount or defeat a threat to the established authorities. A list of prescriptions can be used as a guide to develop a case specific answer to the mounted challenge.

Counterinsurgency thinking is largely a product of the era of decolonisation, when concepts and ideas were developed on how to deal with political challenges by independence movements. David Kilcullen, in Chapter 11 of this volume, even claims to be able to pinpoint the exact date of inception of this classical counterinsurgency thinking in a RAND symposium in the spring of 1962. This classical thought is plagued by two serious but little recognised shortcomings. First, the empirical base of the insights is extremely small, using and referring to only a handful of cases. Second, the prescriptions that were derived from this limited foundation seem to be ideologically charged. The prescription of the hearts and minds ideas – we need to entice the population as the key to strategic success – go against the large body of historical evidence of coercion being the instrument of choice.

From 2006 onwards the classical counterinsurgency thinking experienced a renaissance. Neo-classical thinkers, such as John Nagl, went back to the works of David Galula and Robert Thompson to derive inspiration for the armed challenges in Iraq and Afghanistan (Nagl 2005). Harking back to these trusted concepts of the colonial counterinsurgency repertoire, they tried to apply the recipes in early twenty-first century exigencies. Apart from the school of neo-classical counterinsurgency thinkers, David Martin Jones and M.L.R. Smith identified a second school of counterinsurgency thought (Jones and Smith 2010). The second school of global counterinsurgency or post-classical counterinsurgency, among whom are counted John Mackinlay and David Kilcullen, look at a worldwide counterinsurgency struggle fought in distant battle theatres as much as on home soil (Mackinlay 2009; Kilcullen 2005). These thinkers point to differences in the strategic environment which, they argue, provide a qualitative change warranting a new approach. Kilcullen introduces the concept of ‘accelerated counterinsurgency’. While pointing to the time constraints of foreign military operations, he makes an argument for quick and forceful action against violent irreconcilables and making political overtures to the
reconcilables. It is not counterinsurgency in its classical or neo-classical guise that is being applied in Afghanistan, rather it is a mixture of kinetic peace enforcement together with war termination measures that is making a difference (Chapter 11, this volume).

Jones and Smith dissect that there are serious problems with both sets of ideas (Jones and Smith 2010). The neo-counterinsurgency thinkers run the risk of reducing counterinsurgency to a tactical toolkit readily available to be applied when necessary. The global counterinsurgency thinkers have a tendency to downplay the ideological content of the struggle and reduce it to an ‘accidental guerrilla’ syndrome, where especially local grievances need addressing (Kilcullen 2009).

Apart from debate about (counter-)insurgency concepts, ideas and theories, there is also an important development in counterinsurgency doctrine. The publication of the American Field Manual 3–24 in December 2006 holds special importance. A product of the American Army and Marine Corps, it was developed to fill a void during the Iraq campaign after the fall of the Hussein regime. While intended specifically for the Army and Marine Corps it now holds such stature that in practice it overrides NATO counterinsurgency doctrine, which should inform the NATO operations in Afghanistan. In fact, the lack of strategic vision of the coalition partners in Afghanistan has now led to a situation in which the doctrine has become ‘a panacea for what continues to remain a dangerous strategic vacuum’ (Marshall 2010: 244; Strachan 2010). Strachan argues that

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\text{[i]t is very easy, in the continuing absence of strategy – of political goals to which the military efforts is to be adapted – for counter-insurgency doctrine to fill the gap, for operations to double as strategy. Crude ly put, Field Manual 3–24 took the place of a coalition strategy for Iraq in 2007.}
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(2010: 168)

This rather worrying trend, which has continued in Afghanistan, underlines the importance and significance of the scholarship in this area.

It is clear that there is no universally agreed set of definitions for the study and practice of insurgency and counterinsurgency – and we did not set one for this volume either. Defining concepts is an act essential to any academic endeavour but also an act where the academic is at complete liberty. As an ultimate consequence we have to accept that this leaves open the possibility of concluding, as David Ucko will do in Chapter 6 of this volume, that these fundamental questions lead to a potentially obsolete debate. Along similar lines, David Kilcullen will argue in Chapter 11 that the focus on faulty counterinsurgency concepts leads us completely astray.

The outline of this volume

The volume has been structured into three separate parts: the first part will deal with general analytical and theoretical issues which have emerged in debates on insurgency and counterinsurgency since the end of the Cold War; the second part will deal with insurgent movements and the third part will focus on counterinsurgency campaigns. The purpose is to provide the reader with an overview of what is available in this field of study and where the challenges lie. The book does not provide new research, although several authors have used the opportunity to present some innovative and refreshing insights. Rather this book is intended as both an introduction to and synthesis of this research field.

In Part I, Ian Beckett starts off with an overview of the historiography of insurgency, concluding among others that there is a lot more room for detailed case study analysis. Steven Metz follows by looking at the strategic nature of insurgency. Robert Bunker, in Chapter 4, provides an argument, trying to push the boundaries of the concept of insurgency. David Betz subsequently
Insurgency and counterinsurgency looks at the link between insurgency and the technological revolution. Chapter 6 shifts attention to counterinsurgency. David Ucko opens the debate about counterinsurgency by dissecting both the concept and its current application, concluding that there are serious problems with both. Thijs Brocades Zaalberg follows the conceptual discussion with a treatment of the wider intellectual quagmire of counterinsurgency, peace operations and the comprehensive approach. Are there any differences between these concepts and their practical application or are they all just euphemisms for good old counterinsurgency? Alice Hills concludes in Chapter 8 that the often heard mantra of police forces as key to effective counterinsurgency is not met with an equal amount of scholarship. Geraint Hughes also looks at the practical application of counterinsurgency on the ground focusing on intelligence gathering and special operations as constitutive elements of effective counterinsurgency. The use of these instruments is not without problems and repercussions. This moral and ethical angle is further taken up by Christopher Coker who argues that common humanity should inform counterinsurgency practices in order to be able to terminate the conflict with the best prospects for peace. David Kilcullen’s contribution completes this first part of the volume with a critical look at the current counterinsurgency paradigm and its critics. Kilcullen especially points to the narrow range of colonial models that were drawn in the original development of counterinsurgency doctrine in the early 1960s and suggests that modern counterinsurgency has now moved away from what can easily be attacked as a straw man. He points to a much deeper and more sophisticated development of counterinsurgency centred around the four concepts of effectiveness, appropriateness, ethics and policy.

The second part of the volume is exclusively devoted to insurgency case studies, where Africa is discussed by William Reno, Iraq by Ahmed Hashim, Hamas and Hezbollah by Judith Palmer Harik and Margaret Johannsen, Southeast Asia by Larry Cline, India by Namrata Goswami, Afghanistan by Antonio Giustozzi and Pakistan by Shehzad Qazi and Latin America by David E. Spencer. By no means exhaustive, this part is intended to provide some insights into the scholarship in this area. The limited number of case studies can, in some way, be seen as indicative of the large room that is still available for good quality case study analysis in this area. This unfortunate state of affairs is also brought forward by Beckett and Esterhuyse in this volume (Chapters 2 and 28).

Part III turns to counterinsurgency cases, looking at the United States (Thomas Mockaitis), Israel (Sergio Catignani), the United Kingdom (Warren Chin), Russia (Yuri Zhukov), India (David Fidler and Sumit Ganguly), Sri Lanka (David Lewis), Pakistan (Julian Schofield), China (Martin I. Wayne) and South Africa (Abel Esterhuyse). Despite the present emphasis on the more tempered approach to counterinsurgency, the case studies point to a prevalence of the harsher forms of dealing with political violence. This is representative for the available case study material. These points will be taken up in the concluding chapter of the volume, which will provide an overall summary and some indications on where the editors see future research going.

Notes

1 Even with the upsurge of interest in insurgencies there was still however a tendency for some analysts to view them as exotic. J. Bowyer Bell for instance saw insurgencies as examples of quasi-demonic ‘dragon wars’ fought in the shadows by gunmen operating in an expanding terrain of weak states and state breakdown (Bowyer Bell 1999; Kaplan 2000).

2 Gray in an earlier study published just before the end of the Cold War ignored the whole question of guerrilla insurgency and concentrated instead on the centrality of nuclear strategy (Gray 1990). As recently as 1998 the British military writer John Keegan in his Reith lectures that year on war completely ignored the whole question of insurgent warfare (Keegan 1999).
3 At a more general level work is only really beginning in reinterpreting many periods of European pre-modern history in terms of insurgencies and counterinsurgencies. For one recent example that examines the Christian resistance in Spain to the Arab invasion of AD 711, see Widdowson (2009).

4 Laqueur is at a loss to explain exactly why these writings did not have a wider impact. Best has suggested that the Spanish struggle came to be viewed by military historians and international jurists as a 'cautionary example of what war should not be like' (Best 1982: 175). A more general historical assessment of the military dimensions of the Peninsula War is urgently needed. Napoleon’s invading army had no real doctrine or strategy to meet insurrectional warfare. Overplaying its hand by the brutal suppression of the uprising in Madrid on 2 May 1808 (graphically captured in Goya’s painting) led to a national rebellion and the humiliating defeat of the French army at Bailen in July. By the end of the year Napoleon had 250,000 troops in Spain fighting arguably one of the first real modern counter-guerrilla campaigns. This destroyed the myth of Napoleon as ‘liberator’ and forced him to meet the Russian Tsar at Erfurt to consolidate the agreement at the Treaty of Tilsit. It still did not prevent the Spanish model being emulated in later conflicts in the Tirol, Germany and later Russia in 1812. The loss of this prestige in turn forced Napoleon into a strategy of escalation in Spain which led eventually to a total of 350,000 French troops being deployed. They still could not suppress the insurrection except on the central plains where the decisive role of the French cavalry came into play. All these themes need detailed evaluation in order to flesh out a fuller picture of the historical emergence of guerrilla warfare in the nineteenth century.

5 Beckett has described Callwell as making ‘the only distinctive contribution by any British soldier to the development of military thought in the nineteenth century’ (Beckett 2001: 35).

6 Laqueur points out that the very isolation of the Vendean revolt makes it one of the ‘purer’ forms of guerrilla ‘specimens’. It is thus questionable whether most insurgencies in the nineteenth century can really be described as ‘people’s war’ in the way Best chooses to do (Best 1982: 168–83, 265–72).

7 Debray first visited Cuba as a philosophy student in 1961. He appears to have had relatively minimal impact on Guevara and he really became an agent run by Cuban intelligence in the early 1960s who saw him as a useful means to influence a wider radical audience in the West. Guevara indeed was not especially keen for Debray to even be on the last ill-fated attempt at a foco in Bolivia in 1966–7 following disastrous earlier attempts in Argentina in 1963–4 and in the Congo in 1966 where Guevara himself led a Cuban contingent supporting Laurent Kabila (Beckett 2001: 170).

8 The romantic image of Che is rather undermined by the brief portrait painted by Pablo Neruda who on a visit to Cuba met Che when he was still a minister in Castro’s regime. The romantic hero emerges more as a warrior with a lust for conflict. ‘War . . . war . . . war’, he exclaimed to the shocked Neruda. ‘We are always against war, but once we have fought in a war, we can’t live without it. We want to go back to it all the time’ (Neruda 1982: 323).

9 The differences between terrorism and urban guerrilla become very fuzzy here. It leads Walter Laqueur to conclude that ‘The normal use of “urban guerrilla” is a euphemism for urban terrorism which has a negative public relations image’ (Laqueur 1977: 403). Overall, the effectiveness of urban campaigns has been seriously questioned (Morrison-Taw and Hoffman 1994).

10 For the extension of the Maoist revolutionary war concept to the Vietminh see Pike (1966: 31–43).

11 Kilcullen challenges this reasoning and maintains that ‘insurgency today follows state failure, and is not directed at taking over a functioning body politic, but at dismembering or scavenging its carcass, or contesting an “ungoverned space”’ (2006–7: 112; Hoffman 2007: 81).

References


Morrison-Taw, Jennifer and Bruce Hoffman (1994) *The Urbanization of Insurgency*. Santa Monica: RAND.


