At War with Women

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In a sprawling shantytown by the sea in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, the US government has funded an open-air marketplace, a park, and a community space. The US funding sources are unsurprising amid the alphabet soup of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations (UN) agencies, and private companies, all clamoring for a piece of Haiti. What does stand out, however, is a money trail from these projects in Haiti to the US Department of Defense (DOD). The projects were part of a pilot US government program that used a small part of the Defense Department’s discretionary budget to support reconstruction, stabilization, and security projects around the world. By 2010, I had interviewed many of the actors involved in this new funding source and was invited to see how the funding had been used in Cité Soleil, a marginalized group of neighborhoods in a flood-prone area of Port-au-Prince and one of the largest shantytowns in North America. A major US government contractor led the tour with its local Haitian partners, showing off to State Department and other US and local representatives what they had accomplished. At the time of our visit, the marketplace, intended to increase opportunities for local commerce, sat empty. A Haitian contractor explained this was because of its undesirable location away from the tap-tap stop, an informal local transit system of converted pickup trucks and buses. As we walked from project to project, one guide pointed out a series of drains a contractor had been hired to build that were flooding nearby family homes instead of being properly directed to gutters.

The projects were part of the Haiti Stabilization Initiative, a program in Cité Soleil funded through a new blended source of development and defense funding.
In 2005 following the 2004 coup against Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the area was subjected to an extremely violent UN raid. Peacekeepers sprayed bullets from helicopters and drove armored personnel carriers through informal settlements. Using counterinsurgency language, peacekeepers talked about their mission as “clear-hold-build” to pacify this part of the city. The UN and the State Department imagined the new infrastructure and economic development programs as “holding” the area following the 2005 raids. The Haiti Stabilization Initiative exemplifies how counterinsurgency military theory has been imported into development projects across a much more expansive geography than the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This more expansive geography was produced through a key turning point after the public release of the *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* in 2006, which rearticulated development as a weapon of war. This chapter examines three key dimensions of this turning point, beginning with the genesis and pervasion of “stabilization.” Although explicit reference to counterinsurgency may have faded since its initial appearance in military doctrine, counterinsurgency has morphed into the language of “stabilization” and a “whole of government” approach. Such language has become entrenched in government institutions and funding streams even as military policy has shifted. The ill-fated projects in Cité Soleil came into formation through government, contractors, and NGOs imagining development through a counterinsurgency lens. The various actors touring the empty marketplace used the language of “stabilization” to convey the project’s counterinsurgency purpose.

These changes in US military doctrine, government institutions, and finances are connected to a longer imperial history—our second dimension—reaching back to US westward expansion. That history telescopes into the present at each moment a defense intellectual directly uses colonial and Cold War histories to make counterinsurgency doctrine. By tracing counterinsurgency’s recent lifecycle to its “forebears,” unearthing how military thinking about development specifically draws on historical referents, we see how modern soldiers are asked to identify with imperial figures such as T. E. Lawrence (of Arabia). This imperial lens reimposes colonial hierarchies through a color-blind language that is commensurate with today’s multicultural, multiracial military. Counterinsurgency’s post-9/11 revival shares continuities with the longer history that Lawrence is a part of. One challenge of understanding this continuity is parsing the specific, distinctive characteristics at each juncture along a road of ongoing imperial intervention. The post-2006 turning point was distinguished through a series of new institutional formations—our third dimension—and entangled with the significant role of private contractors. The counterinsurgency language of “stabilization” came together with recycled colonial histories and new bureaucratic and financial enti-
ties to drive the imperialism of the mid-2000s, propping up the post-9/11 wars as it entrenched counterinsurgency logic within development around the world.

**Counterinsurgency and the Conscription of Development**

The *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* was an attempt to reform military policy that was clearly faltering amid growing insurgency in Iraq. In addition to the invasion’s scant public support, squandering of hundreds of billions of dollars, and incorrect information about weapons of mass destruction and Saddam Hussein’s alleged role in the 9/11 attacks, the initial invasion’s aftermath itself fostered an insurgency that was already picking up steam by the time of President George W. Bush’s “Mission Accomplished” speech declaring the end of major combat operations in May 2003. The US invasion of Iraq did not contain plans for the country’s reconstruction following the first battle of March 2003. By disbanding the Iraqi army, disenfranchising a large segment of the population, and lacking a coherent strategy, the US Army effectively created an insurgency that it then had no plan to fight. The prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib, which became public by 2004, further fueled recruitment and support for the insurgency that by this time came to define the war in Iraq.

Derek Gregory has coined the military’s response to this period of failure as a “cultural turn” that emphasized the human over the physical terrain. The counterinsurgency manual was written in this moment of previous strategies’ failure and of a turn toward the cultural and population-oriented dimensions of warfare. An interim army field manual was hastily assembled in 2004, which drew on a 1986 army counterguerrilla publication, heavily shaped in reaction to the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, as well as the 1980 US Marine Corps guide to counterinsurgency and its 1940 predecessor, *The Small Wars Manual*. The 2006 manual was the product of a hybrid military-academic writing team that was at once celebrated in defense circles for its scholarly poise and critiqued by academics for its inaccuracy and absence of scholarly citation.

Sarah Sewall wrote the introduction to the University of Chicago Press edition of the manual. At the time, she was the director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Her background as a human rights scholar indicates how the counterinsurgency shift branded itself as more academic and thus a “smarter” way to wage war. The role of human rights figures such as Sewall is also dissonant with how counterinsurgency may have contained a cultural turn, but this turn was entirely consistent with targeted killings, drone warfare, and other means of violence that did not disappear.
when counterinsurgency reemerged. The manual’s 2007 edition marked the first time in modern history that the US Army had worked with a private publisher to produce military doctrinal publications. Its publication by the University of Chicago Press lent the manual the sort of legitimacy that comes from the rigor of an academic peer-review publication process. However, significant parts of the manual are plagiarized, “borrowing” without attributing numerous passages and phrases. Given the manual’s documentation issues as well as its misreading and manipulation of prominent anthropological theory, critics argued that it enjoyed the status of a university press without being subjected to regular peer-review standards. David Price stated that its “republication transformed the manual from an internal document of military doctrine into a public ‘academic’ document designed to convince a weary public that the war of occupation could be won: it is an attempt to legitimize war by ‘academizing’ it.”

Civilian figures such as Sewall’s scholarship in the human rights field worked alongside military figures such as David Petraeus’s and David Kilcullen’s academic credentials to do this work of “academizing” the manual. Sewall’s human rights credentials were equally important to her position as a scholar in this exercise. Her introduction to the University of Chicago Press edition highlights the importance of development to counterinsurgency: “Equally important, success in COIN [counterinsurgency] relies upon nonkinetic activities like providing electricity, jobs, and a functioning judicial system.” The word nonkinetic appears throughout the manual, in contrast to kinetic (meaning violent) military tools, such as an armed offensive. Although “nonkinetic” still denotes military activity, Sewall says that many of the “operational capacities” required by this mode of warfare are not readily available within the military. She identifies what she calls a paradox of the field manual, that “some of the best weapons do not shoot. A corollary follows: some of the most important actors in counterinsurgency warfare are not self-identified warriors. In COIN, civilians and nonkinetic actions become the Soldiers’ exit strategies.” The sections that follow Sewall’s introduction spend a significant amount of time explaining “nonmilitary counterinsurgency participants,” such as civilian government agencies, NGOs, intergovernmental organizations, and private companies. Development becomes redefined within this framework as a “nonkinetic” military tool essential in transferring the responsibility for economic development, security, and government to the host nation government.

Elaborating on Sewall’s point that civilians and nonkinetic actions become the soldiers’ exit strategy, the manual states a preference that nonmilitary actors should take responsibility for the “welfare and support” of the people who are so vital to success. Yet in the same breath, it also argues that “effective implementation of those programs is more important than who performs the
tasks. If adequate civilian capacity is not available, military forces fill the gap.”

This point is repeated throughout that when civilians best qualified to fulfill developmental tasks are not available, military forces must step in, often learning the necessary skills along the way. Historical precedent serves as a touchstone. The manual’s authors call upon T. E. Lawrence to argue that military forces must fill developmental roles in lieu of appropriate civilian professionals but also that they must, in Lawrence’s words, do so “tolerably.” Lawrence is chief among the historical figures the manual uses to illustrate its arguments.

Following a brief discussion of the division of activities between Vietnamese and American forces during the Vietnam War, the manual recalls T. E. Lawrence’s account of leading the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire in 1917: “Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It’s their war, and you are to help them, not to win it for them.” Vietnam is the other main historical reference in post-9/11 counterinsurgency discussions of development. Here the manual describes how during the Vietnam War, one of the most valuable and successful elements of COIN was the Civil Operations and Revolutionary—later Rural—Development Support (CORDS) program. CORDS achieved considerable success in supporting and protecting the South Vietnamese population and in undermining the communist insurgents’ influence and appeal. Keen attention was given to the ultimate objective of serving the needs of the local populace. Success in meeting basic needs of the populace led, in turn, to improved intelligence that facilitated an assault on the Viet Cong political infrastructure.

In its uses of both Lawrence and Vietnam, the manual reduces complex historical instances to sources of evidence for the effectiveness of military campaigns that have incorporated development into wars of pacification.

In contrast to a more dominant historiography of a murderous and strategically flawed US war in Vietnam, the manual treats the CORDS program as a success that just arrived too late and too underresourced in the war. It is also notable that Lawrence, who collected the lessons so enthusiastically cited by US military sources while fomenting rebellion against a foreign occupying force, is repurposed for the post-9/11 wars to explain how a new foreign occupying force might better fight an insurgency against its occupation. In both of these cases, military doctrine glosses over the finer grain of political and historical detail to create abstract lessons—“do not try to do too much with your own hands”—that can be applied to the most pressing military interventions at hand.

This process of what I am calling abstraction more broadly indicates how the military assembles imperial thought and practice in the ongoing wars. As I discuss
at greater length in chapter 3, military instructors undertake a particular approach to selecting historical cases, such as Lawrence and Vietnam, with the explicit goal of identifying what they call “tactics, technologies, and procedures” that can be applied to interchangeable locations and time periods of military intervention. In constructing these abstract tactics, technologies, and procedures, instructors erase history from place and people from the places of war. The erasure of history is also an erasure of politics that creates an apolitical list of military tactics applicable to human war fighting on the grandest scale. In this particular military frame of mind, the political history of Vietnam is insignificant, since the specific tactic of, for instance, CORDS is framed as a technical piece of the broader tool kit of tactics, technologies, and procedures that forms the conceptual skeleton of what military trainees are to take away from such lessons. This exercise of abstraction has masculinist power that the (in this binary frame, feminized) selection of individual case studies does not.

Often, the colonial subject is entirely absent from the examples that military instructors invoke in classrooms. Instead, the colonial administrator’s or military officer’s experiences form the basis of the lesson. When the colonized are visible at all in such stories, they appear as savage subjects located “backward” in history—their inability to manage basic human functions such as hygiene, let alone their own territory, justifies military occupation. Military trainees are asked to identify with the white colonial officer such as T. E. Lawrence. This is another process of abstraction, given the multiracial character of the US military. Many of the soldiers asked to identify with, for example, Lawrence have been shaped by the legacies of racism and colonialism that Lawrence is a part of. The process of abstraction allows instructors to claim that the colonial hierarchy underpinning a lesson about Lawrence is not about racial war so much as a set of neutral tactics useful in any war campaign.

The US Army and the Marine Corps rereleased the *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* again in 2014 as an official joint publication. The manual’s internal re-release (without a corresponding press edition) speaks to the ways in which counterinsurgency has continued to inform military doctrine even as it has faded from the public eye. In many ways, the 2014 manual codifies many of the lessons featured in its previous iteration: the importance of a “whole of government approach,” the centrality of “stability operations,” and “nonkinetic” instruments of military power. It is organized somewhat differently than the University of Chicago Press edition and has a different title, *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies*, placing counterinsurgency in a particular discourse of insurgencies and how to counter them. In place of the multiple lengthy forewords and introductions by renowned soldier-scholars such as John Nagl and civilian human rights proponents such as Sewall, the 2014 edition gives just two paragraphs as
framing remarks and then outlines the various chapters, which follow in a broad sense from the earlier version.

Whereas the 2006 manual is very tactical, written quickly while troops were actively engaged in a counterinsurgency, the 2014 manual is organized differently, spending more time defining an insurgency, discussing the context and range of military responses, and generally fleshing out the thinking behind many of the tactics in the earlier version. The 2006 manual defines an insurgency as “an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict,” while in the 2014 edition insurgency is defined as “the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region,” removing reference to a government. The manual doubles down on its claims for the power of “softer” developmental tools for reconstruction and a method of limiting the direct involvement of US forces. Accordingly, influential defense voices critiqued the 2014 manual for, like its predecessor, sounding as if it “belongs in a social science faculty lounge instead of a war room.” For example, Bing West, who was assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs under President Ronald Reagan and later embedded himself with patrols in Iraq and Afghanistan, wrote in the Small Wars Journal that “the 2014 FM hurtles down the wrong track. . . . If we cannot put our enemies six feet in the ground and infuse that same fierce, implacable, winning spirit into the host nation forces, friendly persuasion and development aid will be seen by our enemies as weakness and fecklessness.” Counterinsurgency continues to spark gender horror that its preferred mode of engagement is weak and unmasculine.

Since military manuals are updated and republished often, the 2014 edition is not necessarily exceptional but does call into question some scholars’ claims that the counterinsurgency era has ended. Following President Donald Trump’s 2017 use of the “mother of all bombs” in eastern Afghanistan and his announcement later that year to send four thousand more military personnel to Afghanistan, Oliver Belcher argued that “to be sure, counterinsurgency has recently returned to its status as a dead letter.” The 2014 manual imagines a different subject than the massive deployment of ground troops actively engaged in counterinsurgency warfare that was the impetus for the original document. But treating counterinsurgency as if it has disappeared from military thinking would be a mistake; instead, this version amplifies a “whole of government” approach and refers to “stabilization.” A related joint military publication on counterinsurgency states in 2021 that “insurgencies will continue to challenge security and stability around the globe.” The concept of “stabilization” has become more entrenched in security discourse and institutions as the post-9/11 wars have morphed and their geography has expanded. To understand the extent and meaning of this pervasive language linked to counterinsurgency, it is worth examining a few of its key locations.
In 2005, the DOD issued a directive that elevated the status of “stability operations” to the same level as combat. DOD Directive 3000.05, “Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction,” defines “stability operations” as “military and civilian activities conducted across the spectrum from peace to conflict to establish or maintain order in States and regions.” The directive was so significant because it changed military policy to now consider stability operations a “core US military mission” that the DOD needed to prioritize in a way that was comparable to combat operations. The directive ordered the DOD to integrate this emergent notion of “stability” into all of its activities, from doctrine and training to personnel and facilities. Following the directive’s emphasis on “integrated civilian and military efforts” and military support for and coordination with civilian agencies, one effect of this shift in military policy was the extension of the military’s already-long reach into civilian parts of the US government. The new institutions that channeled parts of the defense budget to development projects in Haiti and brought development contractors onto military bases were all part of this broader shift in the mid-2000s that saw new administrative pathways between development and defense bureaucracies.

The language of “stabilization” was also implemented through the less noted release in 2008 of The US Army Stability Operations Field Manual (FM 3-07) that, following the Counterinsurgency Field Manual, was the second military document to be republished by a university press (the University of Michigan Press) in 2009. The Stability Operations Field Manual changed military doctrine’s relationship to development. In the foreword, Lt. Gen. William Caldwell argues that America’s future abroad is unlikely to resemble Afghanistan or Iraq, where we grapple with the burden of nation-building under fire. Instead, we will work through and with the community of nations to defeat insurgency, assist fragile states, and provide vital humanitarian aid to the suffering. Achieving victory will assume new dimensions as we strengthen our ability to generate “soft” power to promote participation in government, spur economic development, and address the root causes of conflict among the disenfranchised populations of the world. At the heart of this effort is a comprehensive approach to stability operations that integrates the tools of statecraft with our military forces, international partners, humanitarian organizations, and the private sector.

The manual defines stability as “establishing civil security” and rule of law, essential services, and representative political institutions. It emphasizes cooperation with NGOs, the UN, and other international organizations and includes in its definition of stability such tasks as the “alleviation of human suffering” as well as “support to economic and infrastructure development.” The manual also advo-
cates for a “whole of government approach,” another key phrase appearing in the reissued DOD Stability Directive in 2009 and the 2010 National Security Strategy that, like Directive 3000.05, elevates stability operations to the same priority as combat.\textsuperscript{32}

The *Stability Operations Field Manual* returns repeatedly to a “comprehensive” approach, declaring that “throughout US history, the Army has learned that military forces alone cannot secure sustainable peace.”\textsuperscript{33} International organizations, NGOs, and humanitarian aid are listed as key elements of “securing sustainable peace.” The manual addresses the military’s role in supporting economic and infrastructure development, job creation, and public health. Much of this discussion is framed in terms of the eventual transfer of responsibility for these components back to civil authorities while still recognizing that they are an important and increasingly visible aspect of military campaigns, including but not limited to counterinsurgency operations.

If the earlier language of “winning hearts and minds” represented the initial post-9/11 counterinsurgency moment in the mid-2000s, it was considered inferior to the narrower technical language of “stabilization” that later military trainings favored. In a training I observed in 2011, US Agency for International Development (USAID) contractors used the language of “stabilization” to explain their work, which they also understood as more scientific, current, and precise than the outdated language of “hearts and minds.”\textsuperscript{34} One USAID trainer speaking to a military audience explained how he had become converted to “stability” over “winning hearts and minds” by using his own experience in Afghanistan:

My team spent eight million dollars doing all kinds of stuff. We built a dozen schools; we built one hundred kilometers of road; we built a hospital and a day care center. The list went on and on. And it looked great on my AAR [after-action report]. But at the end of my tour, things had actually gotten worse in terms of stability. There were more TICs [troops in contact], more IEDs [improvised explosive devices], fewer NGOs that had freedom of movement in the area. And we honestly had to look back and say “Hey, my AAR, your AAR looks great, but we didn’t really accomplish anything in terms of stability.” We didn’t have a framework like this to help us focus our attention. We just, like, sprinkled fairy dust all over Helmand province. We had no measurable effect, so that’s why this process exists. The SOI [source of instability] matrix is a way of focusing our attention on what’s driving instability. Then the TSM [tactical stability matrix] is the logical thought process to say “Okay, this is the problem I’m trying to solve. How do I identify the appropriate activities to solve that problem?” So, we do the systemic causes. What are the root causes?
CHAPTER 1

What am I trying to achieve? The impact indicators will tell me how I will know if I achieved it—and on down the list. So that’s sort of the high-level view for why this process exists and why they carved out three and a half days to give you some starting points.

The contractor likened building schools, hospitals, and roads to “sprinkling fairy dust all over Helmand province.” His comments represent a broad rhetorical shift that occurred in this period. Whereas in 2006 military training material described counterinsurgency as “winning hearts and minds,” by 2011 “systemic causes of instability” had become standard language when this contractor delivered a training. The matrices and concepts the contractor mentions—tactical stability, sources of instability, measurable effects, and impact indicators—come from the social scientific framework that USAID established to bring development tools overtly into military trainings. His language also indicated stabilization’s close relationship to social science at this time.

If the language of “stabilization” pervades military documents from this period, it also appears in associated development discourses, again in the spirit of drawing development and defense institutions closer together. In 2009 early in her term as secretary of state, Hillary Clinton launched the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR). The process mirrored the longstanding, legislatively mandated Quadrennial Defense Review conducted by the DOD every four years to review defense strategy and priorities. The first QDDR, released in 2010, refracted Clinton’s earlier reference to “smart power” and a “3Ds” approach—or mutually reinforcing and linked fields of development, diplomacy, and defense—through the language of “civilian power.” An official fact sheet for the 2010 QDDR announced that “at its core the QDDR provides a blueprint for elevating American ‘civilian power’ to better advance our national interests and to be a better partner to the US military.” Civilian power was described as multiple civilian agencies working together to address conflict and poverty.

The 2015 QDDR further amplifies a vision of development as “conflict prevention,” marking a certain continuity with Mark Duffield’s discussion of underdevelopment as “dangerous.” Part of what is distinctive, though, about this particular iteration of militarized development is the institutional changes it has wrought. The State Department established a new office, which directly emerged from the QDDR, specifically tasked with institutionalizing the linkages between development, diplomacy, and defense captured in the “stabilization” and “whole of government” language that is emblematic of the post-2006 landscape. The language of counterinsurgency has not so much disappeared as it has morphed into the language of “stabilization” and “whole of government.” Materially, this has meant that parts of the federal government have been reorganized to integrate defense,
development, and diplomacy. Counterinsurgency’s associated language and institutions continued to affect development and defense policy and practice even as military policy shifted. Extensive financial and institutional rearrangements associated with the language of “stability” and “whole of government” led to development contractors’ entrance onto military bases. These institutional changes and post-9/11 counterinsurgency discourses had deep historical roots.

Counterinsurgency Histories in the Present

The Counterinsurgency Field Manual’s uses of development grow directly out of its authors’ own knowledge of counterinsurgency as a tool to repress resistance to imperial occupation. Kilcullen and Nagl both served on the manual’s writing team, hold PhDs alongside military officer credentials, and made many influential media appearances that were part of a more pervasive conversion of the press to support counterinsurgency. Soldier-scholars such as Nagl, Kilcullen, and, most famously, Petraeus played a key role in promoting the manual as a “smart bomb” that would reverse the downhill trajectory of the war in Iraq. Development’s role in counterinsurgency is also rooted in the Counterinsurgency Field Manual’s focus on what the military calls a “population-centric” approach that emphasizes “protecting” the security of the local population and luring them away from supporting the insurgent movement in question. This is opposed to an “enemy-centric” approach that focuses on capturing and killing the enemy.

The dichotomous language is of course misleading, because in practice a “population-centric” approach still involves killing, a dynamic apparent in Kilcullen’s and Nagl’s own writings. Just one example of this doublespeak was at work when the US military’s counterinsurgency campaign involved completely razing several villages in Helmand and Kandahar provinces in 2010. When one of these villages was rebuilt to exemplify counterinsurgency’s more “humane” side, the building style inscribed new forms of violence in its deviation from local norms, including a lack of internal walls around homes in the village. This increased women’s confinement to their homes, which became so hot in the summer that they were uninhabitable.

Counterinsurgency’s referents compose a layering of historical sources in which the argument for the Vietnam War’s relevance to the post-9/11 wars relies on knowledge of colonial counterinsurgency in Algeria. Kilcullen’s and Nagl’s ideas were heavily influenced by David Galula, a French military officer turned counterinsurgency theorist who drew on his experience during the Algerian war of independence. Particularly in Kilcullen’s writings and most elaborately in
Galula’s, women’s bodies are key sites of struggle over the meaning of military intervention.

A former Australian army officer, Kilcullen served as Petraeus’s senior counterinsurgency adviser in Iraq before becoming Condoleezza Rice’s special adviser for counterinsurgency, where he continued to work within the State Department as a chief strategist for the Counterterrorism Bureau. He then entered the private sector and founded several security-related companies, including a tech startup focusing on social and spatial data. Kilcullen was also, in 1996, a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, an institution formed through the involvement of senior ex-military officers and commitments to imperial notions of “exploration” and “discovery.” Kilcullen’s biography reflects geography’s problematic disciplinary history in its entanglement with military and imperial objectives, not to mention counterinsurgency’s linkages to spatial analytics. To complete his PhD in political anthropology from the University of New South Wales, Kilcullen did fieldwork using military leave and travel allowances the military afforded to officers within their “target country,” which allowed him, as the commander of military advisory teams for the Indonesian army, to conduct research on Darul Islam. Kilcullen describes the seamless overlap between his military career and academic research in the preface to his book, without mention of the ethical implications of conducting ethnographic research in foreign military uniform with foreign military funding. He does not disclose how his position as a foreign military adviser could have undermined his research participants’ ability to grant informed consent, violating a key ethical requirement of anthropological research.

Kilcullen’s doctoral research became the thesis of his highly influential book The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One. Considered “an intellectual foundation for the Surge of 2007,” the book describes the “accidental guerrilla syndrome” whereby would-be neutral civilians end up fighting alongside “extremist forces” not because they are ideologically on board but instead because they object to outside interference in what Kilcullen describes as local affairs. This is part of his larger argument that identifies a biomedical (and biopolitical) syndrome of infection (a terrorist organization moves into a remote, “ungoverned” area and takes hold through intimidation and co-optation), contagion (the extremist group’s influence spreads), intervention (external authorities take action against the extremist presence, and local groups begin to close ranks against the external threat), and finally rejection (resembling an “immune response” of rejecting a foreign object whereby local people become “accidental guerrillas” fighting against outside interference although not necessarily in favor of the extremist group).
Kilcullen’s medical analogies naturalize the accidental guerrilla phenomenon. They also allow him to generalize this theory across geographical sites. Just as the human body generally reacts to a virus or an infection (i.e., a foreign body), so too do people react to extremist forces, or so the logic goes. The influence of such biomedical and biopolitical language is palpable in the *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, which describes “three indistinct stages” of counterinsurgency. The first stage, “stop the bleeding,” is likened to “emergency first aid for the patient,” where the goal is to “protect the population, break the insurgents’ initiative and momentum, and set the conditions for further engagement.” The second stage, “inpatient care—recovery,” describes “assisting the patient through long-term recovery or restoration of health—which in this case means achieving stability. . . . As civil security is assured, focus expands to include governance, provision of essential services, and stimulation of economic development.” Third, “outpatient care—movement to self-sufficiency” refers to when stability operations can geographically expand, eventually transitioning responsibility for counterinsurgency to the host nation. Kilcullen’s and the counterinsurgency manual’s medical analogies do powerful work to professionalize and sanitize counterinsurgency. Theorists of counterinsurgency have generally interpreted this as part of the military’s attempt to anesthetize and distract the public from counterinsurgency’s violence. Gregory has written of biopolitical language such as Kilcullen’s as “intrinsically therapeutic” in that “the walling of Baghdad neighborhoods becomes the military’s equivalent of ‘tourniquets in surgery.’” The language likens each of these steps to precise, surgical medical interventions, further contributing to the notion of counterinsurgency as a “smarter” form of war. It also naturalizes the occupation, imagining the world as the operating table for the US military, which in this metaphor has somehow become a professional surgeon with all the attained and self-evident status that makes it the unquestionable authority.

While scholarship has attended to the implications of Kilcullen’s biopolitical language, there is also a spatial aspect to this argument that has garnered considerably less attention. An understanding of place as a bounded unit underpins Kilcullen’s argument. Writing of debates over “locality studies” in geography in the 1990s as well as popular conceptions of place over the previous decade, geographer Doreen Massey critiqued views of place as bounded, fixed, and singular. This static view of space is an important part of the theoretical underpinning that allows Kilcullen to construct the accidental guerrilla syndrome. Particularly in the last medicalized phase, rejection, the argument depends on an understanding of local and global as opposed to one another. The key turning point in Kilcullen’s argument is when “local populations”—framed in Massey’s words as authentic, singular, fixed, and unproblematic in their identity—join an extremist movement,
which they associate with “local society,” for the sole reason that they oppose the intrusion of “outside interference” in their affairs. Kilcullen imagines the local as enclosed and harboring a fixed identity.

Medical analogies do further work to naturalize the local response to the binary global. “If, however, the spatial is thought of in the context of space-time,” as Massey writes, “and as formed out of social interrelations at all scales, then one view of a place is as a particular articulation of those relations, a particular moment in those networks of social relations and understandings.” Massey argues for an expansive sense of place in which the global is part of what constitutes the local, a view of place that challenges claims to “internal histories or timeless identities.” Applied to Kilcullen, a Masseyan sense of place negates the possibility that the localities he considers had no previously existing relations to the global. The multiplicity of identities contained within Massey’s sense of locality complicates the automaticness with which Kilcullen imagines the local community will band together against uniform outside influence.

Also drawing on a bounded sense of place, Kilcullen sets up his accidental guerrilla thesis through a series of models of what he refers to as the “threat environment.” One of these models is the “globalization backlash thesis,” which adopts Thomas Friedman’s understanding of globalization as a technologically driven process that has sped up the circulation of people, capital, and goods, carving the world into, in Friedman’s words, the “flat” technologically connected world and the “unflat” world of those too sick, disempowered, and frustrated to participate in globalization. Kilcullen also refers to regions of Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia as “gap countries,” adopting the map that military theorist Thomas Barnett uses to explain terrorism as a by-product of “gap” countries’ economic, technological, and “cultural” disconnectedness from the “core” of the developed world. Friedman’s understanding of globalization influences Kilcullen’s “globalization backlash” model in which “traditional societies” are subjected to the “corrosive effects” of globalization on what are conceived as fundamental cultural and religious views, sparking violent backlash against symbols of “Western-led modernization.”

Development occupies a particular role in Kilcullen’s thinking, given his spatial argument that insurgency is caused by certain populations being “left out” of globalization, exiled to Barnett’s “gap” or Friedman’s “unflat world.” The corollary to Kilcullen’s “globalization backlash” model is the “globalized insurgency” model in which he argues that given the globalization backlash, insurgency is also globalized: its target is the entire world. Here Kilcullen espouses the notion of a “population-centric” strategy, emphasizing programs addressing the conditions that terrorists exploit over killing and capturing terrorists, which he deems “strictly a secondary activity.” As captured in the language of “stabilization,”
such a population-centric approach to counterinsurgency underpins militarized forms of development that seek to accomplish what Kilcullen describes as the prevention of future terrorism. Kilcullen’s is an implicit argument about development as potentially part of a population-centric military strategy to entice would-be accidental guerrillas away from supporting an insurgent movement. Development within this framework targets Barnett’s “gap” or Friedman’s “unflat world,” operating with an explicitly spatial conception of development as a means of incorporating those “left out” of globalization. Many of the institutional shifts that took place in response to counterinsurgency’s influence in this period were based on an understanding of development as part of this population-centric approach.

Kilcullen elaborates elsewhere an argument related to his notion of development influencing military doctrine—that counterinsurgency is “armed social work; an attempt to redress basic social and political problems while being shot at.” This highly cited piece of advice appears in Kilcullen’s “Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency,” first published in Military Review in 2006 and then reprinted and circulated through multiple other defense publications. This was Kilcullen’s first and most widely read piece on counterinsurgency, self-consciously modeled in its title and structure after T. E. Lawrence’s writings during World War I. “Twenty-Eight Articles” draws on Kilcullen’s doctoral work that became the basis of The Accidental Guerrilla. The article is written as a series of enumerated, practical pieces of advice for a military unit about to deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan. In contrast to the historical orientation of Galula’s writings or the doctrinal level of the Counterinsurgency Field Manual, Kilcullen’s article is tactical—it distills the prevailing theoretical frameworks of counterinsurgency into a few takeaway points, followed by a numbered series of “commandments” including the advice to conduct “armed social work,” which he also calls “armed civil affairs.” Kilcullen points to the importance of civil affairs—a military specialization focused on civilian interaction—encompassing everything from the sort of humanitarian response seen in the 2010 Haiti earthquake to the population-centric counterinsurgency projects he discusses. Whereas civil affairs has historically been seen as a less-glorified specialization within the military than combat jobs such as infantry and artillery, particularly in the Marine Corps, the military has found it necessary to fill an increasing number of civil affairs positions, often to the dismay of personnel who are reassigned there from historically more valorized combat positions.

Laleh Khalili situates Kilcullen within a genealogy of counterinsurgency thinkers that reaches back to the colonial era. She notes that the basis of Kilcullen’s accidental guerrilla thesis—that the majority of the population in an area of insurgency will support whichever side can provide security and basic needs and “most closely aligns with their primary group identity”—recycles David
Galula’s writings on counterinsurgency. Galula claims that “in any situation, whatever the cause, there will be an active minority for the cause, a neutral majority, and an active minority against the cause. The technique of power consists in relying on the favorable minority in order to rally the neutral majority and to neutralize or eliminate the hostile minority.” Khalili notes the extent to which Kilcullen relies on Galula’s “Machiavellian understanding of politics,” alongside the influence of former army officer and coauthor of the Counterinsurgency Field Manual, John Nagl. Kilcullen thanks Nagl in his book’s acknowledgments before quoting Galula’s Counterinsurgency Warfare in the prologue to The Accidental Guerrilla. These lines of gratitude also trace a clear lineage of colonial thought that underpins the 2006 manual.

T. E. Lawrence, whose Twenty-Seven Articles Kilcullen borrows from to title his own “Twenty-Eight Articles” is a touchstone in these multiple pathways between colonial and contemporary counterinsurgency thought. In Seven Pillars of Wisdom, Lawrence wrote that “to make war upon rebellion is messy and slow, like eating soup with a knife.” Writing almost a century later on the eve of the war on terror, Lt. Col. John Nagl used these very words as the title for his book Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam. The book, which is based on Nagl’s doctoral dissertation in international relations at Oxford University, compares the organizational cultures of the British army during the Malayan Emergency (1948–1960) to the US Army during the Vietnam War. Nagl earned his doctorate after deploying to Iraq during the Gulf War (1990–1991), then returned to Iraq in 2003 as an operations officer in Al Anbar Province. In 2004 the New York Times Magazine ran a cover story on Nagl’s doctoral dissertation. The article, which brought Nagl to Pentagon officials’ attention, is a perfect example of how seductive Nagl’s and Kilcullen’s academic representations of war were to mainstream media outlets.

Nagl was a key figure on the writing team for the Counterinsurgency Field Manual, integrating many of the arguments from his book into the eventual doctrine. His book argues that the British army was a “learning institution,” while the US Army was not. “The United States Army resisted any true attempt to learn how to fight an insurgency during the course of the Vietnam War, preferring to treat the war as a conventional conflict in the tradition of the Korean War and World War II. The British army, because of its traditional role as a colonial police force and the organizational culture that its history and the national culture created, was better able to learn quickly and apply the lessons of counterinsurgency during the course of the Malayan Emergency.”

The crux of Nagl’s argument comes from his comparison of British army doctrine in 1957 versus 1951, allowing him to track how the British army developed tactics in response to its experience fighting the insurgency. Nagl attributes the
Malayan counterinsurgency’s success to British “population control” measures that, in addition to a detention and deportation campaign, forcibly resettled hundreds of thousands of Malays into “New Villages.” The villages were surrounded by barbed wire and guard towers, and food was rationed to ensure that none was passed on to the guerrillas. One cannot possibly squint hard enough at this aspect of the Malayan campaign to see a benign institution, as Nagl does, in the business of “protecting” the population. Yet Nagl frames the British in Malaya as a “successful” example of militarily suppressing an insurgency and securing the interests of the (colonial) military power in question, a perspective echoed in multiple other military instructional contexts from enlisted trainings to war college classrooms.

Khalili shows the incoherence of Nagl’s celebration of “population control” on its own terms, pointing to the direct descent of Malaya’s New Villages from the concentration camps the British used during the Anglo-Boer War. “In the Boer war, the language of protection and refuge was used to herd thousands of civilians into barren compounds after their farms and houses were ordered torched by Lord Kitchener. In counterinsurgency doctrine, however, Boer war tactics are held up as enemy-centric (with an odor of disapproval wafting from the term), while the New Villages are considered a source of emulation for practitioners of humane, population-centric quashing of rebellion.” Historians highlight the inaccuracy of the phrase “hearts and minds,” whose origins are attributed to British general Gerald Templer during his reign as high commissioner of Malaya, that “the answer [to the uprising] lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but in the hearts and minds of the people.” While the phrase was used in Malaya to denote the use of “less coercive tactics against insurgents,” in contrast to the use of conventional warfare tactics that deploy overwhelming force and are willing to incur civilian casualties, critics have noted that in practice the “hearts and minds” campaign in Malaya involved free-fire zones, detention camps, and mass incarceration.

Nagl also does not follow the New Villages into Vietnam, where the Malayan example was used as a template for forced villagization. Recycling Templer’s language from Malaya, in 1965 President Lyndon Johnson proclaimed that “we must be ready to fight in Vietnam, but the ultimate victory will depend on the hearts and minds of the people.” In Vietnam, a “hearts and minds” strategy entailed forced displacement of villagers, poisoning crops, assassination campaigns, saturation bombing, and free-fire zones in which anyone alive was presumed to be hostile. This violent history underpins the authorship of the 2006 field manual. Nagl recounted how the writing team for the Counterinsurgency Field Manual drew not only on historical case studies but also on the primary source writings of historical counterinsurgent figures such as David Galula. Nagl

In his essay on Nagl’s use of Galula, anthropologist John D. Kelly describes “Nagl’s Galula” as “the voice unheard, the lost genius.” The *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*’s authors adopted wholesale elements of Galula’s eight-step tactical solution to “destroy or expel the insurgent guerrilla area by area (mobile forces) and also, area by area, control and get to know the local population (static forces).” Galula’s influence is also prominent in the manual’s discussion of how civilians would often be the more appropriate implementers of developmental tasks required of a counterinsurgency, though military personnel must step in when civilians are often not readily available. As evidence to support this claim, the manual recalls that “David Galula wisely notes, ‘To confine soldiers to purely military functions while urgent and vital tasks have to be done, and nobody else is available to undertake them, would be senseless. The soldier must then be prepared to become . . . a social worker, a civil engineer, a schoolteacher, a nurse, a boy scout. But only for as long as he cannot be replaced, for it is better to entrust civilian tasks to civilians.’” In the manual’s recycling of Galula’s words, it specifically adopts the idea of the flexible soldier capable of becoming a social worker, among other educational or caregiving tasks (the boy scout metaphor is slightly more curious, given the relationship of scouting to imperial militarism).

Galula’s own thinking on counterinsurgency was shaped through the ties binding colonial to Cold War counterinsurgencies. His most famous book, *Pacification in Algeria, 1956–1958*, was produced in direct relation to the Vietnam War. In 1962, Galula had come to the United States as a fellow at Harvard’s Center for International Affairs. He participated in a symposium during this time at the RAND Corporation, which brought together military officers and civilian officials to distill their experiences in Algeria, China, Greece, Kenya, Laos, Malaya, Oman, Vietnam, and the Philippines into lessons to apply to the US campaign in Vietnam. So impressed was the organizer of the symposium with Galula’s comments on counterinsurgency that he invited him to write a more detailed study for RAND. Galula wrote *Pacification in Algeria, 1956–1958*, published by RAND alongside *Counterinsurgency: A Symposium* in 1963. RAND reissued both documents in 2006, the same year the *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* was published, in the spirit of now applying to Iraq those lessons Galula had originally distilled from Algeria for the Vietnam War.

Galula begins *Pacification in Algeria* by describing his enthusiasm to test the theories he had developed about counterinsurgency during his post in China during the civil war, as a UN military observer in the Balkans, and then as a military attaché in Hong Kong, where he visited the Philippines and corre-
sponded with officers serving in French Indochina and British Malaya at the height of their anticolonial insurgencies. He explains that “I left Hong Kong in February 1956 after a five-year assignment as military attaché. I had been away from troop duty for eleven years, having specialized in Chinese affairs since the end of World War II. I was saturated with intelligence work, I had missed the war in Indochina, I felt I had learned enough about insurgencies, and I wanted to test certain theories I had formed on counterinsurgency warfare. For all these reasons, I volunteered for duty in Algeria as soon as I reached France.”

Just as military instructors reading Galula in the context of Iraq and Afghanistan were concerned with Algerian history insofar as they could extract generalizable lessons applicable to the post-9/11 wars, Galula himself was interested in developing a generalizable theory of counterinsurgency applicable to any time or place.

In the treatise that follows, Galula separates the phases of counterinsurgency into an initial “mandatory first phase of any counterinsurgency effort,” which he titles “struggle for control of the population.” Here he writes of Algeria as “a perfect testing ground for the ideas on counterinsurgency and pacification that he had developed through experience and observation in China and Greece.”

In this initial phase, he describes identifying pro-French colonial subjects through detention, interrogation, and eventual “purging” of rebels from a series of villages. We must also contextualize Galula’s sterile step-by-step directions with the food-denial operations, torture, and mass incarceration of civilians that characterized the colonial counterinsurgency.

While this initial struggle for control also included what Galula calls “civic action” projects, including a school and a medical dispensary, projects of militarized development are absolutely central to the second phase, “the struggle for the support of the population.” He describes how after “cleaning” a village, “this was the moment for the French to lay the groundwork for a trustworthy local self-government and to launch an intensive program of social and economic improvement.”

Women and children are key targets of these projects of “civic improvement.” “Villages received government funds with which to build roads, schools, wells, and reservoirs. They were persuaded to clean and whitewash their houses.” Later in the text, Galula elaborates “a sample process” one of his staff conceived of to win a village’s support. The document outlines hiring men for public works projects directly benefiting the villagers (e.g., wells) and benefiting the army and colonial administration (e.g., road construction), using local muleteers for military convoys, and arming the local population.

The Muslim woman is, for Galula, a crucial site of intervention. Summarizing his report for RAND, Galula comments that “the writer even went so far as to initiate the emancipation of the Moslem women, who theretofore had been kept in
semislavery, and he was struck by the readiness of their response.”78 After describing the opening of a medical dispensary and a school in one of the villages he was in charge of, Galula reflects on the position of women in his schema. “Reflecting on who might be our potential allies in the population, I thought that Kabyle women, given their subjugated conditions, would naturally be on our side if we emancipated them.”79 He focuses on girls’ education, boasting how he ignored protest against his mandate for all girls between the ages of eight and thirteen to attend school in the afternoon. After describing overseeing schools in his area of responsibility, Galula praises how the abundant supply of water in the area allowed the school staff to provide the children with weekly showers. “A minor revolution occurred when the girls were asked to discard once and for all their dirty head scarves, and to clip their hair and wash it; it was contrary to local customs and superstitions. But once the change was made, everybody approved heartily. ‘They now look like little French girls,’ was the general comment.”80

This passage highlights the crucial intersection of gender, education, and hygiene that forms a central pillar of Galula’s commentary on civic action projects in counterinsurgency. The parallels with the proliferation of commentary on the significance of girls’ education in Afghanistan are striking. One must look only so far as popular texts such as Three Cups of Tea or the West’s fascination with Malala Yousafzai, a young girl in Pakistan’s Swat Valley propelled into the public spotlight by her writings against the Taliban’s banning of girls’ education and attempted assassination in 2012 on her way home from school.81 In their piece “Feminism, the Taliban, and Politics of Counterinsurgency,” published shortly after 9/11, Charles Hirschkind and Saba Mahmood comment on how, following 9/11, “the burqa-clad bodies of Afghan women became the visible sign of an invisible enemy that threatened not only ‘us’ . . . but our entire civilization.”82 Writing in the same post-9/11 moment, Lila Abu-Lughod makes a related argument about the power of Muslim women, in particular Afghan women, as culturally homogenized symbols for the United States to wage the war in Afghanistan.83 Apropos of Galula’s emphasis on the removal of Algerian girls’ headscarves, Mahmood and Hirschkind comment on perceptions of the veil as repressive in the context of its banning from French schools. In this way, Galula haunts the present not only when referenced by architects of ongoing wars but also through the repetition today of older colonial and Cold War legacies under which women’s bodies become key sites of intervention.

Galula concludes with four “laws” of counterinsurgency warfare that foreshadow the 2006 Counterinsurgency Field Manual. Like Kilcullen’s medical rhetoric, Galula’s conception of these as laws is professional, hygienic, and authoritative. In the first law, “the objective is the population. The population is at the same
time the real terrain of the war. . . . This is where the real fighting takes place, where
the insurgent challenges the counterinsurgent, who cannot accept the challenge.”
In the second law, “the support from the population is not spontaneous, and in any
case must be organized,” which means accessing the minority of the population
that favors the counterinsurgent. In the third law, the “minority will emerge, and
will be followed by the majority, only if the counterinsurgent is seen as the ultimate
victor,” and in the fourth law, “seldom is the material superiority of the counterin-
surgent so great that he can literally saturate the entire territory,” meaning the
counterinsurgent may have to focus on certain geographical areas at a time.84

One can see the influence of Galula’s thought in more recent counterinsur-
gency materials. In a memo written for and circulated to all North Atlantic Treaty
Organization International Security Assistance Force troops and US forces in Af-
ghanistan, David Petraeus gave his guidance for the conduct of counterinsurgency
operations in Afghanistan. Under the first guideline, “secure and serve the popu-
lation,” Petraeus argues that “the decisive terrain is the human terrain. The people
are the center of gravity,” a phrase practically lifted from Galula’s language of
“control” and “struggle for support of the population.”85 In Petraeus’s 2006 Mil-
tary Review article “Learning Counterinsurgency: Lessons from Soldiering in
Iraq,” he cites Galula in support of his observation that “success in a counterinsur-
gency requires more than just military operations.” He also cites Galula to argue
that “counterinsurgency strategies must also include, above all, efforts to establish
a political environment that helps reduce support for the insurgents and under-
mines the attraction of whatever ideology he may espouse.”86

As is evident in Petraeus’s more recent writing, counterinsurgency’s con-
temporary form relies heavily on historical figures such as Galula and historical
case studies such as Kilcullen’s. The policy shifts that in the mid-2000s changed
the relationship of development to defense grew out of a layering of histories in
which Galula’s writings on Algeria informed Nagl’s thinking on Vietnam, which
in turn directly informed the writing team for the 2006 Counterinsurgency Field
Manual. This layering of history shows that post-9/11 US military doctrine is
not new. Yet, what is significant is not only that Galula is resurrected to fight
ongoing wars but also how this is accomplished. Just as Galula wrote of Algeria
to extract lessons applicable to other places, when he is taught in military class-
rooms it is in the spirit of extracting generalizable lessons to be applied to the
post-9/11 battlefield. Galula, like Lawrence, is treated as material to place within
the skeletal frame of tactics, technologies, and procedures destined for inter-
changeable locations of war fighting. Given that the US military is referencing
occupying powers fighting anticolonial insurgencies, many of the examples in-
structors draw upon, such as Vietnam and Algeria, come from an occupying
force that lost the war. Abstraction allows instructors to claim that whether the battle was won or lost is not significant; the value of the tactic must be identified and stripped of its historical specificity to be added to a tool kit of tactics, technologies, and procedures that can circulate the globe.

This process of military knowledge production speaks more broadly to the changes and continuities of the present imperial moment. Recent counterinsurgency doctrine’s place within a longer imperial trajectory is apparent through its direct reference to colonial history. The imperial hierarchy of, for instance, Lawrence in relation to his colonial subjects continues to inform today’s military doctrine. Yet, abstraction also erases colonial racism. In place of colonial racial hierarchies, the modern US military is a multiracial force that uses color-blind language to frame its internal composition as a meritocracy in which everyone is “green” (as opposed to Black, white, Latinx, etc.). This color-blind language also offers a racial grammar that uses the implicitly racialized language of “culture” and “civilization” to distinguish the occupied Other.

Institutional Reverberations of Counterinsurgency’s Return

The developmental rhetoric of the counterinsurgency and stability field manuals, which took shape through their historical predecessors, provoked a series of institutional shifts that prefigured the entrance of development contractors onto military bases. Policy shifts in this period of the mid-2000s were articulated in the language of a “whole of government” approach to US power abroad. In her nomination hearing to be secretary of state in 2009, Hillary Clinton used the language of “smart power” to promote the deft combination of diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal, and cultural tools. Clinton adopted Joseph Nye’s term “smart power,” which he developed in 2003 in response to critiques that his foundational idea of “soft power” could alone shape effective foreign policy. While “soft power” was defined as “the ability of a country to persuade others to do what it wants without force or coercion,” smart power was a combination of both hard- and soft-power tools. In a speech shortly after this in early 2010, Clinton spoke of the need to “elevate development and integrate it more closely with defense and diplomacy in the field. Development must become an equal pillar of our foreign policy, alongside defense and diplomacy, led by a robust and reinvigorated [US]AID.” Clinton coined this as a “3Ds” approach, arguing that “the three Ds [development, diplomacy, and defense] must be mutually reinforcing.” Clinton’s discussion of “elevating” development to the level of defense was contextualized by massive cuts to
USAID direct-hire staff during the 1990s. Yet the discussion in this period of making development an “equal pillar” to defense and diplomacy was not just a response to budget cuts; it also contained an argument for a particularly securitized brand of development that both harnesses development toward the aim of promoting US interests abroad and institutionally integrates development with defense and diplomacy.

Clinton was not only a key proponent of this securitized development but also embodied a liberal feminist tradition that has celebrated women’s ability to rise to powerful positions within the national security establishment, all while remaining uncritical of, or, in Clinton’s case, actively supporting US imperialism. Clinton prefigures the ways in which militarized development paved the way for the imperial feminism that flourished within female counterinsurgency teams. Her biography, like Samantha Power’s, speaks to how militarized development and imperial feminism operated in and through one another.

In her nomination to be secretary of state, Clinton mentioned Secretary of Defense Robert Gates’s advocacy of adding resources to chronically underfunded civilian institutions of diplomacy and development. In a 2007 speech at Kansas State University, Gates summarized his position as

here to make the case for strengthening our capacity to use “soft” power and for better integrating it with “hard” power. One of the most important lessons of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is that military success is not sufficient to win: economic development, institution-building and the rule of law, promoting internal reconciliation, good governance, providing basic services to the people, training and equipping indigenous military and police forces, strategic communication, and more—these, along with security, are essential ingredients for long-term success.

Gates emphasized civilian expertise and the need for more funding devoted to “non-military instruments of power.” In a move he described as, for some in the Pentagon, “blasphemy,” he advocated focusing “beyond the guns and steel of the military” and bolstering diplomacy, foreign assistance, and economic reconstruction and development, which he called “civilian instruments of national security.” Gates’s words were significant given his own position and budgetary concerns within the DOD. He also drew attention to military tools as insufficient to meet more complex national security needs. Although Gates recognized that his own words might be regarded as blasphemy, those officers I interviewed who were involved in training and response for civil affairs, humanitarian operations, and disaster response echoed his advocacy for civilian tools. One officer who oversaw an army civil affairs training echoed Gates’s concern that, in
the officer’s words, “if your only tool is a hammer, every problem starts to look like a nail,” implying that the same “civilian instruments of national security” must be bolstered to rectify this problem.

Clinton and Gates were influential civilian voices within the intertwined “3Ds” of diplomacy, development, and defense. In this same period surrounding the Counterinsurgency Field Manual’s release, Reuben Brigety, a former naval officer who went on to work in policy and diplomacy, wrote the influential report “Humanity as a Weapon of War.” Brigety begins by describing US Navy Seabees drilling a well in northeastern Kenya. The well turned out to be a humanitarian mission with a dual purpose. In an area populated by ethnic Somalis, the project “shows the face of American compassion to a skeptical population while also giving the military an eye to activity in the area. Winning hearts and minds with an ear to the ground is the new American way of war.”

Brigety describes the US military’s expanding role in addressing basic humanitarian needs of civilians abroad, calling this “one of the most profound changes in US strategic thought and practice in at least a generation.” He provides numerous examples of shifts in the organization of the US government, funding streams, defense policy, and attitudes of practitioners. Ultimately, Brigety argues for a concept of “sustainable security” involving “the strategic use of development assistance” in the interest of national security. He provides several policy recommendations to guide civil-military coordination, including what he calls a “national consensus” on development’s importance, the “adoption of a National Development Strategy,” and a general dispersal and greater institutionalization of development expertise and measurements throughout military and civilian agencies.

Brigety exemplifies a particular argument that the relationship of development to militarism is a policy problem that can be solved through better coordination of institutions, policy, and funding. The argument’s popularity at the time he was writing is reflected in the multiple “civil-military coordination guidelines” that civilian development institutions adopted to institutionalize their coordination with the military. From an internal perspective within these organizations, formulated through everyday administrative responsibilities, it makes sense to treat development’s relationship to defense as a technical problem. However, the recasting of this problem as a technical one obscures a series of other questions, including the significance of colonial histories in shaping military doctrine.

The remarks of Clinton, Gates, and Brigety represent a particular turning point in militarized development, defined by the years surrounding the release of the Counterinsurgency Field Manual. Development discourses within military doctrine were crucial drivers of this turning point, as were the attitudes toward development as, in Brigety’s words, “a weapon of war,” and in Clinton’s concept of a “3Ds” approach. A number of institutions, policies, and funding streams were
reorganized, prefiguring the sorts of changes in military trainings I discuss in later chapters. In 2005, USAID established the Office of Military Affairs to coordinate USAID’s relationship with the DOD. In 2012, USAID changed the name to the Office of Civilian-Military Cooperation. The office was established in direct response to the shift in policy discourses, specifically the National Security Strategy’s demand that “development be a strong and equal partner with diplomacy and defense.”

The Office of Civilian-Military Cooperation, which hosts military liaisons within USAID, places senior foreign service officers at the Pentagon and the military’s geographical combatant commands, develops policy to aid coordination between USAID and the DOD, and facilitates the training of development and military personnel on how they may work with one another. One of this new USAID office’s main activities has been to hire and send civilian contractors onto military bases to teach a framework written by USAID, which they describe as “translating” development “best practices” for military audiences.

In 2004, the State Department established the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). The official mission of the S/CRS was to “lead, coordinate and institutionalize US Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations, and to help stabilize and reconstruct societies in transition from conflict or civil strife, so they can reach a sustainable path toward peace, democracy and a market economy.” Official statements from the period in which the S/CRS was established describe how the US government previously responded to “stabilization and reconstruction operations” in an “ad hoc fashion” and that the new office was meant to institutionalize policy tools specific to this emerging concern with “stabilization,” which notably is mirrored in defense language, such as the Stability Operations Field Manual.

In 2011, I attended a briefing on Capitol Hill in which Ambassador Robert Loftis, the acting coordinator of the S/CRS, described it as a “surge capacity” for the State Department, a corps of civilians capable of responding to crises of stabilization and reconstruction. Like many policymakers I spoke with in Washington, D.C., the ambassador emphasized his hope that the United States would not become involved in another prolonged conflict such as Iraq and Afghanistan in the future. He saw “stabilization” as a global effort to cut future military conflicts off at the pass, with the ongoing wars serving as material from which to learn. At the same time, he spoke of the unlikelihood of actually preventing US entry into major conflicts of this scale in the future and his hope that the office could retain lessons from the mistakes they had made in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, including the need for quicker “civilian uplift,” or massive influx of civilian administrators to run the country following military invasion.

This treatment of imperial history—or here ongoing imperial wars—as material to cobble together a tool kit of abstract, technical, depoliticized lessons...
speaks more broadly to the process of abstraction at work in making military doctrine. The ambassador’s cataloging and repurposing of imperial technologies also reveals how this way of constructing US policy abroad (including but not limited to military doctrine) relies on an uncritical approach to history that asks for repetition of past tactics whose technical value will become clear so long as they are wiped clean of their political connotation. The need for such tactics to fit within an existing bureaucratic structure informs how the tactics recycle the same material rather than asking for something new. Loftis’s comment on preventing prolonged military occupation also addresses how development, couched in the language of “stabilization,” was understood as a sort of conflict-prevention weapon. Institutions such as the S/CRS very much embodied the “smart power” approach captured in Clinton’s and Gates’s words.

In 2008 Congress established the Civilian Response Corps, overseen by the S/CRS, that drew from different federal agencies to deploy civilian responders with expertise in conflict prevention and stabilization to US embassies around the world. The Civilian Response Corps was another institutional outgrowth of federal institutions’ discursive emphasis on “stabilization,” a “whole of government” approach, and the “3Ds.” The corps has been described as “a kind of international Federal Emergency Management Agency” that would take charge of police, banking systems, airports, and other infrastructure in a context where the state has collapsed or a government has been defeated in a war. Extending from his 2007 speech supporting increased funding for nonmilitary security instruments, Gates became one of the most vocal proponents of the Civilian Response Corps, advocating for an increase in its promised funding. A congressional report on the formation of the new State Department office and response corps names the 2003 invasion of Iraq as exemplifying civilians’ inability to fill required civilian jobs. The same report lists peacekeeping operations during the 1990s such as those in Haiti, the Balkans, and Somalia as demonstrating the military’s “inability to field adequate numbers of appropriate personnel to perform tasks in the aftermath of conflicts . . . that many defense experts believed would be better conducted by civilians.” The Civilian Response Corps was thus established to bridge these dual inadequacies. In 2011 the S/CRS was replaced by the State Department Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization, which continued the work of the S/CRS but pared down the emphasis on state-building postconflict missions, including downsizing the Civilian Response Corps.

These new institutions introduced new forms of funding that blended development and defense. Beginning in 2005, the S/CRS was funded by Congress, providing the DOD with Section 1207 authority. Section 1207 of the National Defense Authorization Act provided authority for the DOD to transfer US$100 million per year in support of reconstruction, stabilization, and security activities abroad. Sec-
Section 1207 provided this authority from fiscal years 2006 to 2010 and then expired.\textsuperscript{107} Section 1207 was introduced to “jump start the S/CRS” by making funds available for interagency projects.\textsuperscript{108} The legislation thus came out of efforts within the US government at the time to institutionalize the “whole of government” approach. It was conceived as a short-term temporary measure to fund interagency projects during a time when Congress could not pass a State Department bill authorizing the S/CRS to do emergency and postconflict work involving USAID, the Department of State, and the DOD. Government analysts have also suggested that the Section 1207 authority was introduced because it was easier to obtain funding from Congress in a DOD versus a State Department bill.\textsuperscript{109} The program was allowed to expire based on congressional authorizers’ expressions that such funding should be directly provided through the State Department budget.\textsuperscript{110}

One example of the sort of program that Section 1207 funds were used for was the Haiti Stabilization Initiative, which funded the empty marketplace in Port-au-Prince. The initiative was overseen by the S/CRS from 2007 to 2010. In Haiti, the program took US$20 million of the experimental blended funding to combine the sorts of infrastructure improvement and job creation programs I toured in 2010 with a police training program that was contracted and administered by Dyncorps.\textsuperscript{111} The flooded neighborhoods and abandoned economic development sites illustrated a fabric of everyday life largely unchanged by the millions of defense dollars spent on infrastructure and commercial opportunities. The new source of funding did, however, further fuel the contracting machine behind so many development projects in Haiti and beyond.\textsuperscript{112} The initiative also amplified the increasing prevalence of references to stabilization and at times even terrorism and counterinsurgency in US government-funded development projects during this period. Contractors leading the tour in Cité Soleil were motivated by the Section 1207 program’s own translations of counterinsurgency into development language to present their projects as the “hold” stage of a “clear-hold-build” sequence akin to Galula’s and Nagl’s advice.

When Section 1207 authority expired in 2010, Congress established the Complex Crisis Fund for USAID, beginning in fiscal year 2011, and the Global Security Contingency Fund, also authorized by the same section of the National Defense Authorization Act, beginning in fiscal year 2012. Like the previous Section 1207 authority, the Global Security Contingency Fund was intended to support joint State Department–DOD stabilization and security assistance projects abroad.\textsuperscript{113} Yet unlike the Section 1207 program, the fund has not provoked the same degree of controversy for further blurring the already permeable boundary between development and defense. Instead, the fund seems to have codified what was mired in conflict before. The Section 1207 program caused great controversy in the NGO world. Although it was never intended to be permanent, the program
represented the sort of incursion of defense into development that animated the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan and Brigety’s military “humanitarian” projects in East Africa.\textsuperscript{114}

In the words of one think tank member I spoke with in Washington, D.C., the Section 1207 program “puts a bull’s eye” on NGOs working in conflict zones by associating them with the military. In 2009 and 2010, I interviewed a series of NGOs in the D.C. area who voiced concern over their shifting relationship to the DOD. The group InterAction, an alliance of almost two hundred NGOs located in D.C., convened a civil-military working group that arose from concerns over the sorts of projects Brigety writes of, such as army civil affairs groups building wells as part of a counterterrorism campaign in East Africa. NGOs vary greatly in perspective on what constitutes an appropriate relationship to the military. At one extreme is Project HOPE, a medical NGO founded by President Dwight Eisenhower’s personal physician after World War II that today is staffed by former military physicians. The organization partners directly with the DOD to conduct medical missions aboard floating hospital ships, often with an overt goal of improving local public opinion of the US military and facilitating basing agreements.\textsuperscript{115} Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières) sits at the other end of the spectrum, employing a policy of “independence and separation” from military actors to maintain neutrality and impartiality.

Specific to the Section 1207 program and the controversy it incited among NGOs, in 2007 the Section 1207 authority was used to fund part of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), an interagency program focused on Mali and Niger that designed development projects with the explicit aim of reducing terrorist recruitment. This program focused on Africa, prefiguring the US military’s consideration of the African continent as “tomorrow’s battlefield” in the latest chapter of the post-9/11 wars.\textsuperscript{116} Multiple NGOs were already working in these areas doing related programming. For instance, the international humanitarian agency CARE had recently finished a rural livelihoods, education, and conflict-resolution project for young people in rural Niger. Once the TSCTP and Section 1207 started funding the project’s new iteration, the language of counterterrorism became much more pronounced in the request for proposals, sparking concern within the organization over the safety of local staff as well as how this blended funding interfered with their “needs-based” approach and incentivized framing development in terms of strategic counterterrorism.\textsuperscript{117} Such concerns caused the organization to turn down the Section 1207 funding even though it had already successfully completed a related project. When I interviewed her in 2009, an employee of the organization described how she had directly experienced a “whole of government” approach to mean that USAID had to introduce DOD representatives to their partner organizations, such as CARE. These fortified link-
ages between development and defense institutions led to encounters on the ground such as military civil affairs teams approaching the NGO to collaborate with them on local projects in the Horn of Africa. The NGO declined to collaborate, but the staff member expressed concern that even the military’s outstretched hand could compromise their image and their staff members’ safety. A representative from Catholic Relief Services also recounted in a 2009 interview a similar experience of being offered Section 1207/TSCTP funding essentially to continue work that the organization was already doing in West Africa but couched in strong counterterrorism language. Catholic Relief Services also turned down the funding out of fears similar to those of CARE as well as suspicion that the organization would be asked to inform on its beneficiaries.

I also spoke with Africare, which had accepted Section 1207 funds for related work in West Africa via the TSCTP. This NGO was not ethically opposed to accepting military funding. The representative I spoke with described these blended funds as a potentially valuable trove of future funding that Africare wished to leave the door open to. However, staff members described fissures within the institution. Some members saw the military funding as a valuable resource, while others were hugely suspicious of whether it would introduce the sorts of surveillance concerns that Catholic Relief Services and CARE raised. When a staff member spoke of visiting the Mali program in the early 2000s just before the US Africa Command’s establishment (2007), he realized how much interaction his local Malian staff already had with the US military beyond this new funding. The US embassy’s Office of Defense Attaché had been funding small development projects, such as microfinance and solar energy, since the 1990s. The deeper roots of militarized development projects in this region also encompass USAID’s role as an instrument of national security reaching back to the Cold War. Africare’s own experience of Section 1207 funding not marking a sharp break with the past speaks to this longer history that Section 1207 grows out of.

A fourth organization, the Academy for Educational Development, received funding for projects in Chad and Niger through the TSCTP although not in direct relation to Section 1207 authority. The NGO representative I spoke with strongly disagreed with the language of “terrorism” and “recruitment of at-risk youth” but was equally positive about the projects the organization was able to support, which she enthusiastically described as improving opportunities for young people through vocational training, job creation, and construction of youth centers and soccer fields. The project also included a media component that provided equipment and training for community reporters to broadcast different information channels. The grant’s language described the media program as “countering extremist messages,” but the NGO representative was quick to translate this for me as providing young people with training and opportunities to become local
reporters. In the end and against the wishes of some staff, the organization accepted the defense funding and the program’s counterterrorism language out of optimism about what the funds could allow them to accomplish. One of the most notable consequences of accepting the funding was that it opened the door for the military to pursue the organization’s cooperation on future unrelated projects. For instance, a civil affairs team asked for the Academy for Educational Development’s advice on a DOD program in the field. The staff member emphasized how the organization refused to have anything to do with “actual troops,” meaning, for example, the civil affairs team implementing this project. She viewed face-to-face contact with uniformed soldiers as entailing larger ethical and practical safety concerns for her organization than those attached to the Section 1207 funding.

What is clear from this variety of NGO perspectives and experiences is how new forms of defense funding constrained the sorts of development projects that could be funded. Some organizations discontinued existing projects because the only available funding came with the requirement to frame, for example, employment creation and media projects in counterterrorism language, potentially endangering staff by perceived (and actual) military alliances. Other organizations embraced the blended development/defense funding with varying degrees of enthusiasm, understanding it as a potentially lucrative source of future program support. This broader institutional and financial climate incentivized organizations to frame development work in the language of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency. The Academy for Educational Development, for example, noted USAID’s descriptions of programs that fund the construction of youth centers, soccer fields, and vocation training as “counterterrorism” and the “prevention of recruitment for at-risk youth.” If used in the field, this language would alienate some of the religious communities the organization works through, forcing the organization to walk a fine line between implementing effective projects and accurately reporting their work to funders.

Military understandings of development and humanitarianism as weapons of war were fundamental to the post-9/11 revival of counterinsurgency. Defense thinkers actively drew upon the colonial past as they shaped this doctrinal turning point. Such uses of history inscribed the perspective of colonial administrators into post-9/11 military doctrine, erasing occupation’s body counts in favor of sanitized tactics, technologies, and procedures. The turning point of the mid-2000s created new institutional and financial linkages between development and defense. New institutions such as the Section 1207 program and USAID’s Office of Military Affairs also mark continuities with deeper histories of, for instance, USAID’s conception from the beginning as “an arm of political and economic security.” USAID was born out of Cold War projects to harness development as a weapon in the fight against communism in the third world. The
institutional, policy, and financial shifts discussed here define the contours of key doctrinal turning points in the new imperial wars. Understanding these doctrinal turning points is crucial because they underpin the changes we now turn to in military training. Onto this new terrain step a set of private for-profit development contractors who have laid claim to a slice of the massive post-9/11 spike in defense spending. I follow these contractors onto the bases where they provide the military with counterinsurgency training aimed to remake soldiers in the image of “armed social workers.”