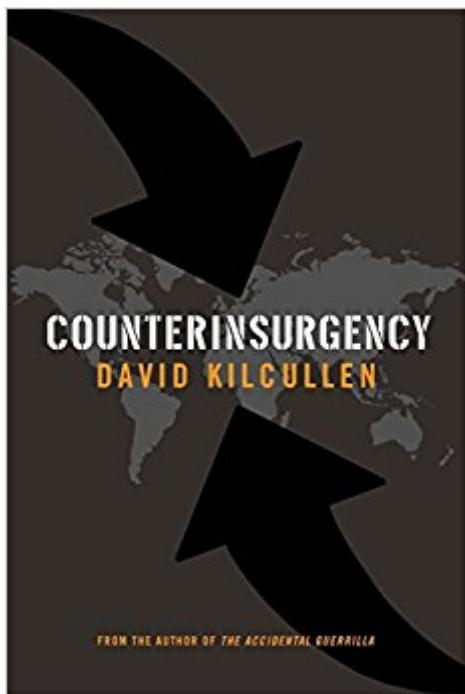


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# Counterinsurgency



## **Synopsis**

David Kilcullen is one of the world's most influential experts on counterinsurgency and modern warfare, a ground-breaking theorist whose ideas "are revolutionizing military thinking throughout the west" (Washington Post). Indeed, his vision of modern warfare powerfully influenced the United States' decision to rethink its military strategy in Iraq and implement "the Surge," now recognized as a dramatic success. In Counterinsurgency, Kilcullen brings together his most salient writings on this vitally important topic. Here is a picture of modern warfare by someone who has had his boots on the ground in some of today's worst trouble spots-including Iraq and Afghanistan-and who has been studying counterinsurgency since 1985. Filled with down-to-earth, common-sense insights, this book is the definitive account of counterinsurgency, indispensable for all those interested in making sense of our world in an age of terror.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Kilcullen is to be applauded for his effort to impose strategic order on the threat of Islamist movements..."--Colin Jackson, Naval War College "This book gives the reader much more than a better understanding of the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan. It encapsulates numerous particularly relevant insights into the tactical, operational, and strategic challenges of counterinsurgency; plus it offers the most succinct overview of how to wage a global counterinsurgency anywhere." --Army History

David Kilcullen was formerly the Senior Counterinsurgency Advisor to General David Petraeus in

Iraq and later an advisor to General Stanley McChrystal in Afghanistan. He is currently an advisor to NATO. Kilcullen is also Adjunct Professor of Security Studies at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and a Fellow at the Center for a New American Security.

Over the past ten years our television screens have been filled with images of Afghanistan and Iraq. This conflict has been described as an insurgency. Various Generals have described the US response to this as a counterinsurgency. I am sure many people wonder what that is. This book answers that very question. It describes how to run a counterinsurgency. For sure military people need to read this book. The book will arm you with priceless information which might save your life. Others might like the book as a tool to understand what is going on. The book in reality is a collection of articles by the author, David Kilcullen. The author served as an advisor to General Petraeus during the surge in Iraq. He is also a retired LTC with the Australian Army. These articles offer gems of wisdom that will unlock the gates of knowledge about the subject. There is also a few lessons nonmilitary people will like his chapter on indicators. He talks about how you measure success on large projects as counterinsurgency. I also liked the last chapter about the grand world wide Islamic counterinsurgency as he put it. The tactics he suggests gives hope to all of us as you watch the TV events.

Another excellent book from this author. Must-read on this topic.

For students and practitioners of statecraft, nation building, counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism, David Kilcullen is a living legend. His main claim to fame is as author of the modern classic 'Twenty-Eight Articles', the writing of which apparently started on a whim in a Washington area Starbucks early one March 2006 evening and finished on his laptop at home the wee hours of the following morning. Emailed to a few colleagues for comment that early morning, the article went viral (even I received a copy!) and has now been read in its hundreds of thousands of copies, perhaps millions, translated into multiple languages and a freely available download if one types its name into an internet search. An experienced army officer and academic, so steeped in counterinsurgency to have written such a masterwork of community-level operations as 'Twenty-Eight Articles', must have more to say if given book-length scope to say it. 'Counterinsurgency' is David Kilcullen's second book-length opportunity to do so. I was disappointed to discover that it is not really a book but a loosely connected patchwork of his previously published articles, including a repeat of 'Twenty-Eight Articles', each with a patina of his

annotations. An initial point, tantalizingly dangled and then abruptly left hanging, is that the only two hard rules of counter-insurgency are (1) an absolute need to respect non-combatants and (2) to beware of template approaches, given that successful counterinsurgencies are ultimately custom built to fit a particular situation and may involve doing precisely the opposite of a solution that worked in a different insurgency. The patchwork of articles approach frustrated me as it only partially illustrated any conclusions, and even that was too frequently left to the reader's own inferences. Beyond the author being a key participant and that it allowed the reprinting of a previously published article, I ended confused, for example, as to the logic behind including a 40 page discussion (about 20% of the book) on a minor 1999 engagement during East Timor's separation from Indonesia. If there were broad conclusions that could be drawn from that engagement - the Australian Army, in this instance, was arguably an ultimately successful UN-sponsored insurgent force against the counterinsurgent Indonesian Army - the conclusions should have been spelled out. I was too thick to detect them. Even the title, 'Counterinsurgency', seems to bait and switch diplomats, aid workers and soldiers hungry for knowledge in advance of a deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan. One of the points the author seems to guide the reader toward is that if the issue is seen as a counterinsurgency, rather than a competition between systems within which an insurgency operates, the effort may be doomed to defeat itself. Notwithstanding the lack of organizing frame and direction, the book contained much of value. The brief, stark and sober chapter on measuring performance in Afghanistan was itself worth the price of the book. Likewise, the final chapter contained promising ideas, vexingly only partially developed, about insurgencies as systems best dealt with on a systems level. That concept, more fully elaborated, may have been the great book I was hoping for. Perhaps my expectations were raised too high by the elegance and blinding clarity of 'Twenty-Eight Articles', but 'Counterinsurgency' ultimately disappoints as a stock and workmanlike addition to the genre, interrupted by brief flashes of blinding insight.

I can't say enough good about how in depth David Kilcullen is in his books. Get the Audible version with it so you can ruck while listening!

If you are interested in (or worried about) insurgencies and related topics, this is a good book to read. Kilcullen has "been there" in terms of on the ground counterinsurgency work and also has the intelligence and writing skills to extract useful lessons from what he has seen and to explain them clearly. The book is fairly short and easy to read. It is also used by many professionals in the field as part of the core of study.

This should be one of the textbooks the military uses and references throughout officer and senior NCO schooling. This book explains the deep principles necessary to fight a counterinsurgency rather than the shallow metrics often applied. I wish this had been published in 2002. It would have saved a lot of time and money for the United States.

This is a well-written analysis on the principles of counterinsurgency and the development of this kind of warfare to our days. The reason I do not rate it in 5 stars is that the author has concentrated too much on Australian operational experience in Indonesia.

With everything going down in politics today and because knowledgeable people have figured out there is an insurgency within the United States right now these are things you need to know. The Deep State is acquiescing to BLM, Antifa, #resist and 50+ other groups to take down the US. You need to know how it is played to keep from becoming a casualty either by playing their game or beaten up just because you were in the area. Kilcullen has another book that goes with this one titled "On Killing". Don't let the title throw you off. He is not advocating, he is explaining. Also look into his book "The Accidental Guerrilla."

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