CHAPTER TWO

The Cases

Thirty cases of insurgency form the empirical foundation for this research. This chapter begins by describing the process used to select the cases and to collect data for them, as well as how we determined whether the outcome of a case was a win or a loss for COIN forces. The bulk of the chapter, however, is devoted to brief summaries of each of the 30 cases. More extensive case-study details can be found in the accompanying volume, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*.[1]

Case Selection and Data Collection

The 30 insurgency cases were drawn from a larger list of historical insurgencies developed as part of a previous RAND COIN study.[2] That initial list included 89 cases and purports to be an exhaustive list of insurgencies from 1934 to 2008. All cases met the following criteria:

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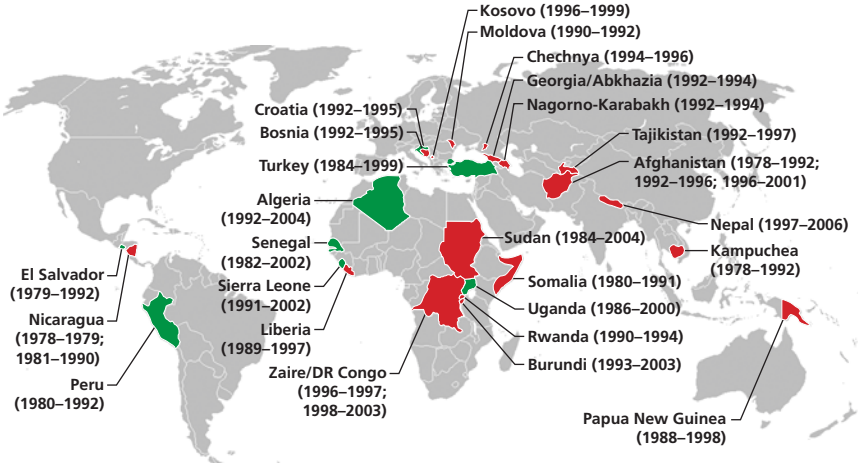
[1] Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010.

[2] Martin C. Libicki, "Eighty-Nine Insurgencies: Outcomes and Endings," in David C. Gompert, John Gordon IV, Adam Grissom, David R. Frelinger, Seth G. Jones, Martin C. Libicki, Edward O'Connell, Brooke Stearns Lawson, and Robert E. Hunter, *War by Other Means—Building Complete and Balanced Capabilities for Counterinsurgency: RAND Counterinsurgency Study—Final Report*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-595/2-OSD, 2008. The initial case list was drawn from James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1, February 2003.

- They involved fighting between states and nonstates seeking to take control of a government or region or that used violence to change government policies.
- The conflict killed at least 1,000 people over its course, with a yearly average of at least 100.
- At least 100 people were killed on both sides (including civilians attacked by rebels).
- They were not coups, countercoups, or insurrections.

From that list, we selected the 30 most recently begun, completed cases for our study. Selection of these 30 cases also corresponds to a 30-year chronological span: All insurgencies began and were resolved between 1978 and 2008. These 30 cases span 26 countries and much of the globe (see Figure 2.1). Appendix A includes further detail about the case selection.

Figure 2.1
Map of COIN Case Dates, Countries, and Outcomes



NOTE: Green shading indicates that the COIN force prevailed (or had the better of a mixed outcome), while red shading indicates that the outcome favored the insurgents (thus, a COIN loss).

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Data for the case studies come from secondary sources. The analyst assigned to each case thoroughly reviewed the available English-language history and secondary analysis of the conflict for that case. Documentation proved voluminous for some cases (particularly those in Central and South America but also cases in which Russian or Soviet forces were involved); it was much more sparse for other cases (particularly those in Africa). In all cases, available information was sufficient to meet our data needs for the quantitative analyses (described in Chapters Three and Four). The references provided at the end of the accompanying volume of case studies demonstrate the range and depth of the available literature.

Phased Data

Because the approach and behavior of the COIN force, the actions of insurgents, and other important conditions can all change during the course of an insurgency, we broke all of the cases into two to five phases. Throughout the discussion, *case data* refers to the data for the decisive phase of the case. A detailed discussion of each phase of each case and the value of each quantitative factor can be found in the accompanying volume, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*.[3] Appendix A includes additional discussion of the phase assignment process in the section "Phased Data."

The phases are not of uniform duration. A new phase was declared when the case analyst recognized a significant shift in the COIN approach, in the approach of the insurgents, or in the exogenous conditions of the case. Phases were *not* intended to capture micro-changes or tiny cycles of adaptation and counteradaptation between the insurgents and the COIN force; rather, these were macro-level and sea-change phases.

[3] Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010.

Assessing Case Outcomes

Since our analysis focuses on correlates of success in COIN, one of the most important elements of our case studies is the identification of the outcome of the cases (i.e., whether COIN forces actually succeeded). Many of these cases have complicated outcomes in which neither side realized all of its stated objectives and it is not exactly clear who won. While we report mixed outcomes in our case narratives, we also identify each case as either a COIN win or a COIN loss.

To adjudicate unclear case outcomes, we followed the logic illustrated in Figure 2.2. First, for each case, we asked whether the government against which the insurgency arose had stayed in power through the end of the conflict and whether it retained sovereignty over the region of conflict. If insurgents either deposed (or otherwise led to the fall of) the government or won de facto control of a separatist region, then the COIN force did *not* win. If the government remained in power and the country remained intact, then we further considered whether the government had been forced to (or chose to) make major concessions to the insurgents, such as power sharing or loss of territory or other sovereign control, or was otherwise forced to yield to insurgent demands. If the government stayed in power, the country remained intact, and no major concessions were granted to the insurgents, then the COIN force unambiguously won. If, however, major concessions were made, then the outcome was mixed. In all cases, what constituted a "major" concession and who (the COIN force or the insurgents) had the better of a mixed outcome was decided at the discretion of the individual case analyst and was based on the distinct narrative of that case.

Applying this logic to the 30 selected cases results in eight cases that are COIN wins and 22 cases that are COIN losses. Table 2.1 lists the insurgencies, the dates they spanned, and their outcomes.

The remainder of this chapter presents brief summaries of the historical cases. They are presented by start date. Analyses of the relationships between specific approaches and factors and case outcomes are presented in Chapters Three and Four. Those familiar with the histories of these cases are welcome to skip ahead.

Figure 2.2
Logic for Assignment of Case Outcomes

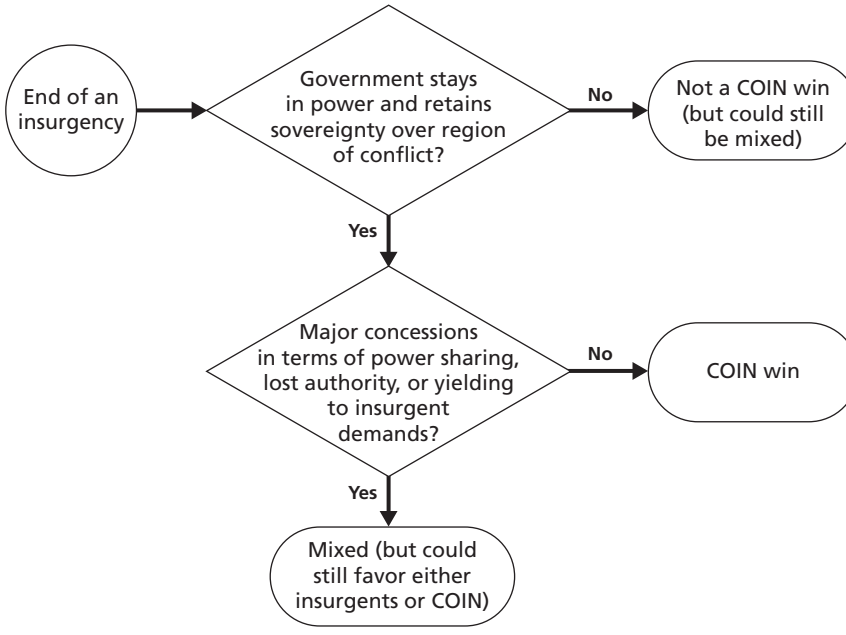

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Table 2.1
Countries, Insurgents, and Date Spans of the 30 Case-Study Insurgencies

Country (Insurgency)	Years	Outcome
Nicaragua (Somoza)	1978–1979	COIN loss
Afghanistan (anti-Soviet)	1978–1992	COIN loss
Kampuchea	1978–1992	COIN loss
El Salvador	1979–1992	**COIN win**
Somalia	1980–1991	COIN loss
Peru	1980–1992	**COIN win**
Nicaragua (Contras)	1981–1990	COIN loss
Senegal	1982–2002	**COIN win**
Turkey (PKK)	1984–1999	**COIN win**
Sudan (SPLA)	1984–2004	COIN loss

Table 2.1—Continued

Country (Insurgency)	Years	Outcome
Uganda (ADF)	1986–2000	**COIN win**
Papua New Guinea	1988–1998	COIN loss
Liberia	1989–1997	COIN loss
Rwanda	1990–1994	COIN loss
Moldova	1990–1992	COIN loss
Sierra Leone	1991–2002	**COIN win**
Algeria (GIA)	1992–2004	**COIN win**
Croatia	1992–1995	**COIN win**
Afghanistan (post-Soviet)	1992–1996	COIN loss
Tajikistan	1992–1997	COIN loss
Georgia/Abkhazia	1992–1994	COIN loss
Nagorno-Karabakh	1992–1994	COIN loss
Bosnia	1992–1995	COIN loss
Burundi	1993–2003	COIN loss
Chechnya I	1994–1996	COIN loss
Afghanistan (Taliban)	1996–2001	COIN loss
Zaire (anti-Mobutu)	1996–1997	COIN loss
Kosovo	1996–1999	COIN loss
Nepal	1997–2006	COIN loss
DR Congo (anti-Kabila)	1998–2003	COIN loss

NOTE: "COIN loss" includes the outcomes "insurgent win" and "mixed, favoring insurgents" (nine of 22 case losses were mixed outcomes favoring the insurgents). "COIN win" includes "COIN win" and "mixed, favoring COIN force." "Mixed, favoring COIN force" occurs only once in the eight COIN wins. For details on outcome scoring and categories, see the section "Outcome Assessment" in Appendix A.

Nicaragua (Somoza), 1978–1979

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Four decades of neopatrimonial rule by a corrupt and unpopular government led to an uprising in the rural parts of Nicaragua that quickly spread from the countryside to the cities and towns surrounding the capital, Managua. The murder of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, an extremely popular newspaper editor, served to add fuel to an already

smoldering fire as widespread dissatisfaction with the Somoza regime quickly galvanized into an insurgency.

Four important factors converged to allow the insurgents to dislodge a qualitatively and quantitatively superior COIN force. First, the three main insurgent groups reconciled their respective differences and combined their efforts to fight the government. Second, indiscriminate violence by the counterinsurgents turned the population toward the Sandinistas and swelled their ranks with recruits. Third, the Carter administration decided that it could no longer back Nicaraguan president Anastasio Somoza Debayle following egregious human rights violations committed by his forces. Finally, Venezuela, Cuba, and Panama afforded the insurgency the weapons and safe haven necessary to defeat a stronger opponent. The combination of effective political organization by the Sandinistas, repressive policies by the government, loss of support for Somoza in the United States, and a steady supply of weapons from various Latin American nations to the insurgents led to an insurgent victory in a short but bloody conflict.

Afghanistan (Anti-Soviet), 1978–1992

Outcome: COIN Loss

The Afghan insurgency against the Soviet Union has been referred to as a "textbook study of how a major power can fail to win a war against guerrillas."[4] Despite their overwhelming political and military superiority, the Soviets encountered unexpected opposition to their invasion in 1979 and were unprepared to face the challenge of sustaining a weak, unpopular communist government against highly motivated Islamic fighters, or mujahadeen. While Moscow and its proxy regime in Kabul were able to develop more effective COIN policies in the mid-1980s, they were at a disadvantage against the mujahadeen, who not only benefited from extensive external support (including the provision of highly effective Stinger missiles from the United States) and reli-

[4] Anthony James Joes, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical, Biographical, and Bibliographical Sourcebook*, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996, p. 119.

gious fervor but were also in a position to "win by simply not losing."[5] The mujahadeen failed to unify as an insurgent force or offer an alternative form of governance, yet they were able to delegitimize the Kabul regime and defeat the Soviets after more than a decade of guerrilla war.

Kampuchea, 1978–1992

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Fed up with the policies and cross-border incursions of Kampuchea's Khmer Rouge government, Vietnam invaded Kampuchea in December 1978. Initially welcomed for freeing the people of Cambodia from the depredations of Pol Pot, the Vietnamese quickly wore out their welcome. With the support of Thailand (and others further abroad), the Khmer Rouge reconstituted itself as a significant insurgency, and several other insurgent movements formed and contested the occupation. The 1984–1985 dry season saw the Vietnamese and their Cambodian proxies aggressively sweep the border regions free of insurgents and then build a "bamboo curtain" (with cleared ground, minefields, and defensive road networks) with their K5 plan. This ambitious operation was effective over the short term, but the bamboo curtain did not keep the insurgents out, and the use of forced labor in its construction further alienated the population. After several years of expensive stalemate, Vietnamese forces abandoned Cambodia to their indigenous proxies in 1989. The puppet government managed to hang on through the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement in 1991 and into the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission period. It was then soundly defeated at the polls.

Although the government unambiguously lost this insurgency, it is scored as a mixed outcome for two reasons. First, the principal insurgent group, the Khmer Rouge, also "lost" in that it was not particularly favored in the settlement or an important part of the postconflict governing coalition (other, more modestly sized and more moderate insurgent groups were). Second, although it withdrew and its puppet

[5] The phrase "win by not losing," which has been used to characterize the goals of the Afghan resistance, is a central tenet of the "continuation and contestation" approach (see Chapter Four).

government was ultimately displaced, the government of Vietnam realized many of its more modest long-term political goals for Cambodia.

El Salvador, 1979–1992

Case Outcome: COIN Win (Mixed, Favoring COIN)

The Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) offered a significant challenge to a kleptocratic and dictatorial Salvadoran government and a corrupt, barracks-bound Salvadoran military whose only significant victories were against the civilian population. With time bought by massive amounts of U.S. aid during the 1980s, the government of El Salvador democratized and increased its legitimacy, while the military increased its competence and improved its respect for human rights. By the end of the conflict, real evidence of reform corresponded with government and military statements and helped generate and sustain credibility and legitimacy. The conflict reached a stalemate in the late 1980s and was ultimately resolved through a settlement favorable to the government as external support to the insurgents dwindled and participation in the political process became an increasingly tenable approach to redressing grievances.

Somalia, 1980–1991

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Mohamed Siad Barre's dictatorial regime was ousted by a decade-long insurgency that featured several insurgent groups fighting against the government. COIN forces repeatedly resorted to brutal tactics, which only served to galvanize the opposition and turn local populations against the military. Barre continuously underestimated the threat posed by the various insurgent factions while also failing to take heed of growing antigovernment sentiment among average Somalis. After years of wanton violence against civilians and any persons thought to be associated with certain tribes, Barre's government lost any support it once had, and the population actively supported the various insurgent groups in their quest to overthrow the dictator.

As the insurgency progressed, the two main insurgent groups operating in the north, the Somali National Movement (SNM) and the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), began to capture territory

throughout the country. Moreover, the SNM received material support from neighboring Ethiopia. Growing discord between Barre's regime and the military, coupled with a lack of a coherent COIN approach, contributed to his downfall. No longer able to bribe and coerce the myriad clans and tribes he had tactfully manipulated for so long, and facing a more organized and aggressive insurgency, Barre eventually succumbed to defeat as he fled the country in the wake of his government's collapse. Somalia's clan- and tribal-based society was an ideal setting for guerrilla warfare, and the country has not had a functioning government since 1991.

Peru, 1980–1992

Case Outcome: COIN Win

Abimael Guzmán's Sendero Luminoso, or Shining Path, proved to be a surprisingly resilient threat to democratic Peru. Arising in the midst of a significant economic crisis that corrupt and squabbling government officials did little to resolve, Sendero was first treated as a law-enforcement problem. The threat grew largely unabated until 1982, when states of emergency were declared in many of the country's departments, allowing the military to enter the conflict. Massive repression and indiscriminant violence did little to help the government's cause. The late 1980s saw shifts in government strategies, with reduced repression and new attempts to encourage development. These initiatives were marred, however, by corruption and lack of unity of effort. Though Sendero never had the support of most of the population (the group was too violent and too radical), government and military incompetence led to widespread belief that the insurgents would win. All this changed with the 1990 election of Alberto Fujimori to the presidency and his administration's commitment to local defense forces and an intelligence-focused strategy that ultimately led to the capture of Guzmán and the disintegration of Sendero. Under Fujimori, for the first time in the conflict, the government, police, and military made effective use of what would now be called *strategic communication*, with a greater emphasis on government credibility and consistency between actions and messages.

Nicaragua (Contras), 1981–1990

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Various opposition groups came together to fight against the Sandinista government shortly after its victory over the Somoza regime in late 1979. This insurgency is heralded as classic example of the Reagan Doctrine in action. Backed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Contra insurgents gained momentum early in the conflict by catching the Sandinistas by surprise. After regrouping and improving intelligence collection during the second phase of the insurgency, the Sandinistas regained the upper hand. Ultimately, however, the Contras emerged victorious as a result of better training and organization, as well as considerable pressure exerted on the Sandinista government by the United States. Militarily, the support provided by the United States in the form of training, weapons, and money allowed the Contras to avoid defeat just long enough for the political elements of the insurgency to work in their favor. Politically, the U.S.-backed candidate, Violeta Chamorro, benefitted significantly from the nearly $3 million spent by the National Endowment for Democracy on "technical assistance."

Senegal, 1982–2002

Case Outcome: COIN Win

A separatist insurgency, the Movement of Democratic Forces of the Casamance (MFDC), troubled the government of Senegal for two full decades. Early on, the group "capitalized upon the grievances of the local populations, and received support from them."[6] However, in the early 1990s, the insurgency began receiving external support from neighboring countries the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, which led it to escalate its tactics and turn on the local population. As the government of Senegal sought to improve relations with its neighbors in an effort to stem the flow of support for the insurgency, it also attempted to cut off any remaining internal support for the MFDC through what Wagane Faye has called a "politics of 'charm.'" (Senegal is the only case in which

[6] Wagane Faye, *The Casamance Separatism: From Independence Claim to Resource Logic*, thesis, Monterey, Calif.: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2006, p. v.

the government realized all seven factors associated with strategic communication as a COIN approach in the final phase of the insurgency; see Chapter Three.) "In response, the MFDC [became] engaged in the illegal exploitation of [Senegal's] natural resources."[7] Ultimately, after dividing the insurgents through co-optation and amnesty, the government was able to settle with the majority of the insurgents, and the bandit activities of the remainder subsided to the level of a law-enforcement problem. At no point during this lengthy though relatively small and low-intensity insurgency was the government of Senegal ever seriously threatened.

Turkey (PKK), 1984–1999

Case Outcome: COIN Win

The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) began its insurgency as the outlawed party of an ethnic minority whose very existence was denied by the Turkish Constitution. The PKK struggled initially to develop support among a Kurdish population familiar with Turkish repression and not keen on further quixotic resistance. Over time, the PKK established itself as the premiere Kurdish cultural, political, and resistance organization and won significant regional popular support for its secessionist violence. This growth in support was a product not only of PKK successes but also of the repressive and heavy-handed response by Turkish authorities.

The PKK was defeated in 1999 after several years of "big stick" COIN by the Turks. Turkish forces had taken drastic measures to separate the insurgents from the population in the mountain villages in the area of conflict, aggressively pursued the insurgents into the mountains, sought to cut off cross-border support to them, and, most tellingly, made a political deal with extranational hosts to capture the authoritarian leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan.

[7] Faye, 2006, p. v.

Sudan (SPLA), 1984–2004

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

The civil war in Sudan pitted the developed Arab Muslim government in the north against the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), representing Christians and animists in the rural, oil-rich south. The northern-based government sought to extend Islamic law throughout the country and benefit from the south's oil wealth while the southern rebels fought to obtain autonomy. An ineffective COIN strategy motivated by religious convictions and a "military-first" approach hampered the Sudanese government's attempts to crush the insurgency. Despite factionalism within the SPLA and changes in its external sources of support, the insurgents were able to continue to launch attacks on government forces and Sudan's oil pipelines and infrastructure in the south. After two decades of fighting and widespread famine, the government bowed to significant international pressure and agreed to a negotiated settlement with the SPLA that included a power-sharing agreement with the south and the promise of a referendum on secession.

Uganda (ADF), 1986–2000

Case Outcome: COIN Win

The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) launched an insurgency against the Ugandan government in 1986, undertaking brutal attacks on civilians in the western region of the country. While a nominally Muslim group, the ADF did not have a clear religious agenda. Its vaguely stated goals were to overthrow the government and rid Uganda of Rwandan Tutsis. ADF attacks against civilians and military outposts increased in 1998, aided by external support from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sudan. Initially, the Ugandan government was unable to maintain security in the region, but it eventually contained the insurgency by attacking the ADF's rear bases in the DRC and by developing special COIN units trained in mountain warfare.

Papua New Guinea, 1988–1998

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

The insurgency on the island of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea was sparked by protests by local landowners against the policies of out-

side mining companies. The protests became increasingly violent after the government sent in troops to defend the mines, leading to the evolution of a wider secessionist movement. Attempts by the Papua New Guinea army to crush the rebellion by employing local militia forces and instituting a military and economic blockade of the island failed. After six years of low-intensity conflict, the president of Papua New Guinea contracted with a private military firm to aid his COIN efforts. This decision led to the collapse of the government and a decline in public support for the military effort. Political negotiations were then pursued, leading to agreement on a cease-fire in 1998 that promised broad powers of self-governance for Bougainville.

Liberia, 1989–1997

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

What began as a civil war soon descended into a frenzy of violence, with as many as seven armed insurgent groups vying for power simultaneously. Under the command of Samuel Doe, the Liberian army and its ethnic Krahn counterparts attacked other tribes seen as threatening Doe's power, specifically those in Nimba County. In response, Charles Taylor organized a rebel force across the border in Côte d'Ivoire, where the insurgents organized, trained, and prepared for battle.

Soldiers from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), supplanted a deteriorating government as the primary COIN force. Atrocities were committed by all sides, including the COIN forces, as each side sought to gain control over valuable natural resources, such as diamonds, gold, iron ore, and timber. Accusations of brutality, collusion, and corruption, especially among the Nigerian contingent, plagued the COIN force throughout the conflict and certainly contributed to its dearth of credibility. With the civilian population suffering from war fatigue and the combatants themselves battle-weary, the fighting began to ebb. After 13 failed attempts to reach a peace agreement, the conflict was finally terminated when Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) received the tacit approval of Nigeria to sit for elections. Receiving an overwhelming 75 percent of the vote, Taylor and

his National Patriotic Party defeated the 12 other candidates contesting for power in an election marred by widespread voter intimidation.

Rwanda, 1990–1994

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

The civil war in Rwanda began in 1990 when the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invaded the country from its base in Uganda, seeking to establish democracy and the right of return for Tutsi refugees. After the RPF was turned back by Rwandan and French forces, it conducted an effective guerrilla campaign that ultimately led to the negotiation of a power-sharing agreement with the Hutu-led government. The political agreement with the RPF raised fears among the Hutu population over a reassertion of Tutsi power, however. In 1994, tensions came to a head when the plane carrying the Rwandan president was shot down and a genocidal campaign was declared by the radical Hutus, who gained control of the provisional government. Over the next few months, the government became preoccupied with eliminating Tutsis and moderate Hutus. French forces withheld direct military support, which allowed the RPF to regroup and quickly defeat the Rwandan army, gaining control of the capital with little opposition.

Moldova, 1990–1992

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Situated at the ethnic crossroads of several former empires, Moldova was host to violence that pitted pro-Romanian ethnic Moldovans against pro-Russian Dniesters in the early 1990s.[8] Suspicious that ethnic Moldovans in the government were planning to unite Moldova with Romania following independence, various elements in the Transdniester region along the Moldova-Ukraine border agitated for attacks against the Moldovan police. COIN forces were woefully underequipped and lacked a full-spectrum force. Furthermore, they were incapable of conducting high-intensity tactical assaults, despite having air supremacy and artillery superiority. The insurgents, on the other

[8] Moldova lies at the "ethnic crossroads" of greater Bessarabia, the intersection of German, Russian, Turkic, Romanian, and Ukrainian populations, history, and culture.

hand, acquired arms and heavy weapons from the Russian 14th Army, which was stationed in the region and provided seemingly unending tangible support to its ethnic kin. The support of a professional military proved to be the decisive factor in this lopsided insurgency.

The Moldovan government tried relentlessly and to no avail to solve the conflict through diplomacy, with the Moldovan leader Mircea Snegur unwilling to unleash the full fury of his COIN force against his enemies. The insurgents then defeated the COIN forces in a short but bloody battle with the assistance of the Russian 14th Army and various mercenaries. The Transdniester region retains de facto independence and is still under supervision by the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe.

Sierra Leone, 1991–2002

Case Outcome: COIN Win

The COIN force in this conflict comprised a series of actors and lasted for more than a decade. The insurgents terrorized the population through looting, rape, mutilation, and murder. Control of the diamond fields was a central focus of the conflict and served as the primary motivation for the insurgents. Money gained from the sale of diamonds was used to pay fighters and acquire sophisticated weaponry.

During one stage in the conflict, the government of Valentine Strasser and the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) hired the South African mercenary firm Executive Outcomes (EO) to conduct COIN operations. Ultimately, British-led COIN forces adopted good COIN practices, quelled the fighting, and restored order to the country. Indeed, the lack of continuity between COIN forces—the Sierra Leonean army, EO, ECOMOG, and the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)—certainly contributed to the prolonged nature of the insurgency. However, by reorganizing UNAMSIL into a more modern force with new leadership and better coordination at all levels, the COIN force was eventually able to adopt positive COIN practices in the later stages of the conflict. In addition to acquiring helicopter gunships, deploying a full signals battalion, and using detailed maps and satellite imagery, the COIN force was able to maintain regular contact for the first time between troop-contributing countries, the

UN Security Council, and the secretariat through the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Furthermore, the COIN force kept its promise to protect the citizens during elections, providing the security necessary for Sierra Leoneans to vote at the polls with little fear of being attacked. Approximately 47,000 excombatants turned in their weapons, making the use of force by the counterinsurgents largely unnecessary during the final phase of the insurgency and lending a sense of credibility to the nearly disgraced UNAMSIL mission.

Some have called UNAMSIL the "model mission." To be sure, the COIN force was not without its shortcomings. However, at its height, UNAMSIL had roughly 17,000 troops and a large civilian staff operating at a cost of $700 million per year. Although not recognized as such at the time, adherence to strategic communication principles was a major factor in the mission's success. Indeed, the COIN force was able to maintain credibility with the local population, achieve unity of effort, and keep consistency in its message. This was accomplished by coordinating a large-scale disarmament program, successfully organizing elections, and, above all, providing a secure environment for the population.[9] These factors ultimately converged to allow the COIN force to prevail. In the 2002 elections, government- and COIN force–backed President Tejan Kabbah won the election while the insurgent-supported Revolutionary United Front Party failed to win a single seat.

Algeria (GIA), 1992–2004

Case Outcome: COIN Win

The insurgency by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) was prompted by the Algerian government's decision to cancel an election that was expected to put an Islamic party in power. The GIA initiated an urban terror campaign that became increasingly violent and targeted toward civilians. Although the military government in Algiers took brutal repressive actions against the insurgency, the GIA's attacks were viewed as even more violent and threatening. After a series of civilian massacres, by 1998, the GIA had lost much of its public support. The

[9] Funmi Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: The Story of UNAMSIL*, Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008, p. 111.

government then pursued a more effective COIN strategy, implementing an amnesty program, targeting the GIA hardliners, and offering political concessions, which helped to defeat an already weakened and fragmented GIA.

Croatia, 1992–1995

Case Outcome: COIN Win

The insurgency in Croatia was fought between the Croatian army (HV) and various elements of the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) and other Serb insurgent forces, which attempted to form their own independent enclave within Croatia known as the Republic of Serbian Krajina.

This three-year conflict saw innumerable failed cease-fires and egregious human rights violations committed by both sides. After two-and-a-half years of on-again, off-again fighting, the government prevailed as a result of two overarching factors: First, the Croatian military completely revamped itself from a second-rate fighting force into a formidable army with the assistance of the United States. Second, and equally important, the insurgents were abandoned by Belgrade as Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic diverted his support elsewhere in the Balkans in an attempt to capitalize on insurgent success in neighboring Bosnia.

Following its transformation into a respected military, the HV was able to reduce tangible support to the insurgents and was strong enough to force the Serbs to fight as guerrillas. As a result, the government in Zagreb soon gained a reputation as a competent and capable state. While the Croats fought valiantly throughout the conflict, it was not until the final phase that they were able to put all the pieces together, launching two devastating COIN operations (Flash and Storm in May and August 1995, respectively).

Despite employing many poor COIN practices, including severe repression, the Croats exhibited enough positive practices on balance to prevail and secure the country's independence with its capital in Zagreb.

Afghanistan (Post-Soviet), 1992–1996

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

After the fall of the Soviet-supported Najibullah regime in 1992, Afghanistan lacked a legitimate central government. Kabul was governed by a coalition of former mujahadeen who competed for power among themselves, leading the country to devolve into a state of warlordism. The Taliban rose to prominence in 1994 by establishing a devout and disciplined militia that promised to restore order and security to the country. Taliban leaders received support from Pakistan and the war-weary Afghan population and were able to defeat what remained of the divided mujahadeen government, seize control of Kabul, and establish their own unified yet brutal government.

Tajikistan, 1992–1997

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Less than a year after gaining independence from the Soviet Union, a mix of democrats, Tajik nationalists, and Islamists joined together to form the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) to challenge the communist-based government in Dushanbe. The UTO briefly gained control of the capital before being forced out by former government leaders, aided by Russian and Uzbek forces, employing brutal methods and inflicting significant civilian casualties. Upon its retreat, the UTO began launching attacks from bases in Afghanistan and became more closely associated with the Islamic movement.

The new government of Tajikistan subsequently did little to meet the needs of its populace and relied increasingly on Russian military support. While Tajik leader Emomali Rahmonov bowed to pressure to make some changes to his government and military leadership, they were not sufficient for the rebels, who continued to launch attacks. Only after the Taliban gained control of Afghanistan did Russia and Uzbekistan force the Tajik government to make greater concessions. This outside pressure led to the signing of the Peace and National Reconciliation Accord that met most of the UTO's political demands.

Georgia/Abkhazia, 1992–1994

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Long a hotbed of unrest, the disputed Abkhaz region was one of many areas that erupted in violence following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The Georgia/Abkhazia border region became host to an insurgency after the kidnapping of Georgian government officials in 1992. Control of the capital, Sukhumi, switched hands several times, and the two-year conflict featured numerous failed cease-fires. Georgian COIN forces were defeated by Abkhazian insurgents in a conflict characterized by atrocities on both sides, which fits the general pattern of insurgency warfare in the post-Soviet Transcaucasus. The insurgent force was supplemented by volunteers from the Confederation of Peoples of the North Caucasus as well as Russian soldiers. The COIN force's inability to seal the country's borders allowed insurgent fighters, weapons, and materiel to prolong the conflict and provided the Abkhaz with the resources necessary to emerge victorious.

In addition to fighting Abkhaz insurgents, Georgian COIN forces were simultaneously engaged in a civil war against Georgian rebels and a war in South Ossetia. Ultimately, Russian soldiers tipped the balance in favor of the insurgents. Eager to end the fighting, Georgia begrudgingly accepted membership in the Commonwealth of Independent States as a precondition to Moscow's influence in bringing intra-Georgian fighting to a halt. Abkhazia gained de facto independence following the end of the insurgency and expelled the majority of the Georgian population living within its borders.

Nagorno-Karabakh, 1992–1994

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

In another case of post-Soviet separatism, Azerbaijani authorities had governed Nagorno-Karabakh[10] directly with tacit approval from the Kremlin beginning in the late 1980s. When its Armenian majority declared the territory an independent state completely free from Azerbaijani rule, the two sides mobilized for war.

[10] Sometimes referred to in the literature as Nagorny-Karabagh or simply Qarabagh.

A more disciplined, better organized Karabakh Armenian insurgency defeated Azerbaijani COIN forces with the assistance of Russia, which provided weapons and troops to both sides in the conflict at various points. Political discord in Baku contributed significantly to the counterinsurgents' inability to muster an organized fighting force capable of defeating the insurgency. This case is a clear example of how ineffectual political leadership can adversely affect battlefield performance. Moreover, the Armenians possessed superior fighting skills from their experience in the former Soviet army. By the time the fighting came to an end, Armenian insurgents controlled not only Nagorno-Karabakh proper but also approximately 15 percent of Azerbaijani territory. Russia helped negotiate a cease-fire in May 1994, with a major stipulation being the recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh as a third party in the war. The situation in Nagorno-Karabakh remains unresolved today and is commonly referred to as a "frozen conflict" because of the inability to find a lasting resolution that is acceptable to all sides.

Bosnia, 1992–1995

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Following Bosnia's independence after the breakup of Yugoslavia, Bosnian Serb insurgents battled both Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats for control of territory. COIN forces were underequipped and frequently fought with each other, while the insurgents were more organized, highly motivated, and better equipped. "Arkan's Tigers" were an extremely brutal but highly effective paramilitary unit operating throughout the country during the course of the insurgency. Bosnia was also the scene of the Srebrenica massacre, a campaign of ethnic cleansing orchestrated by Bosnian Serb insurgents that led to the deaths of more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslims and the exodus of an additional 25,000–30,000 refugees.

The Srebrenica massacre and another large-scale slaughter of civilians in Markale prompted the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to intervene to end the fighting in the waning stages of the conflict, but Bosnian Serb insurgents secured a significant portion of territory and established the autonomous Republika Srpska, with close

ties to Belgrade. The insurgency officially ended with the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina in Paris on December 14, 1995.

Burundi, 1993–2003

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Burundi has long been plagued by ethnic conflict between the Tutsi minority, which maintained control of the government, and the majority Hutu population. In 1993, a series of ethnic massacres occurred after the country's first democratically elected Hutu president was assassinated. Subsequent instability led the Tutsi-dominated army to reassert control and reinstall a Tutsi-led government under Pierre Buyoya. The Buyoya regime implemented harsh COIN tactics, including widespread forcible resettlements, which served to reduce popular support for the government. Only after a decade of fighting, tens of thousands of deaths, and hundreds of thousands of displacements was a peace agreement finally reached with the Forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD, one of the two major Hutu insurgent groups), in which the FDD agreed to abandon its armed struggle in exchange for guaranteed representation in the government.

Chechnya I, 1994–1996

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

After failing to put down a rebellion by proxy in the breakaway Republic of Chechnya, Russian forces entered Grozny in December 1994. As the COIN force, the Russian army was plagued by a lack of training, severely disjointed command and control, and an unclear mission. Chechen insurgents, however, were highly motivated, familiar with the terrain, and able to marshal the resources necessary to exploit the Russians in asymmetric engagements.

The insurgents proved to be as adaptable and flexible as the COIN force was cumbersome. Realizing that hit-and-run tactics would require a high degree of mobility, the Chechens used light and portable grenade launchers, machine guns, and antitank weapons. The Chechens employed a technique known as "hugging," in which they stayed close to the Russian infantry in urban areas (they were usually

less than 50 meters away) to reduce casualties from COIN artillery and air attacks. Furthermore, the insurgents had an extensive support network among the population, which provided them with real-time intelligence, food, weapons, and fuel. The conflict devolved into carnage with widespread atrocities committed by both sides before a Russian withdrawal in 1996.

Afghanistan (Taliban), 1996–2001

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

The Taliban took power from an unstable mujahadeen government in Kabul in 1996 and consolidated control over much of the country over the course of the next two years (with the help of Pakistani and foreign jihadist fighters). It failed, however, to establish an effective administrative apparatus that could provide services to the population or gain popular support for the regime. Welcomed at first for imposing order after years of chaos and bloodshed, the Taliban alienated many Afghanis and isolated itself from the international community with its brutal imposition of Islamic law. Ultimately, the Taliban's decision to host Osama bin Laden and allow him to establish al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan led the Taliban to be driven from power by a U.S.-led coalition in November 2001.

Zaire (Anti-Mobutu), 1996–1997

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

The eastern region of Zaire was destabilized by the civil war in neighboring Rwanda and the influx of Hutus across the border. The displaced Hutus threatened the native Tutsi population in Zaire and established a base for rebel attacks against the new Rwandan government. In response to this threat, local Tutsis and the Rwandan army launched a preemptive attack on the Hutu militia and the Zairian army that supported it. A national rebel group under the leadership of Laurent Kabila was then formed to lead the fight against Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko's regime. Kabila faced little resistance from Mobutu's poorly equipped army. Aided by the Rwandan, Ugandan, and Angolan armies, Kabila was able to take control of the capital within a matter of months.

Kosovo, 1996–1999

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) insurgents battled Federal Republic of Yugoslavia COIN forces to a stalemate for most of the duration of this conflict. The KLA received financial assistance from the Kosovar Albanian diaspora and also benefited from the implosion of the government in neighboring Albania, which resulted in significant amounts of weaponry flooding across the border into the hands of the KLA.

The Racak massacre carried out by COIN forces prompted NATO to intervene on the side of the insurgents in an attempt to prevent ethnic cleansing and defeat the Milosevic regime. NATO forces conducted a three-month air campaign while KLA insurgents fought Serbian troops on the ground, resulting in Milosevic's capitulation and the imposition of a UN-backed peacekeeping force. While various commentators speculate on the motives for Milosevic's concession of the war, the primary reason is unequivocal: NATO airpower was *the* deciding factor in bringing the conflict to a close. Following its unilateral declaration of independence in February 2008 as the Republic of Kosovo, the country is recognized as an independent nation by 63 UN member states, including the United States.

Nepal, 1997–2006

Case Outcome: Coin Loss

A democracy since 1990, Nepal fell prey to problems common to nascent democracies: corruption, excessive interparty politicking, and general paralysis and ineffectiveness.[11] This left the citizenry very open to the criticism offered by Maoist insurgents beginning in 1996. The insurgents' criticism of the state was further validated by the ineffective yet brutal COIN campaign launched by local police, which targeted both the insurgents and civilians. The one government institution with any kind of legitimacy, the monarchy, was shattered in a 2001 regicide. That same year, Nepal's army was unleashed on the insurgents for the first time and proved no more effective than the police had been.

[11] Thomas A. Marks, *Insurgency in Nepal*, Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, December 2003, p. 4.

Largely a ceremonial force, though substantially better equipped than the police or insurgents, the army made no headway against the Maoists and could not provide security for itself, let alone the larger population. King Gyanendra's 2005 royalist seizure of the government cast much of Nepali civil society into opposition. The Maoist insurgents opportunistically joined with a prodemocracy coalition and secured a significant place for themselves in the new government after the combination of military and civil pressure forced the king to capitulate in 2006.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (Anti-Kabila), 1998–2003

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

The second Congolese war began in 1998 with the invasion of Rwandan and Ugandan forces seeking to overthrow DRC President Laurent Kabila, their former ally. Kabila countered the threat to his government by engaging Angolan, Zimbabwean, and Namibian forces and local militia groups in his defense. The war then devolved into a conflict of pillage and partition as the various regional forces battled for control of the country's resources. Efforts toward political compromise and international negotiation began in 2001 after the president was assassinated and replaced by his son, Joseph. Joseph Kabila eventually concluded a cease-fire agreement with the Ugandan, Rwandan, and other foreign forces and a power-sharing deal with the major rebel groups, which greatly reduced the level of fighting by 2003.

Case Narrative Results

These narratives provide some context for the quantitative analysis presented in the next chapter. The accompanying volume contains more detail for each case, including

- a short summary of the case
- a summary of each phase of the case, including key factors for that phase

- a discussion of the conventional explanations for the outcomes of the case, as offered in existing secondary analysis
- a list of distinct features of the case.

Beyond this, we offer no separate analysis of the individual cases; all of the analyses are of aggregate-level data across all of the cases together. In fact, one of our most striking findings is that we do not need to discuss any of the distinct features or unique narrative peculiarities of the individual cases to wholly explain the outcomes: The patterns of presence or absence of factors common to all of the cases are sufficient to explain all of the outcomes (see Chapter Four). In fact, our analysis supports the idea that it can be a mistake to learn too many "lessons" from a single case, as the peculiarities and distinctions of a single case may obfuscate otherwise critical and enduring relationships between COIN practices and outcomes.