An Integrated Approach to Counter Insurgency: A Burundi Case Study

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AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO COUNTER INSURGENCY: A BURUNDI CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

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Since the 1960s, insurgency has occupied the center stage of violent conflicts in the Great Lakes Region of Africa (GLRA). While the main reason has oftentimes been bad governance, the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has favored insurgency. As governmental forces lack control of this area, insurgents from Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi enjoy it as a safe haven. Since 1994 to 2006, Burundi has been attacked from that area until the Arusha accord led to democratic elections in 2005. Five years later, while observers did not notice any major anomaly, a number of former rebels and some political parties' leaders have contested the 2010 election and are initiating a new insurgency. Using guerilla tactics as means to achieve political ends, insurgents oppose the Government of Burundi (GB) on the outcome of the 2010 election. However, the Government labels them as bandits. As Carlos Ospina has stated, “no matter what the enemy is called, successful counter insurgency depends on a thorough understanding of the enemy and his real intention.” ¹Thus, consistent with this idea, an integrated approach is advocated. It is premised on a strategy using ends, ways, and means to correct the trajectory of the current counter insurgency effort.
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Peace and security in Burundi are threatened by a renewal of insurgency. Despite the validation of the 2010 elections by international observers and former rebels, some political leaders have contested the outcome of the presidential election and abandoned the peace accord signed in 2003. They have fled to the traditional safe haven in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to devise a new insurgency and violently claim that elections were fraudulently won. If this situation is not appropriately checked by Burundi policy makers, the country might experience another conflict.

At the same time, the government is in a security dilemma whether to publicly recognize the existence of an insurgency or not. While many analysts foresee a return to a conflict if nothing is done to address the issues at hand, Burundi policy makers think they can quietly fight the insurgency by only using police and military forces. It appears that the governmental approach is more interested in treating symptoms by military means instead of envisioning a holistic solution to the root causes that have given rise to the renewal of the insurgency. That is to say, Burundi policymakers have to deal with the sickness that plagues Burundi at the political, economic, and social levels instead of seeking short term solutions. Consequently, military leaders have to define the enemy earlier in order to ascertain the kind of war that is to be fought.

Since October 2010, opposition parties’ militants, local officials, and security force members have been killed. Violence started in the southern outskirts neighboring the capital Bujumbura where opposition leaders had strong supporters. Initially, friction
involved only police and opposition militants, but eventually, military stations and the population were also attacked by small armed groups. The recent attack on September 18, 2011 took 39 lives in Gatumba, a city nearing the DRC border in the western part of Burundi. The government accused the Front National de Liberation (FNL) while the latter accused the governmental police. Daniel Bekele, Director of Human Right Africa clarifies the situation as follows:

Several FNL and other opposition leaders fled into exile and remain outside Burundi. Some former members of rebel groups have taken up arms again and returned to the bush. The western part of the country, particularly the province of Bujumbura Rural where Gatumba is located, remains an FNL stronghold. Most incidents of political violence have occurred in this area.\textsuperscript{2}

This renewal of insurgency is worth a systematic analysis in order to identify long term solutions. To successfully work at this issue, the starting point shall be the use of history to determine the root causes of the conflict so that the insurgency can be cut from its lifeline. The next step shall be an assessment of motivations and forces that drive insurgency in the strategic environment in order to explore options for a comprehensive approach. The last step, but not the least, shall be the selection of an appropriate option as a recommendation for a Burundi COIN effort. As Bard E. O’Neil has stated “...particular violent situations arose where societal divisions were cumulative and were combined with economic and political disparities.”\textsuperscript{3} It is in the light of this view that a comprehensive approach is advocated to address the overall underlying conditions that push people to fight.

This paper discusses the best combination of the instruments of national power to fight the current insurgency and achieve lasting peace in Burundi. To address the issue at hand, this project suggests an indirect approach asserting that military actions
need to be complimented by non-military ones in a COIN effort. After clarifying and framing the concept, an analysis of the historical roots of insurgency in Burundi and a diagnosis of the strategic environment are presented. This diagnosis informs with an evaluation, in terms of strengths and weaknesses, of the current method of waging COIN operations. Crafting a new strategic approach, that aims at correcting identified flaws, is the ultimate goal of this project. The methodology focuses on a strategic framework that uses ends, ways, and means to shape the operating environment, frame the problem and suggest an integrated approach as a recommended option to defeat insurgency and win lasting peace.

**Clarifying and Framing the Concepts of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency**

Insurgency and Counterinsurgency that are the case in point for this project have been conceptualized in the *2006 U.S. Quadrennial Defense Review*. According to this report, “threats are posed by four challenges: irregular, catastrophic, disruptive, and traditional. Terrorism and insurgency fall within the irregular warfare as do stability operations and whole-of-government stabilization and reconstruction.”

Also, the *Field Manual (FM) 3-24, Counterinsurgency*, co-authored by the U.S. Army and the Marines, defines insurgency as “an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion.” This definition emphasizes both ways and ends but does little to speak to the kinds of means used by insurgency organizations. To be more complete, Raj Desai and Harry Eckstein state that:

Insurgency is a syncretic phenomenon, one that joins diverse elements in an explosive mix. It combines three elements: first, the spirit of traditional peasant rebellion; second, the ideology and organization of modern revolution; and third, the operational doctrines of guerilla warfare.
Thomas A. Marks further states that “insurgency is about politics, about reshaping the process of who gets what.” This definition clarifies the organization and means of insurgency, shows the political nature and its symbiotic relationship with force; however, it does not focus fully on insurgency ends.

A combination of the above better clarifies the concept because ends, ways, and means that guide insurgency have to be stressed. A combined definition follows:

Insurgency is an organized movement aimed at overthrowing a constituted government using an explosive mix of three elements: first the spirit of tradition peasant rebellion, second the organization of modern revolution, and third the operational doctrines of guerilla warfare to reshape political settings. This definition combines modern and traditional ingredients that have been shaping insurgency doctrine throughout history while showing the political objective articulated into ends, ways, and means. It also informs that “one must remember that insurgents have a doctrine too.” This definition is the premise of our analysis.

*The Field Manual 3-24* also defines the counter insurgency as “a military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency.” This definition implies joint roles between other instruments of the national power in addition to the military force. It also brings to the forefront the difference between traditional military operations and COIN efforts. This is better explained by the *United States Marine Corps Small Wars Manual* in addressing how political authorities handle them. According to the author, political leaders adopt different attitudes toward COIN and conventional wars. “At the beginning of a conventional war, political leaders hand over to military men the problem that diplomacy has not solved and tell them to deal with it. But in small wars [insurgency] political authorities never let the strings out of their hands.” What pushes political leaders to
keep an eye on COIN is to ensure that military operations are correctly aligned with political objectives. That is, in an insurgency aimed at opposing governmental legitimacy, military operations must be kept in check by political actors to fully focus on population needs owing that the people, sooner or later, have to choose their leaders. After framing the concepts of insurgency and COIN, history is used to show the link between the previous insurgency and the current one.

**Historical Roots of Insurgency in Burundi**

Understanding historical roots of the insurgency in Burundi requires a grasp of the colonial, ethnic, and regional contexts that have continuously shaped insurgency. Burundi sits between the United Republic of Tanzania in the East and South, the Democratic Republic of Congo in the West, and the Republic of Rwanda in the North. It is a mountainous country covering 10,747 square miles. Burundi is inhabited by three ethnic groups: the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. All three ethnic groups speak the same language, the Kirundi. They also live mixed together in scattered villages organized according to clan affiliations.¹²

Formerly colonized by Germany in 1899, the kingdoms of Rwanda and Urundi were “both entrusted to Belgium by the League of Nations on November 23, 1923. Belgium had already occupied the two small kingdoms after defeating the Germany contingent in 1916.”¹³ During the colonial era, the Belgium kingdom emphasized ethnic differences leading to tension between the two main ethnic groups the Hutu and Tutsi. Through an indirect rule, Belgium administered the territory building on the Tutsi-dominated aristocracy, both in Rwanda and Burundi. When independence movements peaked in most African colonies in the 1950s and not willing to cede the power to
nationals, a colonial policy aimed at turning the "Hutu majority (85%) against the Tutsi minority (14%)" was crafted and applied throughout the two territories. The narrative was that Tutsi elites dominated both colonial administration and independence seeking parties while Hutu were excluded. However, the genuine rationale for Belgium’s decision was to create rivalry and tensions to thwart the independence process. This colonial policy succeeded in Rwanda in 1959 when the so-called Hutu Revolution resulted in the mass killing of thousands of Tutsi. In Burundi, prominent leaders were targeted. The hero of the independence, Louis Rwagasore, was killed in a Belgian plot on October 13, 1961.

Burundi attained its independence on the same day as Rwanda but with different political settings. On June 20, 1962, the United Nations Assembly voted to allow Rwanda-Urundi to be two separate independent states. While Rwanda was a republic dominated and ran by a Hutu president, Burundi was ruled by a king (Mwami). Most Burundians had expressed the wish to retain the Mwami as a ceremonial head of state even after the independence that was declared on July 1, 1962.

However, tensions between Union Pour le Progres Nationale (UPRONA) party leaders rendered the replacement of Rwagasore problematic. The UPRONA party, which had won legislative elections on September 18, 1961, was comprised of all ethnic groups. It was featured as the post independent ruling party. However, speculation over the replacement of Rwagasore put at stake the fragile cohesion between Hutu and Tutsi. UPRONA Tutsi hard liners opposed the replacement of Rwagasore by a Hutu who was vice president of the UPRONA party. They feared an anti-Tutsi alliance...
between Hutu ruling authorities in Rwanda and the vice president of the party, Paul Mirerekano.

In order to reconcile the two ethnic groups, “the Mwami (king) called upon a Hutu Prime Minister, Pierre Ngendandumwe, to form a government on January 7, 1965.” The Prime Minister was killed on January 15, 1965, a week after his nomination. “Some Tutsi were arrested while another Hutu, Joseph Bamina, was appointed as Prime Minister.” Despite the king’s effort to address the issue at hand, a military coup against the Mwami worsened the ethnic differences and created tensions between the two ethnic groups. On November 28, 1966, a new president, Captain Michel Micombero, overthrew the king and changed the kingdom into a Republic. Instead of promoting unity between the two groups, he politically excluded Hutu and Tutsi leaders that were not from his native province of Bururi.

The lack of leadership led to a Hutu revolt in 1969 followed by an overt Hutu uprising against the Tutsi in Burundi on April 29, 1972. “A bloodshed that lasted for months resulted in 100,000 to 200,000 deaths.” Exclusion, segregation, hatred, and cyclic killings increasingly shaped the relationships between the two ethnic groups until 1988 when a full blown insurgency swept two Northern provinces of Kirundo and Ngozi. The Force Nationale de Liberation (FNL) supported by the Rwandan regime, claimed responsibility for the attack.

In 1989, the end of the Cold War triggered democratic changes in most African countries; it was not welcomed in Burundi. The 1993 presidential election was won by a Hutu, Melchior Ndadaye. Even as he promoted democratic values, Ndadaye was killed three months after he took the presidency for presumably being in the right place at a
wrong time: as war broke out in Rwanda in 1990 between Tutsi refugees and the Hutu governmental army, a small group from the army, dominated by Tutsi in Burundi, thought it was not appropriate to hand over the power to a Hutu who graduated in Rwanda and was a close friend to then President of Rwanda, Juvenal Havyarimana. A similar situation yielded the same effect in the 1960s when Tutsi feared an anti-Tutsi alliance between two Hutu Presidents in Rwanda and Burundi.

A stalemate swept the country for a decade between 1994 and 2006. When President Ndadaye was killed on October 21, 1993, hundreds of thousands of Tutsi and moderate Hutu were instantaneously killed in a Hutu upheaval orchestrated by then presidential ruling party, Front pour la Defense de la Democratie (FRODEBU). After six months, the president vacancy was filled by another Hutu, Cyprien Ntaryamira. However, he died one month after assuming office in an airplane clash alongside the president of the Rwanda on April 6, 1994. His tenure was completed by another Hutu, Sylvestre Ntibantunganya.

After a chaotic fight, a treaty was signed in Tanzania by insurgent organizations, political parties, and the government on August 28, 2000. It was followed by a comprehensive accord three years later. Since 1994, Hutu militias separately fought the Tutsi dominated army. Having sanctuaries both in eastern part of the DRC and in Tanzania, the Conseil National pour la Defense de la Democratie –Front pour la Defense de la Democratie (CNDD-FDD) was paradoxically supported by President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya in order to dismantle the Tutsi dominated army. Therefore, the former President, Pierre Buyoya used the same army to remove Ntibantunganya
from the power in a military coup in July 1996. The East African Community condemned the military coup and decreed an all-out embargo on Burundi.

Covert negotiations started in 1998. As Burundi is a landlocked country, the embargo curbed the new regime. President Buyoya started negotiations with some insurgent leaders in Arusha (Tanzania) in 1998 under the mediation of former President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere. The Arusha Accord\textsuperscript{19} was reached on August 28, 2000. However, the CNDD-FDD and the FNL separately pursued the fight. Three years later, the CNDD-FDD signed the Accord in November 2003 under the mediation of Nelson Mandela (President Nyerere had died in October 1999). The African Union prompted a peacekeeping mission known as the African Mission in Burundi in 2003 to monitor the cease fire. This accord is actually the backbone of the Constitution of Burundi. Political power sharing and a new army, the \textit{Force de Defense National} (FDN), made up of an equal number of Hutu and Tutsi representatives, are the main premises of the Arusha Accord. However, the FNL refused to join the Arusha Accord.

Notwithstanding insecurity, Burundi held post conflict elections in August 2005. Despite persistent violence spread throughout the country by the FNL, elections were organized under the protection of the new army. Elections resulted in CNDD-FDD winning; Burundi was back on the democratic track in June 2005. At the same time, the FNL was defeated and compelled to sign the Arusha Accord in 2006. However, instead of adhering to the provisions of the accord, the FNL launched an attack to capture the capital Bujumbura in August 2008. It was again defeated by the FDN and thus, the FNL was constrained to join the GB.
Finally, the Arusha Accord produced a win-win solution between the two ethnic groups. It shaped the political environment by including all ethnic groups in the ruling spheres while also building a new army. However, five years later, the FNL political leader, alongside three other leaders of small political parties, contested the 2010 elections results arguing there was a vote fraud. Currently, the insurgents’ narrative emphasizes that corruption, bad governance, and the killing of opposition political parties’ members as additional causes to the 2010 election contest.

After showing the historical context of the insurgency in Burundi, a further understanding of the strategic environment and the root causes of the problem is needed in order to design the comprehensive approach.

**Framing the Strategic Environment**

Defining a strategic environment in a post conflict state is both difficult and confusing, but it is a compelling prerequisite to shape the future operating environment. Understanding the various parties involved is extremely important to comprehend the true nature of the insurgency. As Burundi had only established peace in 2008 the strategic environment is still fluid; not only do personal vendettas and social movements appear as violently as the insurgency does, but organized crimes also resembles guerilla warfare. A complex interplay of violence such as score settlements, arms proliferation, armed groups, and trade union protests challenge peace and security. Therefore, such mix of challenges creates a fog that blurs the discernment of peace and security drivers. Simply put, “volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA)”²⁰ are the main features of the Burundi strategic environment.

To understand and conceptualize the current battle space, a systematic analysis is purposely drawn from past experiences of prominent authors on insurgency. What
happened after the 2010 elections can be better explained by Rodney Stark. After deep observations of social movements, he posits “these movements seek change inherent to political, social, and economic grievances. Such demand for redress of grievances is peaceful even though it is accompanied by sharp elbows.”\textsuperscript{21} Yet changes are not always possible, “[T]here will be groups that continue to participate peacefully in the quest of changes while some sprinters will turn violent.”\textsuperscript{22} The author has really hit the nail on the head because the most influential political party, UPRONA (opposition) continues to participate in political institutions while other opposition parties have withdrawn from them. According to the same author “grievances can take the form of hopes and aspirations, and so might well bundled as unfulfilled needs and drive people forward.”\textsuperscript{23}

Stark adds another dimension of the interpretation of the current strategic environment. He states that “grievances need not to be reasonable to be felt, they can be unreasonable and yet still drive people forward, what matters is what is in the minds of people.”\textsuperscript{24} He also notes that “the absorption of manpower produced by government abuses allow insurgency to grow.”\textsuperscript{25} This description coincides with the situation that prevailed in Burundi after the 2010 elections. Political parties that protested against the supposed voting fraud were harshly repressed by the police. Man hunts, extra judicial killings, disappearance of key opposition local officials were recorded in the Human Rights reports. As Bekele points out:

Killings targeted prominent members of the FNL as well as the rank and file. In response to these attacks, armed groups, some of whom were believed to be associated with the FNL, increased attacks on CNDD-FDD members and local officials.\textsuperscript{26}

Stated another way, the mishandling of the protests has contributed to give a supplementary reason for insurgency. As Della Porte clearly notes it, “state repression
is a key intervening variable that can set in motion further splintering that may ultimately lead to a strategic choice (terrorism or insurgency as forms of violence).” 27 The current situation in Burundi is better explained through this observation because repressive operations against protestors have pushed them into hostile actions.

The strategic environment can be framed as follows: tense political cleavages between opposition parties and the ruling party; terrorism acts done by insurgents; disappearance of opposition members; a fragile economy exacerbated by corruption and unemployment. All of the above mentioned problems have inspired the insurgency narrative. Private media, in search for sensational news, vehemently echoes raw news and shapes opinions that a burning issue exists. Most journalists who spoke out have experienced jail. If the current strategic environment is not acted upon, political unrest could develop.

**Root Causes of the Insurgency in Burundi.**

The current insurgency is politically driven. Political grievances are denounced in term of election fraud but also, and more importantly, in terms of the lack of inclusion and power sharing between the ruling party and opposition parties. Opposition parties also claim that the current judiciary system is the extension of the executive, due to the political affiliation of the nominees; hence, judicial matters are not properly expedited. Even though the nascent insurgency is a political-driven issue, political grievances are not the only causes of the current insurgency. As Frederick Wilkins stated, “When there are no economics and political foundations for the guerilla movement, there will be no guerilla movement.” 28 The current conditions illustrate Wilkins idea because the implementation of the Arusha Accord has created economic and political frustration that
speak to the renewal of insurgency. After a deep analysis of the conduct of the Security Sector Reform (SSR) program in 2005-08, it appears that the FNL has reinitiated insurgency as a continuation of the previous one to correct flaws noticed in the implementation of the Arusha Accord. As the integration of the FNL combatants in the FDN has only accounted for one-seventh of its total manpower, frustration was deep-seated within the FNL ranks for being less represented in the new army. In the same vein, the Demobilization, Disarmament, and Reintegration (DDR) program has been effective for only one-third of the FNL veterans. Most of the FNL combatants and veterans were frustrated by the outcome of the SSR and DDR programs. Taken altogether, unemployment has scaled up after the conflict to attain 13% in urban areas.  

Social and economic grievances are also stated as part of the root causes for the insurgency. After 40 years of political turmoil and 13 years of horrible conflict, Burundians expected to see better governance, a revitalization of the economy, a functioning justice, and an uncorrupted administration. Put in other words, Burundians expected to overcome the conflict and think for a better future. However, current insurgency narrative states that political space is dominated by one political party and portrays the economy as corrupted. Such challenges are inclined to create underlying conditions for the insurgency if significant measures are not taken to politically defuse the rampant tension between the ruling party and the nascent insurgency.

After the analysis, it appears that political, economic, and social grievances have been cumulative to create the causes of the insurgency and its narrative, while the 2010 election has served as a triggering event for the insurgency. To develop a remedial
approach, Burundi policy-makers have to use all the instruments of national power to assess if the COIN effort equals or conflicts with root causes, then adopt specific measures to correct the trajectory. Framing the problem is a prerequisite for problem solving and to determine the required dosage of national instruments to achieve lasting peace in Burundi. To clearly address the problem, this paper suggests an overall analysis of weaknesses, strengths of the current COIN effort and a development of an integrated approach as a recommendation to correct the flaws noted in the current approach. The next chapter assesses the current COIN efforts.

**Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses in the Countering Insurgency in Burundi**

After an evaluation of the current COIN effort, four major weaknesses have been identified. First, even though Burundi has experienced insurgency since 1972, the creation of institutional memory and the development of a COIN doctrine have never been a priority for the governmental army. There has never been a coordinated effort to collect lessons learned or develop a doctrine from the decades of insurgency. As “an Army doctrine provides a common language and a common understanding of how Army forces conduct operations,” Burundi COIN efforts miss a precious reference tool. Therefore, the lack of doctrine, standards, and evaluation techniques for training could generate inconsistencies in the COIN effort.

Second, the lack of coordination mechanism between different COIN actors has unknowingly resulted in interference between the National Police of Burundi (PNB), the National Defense Force (FDN), the National Intelligence Service (SNR), local leaders, UN agencies, and NGOs. Research indicates there is little or no joint planning between actors to address COIN. On one hand this confusing situation is a consequence of a
lack of coherence, coordination, and synchronization between actors while on the other hand, the lack of information sharing and suspicions hinder planning.

Third, the lack of proactive information has put COIN actors in a predicament. As long as the populace is not secured, the operational information on the insurgency will be a challenge, especially for the FDN which is deployed throughout the country. Without precise and earlier information given by the population, the army cannot efficiently fight. As John Nagl has put it “information depends most entirely on the police who in their turn must depend on the confidence of the people, and the civil administration generally and its power to protect them.”31 The lack of proactive intelligence was the general complain of military and police commanders after the stated killing of 39 people that occurred at Gatumba.

Fourth, the lack of required capabilities for the COIN effort is a hindrance for the efficacy of military operations and force protection. When war ended in 2008, most military capabilities were destroyed. Burundi's mountainous jungle countryside favors guerilla operations. The lack of armored vehicles, information, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets (ISR) impact negatively on the effectiveness of military operations.

To complete the assessment, strengths must also be assessed. Two major areas of strengths are identified. First, the government’s legitimacy is a powerful weapon against the insurgency. The current insurgency opposes a democratic regime that is at its second tenure. As noted by the international observer community, no vote fraud was noticed. This makes it difficult for the insurgency to impose a counter view of legitimacy to the people. However, this doesn’t mean that government has the absolute right to
ignore other political parties by refusing to share power as directed by the Constitution. The Arusha Accord must be flawlessly implemented to include the sharing of power. Equally important, the GB has to build institutions that reflect unity and equity which offer one more means of denying the insurgency.

Second, a COIN- experienced Army which is a force multiplier in a comprehensive approach. The FDN’s decade long insurgency has produced extensive experience in irregular warfare. Such experience has been complemented by the pre-deployment training provided by the African Contingency Organization Training Assistance (ACOTA) in support of the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Furthermore, as military units rotate each year into Somalia, the experience acquired on this mission can be leveraged in Burundi’s COIN efforts. This could make a significant difference if the government adopts a good stance against the insurgency and employs all instruments of national power to fight the insurgent narrative.

To fight the right way, a number of options are available for consideration to Burundi policy-makers. According to Nagl, in order to counter insurgency, “two options are available: the direct approach and the indirect one.” The direct approach consists of “absolute repression” in order to kill insurgents while the indirect approach aims at “turning the loyalty of the people” by defeating their political will. An analysis of both options is done to suggest the most suitable and acceptable option for Burundi COIN.

The direct approach consists of annihilating suspected insurgents and their followers. It focuses on guerilla forces instead of addressing political root causes that give rise to the insurgency. This approach is unsuitable with the Burundi COIN effort because its effects are counterproductive. If the GB only uses the military approach to
resolve the conflict, people will see the government as a pure product of brute force. Instead of adhering to the approach, citizens will look to the insurgency for better protection. That is, instead of fulfilling its security role, the government would create an unsecure environment that insurgents will usefully exploit. The practitioner’s bias is generated by the direct approach ignores the idea that, “warriors are part of the people, living among them during the day and striking at night.”\textsuperscript{35} This once again highlights the importance of protecting the non combatant population. As Joseph Celeski points out, France applied the direct approach in Algeria, in 1958, to destroy the \textit{Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN),} and terrorize the population to cut their support. The result was counterproductive because Algerians became more committed to support insurgents.\textsuperscript{36} The direct approach is a force multiplier for the insurgency because “undue focus on military actions clouds the key political realities which can result in a military-dominated campaign that misses the real political focus on insurgency.”\textsuperscript{37} The direct approach cannot fit in Burundi’s strategy because it doesn’t gain the hearts and the minds of populace that are critical for any COIN. It therefore has a counterproductive effect on peace and security.

However, a constructive peace approach that gives an opportunity for the people to participate to their own security is the best option. It is the indirect approach. Initiated by Sun Tzu in his seminal book, \textit{The Art of War}, the indirect approach was given full meaning in the 1950s by the British against the Malaya insurgency. Nagl defines the indirect approach by stating“ that defeating an insurgency by focusing on dividing the people from the insurgents, removing the support that they require to challenge the government effectively.”\textsuperscript{38} While military efforts are important to COIN, they are only
effective when integrated into a comprehensive strategy that coordinates all instruments of national power. The key to success is the protection of the population from insurgent influence by meeting their needs and gaining their support. Nagl defines this approach as the mechanism of “turning the loyalty of the people.”\textsuperscript{39} The indirect approach is suitable in Burundi because it focuses on the populations’ basic needs, safety, and security.

The necessity to focus on people support is better explained by the same author when he shares his experience.

What is frustrating in insurgency is responding to the scene of an attack, whether on population or army with the sure knowledge that at least some of the bystanders have critical information on those people responsible of the attack, but being unable to obtain that information from them because they are intimidated.\textsuperscript{40} This experience shows that people are the alpha and the omega of intelligence in the contested area. If the rebels intimidate the population, the people will not provide critical information. Furthermore, Joseph Celeski points out that leverage can be achieved between Police and the FDN showing that “unlike soldiers and antiterrorist units, police units typically establish a long term presence in a locality and can cultivate relations with community leaders.”\textsuperscript{41} The author shows that building relationships is an overarching goal in countering insurgency to ensure leverage of information. Therefore, the populace has to feel valued and secured to fully collaborate with the COIN effort of the government.

This approach is also feasible in Burundi’s COIN effort because all instruments of national power are, by design, under political control. Since political leader have responsibility over all instruments of national power, the integrated approach is feasible. It is a matter of understanding that” the intensity of insurgency activity in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century
exceeds the capacity of the police, the law enforcement,"\textsuperscript{42} and even the army, if taken separately. The indirect approach fosters joint effort and recognizes that together people and institutions are stronger. Therefore, it is acceptable and feasible. This principle is the \textit{raison d’être} of the integrated approach that this project suggests to Burundian policy makers as a recommendation.

\textbf{The Integrated Approach to Counter Insurgency in Burundi-- A Recommendation}

To correct the trajectory of current COIN efforts and achieve a lasting solution, the GB has to apply an integrated approach that puts together, in a coordinated manner, all instruments of the national power. The integrated approach fosters a clear understanding of the strategic environment and the problem. It also shows ends, ways and means required to exert an influence on the situation. The following approach is neither a panacea nor a cook book. It is just a suggested approach that ties together all the instruments of national power to improve the current COIN effort. It can be adapted and improved through different ways. What will be of great value is to strike a right “balance between the measured use of force with an emphasis on nonmilitary programs.”\textsuperscript{43} Therefore, an Integrated Force (IF) made up of Military forces, Law Enforcement, Police units, local officials, selected officials, and other stakeholders will be tasked by Burundian decision makers to address insurgency using all the instruments of the national power.

Based on the conclusions of the above analysis, the framework of the approach describes how the IF will counter the insurgency and influence the features of the operating environment. The approach focuses on population needs while addressing root causes that have given rise to the insurgency. It also outlines ends, ways, and
required means to return to the normalcy. Ends are objectives. Ways are specific actions that the integrated force will achieve to reach objective while means are the methods and capabilities required to execute the ways.

To develop a durable solution, the new strategy for Burundi will consist of the integration of all the instruments of national power to prevent insurgents from turning population loyalty against the government, deny the insurgency from controlling areas and safe havens, and disrupt and defeat them while addressing root causes and grievances that drive the insurgency. To achieve these goals, leaders must collaborate with governmental agencies, multinational partners, and, where appropriate with neighboring states to create an insurgency free-environment in the GLRA. Through a continuous assessment and adaptation of the approach, the strategic direction will keep track of the operating environment to capture in real time dynamics and complexities that drive the change of the operating environment.

The integrated approach has to have a vision. The vision for this strategy will consist of a secure and safe state characterized by an insurgency-free environment where democratic values and rule of law are fostered—a security environment conducive to national reconciliation and economic recovery. To achieve the end state, the approach relies on goals that concurrently work along lines of operations (LOO) to exert an influence on the strategic environment.

Goal-1: Prevent insurgency from turning the people’s loyalty against the government. To achieve this goal, Burundi policy makers have to stand between the insurgency and the population to maintain people’s loyalty. As insurgents have chosen to train their operatives outside the country, the IF will focus on two major objectives to
achieve Goal-1. The first objective shall be to ensure border control and border defense. Since Burundi is a small state, insurgents must organize outside the country, stealthily enter the country, and commingle with the population. Gaining their support and developing networks that link back to external supports is their primary objective. With the Ministry of Defense in the lead, military units, border control agencies (police), and local leaders will work together to tighten borders through a rigorous check of people entering and exiting the country. Finally, ensuring an overall screening of carriages to detect weapons and other harmful materials will limit the scope of weapon proliferation in the country.

The second objective will consist in fostering reconciliation between Burundians. Burundi is a fragile state that has experienced a long conflict since its independence. However, little has been done to create a functioning justice. It is essential for the government to have its citizens reconcile their past in order to prevent acts of revenge that turn the population towards violence. The example can be drawn from South Africa where leaders installed a transitional justice system that judged crimes during the Apartheid era. Truth and reconciliation have followed suit leading former enemies to work together. The set up of this transitional justice will prevent lawlessness and limit further personal setting scores. This objective will be an enduring effort that will be stressed on in the last phase of the implementation of this approach as part of Goal-4.

Goal-2: Protect the population and deny insurgents from controlling any area or establishing sanctuaries. The attainment of this goal will be achieved by the IF under the lead of the Ministry of Defense and with the support of the Police. To fully protect the population, denying insurgents from having safe havens and sanctuaries inside the
country is the main focus of this end. It is under the umbrella of a secure and safe environment that supporting activities can be conducted. As it was markedly done during the previous conflict, people need tangible actions that lead to real success. They follow the leader who cares about their basic needs in terms of food, shelter, safety, and security of their families. As David Kilcullen clearly confirms it:

Convincing threatened populations that we are a winning side and demonstrating that we can protect them from guerilla and that their best interest is better served by cooperating with us is the critical path in COIN.45

It is in keeping with this idea that the IF must be robust enough to prevail over the insurgency and ensure the protection of the population. Consequently, the IF must dominate the ground in order to accomplish this goal. This goal will be achieved by putting in practice three objectives.

The first objective aims at getting proactive intelligence to better protect the population. The protection of the threatened population is critical in accomplishing this goal. As Kircullen states, “Protecting and defending local noncombatant civilians is critical components and a key to operational success.”46 To achieve this objective, effort will be applied to the establishment of military posts among the populace. This will provide protection as well as the opportunity to gather intelligence. Required intelligence will focus on understanding the operating environment, especially “what drive the conflict in a given area or with any given population group.”47 The joint force will use such information to hunt down insurgents and hand the suspects to the law enforcement agents while creating usable databases on insurgency and organizing people for self-defense.
The second objective of Goal-2 consists in denying insurgency from establishing or building sanctuaries. The denial of insurgents from controlling areas or having safe havens within the country or in border areas is a key to ensure full control of the population by the government. Depending on how the insurgency will evolve, the IF will “take the fight to the enemy through combat operations,” and defeat its strategy by applying pressure of kinetic operations supported by intelligence. As insurgents attempt to flee from sanctuaries and commingle with the population, an effort will be drawn to separate the population from insurgents. To clear and hold the area, to create favorable conditions for stabilization programs will be the focus of military operations.

Moreover, the GB will benefit from good diplomatic relationships with the neighboring states to destroy insurgent capabilities and sanctuaries on common borders and/or inside the countries. This kind of cooperation could be implemented through bilateral security coordination and military-to-military cooperation. The objective of either form of cooperation will enable the FDN alongside the neighbor’s armies in conducting joint operations to destroy insurgency sanctuaries. Such operations must be directed and firmly controlled by government leaders.

Goal-3: Disrupt and defeat the insurgency networks in populated areas. To sustain its guerilla activities, insurgents create vast networks across the country and abroad. Such networks are very compartmentalized and enmeshed in the populations: supporters, recruiters, funders, and intelligence agents operate within populated areas. In addition, parallel economic activities such as, taxation systems, money transfers, and other similar financial operations on the behalf of insurgency are unknowingly part of
daily business. Such situations are complex and hard to untangle, thus requiring strong relationships between the people and intelligence actors.

To dismantle the network, a two stage approach of detecting the insurgency network and use of Special Operation Forces to disrupt the insurgency center of gravity will be applied. The first stage aims at detecting the insurgency network and its centre of gravity. Military, police, intelligence and local leaders will work at detecting, locating, and mapping the insurgency centre of gravity and enablers while creating accurate data usable by Special Operation Forces. Lessons learned from Iraq emphasize the focus on operations that nail down the middle tier of planners, facilitators, and operators rather on senior leaders. Such activities will be carried out in total secrecy to increase the chance of success fully enabling the next stage of the operation.49

The second stage consists in carrying out special operations to disrupt the insurgency centre of gravity. Special Operation Forces, enabled by intelligence, will carry out “counter network operations that focuses on the middle tier of planners, facilitators, and operators rather on senior leaders.”50 Relying on a database created in the previous stage, this operation will seek to “clear, hold, consolidate, and develop”51 the infested area while convincing senior enemy figures that they simply cannot achieve their objectives by continuing to fight. A caution must be observed to discriminate with extreme precision between reconcilable and irreconcilables.52 This phase will be delicate and sensitive because it requires humanitarian relief to support population that will temporally leave their home to limit collateral damages. Such clearing operations should be followed by a temporary holding of the area to give enough time for humanitarian and other organizations to initiate stabilization and building activities.
Goal -4: Effectively Addressing root causes of the insurgency. Addressing the root causes that drive insurgency is the alpha and the omega of the COIN effort. To do so, most objectives will be carried out through the political instrument of national power by addressing governance issues, curtailing corruption, creating conditions conducive to boost the economy, and gradually shrink unemployment.

The first objective addresses governance issues. Good governance is difficult to define since states have different vision of an idealistic democracy. Depending on what policymakers deem suitable, democratic values have different significances from state to state. Consequently, root causes that undermine good governance varies from state to state, as well. The strategic culture and most importantly, how people have tailored the political process will define democracy. Quan Li states that “political process provides an opportunity to shape the policy “53 and therefore, “by improving electoral participation and political efficacy, democratic governments can reduce the number of terrorist within its borders.”54 According to the author, political processes are critical in creating harmony between populace. Therefore, the author’s view implies that inclusion in political process contributes to reduce terrorism in a given state. He also advises leaders to stick to their constitution as he points out that “When elected leaders extend their rule beyond what is constitutionally allowed, they violate the sacred pact made with their countrymen.”55 It is in this light that Burundi policymakers must ensure “inclusiveness, accountability, rule of law, participation to elections and stick to the Constitution.”56

The second objective emphasizes the curtailing of the corruption. Corruption has diverse facets and effects on Burundi’s operating environment. Not only has it created
bold economic disparities between people, but it also creates beneficiaries who are inclined to think they are above the law. Moreover, a corrupted economy will impede national and foreign investment due to biased decisions of corrupted leaders. Enacting drastic laws against corruption and enforcing them with a high standard of indiscrimination must be the main activities to achieve this objective. Given the rampant poverty and unemployment, a failure to redress the trends of these top issues will strengthen the insurgency.

The third objective consists of creating conditions conducive for foreign investments that will boost the economy and gradually shrink unemployment. Incentive measures to attract foreign investors such as the improvement of the chamber of commerce process and a policy to attract investments could make the difference in boosting the economy and creating jobs. However, such measures need to be coupled with governmental investment in basic infrastructure such as roads, railways, airports, seaports, and hydraulic dams.

The fourth objective aims at bolstering reconciliation between ethnic groups while restoring a functioning justice system. At this stage, opportunities will be given to people responsible for past atrocities to repent for their actions. This will be carried out under the supervision of a transitional judiciary mechanism. To attain this goal, the GB must give enough attention to the victims or their relatives by indicting human right abusers notwithstanding their ethnic or ideological backgrounds. Next, the transitional justice must take aim at compensation or forgiveness while building a strong judiciary system. This will set the tone for a clear separation of the legislative, executive, and judiciary powers.
Goal-4 will be a large part of an enduring effort that will be led toward political
and economic LOOs. It directly gears to the root causes of the insurgency.
In the same vein, the implementation of the overall goals requires to strike a balance
between ends, ways, and means in order to achieve the end states.

To support the ways, COIN efforts have to rely on national means for the
implementation of the suggested strategy. Since insurgency is protracted by nature,
COIN efforts will engulf considerable expenditures of time and resources. As peace and
security are priceless, the country of Burundi will have to organize its economy
accordingly to uphold the strategy while maintaining peace and security. Thus, COIN
practitioners will lean on all instruments of national power to enforce the states
legitimacy, curb and defeat insurgency, and achieve peace. Means will work along six
lines of operations (LOO): political, economic, security, infrastructure, humanitarian, and
information operation.

To work at these LOOs, joint assessment, joint planning, and coordinated joint
operations are paramount for all stakeholders. Such activities will be initiated to avoid
seams that result in a lack of coordination between actors. Equally important, leverage
between LOO objectives requires informational sharing and a unity of effort. It is
imperative to create information channels that inform progress achieved in each line of
operation and ensure everyone has done their fair share of responsibilities. Finally and
most importantly, the coordination of all instruments of national power will be placed
under civil control to ensure the coherence of the strategy to the Constitution.

The political and the economic LOOs must work closely, not only to ensure the
needs of the people are fulfilled, but also to match political promises. The political LOO
will focus on persuasion to deny moral and physical support to the insurgency while maintaining the people’s loyalty. Simultaneously, the economic LOO will emphasize community development and the need to cut the lifeline of the conflict. It is imperative that officials who will lead the LOOs work closely together to effectively link economic development and governance. Crafting a narrative that matches economic and political actions will be a key to strengthen government’s legitimacy. Such synergy is determined by the specific features of the insurgency where political problem may need an economic solution.\textsuperscript{57}

While political and economic means will focus on political issues and development, military and police will focus on security. To work on this LOO, the use of the appropriate level of force and the collection of intelligence will be combined to regain the people’s loyalty and establish legitimacy in the areas where the population has traditionally supported insurgency activities. Equally important, the protection of the population’s interest will establish governmental credibility which is the desired effect of COIN. As it has been observed by U.S. COIN practitioners, “victory comes, in large measure, by convincing the populace that their life will be better under the Government than under an insurgent regime.”\textsuperscript{56} That is, keeping the population under the government umbrella will be a step in the right direction to achieve political goals.

Depending on the scope and area the insurgency is unfolding, military and police will have to band together either “in military-led approach with a supporting police”\textsuperscript{59} or in “a police-led operation with military in support.”\textsuperscript{60} For the military-led effort, it is oftentimes necessary to use military supported by the police in jungles and large campaign and use police-led approach in cities and small scale battles; the reason is
the gradual use of minimum force to limit collateral damages especially in populated cities.

To tie together all instrument of national power, information will play the vital role. An enhanced strategic communication between the IF, the population, and other stakeholders will be crucial to the attainment of the overall goals. As local commanders and constabulary police have the best understanding of the area of responsibility, it is essential to give them resources needed to implement actions that timely foster a good population perception of the GB. To enable such overarching actions, civil military relations have to be managed at the highest level of trust and confidence. Local commanders, local officials, and police have to “capture an insurgency’s cause and exploit it …by appealing for a moderate interpretation”61 or countering its contents. Equally important, military and civilian leaders must prosecute a rigorous observance of discipline towards the populace and his assets to avoid any abuse that could create negative perceptions of the IF by the population. The principle that deeds speak louder than words can also play negatively against the GB if an IF member misconducts toward the population.

Finally, all instruments of national power must have a strategic direction. To avoid seams and encroachment between instruments of national power, the strategic direction has to define a structural relationship that assures liaison and coordination mechanisms and quick response to insurgency activities. Furthermore, the strategic direction plays a key role in managing resources and capacities with respects to their particular areas of expertise. The strategic direction will have control over all instruments of national power and will use these concurrently to achieve the stated
objectives. At various times, they will be used jointly to achieve a synergetic effect on an objective, or they will work either offensively or defensively depending on objectives to achieve.

The integrated approach does have risks associated with it. Primarily, this strategy will have an economic risk. As a member of the East African Community, Burundi has to implement the Custom Union Agreement that emphasizes the free flow of goods and services. Unintended consequences such as time delays caused by the screening process could potentially upset business leaders. This will create extra costs for goods and services for the consumer. It is essential to mitigate this risk through a strategic communication plan with Burundi’s partners. More importantly, measures to accelerate the flow of goods through the use of technology coupled with additional border custom personnel will reduce time delay and avoid potential issues.

Another risk lies with the lack of required capacities to translate the integrated approach into viable COIN actions. In Burundi, capacity building programs have been handicapped by the decade of conflict and therefore, interagency personnel know little about the planning process. Such impediments will be reflected at the operational level during the implementation of this strategy. To mitigate the risk of being stuck by inexperience, it is essential to request extended cooperation and security assistance with partners to enhance the planning capacity of involved personnel.

**Conclusion**

The integrated approach recommended in this study advocates for a use and synchronization of all instruments of the national power to win lasting peace in Burundi. To effectively work at this issue at hand, a strong strategic direction that combines
Force management skills and a grasp of the political situation\textsuperscript{62} is required to focus a timely assessment of the strategic environment, design an integrated approach and plan accordingly to maintain the populace’s security and loyalty. Equally important, the ability of national instruments to integrate without creating institutional seams will be the operational center of gravity of COIN efforts. This speaks both to the security forces and civilian components of the IF. As security forces and the military have the legacy of planning behind closed doors, it is imperative to ensure transparency and harmony with civilian components. Conversely, most civilian organizations care little about the planning process while they have to be involved in it. The two components must have a middle ground to plan their works and transparently work their plans. Furthermore, the strategic direction must embrace the bottom-up assessment policy that values input from the tactical level and incorporates lessons learned into a joint doctrine for COIN.

As a lesson from recent insurgencies, “COIN campaigns are considerably enhanced by considering both police and military as a combined logical line of operations.”\textsuperscript{63} It is therefore important to understand that the military needs to adapt its organization, doctrine, and training to meet the structure and skills required to work with the police, populace, Non Government Organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders. This need is dictated by the fact that military forces that structure themselves for conventional warfare will not succeed in protecting populace because “they are neither trained nor equipped for the task, and therefore they cannot fulfill it.”\textsuperscript{64}

Through this approach, it can be noted that COIN efforts require unconventional ways of thinking since insurgencies do not play by the rules of conventional warfare. Therefore, policy makers must think out of the box and deliver a long term solution to
counter the insurgency. Used successfully by the British army in the Malaya insurgency against the British in 1952, the integrated approach has already yielded tangible success in the past.\textsuperscript{65} In 2006, the U.S. Army had defeated the insurgency in Iraq using the integrated approach. It can also apply to defeat the insurgency in Burundi. That is, COIN actors have to develop specific measures tailored to the environment while strengthening the population’s resilience.\textsuperscript{66} These measures have to be initiated in time to deal with an insurgency that is itself evolving.\textsuperscript{67} In this perspective, COIN efforts need to be a learning experience through continuous assessment and tracking of the operating environment.

Finally, what makes the indirect approach an asset for Burundi COIN efforts is the range of options and the combinations it provides to the instruments of national power. As insurgency is an asymmetric and protracted conflict by nature, Burundi Insurgents will try to use their strengths against government weaknesses in order to create fatigue and rupture of instruments of national power over an extended period of time. Through an evolving doctrine that is suggested through the integrated approach, the government can better adapt its instruments of national power and apply a number of options to changing the nature of the insurgency. Ensuring population support, while shielding them from insurgency violence is the key to defeat the insurgency in Burundi. If this is accomplished, while simultaneously fighting the insurgency narrative through a synchronized plan that addresses underlying conditions and root causes, the GB can effectively counter this nascent insurgent movement.
Endnotes

1 Carlos Ospina Ovalle, “Insights from Colombia’s Long Wars: Counterinsurgency Lessons Learned,” Counterterrorism 12, no. 3 (Fall 2006), 14.


8 This definition was adapted by the author of this SRP through a combination of two definitions: one from the U.S Field Manual 3-24 and another drawn from the book Raj Desai, cited above to emphasize a global view of and an understanding of the insurgency.


12 In Burundi, ethnic groups (Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa) have sub-groups called clans. For some clans, the affiliations can be traced and linked to other clans in Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and DRC. In Burundi, ethnic groups speak the same language. There is no region dedicated to ethnic entities. All ethnic groups live together in villages for years.


14 Ibid., xv.

15 Ibid., xxii.

16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.


19 Arusha is a small town of Tanzania where an accord between the government of Burundi and insurgent movements was reached on. The accord borrowed the name of the town in all writings related to this accord. Key word is Arusha Accord.


22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.


31 Ibid., 73.

32 Ibid., 27.

33 Ibid., 73.

34 Ibid., 31.


37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid., 26.

40 Ibid., xiii.

41 Joseph Celeski, *Policing and Law Enforcement in COIN-the Thick Blue Line*, 13

42 Ibid., 12.


44 This is the vision I suggest to Burundi policy-maker for the comprehensive approach for COIN effort in Burundi.


46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., 3.


49 Ibid.


52 David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, 5.


54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Thomas A. Marks, *Maoist Insurgency since Vietnam*, 42.


35
Ibid.


63 Ibid., 84.


67 Ibid.