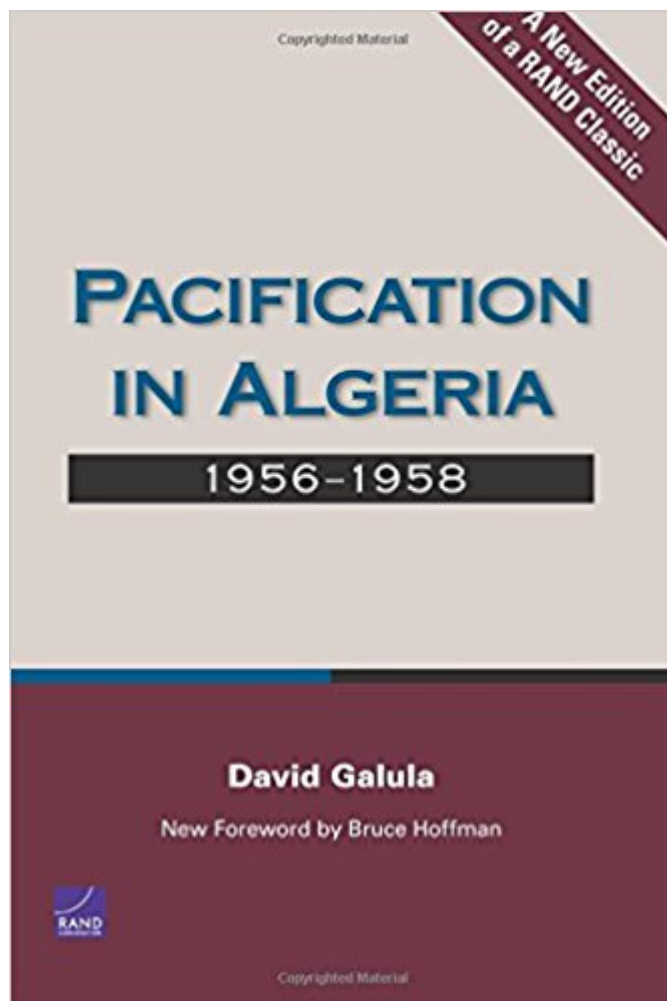


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Pacification In Algeria, 1956-1958



Synopsis

When Algerian nationalists launched a rebellion against French rule in November 1954, France, mired in similar wars for independence in its colonial territories, was in a poor position to cope with further upheaval. The Algerian strategy encompassed varying approaches and was more adaptable than that of the French, necessitating a rethinking of traditional counterinsurgency methods. In this volume, originally published in 1963, David Galula reconstructs the story of his highly successful command in the district of Greater Kabylia, east of Algiers, at the height of the rebellion, and presents his theories on counterinsurgency and pacification. In the process, he confronts the larger political, psychological, and military aspects of the Algerian war, and provides a context for present-day counterinsurgency operations. This groundbreaking work retains its relevancy as a challenge to traditional counterinsurgency tactics and presents approaches to predicting, managing, and resolving insurgent and guerilla conflict. The parallels between the Algerian war and modern warfare are striking, and lessons can be extracted from French successes and failures in its drive to contain and manage the Algerian uprising. A new foreword by counterterrorism expert Bruce Hoffman elucidates the relevance of this historic study in the context of modern times.

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Customer Reviews

To understand the new American military strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan you could download a copy of the Army's counterinsurgency field manual, FM 3-24. Or you could read the elegant, entertaining books by French Lt. Col. David Galula that inspired Gen. David Petraeus in producing FM 3-24. Galula wrote 'Pacification in Algeria' in 1963 at the RAND Corporation, followed in 1964 by

'Counterinsurgency Warfare' at Harvard. Now, both have been reissued. 'Pacification' tracks Galula's two years as a company commander in Algeria and the development of his ideas about counterinsurgency into a successful formula soon adopted by the French force in Algeria... The questions Galula raises in the gripping 'Pacification' couldn't be more current. The French haven't won any wars in a long time, but they excel at theorizing about them... Now, practice is catching up with theory, both in Iraq, where American forces are leaving Forward Operating Bases for quarters in the cities, and in Afghanistan.

Ann Marlowe

One of the important theorists of counterinsurgency was David Galula, who died in 1967. Galula was a French officer who studied insurgency while serving in a variety of posts in China, Communist-threatened Greece, and in Hong Kong during the French Indochina War. Galula's ideas have emerged as key elements of American counterinsurgency doctrine. His 'Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice' (Praeger, 1964) was one of the first texts used by Army officers in 2005 to come to grips with problems confronting them in Iraq. Far more impressive and readable, but less well known is Galula's 'Pacification in Algeria', written, at RAND's invitation, following his participation in a conference on counterinsurgency in 1962 on similar problems confronting the United States in Vietnam... The similarities between France's mistakes in Algeria and American performance in Iraq are striking... Galula's 'Pacification in Algeria' is an exciting story of the difficulties faced by a small-unit commander striving to succeed in a nebulous counterinsurgency environment. It is a story small-unit leaders in Iraq today will find quite familiar.

Journal Of Military History, October 2007

Throughout the history of armies, counterinsurgency warfare has generally been greatly feared, and the drafting of counterinsurgency doctrine generally avoided. This is evident in the lack of any comprehensive approach to the subject, until recently, in virtually every army, including those that have had to deal with insurgencies on a regular basis. Since the invasion of Iraq by the US-led coalition, various approaches have been tried, and, only with the publishing in December 2006 of U.S. Field Manual 3-24, has a new comprehensive doctrine for counterinsurgency operations been established. [The U.S. Counterinsurgency Field Manual 3-24] was penned under the supervision of General David Petraeus, an innovative American thinker, and, since January 2007, the Commander of Multinational Force Iraq. The inspiration for this field manual was a book written almost 50 years ago, after another counterinsurgency in another Muslim country. In 1963, at the urging of the RAND Corporation, Lieutenant Colonel David Galula, a French officer with extensive counterinsurgency experience, including two years in Algeria, wrote what was to become a personal account of his success in pacifying his area of responsibility. The Rand Corporation, in the hope that its lessons can be used in Iraq, has reissued Galula's book. Fifty years after being written, it has become

enthusiastically embraced by an army seeking a way out of a quandary brought on partially, I believe, by its overconfidence in high technology weaponry. One may hope that this signals a new openness to ideas and opinions penned outside of America. But the lesson of the author is that pacification requires a long-term commitment and imagination. For the author, every war is a special case requiring a unique strategy. And anyone who thinks that they found a 'quick fix' will have misunderstood David Galula's lesson. Canadian Military Journal, Winter 2007/2008

At this point in the war on terror, even people who think David Galula is a trendy new chef are quick to point to the need for cultural understanding in successful counterinsurgency. Often, they are quicker still to beat up on our military for supposedly ignoring this. They are quite sure that if we just understood the Iraqis/Afghans/Shiites/Sunnis better, we would have made fewer mistakes... Well, perhaps the most successful counterinsurgency operation ever mounted, David Galula's in Algeria, doesn't build the case for the overweening importance of cultural knowledge. The Algerians pacified thanks to Galula's insights were French-speaking (some of the leaders of the FLN barely spoke Arabic). The French took back territory from the rebels not because Galula convinced them that he understood their culture, but because he convinced them that their interests were better served by affiliation with France. (A dozen pages of Galula are worth more than anything written by anyone mentioned in this article. His 1963 *Pacification in Algeria*, reissued by RAND last year, is a witty, snappy, pre-PC read.). The Weekly Standard, November 26, 2007

Originally published in 1963 and featuring a new foreword by Bruce Hoffman, this account of the author's successful command in the Algerian war for independence presents a striking parallel to present-day counterinsurgency operations.

David Galula, a veritable Cassandra of counter-insurgency warfare has, thanks to the Iraq and Afghan wars, risen anew from the "dustbin of history" to have his pithy observations on the nature and conduct of "revolutionary wars" considered again. This book is a coda to Galula's magnum opus, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*. Both books are well worth reading, but *Counterinsurgency Warfare* is the more cogently argued and less anecdotal of the two. Many of the vignettes Galula recites in *Pacification* are idiosyncratic to the Algerian conflict. For example, the overwhelming material and organizational weaknesses of the FLN, their inability to effectively communicate with "the masses" and their relative isolation are not features of most current insurgencies. The ability of the French to effectively seal the Algerian frontiers, thus interdicting flow of men and supplies to the FLN is also unique to that conflict. In addition, Galula focuses almost exclusively on his pacification

campaign in Kabylia, only providing occasional glances at the terror campaign being waged in Algiers, Oran and elsewhere. Very little perspective on the pieds noirs (European-Algerians) was provided and a rather stilted perspective on the Salan coup was offered. There was nothing in the book to suggest the impending emergence of the OAS and little was given to suggest that something along the lines of the Evian talks (De Gaulle's negotiations with the FLN which ultimately ended the conflict) could emerge. As this monograph was originally issued by RAND in 1963 (and the war ended in 1962) this recounting of events presents a curiously removed perspective. RAND evidently requested a very specific report on Galula's own efforts, so perhaps the criticism is somewhat unfair. "Pacification" illustrates the method for controlling the population (Galula acknowledges Mao here), the need for "policing", providing essential services and domestic security to the population. He also repeatedly and candidly states the need for controlling the population and provides several stark examples of his methods. He also allude to the reluctance of the military to engage in this sort of endeavor. Our military shares this perspective to a greater or lesser extent. Above all, what this book does graphically acknowledge is the need for a specific, defined, focused and consistent political policy toward the insurrection. The FLN (and, I presume) the current adversaries the US faces in Southeast Asia grasped that we (unlike they) are not in the war for the long run. He writes, "One might even say that, in this sort of war, military action is but a minor facet of the conflict, a partial aspect of the operation. Give me good policy and I will give you good revolutionary war!" Cogent advice, indeed. The FLN terror campaign coupled with a compelling ideology was seminal in defeating French domestic opinion (the real battleground) and driving the French from Algeria. The French had no ideology to propagandize, appeared as colonialists and had inconsistent and vacillating policies which were also unevenly applied. As a result of all that, they had no "theater" of their own to present. Galula minimizes the extent of the ideological dimension in the text, but makes a compelling case for it in the Appendixes of the book. Bruce Michael Jenkins, RAND's own terrorism expert noted that, "Terrorism is theater." Of course, that was perfectly understood by Frances FLN opponents, one of whom, Ramdane Abane, trenchantly observed that, "One corpse in a jacket is always worth more than 20 in uniform" which seems to me to convey a perfect understanding of the psychology of the intended audience; the "theatrical" dimension, if you will. Yet, by and large, Galula's adversaries, as depicted in the text of "Pacification" seem, in general, to be political bumpkins which (of course) they were not. A more specific propaganda program was presented in Appendix 3, but if and how this was implemented in Algiers (the epicenter of the conflict) was never clarified. While Kabilya was Galula's "laboratory", it was far remote from the real action in France and in the Algerian capital. But, Galula contends, what

worked there should work elsewhere, too. Regardless of these criticisms, this is an important book, one which was well deserving of reissue. Because of its very narrow perspective, the book should be read in conjunction with "Counterinsurgency Warfare" and, for additional insights into the Algerian situation, with Alistair Horne's book, "A Savage War of Peace". Bruce Hoffman, who wrote the new introduction to "Pacification" and is himself a terrorism expert, noted in, "Inside Terrorism" (his 1998 book) that, "terrorism is where politics and violence intersect in the hope of delivering power." Galula understood that the need for counterinsurgents to forcibly divorce one from the other in the adversary's camp is the crux of destroying them both.

In "Pacification in Algeria", David Galula describes his (largely) successful experiences as a company commander and battalion S3/XO in Algeria in the late 1950's and draws on these experiences and his earlier exposure to Communist insurgency throughout Asia and the Balkans in order to develop and articulate a theory of COIN. Most of the book is a relatively detached and analytical (albeit honest) discussion of his experience and reaction to events as a company commander in a rather nondescript battalion and AO. The reader expecting exciting accounts of desperate battles or tales of derring-do will be disappointed - not only is combat fleeting, but Galula's perspective is about recounting what he thought and did in a "campaign planning" sense, rather than in the "here and now" tactical space. For anybody with more than a superficial interest in sub-unit operations there is however ample description, explanation and analysis of a range of tactical activities and objectives, be they kinetic or otherwise. Despite the author's obvious scholarly interest in advocating a theoretical approach to COIN, it is still relevant and enjoyable reading for tactical level commanders with more pressing concerns than wading through dense academic tracts. Both Galula's own actions and embryonic theory (explored more fully in *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (PSI Classics of the Counterinsurgency Era)) are persuasively argued here - certainly, on first reading "Pacification in Algeria" at a point during a deployment to Afghanistan when I was wondering just how relevant our tactical successes really were, Galula's arguments that successfully shooting insurgents was irrelevant unless accompanied by measures to secure and win the support of the population were nothing short of a revelation. Galula's specific prescriptions should be treated as a guide to further thinking rather than a template, however - the reader should note that his theory was largely shaped by unique and absorbing experiences within his company/battalion AO which were characterised by a relative unity of command on the counterinsurgent side (no indigenous government or security "partners" being mentored here) - even if higher headquarters focused on traditional institutional perspectives and

the wrong metrics for too long (sound familiar?) - and a relatively unsophisticated and politically malleable population within the AO. Overall, essential reading for anybody in or around platoon, company or battalion command groups that expect to engage in COIN operations, and highly recommended as a pivotal part of the "COIN canon" of modern western military thought.

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