

Counterinsurgency by David Kilcullen

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David Kilcullen is the author of the highly acclaimed book *'The Accidental Guerrilla'*. Kilcullen was involved with the George W Bush administration as a senior counterinsurgency adviser to General Petraeus in Iraq in 2007 as part of 'the Surge' which is now recognized as a military success. Dr David Kilcullen is a former Australian Army Officer, founding president and CEO of Caerus Associates LLC which specializes in solutions to the world's hardest problems.

Kilcullen has written *'Counterinsurgency'* with the emphasis on understanding how counterinsurgency works in today's conflict environment. He examines the history of counterinsurgency which looks at T.E. Lawrence's (Lawrence of Arabia) insurgency work with the Arabs against the Turks and explores warfare strategies used by the Romans and Adolph Hitler, through to present day Iraq/Afghanistan. Kilcullen draws on his own experience from his time spent as a soldier and as a senior advisor in East Timor, Indonesia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The writing of the new U.S. Army and Marine Corps counterinsurgency manual in 2006 was a joint initiative between the U.S. Army and Marines. This was the beginning of rapid change in how American troops fought counterinsurgency. *'This was the first U.S. military manual with an annotated bibliography. It was downloaded more than six hundred thousand times within twenty-four hours of appearing on the internet'*. Kilcullen was working at the Counterterrorist Office at the State Department when approached to work on the new *'Small-Unit Operations guide'*, a companion to the new manual. It was designed to give Junior Non Commissioned Officers (JNCO's) tactics, techniques and procedures for counterinsurgency. The new counterinsurgency manual told them what to achieve, but not what to do. What was needed was practical advice for the JNCO'S and young Platoon Commanders (Pl Comd) on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Iraq and Afghanistan were different wars to the ones previously fought by the U.S. and Coalition Forces which were more focused on conventional force-on-force warfare. The dramatic changes that were happening with the major escalation of violence in Iraq and intensifying insurgency of the Taliban in Afghanistan fast tracked Kilcullen's decision to send the draft of his *'Twenty-Eight main points'* to his peer group for review. As Kilcullen remarks in the book *'the document had gone "viral" around the U.S. Government, the U.S. Military and Allied Forces'*. To Kilcullen's credit, he acknowledges the people who contributed directly or indirectly to his *'Twenty-Eight main points'* who reviewed his draft edition.

The *'Twenty-Eight Articles'* is a concise practical guide that would be easily understood by soldiers, JNCO's, non commissioned officers and junior Pl Comd. I like the use of the headings for the *'Twenty-Eight Articles'* (Know your turf, Travel light and harden your Combat Service Support, Rank is nothing: talent is everything) and the easily understood description of each of these topics. I look at these *'Twenty-Eight Articles'* and wished that they were available to me before my deployment to Iraq in 2004. It now makes perfect sense to me after reading this book.

Kilcullen reflects on the part he played at Motaain Bridge in East Timor, which is now part of Australian military history. He was the Officer Commanding (OC) Support Company, Second Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2 RAR). I found this part of the book interesting as Kilcullen describes all the variables that can and does happen in a combat zone. How one soldier reflects on what happened during the firefight and how another soldier has a totally different aspect of the same firefight that each was involved in. His reflection and account of what happened at Motaain Bridge is a must read for any young Australian soldier, Section Commander, Platoon Sergeant or Platoon Commander to further assist them in their future military careers writing post operation reports.

Kilcullen is a world expert in counterinsurgency and modern warfare. Kilcullen's expertise and experience comes from personal experience in East Timor, Indonesia, Iraq and Afghanistan. He goes into great detail in understanding how counterinsurgency works on the modern battlefield. He goes a long way in making sense of, how to combat counterinsurgency. Kilcullen just doesn't tell the reader what is wrong with Iraq or Afghanistan, he offers some solutions to the problems faced by Coalition Forces starting at the lowest ranking soldier to the highest ranking General.

Kilcullen states in his book *'This book is intended for counterinsurgents-civilian and military students and practitioners of counterinsurgency-and for the general reader interested in understanding today's conflict environment'*. He has shown that this book is not just for military personnel with a background in international politics, but has the ability to cross over to a wider audience of readers and highly recommend reading *'Counterinsurgency'*.

Dr David Kilcullen's next book is *'Out of the Mountains'* (forthcoming 2011)

Gordon Traill

Editor 'Peacekeeper'