

Showdown in Oregon: How to – and How Not to Fight Tyranny



By Tony Cartalucci | [Activist Post](#)

The showdown between armed ranchers and federal agents in the US state of Oregon has triggered passionate debates not only about the particulars of the standoff itself, but the precise manner in which people *should* stand up against an increasingly overbearing government and the corporate-financier special interests that have commandeered it.

[Related Article: America Has Become A Tyranny of the Few, But We Can Fight It](#)

Wall Street and Washington have left the country itself in socioeconomic shambles. Abroad, these collective special interests are subverting nations politically and economically from Venezuela to Southeast Asia, waging war throughout North Africa and the Middle East, while propping up criminal client regimes in nations like Ukraine.

A handful of armed ranchers with a few boxes of supplies, who live within and are completely dependent on a system controlled by the very special interests they are standing up against, will do little to change the military, economic, political, and social factors that add up to the above-described global equation.

The ranchers' supply cache looks like it was picked up from one of America's many mega-retailers, the literal consumerist feeding troughs that keep the American people perpetually in servile dependence, and the Fortune 500 deeply entrenched amid the unwarranted power and influence it has enjoyed for decades and is able to wield at home and abroad with virtual impunity.

It is not unlike a group of American G.I.'s trying to fight the Germans during WW2, while buying German rations, from the Germans, all while leaving German supply lines completely intact. They would not only be preserving their enemy's source of strength to fight, but paying into it. The harder they "fought" the more supplies they would need, and the stronger their enemy would become.

The ranchers' standoff, from a purely strategic point-of-view, is already a failure. No matter who is really behind it, and no matter how it plays out, the actions of the ranchers at best will cause the government to back down on this one particular issue, and only for this particular case. At worst, it will only further justify the growing police state evolving within America's borders. Regardless, it will do absolutely nothing to change the balance of power enabling Wall Street and Washington at home or abroad.

How to Fight Tyranny

A growing tyranny is not entirely unlike an insurgency. The terms insurgency and counterinsurgency can quickly become confusing in a politically motivated context. However, generally speaking, an insurgency seeks to overthrow an

established institution or political order, while a counterinsurgency seeks to maintain that order.

Related Article: Why We Must Fight Tyranny

In the United States, and around much of the world where the nation-state still prevails, the established order is one of national sovereignty based on constitutions and charters produced by each respective nation, with an infrastructure built and improved upon over generations by each nation's respective cultures, economic activities, and innovations. From a nation's national courts and military, all the way down to the individual family, these are the established institutions of one's nation.



Image: The problem goes beyond the various government agencies that torment us, be it land departments perceived to be harassing ranchers, or police perceived to be harassing African-Americans, and stems from the unwarranted power and influence the government wields due to the corporate-financier interests that have commandeered it to serve its own interests. A few guns and a box of supplies bought at Walmart will not solve a problem that, ironically, includes Walmart.

There is an insurgency to subvert all of this. A global [corporate-financier](#) insurgency, or simply a “corporate-insurgency.”

The corporate-insurgency seeks to subvert our institutions, starting with the family, extending to our schools, universities, churches, temples and mosques, our local sheriffs, and even reaching into our national governments, rewriting or eradicating altogether our national constitutions and charters. It has, to a great extent, already subverted our independent local infrastructure, while implementing laws and regulations to prevent us from restoring it. We have the very tactics described in a vast library of government and military counterinsurgency documents being employed against us, where ever we are and to a profound effect.

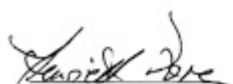
Insurgency is the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify or challenge political control of a region. As such, it is primarily a political struggle, in which both sides use armed force to create space **for their political, economic and influence activities to be effective**. Insurgency is not always conducted by a single group with a centralized, military-style command structure, but may involve a complex matrix of different actors with various aims, loosely connected in dynamic and non-hierarchical networks. **To be successful, insurgencies require charismatic leadership, supporters, recruits, supplies, safe havens and funding (often from illicit activities)**. They only need the active support of a few enabling individuals, but the passive acquiescence of a large proportion of the contested population will give a higher probability of success. This is best achieved when the political cause of the insurgency has strong appeal, manipulating religious, tribal or local identity to exploit common societal grievances or needs. Insurgents seek to gain control of populations through a combination of persuasion, subversion and coercion while using guerrilla tactics to offset the strengths of government security forces. Their

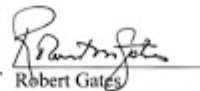
intent is usually to protract the struggle, exhaust the government and win sufficient popular support to force capitulation or political accommodation. Consequently, insurgencies evolve through a series of stages, though the progression and outcome will be different in almost every case. – [page 7 U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide, 2009](#) (emphasis added)


While this above quote is a most accurate description of an insurgency, as one reads [the US Government Counterinsurgency Guide \(2009\)](#), they will realize that the opposing methods of counterinsurgency itself involve all of these same factors, simply mirrored and reflecting the interests of the US versus the interests of targeted “insurgencies.”

U.S. GOVERNMENT COUNTERINSURGENCY GUIDE




Henrietta Fore
Administrator, USAID


Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense


Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State

January 13, 2009

Image: The cover of the [US Government Counterinsurgency Guide \(2009\)](#) features the signatures representing the trifecta of modern-day empire, covert operations (USAID), military force (Department of Defense), and system administration ([the State Department](#)). COIN describes the methods by which empire is implemented at a grassroots level.

As a matter of fact, what is described by the 2009 counterinsurgency (COIN) guide, is an accurate description of how political control has been achieved and maintained by all governments throughout the entirety of human history – it also forms the foundation [of modern empire](#).

Understanding this is key to finding solutions when one finds themselves under the subjugation of an unfavorable political ideology or system. The tactics the guide describes can, and often are, used by either side in any political struggle, not necessarily only in an armed "insurgency."

COIN is a socioeconomic-tactical synthesis, an interdisciplinary strategy based on an understanding of how a society functions, how to organize human resources to multiple force, and what needs and desires motivate individuals, as well as how these can be manipulated and controlled to collectively motivate a society. These more technical concepts are generally absent from everyday political discourse, and equally absent or incomplete in regards to finding solutions for a failing or unfavorable system.

Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: How to Fight Back

While the US Government COIN guide gives us a clear picture over the governmental-military interdisciplinary aspects of COIN, the Marine Corps Field Manual 3-24 (FM 3-24) provides us with a complete picture of the actual components of an insurgency and all the relating factors that affect it.

This includes an enumerated list of services, institutions, organizations, and processes that must be controlled in order to establish political, tactical, and economic primacy. Without these, counterinsurgency fails. **Without these, any political movement seeking to assert itself over a flawed or failing system, fails.**

FM 3-24
MCWP 3-33.5

COUNTERINSURGENCY

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[Counterinsurgency FM 3-24.](#)

While FM 3-24 deals with an armed insurgency, presumably in a foreign country, the basic concepts can and are applied to the relatively peaceful execution of real political power throughout the world as well. The reason why so many well-intentioned political solutions fall short, is because they are tailored without understanding these basic concepts.

1. Establishing Essential Services

When attempting to establish political primacy – essential services, basic infrastructure, economic development and

administration must all be controlled by the counterinsurgency. It is upon these basic aspects of modern society that people depend, and from which popular support is sustainably derived. Strength in arms alone will fail utterly unless these aspects are secured, controlled, and developed properly.

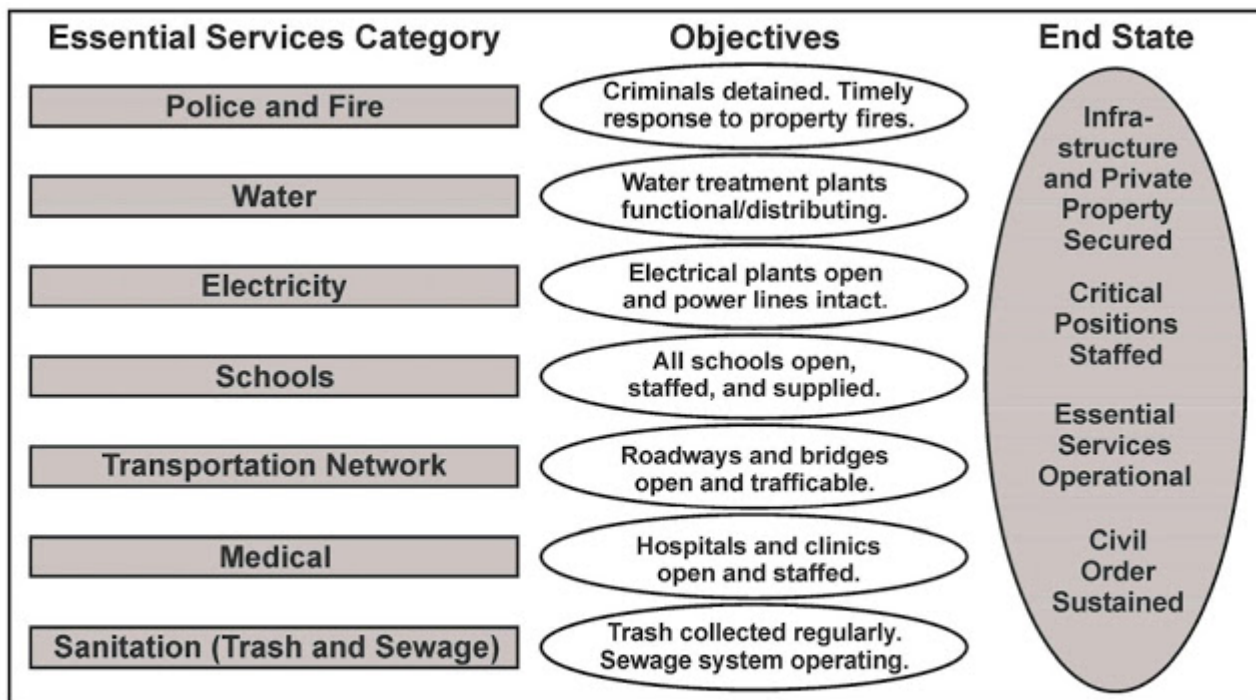


Figure 5-4. Example of essential services categories and objectives

Table 5-4. Considerations for developing the essential services LLO

- Make this effort a genuine partnership between counterinsurgents and host-nation authorities. Use as much local leadership, talent, and labor as soon as possible.
- Plan for a macro and a micro assessment effort. Acknowledge early what is known and not known—and honestly appraise what needs to be accomplished. The macro assessment concerns national-level needs; it is long term in focus. The micro assessment focuses on the local level; it determines, by region, specific short-term needs.
- Appreciate local preferences. An accurate needs assessment reflects cultural sensitivity; otherwise, great time and expense can be wasted on something the populace considers of little value. Ask, How do I know this effort matters to the local populace? If there is no answer, the effort may not be important. Host-nation authorities are a good place to start with this question. A local perception assessment may also be useful. (See appendix B.)
- Establish realistic, measurable goals. Establish ways to assess their achievement.
- Form interagency planning teams to discuss design, assessment, and redesign. Recognize and understand other agencies' institutional cultures.
- Meet with representatives from organizations beyond the host-nation government team. Many nongovernmental organizations do not want to appear closely aligned with the counterinsurgency effort. Encourage their participation in planning, even if it means holding meetings in neutral areas. When meeting with these organizations, help them understand mutual interests in achieving local security, stability, and relief objectives.
- Be as transparent as possible with the local populace. Do your best to help people understand what counterinsurgents are doing and why they are doing it.
- Consider the role of women in the society and how this cultural factor may influence these activities.
- Discourage the attitude that counterinsurgents have arrived to "save the day"—or that their arrival will only cause greater problems. Helping the populace understand what is possible avoids frustrations based on unrealized high expectations.

Upo
n page 117, the manual discusses the establishment or restoration of essential services. It states specifically (emphasis added):

Essential services address the life support needs of the HN [host-nation] population. The U.S. military's primary task is normally to provide a safe and secure environment. HN or interagency organizations can then develop the services or infrastructure needed. In an unstable environment, the military may initially have the leading role. Other agencies may not be present or might not have enough capability or capacity to meet HN needs. Therefore, COIN military planning includes preparing to perform these tasks for an extended period.

Any goal, no matter how well-planned, noble, or progressive, cannot be achieved before these basic services are established and capable of being sustainably maintained. The military is a

highly trained, disciplined, well organized institution capable of developing, maintaining, as well as protecting these services. In our local communities around the world, we have to ask ourselves how we can similarly develop and maintain these services sustainably.

Related Article: Homeless Activists Go Organic and Feed an Entire Shelter With Rooftop Garden

Community gardens, farmers' markets, alternative energy and energy cooperatives, and many other local initiatives shift the power and influence centralized governments and corporate-financier special interests enjoy, away from their monopolies and toward our local communities. Communities that no longer dependent on these special interests are less likely to support them and more likely to defend vigorously infrastructure they are directly invested in.



Image: Local energy cooperatives – maybe not as exciting as a shootout with the Feds, but definitely more constructive and unlike a shootout with the Feds, will actually leave the

balance of power tipped slightly greater in the people's favor...

The task is not entirely as daunting as it may seem. Local communities around the world accomplish this through a combination [of traditional and newly created local institutions](#). Most local communities around the world operate with the added advantage that the corporate-insurgency they face is low-intensity and generally not armed. For prospective activists, auditing what their communities already possess, and how to develop it to be more organized and effective would be a good first step.

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