

# **The Media and Counter-Insurgency: An Insight into the News Agenda-Setting**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*There have been a groan concerns on how well to report the activities of the State (Government) and also play down the insurgent groups in the interest of public safety and peace. This is due to the fact that counter insurgency strategy is a competition of ideas, ideologies and socio-political movements. Consequently, the use of agenda setting becomes an imperative tool in disseminating and transmitting messages that enhance the shaping of public opinion and denouncing of rumour impressions in the public domain. It is on this piece that this paper is set to review the use of agenda setting by the media in countering - insurgency. This study therefore recommends that for sustainable peace to be achieved, all the stakeholders must be effectively harnessed into counter insurgency campaign. Moreover, counter insurgency strategies will be successful when agenda setting of the news from the media makes the insurgents' activities unpopular.*

**Keywords:** *Counter Insurgency, Agenda Setting, News and the Media*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The twenty-first century is typified by a volatile international environment, persistent conflict, and increasing state fragility. Long-standing external and internal tensions tend to exacerbate or create core grievances within States, resulting in political strife, instability, or even insurgency. Likewise, transnational terrorists/extremists with radical political and religious ideologies often intrude into weak or poorly governed States to form a wider, more networked threat. Thus, insurgency as a phenomenon is an internal threat that uses subversion and violence to reach political ends (Nagl, 2002; British Army, 2001). Though insurgency is not a new form of warfare, it could be argued that there have been elements of insurgencies within the majority of modern conflicts. Over the years, insurgencies have gone by many names from guerrilla war and insurrection to revolution and civil war. By and large, insurgency is a struggle for control over a contested political space, between a State (or group of states or occupying powers), and one or more popularly based non-State challengers (McCormbs, 2003; Boot, 2003). Insurgencies are more likely to occur in States where there are inherent social divisions based on racial, cultural, religious or

ideological differences, which lead to a lack of national cohesion. Although various types of insurgencies have unique characteristics, studies have shown that they follow familiar patterns (mass mobilization and armed actions as their doctrine) (Mendelsohn, 1989; Tomes, 2004, Cassidy, 2005; British Army, 2001). Mobilization of the masses places high premium upon political action by the cadre in local areas, with strategic and operational directives coming from above. The insurgent movement that results from these will resemble a pyramid in its manpower distribution, with the combatants at the smallest part of the movement (the apex of the pyramid). Similarly, second pattern of insurgency emphasizes armed action (Cassidy, 2005). This course favours violence rather than mass mobilization and normally results in an inverted pyramid, with the combatants themselves being the bulk of the movement. This was the approach taken by Fidel Castro in Cuba during the 1950s and may be an approach some insurgents in Iraq have taken against the post-Saddam government, although some efforts to mobilize have also been reported (Brett, 2008; Iyengar, 1990; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987).

Consequently, there is need for counter insurgency strategies. This is expected to be actions and efforts taken by the governments of a nation to quell insurgents' activities (Archer, 2006 and British Army, 2001). These include military efforts and civil actions which are necessary and important to counter insurgency efforts, but they are only effective when integrated into a comprehensive strategy employing all instruments of national power. Therefore, a successful counter insurgency operation must meet the contested population's needs to the extent needed to win popular support while protecting the population from the insurgents (Tomes, 2004 and Nagl, 2005). Likewise, effective counter insurgency operations ultimately eliminate insurgents or render them irrelevant (Archer, 2006).

However, counter insurgency operations require synchronized application of military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological and civic actions. This is due to the fact that successful counter insurgents support or develop local institutions with legitimacy and the ability to provide basic services, economic opportunity, public order and security (Cassidy, 2005). In this vein, the political issues at stake are often rooted in culture, ideology, societal tensions, and injustice. As such, they defy nonviolent solutions. Consequently, military forces can compel obedience and secure areas; yet, they cannot by themselves achieve the political settlement needed to resolve the situation. Sequel to this, counter insurgency effort includes civilian agencies that seek to defeat insurgents, address core grievances and also prevent insurgency's expansion (Nagl, 2005).

Meanwhile, governments and organizations around the world muster much more resources to counter insurgency, public service announcements, print, internet publications as well as television and radio programmes to contain or quell an insurgency taken up against it. Accordingly, insurgency are being fought on the screen as well as on the battlefield. Hence, media coverage of insurgent activities and conflicts have often influenced not only the polity but also public opinion. This influence has expanded as technological development enabled the media to present more information, at a faster rate and of a better quality notwithstanding the insurgence popular uprisings that grow from, and are conducted through pre-existing social networks (village, tribe, family, neighborhood, political or religious party)

in a complex social, informational and physical environment (Hallin, 1989; Mendelsohn, 1989; Livingston and Wolfsfeld, 2004). In this vein, the media shape what we see and hear about insurgency. The perspectives of those who run the media shape stories that are covered. Journalists have opinions and beliefs based on their experiences; the media owners have economic interests, they want to sell in their stories and programmes to a public who will be their patronage. Albeit, the agenda setting phenomenon in media disposition could thus be seen as the one in which issues that receive prominent attention on the national news become the topics that the viewing public considers to be most important (McCombs, 2003). In this respect, information that the public gets from the media is the only contact that many have with political actors (McCombs, Esteban-Escobar and Llamas, 2000). According to Macnamra (2010), what is happening is not simply an evolution in the media and public communication, rather, radical change is afoot and will reverberate through the media, advertising, journalism, public relations and politics for some time to come.

On the whole, the media serve as intermediaries between the political figures and the public. Thus, the agenda setting theory is based on the premise that perceptions and beliefs could be influenced based on what the media wants the public to be talking about (McCombs, 2003). Meanwhile, Norwegian scholar, Johan Galtung (1969) first proposed peace journalism as a self-conscious and working concept for journalists covering wars and conflicts. By taking an advocacy and interpretative approach, the peace journalist concentrates on stories that highlight peace initiatives; tone down ethnic and religious differences, prevent further conflict, focus on the structure of society, and promote conflict resolution, reconstruction, and reconciliation (Galtung, 1969). Galtung (1969) further observes that traditional war journalism is modeled after sports journalism, with a focus on winning in a zero-sum game. In Galtung's vision, peace journalism approximates health journalism. Moreover, the actions of militaries are being scrutinized by the global community in such a way that how they accomplish their missions have become just as important as successfully accomplishing their missions. More importantly, the playing field within the information environment is much more evenly matched than foes on the physical battlefield. The speed and diffusion of information and its effects on global or regional perception has become a crucial line of operation for governments and their militaries. To this end, literatures on counter insurgency strategies have examined the contributions of military actions with little efforts in exploring the contribution of civilian populace and government through the media for counter insurgency. It is against this backdrop that this paper is set to evaluate the media agenda setting and their contributing strategies towards counter insurgency.

## **THE STRUCTURE OF INSURGENCIES**

Insurgency is an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict. It is a protracted political -military struggle designed to weaken government control and legitimacy (Archer, 2006). On the whole, political power is the central issue in an insurgency. Thus, according to publication for Australian Army (Archer, 2006), an insurgent organization normally consists of four elements: Leadership, Combatants (main forces, regional forces, and local forces), Cadre

(local political leaders that are also called the militants) and the Mass base (the bulk of the membership). Leadership figures engage in command and control of the insurgent movement. They are the idea people and planners. They see solutions to the grievances of society in structural terms. The combatants do the actual fighting and are often mistaken for the movement itself. This they are not. They exist only to carry out the same functions as the police and armed forces of the State. They only constitute part of the movement, along with the planners and idea people.

Also, the cadre is the political activists and local political leaders of the insurgency. They are referred to as militants since they are actively engaged in the struggle to accomplish insurgent goals. The insurgent movement provides guidance and procedures to the cadre, and the cadre use these to assess the grievances in local areas and carry out activities that satisfy those grievances. They then attribute the solutions they have provided to the insurgent movement itself. The mass base consists of the followers of the insurgent movement that are the population of the counter State. Mass base members are recruited and indoctrinated by the cadre, who implement instructions and procedures provided by the insurgent leadership. Though they do not actively fight for the insurgency, mass base members provide intelligence and supplies. Mass base members may continue in their normal positions in society, but many will either lead second, clandestine lives for the insurgent movement, or even pursue new, full-time positions within the insurgency (Cassidy, 2005).

#### **TYPES OF INSURGENCIES**

Meanwhile, the types of insurgencies include anarchy, egalitarian, traditionalist, pluralist, secessionist, reformist, preservationist (Archer, 2006). The anarchist goals are elimination of any political structure, societal laws or social framework of the country that they are targeting. This problem is further enhanced by the fact that the anarchist groups generally have no intention to replace the deposed government or rule of law, leaving a power vacuum that external agencies or criminal organizations could fill. Egalitarianism seeks to impose a new system based on centrally controlled structures and institutions to provide equality in the distribution of all state resources. Further to this, traditionalist insurgents seek to overthrow or remove the established order and implement their own government, laws and societal framework that link these to past beliefs, customs and ideals.

Similarly, pluralist entails many of the values that form the basis of many Western Societies such as personal freedom and liberty. Pluralism is the most uncommon form of insurgent movement. The secessionist movement does not wish to overthrow or completely change the current system. It primarily wants to separate itself from an independent organization or structure. Reformist insurgencies carry the least risk for the insurgent group, as they do not directly target the ruling party instead they fight for political, social and economic reforms. Preservationist groups will attack any organization or system that endangers the current regime. Preservationists will target opposition groups that support change as long as they benefit from the current authority. Likewise, counter insurgency embraces all of the political, economic, social and military actions taken by a government for the suppression of insurgent resistance, and revolutionary movements.

## **COUNTER INSURGENCIES STRATEGIES**

According to British Army (2001), the first thing that must be apparent when contemplating the sort of action which a government facing insurgency should take, is that there can be no such thing as a purely military solution because insurgency is not primarily a military activity. At the same time there is no such thing as a wholly political solution either, short of surrender, because the very fact that a state of insurgency exists implies that violence is involved which will have to be countered to some extent at least by the use of force. Consequently, the following principles could be seen from a comparison of Australian and British doctrine of counter insurgency, as well as from the analysis of various authors. These include political primacy and a clear holistic aim; coordination of all elements of power; isolating the insurgents from their support and resources; defeating the cause of the insurgency and not the insurgents; gaining the support of the populace and developing long-term strategies for the State (British Army, 2001 and Archer, 2006).

In this vein, for political primacy and a clear holistic aim, the government must establish clear goals that employ all of the elements of national power. Thus, when considering this aim of a counter insurgency operation, the government takes into consideration the economic, cultural and social conditions of the host nation. Of particular importance in this respect are the fact that this solution to counter insurgency is less military and predominantly other agencies. As a result, military forces could fall under civilian control within the theatre and all military actions should lead to the achievement of the overall political goals and ends. Furthermore, coordination of all elements of power as counter insurgency strategy involves that there is unity of effort from all of the participating agencies. This may not only entail elements from within the government's circle of influence, but is likely to include host nation and multinational assets (Brett, 2008).

Theoretically, Santa Cruz de Marcenado (1684-1732) is probably the earliest author who dealt systematically in his writings with counter-insurgency. In his *Reflexiones Militaries*, published between 1726 and 1730, he discussed how to spot early signs of an incipient insurgency, prevent insurgencies, and counter them, if they could not be warded off (Heuser, 2010). Strikingly, Santa Cruz recognized that insurgencies are usually due to real grievances: "A state rarely rises up without the fault of its governors." Consequently, he advocates towards the population and good governance, to seek the people's "heart and love" (Heuser, 2010). Also, according to Liddell Hart (Heuser, 2010), there are few effective counter-measures to this insurgency. He believes that so long as the insurgency maintains popular support, it will retain all of its strategic advantages of mobility, invisibility, and legitimacy in its own eyes and the eyes of the people. So long as this is the situation, an insurgency essentially cannot be defeated by regular forces. Essentially, then, only one viable option remains: the key to a successful counter-insurgency is the winning-over of the occupied territory's population. If that can be achieved, then the rebellion will be deprived of its supplies, shelter and more importantly, its moral legitimacy. According to him, unless the hearts and minds of the public can be separated from the insurgency, the occupation is doomed to fail. This is due to the fact that in a modern representative democracy, in the face of perceived incessant losses, no conflict will be tolerated by an electorate without

significant show of tangible gains (Brett, 2008). Further to this, is David Galula theory (Brett, 2008) of counter insurgency which is not primarily military, but a combination of military, political and social actions under the strong control of a single authority. Galula contends that a victory [in a counter insurgency] is not the destruction in a given area of the insurgent's forces and his political organization, but the permanent isolation of the insurgent from the population, isolation not enforced upon the population, but maintained by and with the population. In conventional warfare, strength is assessed according to military or other tangible criteria, such as the number of divisions, the position they hold, the industrial resources, nevertheless, in revolutionary warfare, strength must be assessed by the extent of support from the population as measured in terms of political organization at the grass roots. The counter insurgent reaches a position of strength when his power is embedded in a political organization issuing from, and firmly supported by, the population (Brett, 2008)

Equally, as varying insurgencies share common principles, the principles for counter insurgency can be employed to increase the counter insurgents' chances of success. Similarly, isolating the insurgents from their support and resources is the indirect approach to defeating the insurgents and conceivably the most effective. The downside to this approach is that it is resources and time intensive (Heuser, 2010). The aim is to deny the insurgent force access to logistics, intelligence and safe havens, whilst also denying them the ability to recruit. In short, this approach will starve the insurgents. Further to this, another counter insurgency strategy is defeating the cause of the insurgency and not the insurgents. In this vein, in order to target the cause of the insurgency, one must expand focus from the insurgent to the whole system within which the insurgent is operating.

When this is conducted, the counter insurgents may determine whether the cause of the insurgency is economic, cultural, political, religious or even historically based. Once the cause is determined, then the counter insurgents can focus their resources on the causes, and indirectly solve or defeat the insurgency. Although within this principle, the military will primarily be involved with providing a secure environment for the other agencies to operate. They can also employ indirect methods such as psychological operations or propaganda campaigns. Likewise, counter insurgent needs to secure critical bases, hand control over to local security forces and then expand to the next area that needs securing (Cassidy, 2005). Once an area is secured, the second issue will be of what benefits can the counter insurgent provide to the populace and the individual can be addressed.

Moreover, developing long-term strategies against insurgency for the state is another counter insurgency strategies. At this point, counter insurgency operations do not stop with the defeat of the insurgent force. The counter insurgent organization ensures that all of the causes that lead to the insurgency have been rectified and that the country is set up for success. Some of the conditions that may need to be in effect are a functional government at the national and local level (not necessarily a democracy), an established and effective police force, a security force that can defeat internal issues and deter or defeat external aggressors, a functioning economy, education and an operating health care system. This is by no means a complete list but it portrays the complexity and size of the tasks that need to be completed after. To this end, civil efforts of counter insurgency strategies require

mass mobilization of populace in order to make the ideology of the insurgent groups unpopular and irrelevant to the masses. To this end, David Galula, Santa Cruz de Marcenado and Liddell Hart theory of counter insurgency demonstrates the contribution of the civil populace in countering insurgency through information mobilisation by the governments in order to win the populace to their side (Brett, 2008; Iyengar, 1990; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). Consequently, the use of agenda setting by the media becomes paramount in winning the populace.

### **AGENDA-SETTING THEORY**

Agenda-setting theory describes the ability [of the news media] to influence the salient topics on the public agenda (Mcnamra, 2010). In this vein, the theory states that the more salient a news issue is, in terms of frequency and prominence of coverage - the more important news audience will regard the issue to be. A look into the history shows that the theory of agenda-setting can be traced to the first chapter of Walter Lippmann's 1922 classic, "Public Opinion". In that chapter, called "the world outside and the pictures in our heads," Lippmann (1922) argues that the mass media are the principal connection between events in the world and the images of these events in the citizens' minds. Further to this, agenda setting theory was developed by Maxwell McCombs along with Donald Shaw in 1968 (McCorms and Kiouisis, 2004). Thus, agenda setting theory is based on the premise that we are given our "agenda" of daily information for discussion based on what the media wants us to talk about (McCorms, 2003). In this vein, the original agenda-setting hypothesis proposed a moderate media influence on social cognition, how individuals learned about the important issues of the day. Thus, extensive media coverage supplied the media consumers with salient cues regarding the relative importance of these issues.

Meanwhile, agenda setting has been the focus of hundreds of systematic studies, the vast majority of which have found support for the idea that the public learns the relative importance of issues from the amount of coverage given to the issues in the news media (Hallin, 1989; McCormbs, 2003 and Seib, 2011). An underlying assumption of agenda-setting theory is that once an object appears on the media agenda, the volume of cumulative news coverage increases its prominence and perceived importance among the public. McCombs's theory has taken a step further in recent years to determine if the media control what we think about and how we think about it (McCombs, 2003).

From the study conducted by McCombs, the media keeps the populace informed and gives topics of interest without them realizing that they are being given topics. This is due to the fact that the things we see in newspapers and the things heard on the radio are things that people all over the country are talking about. Newspapers, magazines, television, radio and the internet are critical for the interpretation of the events outside of direct environment and they inform what is known as 'symbolic sphere of populace existence' (Soroka, 2001). Thus, the choice and the positioning of the messages in the media channels will be remembered for its emphasis on the unique channel of communication, clever targeting of its audience and its ability to affect the cultural context. In this perspective, peace-oriented entertainment, journalism and any other peace media programmes would

be most effective. However, news agenda setting could be manifested in propaganda. Over the years, mass media's influence evolved gradually together with the technology that carried mass mediated messages. The examples from the World Wars, the Vietnam War, and civil wars of the last decade all suggest considerable media propaganda influence among populations in conflict. The agenda of a news organization is found in its pattern of coverage on public issues over a period of time, a week, a month, an entire year. Over this period of time, whatever it might be, a few issues are emphasized, some receive light coverage, and many are seldom or never mentioned. It should be noted that the use of the term "agenda" here is purely descriptive. There is no pejorative implication that a news organization "has an agenda" that it relentlessly pursues as a premeditated goal. The media agenda presented to the public results from countless day-to-day decisions by many different journalists and their supervisors about the news of the moment. The agenda-setting influence of the news media is not limited to this initial step of focusing public attention on a particular topic. The media also influences the next step in the communication process: understanding the perspective on the topics in the news. For instance, if you think about the agenda in abstract terms, the potential for a broader view of media influence on public opinion becomes very clear. In the abstract, the items that define the agenda are objects.

Furthermore, numerous studies over the years have shown that mass media do in fact shape mass political decision making through the setting of agenda on issues for the public to consider when supporting a political issue (Bennete, Lawrence and Livingstone, 2006). While it is apparent that the media does not tell the public explicitly what to think, it does tell the public what to think about. Media, especially television, is so pervasive that it affects virtually everyone. The visual aspect of television news makes it easy for even an unmotivated, uninvited individual to soak in the information. Also, the sensationalism of certain news publications does not negate the importance of the mass media's role in affecting mass political decision-making.

### **THE MEDIA AND COUNTER INSURGENCY: THE NEWS AGENDA SETTING**

The power of the mass media has expanded dramatically since the beginning of the twentieth century. In large measure, the expansion is associated with technological changes that today allow the public to read, see and hear a barrage of information almost instantly and constantly (Seib, 2011). The major influence today are television, radio and print media providing the majority of citizens with the greater part of their information on all newsworthy subjects. The media can promote positive relationships between groups, particularly in conflicts over national, ethnic, religious identity. In addition, the most obvious effect of the media is in its ability to increase cognitive knowledge by supplying people with information. Once news agenda setting is established, an audience tends to position itself towards the message. An audience contemplates the value of the message and immediately formulates a positive or a negative response to it. The audience can either be persuaded or remain unconvinced (Krawchuk, 2006). Hence, the media can contribute toward creating positive attitudes by bringing a number of advertisements for the ideological change of insurgency.



Therefore, positive attitude building is carried out successfully through the media in front of insurgent groups. More so, the significance of news and social media is now at the centre of a broad debate about understanding the nature of contemporary political and social forces in the context of globalized communications and the potential of new internet technologies to promote rapid social and political change from below, especially in security challenges (tackling insurgency and creating a counter insurgency structure). Moreover, social media through, internet access-wired, mobile or both in many of the countries in recent years have indeed ensured a wider coverage audience.

However, effective counter insurgency operations directly engage in a dialogue with the media by communicating operation information themes (David, 2006). With the proliferation of sophisticated communication technologies throughout the global information environment, the nature of media coverage has a significant impact on counter insurgency operations at all. This is due to the fact that the civilian and military media coverage influences the perception of the political leaders and the public as a whole by supporting the key audience for counter insurgency forces, the execution of their operations, and the efforts towards opposing insurgency. Recognition of this influence creates a war of perceptions between insurgents and counter insurgency forces that is conducted continuously through the communications media. To this end, the media are a permanent part of the information environment and effective media and public affairs operations are critical to successful military operations as every aspect of a military operation is subject to immediate scrutiny.

There are numerous methods available to commanders of counter insurgency forces for working with the media to facilitate accurate and timely information flow. These include embedded media, press conferences and network with the media outlets (Foster, 2005). In this vein, embedded media representatives get to know the soldiers' and marines' perspectives in the context of the counter insurgency environment. However, embedding for days rather than weeks runs the risk of media representatives not gaining any real understanding of the context of operations and may lead to unintended misinformation. Nevertheless, media representatives embedded for weeks become better prepared to present an informed report and set news agenda. Furthermore, weekly press conferences might be held, particularly with government media officers, to explain operations and provide transparency to the people mostly affected by counter insurgency efforts.

Such venues also provide an opportunity to highlight the accomplishments of counter insurgency forces and the government. Thus, the media are ever present and influence perception of the counter insurgency environment. Consequently, successful counter insurgency leaders engage the media to create positive relationships, and help the media to tell the story. On the whole, media agenda setting publicize insurgent violence, respond quickly to insurgent propaganda and use consequence of terror to discredit the insurgency. More so, the influence of the news media on conflicts and peace process is best seen in terms of a cycle in which changes in the political environment lead to changes in media performance that can lead to further changes in the political environment. Thus the phenomenon of agenda setting becomes imperative in this direction. Agenda-setting emphasize how mass media, policy makers, and the public interact and influence one

another to affect issue salience (McCombs, 2003). With this, agenda setting is a type of social learning. Individuals learn about the relative importance of issues in society through the amount of coverage the issues receive in news media. This social learning transcends mere recall of topics in the news. McCombs (2003) finds that agenda setting not only shapes the salience of broad issues but also the salience of proposed solutions to those issues and the rationale behind those solutions. The strength of the link between media salience and attitude strength is particularly significant and suggests that a unique opportunity exists to expand current knowledge about agenda setting effects and public opinion. On the other hand, when government policies enjoy a wide level of support, the news media reflect and reinforce those views (Mendelsohn, 1989 and McCombs, 2003). Hence, the element of coverage speed meant that media policies for a given conflict had to be planned ahead, if those policies could hope to have effect.

One result of media influence, real or perceived, is that military operations now include significant elements of the media policies. While academics still debate the tangible effects of the media on conflict, the military certainly shows no doubt that those effects are very real and act accordingly (Archer, 2006). Thus, media policies on conflict are engendered in agenda setting through the means and methods adopted by the political and military leadership for effective handling and harnessing of campaigns. The range of those policies is wide, encompassing such components as propaganda in its different forms, censorship, denial of access, technical or legal restrictions, to the provision of information and the creation of news. Thus, the media strategy defines a coherent mix of the media policies set to bolster or enhance the political aims of a campaign. Such a strategy could develop on an ad hoc basis, as a crisis forces military action at short notice (Hallin, 1989).

People need to orient themselves in a complex world full of complex issues. This is due to the fact that in the absence of other cues, people tend to judge the importance of issues from their salience in the media and to focus their attention on those presumably most important issues. To this end, the media have a strong influence on people's perception of which issues are important and which problems they want their government to do something about (McCombs, 2003). Thus, the agenda-setting influence of the news media increases when the need for orientation among the audience is high. This could be seen when the insurgent groups pollute the society with information that influences their grievances. Additionally, the agenda-setting of counter insurgency in the media is stronger for concrete issues that are easy to visualize than for abstract issues. This is expected to buttress the claim of the State against insurgent groups as the government has structures coupled with existing sovereign power that could counter insurgency.

Moreover, news agenda setting from public diplomacy tends to be underrated as a counter insurgency strategic tool. Public diplomacy is that element of diplomacy through the media that involves a government reaching out to a public, rather than to another government (Seib, 2011). Multinational organizations, non governmental organisations, corporations, and the like may do so as well. These will be manifested through the mass media. Meanwhile, not only do government possess this tool of public diplomacy in the media, but members of the public expect them to use it. These could be evident in the

proliferation of satellite television and the Internet means that people know more and know it faster than at any previous time. Most of the world population know more about what is going on. The diplomatic pouch has given way to the BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera, and other international satellite channels. The field is further crowded by social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Consequently, the media continues to report and also discuss the issue of insurgency and counter insurgency. This means that when policy determinations are made on counter insurgency, the world may learn about them within minutes from a variety of sources that may feature a variety of slants on the information. To meet this wave of information, a parallel public diplomacy plan using news agenda setting on counter insurgency must also be induced into the communication system. Thus, if counter insurgency strategy were to shift away from a "hard power" effort towards a more political approach, the significance of media-based tactics such as agenda setting would increase. Overall, the task along these lines would be having an agenda setting products that makes non-violent political change seem more appealing.

Conversely, developing information and communication strategies involve providing a legitimate alternate ideology, improving security and economic opportunity, and strengthening family ties outside of the insurgency. In order to conduct public diplomacy through these means, counter insurgency communication needs to match its deeds with its words. Information provided through public diplomacy during a counter insurgency must not be lie. The information and communication to the people always has to be truthful and trustworthy in order to be effective at countering the insurgents. News agenda setting of public diplomacy in counter insurgency (influencing the public thoughts and ideas) is a long time engagement with a conversation through the media news agenda setting happening between the counter insurgency team and the local population of the area of operation.

Moreso, building rapport with the public involves "listening, paying attention, and being responsive and proactive" which is sufficient for the local population to understand and trust the counter insurgency efforts and vice versa (Krawchuks, 2006). This relationship is stringent upon the counter insurgents keeping their promises, providing security to the locals, and communicating their message directly and quickly in times of need with partnership with the media for information dissemination. The media influence how the people view counter insurgency and the host nation legitimacy. In this vein, the use of public diplomacy in news agenda setting to strategically relay the correct messages and information to the public is essential to succeed in a counter insurgency operation.

For example, close relationship with the media members in the area is essential to ensure that the locals understand the counter insurgency objectives and feel secure with the host nation government and the counter insurgency efforts. Perhaps, if the local media is not in the same view with the counter insurgency operatives then the insurgents could spread incomplete or false information about the counter insurgency campaign to the public. To this end, introducing news agenda setting from public diplomacy products becomes imperative. As a preventive measure against insurgency, the use of news agenda-setting from public diplomacy offers an alternative to military or police force because it seeks to reduce the level of enmity between those who might commit such acts and their potential

victims. Even though, dealing with insurgency tends to be left primarily to exponents of hard power, yet defeating insurgency will require more complex and carefully crafted measures that address the mass publics from which insurgents draw their recruits and support. This is due to the fact that the public may be exposed to increasingly sophisticated media messages from insurgent groups, and such messages must be countered. Setting news agenda on public diplomacy should be at the heart of such efforts.

## CONCLUSION

The Media is increasingly mobile and has the unique ability to reach many at an unprecedented rate, making it a tool for disseminating information. Accordingly, information and communication are vital in building trust and ensuring the support of the local population for the counter insurgency mission. Hence, information is crucial to gathering support from both the internal and external actors. The media (television, radio, print and Internet) helps to set the public agenda and frames the scope of public discussion by providing and limiting the range of ideas from which audience can choose, in view of that, long and short term counter insurgency strategies could be effectively built with the use of media agenda-setting. Consequently, target audience consists of the global public, the population of a country where a counter insurgency mission is deployed and the population in countries participating (or contemplating participation) in the campaign against insurgency. In general, the media's greater mobility and flexibility, due in part to the use of satellite phones, lightweight laptops, and digital cameras are a sign of hope that the ideology of insurgence groups could be changed through a proactive media that use agenda setting against insurgency. This is due to the fact that being proactive would in fact strengthen the international media's ability to serve as an indicator or early warning device for conflict and genocide. Thus, sustainable peace will be achieved when stakeholders such as the media are effectively harnessed into counter insurgency campaign. Moreover, counter insurgency strategies will be successful when agenda setting of the news from the media makes the insurgents activities unpopular.

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