



Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror: Military Culture and Irregular War (Stanford Security Studies)

Robert Cassidy

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Since September 2001, the United States has waged what the government initially called the "global war on terrorism (GWOT)." Beginning in late 2005 and early 2006, the term Long War began to appear in U.S. security documents such as the National Security Council's National Strategy for Victory in Iraq and in statements by the U.S. Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the JCS. The description Long War—unlimited in time and space and continuing for decades—is closer to reality and more useful than GWOT.

Colonel Robert Cassidy argues that this protracted struggle is more correctly viewed as a global insurgency and counterinsurgency. Al Qaeda and its affiliates, he maintains, comprise a novel and evolving form of networked insurgents who operate globally, harnessing the advantages of globalization and the information age. They employ terrorism as a tactic, subsuming terror within their overarching aim of undermining the Western-dominated system of states. Placing the war against al Qaeda and its allied groups and organizations in the context of a global insurgency has vital implications for doctrine, interagency coordination, and military cultural change—all reviewed in this important work.

He first offers a distilled analysis of al Qaeda and its associated networks, with a particular focus on ideology and culture. In subsequent chapters, he elucidates the challenges big powers face when they prosecute counterinsurgencies, using historical examples from Russian, American, British, and French counterinsurgent wars before 2001. The book concludes with recommendations for the integration and command and control of indigenous forces and other agencies.

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