

Warrior-Scholars Connecting Theory and Practice of Counter-Insurgency

**Arrábida Seminar
19-21 July 2010**

The aim of this seminar is to provide, during three days, a meeting place for presentation and discussion by 10/12 authors of a collective book to be published in late 2010 or early 2011 by a UK or US Publisher (e.g. Cambridge UP, Routledge) on the role of military thinkers/warrior scholars in the development of strategic thought and military practice in response to unconventional military conflicts.

Insurgencies have become increasingly the dominant form of armed conflict from the Second World War onwards with data pointing to as much as 72% of all conflicts from 1945 to 2005 being unconventional. But this predominance is far from being reflected in existing journals, textbooks or scholarly publications on military affairs and strategic studies. The aim of this seminar and future publication will be to help redress that imbalance and make available a useful tool for teaching in graduate and post-graduate security studies both in civilian and military academic institutions; providing a rigorous and interesting analysis of individual warrior-scholars; and making this a reference for the relevant scholarly audience as well as all those interested in high quality work on such important and topical matters.

The apparent degeneration of the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan into insurgent quagmires has sparked a renewal of academic and military interest in the theory and practice of counter-insurgency. Apparent success in Iraq but the need to either retreat or send more forces to Afghanistan has renewed the debate between advocates of COIN and more conventional strategic thinkers. The aim of this seminar and is to provide a platform to engage more in-depth and in a longer-term perspective with such a debate, however. Irregular warfare is notoriously difficult, with the need for specific conceptualization of victory and for specific guidelines regarding the use and usefulness of force. How to understand and learn about this particular form of warfare is almost equally difficult; especially given the residual anti-intellectualism within Western militaries and the removal from the battlefield of the academy, often seen by the military as an almost scandalous ivory tower pontificating on “their” business.

This seminar will be dedicated to analysing the best perceivable bridge between these two strands. ‘Warrior scholars’ are theoretical practitioners, soldiers or senior military policy-makers who have contributed to our scholarly understanding of counter-insurgency and who have had the opportunity to enact their proposals.

The draft papers within this seminar planned as future chapters of this publication explore the theoretical and practical contributions made by a selection of ‘warrior scholars’ of different nationalities from periods ranging from the Dutch colonial wars of the nineteenth century to the innovative and prevalent contribution to American counter-insurgency made during the Iraq war; from the French experiences in Indo-China to that of their later US counterparts in Vietnam, including the Portuguese experience.