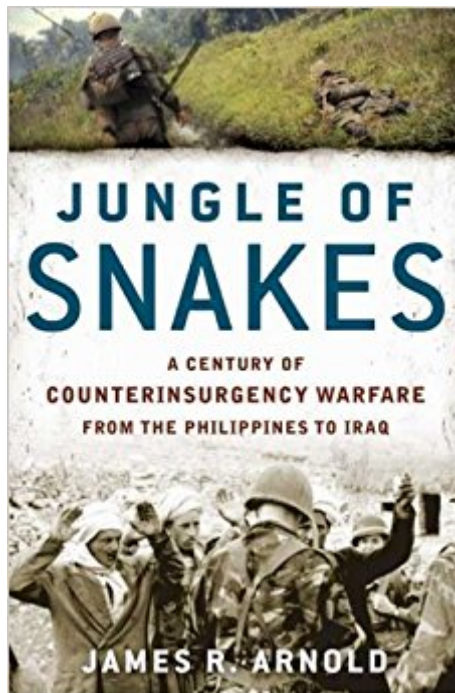




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Jungle Of Snakes: A Century Of Counterinsurgency Warfare From The Philippines To Iraq



Synopsis

A gripping history of a new kind of warfare, with sobering lessons for America's future. The end of the cold war promised a new era of international peace. But instead, violence has proliferated across the globe, not in the form of a superpower arms race or a clash of armies, but in bitter local conflicts marked by terrorism, insurgency, and guerrilla warfare. Former Central Intelligence Agency director James Woolsey likened the post-cold-war world to "a jungle full of snakes." The emergence of this new, potentially never-ending struggle has forced our military to reevaluate strategies or risk losing hearts, minds, and soldiers the world over. James Arnold delivers a gripping narrative of a century of counterinsurgent warfare, from the Philippine War to present-day Iraq, analyzing wars won and lost: the British in Malaya, the French in Algeria, and the United States in Vietnam. Arnold explains the tug-of-war for civilian support and illustrates the high stakes of any counterinsurgency effort. The epilogue examines the occupation of Iraq, where America, to its cost, ignored the lessons of previous conflicts. A veteran military historian, Arnold combines storytelling ability with strategic insight. *Jungle of Snakes* will be essential reading for those who want to understand the ongoing series of struggles that the Pentagon calls "the Long War."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a thoughtful history of two successful counterinsurgency campaigns (the Philippines after 1898 and Malaya 1948–1960) and two failures (Algeria 1954–1962 and Vietnam). According to Arnold (Tet Offensive 1968), in the Philippines, the entire U.S. army of 70,000 spent a decade brutally suppressing a poorly equipped, almost leaderless rebellion. The British campaign in

Malaya enjoyed the priceless advantage that the insurgents were Chinese, a minority and traditionally hated by the majority Malays. Despite this, victory took 12 bloody years. French forces had overwhelmed Algerian rebels when French President De Gaulle ordered a withdrawal, having decided the political cost of remaining in a hostile country was too great. And American troops in Vietnam killed so many Vietcong that North Vietnamese troops took over most of the fighting, but the civilians never trusted the government to protect them—and all insurgencies feed off this failure, notes Arnold. The author makes a convincing case that killing insurgents never defeats an insurgency. That happens when a nation's population feels safe, a painful lesson that America is relearning the hard way in Iraq and Afghanistan. B&w illus. (June) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

“Delivers needed insight and historical precedent to the current war debate.”
Kirkus Reviews “A thoughtful history [Arnold] makes a convincing case that killing insurgents never defeats an insurgency. That happens when a nation's population feels safe, a painful lesson that America is relearning the hard way in Iraq and Afghanistan.”
Publishers Weekly

America currently engaged in counter-insurgency operations in many areas of the world. We are expending blood and treasure in pursuit of a very amorphous goal: the defeat of Terror. This very insightful book James R Arnold analyzes several counterinsurgency various countries in various historical eras and offers a compelling analysis of why we have not been successful. In his conclusion, after analyzing several counterinsurgency campaigns, he offers a compelling analysis of why we have not been more successful and what we need to do to reverse this trend. Language, cultural understanding, pertinent intelligence - all are important. But most important is a clear understanding of why we are engaged in a particular conflict- how national interests are served by our involvement, and once the decision is made that we should be involved, make a long-term commitment to success. I heartily recommend this book to anyone who wants a deeper understanding of Americas counterinsurgency activities, their successes and failures.

Review -Jungle of Snakes by James Arnold
“Jungle of Snakes: A Century of Counterinsurgency Warfare from the Philippines to Iraq” by James Arnold is a well written commentary on four insurgencies: The Philippines by USA 1898-1904, Algeria by the French 1950's, Malaysia by the British 1950's and Vietnam again by the USA 1960's.

The author states in the "Acknowledgments" that his book grew out of discussions "about relevant military history about America's ongoing counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq." To this end the four insurrections are evaluated in terms of security, local conditions, preparations by the invading country, commitment, weapons, language, home support, capacity to recruit insurgents, pacification and country rebuilding techniques, goals of the conquerors, and information and communications, use of torture, and cohesion of the aims and methods of the conquerors. It becomes obvious midway through the book, and frankly stated in the Vietnam section that the author comes down squarely with Gen Petraus and against Gen Westmoreland in the long standing disagreement about the roles of the army and other US military in any insurgency and counterinsurgency. In the Vietnam section and the conclusions section, the author makes frequent reference to the 1940 "Small Wars Manual" of the US Marine Corp and decries that its lessons had to be relearned from scratch as it had been forgotten. The book is well written, an entertaining read, informative as to neglected facts of the four insurgencies, and clear in its arguments as to why Gen Petraus was right. There are few diagrams, and no pictures, but these would have been superfluous. I am left with the suspicion that the histories are told selectively to make the author's points. Many points are made by focusing in on examples of pacification attempts and anecdotal evidence. I strongly recommend this book to students of counterinsurgency history as its points are well made and well taken. But an eye needs to be kept out for prejudgements and selective history telling. The arguments as to the tactics and strategy, i.e. the purpose and uses of the armies, to achieve the goals of the conquering nations need to be understood and kept in mind as this book is read. FYI there are minimal references to Iraq and Afghanistan in spite of the reference made in the "Acknowledgments" that this book is to prepare the reader to understand military history that applies to both.

While not the most penetrating or scholarly study of Counterinsurgency, *Jungle of Snakes* draws on four twentieth-century counterinsurgency campaigns in a largely successful effort to identify enduring themes and misconceptions. While this limited scope leaves a lot of issues and potential lessons unexplored, the four campaigns of choice (Philippines post-1898, Malaya, Algeria and Vietnam) are covered in sufficient detail to illustrate little-known aspects of each campaign, and with enough critical insight to counter the sometimes superficially uncritical citing of British practice in Malaya, French theory born of Algerian experience, or US Marine versus US Army practice in Vietnam as examples of successful COIN. *Jungle of Snakes* is written in a clear, accessible 'popular

history' style and avoids excessive reliance on military knowledge and jargon in order to interest readers without detailed military knowledge, yet contains sufficient detail and rigor to serve as a suitable introductory work for military professionals before tackling COIN theorists (for example, Kilcullen's or Galula's work) or detailed accounts of campaigns such as Horne's 'A Savage War of Peace'. Recommended as worth a look if you are interested in an accessible yet surprisingly penetrating overview of COIN.

Gives an insight on post WW2 warfare

Excellent analysis of four 20th century counterinsurgencies: Philippines, Malaya, Algeria, and Viet Nam. Each section helpfully includes a summary of points. Among the lessons the reader takes away: draconian methods are needed to successfully battle guerrilla movements, even when those movements are not supported by the population (Malaya). Further, draconian methods leave the counterinsurgency effort understandably vulnerable to press coverage except where that coverage can be deflected (Philippines) and that press coverage can seriously weaken effort. Also, as is obvious in Iraq and Afghanistan, no matter the provocation, Western democracies do not have endless patience with drawn-out efforts; that's a huge advantage to the guerrillas. Worthwhile addition to your library.

This book provides several vignettes dealing with Algeria, Vietnam, Philippines and Malaya. Author explores how in both Vietnam and Algeria the French and Americans did not adopt effective strategies till it was too little too late.

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