New Media: A Boon for Insurgents or Counterinsurgents?

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More than two billion people – approximately one third of the global population – now use the Internet, and that figure will increase dramatically over the next decade.[1] With this increased use comes ever-greater decentralization of information, which in turn has profound repercussions on societal interactions. For the purposes of this study, "new media" is defined as a host of platforms, including social media, generally supported by the Internet, that offer immediate and direct potential to receive and share information. The Internet is also ripe for the conveyance of opinions and political messages from a large field of users – including those who have historically lacked the opportunity or resources to frame the debate.

Insurgencies have utilized these new tools to improve their strategic and tactical communications. For the sake of this paper, "insurgency" is defined as any group individuals whose protests and collective action threaten the existing regime. Most insurgents' communications strategies are indelibly entwined with their political strategies.[2] Information and technological revolutions have allowed insurgent groups through the Internet and its many platforms to compete with counterinsurgents' long-standing monopoly on conventional mass communication.[3] Personalized media platforms, i.e. social media, greatly benefit insurgents by allowing interaction with and contributions from participants.[4]

Though social media platforms are relatively new, they have already played crucial roles in several rebellions. During the April 2009 "Twitter Revolution" in Moldova, protesters created Twitter 'hashtags' that allow those posting the information to indicate a topic or conversation to which their "tweet" pertains. Twitter allowed Moldovans to follow along and contribute to the political discussion and to coordinate with one another. It also allowed international observers to follow the conversation and activity. One hashtag proved so popular that it became a trending topic worldwide on Twitter.[5]

Moldova's Twitter Revolution highlighted two lessons about the strengths and weaknesses of social media as a revolutionary tool. Twitter's ability to mobilize support and to raise and sustain international awareness proved constructive.[6] However, it did not assist with coordination of those already involved in actions. As one commenter noted, "When you have angry and disorganized crowds, you don't need decentralized platforms – you want to centralize instead."[7]

The social rebellion movement next appeared in Iran. Though most of the tweeting in the "Green Revolution" that began in June 2009 appeared to occur outside of the country or by English-speaking participants (Twitter did not initially support Farsi), much of the information reported by the international media was delivered via the platform.[8] The protests in Iran also dominated worldwide Twitter hashtags during this time. The State Department even requested that Twitter delay scheduled maintenance to avoid disturbing the service of protesters, demonstrating the U.S. government's recognition of the power of

social media.[9]

The rebellions in Moldova and Iran brought the role of social media and the Internet to the forefront of debate regarding the processes of political change. Some argued that social media and the Internet could become a transformative tool for insurgencies, while others downplayed their role, and even asserted they were of greater use to government forces. The more recent uprisings in the Middle East – in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya – have put the theories of the uses of new media in insurgencies to the test. On one hand, these platforms offer many advantages to insurgents. The Internet can facilitate the attraction of new members and international support, and assists with the formation of new coalitions. It can serve as an extension of fourth generation warfare, a core tactic of many insurgencies. It can also allow insurgents to successfully accomplish strategic messaging and serve as a virtual safe haven in which a group can carry on critical functions like recruiting and fundraising.

Conversely, new media poses some disadvantages to insurgents. Using the Internet as a primary strategy can potentially undermine an insurgency's leadership structure. It also reveals the insurgents' strategy to its opponents. Further, insurgents may have difficulty uniting disparate elements of the population and may recruit only passive supporters. Finally, counterinsurgents can also utilize new media to undermine the insurgency.

Positive Aspects for an Insurgency

Attraction of New Members

Insurgents can use new media to quickly attract new members and grow the insurgency, turning passive supporters into active participants. Studies suggest that people join insurgencies in part because of their social networks, so insurgents can use existing social networks to attract new members.[10] The interconnected nature of social media may also allow insurgent groups to recruit new members because of the associated peer pressure, a powerful motivator. Though slightly pre-dating the proliferation of social media, a Serbian youth movement named "Otpor" provides a clear example of political movements using peer pressure, in this case the positive form. Conducting street theatre inspired by Monty Python, the group attracted many followers through its use of satire and political pranks.[11] By creating an identity-based community and a corresponding culture, the movement grew from 11 individuals in October 1998 to more than 70,000 two years later and ultimately became instrumental in the downfall of Slobodan Milosevic.[12]

Social media can similarly further the effects of peer pressure. Although individuals may never have met in person, users often discover shared values that lead to the creation of an online community toward which an insurgent group can target its marketing and outreach efforts. Also, social media attracts a younger population, which makes up the majority of Internet users.[13] Youth, who are more susceptible to peer pressure, are typically vital for insurgencies and usually make up a large portion of the critical mass necessary to challenge a government.[14]

The Power of Individuals

Mohammed Nabbous of Libya demonstrated that one charismatic individual with a powerful message and the right skills to transmit that message can have a profound impact. Nabbous created an Internet TV station, "Libya Alhurra" (Free Libya) in Benghazi in February 2011.[15] He carried live footage 24 hours per day, depicting the city under attack by forces loyal to Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. Nabbous regularly pleaded to Western countries to intervene on behalf of those that opposed Gaddafi.[16] On March 19, while recording live on the streets of Benghazi, Nabbous was shot and killed. Since his death, Nabbous'

cause has been widely celebrated.[17]

Called the "face of the Libyan protest," Nabbous was a regular contributor to Western media outlets such as CNN.[18] He managed to overcome government efforts to block Internet access, thereby connecting the international media directly to the opposition in Libya.[19] Images from the Libyan opposition were carried on his Livestream page, and rebroadcast via social media throughout the world.[20] Nabbous stood in stark contrast to the Gaddafi regime's clumsy disinformation campaigns and outright attempts to obscure unfavorable events. At times, the regime imprisoned and beaten international journalists; within this context, the rebel's counter-narrative became a powerful force.

Charismatic individuals also played a role in Egypt, where social media was crucial in recruiting new members. In one instance, Google marketing executive Wael Ghonim used his professional experience for recruitment purposes. To advertise for a protest, he created a Facebook group, "We Are All Khalid Said," named for an individual tortured and murdered by Egyptian police.[21] Ghonim applied his marketing knowledge to building an insurgency, stating, "I worked in marketing, and I knew that if you build a brand, you can get people to trust the brand."[22]

Attraction of International Support

New media can also provide a direct channel for international support. Globalization and the Internet allow an insurgent group to instantly and continuously broadcast their cause.[23] This could result in an insurgency gaining moral, political, or material support.[24] The use of new media by activists like Nabbous attracted global attention to the insurgent cause. Labels of "freedom fighters" and comparisons of the insurgents' struggle to the American Revolution[25] raised expectations of some reaction from those in the West who actively promote democratic ideals. Many states responded by providing moral, political, and material support.

New Media and Fourth Generation Warfare

Fourth generation warfare is characterized by the use of all available tools to convince opposition leaders that their political goals are not achievable or will cost more than they are —to sacrifice.[26] It differs markedly from first-and-second generations of warfare in that it does not concentrate on the direct destruction of enemy forces and is often measured in decades.[27] This suits the asymmetric tactics preferred by most insurgent groups. International pressure is a vital tool of fourth generation war. In many ways, new media has strengthened the practitioners of fourth generation warfare by facilitating the insurgent's ability to deliver a message to its target audience, which oftentimes resides in another country.

In one example of the fourth generation warfare strategy of delivering messages to the opposition's home audience, following an August 18, 2009 ambush of a French patrol in Afghanistan that killed 10 soldiers, the Taliban managed to appear in a French magazine showing off captured uniforms, weapons, and personal effects of the soldiers.[28] As a result of the ambush, French support for the war effort in Afghanistan plummeted.[29] Defense Minister Herve Morin stated that the Taliban "understood that public opinion is probably the Achilles' heel" of the international forces involved in Afghanistan.[30]

The recent events in Egypt also provide a strong example of fourth generation warfare. Following fourth generation principles, insurgents in Egypt relied on new media to create intense political pressure on the Mubarak regime. These tools allowed members of the insurgency to carry their message directly to the international media and populace without interference.

Mahmoud Salem, Internet activist who runs a blog entitled "Rantings of a Sandmonkey," is a prime example of an individual who used new media to pressure the Mubarak regime. Salem received a strong

following in Egypt and internationally, which enabled him to become one of the leading voices of the uprising. Salem's story resonated with international media, and allowed him to transmit his anti-Mubarak message to the world.[31]

Salem also recognized the value of disaggregated information sources in directing public engagement. He and others felt that Egyptian insurgents should use asymmetric tactics; they should never meet Mubarak forces head on.[32] According to Salem, the rapid-fire, open source nature of Twitter allowed protesters to accomplish this.[33] Google's Wael Ghonim's group also advocated asymmetric tactics such as flash mobs. [34]

Ghonim also pressured the Mubarak regime by transmitting a contrasting message to the world. Two days after his release by the Egyptian government, an interview by Ghonim appeared on CNN in which he discussed his confinement and the situation in Egypt.[35] This speech strongly resonated with protestors and strikingly re-energized the movement. In an interview the day Mubarak stepped down, Ghonim acknowledged the role of the international media in the resignation of Mubarak and thanked the media, stating, "You are part of the revolution."[36]

As a result of such pressure and the insurgents' ability to mobilize large numbers in protest, a decisive military victory over the Mubarak regime was unnecessary.[37] The resonance of their message in the international media contributed to pressure on political leaders in countries like the U.S., from which Mubarak received strong support. This contributed to former allies removing their support and the crumbling of his international legitimacy. This weakened his grip on the country and contributed to his fall.

The Importance of the First Truth

New media likely makes it easier for an insurgent group to be the first party to address and frame an event. Telling the story before one's adversary holds incredible strategic importance in a counterinsurgency.[38] Doing so effectively forces the opponent to react to the first version of the details. Oftentimes the initial version of the story holds up over the long run, as it is the first one digested by the public.

Insurgents typically hold an advantage in communication due to their presence amongst the population. Social media can emphasize this advantage due to the instant communication it facilitates. A well-crafted, concise piece of propaganda can easily be shared, reach viral levels very quickly, and be virtually impossible for counterinsurgents to comprehensively refute. Insurgent groups like al Qaeda, which operate without the assistance of a host government and the associated access to mainstream media, are particularly reliant on new media for strategic communications.[39]

Insurgents can also use the Internet to capitalize on the mistakes of counterinsurgents. Examples of previous blunders include scandals over the torture of detainees at Abu Ghraib and the Florida pastor Terry Jones' decision to burn a Koran. Insurgents can leverage the public relations advantage in the aftermath of such events in order to undermine the credibility of counterinsurgents.

Virtual Safe Haven

The role of safe havens in insurgencies has been well documented. The Internet and social media can supply for an insurgent group a "virtual safe haven," largely off limits to counterinsurgents. From this sanctuary, insurgents can transfer and receive financial, moral, and personnel support.[40] The Internet can also be used for propaganda, recruitment, training, communications, planning, and intelligence purposes. [41]

Footage claiming to show oppression of Muslims in Iraq, Palestine, the Balkans, and Chechnya frequently pass among jihadist websites to stoke support.[42] Similarly, jihadists post videos showing bombings of mosques and footage of U.S. soldiers using excessive force on civilians.[43] Examples such as al Qaeda's *Inspire* English-language magazine and media production unit *As-Sahab* demonstrate a willingness to use the Internet to recruit new members.[44]

Jihadists also post videos of successful attacks by insurgent groups on counterinsurgent forces to increase morale. The "Baghdad Sniper" videos, which show attacks on American soldiers in Iraq by an individual named "Juba," constitute one such example.[45] The jihadist presence on the Internet has led to the slogan "keyboard equals Kalashnikov."

Posting attacks online also publicly demonstrates the capabilities of the insurgency and the vulnerability of counterinsurgents. They display to viewers the military initiative that is critical to maintaining participation and recruitment and to "create the impression that the insurgency has momentum and will succeed."[46] These demonstrations of potency may very well make the "Baghdad Sniper" videos and others like them the modern day equivalent of attacks like the Tet Offensive, in that they crystallize the cost to counterinsurgents and erode domestic support.

With the advent of chat rooms, email, website posting boards, and blogs, the Internet has facilitated semi-secure communications among insurgent groups.[47] Electronic communication allows leaders to avoid meeting face to face.[48] Strategies that prove effective are frequently shared online and sprout up in insurgencies elsewhere in the world.[49] For instance, improvised-explosive devices, first used in Chechnya, later appeared in Iraq and Afghanistan.[50]

Insurgents can often acquire intelligence on counterinsurgent locations or information on other targets from open source information contained on the Internet, saving time, money, and decreasing the risk of exposure. Readily available sources such as *Google Maps* can assist insurgents in their operations, as has occurred in Iraq.[51] Al Qaeda's Manchester Manual stated that, "openly and without resorting to illegal means, it is possible to gather at least 80% of information about the enemy." Insurgents can also use the Internet to track international reaction to their operations and access national debates regarding the counterinsurgency effort.[52]

New media has played a crucial rule in financing operations as insurgents can quickly and easily collect donations online. Many sites promoting insurgent causes also facilitate money transfers.[53] Counterinsurgents have found it particularly difficult to shut down websites associated with insurgent groups. "Bouncing," the practice of linking a site on multiple servers (potentially in different countries) makes it difficult to eliminate insurgent material, not to mention identifying the individual responsible for initially posting the content.[54] Finally, problem exists with differing legal codes; posting insurgent-related material may be illegal in one country, but legal in another.[55]

Insurgents can also effectively communicate across borders using the Internet, which is helpful for transnational insurgencies or those wishing to strategically link with groups operating in other states. For instance, the April 6 Youth Movement collaborated online with former members of the Serbian group Otpor.[56] After deposing Milosevic, Otpor went on to form the Center for Applied NonViolent Action and Strategies (CANVAS), which has consulted with democracy movement leaders in 50 states, including Egypt.[57] Egyptians benefited from the experience of insurgents in Tunisia, who supplied practical advice via Facebook, including tips on how to counteract tear gas by using scarves soaked in vinegar.[58]

Multiple Benefits of Social Media

 Social media is an ideal tool for transmitting ideas broadly. Insurgents can cheaply and quickly spread

their message online, which is much more efficient than traveling from village to village. This also makes promoting antigovernment ideas comparatively safer. Government forces can still identify insurgents based on Internet communication, but this requires technical expertise, and effective users can usually achieve anonymity.[59] The Internet and social media also make logistical coordination much easier. Though government forces can respond by shutting down the Internet, this will not stop access to Twitter, as users can Tweet via SMS on their mobile phones.

Further, the interconnected nature of social media can act as a force-multiplier by allowing smaller groups to project beyond their size.[60] Messages can be instantaneously shared among users on popular social media platforms independently of the creator of the message. This serves to advance the ideas of the insurgency far beyond origination. Also, the government and public cannot easily determine the scope of the originators of the message. Consequently, counterinsurgents (and the public) might overestimate the size of an insurgent group, thus allowing insurgents to leverage the psychological impact of their operations.[61]

The leaderless nature of an insurgency utilizing this platform would also make for harder targets for counterinsurgents. If no centralized leadership structure exists within an insurgent group, government forces could not end the insurgency by removing the leadership structure. Wael Ghonim hinted at this strategy when he claimed the Egyptian rebellion was modeled after the anonymous, faceless leader in the movie "V for Vendetta," who anonymously leads an uprising in a futuristic, Orwellian England.[62]

Negative Aspects for an Insurgency

Effects on Insurgent Leadership

As mentioned above, one of the hallmarks of a successful insurgency – effective leadership – plays less of a role in a movement driven by the Internet, which may result in a flat leadership structure. This strategy can also stunt the development of leaders. While organizers might contribute to arranging events from the relatively safe confines of the Internet, this does not automatically translate into an active role in insurgent actions, where leaders typically become synonymous with an insurgency.

Further, this flat leadership structure can have profound consequences on the conclusion of an insurgency. For instance, following Mubarak's resignation, the protest movement lacks a single leader to serve as the focal point for negotiations with the military. A lack of representation could result in a diminished voice in discussions about the new form of government. This has clearly occurred in the aftermath of Mubarak's resignation. The transitional military council has been accused of abuse, torture, baseless arrests, and incommunicado detentions, and former Mubarak regime officials have been taking up positions in the provisional government.[63] The election system instituted by the transitional military council in May 2011 awards two-thirds of the seats in parliament based on votes in individual districts, which favors the established Egyptian political parties at the expense of the smaller liberal movements formed after the revolution who cannot compete in every district.[64]

A leaderless insurgency also faces a significantly greater chance of splintering. Although this danger exists for all insurgencies, it is acutely so in one developed via social media because there is less of a need for leadership within the insurgency and no real threat of punishment (either social or otherwise) for defectors. Yet a successful insurgency requires cohesion. As Mao Zedong stated, "Without centralized strategic command, the partisans can inflict little damage on their adversaries."[65] Observers have noted this occurrence in Egypt, where the multitude of participants in the uprising that contributed to the resignation of Mubarak have by and large split to form their own political movements.[66] Libya also demonstrates the difficulty of a leaderless insurgency to act cohesively.[67] The lack of centralized

leadership also would make the insurgency more susceptible to outside interference or manipulation.[68]

Questions exist as to whether an insurgency fueled by the Internet can operate effectively or attract international recognition or support. Authors have linked successful insurgencies to the existence of a complex organization capable of efficiently conducting training, performing logistics and intelligence, and coordinating operations.[69] Without a complex unifying organization, an insurgency's effectiveness is likely limited. An insurgency based on social media would have difficulty developing this complexity given the disparate voices that make up an online community. This might also limit the chances of attracting international legitimacy, as foreign states would not likely grant recognition to an insurgency with an indiscernible leadership structure.

That said, rebels in Libya proved it possible to develop complexity in short order after the challenge to the government began. A political structure was formed by the Libyan opposition on February 27, 2011, and two months later they drafted a constitution for the new government.[70] Whether this government will form an effective base capable of sustaining the insurgency in Libya remains to be seen as the Libyan opposition still struggles to stand on its own against Gaddafi's forces. They have suffered from an inability to increase their territory and difficulty in defending what they control, stemming from a lack of proper military leadership.[71] The situation in Libya reiterates the fact that a leaderless insurgency faces incredible difficulty in a military conflict because of the impossibility of fighting battles by consensus or as disparate parts.

Donor states are disinclined to support insurgencies composed of disjointed groups.[72] Material support received by an insurgency with an indiscernible leadership structure may increase the fracture within the insurgency. Donor aid in a fragmented insurgency tends to favor one group over others, which might be the intention of donor states.[73]

Revelation of Strategy

Insurgents who use new media extensively are in effect revealing their strategy to the opposition, which should allow government forces to better neutralize the insurgency.[74] Counterinsurgents can monitor new media sources and insurgent communications to identify motivations or grievances. With this information, government forces could produce policies that allay existing societal grievances, thereby undercutting support for the insurgency.

Difficulty in Uniting Elements of the Population

Using new media to organize an insurgency might also cause difficulties in uniting diverse segments of a population. Older persons, less likely to use the Internet than the young, might be out of reach. This could limit the strategy's effectiveness in states with older societies. Also, those who live in rural areas, away from technological infrastructure and Internet service might prove difficult to recruit.

The Curse of Passive Involvement

An Internet-driven insurgency might also encourage participants to become only passively involved. New recruits might be satisfied with "liking" a group on Facebook or following someone's Twitter feed, but may not risk personal safety by taking part in street actions. Under such a scenario, the insurgency's message might expand to reach new people, but its actual strength (and ability to challenge the government) could stagnate.

Other Limitations

The use of new media as a primary strategy for insurgencies has several obvious limitations.

Approximately 25 percent of Egyptians have Internet access, and a new media-based insurgency proved successful. However, in a country like Somalia, where only one percent of the population has Internet access, the strategy is not likely viable. Obviously, low literacy rates would also affect the potential value of this strategy.

In addition, as occurred in Moldova, Iran, and Egypt, a government that controls Internet service can respond by shutting down access across the country. While insurgents may develop alternative methods (e.g., text messaging with mobile phones), a lack of widespread access could prove damaging. An insurgency that has become organizationally dependent on the Internet while ignoring the development of traditional insurgent methods such as personal networks may find it difficult to survive if the government eliminates access.

Crucially, the use of new media by an insurgent group is contingent on the existence of societal grievances. If they exist, such grievances can be used to create an alternate vision for the country, which will facilitate the formation of a critical mass necessary to challenge the government. However, insurgents cannot create these conditions using the Internet; they can only hope to exploit existing grievances using online tools.

The Use of New Media by Counterinsurgent Forces

In the end, new media platforms represent just another area of competition between insurgents and government forces. While insurgents can use the Internet to their advantage, the government could use the same tools to undercut insurgent rhetoric, thereby reducing support. On the more aggressive side, counterinsurgents might use the same tools to identify and detain participants of insurgencies. They could also subvert social media platforms, sending false messages,[75] or set up "honeypots," websites monitored to identify potential insurgents.[76]

Although social media has been widely lauded as a positive force for social change, the successes of insurgents in Egypt might be best explained by the Mubarak regime's unwillingness to develop a proactive approach to the insurgency, and specifically his disregard of the Internet.[77] Counterinsurgents of the future will likely conduct a pervasive, coordinated, preventive Internet propaganda campaign designed to undermine opposition groups. China and Russia already practice these methods with the purpose of preventing insurgencies from forming in the first place.[78] Pro-regime forces in Syria have used the same new media tools as insurgents to disseminate information.[79]

Governments can certainly possess the ability to conduct counterinsurgencies much more effectively than the Mubarak regime. Chiefly, counterinsurgents can use social media sites to identify the opposition. Following the events in Iran, the government reposted on its own websites photos that protesters had published. The Iranian government then designated the individuals it could not identify, and requested that the public supply names.[80] In the future, counterinsurgents could use facial recognition software to match pictures of known insurgents to Facebook profiles. Facebook is already integrating such software within the platform. In the past year the social networking site added facial recognition to the default settings for users.[81]

It is easy to see a progression by social media platforms towards diminished user anonymity. Advertising revenue for such sites increases when they provide more detailed information about users, so social media sites are motivated to collect as much information as possible about users. It stands to reason that social media sites could become a very dangerous place for insurgents – especially if new features designed to

collection information become compulsory. This reality could have contributed to Syria's decision in February 2011 to allow once more access to social media sites.[82]

Conclusion

The dramatic increases in Internet availability around the world will only increase in the near future. Likewise, the intensity of competition between insurgents and government forces will grow as each struggles to strategically harness the Internet and its diverse array of platforms. In many ways, new media serves as an extension of fourth generation warfare and supports asymmetric tactics. It can allow insurgents to attract new members, form coalitions, gain international support, and serve as a force multiplier. The Internet can also serve as a virtual sanctuary for an insurgent group.

However, reliance on the Internet can also act as a detriment to insurgent groups. It has negative implications for insurgent leadership, plainly reveals the insurgency's methods, and might fail to support insurgents' ability to unite dissimilar segments of a population. It could also lack the ability to promote more than passive involvement by the public. Finally, counterinsurgents can use the very same tools to undermine the insurgency.

Experts suggest that the success or failure of any insurgency ultimately boils down to the government's response, rather than the strength of the insurgency.[83] That is, the government innately possesses the upper hand but can relinquish it by failing to sufficiently respond. However, the Internet has become the main communication platform for insurgencies.[84] These platforms allow users to push the tempo of messaging and to dominate conversation, creating a higher bar for governments to reach in order to quell the insurgency.

As a result, government forces must address the strategic underpinnings of an insurgency, rather than reacting at the operational level. Waiting for an insurgency to establish itself online makes the counterinsurgents' job much more difficult. This becomes especially true when counteracting an insurgency employing new media. Counterinsurgents cannot possibly shut down all websites or refute all tweets or postings on Facebook. Government forces would be much better served developing a proactive solution. Though it faces many current problems with Islamic jihadist insurgencies, the U.S. has yet to develop an effective counter-narrative on the Internet. Focusing on older versions of media – such as its al-Hura TV station and al-Sawa radio station – may do little to counteract the presence of extremist groups online.[85]

Because it cannot possibly succeed in a reactive role, the U.S and its allies must develop a strategic counter-communication plan capable of undermining insurgent messaging online. They must integrate the plan with their wider counterinsurgency strategy, including military, law enforcement, political, diplomatic, and socio-economic aspects. Further, for transnational threats, the U.S. must institute its operations worldwide and ensure consistency at the strategic, tactical, and operational levels.[86] The U.S. should also tailor its counterinsurgency strategy for individual insurgencies; a one-size-fits-all approach will not succeed.

Insurgent use of new media also imposes limitations. An insurgency will never succeed if it is limited to the Internet. Insurgents must motivate participants to take to the streets or become involved in some other form of action. Consequently, insurgents must create a message powerful enough to not only encourage participation on the Internet but also to risk personal safety and livelihood by taking part in street actions.

Contemporary insurgent successes in the Middle East will serve as a template for future Internet-fueled rebellions. However, they will also inform future counterinsurgent efforts. Recent innovations do not amount to a decisive advantage for insurgents or government forces. Consequently, in the future, the

Internet and its many platforms will exist as yet another area of competition between insurgents and counterinsurgents.

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This new agenda now addresses virtually all areas of human activity and is truly a blueprint for global governance. At first glance, this agenda appears to be combating every serious problem on the global stage. Yet when one delves deeper into the logistics of the plan, it becomes clear that the act of suggesting what should be done, and having a solution to a problem, are two very different things. Will their country be exempt from the universal poverty-ending plan? As far as the media is concerned, these topics are not very important. It is quite odd that a plan of such relevance, such magnitude, is being completely disregarded by the mainstream media. • Insurgent Goals. Are the insurgents striving to overthrow the existing government or to gain autonomy for a region? How can the government take advantage of each goal? • The Nature of Insurgent Attacks. Importantly, throughout the monograph we stress the need for high-quality intelligence in the counterinsurgency (COIN) effort, and the similarity of COIN to police work. Insurgents who use new media extensively are in effect revealing their strategy to the opposition, which should allow government forces to better neutralize the insurgency.[74] Counterinsurgents can monitor new media sources and insurgent communications to identify motivations or grievances. With this information, government forces could produce policies that allay existing societal grievances, thereby undercutting support for the insurgency.