

2014

Teaching Notes for CHAPTER 14: A Penny for Your Thoughts, a Nickel for Your Heart: Buying Popular Support for Counterinsurgency

Justin Gorkowski
United States Army

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/ucmoteaching_notes



Part of the [Defense and Security Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gorkowski, Justin, "Teaching Notes for CHAPTER 14: A Penny for Your Thoughts, a Nickel for Your Heart: Buying Popular Support for Counterinsurgency" (2014). *Teaching Notes*. Paper 14.
http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/ucmoteaching_notes/14

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Teaching Notes by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University.

TEACHING NOTES

A Penny for Your Thoughts, a Nickel for Your Heart:

Buying Popular Support for Counterinsurgency

By Justin Gorkowski*

The use of money as a weapon in the current conflicts is a contentious issue and one that is gaining more attention. This case can be used to generate thought, analysis, and discussion to fit an array of courses in a foreign-policy-related curriculum. The case can be tailored through classroom discussion to highlight issues as desired by the instructor or determined by the syllabus. The questions and background resources that follow are supplementary material that may help guide classroom instruction and discussion. They are not all inclusive but serve as a tool to guide instruction according to specific learning objectives.

The purpose of this case is to discuss the pros and cons of using monetary incentives, either directly or indirectly to increase popular support for counterinsurgency or nation-building efforts. The use of money in the post-9/11 counterinsurgency efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines came under increased scrutiny by members of the U.S. Congress as signs of corruption became more evident. This case is designed to illuminate the numerous decision-making dilemmas presented through the utilization of money to attain popular support in counterinsurgencies with the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP). There are two primary objectives of this case that force students to think critically about the use of money in warfare: (1) whether popular support can be purchased and, if it can, (2) whether popular support should be purchased. Further, consideration of all the ancillary factors involved in CERP reconstruction presents numerous dilemmas that could have long-term policy implications.

Skills such as multivariate decision-making, critical thinking, analysis, teamwork, statistical analysis, and problem-solving will all be stressed through review of this case study. This case will also provide an opportunity to gauge students' attitudes concerning the relevance of their studies in the broader policy and security environment.

The case presents an opportunity to assess student sensitivity to other cultures; foreign aid; and the relationship between the government, the military, and civilian organizations. Given a knowledge base of the public policy, economics, and international relations principles and theories, the primary and secondary learning objectives of this case are outlined as follows.

Target Audience

This case is intended for graduate students of public policy and related fields, but undergraduates should benefit from it as well. Applicable courses include economic development, international development, conflict resolution, negotiation and consensus building, national security, and counterinsurgency.

* **Justin Gorkowski** is a Captain in the United State Army.

Objectives

Upon completion of this case, students should be able to do the following:

1. Develop well-constructed arguments about whether monetary incentives can be used directly or indirectly to influence popular support in low-intensity or postconflict environments.
 - Identify the various types of reconstruction funds available and their intended uses.
 - Critically discuss the pros and cons of the impact of monetary incentives on the people in postconflict environments.
 - Cite leading experts and theories that support or negate the idea of using money to buy popular support.
2. Develop well-constructed arguments about whether monetary incentives should be used directly or indirectly to influence popular support in low-intensity or postconflict environments.
 - Identify the pros and cons of buying popular support.
 - Compare and contrast the pros and cons of buying popular support.
 - Identify the ancillary effects of buying support and construct well-informed arguments to support or dismiss the need to provide CERP reconstruction.
 - Develop and support policy recommendations for the long-term (post-Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom) use of CERP.

Issues for Exploration

This case offers several issues for exploration—the case revolves around two core issues, while five additional issues are more subtly presented. The case is intended primarily to promote the exploration of the issue of buying popular support.

The first issue deals with whether support can even be purchased. The case discusses the use of CERP by General Chiarelli and the subsequent use of money by Muqtada al Sadr to buy support. It goes on to discuss how historically there is a positive correlation between the amount of CERP money spent and violence.

The second major issue is whether support should be purchased. The case outlines the major arguments for buying support. Exploration into the details of any one of these pros or cons will reveal increased understanding for decision-making.

Five other issues are touched upon in this case, for which further discussion and exploration could prove fruitful. They are the economics and soft power contributions to war; joint/interagency planning and coordination; the issue of support as a commodity; the practicality of CERP's contribution to counterinsurgency (COIN), and finally the issue of sustainability.

The case revolves around the often overlooked nonlethal contribution of economics and the often ancillary soft power aspects of warfare. With all the talk in the media about COIN strategies, surges, and drone attacks, it is widely unknown how significantly economics can and does influence war—both positively and negatively. Further, the relationships and trust networks that are developed through such transactions are profound. This case presents the opportunity to explore the broader issue of the role of economics and soft power in warfare.

Several instances are presented in this case that outline the difficulty and importance of joint, multinational, or interagency coordination and cooperation. The money used for reconstruction passes through many hands before expenditure. The potential for infighting during the process is significant. The planning considerations by each agency can influence how the money impacts the economy and the people—again both positively and negatively.

Another issue ripe for discussion is that of support as a commodity. Discussion should focus on why people lend their support in one direction over the other and if money is the sole driving factor. Special consideration should be paid to the fact that these funds are available in areas that have experienced typically violent and unstable histories. Concepts that would further be discussed below, such as behaviorism, add flavor to this issue. The underlying theme is determining why people behave as they do in low-intensity and postconflict environments and exploring ways in which such behavior might be influenced.

The next issue concerns the practicality of CERP as a contributor to violence. The money spent on CERP is a drop in the bucket compared to other reconstruction funds. Is putting all the effort into the prioritization of CERP really worth it? The exploration of this issue should take into consideration all factors that influence violence in a counterinsurgency. The first answers that will invariably surface concerning those factors that decrease violence will be hunt-and-kill-type operations. However, numerous factors influence the fight—especially when considering the culture and local intricacies. Ethnic tensions, history, regional power brokers, intelligence, the presence of other international players, the strength of the adversary, and the support of the people at home represent some of the possible contributing factors—in addition to the influence of money, mentioned previously.

The final issue presented in this case for exploration is that of sustainability and hasty progress. The underlying theme for this issue is whether the projects constructed with CERP are truly meeting the needs of the people and whether they will continue to serve the people for an acceptable period of time. There have been several investigations by the Special Inspectors General for Iraq and Afghanistan Reconstruction that depict extremely poor construction quality that would not adhere to the most lenient of western standards. Reconstruction experts (USAID and the Corps of Engineers) have taken issue with this fact and are often critical of CERP because of this fact. This issue ties into the interagency coordination issue mentioned previously. Discussion should explore the need for coordination between those at the front enacting CERP reconstruction projects and the experts responsible for long-term reconstruction reliability or sustainability. Those using CERP funds have an advantage over the more bureaucratic reconstruction institutions—they have the ability quickly to access funds as well as the ability to impact the population at the lowest level or the most remote village.

Perspectives and Role Playing

Four major perspectives are important in considering this case: (1) Congress/the Appropriations Committee; (2) the military commander requesting funds and completing the project; (3) the

recipients of the project (those whose support might be swayed); and, finally, (4) the insurgents. Each party will have a different perspective and likely a different desired use of the money. Additionally, each will have different considerations at stake that will guide their decisions.

Students may be divided into groups for role-playing exercises and discuss the following questions from their respective perspectives:

Congress/Appropriations Committee

- How much of the appropriated money was requested and spent during the previous year?
- How has the expenditure of CERP influenced counterinsurgency efforts historically in this geographic area?
- Can this money be better spent in other areas?
- How is the quality of life for locals improved through the expenditure of CERP?
- How is the expenditure of CERP going to help the United States withdraw forces sooner than the expenditure of money in other areas?

Military Commander

- How can I use CERP to influence the insurgency in my area of operations?
- What do the people in my area of operations need, and how can I satisfy those needs to produce favorable behavior?
- How much money do I have available for expenditure?
- Should I place a high priority on the urgency and execution of CERP projects, or should I be more concerned with hunting and killing or capturing high-value individuals?
- Do I have time to focus the attention needed for spending thousands of taxpayer dollars on unknown results?
- Whom can I trust to build the projects that the people need?
- Will the expenditure of money in a particular area potentially lead to increased violence or retribution?
- Do the risks of project construction outweigh the benefits? What are the risks and benefits?

Project Recipients

- Do I need this project that the Americans are building?
- Does the local insurgency provide for me sufficiently?

- Will the local insurgency act violently toward me if they perceive me as taking goods or bribes from the Americans (counterinsurgents)?
- Why are the Americans building projects in my neighborhood?
- Will the Americans expect something in return for project construction?

Insurgents

- Why are the Americans building projects in these locations?
- What can we do to maintain the support of the population?
- How can we exploit the Americans' construction of this project?
- How can we destroy or inhibit project construction?
- What types of propaganda messages can we develop to take advantage of this situation?
- What vulnerabilities will the Americans present as they construct this project?
- How can construction of a project in one area help us determine how to predict future actions?
- Whom do we know who can gain the bid as a contractor for the Americans so we can get the Americans to pay us to construct their project?

There are obviously many other questions that each actor could ask, but these should serve as a starting point to generate discussion and add perception.

Concepts and Theories

There are three major concepts or theories that are pertinent to this case study. The first is Social Movement Theory. This theory is a grievance-oriented model that is useful in analyzing how individual grievances are transformed into contentious collective action. The utility of this theory is in identifying how CERP reconstruction might contribute to the nullification of potentially violent contentious collective action.

The second theory is behaviorism by B. F. Skinner. This theory is extremely useful for considering the causes of human behavior. In this case, we are looking at the causes of human behavior and the influence of money on those causes. This theory helps us to understand if, why, and how we might be able to predict and control behavior—in this case violent behavior.

Finally, the concept of economic utility is useful for analysis of this case. The idea of starting any reconstruction project is to get the “biggest bang for the buck.” With most types of reconstruction this means serving the largest number of people with the least expenditure of dollars. With CERP, it might be possible to achieve the greatest positive effects with regard to gaining popular support. The concept of optimizing utility remains constant in both cases.

Supplementary Questions for follow-on Research Projects

The following supplementary questions can be used in class discussion or to generate research questions. They are grouped under the headings economics/reconstruction, foreign policy, and military.

Economics/Reconstruction Questions

- Is the money spent on CERP reconstruction thus far a worthwhile investment?
- Is it possible to predict a return on investment for CERP?
- Are there other ways that money can be used to influence insurgency/violence?
- Is it ever possible to truly understand and provide for the micro-level needs of a foreign culture under the time constraints the American people demand?
- Is it possible to provide for the needs of a foreign population and hand over the responsibility of sustainment to an indigenous, developing country population under the time constraints the American people demand?
- How can money invested through CERP generate negative returns?
- What are the pros and cons to simply handing out money to an indigenous population as opposed to building projects for them?
- What are the possibilities of corruption with CERP, both for U.S. and indigenous personnel?
- How might the inappropriate prioritization of projects create negative returns?
- Is there potential for underuse of CERP?
- What are the operational and strategic implications regarding CERP project sustainment, and how might problems associated with unintended side effects be mitigated?

Foreign Policy Questions

- How does the concept of behaviorism apply to U.S. foreign policy?
- Is all soft power an attempt at controlling behavior?
- Are there any moral/ethical implications of trying to control a foreign population's behavior?
- Could/would attempts to control behavior be easily perceived as unwelcomed western influence or democratization?
- How might U.S. adversaries, both state and nonstate actors, spin this type of proactive policy against the United States?
- Would the use of CERP benefit U.S. operations in future conflicts? Where, and how?
- Does the use of CERP in Iraq and Afghanistan promote expectations among the indigenous population that the United States will not be able to fulfill in the future?
- Does the U.S.'s use of CERP in Iraq and Afghanistan promote expectation among the developing world that the United States will not be able to fulfill?
- How might foreign policy be crafted to control behavior through the targeted expenditure of money?
- Would such a foreign policy be at all new, or would it just have a new name?

Military Questions

- Was General Chiarelli's success in Sadr City only achieved because of the myriad of other factors contributing to stability and security in 2004? Will CERP have the same effect that General Chiarelli achieved in other areas? What are the supporting and related factors?
- Are the local expectations developed through project construction at the micro level damaging to long-term operations in a particular area?
- Should economic manipulation become a component of irregular warfare?
- Does or can CERP really contribute to a reduction in violence? If it can, will it ever?
- How much of a role does the concept of behaviorism really play in counterinsurgency?
- Have programs such as CERP existed in previous conflicts? Were the results captured, and how do they compare?
- Should Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) use CERP, or should it be reserved for maneuver commanders responsible for battlespace?

- What will happen when CERP funds stop flowing? When should CERP funds cease to exist?

Supplementary Materials

The following additional materials will provide background that will bolster case discussion and comprehensive student understanding.

CERP Background

Martins, Mark. The Commander's Emergency Response Program. *Joint Forces Quarterly* 37 (2005): 46–52.

Economics in COIN

Berman, Eli, Jacob Shapiro, and Joseph Felter. Can Hearts and Minds be Bought? The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq. <http://econ.ucsd.edu/~elib/ham.pdf>.

Helmus, Todd, Christopher Paul, and Russell Glenn. *Enlisting Madison Avenue: The Marketing Approach to Earning Popular Support in Theaters of Operation*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2007.

CERP in Practice

Chiarelli, Peter, and Patrick Michaelis. Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full Spectrum Operations. *Military Review* (July-August 2005): 4–17.

Motivation/Behaviorism

Maslow, A. H. A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review* 50 (1943): 370–396.

Skinner, B. F. Behaviorism. In *Science and Human Behavior*. New York: The Free Press. <http://www.iupui.edu/~philosop/skinnerbehaviorism.pdf>.

Congressional Inquiry

Murtha, John P. July 15, 2009. U.S. Congress. House. Appropriations Committee. Subcommittee on Defense. Memorandum to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory?id=8179814>.
<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/GEE5AN1DM.htm>.

