Showdown in Oregon between Armed Ranchers and Federal Agents: How to – and How Not to Fight Tyranny

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The showdown between armed ranchers and federal agents in the US state of Oregon has triggered passionate debates not only about the particulars of the standoff itself, but the precise manner in which people should stand up against an increasingly overbearing government and the corporate-financier special interests that have commandeered it.

Wall Street and Washington have left the country itself in socioeconomic shambles. Abroad, these collective special interests are subverting nations politically and economically from Venezuela to Southeast Asia, waging war throughout North Africa and the Middle East, while propping up criminal client regimes in nations like Ukraine.

A handful of armed ranchers with a few boxes of supplies, who live within and are completely dependent on a system controlled by the very special interests they are standing up against, will do little to change the military, economic, political, and social factors that add up to the above described global equation.

The ranchers' supply cache looks like it was picked up from one of America's many mega-retailers, the literal consumerist feeding troughs that keep the American people perpetually in servile dependence, and the Fortune 500 deeply entrenched amid the unwarranted power and influence it has enjoyed for decades and is able to wield at home and abroad with virtual impunity.

It is not unlike a group of American G.I.'s trying to fight the Germans during WW2, while buying German rations, from the Germans, all while leaving German supply lines completely intact. They would not only be preserving their enemy's source of strength to fight, but paying into it. The harder they "fought" the more supplies they would need, and the stronger their enemy would become.

The ranchers' standoff, from a purely strategic point-of-view, is already a failure. No matter who is really behind it, and no matter how it plays out, the actions of the ranchers at best will cause the government to back down on this one particular issue, and only for this particular case At worse, it will only further justify the growing police state evolving within America's borders. Regardless, it will do absolutely nothing to change the balance of power enabling Wall Street and Washington at home or abroad.

How to Fight Tyranny

A growing tyranny is not entirely unlike an insurgency. The terms insurgency and

counterinsurgency can quickly become confusing in a politically motivated context. However, generally speaking, an insurgency seeks to overthrow an established institution or political order, while a counterinsurgency seeks to maintain that order.

In the United States, and around much of the world where the nation-state still prevails, the established order is one of national sovereignty based on constitutions and charters produced by each respective nation, with an infrastructure built and improved upon over generations by each nation's respective cultures, economic activities, and innovations. From a nation's national courts and military, all the way down to the individual family, these are the established institutions of one's nation.

Image: The problem goes beyond the various government agencies that torment us, be it land departments perceived to be harassing ranchers, or police perceived to be harassing African-Americans, and stems from the unwarranted power and influence the government wields due to the corporate-financier interests that have commandeered it to serve its own interests. A few guns and a box of supplies bought at Walmart will not solve a problem that, ironically, includes Walmart.

There is an insurgency to subvert all of this. A global [corporate-financier](#) insurgency, or simply a "corporate-insurgency."

The corporate-insurgency seeks to subvert our institutions, starting with the family, extending to our schools, universities, churches, temples and mosques, our local sheriff, and even reaching into our national governments, rewriting or eradicating altogether our national constitutions and charters. It has, to a great extent, already subverted our independent local infrastructure, while implementing laws and regulations to prevent us from restoring it. We have the very tactics described in a vast library of government and military counterinsurgency documents being employed against us, where ever we are and to a profound effect.

> "Insurgency is the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify or challenge political control of a region. As such, it is primarily a political

struggle, in which both sides use armed force to create space **for their political, economic and influence activities to be effective.** Insurgency is not always conducted by a single group with a centralized, military-style command structure, but may involve a complex matrix of different actors with various aims, loosely connected in dynamic and non-hierarchical networks. **To be successful, insurgencies require charismatic leadership, supporters, recruits, supplies, safe havens and funding (often from illicit activities).** They only need the active support of a few enabling individuals, but the passive acquiescence of a large proportion of the contested population will give a higher probability of success. This is best achieved when the political cause of the insurgency has strong appeal, manipulating religious, tribal or local identity to exploit common societal grievances or needs. Insurgents seek to gain control of populations through a combination of persuasion, subversion and coercion while using guerrilla tactics to offset the strengths of government security forces. Their intent is usually to protract the struggle, exhaust the government and win sufficient popular support to force capitulation or political accommodation. Consequently, insurgencies evolve through a series of stages, though the progression and outcome will be different in almost every case." – [page 7 U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide, 2009](#) (emphasis added)
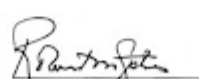
While this above quote is a most accurate description of an insurgency, as one reads [the US Government Counterinsurgency Guide (2009)](#), they will realize that the opposing methods of counterinsurgency itself involve all of these same factors, simply mirrored and reflecting the interests of the US versus the interests of targeted "insurgencies."

U.S. GOVERNMENT
COUNTERINSURGENCY
GUIDE

Henrietta Fore
Administrator, USAID

Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense

Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State

January 13, 2009

Image: The cover of the US Government Counterinsurgency Guide (2009) features the signatures representing the trifecta of modern day empire, covert operations (USAID), military force (Department of Defense), and system administration (the State Department). COIN describes the methods by which empire is implemented at a grassroots

As a matter of fact, what is described by the 2009 counterinsurgency (COIN) guide, is an accurate description of how political control has been achieved and maintained by all governments throughout the entirety of human history – it also forms the foundation of modern empire.
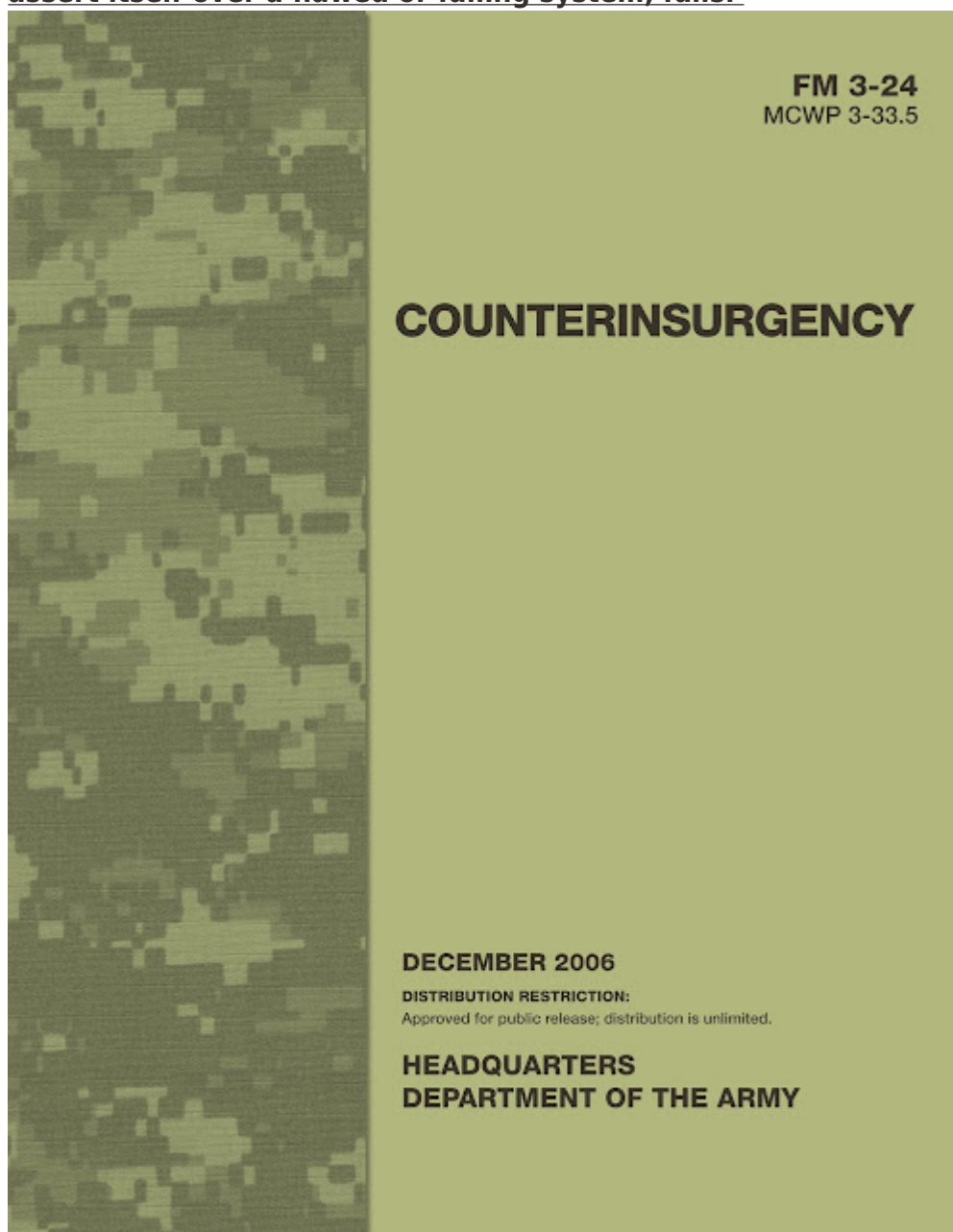
Understanding this is key to finding solutions when one finds themselves under the subjugation of an unfavorable political ideology or system. The tactics the guide describes can, and often are, used by either side in any political struggle, not necessarily only in an armed "insurgency."

COIN is a socioeconomic-tactical synthesis, an interdisciplinary strategy based on an understanding of how a society functions, how to organize human resources to multiple force, and what needs and desires motivate individuals, as well as how these can be manipulated and controlled to collectively motivate a society. These more technical concepts are generally absent from everyday political discourse, and equally absent or incomplete in regards to finding solutions for a failing or unfavorable system.

Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: How to Fight Back

While the US Government COIN guide gives us a clear picture over the governmental-military interdisciplinary aspects of COIN, the Marine Corps Field Manual 3-24 (FM 3-24) provides us with a complete picture of the actual components of an insurgency and all the relating factors that affect it.

This includes an enumerated list of services, institutions, organizations, and processes that must be controlled in order to establish political, tactical, and economic primacy. Without these, counterinsurgency fails. **Without these, any political movement seeking to assert itself over a flawed or failing system, fails.**

FM 3-24
MCWP 3-33.5

COUNTERINSURGENCY

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HEADQUARTERS
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While FM 3-24 deals with an armed insurgency, presumably in a foreign country, the basic concepts can and are applied to the relatively peaceful execution of real political power throughout the world as well. The reason why so many well-intentioned political solutions fall short, is because they are tailored without understanding these basic concepts.

1. Establishing Essential Services

When attempting to establish political primacy – essential services, basic infrastructure, economic development and administration must all be controlled by the counterinsurgency. It is upon these basic aspects of modern society that people depend, and from which popular support is sustainably derived. Strength in arms alone will fail utterly unless these aspects are secured, controlled, and developed properly.
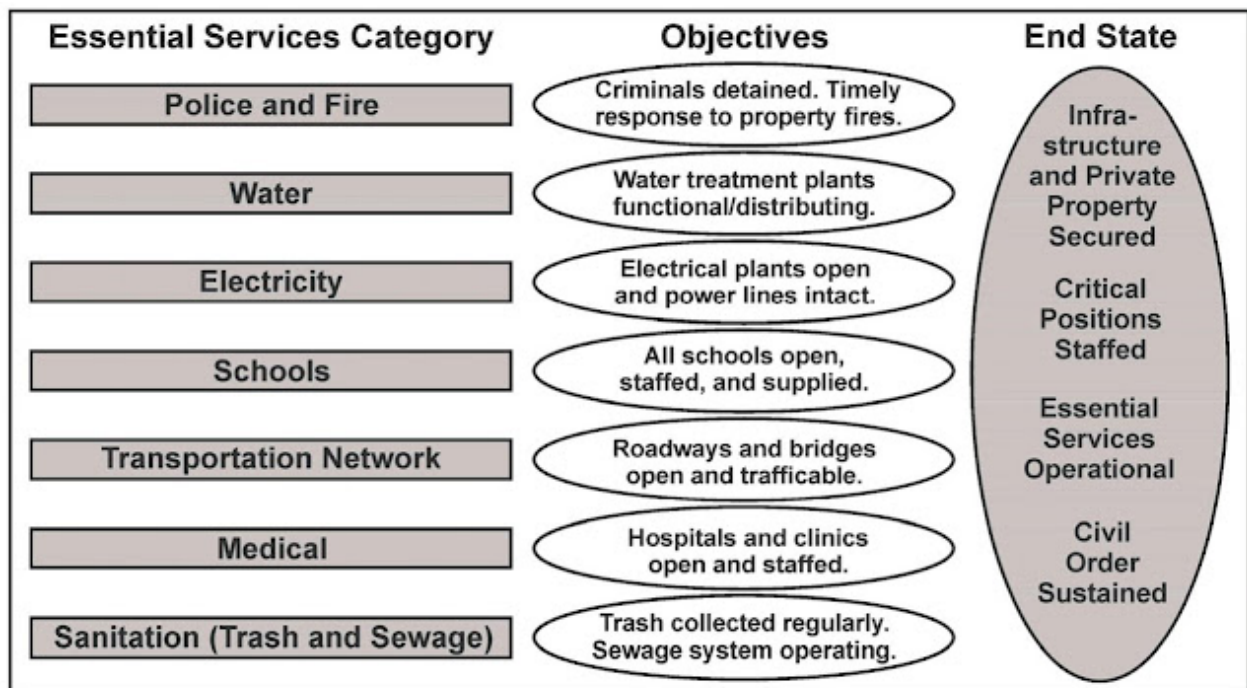
Figure 5-4. Example of essential services categories and objectives

Table 5-4. Considerations for developing the essential services LLO

- Make this effort a genuine partnership between counterinsurgents and host-nation authorities. Use as much local leadership, talent, and labor as soon as possible.
- Plan for a macro and a micro assessment effort. Acknowledge early what is known and not known—and honestly appraise what needs to be accomplished. The macro assessment concerns national-level needs; it is long term in focus. The micro assessment focuses on the local level; it determines, by region, specific short-term needs.
- Appreciate local preferences. An accurate needs assessment reflects cultural sensitivity; otherwise, great time and expense can be wasted on something the populace considers of little value. Ask, How do I know this effort matters to the local populace? If there is no answer, the effort may not be important. Host-nation authorities are a good place to start with this question. A local perception assessment may also be useful. (See appendix B.)
- Establish realistic, measurable goals. Establish ways to assess their achievement.
- Form interagency planning teams to discuss design, assessment, and redesign. Recognize and understand other agencies' institutional cultures.
- Meet with representatives from organizations beyond the host-nation government team. Many nongovernmental organizations do not want to appear closely aligned with the counterinsurgency effort. Encourage their participation in planning, even if it means holding meetings in neutral areas. When meeting with these organizations, help them understand mutual interests in achieving local security, stability, and relief objectives.
- Be as transparent as possible with the local populace. Do your best to help people understand what counterinsurgents are doing and why they are doing it.
- Consider the role of women in the society and how this cultural factor may influence these activities.
- Discourage the attitude that counterinsurgents have arrived to "save the day"—or that their arrival will only cause greater problems. Helping the populace understand what is possible avoids frustrations based on unrealized high expectations.

Upon page 117, the manual discusses the establishment or restoration of essential services. It states specifically (emphasis added):

> **Essential services address the life support needs of the HN [host-nation] population. The U.S. military's primary task is normally to provide a safe and secure environment. HN or interagency organizations can then develop the services or infrastructure needed.** In an unstable environment, the military may initially have the leading role. Other agencies may not be present or might not have enough capability or capacity to meet HN needs. Therefore, COIN military planning includes preparing to perform these tasks for an extended period.

Any goal, no matter how well-planned, noble, or progressive, cannot be achieved before these basic services are established and capable of being sustainably maintained. The military is a highly trained, disciplined, well organized institution capable of developing, maintaining, as well as protecting these services. In our local communities around the world, we have to ask ourselves how we can similarly develop and maintain these services sustainably.

Community gardens, farmers' markets, alternative energy and energy cooperatives, and many other local initiatives shift the power and influence centralized governments and corporate-financier special interests enjoy, away from their monopolies and toward our local communities. Communities that no longer dependent on these special interests are less likely to support them and more likely to defend vigorously infrastructure they are directly invested in.

Image: Local energy cooperatives – maybe not as exciting as a shootout with the Feds, but definitely more constructive and unlike a shootout with the Feds, will actually leave the balance of power tipped slightly greater in the people's favor...

The task is not entirely as daunting as it may seem. Local communities around the world accomplish this through a combination of traditional and newly created local institutions. Most local communities around the world operate with the added advantage that the corporate-insurgency they face is low-intensity and generally not armed. For prospective activists, auditing what their communities already possess, and how to develop it to be more organized and effective would be a good first step.

Some other initial priorities identified by the manual include the following taken from page 122:

- Collecting and clearing trash from the streets.
- Removing or painting over insurgent symbols or colors.
- Building and improving roads.
- Digging wells.
- Preparing and building an indigenous local security force.
- Securing, moving, and distributing supplies.
- Providing guides, sentries, and translators.
- Building and improving schools and similar facilities.

Many communities already possess the ability to do these activities on their own. Points such as "building an indigenous local security force" might translate into efforts to empower local sheriff offices to negate intrusive, unconstitutional federal government control. It might also include the establishment of professional neighborhood watches and shooting clubs where responsible gun ownership is taught – not only to gun enthusiasts, but inclusively to community demographics not traditionally associated with firearm ownership.

Building and improving schools might translate into expanding and improving local home schooling networks, leveraging freely available [open-courseware online](#), and opening after-school tutoring centers giving remedial classes or teaching trades and skills not taught at existing educational institutions.

Image: Growing food organically, locally, undermines big-ag and big-retail. It also redistributes wealth not through government programs that breed dependency amongst the population, but through local entrepreneurship where people directly participate in and benefitfromproductiveeconomicactivity.

Ultimately, most communities are not faced with absolute destitution. For the most part, basic services exist. The problem really is that these services are carried out in some cases by "corporate-insurgents" and play an essential role in building legitimacy and a support base dependent on the corporate-insurgency for these services. Therefore, the goal should be to take ownership over the execution of these basic services which can be done as a community effort or as a local, small business. The precept of "boycott and replace" is the equivalent of the "take, hold, and rebuild" doctrine in military "nation-building" and counterinsurgency.

2. Economic Development

On page 119 of the report, it states the importance of expanding on basic services and supporting economic development. It states specifically:

> **The short-term aspect concerns immediate problems, such as large-scale unemployment and reestablishing an economy at all levels. The long-term aspect involves stimulating indigenous, robust, and broad economic activity.** The stability a nation enjoys is often related to its people's economic situation and its adherence to the rule of law. However, a nation's economic health also depends on its government's ability to continuously secure its population.

> Planning economic development requires understanding the society, culture, and operational environment. For example, in a rural society, land ownership and the availability of agricultural equipment, feed, and fertilizer may be the chief parts of any economic development plan. In an urban, diversified society, the availability of jobs and the infrastructure to support commercial activities may be more important. Except for completely socialist economies, governments do not create jobs other than in the public bureaucracy.**However, the micro economy can be positively stimulated by encouraging small businesses development. Jump-starting small businesses requires micro finance in the form of some sort of banking activities [now easily done via crowd funding].** So then, supporting economic development requires attention to both the macro economy and the micro economy.

> Without a viable economy and employment opportunities, the public is likely to pursue false promises offered by insurgents. Sometimes insurgents foster the conditions keeping the economy stagnant. Insurgencies attempt to exploit a lack of employment or job opportunities to gain active and passive support for their cause and ultimately undermine the government's legitimacy. Unemployed males of military age may join the insurgency to provide for their families. Hiring these people for public works projects or a local civil defense corps can remove the economic incentive to join the insurgency.

The report then goes on to list the major categories of economic activity that it implies are essential for the counterinsurgency to control:

- Fossil fuels, mining, and related refining infrastructure.
- Generation and transmission of power and energy.
- Transportation and movement networks.
- Stock and commodities exchange.
- Banking.
- Manufacturing and warehousing.
- Building trades and services.
- Agriculture, food processing, fisheries, and stockyard processing.
- Labor relations.
- Education and training.

Clearly all of these industries are dominated by corporate-financier special interests and their "corporate-insurgency." One need not stretch their imagination here to see how the economic crisis created by corporate-financier interests across the West and spreading around the world is comparable to the sort of economic challenges facing a post-war nation fighting an armed insurgency.

Image: Through crowdfunding platforms like Kickstarter, local communities can "jump-start" local businesses and their local economies without banking monopolies being involved or possessing leverage over the community long after loans are granted.

The description and redresses described on page 119 are particularly relevant, and if we consider the corporate-financier interests who have overtaken our government and institutions as the insurgency, we must see it within ourselves and our communities to search for the energy and initiative to begin local economic development.

And again, where the military possesses the ability and the resources to do this on their own, or with other government institutions assisting – local communities must develop their own institutions to accomplish these same goals themselves. Hackerspaces and farmers' markets represent two organized efforts to develop economic opportunities locally, and present viable models that can be expanded into other industries.

3. Logistics

An entire section of the counterinsurgency field manual is dedicated to logistics. The importance of managing logistical lines not only enable an army to conduct counterinsurgency operations efficiently, but deny the insurgency supplies to conduct their operations. As it is pointed out, throughout history, insurgencies many times supply themselves off of carelessly protected counterinsurgency supply lines.

The report states on page 169 (emphasis added):

Insurgents have a long history of exploiting their enemies' lines of communications as sources of supply. During the Revolutionary War, American forces significantly provisioned themselves from the British Army's overindulgent and carelessly defended logistic tail. In the 1930s, Mao Zedong codified a doctrine for insurgency logistics during the fight against the Japanese occupation of China. Without exaggerating, Mao stated, "We have a claim on the output of the arsenals of [our enemies],...and, what is more, it is delivered to us by the enemy's transport corps. This is the sober truth, it is not a jest." For Mao's forces, his enemy's supply trains provided a valuable source of supply. Mao believed the enemy's rear was the guerrillas' front; the guerrillas' advantage was that they had no discernable logistic rear...

...For these reasons, forces conducting counterinsurgency operations must protect all potential supplies. Forces must also vigorously protect their lines of communications, scrupulously collect and positively control dud munitions and access to other convertible materiel, and actively seek ways to separate insurgents from black market activities.

The corporate-insurgency's logistical lines are particularly easily to compromise – that is because we the people are their logistical lines. Corporate-financier special interests and the government they have constructed to serve them, sustains itself from the collective patronage of communities around the world failing to develop local institutions, services, and economies, and instead pay into centralized, monopolizing multinational corporations. By boycotting and replacing these multinational corporations, we cut the corporate-insurgency off entirely from its logistical lines, starving it into submission.

But just as the USMC COIN manual implores counterinsurgency planners to secure their logistical lines from pilfering insurgents, the corporate-insurgency uses laws and regulations to protect their lines.

Image: The Oregon ranchers' supply lines appear to lead right to Walmart's front door. Resistance against Wall Street that pays into Wall Street to sustain itself is doomed to fail before it even begins.

Laws and regulations are designed to prevent independent local institutions, services, and economies from springing up and competing directly with the corporate-insurgency. Farmers in America have been fighting laws seeking to disrupt and regulate out of business, local farmer's markets. Similar laws in regards to "intellectual property rights" seek to stifle the emergence of independent technological innovation and personal manufacturing. Understanding the greater implications of these laws should provide us a greater impetus to organize and find the means of circumventing them.

For local communities organizing against the corporate-insurgency, our "supplies" consist of our food and water, our electricity, our means of communication, and many others. To secure these, we must assume ownership over them, maintaining them as a collective common or a small, local business. To organize against the corporate-insurgency when we are still dependent on them for even simple things like food and water, is a recipe for instant and repeated failure.

4. Communications

In a very literal sense, a local community's communications include telephone networks, the Internet, and radio. Like many other aspects of fighting the corporate-insurgency, the low-intensity nature of it affords us the ability to piecemeal boycott and replace various aspects of its power structure without disrupting the lives of people in our local community.

Often times, alternatives are more appealing than existing, monopolized options, and enhance rather than disrupt the lives of ordinary people.

In terms of communication infrastructure, ad hoc wireless networks could be constructed to connect a local Internet. This is already being done by the US State Department to infiltrate and overthrow sovereign nation-states – they already recognize it as an essential strategy of the corporate-insurgency.

In New York Times' article, "U.S. Underwrites Internet Detour Around Censors," it states:

> The Obama administration is leading a global effort to deploy "shadow" Internet and mobile phone systems that dissidents can use to undermine repressive governments that seek to silence them by censoring or shutting down telecommunications networks.
>
> The effort includes secretive projects to create independent cellphone networks inside foreign countries, as well as one operation out of a spy novel in a fifth-floor shop on L Street in Washington, where a group of young entrepreneurs who look as if they could be in a garage band are fitting deceptively innocent-looking hardware into a prototype "Internet in a suitcase."

With a well developed community Hackerspace, a similar network can be created for a local community to simply circumvent and replace corporate-financier monopolies, providing custom tailored services for a community its creators already know, and spreading the profits of communication monopolies across local communities worldwide – a redistribution of wealth done not through socialist handouts, but through innovative local entrepreneurship. A larger international Internet could be made by simply providing links

between communities.

Image: Hackerspaces – sometimescalledmakerspaces- are local institutions that pool together both technological and human resources to prototype and manufacture local technology and solutions. They serve as the perfect nexus for solving everything from agricultural problems to creating local communication solutions, and even bringing manufacturing down to a personal level.

The alternative media is a perfect example of a new decentralized "institution" leveraging communication to successfully counter the corporate-insurgency, and it does so by leveraging technology that allows us to do as individuals what was once only possible with large, capital intensive organizations.

The alternative media also reflects some of the tactical considerations expressed by the USMC COIN field manual in regards to logistics. By using large corporate-owned, free services like Blogger, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and others to spread a constructive message aimed at developing our local communities, and against the corporate-insurgency, we are essentially exploiting their own logistical lines for our own cause.

Conclusion

It must be understood that while, without taking these basic aspects into consideration a political movement is sure to fail, this does not by any means negate the work of activists focused in other areas. A synergy must be created between all efforts aimed at unwarranted corporate-financier influence – but these fundamentals must be understood by all involved.

It must also be understood that not everyone employed or involved in a large corporate-financier, multinational corporation is a bad person. In fact, many people who work for corporations like Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Halliburton, Exxon, and even Monsanto or Cargill are hardworking and incredibly talented. Like many military who leave the service and join the cause of humanity, these people can become some of our most valued allies if and when they realize the greater implications of what they are involved in and what, for their own best interests and those of humanity, they must next do.

For our part, we must work hard to develop our local communities, to create tangible solutions to the problems we face, superior local alternatives to replace the dependency that empowers special interests, and produce a viable model that is self-evidently a system people will want to join and help build.

The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.

(Sun Tzu)
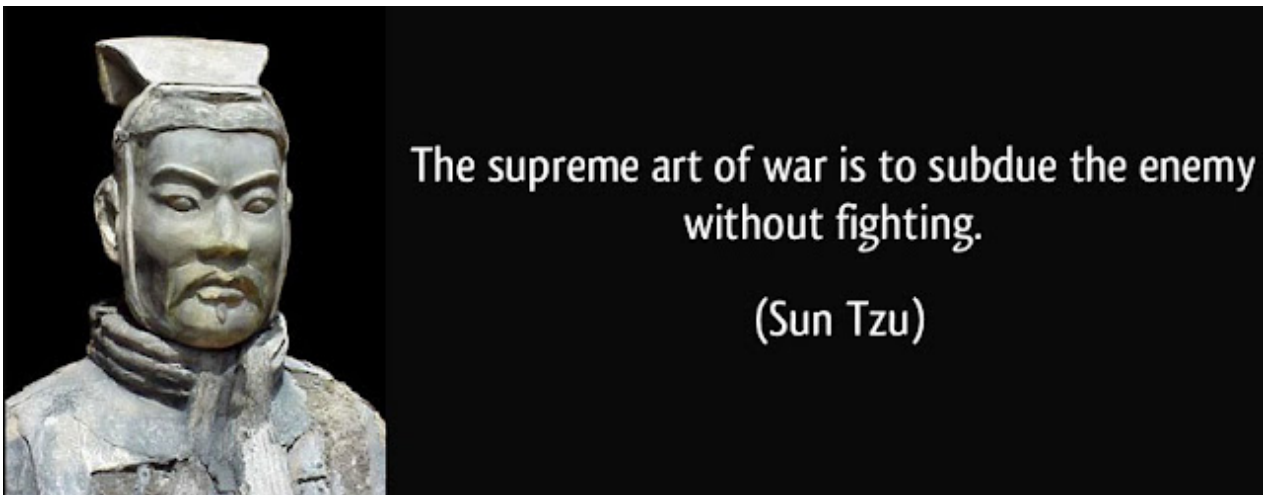
Of all the aspects discussed in the voluminous collection of counterinsurgency manuals the US government has produced, possessing a morally superior cause and instilling a sense of legitimacy within a population ranks toward the top in importance. Building a local community with the people's best interests addressed by the people's own two hands themselves, exhibits just such a cause, featuring just such legitimacy. It would be a movement very difficult for the corporate-insurgency to prevail against, and is the key reason why their doctrine has failed them overseas in pursuit of their empire where nations and peoples have successfully accomplished this.

For the Oregon ranchers, their ill-conceived strategy fits nowhere within the above outlined necessities for taking back our communities and institutions. A well-organized and well-armed citizenry if led and used properly, would deter confrontations before they even unfolded. A group finding itself in multiple armed standoffs before it has even built the necessary sociopolitical and technical underpinning necessary to sustain any kind of struggle, has failed to understand even the most elementary aspects of strategic doctrine and has doomed itself before it even began.

The best advice for those either joined with these ranchers, or supporting them, is to step back from the Hollywood narrative apparently being woven, see how our attention has been distracted away from real solutions and real local empowerment, and directed toward an expanding confrontation Wall Street and Washington are well prepared to easily win.

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