

## Hearts and Minds? British Counterinsurgency from Malaya to Iraq

Counterinsurgency has become a 'hot topic' because of the British and US military's involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq. The two militaries, however, have approached counterinsurgency from different perspectives. The British Army drawing on its apparently successful experiences in Malaya and Northern Ireland advocates a less coercive, 'hearts and minds' model of counterinsurgency. This contrasts with the more conventional warfare approach of the US military. The difference in the approaches of the two militaries to counterinsurgency has created tensions between them in both Iraq and Afghanistan. This prompted the then head of the British Army, **General Sir Mike Jackson**, in April 2004, to distance himself from the US approach in Iraq, "We must be able to fight with the Americans. That does not mean we must be able to fight as the Americans".



**General David Petraeus** was influenced by British counterinsurgency thinking when developing the US Army and Marine Corp's *Counterinsurgency Field Manual 2006* which marked a shift away from the conventional approach. Since then, however, the US has become more critical of the British approach to counterinsurgency in both Afghanistan and Iraq, leading to what was described as 'a minor crisis in Anglo-American military relations' (*Daily Telegraph*, 20 August 2007). **Sir Jock Stirrup**, the Chief of the Defence Staff, accepted that Britain had become 'too complacent' and 'smug' about its experiences in Northern Ireland and Bosnia.

The special issue of [The Journal of Strategic Studies: 'Hearts and Minds? British Counterinsurgency from Malaya to Iraq'](#) edited by **Paul Dixon**, *Kingston University, UK* is out now and available to buy at the special issue price of £10/US\$20.

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