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Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria

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104 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

for fear of confirming what he already knows. In the case of American society going to see a doctor acknowledges the fact that we have failed, but it also represents the first step toward recovery. Clearly the Nation cannot ignore failure, and the sooner remedial action is begun the better. What were comfortable and familiar ways ultimately led to disaster, and if we are to profit from the experience, we must be willing to make the sacrifices necessary to repair the great rifts in our national fabric.

Mr. Corson has taken upon himself an incredibly broad topic and has dealt with it in somewhat less than 200 pages. Needless to say, many of his observations and conclusions are general and a bit simplistic, but his basic point is well taken. A national failure shapes policy just as surely as does success, and future decisions must be made with that in mind. If we are to proceed in any sort of viable manner, we must first repair the damage. *Consequences of Failure* is a good starting point in the assessment of what choices are available for that repair.

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Heggy, Alf A. *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1972. 327p.

Dr. Alf A. Heggy, an associate professor of history at the University of Georgia, has written a perceptive, scholarly, and timely study of the Algerian nationalist rebellion during the 1954-1958 period. This first-rate study, financed in part by the Army Research Office in Durham, N.C., is of great value to social scientists, professional military personnel, lay readers, and scholars alike. The book, divided into 16 chapters, complete with 10 charts, 8 maps, a glossary of French and Arabic terms, a list of abbreviations for French terms,

12 pages of bibliography, 39 pages of footnotes, and an index, can be used equally well as a reference work on insurgency and counterinsurgency. Dr. Heggy's study is made especially impressive by his utilization of unpublished documents, his fastidious documentation and footnoting, and his personal experience in Algeria. The son of a missionary who served in Algeria for 30 years, Dr. Heggy received some of his education in France and returned to Algeria during his school vacations. His understanding of the Algerians, their manners, their aspirations, and their frustrations is quite apparent in the book and adds immeasurably to the authenticity and quality of insight that the reader will find.

In the first three chapters, Professor Heggy traces the political history of Algeria and its Moslem and European inhabitants from 1830, when it became a French possession, until the outbreak of the rebellion in November 1954. The author lucidly explains the political mobilization and maturation of the Algerians, both in Algeria and in France (where they were migrant workers), and the creation of the Moslem political elites that eventually led the revolution.

French policy in Algeria was largely geared to accommodate the interests of the French settler rather than the Moslem, and the attendant result was that an increasing number of Algerians became estranged from France, as demonstrated by the 1945 uprisings. Beginning with legislation in 1947, the French Government began to replace its time-honored colonial policy of assimilation with one of autonomy. (p. 30) Yet, asserts the author, "The French failure to effect reforms in Algeria before the situation there became crucial cost dearly in terms of local popularity. By and large, the natives [that is, the Moslems] had lost faith in the government of France even before [the outbreak of the rebellion in] 1954." (p.

99)

PROFESSIONAL READING 105

Consequently, the French Army found it difficult to develop a counter-insurgency capability which could not only encapsulate and destroy the Algerian nationalist movement but also win the allegiance of the Algerian masses. Tragically, torture and terrorism were used by both the French Army and the Algerian National Liberation Army to cow the Algerian masses into filling their demands. Professor Heggoy sagely observes that "It was in the realm of the peasant and his mind, not in terms of power or established law, that the [Algerian] nationalists challenged France." (p. 173)

Although the French forces did successfully meet the military challenge of the National Liberation Army, they ultimately "failed because their government lost the desire to hold Algeria. The army blamed the [previous] defeat in Indochina on the politicians, and blamed them for the situation in Algeria. . . . The important decisions were political decisions reached after [the fall

of the Fourth French Republic in] 1958 and imposed by Charles de Gaulle." (p. 259)

Along with the loss of political will in metropolitan France, the French Army was handicapped, in Dr. Heggoy's judgment, by its lack of intimate knowledge of the cultural milieu of the Algerians, the knowledge that gave the nationalist forces their cutting edge and staying power. (pp. 96 and 207) Finally, the author has observed that the French Army lost the battle for public opinion, both in the UN and in the international press. These lessons, although exemplified by France, are significant for all Western democracies in an era when large citizen armies are employed to wage subconventional warfare in areas where the insurgents and counter-insurgents are separated by huge human moats of cultural and/or racial differences.

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