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**DISTRIBUTION OF DRDC CORA TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM 2008-041,  
“THE GRADUATE LEVEL OF WAR”: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN  
US COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY”**

1. This Technical Memorandum examines that claim that the new US doctrine manual on counterinsurgency is a significant departure from the US military’s previous approach to counterinsurgency (COIN) warfare. It compares the new manual to the publications that it superseded with a view to identifying how the US military’s understanding of, and strategic approach to, COIN warfare was transformed by the new manual. It concludes that while most of the key strategic elements that enabled the COIN campaign in Iraq to succeed are drawn from earlier doctrine and historical experience, three factors—catering to the greater manpower requirements of COIN versus conventional operations, the importance of identifying and exploiting internal division in the insurgency, and the need to secure the population as the primary goal of a COIN campaign—were relatively recent interpretations, and played a crucial role in the success of the surge strategy between June and December of 2007.

2. This Technical Memorandum is a peer reviewed publication of Defence R&D Canada - CORA. The reported results, their interpretation, and any opinions expressed therein, remain those of the author and do not necessarily represent, or otherwise reflect, any official opinion or position of DND or the Government of Canada.

3. Comments and questions are welcome and should be addressed to Dr. Don Neill at (613) 945-1203 e-mail at [Donald.Neil@drdc-rddc.gc.ca](mailto:Donald.Neil@drdc-rddc.gc.ca), or to Mr. Stéphane Lefebvre, Section Head Strategic Analysis, at (613) 996-3918 or by e-mail at [stephane.lefebvre@drdc-rddc.gc.ca](mailto:stephane.lefebvre@drdc-rddc.gc.ca).

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