

Colonel (ret.) JOSEPH H. FELTER III
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Stanford University
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PROFILE:

Joseph Felter is a Senior Research Scholar at the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC) at Stanford University and Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution. Felter Co-Directs Stanford's Empirical Studies of Conflict Project (ESOC). Prior to arriving at Stanford, Felter served as a career Army Special Forces and Foreign Area Officer with distinguished service in a variety of special operations, diplomatic and other military assignments. He has conducted foreign internal defense and security assistance missions across East and Southeast Asia and has participated in operational deployments to Panama, Iraq, and Afghanistan. As a military attaché to the Philippines he helped develop the country's counterterrorist capabilities and advance the peace process between a major Islamic separatist group. Felter has extensive organizational leadership and program management experience notably helping to build West Point's Combating Terrorism Center into an internationally recognized center of excellence for terrorism education and research. In 2010-2011 he led the International Security and Assistance Force, Counterinsurgency Advisory and Assistance Team deployed throughout Afghanistan reporting directly to General Stanley McChrystal and Gen David Petraeus advising them on counterinsurgency tactics, operations and strategy.

EDUCATION:

Ph.D., Stanford University, Political Science, 2005.

Dissertation: "Taking Guns to a Knife Fight: A Case for Empirical Study of Counterinsurgency."

Dissertation draws on an original 10,000-incident, micro-conflict data set.

Committee: David Laitin, James Fearon, and Simon Jackman.

Graduate Certificate in Management, University of West Australia, 2002.

M.P.A., Harvard Kennedy School, 1998. Methodological Area of Concentration in Negotiations and Conflict Resolution.

B.S., United States Military Academy, 1987.

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY: US Army Officer 1987-2011

2010-2011 Commander, Counterinsurgency Advisory & Assistance Team (CAAT), International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), Afghanistan.

Led international team of 110 senior counterinsurgency advisors deployed across Afghanistan advising and assisting leaders at all levels engaged in counterinsurgency operations. Reported directly to ISAF Commanding General (General Stanley McChrystal and General David Petraeus) providing expertise and advisory support on all counterinsurgency related matters.

2005-2008. Director, Combating Terrorism Center (CTC), West Point, NY.

Recruited, mentored and supervised a select team of scholars teaching, researching and publishing on terrorism related issues. Led team in greatly expanding the budget, pace and scope of the center's research and international reach. Initiated an aggressive research program focusing on terrorist

ideology and organization. Initiated and managed the “Harmony Project” – a multi-year collaboration between CTC and US Special Operations Command that harnessed the capacity of leading US and international scholars to analyze captured al-Qa’ida documents from the Defense Department’s Harmony Data Base, producing reports informed by these documents, and making them available to the broader academic and policy community. Initiated comprehensive terrorism education program for multiple military and government agencies to include special emphasis on new agent training for the FBI and Joint Terrorism Task Force’s (JTTF) around the country

Spring-Summer 2008. Balad, Iraq

Deployed to Iraq with the 75th Ranger Regiment to support a Joint Special Operations Task Force.

Spring-Summer 2006 Defense Attaché Office Kabul, Afghanistan

Deployed to Afghanistan to assess the readiness and training of the Afghan National Police and to provide operational support to the US Defense Attaché’ Office, Kabul. Provided comprehensive report and findings to US Ambassador.

1999-2002. Military Attaché Manila, Philippines

Worked with the Armed Forces of the Philippines Special Operations Command, US DoS Counterterrorism Coordinator and US Special Operations Command Pacific to develop the capacity of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Counterterrorism Forces. Planned and initiated a program that provided negotiation training to the Philippine Government and Moro Islamic Liberation Front peace process panel members. Served as US Embassy Liaison to the Philippine military during two international hostage crises involving American citizens.

1992-1996. Special Forces A-Team Leader and Company Commander – Southeast Asia

Conducted foreign internal defense and security assistance missions with host nation military and internal security forces throughout East and Southeast Asia while leading specialized operational teams and a company in the 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) based in Okinawa, Japan.

1989-1991. Ranger Platoon Leader with the US Army 75th Ranger Regiment

Led elite platoon of US Army Rangers, the US military’s premier strike force capable of projecting power worldwide within 36 hours. Led rangers in combat airborne assault and follow-on missions in support of the invasion of Panama and capture of Manuel Noriega during Operation Just Cause.

TEACHING HISTORY:

Stanford University. Course taught: “The Face of Battle” Fall 2011, Fall 2012, Fall 2013. CISAC Honors Seminar Fall 2012, Winter 2013, Spring 2013.

Assistant Professor, Department of Social Sciences, United States Military Academy, 2005 – 2008. Courses taught: International Relations; Advanced International Relations Theory; Terrorism Studies; Advanced Terrorism Studies

Adjunct Associate Professor, School of International & Public Affairs, Columbia University, 2007-2008. Courses Taught: Limited War and Low Intensity Conflict

LANGUAGES:

Defense Language Proficiency Test Ratings in: Dari, Thai, Tagalog, Korean, and German

FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

Co-Director, Empirical Studies of Conflict (ESOC) Project. 2008-Present

Research Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, 2009-Present

US Army War College Fellow and National Security Affairs Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, 2008-2009

Member, Army Science Board for Terrorism's Root Causes, 2006 – 2007

Senior Service College Fellow, Singapore Command and General Staff College, 2002. Received Singapore Senior Service College annual award for earning the highest academic average in the college's academic curriculum

Harvard-Stanford Preventive Defense Project, Research Associate, 1997 – 1999. Authored “*Understanding and Managing the Taiwan Question: Opportunities for Courtship versus Coercion across the Taiwan Strait.*” under the supervision of Ashton B. Carter which served as a base document for cross-Strait issues for participants in a Track II trip to China and Taiwan in March 1999.

PUBLICATIONS:

“*Modest, Secure and Informed: Successful Development in Conflict Zones*” with Eli Berman, Jacob Shapiro and Erin Troland. *American Economics Review Papers and Proceedings* (2013) “Modest, Secure and Informed: Successful Development in Conflict Zones.” With Eli Berman, Joseph H. Felter, and Erin Troland. *American Economic Review*: 103, 518-522. Longer version as NBER Working Paper 18674.

“*Can Hearts and Minds be Bought?*” *The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq*,” With Eli Berman and Jacob N. Shapiro. *Journal of Political Economy* (2011) 119, 766-819.

“*Do Working Men Rebel?*” *Insurgency and Unemployment in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines.*” With Eli Berman, Michael Callen, and Jacob N. Shapiro. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2011) 55, 496-528.

“*The Enemy of my Enemy: Al Qaeda and the Libyan Insurgency*”, With Brian Fishman. *Foreign Policy*, April 2011.

“*Constructive COIN: How Development Can Fight Radicals.*” With Eli Berman and Jacob Shapiro. *Foreign Affairs* (online), June 2010.

“*Iranian Influence in Iraq: Politics and Other Means.*” With Brian Fishman. Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, NY, October 2008.

“*Al-Qa’ida’s Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A Second Look at the Sinjar Records.*” In Brian Fishman ed. *Bombers, Bank Accounts, and Bleedout: Al’Qa’ida’s Road in and Out of Iraq.* Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, NY, 2008.

“*The Power of Truth: Questions for Ayman al-Zawahiri.*” With Jarret Brachman and Brian Fishman. Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, NY, 2008.

“*CTC Report: An Assessment of 516 Combatant Status Review Tribunal (CSRT) Unclassified Summaries.*” With Jarret Brachman. Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, NY, 2007.

“*Al-Qa’ida’s Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records.*” With Brian Fishman. Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, NY, 2007.

Harmony and Disharmony: Exploiting al-Qa’ida’s Organizational Vulnerabilities. Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, NY, 2006. With Jacob N. Shapiro, et. al.

“Recruitment for Rebellion and Terrorism in the Philippines.” In James Forest ed. *The Making of a Terrorist: Recruitment, Training and Root Causes* (Praeger International, 2006).

“*Aligning Incentives to Combat Terrorism.*” In Rohan Gunaratna ed. *Combating Terrorism* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005).

WORKING PAPERS:

“*Aid Under Fire: Development Projects and Civil Conflict*” (Currently under review) Working paper presented to the NBER annual Economics and National Security Conference July 2011- With Benjamin Crost and Patrick Johnston. We develop a model that predicts how development projects can cause an increase in violent conflict if governments cannot (1) ensure the project’s success in the face of insurgent opposition and (2) credibly commit to honoring agreements reached before the start of the project. To test the model, we estimate the causal effect of a large development program on conflict casualties in the Philippines. Identification is based on a regression discontinuity design that exploits an arbitrary poverty threshold used to assign eligibility for the program. Consistent with the model’s predictions, we find that eligible municipalities suffered a substantial increase in casualties, which lasts only for the duration of the project and is split evenly between government troops and insurgents.

“*Government Transfers and Civil Conflict: Evidence from the Philippines.*” (Currently under review) With Benjamin Crost and Patrick Johnston. This paper exploits a randomized experiment to estimate the effect of a large conditional cash transfer program on civil conflict in the Philippines. We find that the program caused a substantial decrease in reported conflict incidents in treatment villages. We also find evidence that the program reduced conflict in nearby villages through a spillover effect. These findings are consistent with a spatial model in which cash transfers reduce conflict by increasing insurgents’ cost of recruitment, so that affected villages export fewer combatants to other villages.

“*Predation, Economic Activity and Violence: Evidence from the Philippines*” (Currently under review) NBER Working Paper No. 18375- With Eli Berman, Ethan Kapstein, and Erin Troland. This paper explores the relationship between economic activity and political violence through the lenses provided by several different mechanisms. Investment as a predictor of future violence implies that low private sector investment today provides a robust indicator of high

violence tomorrow. “Rent-capture” or predation asserts that economic programs and business investment will increase violence by increasing extortion by insurgents. “Hearts and minds” counterinsurgency has been asserted to link economic activity to political violence in three ways, through an opportunity cost mechanism by which improved economic conditions reduce the cost of rebel recruitment; through a “hope and gratitude” effect by which development assistance generates support for government, reducing cooperation with rebels; and thirdly, through an improved governance mechanism. We lay out these mechanisms in a framework with strategic interaction between rebels, communities, government and firms within an information-centric “hearts and minds” counterinsurgency model. We test the mechanisms in the context of the Philippines in the first decade of this century, using a new dataset that combines violent incidents with indicators of economic activity. The data support the predation thesis, while refuting the predictions of the predictive investment mechanism, the opportunity cost mechanism, and the gratitude effect.

“Taking Guns to a Knife Fight: Sources of Military Effectiveness in Counterinsurgency.” (Currently under review) Existing scholarship on counterinsurgency fails to adequately account for the quality and employment considerations of states’ internal security forces on their ability to conduct effective counterinsurgency. This article demonstrates that the qualities and structures of a state’s internal security forces have a significant impact on their counterinsurgency effectiveness. It identifies the characteristics that increase counterinsurgency effectiveness and explains why some certain types and configurations of military units are more effective and efficient than others. To test this argument, I introduce a new micro-conflict dataset on counterinsurgency operations in the Philippines between 2001 and 2012. My empirical analysis of qualitatively distinct security forces under varying environmental and threat conditions demonstrates that small units possessing superior leadership, training, and doctrine and are able to access local information are more likely to conduct effective and discriminate counterinsurgency. Deploying locally recruited soldiers with specially trained elite forces is a particularly efficient way of achieving this combination of capabilities. My findings demonstrate that variation in the qualities of the military forces tasked with combating insurgent threats affect important conflict outcomes. Significantly, they indicate this variation is not fully determined by factors such as state wealth or level of development and have important policy implications for the professional training of militaries in reducing the damage from, and possible prospects for, protracted insurgencies and civil wars.

“Assessing Relevant Lessons from the Soviet Experience in Afghanistan” with Katya Drozdova (Currently under review) Former highly classified documents chronicling the internal communications of the Soviet Politburo reveal important insights into how senior leaders in the Soviet Union assessed and responded to their evolving situation in Afghanistan—and offer newly valuable insights into what might be expected as the United States and Coalition forces leave Afghanistan as well. Analysis of this unique repository shows how the Soviets devised and executed an exit strategy that enabled Soviet-trained Afghan forces to withstand the insurgent offensive and for President Najibullah to remain in power for nearly three years following the Soviet withdrawal and the fall of the Soviet Union. Evidence from these largely unexploited for the present purpose documents reveals in detail how Soviet leaders evaluated the unfolding situation both before and after the withdrawal of their troops. Although the end of Soviet aid following the USSR’s disintegration greatly weakened the Soviet installed Afghan government, it ultimately collapsed due to internal political strife—not military defeat. The lessons gleaned from the actual internal discourse of the Soviet leadership, provide relevant context that can inform the decisions of US military and policy leaders dealing with comparable contemporary challenges of withdrawing from Afghanistan while attempting to manage

strategic challenges as well as terrorist threats emanating from this unstable region. These insights are an enduring resource for understanding and informing the leadership decisions surrounding great power occupation and exit strategies in general with lasting international security consequences.

“Election Fraud and Post Election Conflict” Evidence from the Philippines” Institute for the Study of Labor Discussion Paper No. 7469 with Benjamin Crost and Hani Mansour and Daniel Rees. Previous studies document a positive association between election fraud and the intensity of civil conflict. It is not clear, however, whether this association is causal or due to unobserved institutional or cultural factors. This paper examines the relationship between election fraud and post-election violence in the 2007 Philippine mayoral elections. Using the density test developed by McCrary (2008), we find evidence that incumbents were able to win tightly contested elections through fraud. In addition, we show that narrow incumbent victories were associated with an increase in post-election casualties, which is consistent with the hypothesis that election fraud causes conflict. We conduct several robustness tests and find no evidence that incumbent victories increased violence for reasons unrelated to fraud.

“Insurgent Math: The Impact of Civilian Casualties on the Afghan Insurgency.” Revision of NBER Working Paper 16152. With Luke N. Condra, Joseph H. Felter, and Radha K. Iyengar. This paper focuses on the reaction to civilian casualties in Afghanistan, using a series of analytic comparisons to distinguish between four prominent theories on the how civilian casualties may affect violence: revenge, recruitment, population-provided information, and the mechanical correlation between civilian casualties and insurgent group capacity. We find strong evidence of a localized revenge effect in Pashtun areas, suggesting insurgents’ mobilizing tools may be quite region-specific.

SELECT PROFESSIONAL TALKS, PRESENTATIONS & AFFILIATIONS:

“Afghan Security Forces and Security Lead Transition: The Assessment Process, Metrics and Efforts to Build Capability” Testimony before the Sub-Committee on Oversight and Investigations, House Armed Services Committee, US House of Representatives. July 24, 2012.

“Conditional Cash Transfer Programs and Civil Conflict: Experimental Evidence from the Philippines” at the 35th Annual National Bureau of Economics Research (NBER) Summer Institute “Economics of National Security Conference” in Cambridge, MA. July 17-18 2012.

April 11: BACK TO THE FUTURE: Regional Stability Around Afghanistan and U.S. National Security Implications - Post-Soviet Lessons for Post-ISAF Prospects. Hosted by Pentagon’s J39, DDGO/SMA (webcast to national and international viewers)

April 2012 : “Evidence to Action: The Road from Conflict to Recovery” UC Berkeley Center for Effective Global Action.

“Aid Under Fire” at the 34th Annual National Bureau of Economics Research (NBER) Summer Institute “Economics of National Security Conference” in Cambridge, MA. July 17-18 2011.

“Theories of Counterinsurgency.” For the *Terrorism, Governance, and Political Violence Conference*, Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC), University of California San Diego, June 2011.

“Mining Afghan Lessons from the Soviet Experience” presentation of research findings at the Human Social Cultural Behavior Modeling Conference: “Integrating Social Science Theory and Analytic Methods for Operational Use”, February 9-11, 2011

“ISAF Counterinsurgency” formal one hour monthly presentations on the state of counterinsurgency across the force to the Commander, International Security and Assistance Force (COMISAF) and senior ISAF Staff at ISAF Headquarters, Kabul Afghanistan Jan – Dec 2010.

“Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism.” For *The Political Economy of Terrorism and Insurgency Conference*, Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC), University of California San Diego, June 2009.

“The Philippines: A Template for Effective Counterinsurgency.” For the World Affairs Council of Northern California, June 2009.

“Deploying Effective Counterinsurgency Forces.” Keynote Address for Philippine Army Senior Leaders and Commanders Conference, Fort Bonifacio, Manila Philippines, March 2009.

“Identifying and Responding to Terrorism and Insurgency.” Invited presentation, The Hoover Institution, Stanford University, November 2008.

“Iranian Influence in Iraq.” Invited presentation, The Hoover Institution, Stanford University, November 2008.

“Rethinking the Global War on Terror” panel member with Martha Crenshaw and Thomas Fingar at FSI International Conference: Transitions Nov 13, 2008.

“The Enemy of my Enemy is Iran: Iranian Influence in Iraq.” For *Social Science Seminar*, Center for International Security and Cooperation and The Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University, October 2008.

“Effective Military Support to Counterinsurgency.” Invited speaker at Yale University Program on Order Conflict and Violence Speaker series, February 2007.

“The Internet: A Portal to Violent Islamist Extremism.” Testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, May 2007.

“Assessing Counter Terrorism Policies.” For *International Security Forum Conference*, Zurich, Switzerland, September 2006.

“The Future of the Jihadi Movement.” Panelist with Peter Bergen, Jessica Stern, Barbara Bodine, and David Cook at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 2006

“Taking Guns to a Knife Fight: A Case for Empirical Study of Counterinsurgency.” Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 2006

Panel Chair and Discussant Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Sept 2005

Frequent appearances and contributions in national and international media outlets, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, U.S. New & World Report, Time Magazine, Newsweek, NBC Nightly News, PBS, ABC News and Fox News.

GRANTS:

Department of Defense Minerva Research Initiative, “Terrorism, Governance, and Development,” 2008. Co-Principal Investigator, \$9.6M, five years.

Office of Naval Research (ONR) “The Economics of Counterinsurgency in the Philippines.”