

Insurgent Archipelago

John Mackinlay



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As a British Gurkha officer assigned to the jungle borders of North Borneo, John Mackinlay experienced firsthand the Maoist-style insurgencies of the 1950s and 1960s, and later in his career, as a scholar researching Muslim NGOs and preventative security, he witnessed the transformation of territorial, laborintensive uprisings into the international networks of individuals and communities that operate across the world today. In this book, Mackinlay focuses on the situation in Afghanistan to see how threats from one theater of operation impact on us domestically in the UK and in the US. Mackinlay maps the transformation of insurgencies against the rapid modernisation of their origin cities, noting the ways in which technology has accelerated and complicated a variety of coalitions and the efforts to defeat them. Our current bin Laden era, Mackinlay argues, must be understood from a Maoist perspective of insurgency. The campaigns of midcentury are directly linked to the global movements of tomorrow, yet the past two decades of insurgent activity have also marked a new chapter in the practice, in which propaganda of the deed (ie, suicide bombings) has become centrally important. This shift presents new challenges to our traditional, timehonored response to terror and places a greater emphasis on mastering the virtual, cyber-based dimension of these campaigns. Mackinlay revisits the roots of global insurgencies, describes their nature and character, reveals the power of mass communications and grievance, and recommends how individual nations can counter these threats by focusing on domestic terrorism.

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