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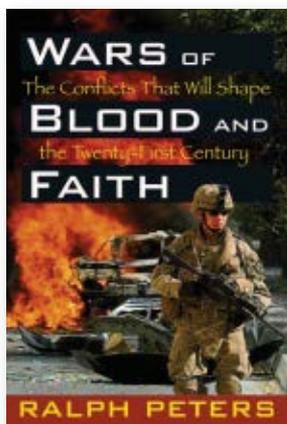
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OCTOBER 2007

Editorial: Back to the Future on Irregular Warfare

Our 29th Commandant, Gen Alfred M. Gray, remarked on many occasions that if you want to learn something new, read an old book. I believe that remark also applies to old articles. In this month's issue of *Gazette* we focus on the current fight and what is called counterinsurgency (COIN) and/or irregular warfare. We have been here before.

We fought a war in Vietnam that had many faces. However, it started out as a COIN or irregular warfare fight. In January 1963 the *Gazette*, as part of the Marine Corps Association's 50th anniversary, published a series of articles on COIN. They were absolutely prescient, and despite a changed dogma and a different location, much of what those authors wrote 44 years ago is still relevant. In the editorial for that issue the editors said:

Just 50 years ago [1913] the Marine Corps Association was born at a strategic base—Guantanamo. The event was conceived in one simple idea: that this nation when in peril would have need of ready forces that could move by sea. Much discussion and thought, the founders foresaw, would have to follow. And so the *Gazette* began. . . .

Those officers of 1913 would be proud of what their Marine Corps has become; they would be awed at the complex skills their successors must have to make it go. And, once again, military professionals need massive discussion and thought to cope with a challenge of the world as we can see it today.

That challenge: counter-insurgency. Fighting is a trade Marines know; fighting guerrillas is a chore Marines have done before. . . . More nations, even continents, could erupt any day. There can be calls for fire teams or BLTs. But the call may also be for instructors or advisers—for diplomats in uniform. And this requires once again more knowledge, more training, more thinking, and study before the call comes. . . .

Counter-insurgency, if it can be summed up at all, is more like a three-legged race—the civil government and the military hobbled together. It takes team work and understanding just to keep from falling on their faces; more to make progress.

As a step toward such understanding, the *Gazette* presents this special issue examining some of the meanings behind one simple fact: that in the next decade, perhaps through the next half century, the probability is high that friendly strategic countries will be racked by insurgency. . . .

We offer no solutions. Those must come from you, and from many others. May it be that half a century from now future editors may report that the task was performed well and truly.

Almost a half century later, we can report that the task *was* performed well and truly. In this issue we are republishing articles that have been in print before and some that are new. Even though the face and the ideology of the enemy have changed, then-MajGen Victor H. Krulak's 1963 article, "Fighting the Abstract War" on p. 10, is as relevant today as when it was first published. Other articles in this issue bring a new perspective to a tough fight.

Just as our predecessors wrote, we offer no solutions. It is essential that you who are in the current fight continue to write and populate your forum, the *Gazette*.

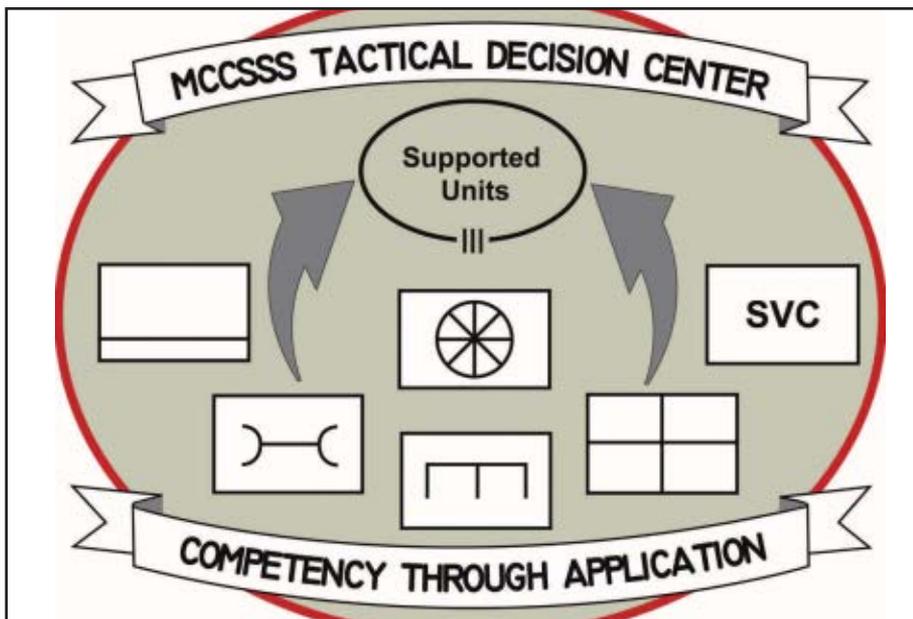
John Keenan

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Tank Ldr MSgt 1812	S-4A/Embark Off 1stLt 0402	POC: Maj. Brian D. Wirtz
Plt Sgt (2) GySgt 1812	S-4A/MMO 1stLt 0402	207-721-9037
Tank Cmdr (4) Sgt/SSgt 1812	XO Maj 0302	brian.wirtz@usmc.mil
POC: Maj Matthew D. Fehmel	Motor Trans Off 1stLt 0402	1stSgt G.L. Wilson
910-450-6700	POC: LtCol Kelly P. Houlgate	207-721-9037
matthew.fehmel@usmc.mil	978-796-2825	wilsongl@mfr.usmc.mil
1stSgt Dwight D. Jones	kelly.houlgate@usmc.mil	
910-450-6698	1stSgt Thomas Herman	
dwight.jones@usmc.mil	978-796-2731	
	thomas.herman@usmc.mil	
Unit: HMLA-775, Det A, Johnston, PA	Unit: Wpns Co, 1st Bn, 25th Marines, Devens, MA	Unit: Co B, 1st Bn, 25th Marines, Londonderry, NH
Billet: AH-1W Pilot Capt/Maj 7565	Billet: Antitank Plt Cmdr	Billet: CO Maj 0302
UH-1N Pilot Capt/Maj 7563		XO Capt 0302
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814-539-7206, ext. 2003		POC: Maj Jason A. Climer
robert.jablonski@usmc.mil		603-537-8000
		jason.climer@usmc.mil
		1stSgt Randy J. Maldonado
		603-537-8000
		randy.maldonado@usmc.mil
Unit: H&S Co, 1st Bn, 25th Mar, Devens, MA	POC: LtCol Kelly P. Houlgate	Unit: Co C, 1st Bn, 25th Marines, Plainville, CT
Billet: S-1 Adjutant 1stLt 0180	978-796-2825	Billet: Plt Cmdr (3) 1stLt 0302
Pers Off CWO3 0170	kelly.houlgate@usmc.mil	POC: Capt William L. Lombardo
S-2 Capt 0202	1stSgt Thomas Herman	860-747-1643
Scout/Sniper Plt Cmdr	978-796-2731	william.lombardo@usmc.mil
1stLt 0203	thomas.herman@usmc.mil	1stSgt Ben A. Grainger
Asst S-3 Capt 0302		860-747-1643
Liaison Off 1stLt 0302	Unit: Co A, 1st Bn, 25th Marines, Topsham, ME	ben.a.grainger@usmc.mil
Marine Gunner CWO2 0306	Billet: CO Maj 0302	
Asst S-3/Air Off Capt 7502		



TDC logo. (Graphics provided by LtCol Kevin M. Barth, USMC(Ret).)

Notices

- Any member of Baker Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, Korea, September 1950, please contact LtCol Marvin D. Gardner, USMC(Ret) at 118 Cobblestone Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80906, 719-226-2467, or mgard721@aol.com.
- An established author writing a biography of LtGen Victor H. "Brute" Krulak, USMC(Ret) would like to correspond with those who served with him. Any stories, memories, or anecdotes will be gratefully received. Please contact Robert Coram at rcoram@bell-south.net or by collect call to 404-266-8064.

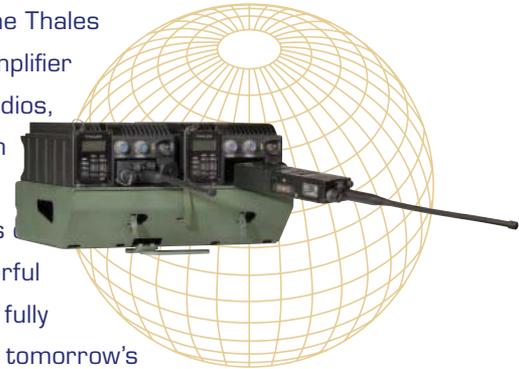
MCCSSS TDC Opens for Business. The Marine Corps Combat Service Support Schools (MCCSSS) Tactical Decision Center (TDC) opened for its first periods of instruction with Tactical Logistics Operations Course 4-07 from 30 July to 3 August. The TDC supports the training of students and Marines in a wide spectrum of simulated command post exercises in order to enhance their decisionmaking skills.

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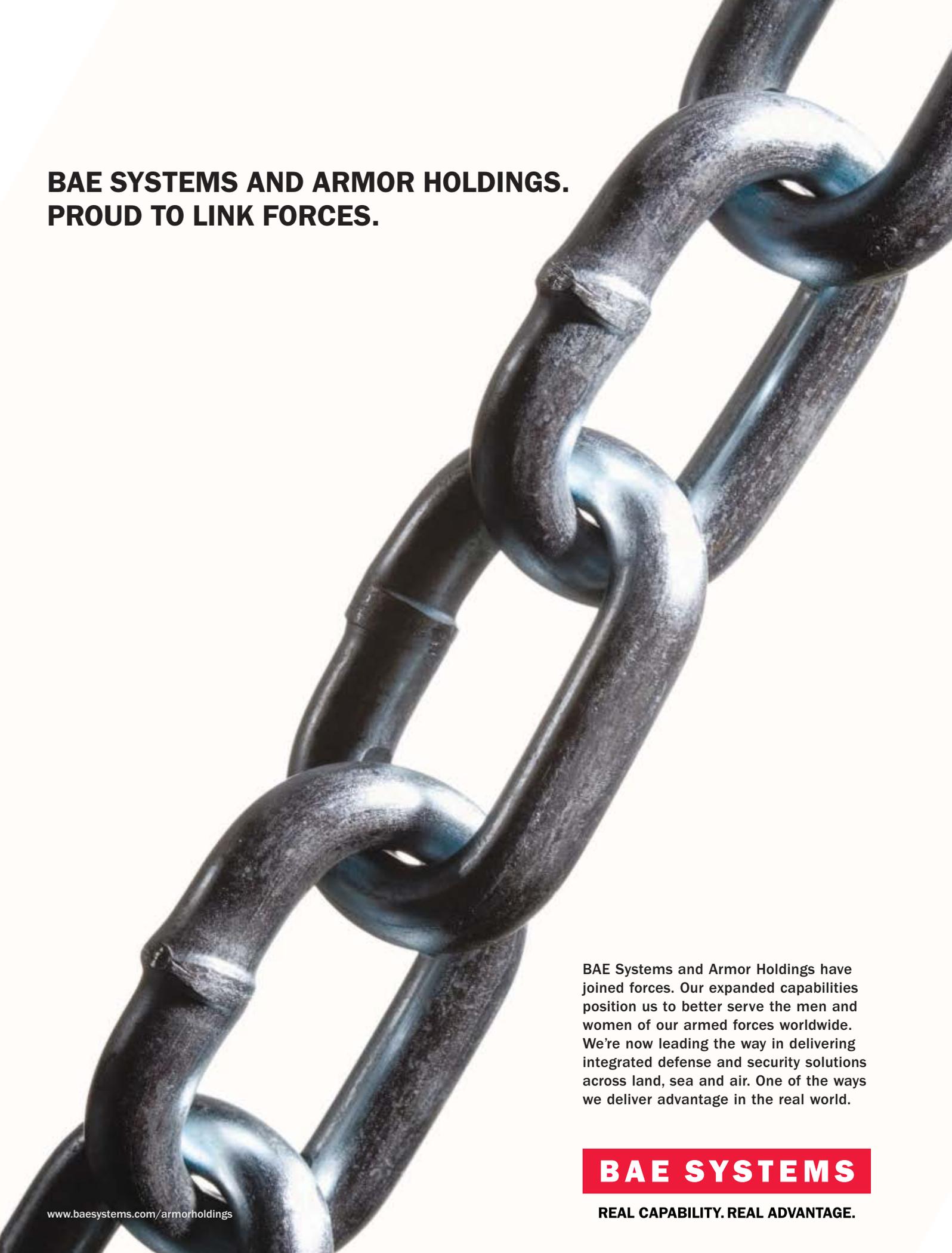


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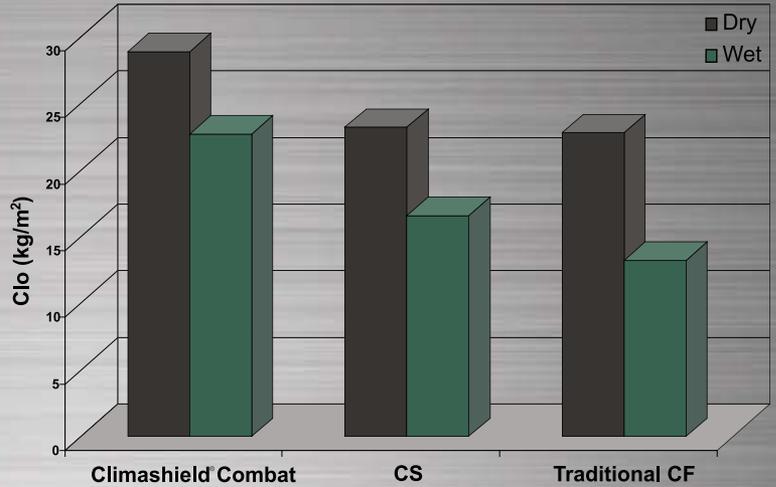
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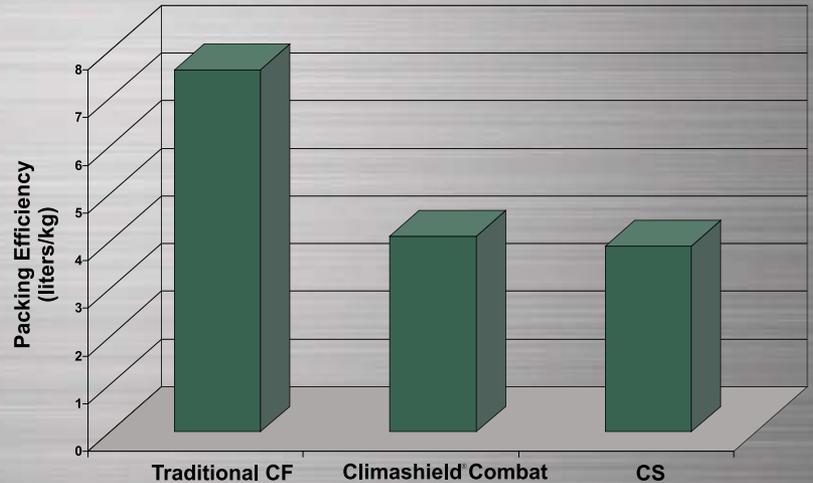
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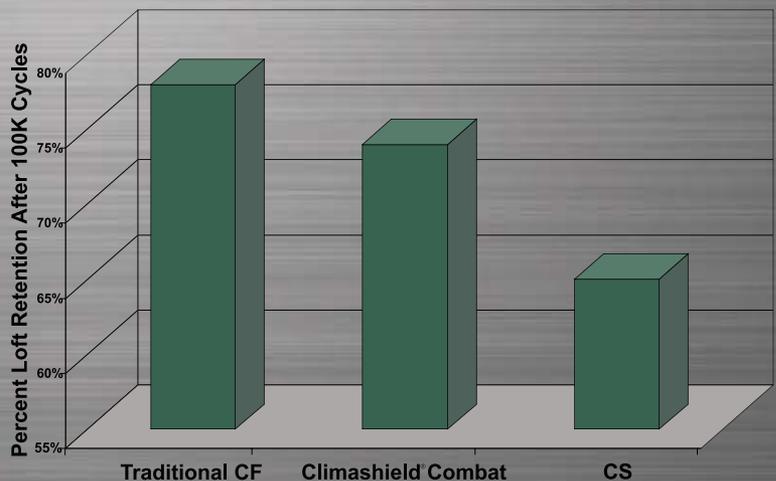
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Service for the Duration

I applaud the *Marine Corps Gazette's* newfound efforts of publishing more controversial and cutting-edge articles. Innovation and courage are hallmarks of our Corps. Its professional journal should echo these same attributes. Capt Zachary P. Martin's article, "One-Year Combat Tours," and Maj Michael D. Grice's article, "The Command Element for the Long War" (*MCG*, Aug07), fall into the category of "innovative" and are clearly "courageous." I tip my hat to them both. However, I would take Capt Martin's arguments one step further. Why not combat tours the length of the entire fight? Wasn't this the case during World Wars I and II? It is interesting that personnel policies that go with the philosophy of limited war ultimately misalign individual incentives and assigned missions. For example, we are fighting a long war in increments of 6 and 12 months at a time.

Maj Grice's arguments for a standing MEF(Fwd) are spot on. We should face the reality that a Marine Corps presence in the Middle East, for the long term, is inevitable. As such, we should realign our organizational structure, manpower policies, and equipment allocation to support this certainty. The use of individual temporary additional duty orders and short-term unit rotations is mind-boggling. James W. Marsh, the namesake of the Manpower and Reserve Affairs Headquarters Center, is likely turning in his grave on these propositions.

LtCol J. Scott Frampton

In the Black Through the Sniper Scope

I recently read the article, "View Through a Sniper Scope," by Sgt Benjamin T. Upton (*MCG*, Jun07). My compliments on an excellent, dead-on-target article. Sgt Upton accurately and precisely described the situation on the war on terror and its relevancy to World War II and Vietnam. As a two-tour Vietnam combat Marine I can verify what he said about that conflict. While we never

lost a major battle, the defeatists and the press lost the war here at home. Now that this war has continued, they are planning on doing the same thing again. Someone said that the military and their families are at war while America is at the mall. America, for the most part, has forgotten how to win a war and has abdicated the will to win to the enemy. Thank God for Sgt Upton and his comrades in arms.

Sgt Gary Neely, USMC(Ret)

The Navy's Error

I always enjoy LtCol F.G. Hoffman's insightful articles in this journal. His latest, "Rethinking Naval Forward Presence" (*MCG*, May07), drew my attention as an intelligence officer. The Navy will be making a mistake in ignoring the need for forcible entry with Marines in its zeal for theater security cooperation under a permissive global fleet station construct. To do so will weaken our overall national security posture. Assisting nations with humanitarian disaster and partnership is all fine as long as it is not at the expense of the inevitable eventuality of a forcible entry into a hostile country while faced with advanced weaponry and troops guarding the beaches. Let us not forget that the long war does not eliminate this eventual scenario that can only be tackled with a robust amphibious force.

LtCol Eugene P. Wittkoff

First to Fight

It was interesting to note that both the *Gazette* and *Proceedings* in their August editions recommended that their subscribers read Gen Victor H. Krulak's book, *First to Fight*. The book's opening chapters retell the Corps' struggle to survive in the post-World War II political arena. This political combat was intense and well fought by the Corps and its political friends. All Marines should know of that struggle and its warriors.

As a Marine and political science teacher I have become extremely concerned that a variation of that struggle lies

ahead of us in the foreseeable future. This time our leaders may be the ones who create the conditions for and advocate the demise of the Marine Corps and the creation of a single United States Armed Force to replace the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force.

During Operation IRAQI FREEDOM I, we saw a Marine Corps that was "Army-like" in its armored race to Baghdad. Since the capture of Baghdad, Marines have continued to fight the counterinsurgency Army-like while ignoring our own successful methods developed in the Caribbean, Central America, and Vietnam. Frequently we hear Marine generals and the Marine Chairman of the Joint Chiefs declaring before congressional committees, "No Marine goes outside the wire unless he is in an up-armored vehicle." How is a squad of Marines in a 7-ton "improvised explosive device proof" truck more effective against insurgents than the combined arms program units of the Vietnam era were? Marines in these million dollar vehicles are less effective against insurgents than are policemen in their cars against street/neighborhood gangs. From behind the wire and in massive trucks no one is able to win the hearts and minds of the people and win the insurgency.

In *First to Fight* we were different. We saw the future's conflicts and had or developed solutions to win them, and by this we could argue our necessity and our future. Marines of today must be like the Marines of whom Gen Krulak wrote. We must see the future and develop the tactics and weapons to solve its conflicts. The Marines of today must learn how to eat soup with a knife and how to use the sling and the stone and the utility of force in our savage wars of the future's peace.

GySgt Fredrick P. Peterkin,
USMC(Ret)

Correction

In the article, "Where Do Old Attaches Go?" in the August 2007 issue, the *MCG* ran the wrong coauthor's name. The correct name should read, LtCol David H. Booth.

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Counterinsurgency: Fighting the Abstract War

Three experts disclose some of the essential differences between conventional warfare and counterinsurgency and tell why it is important for Marines to recognize them



MajGen V.H. Krulak. (File photo.)

MajGen Victor H. Krulak is Special Assistant to the Director for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities, Joint Staff, Joint Chiefs of Staff. He is the first “active duty military voice” to be heard on the Lejeune Forum. As a major in 1942 he volunteered for parachute training and later became Commanding Officer, 2d Parachute Battalion, the unit selected to raid Choiseul Island to divert enemy attention from the Bougainville invasion. During the ensuing weeklong action he earned the Navy Cross. He has twice been awarded the Legion of Merit (Okinawa and Korea) and while Assistant Chief of Staff (C/S) C-3 (Operations), Fleet Marine Force Pacific (FMFPac), received the air medal for reconnaissance flights in Korea between August 1950 and July 1951. He later was C/S, 1st Marine Division (1st MarDiv) in Korea. In 1955 he rejoined FMFPac, serving as C/S until his promotion to brigadier general when he became Assistant Division Commander, 3d MarDiv. From July 1957 until January 1960 he was Director, Marine Corps Education Center, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico. At the time of his present assignment in February 1962 he was the Commanding General, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego. He was commissioned in 1934 after graduating from the Naval Academy.



Col David Galula. (MCG, January 1963.)

Col David Galula is also a welcome newcomer to the Lejeune Forum. Raised in Morocco, he was educated at St. Cyr, commissioned in the French Marine Corps, and fought World War II (WWII) in North Africa, France, and Germany. Postwar duty included 9 years in China and Hong Kong, a tour as United Nations observer in Greece during that country’s civil war, 2 years in Algeria as troop and area commander, and special tours with French Army Intelligence and the General Staff. Recently retired after 23 years of service, he is now a research associate at Harvard’s Center for International Affairs. His most recent project at the center includes as a major part the laws of counterinsurgency and their application. This part, he says, evolves around the golden rule that in any circumstances the people are divided pro and con (both are in the minority) and neutral (the majority). Principle: identify the “pro” group, train it, organize it, and set it to work in order to rally the neutrals and eliminate the “cons.”



Dr. G.K. Tanham. (MCG, January 1963.)

Dr. G.K. Tanham makes his second appearance on the Lejeune Forum. As a member of Forum V (September 1962), he listed what he considered to be the five most important strategic decisions made during this century. One of these was “the Chinese Communist decision to make the Long March in 1934,” an experience, he explained, that helped Mao Tse Tung develop and codify a theory of warfare that today is having important applications all over the world. Here, as before, he writes from the viewpoint of a soldier and a scholar (A.B., Princeton; M.A. and Ph.D., Stanford). During WWII he spent 3 years in Europe with the 7th Armored Division and was awarded the Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, Air

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Medal, and Croix de Guerre. In 1947 he began teaching military history at Cal Tech in Pasadena and in 1954 was appointed Associate Professor of History. He is now Assistant to the President, RAND Corporation.

>Editor's Note: This series of essays first appeared in the January 1963 issue of the Marine Corps Gazette. They have been reproduced here with minor editing and re-formatting.

by MajGen Victor H. Krulak

Before discussing essential differences between conventional warfare and the military aspect of counterinsurgency, we must realize that in conducting counterinsurgency operations around the globe we are fighting a war. Strange as this war may seem, its stakes are just as high as any in history, and the strategy of the enemy is as thoroughly refined and carefully prepared as was German strategy under the Schlieffen Plan. While its character may not be entirely recognizable, its purpose certainly is. In an address on 6 January 1961, Premier [Nikita] Khrushchev proposed that the Communist world would support the uprisings of people around the world who are, as he put it, fighting "just wars . . . against rotten reactionary regimes." In other words he laid down the insurgency challenge.

If we admit this fact of war we illuminate the first and most essential variation from conventional combat: the character of the area of operations. In the last century America has fought her wars principally on the high seas, on the territory of an enemy, or in the land of an invaded ally. Never before, however, have we been dedicated to winning a global war where the battleground is not some identifiable geographic area but is found in the hearts of thousands of small and simple people. Never before, moreover, has the capture or liberation of territory been completely subordinated, as a national goal, to winning the convictions of men, whose loyalty and



Modern equipment can aid counterinsurgency but will not be decisive. 1stMarDiv, March 1968.
(Photo by LCpl R.J. DelVecchio.)

good will are themselves the full measure of victory.

Nor have we ever been obliged to fight under such a blanket of stultifying restraints. For the first time in our history we find ourselves in a position in which our beleaguered allies do most of the fighting and in which our own operational contribution is largely in the form of material and advice—

which may or may not be accepted.

This situation can scarcely avoid breeding frustration, nor is it a frustration confined to ourselves. The matter of sanctuary, for example, has probably never played a more dramatic and more annoying part, as witness Algeria and Vietnam. South Vietnamese officers speak of the Viet Cong bases in Laos, of the columns of warlike mate-



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rial and people entering their country via the Ho Chi Minh trail, and of the unassailable propaganda radios in North Vietnam and Cambodia. The charges may or may not be exaggerated, but the basic fact is still there: the Communists do have a privileged training and marshaling ground north of the 17th parallel if they choose to use it. We saw this first in Korea, and it has become no less repugnant or difficult to deal with since then.

Restricted warfare—war by degree—leads to the matter of escalation and its relationship with national policy. In the classic war of the 1941 style, everyone involved did his level best; the wars were top speed efforts, and all of the antagonists knew it. Italian women surrendered their wedding rings; American wives forewent their nylons. We actually derived a measure of comfort in realizing that everyone was operating at full bore.

War against insurgency is quite a different affair. Its scale or intensity is measured not by what we can afford, not by what we will sacrifice, not by what our economy can stand, not even by what our allies want or what they will accept, but by a complicated synthesis of all these factors—and it is not likely to be the same synthesis on any 2 successive days.

Likewise we are not confronted with a simple matter of calculating the magnitude of the enemy's strength and then gearing to defeat it. In the battle against subversive insurgency our question is not one of estimating how strong the enemy is, but how much of his strength he chooses to employ against us. This is a far more difficult problem for, by an unannounced shift in emphasis, the enemy can force our entire mechanism into another gear ratio.

Further, we find a wholly different impact in the word "totality." In the atom-conscious years following WWII we placed a very clear interpretation on the term "total war." Now, in combating insurgency around the world, we are brought face to face with still another kind of a total war. This is not



Small unit actions are just a part of the counterinsurgency effort. (Photo by Cpl M.J. Coaten, 1st MarDiv, November 1967.)

total war in the sense of multimegaton exchanges or in masses of marching bayonets as in the great wars of the past. But it is total in that it draws upon all the sources of national strength of those who foment the struggle—and those who oppose it, too.

Put another way, our past wars have been largely matters of violence. Equipped with grenades and tanks, ships and planes—all of the mechanisms of destruction—our military people, as practitioners of violence, occupied the key position without challenge. But counterinsurgency is a different matter. The winning of this battle involves not just the efforts of the soldier as he destroys the guerrilla, but the resources of the politician, of the propagandist, the economist, and the educator. In past wars where violence was king, these other forces sat in the economy seats while the military occupied the dress circle. Now they all are involved—and on a coordinate, give-and-take basis. Here is a profound difference (and one that raises immense problems).

Related to this give-and-take effort is another dramatic variation: the almost indistinguishable area between war and peace. Unlike August 1914, this war is not a matter of demands, ultimata, declarations, and then formal war. Rather, an insurgency crisis usu-

ally grows slowly—in some areas it has developed over a decade or more—and the criteria by which it comes to deserve the name "war" are extremely hard to discern. This factor also tends to create operational problems; for example, whether the task at any one moment is primarily political, economic, or military, and just what the balance of responsibility and authority among the participants should be. This is a novel problem for which the United States is only now becoming organized.

Finally, we must consider the difference in motivation. "Avenging the Alamo," "Remembering the Maine," "Making the World Safe for Democracy," "Remembering Pearl Harbor"—these were more than rallying cries in the past, more than standards. In reality they represented a national purpose in terms readily understood by those called upon to sacrifice. In our fight against insurgency we as yet lack an electrifying phrase to chart the road from where we are to where we want to go. In the minds of many of our citizens this leaves the war a political, spiritual, and geographic abstraction. Democracies are not renowned for fighting abstract wars.

Taken altogether these variations from conventional warfare characterize the counterinsurgency war as a very hard one to fight—a war that is quite



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foreign to many of our basic conceptions. Yet one characteristic of counterinsurgency is wholly favorable and, in its significance, far outweighs all of the unfavorable factors discussed to this point. In facing up to the Communists directly, in challenging their “national liberation struggle” philosophy, in striving on our own to win the hearts of the underdeveloped nations around the world, we have actually set a dynamic strategy in motion. Although this strategy is new, although it may involve accepting temporary setback along with incremental triumph, it is geared in the final analysis to win while still avoiding the cataclysm of nuclear conflict—where neither victor nor vanquished is the winner.

by Col David Galula

I want to concentrate on two of the essential differences between conventional warfare and the military side of counterinsurgency operations. One is the difference in the outbreak of the two wars; the other is the difference in conducting them once they have started.

No matter how unpleasant a conventional war may later prove, a war that begins with a good smart bang has the singular merit of clarifying a vast number of problems. The issues, what-

ever they were, become now a singular matter of defeating the enemy. The military takes over, politics move to the back seat. We have a clear issue that leaves no room for opposition.

In conventional warfare, our objective automatically becomes the destruction of the enemy’s armed forces and the occupation of his territory. By its very nature this objective also provides clear-cut criteria to assess whether we are winning, stagnating, or losing.

In conventional warfare, the method to defeat the enemy is essentially military action supported by diplomacy, propaganda, and economic blockade. A war economy, grand strategy, tactics—all are familiar to us, all are governed by well-known, established rules. In conventional warfare, organization is also greatly simplified into a neat division of task and responsibility between civil and military authorities, between the government that directs and the armed forces that execute, between the nation that provides the tools and the soldiers who utilize them. This is only too clearly seen in the theater of operations where civilian authority is completely subordinated to the military.

No positive bang salutes the birth of an insurgency. One of its annoying characteristics, in fact, is how to deter-

mine when it really starts. Does it begin when guerrilla gangs first appear? (1 gang, 2 gangs, 10 gangs?) Or when terrorism attracts the first headlines in the press? Or when police report one meeting of an obscure group of possible plotters out of many other meetings of many other groups of possible plotters? These all are danger signs but scarcely a bang. By the time a bang is heard (and it may not be very loud), the insurgents are well underway in their bid for power.

This initial ambiguity results in serious troubles for the counterinsurgent. Before the feeble bang is heard, while the situation is not yet recognized as an insurgency, the counterinsurgent has no issue that can be known to and approved by the population at large. At this stage only police and other government specialists realize what is looming. On the basis of available, objective facts, how can they possibly convince the nation of a potential crisis, a danger that requires sacrifice?

After the bang, the counterinsurgent has an issue, but unfortunately it is rarely dynamic. The insurgent is capitalizing on such promising causes as independence, freedom, land reform, anticorruption, antifeudalism—the list is as various as the weaknesses of mankind. He has chosen these causes precisely for their attractiveness, for their strong appeal to passion. In doing so he leaves the counterinsurgent a narrow choice of counter issues that appeal generally to reason; for example, stability, unity, order, evolution, reforms. The power of ideology seldom works for the counterinsurgent. Burdened with this handicap, confronted next with opposition and fence sitting even among his own ranks, the counterinsurgent now starts his long, uphill campaign.

Usually at this stage, after the bang is heard, the armed forces are ordered to step in because the normal peacetime means of the government no longer prove adequate to the task. The armed forces now find themselves involved in a political war, because a war whose only valid objective is to gain the



Our forces must carefully move through the entangled elements of the conflict. (Photo by Cpl Mince-moyer, 1stMarDiv, January 1967.)

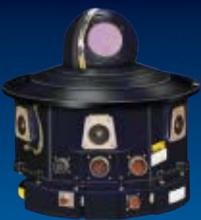
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In counterinsurgency, even professionals are unsure of themselves. (Photo by Cpl Ryan R. Jackson.)

active support of the population or at least to control it can only be a political war—“20 percent military, 80 percent politics” as Chiang Kaishek often stated, and others after him.

“Where then is the difficulty?” one asks. “Let the military do its 20 percent and the civil power its 80 percent.” But now we come to another very real difference. In counterinsurgency, military action cannot be separated from political action. We can see this more plainly if we translate the broad objective—control and support of the population—into such specific field tasks as ensuring a reasonable degree of security, taking a thorough census, enforcing new regulations on the transport of persons and goods, informing the population, conducting person-to-person and village-to-village propaganda, gathering intelligence, identifying and arresting insurgent cell members, finding new leaders from within the population, opening schools for children and adults, giving medical care, finding work for the unemployed, building new roads and rural engineering works, organizing self-defense units, and fighting organized guerrilla units.

These tasks, and the list is by no means complete, are essentially political-military tasks. Rather than taking a

back seat, as in conventional warfare, politics remain of paramount importance in counterinsurgency warfare. Every military operation must be weighed with regard to its effect on the political picture, every political move for its effect on the military situation.

I am the civilian official in charge of a district. I have identified insurgent cell members in a village and my police officer is ready to arrest them. The military commander of the area, however, informs me that he is unable to establish a garrison in the village to protect the inhabitants against insurgent raids.

Shall I proceed to the arrest? I gain obvious advantages if I do so. But I also know that unless the village is garrisoned, guerrilla pressure will subsequently force the inhabitants to organize another cell. Then I must begin the painful, time-consuming process of identification, arrest, interrogation, and punishment all over again with the probability of causing more bitterness.

Shall I wait? Shall I press the military commander to find soldiers to protect the village? The problem of assigning responsibility is further complicated by a lack of trained civilian personnel. No civilian branch of the government has the reservoir of manpower needed for counterinsurgency.

Take the tasks listed above and multiply them by the given number of districts and villages in just a small country. It comes to a staggering personnel requirement. We do not have time to train the people. We need them now. Only the army can provide them. Yet who is to direct them? Military or civilian authority?

The temptation is often great to let the military run the entire show, at least in some specific geographical areas. Such a decision, however, is politically self-defeating, and by taking it the government acknowledges a signal defeat. Unable to cope with the insurgency, it abdicates its powers; in turn, most if not all of the counterissues scraped together to answer the insurgent become dead issues. Primarily for these reasons, overall responsibility must be given at every level to the civilian who represents the political authority in a political war. If there is a shortage of trusted officials, nothing prevents filling the gap with army officers serving in a civilian capacity.

But such are the close interrelations between political and military action in a counterinsurgency that the civilian in charge must forge most of his decisions by committee procedure. Unfortunately the best committee is only as good as its members. Even with the best conceivable organization, personality conflicts are more than likely to be the order of the day. Although the wrong member can sometimes be fired and replaced, this will not solve the problem for all committees. The question, then, is how to make “war by committee” work at its maximum effectiveness in a counterinsurgency, regardless of the personality factors.

I have said that in fighting conventional warfare we rely on time-tested methods of military action familiar to professional soldiers and acceptable to civil officials who have in any event taken a back seat. But when the war is a counterinsurgency, even the professionals—the experts—are unsure of themselves. In sad truth, we have no established rules for this kind of warfare. We know by experience that rules for

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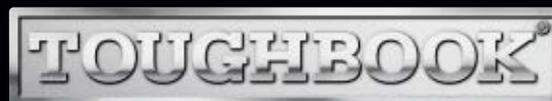
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conventional warfare do not apply. This leaves rules only for the insurgent, based principally on Chinese Communist theory and experience enriched by a substantial number of other successful cases. When the counterinsurgent attempts to copy them—and some have—he falls into a disastrous trap which we must briefly examine.

The chief feature of a counterinsurgency is the total lack of symmetry between the opponents. Although it is the same war as to time and place, the insurgent's and the counterinsurgent's types of warfare are radically different. Each side has its own restrictions, not because it so chooses, but by necessity, because of the very nature of the war, because of the enormous disproportion of strength between the camps at the outset, because of the difference in essence between assets and liabilities.

The insurgent grows from small to large. At the start he has "plenty of nothin'." He has no territory, no administration, no police, no army, no bank, and no tax collectors. He has only an intangible asset, a cause that lends itself to revolutionary developments. His task is to transform this asset into something tangible.

The counterinsurgent goes from large to small. He has territory, administration, and all that. He has also an intangible liability—the responsibility for maintaining order. His task is to prevent this liability from nullifying his tangible assets.

To give a concrete application of this asymmetry: terrorism, a source of disorder, is a valid action for the insurgent (ignoring morals). Can the counterinsurgent use counterterrorism? No, precisely because it too promotes disorder; besides, if it is possible to murder an insurgent, it is also possible to arrest him and punish him legally. Another example: the insurgent fights a cheap war. When he spends one cent, his opponent has to spend \$2; the insurgent can accept a protracted war, the counterinsurgent must not.

Why we lack a set of rules for counterinsurgency warfare after the last 15 years of fighting it, I do not know. I

can only observe the fact. That such a hiatus is potentially disastrous to war by committee is obvious. A committee specially set up to conduct counterinsurgency, and whose members do not know exactly what to do and in what order, is bound to produce confusion, dispute, and perhaps defeat. Indeed, by the time it gets off the ground its *raison d'être* may have fallen to the enemy, and this has happened a good many times in the past.

But let's assume that our committee works, if only more or less. The results of its field operations will merely reflect the overall personality of the committee, its individual approach to the task, its success or failure. The same will be true for neighboring committees. What happens? Inevitably the national counterinsurgency effort will appear as a mosaic, a patchwork with no general pattern. One piece of the mosaic may be well controlled by the counterinsurgent. Simultaneously, bordering pieces may be less well controlled or even yielded to effective insurgent control. So, how easy it is for the insurgent to maneuver at will among these pieces, concentrating on some, disappearing temporarily from others. Against an opponent as elusive as the insurgent, uniformity in action is a must for the

counterinsurgent, more so than in any other kind of warfare.

Another paradox in this type of war is the necessity for extreme centralization of its direction at the top and extreme decentralization of its execution at the bottom. A rigid general line is vital, but so is a broad margin of initiative. At the bottom, this is very small-scale warfare, and this means small-scale and fugitive opportunities, which must be seized upon instantly. This holds true for both sides, insurgents and counterinsurgents.

How, then, is our committee to avoid these pitfalls? How do we allow it to work at its best? We give it something we don't yet have. We give it a doctrine—a sound doctrine whose elements have been proven by past success. This is how the insurgent solves his problem and how the counterinsurgent must solve his.

Let me illustrate this. During the Sino-Japanese War, Communist *maquis* appeared in Hainan Island in the Gulf of Tongking. Communications between the island and the Communist headquarters at Yen-an, some 1,300 miles away, did not exist, even by radio. After V-J Day, when the final round was fought in the long Nationalist Communist struggle, the Communists



Counterinsurgency is best conducted by forces acting for their own government. (Photo by LCpl Christopher Zahn.)

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took from 1 to 2 months to send a courier to Hainan. Yet, according to all Nationalist reports, the local Communists were operating exactly as their comrades in North China, with few deviations, few errors—and with the same amount of success. All they had in common was a doctrine for action.

Complex as is the counterinsurgency problem, it can be relatively simple when armed forces are called to act directly for their own government, in their own country, or in a territory ruled by their own country. But I shudder to think of the difficulty when armed forces are simply serving as advisers in a foreign country, as the U.S. forces are today serving in South Vietnam. Here they can succeed only if they convince. They can convince only if they can rely on a coherent, proven doctrine.

by Dr. G.K. Tanham

In my view each level of counterinsurgency activity, each sphere of operations, military or nonmilitary, presents its own peculiar challenge. In the past we and other nations have erred at all levels; we sometimes continue to err in the present. But we also have made gains, and not the least of these lies in the tactical end of specific military operations.

We know that early insurgency actions are usually committed first by small groups of individuals and then by small-sized units, such as platoons and companies. Lightly armed, these enemy groups find security in mobility and in “blending” with the people. Most of their actions are ambushes, sabotage, and hit-and-run attacks on villages and outposts. To counter them we don’t require divisions or corps, we don’t need to mass tanks or artillery, we don’t have to worry too much about divisional boundaries or large-scale operational planning, and we don’t need a high headquarters to direct the actual fighting. Instead, the requirement is for a small supreme headquarters to direct the general strategy and to coordinate the planning of the war while delegating almost, if not all, authority for operations

to the smaller units—say battalions. If the enemy develops divisions and attempts to hold territory, then there would be a more conventional war and higher headquarters would have a greater role in the fighting.

The local unit knows its area much more intimately than does higher headquarters, and it also is working very close to the people in the area. This is not the kind of war where you can plan campaigns on a map and direct subordinate units to specific objectives. Local units depend on the people for intelligence, and they must work very closely with all local officials. Many military operations may have to be modified or even canceled because of local political situations. One could say that this is warfare by local committee headed by a civilian—not a very appealing notion to the average military man.

The communications lag also makes it difficult if not impossible for higher headquarters to direct in detail operations against a Communist revolutionary force. Insurgent ambushes last only a minute or two, attacks on outposts are of short duration, and assassinations take only a few seconds. While we can speed up reaction times, we can never totally overcome the handicaps imposed by such actions. We may hamper the enemy and reduce his effectiveness if he knows that reserves can be brought against him in a matter of minutes, but this will not stop his operations. Defensively, higher headquarters cannot react quickly enough to play a major role.

Local small units also make the most effective contribution in the offensive. French experience with large offensive sweeps was very disappointing, and I would guess we are encountering similar frustrations now in Vietnam. To hide preparations for such operations, which involve large numbers of troops and items of equipment, is most difficult. Even helicopters broadcast sufficient warning for the enemy to melt away. Troops strange to an area find it difficult to determine who the enemy is and whether the

killed and wounded are friend, foe, or neutral.

In decided contrast to a fanfare sweep launched from higher headquarters stands the small offensive. Based on careful, local intelligence and mounted not just for a few days but for weeks, a small offensive directed by the local commander is much more likely to run the enemy ragged and eventually to track him down. Again, higher headquarters should have the role of general direction, but local units should plan and execute their own fights.

A related difference is that in conventional warfare we deal with specific (usually terrain) objectives. In WWII a corps would order a division to take such and such a physical objective. To regiments, battalions, and companies down the line went orders to take a hill or crossroad or maybe a city block or a clump of trees. Attacks were planned, partially at least, from maps and photos, and the various levels of command could follow the progress of the attacking troops.

In guerrilla warfare we have no such neat delineation of objectives. The enemy isn’t much interested in holding a village, or a crossroad, or a hill. To him these are indescribably useless. If there and if attacked by superior forces he will withdraw or disappear. In 1953 the Viet Minh surveyed all of their installations and asked themselves if there was any single one they would defend to the end. The answer was none. Instead of anchoring himself to a specific piece of land, the enemy retains his mobility and quite often remains indistinguishable from the local people. Rather than the high ground or a commanding position, our military objective, when actually fighting the enemy, is the enemy himself, often very hard to identify.

Faced with this objective our local commander must have good intelligence if he is to stand a fair chance of making contact with his real enemy and not with passive peasants who wear the same kind of clothes. Accomplishing his task means long, grueling

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marches for his troops—many times without success—or, on other occasions, fleeing skirmishes with a frustrating enemy who refuses to stand and fight. However, only through constant patrolling and continuously pushing the physical enemy can he ever expect to root out the hardcore guerrilla bands and provide the security necessary to counter the insurgency's higher mission—winning over the population.

This kind of war is likely to be fought mostly in unfriendly terrain and in underdeveloped areas. Che Guevara has said, as Mao did, that the basis for revolution is in the rural areas where the people are good fighters and the enemy has the greatest difficulty in bringing his power to bear. Recent insurgencies bear this out; we can expect future revolutionary wars to break out in remote and difficult areas where governmental control is weak, communications are poor, and where local grievances can be exploited quietly—at first.

This means that at least some of our equipment cannot be used. Tanks and artillery may not be able to go into jungles or swamps or any place where they will be so road bound as to represent sitting pigeons. The deeds of this war thus become more largely the deeds of men. A battle of human wits is the order of the day, not an overwhelming mass of equipment and supporting arms. This is not to say that helicopters, radios, and new equipment, such as surveillance radar, cannot help in this kind of war. It is to emphasize the danger of becoming too dependent on modern equipment and comforts. In fighting the insurgent we must not only cast away extraneous equipment, but must also rid ourselves of preconceived beliefs and habits and somehow free our minds to conjure up solutions that aren't traditional.

A convention of regular warfare is the clear and legal distinction between combatant and noncombatant. Most nations accept codes that govern the conduct and reciprocal treatment of the soldier and the civilian; for example, soldiers must wear uniforms if



Local intelligence is critical, as is support from the local populace. (Photo by Sgt Tracee L. Jackson.)

upon capture they want to be treated as soldiers. This tradition and legal distinction is difficult for us to eschew, if only because it is convenient and coincides with our more orderly environment.

The insurgent, although differentiating the roles of his men and women, makes no distinction between combatant and noncombatant. For example, a peasant, through desire or pressure, begins informing for the Viet Cong. Next he provides labor or other help, then joins a unit or is blackmailed or cajoled into joining the local Communist guerrilla band. Finally he begins training for future military activity. During the day he tends his rice paddy. At what point exactly is he a combatant or soldier? Even in the later stages of an insurgency, when the revolutionaries have developed formal units and have adopted uniforms, the largest number of adherents will remain outside the regular army. However, they still actively contribute to the war by providing intelligence, logistics support, propaganda support, and money, and by forming a great manpower reserve. These functions are usually performed by regular soldiers in Western-type armies. Who then is who in this type of warfare? How can we identify the guilty without harming the innocent? What do we do with the guilty if we

capture them? All these and more are pressing questions of the moment.

Again, in violation of generally accepted rules of warfare, the revolutionaries do not hesitate to use terror against the people. This is not limited to unpopular officials or to those favoring the legitimate government. It is used against anyone, from successful government officials, who may be improving the people's health or welfare, to a remote tribal headman, who exercises an inconvenient cohesiveness among his people. Che does warn that terror cannot be used indiscriminately. But it can be and is being used effectively, and we can counter it only by our physical presence in an area, and then only sometimes.

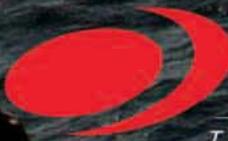
In discussing these few differences—the list is very long, of course—I wanted only to point out how the countering of revolutionary warfare has shifted the emphasis away from warfare as we generally have practiced it in the last two decades. We already have made and we are making certain fundamental changes in our approach to the new challenge. Fortunately, as Americans, we pride ourselves on ingenuity and invention, on living by our wits—and the type of warfare we are now fighting is a unique challenge to that pride.

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Irregular Warfare

New concepts for consideration
by Concepts and Plans Division, MCWL

Thus far in the 21st century, the United States has increasingly faced state and nonstate adversaries who employ irregular warfare to counter our vast conventional military power. That trend is expected to continue with the implication that U.S. forces must become as adept at waging irregular warfare—both defensively and offensively—as we are at waging conventional warfare. We must become expert in irregular methods—unconventional, guerrilla, economic, cultural, technological, and other assorted means—in order to defend the Nation in the protracted regional or global irregular warfare campaigns ahead.

Our rich and varied national experience in irregular warfare—from 1776 to Iraq—shows that we must approach it in a fundamentally different manner from our approach to conventional

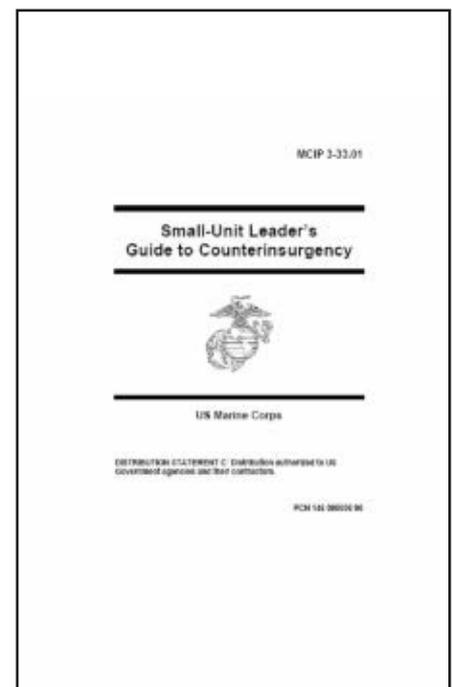
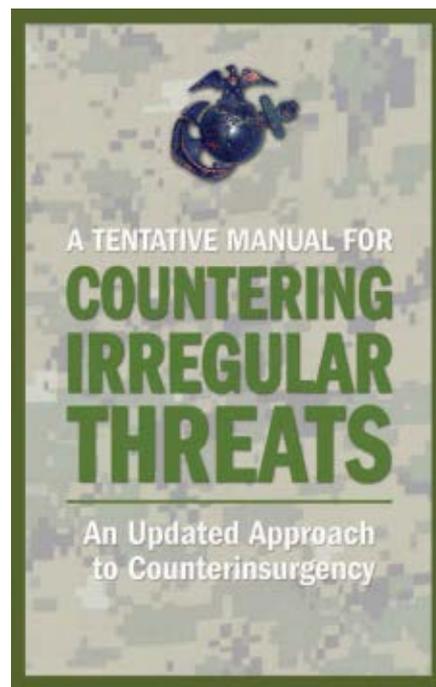
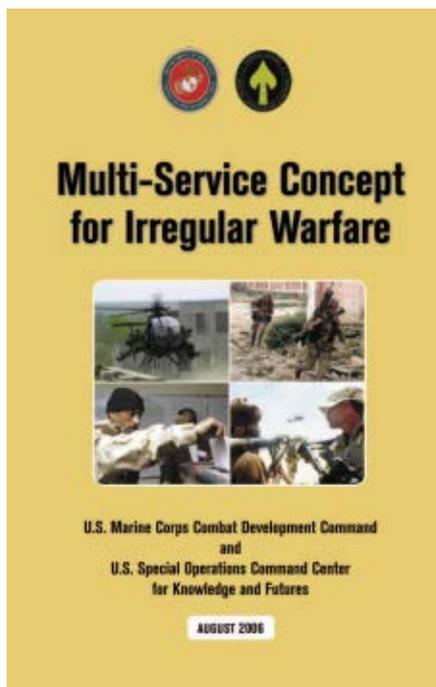
warfare. While many of our current Department of Defense capabilities have applicability in irregular warfare, many others need to be developed and incorporated into doctrine and training. The Concepts and Plans Division,

. . . U.S. forces must become . . . adept at waging irregular warfare—both defensively and offensively. . . .

Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory (MCWL), Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC), is developing a set of concepts and doc-

trine to help shape the capability development. These recently published or forthcoming publications include:

- *The Multi-Service Concept for Irregular Warfare* was produced in cooperation with U.S. Special Operations Command's (USSOCOM's) Center for Knowledge and Futures and approved by the Commanding General (CG), MCCDC and the Deputy Commander, USSOCOM in early August 2006. It describes how U.S. military forces will conduct irregular warfare in support of unified action on a regional or global scale against both state and nonstate adversaries. It is meant as a guide for enhancing and improving U.S. military capabilities and capacities, and to point toward closer integration of U.S. military and civilian agencies in meeting the irregular warfare challenge. It describes a comprehensive approach for applying all



These new doctrinal publications provide the basis for an operating concept in irregular warfare. (Covers courtesy of Concepts and Plans Division, MCWL.)

elements of U.S. national power—economic, diplomatic, cultural, and technological, as well as military—to achieve U.S. objectives. This publication may be viewed on the MCWL website at <http://www.mcwl.usmc.mil>.

- *A Tentative Manual for Countering Irregular Threats: An Updated Approach to Counterinsurgency* was issued in limited numbers by MCCDC during July 2006 for comment and refinement. Targeted at the battalion level and above, it is intended to promote discussion and debate on how to counter complex and dynamic insurgent threats by influencing the environment through the coordinated pursuit of six logical lines of operation—information/intelligence, humanitarian aid, economic advice, defense and security, governance, and combat operations. These six operational lines, all applied by a combined military/civilian team, are not prescriptive but representative, and the *Tentative Manual* shows how, in a given campaign design, their number can be expanded or shrunk to meet the requirements of a particular intervention. This publication is available to registered users on the MCWL website at <http://www.mcwl.usmc.mil>.

- *Small Unit Leader's Guide to Counterinsurgency*, signed by the CG, MCCDC on 20 July 2006, provides a collection of tactics, techniques, and procedures that represent the current counterinsurgency “best practices” from the U.S., British, and Australian experience. This publication is aimed at small unit leaders at the squad, platoon, and company levels. It is available to registered users on the MCWL website at <http://www.mcwl.usmc.mil>.

- *Field Manual 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3.33-5, Counterinsurgency Manual*, is currently under development in cooperation with the U.S. Army. It aims to fill a doctrinal gap by describing how offensive, defensive, and stability operations, conducted along multiple lines of oper-



Irregular warfare is a part of the Corps' past, present, and future. (Photo by LCpl Terence L. Yancey.)

ation, are necessary to defeat insurgency. It requires that soldiers and Marines balance a mix of familiar combat skills with skills more often associated with civilian agencies, such as reconstruction and stability, to defeat an insurgency.

Although the future is highly uncertain, what does appear likely is that our Nation's enemies will not seek to attack our strengths but, rather, will strive to negate these strengths through various means, including hiding amongst the indigenous populations of fragile or failed states. The publications noted above reflect the complex environmen-

tal challenges that war amongst the people can create. A common theme that emerges from these publications is that the capabilities required to wage irregular warfare are largely intellectual rather than material or technical. The general premise is that mental agility and organizational adaptability will enable and support the Marine Corps' successful participation in intervention campaigns—even if that intervention is in the complex environment posed by irregular warfare.



>Editor's Note: This article was originally published in MCG, January 2007.



Significance in Semantics

The utility in defining the war in Iraq

by Maj Christopher S. Ieva



Then-Capt Doug Zembiec, Commanding Officer, Company E, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, directs his company during combat operations in Fallujah, April 2004. The current struggle in Iraq has morphed into the reality of the three block war. Maj Zembiec was subsequently killed during combat operations in 2007. (Photo by Sgt Jose E. Guillen.)

“The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and the commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature.”¹

—Carl von Clausewitz

The Marine Corps’ tacit, singular belief defining the Iraq war as a pure insurgency inhibits efficient management

>Maj Ieva is currently a student at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA. This article was his entry in the Chase Prize Essay Contest.

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of the conflict. From this singular dogmatic perspective, indiscriminate application of counterinsurgency (COIN) operations for nonrelated situations merely produces the “PAD” effect (placate, appease, and delay the inevitable) among the influence audience. Key observations of the Malayan Emergency (pure insurgency) and the Vietnam War (complex civil war) provide a relative present-day indicator of Iraq. As with any tactical problem, the foundation of good decisionmaking finds its basis on an accurate estimate of the situation. Gaining an accurate estimate of the situation is impossible if everything is viewed as an insurgency. The ability to adapt—as the circumstances exist—has long been a vital component of the Marine Corps’ proud fighting legacy. From this context we should seize the opportunity to define war in Iraq to further build upon gained success and apply the lessons learned to the global war on terrorism.

A Tidy Insurgency

The Malayan Emergency’s success created an unrealistic expectation of universal COIN applicability for irregular wars. While viable lessons can be derived from the Malayan insurgency, they should be illuminated in the context of the exceptionally unique conflict. First, the Communist Chinese insurgents were an identifiable minority ethnic group amongst a generally progovernment population. Second, the geography of the Malayan peninsula physically isolated insurgents from support, supply, and sanctuary. Furthermore, the government’s anti-insurgent forces benefited from a remarkable 1 to 2 ratio against the entire estimated sympathetic population at large.² Finally, the concurrent end of British colonial rule during the course of the emergency legitimized the Ma-

“The process is not rigidly sequential; it is a dynamic process that requires great intellectual ability and strong character from tacticians who desire to make successful changes.”⁴

—Timothy Lupfer

layan Government and negated the prime informational weapon of the insurgency. Clearly, the Malayan Emergency serves as a very unique case of irregular war creating the possible subsequent false application of COIN theory.

Vietnam: Murky Civil War

While Malaya serves as the idealized model for the successful application of COIN, the totality of the Vietnam experience is commonly perceived as a COIN failure. However, Vietnam exists as an example of an irregular war that involved various competing state and nonstate actors in an internal struggle versus a pure insurgency. Despite the existence of a highly capable guerrilla force, the North Vietnamese and the associated Viet Cong cadre never considered themselves as a pure insurgency. Instead, the North Vietnamese viewed themselves as the legitimate sovereign in their nationalistic struggle against both oppressive colonial (read American/Western) and foreign (read Chinese/Soviet) rule. The application of guerrilla tactics and revolutionary warfare served as viable shaping efforts for the conventional main effort, but they were never decisive as a singular arm. Regardless of the Marine Corps’ enormous COIN success in Vietnam, a conventional fight was still brewing. The eventual fall of Saigon did not occur from a massive insurgent uprising but from a conventional corps-sized campaign nearly 4 years after the majority of U.S. combat forces exited the country. In retrospect, the greater military failure in Vietnam resulted from addressing only limited aspects of the irregular war.

Iraq: Somewhere in Between

In the fall of 2006, Shi’ite cleric Muq-

tada al-Sadr made his second official trip abroad to meet with leaders of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Iran. While no explicit answers resonate from al-Sadr’s foreign travel, an uneasy feeling surfaces when an Iraqi factional leader conducts foreign diplomacy. If one characterized al-Sadr’s political, religious, military, and social activity he could be described as anything from an insurgent leader to a possible nation builder. From this dichotomy, al-Sadr represents one of the many dynamic, evolving, and complex spheres of power competing in Iraq instead of an isolated insurgency.

Preventing Random Acts of COIN

Violence can be defined as lethal acts produced by military action (regardless of the style or method of warfare), nonstate or even organized gang aggression, and ordinary criminal brutality. Instability categorizes the diplomatic, economic, and informational forces that cause unrest. Together violence and instability (VI) describe the outputs of irregular war. Even more specific, common cause VI describes byproducts of a given society that are nearly always present and in full effect. The reduction of common cause VI proves costly in time, resources, and will. On the other hand, special cause VI can be minimized because their sources are attributable to a specific cause. Every nation possesses common cause VI, ranging from dissatisfaction to crime. Consider the case of the United States; one could easily attribute high murder rates, gang activity, and poverty to an active insurgency. Startlingly, in 2005 there were nearly twice as many prisoners in America than active duty servicemembers.⁵ While an admirable goal, beating common cause VI is far too great an expect-

“Sometimes questions are more important than answers.”³

—Nancy Williard

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It's time to change our vocabulary and view the Iraqi conflict as something more than simply an insurgency. (Photo by LCpl Ryan C. Heiser.)

tation domestically, let alone in a country with a history like Iraq.

Many of the perceived acts of an insurgency are merely extensions of Iraq's high common cause VI previous to the 2003 liberation. The Ba'ath Party's known tactics of intimidation promulgated against all elements of its population, including perceived threats within the party loyalty base, produced a tinderbox soaked in oil. Saddam Hussein's guilty verdict from his illegal reaction to an attack on his Presidential convoy demonstrates the high levels of existing common cause VI. Operation DESERT STORM and subsequent United Nations sanctions further intensified common cause VI. Manifested VI is not always logical, and it should be no surprise that Iraq, particularly Al Anbar Province, would be chock filled with it. Ultimately, the overwhelming success of the Operation IRAQI FREEDOM I liberation erased most of the special causes of VI, namely the brutality of the Saddam Hussein regime, but uncorked common cause VI resulting from the long existing history of unrest.

Biting off more than we can chew in the realm of broad scale COIN produces more dysfunction than satisfaction. The incalculable positive nature of COIN has to be concurrently viewed as a liability

of equal magnitude if the intended action results in failure. Applying the COIN hammer to fix an assumed insurgency may produce long-term problems. First, attempting to treat many of the common cause VI as elements of an insurgency has produced unachievable expectations among the influence population. Second, attempting to conduct COIN in support of a legitimate Iraqi Government while spheres of power are still bubbling yields unintended consequences at best. Whether Iraq is engulfed in a national civil war or just severe sectarian violence, the decision to act could be perceived as biased action. By the same account, any action taken possibly influences the outcome of the internal struggle. While obtaining a favorable outcome by supporting a particular faction is a viable strategy, the unintentional or, more accurately, unknowing support of a faction to yield such a result is risky. Thus, if Iraq is somewhere between a tidy insurgency and murky civil war, COIN could significantly backfire in its original intended effect. Next, treating entire regions as unified insurgencies depletes and fixes limited combat power. The conventional COIN wisdom to control the villages possibly invites manifestation of common cause VI against coalition

forces. If one wants to find a fight in Iraq, he does not have to look too far. By the same account, the mere American presence serves as a fundamental informational message to fuel anticoalition sentiment both inside Iraq and globally. If no massive insurgency exists, no need exists to massively control the villages. When feasible and acceptable, minimizing enduring tasks that oddly exist for the very sake of supporting more enduring tasks gains flexibility. Particularly, low-density, high-demand units serving as COIN multipliers suffer in their ability to be truly effective because they are spread far too thin in order to perform more COIN in the first place! Finally, the greatest detriment in employing COIN for nonapplicable situations involves inability to collect accurate measures of effectiveness (MOE) due to the nonpermissive atmosphere. Far too many times a seemingly positive surface response by the influence audience (the stated PAD effect) sends inaccurate signals regarding actual progress. Concurrently, inaccurate figures of merit in statistical proof of COIN progress mask true results on the ground. It has been said that in Vietnam we counted rounds expended per kill while in Iraq today we could count "gigs" of data per kill or projects enacted. Effective COIN requires unique conditions from a combined friendly, host-nation, and threat perspective. When coalition forces find the right conditions for COIN employment, they must make it an absolute bid for success. Like the maneuver warfare concept of "reconnaissance pull," we need to better reinforce validated success through "MOE pull." In COIN, quality vice quantity reigns supreme. The skill, professionalism, and sacrifice of American and Iraqi forces attempting COIN have been systemically marginalized by universal application of a single doctrine to remedy diverse problems.

For Action

If we must strip our ideological blinders to understand the complexity of American success in the Philippines over 100 years after the conclusion of the insurrection, what ideological obsta-

“When stripped of ideological blinders, the study of the Philippine War can offer great insight into the complexities of localized guerrilla warfare and indigenous resistance to foreign control.”⁶

—Brian Linn McAllister

cles block our understanding of Iraq today? Prescriptive, singular doctrine does not serve as the best remedy for complex situations. By the same token, preconceived interpretations of VI could eventually cause mission failure. With that being said, mindsets utilized in COIN find utility regardless of the conflict’s VI scope and intensity. Effective intelligence, precise uses of force, benevolence toward the influence audience, and civic action are always viable if utilized when applicable. However, it is not to enough throw some “COIN” in the fountain and make a wish. In understanding the Marine Corps’ exceptional

in-country tactical experience, combined with a truly remarkable institutional predeployment training program, room still exists to apply intellectual rigor and professional candor in defining the war in Iraq. Well-conceived analysis of the nature of Iraq would at worst strengthen existing understanding and at best provide an opportunity to optimize existing tactics and doctrine.

Notes

1. Von Clausewitz, Carl, *On War*, translation by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1984, p. 88.

2. Clutterbuck, BG Richard L., *The Long, Long War: Counterinsurgency in Malaya and Vietnam*, Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., New York, 1966, p. 44.

3. Williard, Nancy, retrieved from <http://thinkexist.com/quotes>.

4. Lupfer, Timothy, *The Dynamics of Doctrine: The Change in German Tactical Doctrine During the First World War*, Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1981.

5. As of 30 June 2005 there were 2,186,230 prisoners held in Federal or State prisons or in local jails (retrieved from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/prisons.htm>) and 1,112,684 active duty military personnel (retrieved from <http://siadapp.dior.whs.mil/personnel/MILITARY/history/hst0605.pdf>).

6. McAllister, Brian Linn, *The Philippine War 1899–1902*, University of Kansas Press, Lawrence, KS, 2000, p. 382.



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Transitioning From Conventional Combat

Preparing for the unexpected

by LtCol Lance A. McDaniel

When Army and Marine ground forces participating in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) arrived in Baghdad in early April 2003, they found themselves in an unusual position. The “fight” was no longer purely kinetic in nature. That is, the situation changed so rapidly that unit leaders were caught off guard more than a little bit. Units of the 1st Marine Division (1st MarDiv) were forced to “switch gears” immediately and begin a totally new type of operation—civil-military operations (CMO). Unfortunately, the units of the 1st MarDiv had performed very little planning or preparation for this uniquely challenging operation having been focused up to that time on the conventional fight. This observation is not intended to infer that the military should have been more clairvoyant but, rather, to point out that this experience in Iraq was typical of many other instances of military intervention in which events do not shape up as anticipated. At the tactical level, units were assigned zones of responsibility and directed to begin CMO within their zones. Units began action in what was initially a somewhat haphazard manner, planning and adjusting as the situation unfolded. My own personal experience was with an artillery battalion that was assigned a zone in southeastern Baghdad. We literally parked our howitzers and immediately began the planning and execution of this new mission.

>LtCol McDaniel was the XO, 3d Bn, 11th Mar from June 2002 to October 2004 and deployed with the battalion for OIF I and OIF II. He is currently assigned to Concepts and Plans Division, Marine Corps Combat Development Command.

Making the Transition

The issue of discussion here is not whether units will have to perform alternate missions like CMO. The question is how do units, like an artillery battalion for instance, smoothly transition from one mission to another, distinctly different mission? When Gen Charles C. Krulak, our 31st Comman-

dant, proposed the idea of the three block war, he was talking about something very much like what units in OIF experienced at a very basic and practical level.

In this article, my aim is simply to propose that we, as Marine leaders, should expect to be asked to perform more than our traditional roles and to look for ways to prepare our units for this likely transition. I also propose that our small unit leaders are a continuing source of our success story, and we should foster that excellence.

The Starting Point

Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines transition as “a: passage from one



Shifting tactical environments challenge our ability to transition from kinetic operations to support operations. (Photo by Christopher Zahn.)

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state, stage, subject, or place to another; b: a movement, development, or evolution from one form, stage, or style to another.” What do we mean when we speak of transition in this military sense? We simply mean that the mission the unit was given, the one that the unit has focused its attention on, has changed. Likewise, the situation and the related environment have likely changed as well. We will ask a unit (and the men who comprise that unit) to adapt itself, perhaps instantaneously, to a new mission, in a new environment, with a new set of circumstances and challenges. At some level this adaptation may be as simple as moving into what the commander sees as another phase of an existing operation. In another case, it may require a unit on the ground to radically alter what it understood the plan to be and effect a metamorphosis into something the unit never contemplated and, therefore, never trained to execute. A safe bet is that units, especially in the dynamic environments in which units are operating today, will be forced to transition (perhaps abruptly as the ground units did in OIF I). The question here is what can we do to make the transition smooth and effective (or at least smoother)?

Some units transition successfully and rapidly with only minor problems. Others struggle, seemingly having great difficulty determining the way ahead and acting incorrectly when they do act. What makes one unit successful at rapidly transitioning and others less so? Is there something that operational units can do to prepare to transition from conventional operations to CMO or counterinsurgency operations? Is there something the Marine Corps—at a greater institutional level—can do to help units (and the Marines and sailors who populate these units) make this successful transition?

Perhaps we can start by using OIF I as a case study—though it is admittedly incomplete for this study. Most of what we refer to as OIF I was a conventional fight against a symmetrical

and generally recognizable enemy. However, when units arrived in Baghdad immediately after the most kinetic periods of the fight for Baghdad were over, the situation “on the street” changed radically. What the Marines witnessed was wide-scale looting, especially of buildings previously occupied by government agencies. With Saddam’s regime defunct, a sort of lawlessness broke out. Perhaps we should have anticipated that, but we really did not, at least not to the scale we witnessed. We were caught off guard in the sense that we arrived at that geographical place and in that situation to engage in conventional warfare against a conventional force. That is not what happened. When units crossed the Diyala River into southern Baghdad immediately on the heels of a short and intense infantry fight, the conven-

and the Iraqi people started going about their daily lives.

So how does a ground combat unit react so quickly to a changed reality? How does it transition to a new challenge in time to be effective—particularly from a conventional combat operation to a CMO or a counterinsurgency operation? Common themes are tactical excellence at the small unit level (in skills like mounted and dismounted patrolling), a rapidly developed cultural savvy, decentralized organization and execution, and empowerment of small unit leaders to make decisions at their level. One of the keys to success for ground units doing CMO in the early transition stage was a Service culture that promoted initiative and a bias for action—down even to the squad level. Without asking permission from

We met with local leaders and sought information from them to help us to determine actual needs and to establish priorities for support.

tional enemy forces were gone. The mission, out of necessity, changed exactly at that time (formally and informally). Ground combat units were faced with a requirement for adaptation—a forced evolution to something they had not seriously considered until that moment. So what did we do? We assessed the situation as we observed it. We made plans for our role in dealing with this new reality. That is, we looked at ways we could use our existing military forces to improve the situation. We then began acting, taking steps, and adapting from those initial steps. Action beget action. We stopped the looting. We worked to get the power back on. We maintained control of key traffic areas and bridges. We met with local leaders and sought information from them to help us to determine actual needs and to establish priorities for support. In a short time, a state of normalcy seemed to return,

higher headquarters, units located the medical facilities in their zones and began providing support to those facilities. Without waiting for guidance from any higher authority, unit leaders at the tactical (company and battalion) level located and began holding regular meetings with local secular and religious leaders, first to assess needs, then to organize a response and, ultimately, to gain an understanding of the success and impact of the work effort. Marines formed relationships with the local Iraqi “leaders.” In some cases these leaders were simply doctors who worked in the local clinic or the men who held jobs similar to our agriculture extension agents in the United States—those whom the people trusted and who could speak for their interests. Marine leaders made friends with local educated men (some of whom spoke a little broken English), and they helped



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us understand the culture and the priorities.

In an example from my own experience, on one particular occasion I met with a local religious leader and about eight doctors at a local clinic. (They called it a hospital.) I asked them about the needs of the people in the area. I assumed they would tell me food and water (or something else material). I was mistaken. They explained that the chief priority, and what they sought from me, was “security,” which was their way of saying that they wanted—even needed—stability and order if people were to get back to their lives. I told them I thought we could help with that request. Then they told me they wanted the power back on. I explained to them that we were looking into that issue and that I would get back to them on it. I scheduled subsequent meetings and tried to keep these *de facto* leaders apprised of the success in the restoration of the power. Though my battalion was not actually doing the work, we were providing security at the site of the powerplant, and we had some knowledge of the work effort involved to restore the electrical power to that area of the city. Of course, the religious leader and doctors knew some of the Iraqi engineers who were working on the project, and what I was telling them matched what they were hearing from these engineers, so we developed some credibility. That established credibility and trust seemed to open some doors for more positive interaction.

Ultimately, we were successful in Baghdad because we understood that the kinetic fight no longer characterized the environment, and that the battalion was capable—from an organizational and materiel standpoint—of adapting to this other mission. We had the people, particularly the small unit leaders, who were ready to jump on this new assignment. Interestingly (and no surprise for some readers), we only had to issue mission orders to our small unit leaders—even when it came to dealing with some of the most complex tasks. In fact, the more complex or sensitive tasks

seemed to be best addressed with these mission-type orders.

Missions Outside the Box

Are these examples from OIF unique? Is the CMO experience of ground combat units from OIF I an event that will be singular in history with little chance of being repeated in any similar form? Not likely. In fact, the skills that were ultimately necessary for a unit to be effective in Baghdad during April 2003 probably have great application for units participating in OIF today. For that matter, the skills have relevancy in Afghanistan, and when the Marine Corps enters a new (or old) environment characterized by insurgency or instability, these skills will also apply beautifully. But the basic issue remains—how does a unit transition to a vastly different environment and mission and do it effectively without causing more harm than good? Often, the early days of intervention may characterize the nature of the operation, and a bad transition could jeopardize the operation’s chance of success.

For a unit to be able to transition quickly and effectively during a real-world operation, the unit must first have an understanding, even during the predeployment training period, that it can and likely will be called upon to perform missions outside the unit’s traditional area of expertise. An organizational look indicates that some units need to expand the mission essential task list that the unit trains to before the unit is ever deployed. However, by working backwards here with the OIF case study, we can see that we are going to ask unit leaders and their subordinate leaders to do things they may not be trained to do, that they may be uncomfortable doing. Moreover, they will have to do them with a zeal that overwhelms any discomfort they experience. For instance, you may have difficulty training a staff noncommissioned officer (SNCO) on how to deal with Islamic religious leaders. However, you can (institutionally) educate your NCOs, SNCOs, and

young officers, formally and informally, in a manner so that they can understand the role they must play and that empowers them to make the mental adjustments themselves. We are not creating an organization of T.E. Lawrences. We are simply creating a culture that is comfortable in chaotic situations. Also, some skills, like patrolling, convoy operations, local security, and crew-served weapons expertise, transition well from one type of operation to another. Small unit excellence is stressed during these “unique” missions, and we should stress it during training in every way we know how. To accomplish this task we should attempt, wherever possible, to design training evolutions that are dynamic, fluid, even chaotic in nature, and that demand creative thinking on the part of our junior tactical leaders. We should put our junior leaders in situations where they have to make hard (perhaps even ethically difficult) decisions in which there are no clear-cut answers. In other cases, we may design training that involves deliberately forcing them to violate an order to accomplish the higher intent.

The point in all this is simply a belief, based on a personal observation, that Marine ground combat units will be called upon to transition from conventional combat operations to some form of stability operations. If we plan ahead at the unit level and, more importantly, at the institutional level, we can ensure that our people are ready to make that difficult but important shift. Our small units and small unit leaders are probably the key enablers for most of our work in stability and counterinsurgency operations. They performed remarkably well during OIF, and we should seek to institutionalize the small unit leadership excellence that we have recently observed from our young leaders in Iraq and elsewhere.



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Marines and the Eye of the Tiger

The COMBAT HUNTER limited objective experiments

by Maj James T. Martin & Capt Michael J. Regner

Marines conducting routine “presence patrols” are of the opinion that they are at a serious disadvantage in dealing with snipers and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). In effect, they feel like walking targets, drawing fire in order to “find, fix, and finish” the enemy. Consensus among senior Marine Corps leadership is that employing better proactive individual tactics could reduce casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan. To that end, the Marine Corps Combat Development Command has led an effort to provide Marines tactical advantages in irregular warfare.

Under the umbrella of distributed operations (DO), the Marine Corps is conducting a number of supporting experiments with the objective of further enhancing the ability of the Corps’ tactical units to conduct irregular warfare operations. Collectively these enhancements equate to a higher level of situational awareness and tactical capability. The goal of these experiments is to empower Marines to routinely venture “outside the wire” with an attitude of increased and justifiable confidence and offensive spirit. Noteworthy among these efforts are the recently concluded COMBAT HUNTER and SQUAD FIRES experimentation initiatives.

COMBAT HUNTER seeks to engender a small unit offensive mindset, underscored by greatly improved combat “street sense.” From the time Marines enter recruit training to the day they depart for overseas deployment, they will be imbued with the skills that make them combat hunters, enabled with the abilities to identify, track, and eliminate our Nation’s enemies. This

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isn’t idle talk or false bravado. All Marines will undergo the requisite training to convince them that they have the tools to proactively hunt and beat the insurgent at his own game and on his own turf. This frame of mind is not limited to Marines in the infantry battalions. Every Marine will be a combat hunter, whether walking point on a patrol or driving a 7-ton truck in a resupply convoy. The mind-

set cuts across military occupational specialty and builds upon the time-honored adage that every Marine is a rifleman.

In concert with COMBAT HUNTER, the SQUAD FIRES effort will enable small units to achieve a higher level of lethality by putting the power of the aviation combat element of the Marine air-ground task force at the disposal of that same small unit leader.



A premier predator. COMBAT HUNTER training teaches Marines the hunter mindset, advanced observation, and movement skills. (Photo courtesy of Ivan Carter.)



Marines learn to burn through brush with binoculars. They can see threats without exposing themselves. (Photo courtesy 1st Marine Division (1stMarDiv) Combat Camera.)

SQUAD FIRES will allow these leaders to operate over increased geographical areas with access to firepower far beyond that which is organic to a squad, platoon, or even company. Experimentation has shown that squad leaders can be trained to use Type II close air support predominantly through simulation, thus reducing the training burden on the naval aviation community. SQUAD FIRES will further empower the combat hunter in the

pursuit of tracking and finishing the terrorist.

Small Unit Focus

COMBAT HUNTER and SQUAD FIRES experiments epitomize the Marine Corps' approach to small unit and individual excellence; however, that approach is much more than just a mindset. History is full of examples where unjustifiably confident and offensively oriented armies were beaten to their

knees by "second rate" (and frequently unconventional) forces. The COMBAT HUNTER philosophy is buttressed by a hunter's view of the battlefield. COMBAT HUNTER teaches the use of advanced observation skills combined with an innate understanding of the enemy and the environment in which he chooses to fight. To the combat hunter, every patrol is an opportunity to proactively find, fix, and finish the enemy. There is no such thing as the presence patrol where units "troll" for contact. Marines provided with combat hunter tactical skills, equipment, and familiarity with environmental baselines can venture onto the irregular battlefield with confidence to seek out and defeat the insurgent in his own backyard.

Using a carefully selected combination of world renowned big game hunters, dangerous game guides, man trackers, experienced urban police detectives, seasoned infantry trainers from within its own ranks, and human performance engineers, the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory (MCWL), Training and Education Command (TECom), and the Office of Naval Research collaborated to produce a training and equipment package that was put through its paces across the course of three separate limited objective experiments (LOEs) over a 7-month period. Detailed quick look reports were written for each COMBAT HUNTER LOE and can be accessed at the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned website. These LOEs focused their efforts on combat veteran infantrymen, "fresh out of school" infantrymen, and non-infantry Marines just graduated from their basic Marine combat training (MCT)—a curriculum for all entry-level noninfantry Marines.

If Napoleon Bonaparte's musing that the moral is to the physical as three is to one is valid, then COMBAT HUNTER was an unqualified success. Marines demonstrated the ability to absorb training that included combat profiling (distinguishing friendlies from enemies via advanced criminal observation techniques), spotting ano-



Expert hunters look deep into the shadows for their quarry. With 8x42 binoculars, Marines were able to spot simulated snipers who were not visible to the naked eye. (Photo courtesy of 1stMarDiv Combat Camera.)

malties in the tactical environment (rapidly determining what is not right about the scene), urban and rural tracking, and tactical assessment and reporting. Their own analysis of their improvement was extraordinary. Comments from combat veterans related that this training would have prevented a huge percentage of the casualties they experienced during previous deployments.¹

By collaborating with TECom, specifically the staffs from the Schools of Infantry (SOIs) and The Basic School (TBS), transition of the program to the “schoolhouse” has been almost instantaneous. Just as important is the creation of individual lessons on compact disc that have been distributed to tactical units Corps-wide. TECom has distributed a 12-minute DVD (digital versatile disc) produced by a renowned professional hunting guide on the hunter mindset, observation techniques, and the use of binoculars for use at SOI, MCT, TBS, and the Infantry Officer Course. Additionally, an anomaly detection program called Snapshot, developed by Pacific Science and Engineering Group, is being placed on MarineNet. This methodology will promote a two-pronged approach to capability development—one that starts with entry-level training for all Marines and continues with unit training conducted by the tactical chain of command.

Exploiting Success

The success of COMBAT HUNTER has not gone unnoticed—even outside the Marine Corps. The Joint IED Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) asked to be informed of the program’s objectives, methodologies, and results. The leadership of JIEDDO—itsself a significant institutional “sea change”—expressed support for the COMBAT HUNTER initiative. They acknowledge that better battlefield situational awareness and tactics might well be an equal or even greater tool in defeating the IED threat. The adage that the best defense is a good offense continues to ring true.

It is now up to senior Marine leaders—both on and off the battlefield—to capitalize on the success of COMBAT HUNTER and SQUAD FIRES. Tactical commanders at the battalion, company, and even platoon levels must be confident that rational decisions made on the battlefield will be supported by their chains of command. Absent that support, the concepts of DO and combat hunter will be in jeopardy.

Taking It to the Next Level

DO, COMBAT HUNTER, and SQUAD FIRES are not static efforts. The Marine Corps continues to look at all aspects of ground operations and better preparation of Marines for the irregular battlefield. These efforts include ongoing COMBAT FITNESS and LIGHTEN THE LOAD LOEs. Just as importantly, follow-on experiments are being planned to technologically empower the COMBAT HUNTER and SQUAD FIRES initiatives. In the case of COMBAT HUNTER, MCWL is exploring enhanced simulation technologies to allow small unit leaders to establish their environmental baseline using rapid current imagery downloads and virtual rehearsal. For SQUAD FIRES, MCWL is developing and experimenting with better/lighter rangefinders and target illumination devices. While the Marine Corps’ approach to capability development is training focused, it should not be construed as being technology averse. Every Marine deserves the best equipment money can buy to complement the world-class training, or its value is diminished.

The face of war changes every day. The Marine Corps recognizes that small unit leaders and individual Marines are the keys to winning in the future. We already know the individual Marine seldom lets the Corps down. As an institution, the Corps is committed to ensuring that it will not let Marines down. This involves a commitment by leadership to implement the 2006 Defense Science Board’s admonition to “ensure that tactical troops have the support they need.” The end result will be “tactical leaders who truly

understand that willingness to take a chance will usually pay off, presupposing good judgment.”² War is, after all, “a game not for fools or suckers but for those who have the courage to dare greatly.”³

Notes

1. COMBAT HUNTER LOE 1 quick look sample comment from a sergeant: “I’m definitely more confident after receiving this training During this course, I couldn’t help but think of situations that could have changed for the better had I known some of this.”
2. Martel, LtGen Sir Giffard, as quoted in Col S.L.A. Marshall, *The Soldier’s Load and the Mobility of a Nation*, Marine Corps Association, Quantico, VA, 1980, p. 119.
3. Ibid.



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Best Practices in Countering Insurgencies

Compressing the learning curve
by LtCol F.G. Hoffman, USMCR(Ret)

“Much has been written about low intensity warfare, but it remains an open question how much is understood. Of greater certainty is the fact that very little of what is understood has been applied effectively.”

—Caspar Weinberger

Mr. Weinberger made that observation in 1986, but the reader might be excused for thinking it applied to today’s ongoing global insurgency and U.S. operations in Iraq. This article describes a research effort undertaken in the hopes of identifying key best practices that would enable Marines in their analysis of and planning for conducting future counterinsurgencies. The study synthesizes and builds upon other research efforts.¹ This project was designed to support ongoing efforts within the Marine Corps to help explore new concepts and update doctrine for irregular warfare. Because of Iraq and the long war, the nature of irregular conflicts is of particular importance to today’s national security planners.²

The project examines nine insurgencies conducted by a variety of countries. These cases range across a half-century timespan and cover a variety of different political and demographic circumstances. These studies were undertaken with a focus on potential “best practices” selected from a variety of counterinsurgency experts. Subsequently, the cases were re-

searched and analyzed to ascertain the importance of these identified practices to the success or failure of the counterinsurgency effort. Of course, all insurgencies are different in some way, and each must be analyzed within its own cultural context. Thus, this framework is offered only as a foundation for critical study and adaptation.

The Case Studies

A total of eight case studies were examined in detail. The cases were picked to afford a wide range of political, security, demographic, and geographic elements. The cases include:

- Vietnam. French counterinsurgency campaigns against the Communist Viet Minh of Vietnam, which ended after Dien Bien Phu in 1954.
- Malaya. British-directed program to counter the Communist minority Chinese from gaining control over Malaya during the period from 1950 to 1957.
- Kenya. The British-led counterinsurgency against the Mau Maus that ran from 1952 to 1960.
- Algeria. The French efforts against the native Algerian insurgency to

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achieve independence, which ran from 1954 to 1962.

- Vietnam. The subsequent American intervention in Southeast Asia, which ended in 1972.
- Oman. A British-advised counterinsurgency against a Marxist-fueled group in Dhofar from 1969 to 1976.
- Peru. This South American country’s efforts to dampen the Sendero Luminoso or Shining Path from 1980 to 1992.
- Colombia. Colombia’s efforts to counter the narco-sponsored and Marxist insurgency led by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) from 1964 to the present.

Best Practices or Campaign Components

Instead of examining the campaign through sets of principles or fundamentals, this study expressly uses practices or “campaign components” as the basis for analysis. Some of these represent specific techniques or procedures. Others reflect a much broader approach or what might be a major element or component in the overall counterinsurgency campaign. These elements are described as follows:

- Integrate civil-military mechanisms. How all government agencies were coordinated by command, by a

single individual, or by coordination committees.

- Governance/Political reforms. The degree to which government or political reforms were instituted to counter weaknesses or enhance the credibility of the state.
- Socioeconomic programs. The degree to which social development and economic projects were employed to better support the local civilian population.
- Integrated intelligence. The degree to which special intelligence organs were constructed or existing agencies integrated to deal with the insurgency.
- Special units for foreign internal defense (FID). The degree to which special units or local indigenous units were created as counters to the insurgents.
- Unique military training. The degree to which the counterinsurgent forces are uniquely trained to deal

with an incipient or full-blown insurgency.

- Information operations. How the counterinsurgency employed psychological operations to isolate the insurgents or promote the government's themes.
- Population control. How the civilian population was isolated from the insurgents through security, identification cards, barriers, or forced relocation.
- Resource control. This factor accounts for efforts to limit or isolate the insurgents from food, weapons, or other forms of support.
- Discriminate force. The degree to which counterinsurgent forces limit the use of military power to the minimal degree necessary to avoid antagonizing the local population or to preclude collateral damage. (See Figure 1.)

In general we found a high correlation between all of the best practices

and operational success. When governments and their supporting allies and partners used these elements as key components of their overall campaigns, they were generally successful. In almost all cases, some sort of learning curve was evident, and eventually policymakers and military leaders reassessed themselves and made numerous strategic or operational changes. Some adapted faster than others. Those who ignored history or underestimated the opponent fared much worse.

The best techniques identified in this research effort offer a framework for officer education and for planners studying and preparing Marines for a potential contingency. Most importantly, they are not a prescriptive list or a set of inviolable principles to be rigidly applied. In any case, "the devil will be in the details" of design and implementation.

	<i>Vietnam (45–54)</i>	<i>Malaya</i>	<i>Kenya</i>	<i>Algeria</i>	<i>Vietnam (61–72)</i>	<i>Oman</i>	<i>Peru</i>	<i>Colombia</i>
<i>Integrated civil-military command and control</i>	W	X	X	W	X	X	X	X
<i>Governance reforms</i>	W	X	X	X		X		X
<i>Socioeconomic reforms</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Intelligence</i>		X	X	X	X		X	X
<i>Special units</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Unique training</i>		X	X		X	X		X
<i>Information operations</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Population control</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
<i>Resource control</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
<i>Discriminate force</i>	W	X		W	W	X		

Legend: X = best practice, W = worst practice or misapplied with negative impact.

Figure 1.

Insights

Integrated civil-military mechanisms. This practice has a high correlation to successful strategies since comprehensive applications of all elements of national power are usually the sine qua non for success against an insurgency that seeks to depose an existing regime or create a counterstate. The evidence for this is most manifest in the Malayan case with the series of committees as integrating measures by GEN Sir Gerald Templer. Templer was vested with the authority and had the foresight to understand that all civil and military operations needed to be coordinated. It is also relevant to the belated American pacification effort in the early 1970s in Vietnam, as well as the Kenyan, Peruvian, and Colombian case studies. Colombia hosts one of the most persistent insurgencies and longest enduring narcocriminal enterprises, especially the FARC, which has conducted a four-

decade-long insurgency. Under President Alvaro Uribe, Colombia established unique coordination mechanisms at the strategic and theater levels. The Centro de Coordinacion de Accion Integral (Coordination Center for Integrated Action) was created and physically located at the Presidential palace to maximize its influence and opportunity for strategic direction.

Conversely, the French failed to integrate their civil-military components but did usually vest authority in a single military commander. Whether integration is achieved by unity of command under an El Supremo or by tightly knit integrating mechanisms, the need for the holistic and integrated applications of both civilian and military tools is paramount. This lesson appears to be critical at the operational level for planning and assessment.

Governance reforms. This area attempts to capture how national or local

political and government reforms were instituted to counter perceived weaknesses or to enhance legitimacy or credibility of the state. This is another area with high cause and effect relationships, particularly as evidenced in the Kenyan, Malayan, Omani, and Peruvian case studies. Frequently, in the case of colonial conflicts, this was accomplished by agreeing to eventually grant independence or providing for political freedoms. In other cases, it means negotiating with the enemy and granting concessions of some sort. Both the Algerian and the Vietnamese failures underscore the lesson for political or governmental reform. The American case history includes significant tactical success at the hamlet and village levels but was never translated into significant reforms at the national government or strategic levels. Vietnam may not have been “the wrong war at the wrong time,” but in the words of one analyst, it was a war with the wrong allies.³ The Americans could not induce the host government to make a better case for a free and democratic state.

Socioeconomic programs. Social development and economic projects are often employed to enhance support to the local civilian population and to undercut the ideological message of the insurgent. This correlates well with success, as seen in the Malayan, Kenyan, Omani, and Colombian case summaries. Economic reforms were critical in quelling resistance in Kenya. The Swynnerton Plan allowed the Kenyan Government to seize land from Mau Mau supporters and consolidate plots for award to loyalists or reformed insurgents. The plan replaced communal land ownership with a land tenure system and undercut the Mau Maus’ principal political message.

The rapid implementation of economic aid to Dhofar substantially undermined the resistance in Oman and may be the best case on record of negating an insurgency early. Social and economic programs were at the core of the famous but belated and under-resourced American-led civil operations revolutionary development sup-

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port effort in Vietnam as well. In Vietnam, to address pacification needs, the French established mobile operational administrative units or GAMOs (groupes administratifs mobiles operationnels) to enhance local administration and to help provide food, medicine, and shelter. The GAMOs never had sufficient local militias to hold the cleared areas they were to pacify. In Algeria, the French innovated with the establishment of special administrative sections (SASs). These were designed to address social and political matters and worked to enhance Algerian infrastructure and institutions, including civil administration, local schools, medical services, and constabulary forces. The Marine Corps Combined Action Program in Vietnam drew upon these examples.

Integrated intelligence. This element examines how intelligence was emphasized and exploited. We looked for evidence of where special intelligence cells or means were constructed to deal with the insurgency and/or where efforts to fuse intelligence from various sources (law enforcement, military, etc.) were made to good effect. While unique and special intelligence organs were frequent, they were not the only evidence we found. Overall, the adaptation of existing intelligence to the unique cultural context of the situation and its timely exploitation were correlated with successful counterinsurgency. We found more than sufficient evidence in the Malayan, Kenyan, Peruvian, Colombian, and Vietnamese cases to underscore the conclusion that effective intelligence is the driver of operations in this mode of war. In Algeria we found extensive evidence of intensive intelligence collection (too intense in fact) and effective integration and rapid exploitation. The French assigned their best officers, and intelligence staff positions became, in effect, the key operational staff positions in battalion-level organizations and higher. Second, the French ensured that intelligence was tied tightly to the elite mobile forces. However, the interrogation process undercut French au-

thority and energized the National Liberation Front's resistance in Algeria.

Special units for FID. This element examines the degree to which special units or local indigenous units were created as counters to the insurgents. The employment of indigenous personnel to either serve as home guards/local militia or special units serving as elite counterinsurgent hunter/killer groups was found to be significant to operational success. In almost all successful counterinsurgencies, trained indigenous personnel have been crucial to effective counterinsurgent operations.

French organizational initiatives include the Groupement de Commandos Mixtes Aeroportes, mixing French commandos with former Viet Minh fighters who were inserted in contested areas to work with tribes allied to the French. In Malaya the British created a home guard popular militia as well as the Special Operations Volunteer Force of repatriated rebels, while in Kenya a number of units were created from reeducated Mau Maus who easily infiltrated rebel held areas. Reformed insurgents under British leaders accounted for the capture of the vast majority of Mau Mau leaders.

The French understood the utility of trained indigenous forces in Algeria, forming local paramilitary elements for local security. As these Harki units gained proficiency they were given missions to prove themselves and then were assigned to replace French forces. The British did the same in Oman with firqats, tribal militia recruited with amnesty offers and cash and land grants.

Unique military training. The training foundation for counterinsurgent forces has also been identified as a potential core element to address an incipient or full-blown insurgency. Almost every case study highlights the unique and particularly stressing aspects of counterinsurgency operations. It is almost axiomatic that conventional forces need special training to become agile enough to deal with the complexities of combating a guerrilla force that is contesting for the support of a civil-

ian population for its government and its legitimacy. Each situation, but especially the French and American Indochina, Algeria, Peru, Colombia, and Intifada cases, reveal the initial weakness of using conventional forces that are doctrinally and educationally unprepared for unconventional forms of combat. In several cases, special forces and unique units were created to deal with particular demands. In particular, the British used special advisor units in all three examples they were involved with, as did the Americans and French in Vietnam.

Information operations. Inasmuch as insurgencies are generally won in the minds of the civilian population and its attitudes toward its government, information operations were expected to play a significant role in effective counterinsurgencies. We were not disappointed. The degree to which the counterinsurgent force employed psychological operations to isolate the insurgents correlated fairly well with success. British examples once again showed a sophisticated understanding of the use of various techniques, both simple and culturally astute. Great Britain tapped into the knowledge and expertise of a Chinese-trained expert to orchestrate their psychological operations campaign, as well as input from captured and reformed insurgents, which brought additional acute cultural knowledge to their efforts.

American psychological operations efforts in Vietnam were also extensive, but their overall effectiveness was never equal to the expended resources due to other factors, including inadequate numbers of cultural experts. As seen in recent conflicts, information operations by themselves may never be effective. Actions, in the forms of security patrols, humanitarian projects, and civil action programs, may also be sending messages as well. In fact, actions may speak louder than the leaflets and broadcasts.

Population control. Isolating and securing the civilian population from contact with the insurgents through security measures, physical barriers, or

relocation is another practice that appears with great frequency. This practice can also include checkpoints, national identification cards and censuses, ward or village captains, and mass relocations. Every case history in this study employed more than one form of population control. In some cases, like Kenya and Algeria, a massive scale of detainees and special camps was used. However, it proved difficult for the government to properly control and adequately meet the needs of the internees. These turned out to be counterproductive. Control measures that do not require massive dislocation appear more viable than creating temporary camps. Forced relocation has long-term costs that can be avoided with other forms of control. At the same time, population control features, vital for controlling the introduction of weapons and contraband, may also antagonize the local population and contribute to increased resistance. In some

cases this hostility has been negated by using locally recruited units.

In Malaya, the British built up the Home Guards, local forces for local security of their model villages. More recently in Colombia, local Soldatos de mi Pueblo (Home Guards) have been established as an element of state presence and credibility in areas previously abandoned to the insurgency.

Resource control. Aside from isolating the population, this factor accounts for efforts to limit or isolate the insurgents from food, weapons, or other forms of support. Resource control is usually achieved by various forms of border security and population control. However, in some cases, measures to ration or control foodstuffs were used to limit the ability of the general population to support a standing guerrilla force. This was especially true in the Kenyan, Omani, and Vietnamese examples. Extensive efforts were made in Kenya and in Vietnam to limit the

ability of the insurgents to draw food or other resources from the population. Like Templer in Malaya, GEN Emmanuel A. Erskine enforced food denial programs in Kenya to limit resources for his opponent and to incentivize cooperation. Other campaigns created extensive border security systems, as in Algeria, to block the introduction of weapons and materials. This practice may have greater relevance in rural insurgencies and may not apply or may be extremely difficult to achieve in 21st century urban counterinsurgencies.

Discriminate force. History and past experience strongly suggest that the best weapon in counterinsurgency is invariably *not* a weapon. Success is not achieved by attrition of the insurgent force; in fact, success may be in reverse proportion to the amount of force used. The degree to which counterinsurgent forces limit the use of military power to the minimal degree necessary to avoid antagonizing the local population is cited in both extant British and U.S. doctrine. This is also identified in the *Small Wars Manual*. It is possible to conduct a brilliant series of tactical actions with overwhelming force and firepower and lose the larger strategic goal. "In small wars caution must be exercised and instead of striving to generate the maximum power with forces available," advises the *Small Wars Manual*, "the goal is to gain decisive results with the least application of force and the consequent minimum loss of life."⁴

Firepower-intensive operations may antagonize both external and internal parties that are neutral, swinging support and additional resources to the opponent. Excessive collateral damage will undermine the credibility of external efforts to assist a host-nation and could make the counterintervention longer and more costly. The French experience in Algeria is one example of this concern, as were aspects of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. In Algeria, the French employed raids, reprisals, and interrogations that produced a series of tactical successes but at the cost of the

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support of the Algerian populace at the same time. The case histories in Malaya and Oman underscore the general lesson that kinetic force application must be measured and discriminate. Certainly, events in Iraq are reproving this fundamental principle.

Perspectives

A number of key perspectives have emerged from this analysis. The first is the importance of intelligence, especially an acute degree of cultural awareness. This perspective reinforces a point made in the *Small Wars Manual*. Solid intelligence was a precious commodity in past small wars, largely due to the remote nature of the host-country, the inadequacy of infrastructure, and the lack of familiarity with the native population.

Cultural awareness and understanding are critical to success. But understanding how foreign cultures view us and how they may perceive our actions is critical. It is impossible for U.S. forces to succeed in working within another society without an intimate appreciation of the local culture. This is true for all wars since wars are conflicts between and within societies and cultures. In general, but especially in irregular and counterinsurgent conflicts, “the roots of victory or defeat often have to be sought far from the battlefield, in political, social, or economic factors.”⁵ Counterinsurgencies and other forms of small wars often involve a contest for the popular support of a nation’s citizenry, and as numerous conflicts have demonstrated, it is impossible to win the cooperation, let alone the hearts and minds, of the people without a thorough appreciation of their culture.

The second broad conclusion is the importance of history—in context. The study of history remains the best laboratory for thinking about future military conflict. A comprehensive study of past experience is the best defense against future challenges. But, once again, context matters, and commanders and their planners must consciously look for both similarities and distinctions in applying historical

precedents. Templates are not useful and may even be dangerous. As one strategist recently exclaimed:

Many try to borrow from past wars or historical examples as if a few simple lessons from one conflict could be transferred easily to another. Far too often, they trot out all the same old case histories without really examining how valid they are.⁶

Too often, inappropriate lessons from one insurgency are carried over and unconsciously laminated over an entirely different political conflict or socioeconomic context. The danger of oversimplification and shallow historical analogy is to be avoided. As stated in our own *Small Wars Manual*, “. . . to a greater degree is each small war somewhat different from anything which has preceded it.”⁷ Here the Marine Corps’ initiative to establish a formal and comprehensive approach, including the establishment of a culture center at Quantico, will pay huge dividends.

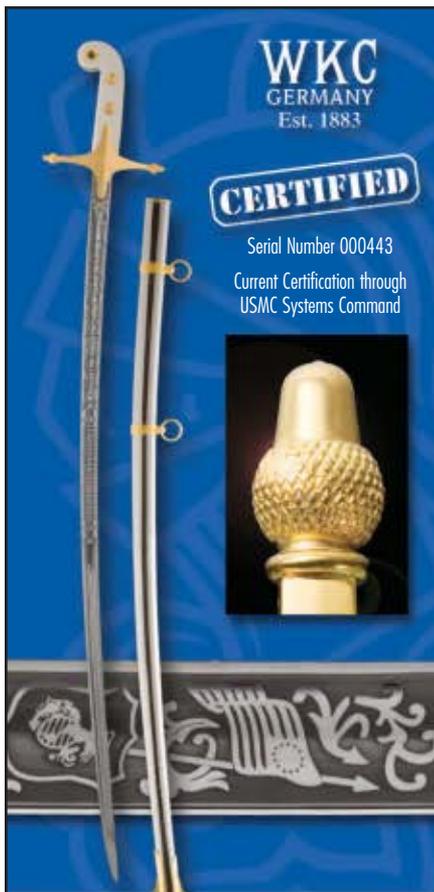
The third most significant action involves the criticality of isolating the insurgent. Despite the wide range of case studies explored herein, the physical and psychological isolation of the insurgent was a key contributor to all successful examples. Isolation cuts off resources and other sources of support, from within the host-nation or from contiguous territories used as sanctuary. Physical isolation maximizes freedom of action within other domains, such as economic development and governance, by limiting the insurgent’s opportunity to coerce indigenous personnel. From Hadrian’s Wall in Britain to Israel’s latest effort, physical defense barriers have been a regular feature in this mode of war. However, isolation in the ideological or political sense is also critical to neutralize both the insurgent’s message and appeal. It also helps reduce intelligence gathering, recruiting, or funding. The classic experts, including T.E. Lawrence, Mao Tse Tung, and Col David Galula, have all underscored the use of information as a weapon. However, its mastery has proven to be elusive even to modern powers. Galula went on to add, “If there was a field in which we were definitely

and infinitely more stupid than our opponents, it was propaganda.”⁸ The Secretary of Defense has admitted that the United States has struggled with this component of national power in Iraq.

This aspect of modern counterinsurgency could rise in salience as future irregular combatants continue to exploit modern Information Age tools to broaden their appeal and resource base. Winning hearts and minds may have a more global orientation thanks to the ubiquitous nature of modern communications techniques. The old *Small Wars Manual* noted the rapidity by which a revolution could develop due to modern communications technologies.⁹ Today’s continuous “24/7” news cycles and graphic imagery produce even faster and higher response cycles from audiences around the globe and offer powerful new “weapons” to those who can master them.

The final and most critical major conclusion involves operational adaptation. This historical analysis suggests that many countries were slow to recognize the potential of a growing insurgent movement, and that both civilian and military organizations went through a slow learning curve to come to grips with the necessary strategic, operational, and tactical adaptations required to win. In most cases, military and police forces were unprepared for the unique and often counterintuitive aspects of counterinsurgency. Few were willing to try different approaches and alter their actions as necessary. Oman was a noted exception, thanks to the experience of the SAS. They proved to be a true learning organization.¹⁰

Such operational learning or adaptation appears to be a useful characteristic in the past, and one even more valuable in the future in a world of protean or adaptive enemies. Some counterinsurgency experts have characterized insurgencies as “competitions in learning,” a form of conflict requiring continuous evolution in procedures, structure, and strategy.¹¹ Today’s adaptive enemies suggest that this will be an attribute of even greater value in the future. Increasing the velocity of organizational learning



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and adaptation may be a key element in future insurgencies.

Conclusion

The purpose of this effort was to identify best practices and key insights about counterinsurgency. As noted by T.E. Lawrence, there really is no excuse for not understanding this mode of warfare, given nearly 2,000 years of recorded experience. The critical study of history, the identification of common threads, and creating an ability to discover discontinuities are critical to gaining and exploiting this understanding.

As the *Small Wars Manual* of 1940 suggests, a study of the past is essential to an understanding of war and the complex nature of the contingencies the Marine Corps came to know as small wars. Today, under the rubric of counterinsurgency, irregular warfare, or hybrid conflicts, the Marine Corps faces a wide range of potential missions and interventions.¹² The Marine Corps' rich legacy in this form of warfare provides a solid foundation to build upon, but it cannot assume easy victories or complacent enemies. Today's threat is more dangerous and more lethal than the past, and the character of modern insurgency is different than the colonial wars or Maoist rural insurgencies of the past. But a detailed knowledge of the existing history of such interventions remains vital. History remains the best means for advancing our understanding of the problem and for developing the critical thinking skills that are the basis for comprehension and professional competence across the full range of human conflict.¹³ With this greater level of comprehension, we'll continue to ensure that we both understand and effectively apply the fundamentals of counterinsurgency, no matter how unique the circumstances.

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An Organizational Model for Marines Fighting an Insurgency

Some observations on how we can improve interagency cooperation and our overall effectiveness in dealing with an insurgency

by Capt David E. Cooper

Marines are in a power struggle with an insurgency in Iraq. The stakes could not be greater, as the future of the Middle East hangs in the balance. There is no question that the Iraqi insurgency has grown in strength over the past year and a half despite the best efforts of our very talented and capable leaders. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell said in an interview on 26 September 2004, “Yes, [the insurgency] is getting worse. And the reason it’s getting worse is that they are determined to disrupt the election.” With our current resources and combat ethos, how can the insurgency be expanding in our Marine area of operations (AO)?

The Problem Defined: The Civil-Military Paradox

The organic assets of a Marine expeditionary force (MEF) were not designed to effectively fight a counterinsurgency. The Marine Corps is unequalled in the military application of power. In a counterinsurgency, though, military power is often used in a supporting role. The peace is actually won through a combination of economic, political, and cultural instruments of power. Military force is generally used to set the conditions for winning the peace.

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Economic, political, and cultural instruments of power are primarily found in the interagency and nongovernmental organization (NGO) community. While the military has developed some of these capabilities over the years, these are not our core military funda-

The organic assets of a Marine expeditionary force (MEF) were not designed to effectively fight a counterinsurgency.

mentals. We rely on the interagency community to provide these critical nonmilitary skill sets. Still, the concept of the military in a supporting role is

fundamentally different from major combat operations and is often difficult for some military leaders to grasp.

Unfortunately, other governmental agencies and NGOs have some real limitations when it comes to tactical execution. There are a variety of political, logistical, and manpower reasons for this. The default has been to give nonmilitary missions to the military. In some respects this is understandable. The military is in a unique position with its logistics, communications, security, and manpower assets to make interagency synergy happen. The caution is that while the military can indeed execute a plan, it does not have the unique skill sets these other agencies possess in nonmilitary matters. The military should support other agencies in doing their jobs but never attempt to replace them. We each have our role, and we each are dependent on the others’ success.

The result of the civil-military paradox in Iraq has been that the current U.S. organizational structure is not bringing the full resources of our country to bear on the insurgency. The insurgency continues to grow. Time is not on our side. We need to do something different. The Marine Corps must understand how to leverage these other tools of power and multiagency assets at the tactical and operational levels within our



We have the military part of the equation figured out and now have to get the other tools of power right. (Photo by Thomas J. Griffith.)

assigned AO. Commanders at all levels must help facilitate a combined synergy of skill sets that will serve to undermine the insurgency. So how do we do it?

Recognize the limits of a bureaucratic structure. I think that the biggest impediment to an effective counterinsurgency is the inherent bureaucracy of our governmental structure (to include the military, other governmental agencies, and NGOs). Do we have the right organizational structure in Iraq? How was the structure created—deliberately or ad hoc?

Bureaucracies are able to handle routine and repetitive situations. They are not as adept at operating in dynamic environments. Our current structure is organized along the lines of a traditional hierarchy. A better organizational model in confronting the insurgency would be a small, task-organized, entrepreneurial organization. Dr. Eric Jansen of the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, cites

Mintzberg and Quinn in describing the strengths of the entrepreneurial organization as being quick, responsive, dedicated, and directed.¹

Military staffs themselves can be just as bureaucratic. The following excerpt from *Lost Victory* by William Colby describes one such pitfall:

At one point, as the American military role in South Vietnam grew and increasingly preoccupied the American policymakers, I spoke privately to McGeorge Bundy after one of the White House meetings. I asked that instead of fine-tuning the next increment of bombing North Vietnam, we should organize some major attention to the real problem we faced: how to meet the Communist challenge at the village level. He answered, ‘You may be right, Bill, but the structure of the American Government probably won’t permit it.’ What he meant was that the Pentagon had to fight the only war it knew how to fight and that there was no other organization in the

American structure that could fight any other.²

Fighting an insurgency will require some unorthodox solutions. The current bureaucratic structure may unwittingly hinder such creative development. We should ask ourselves, what changes could we make to the organizational structure to find creative and effective courses of action? One solution is to give the MEF commander organic control of interagency assets.

Give the MEF commander organic interagency assets with tasking authority. While major combat in Iraq has been declared over, all parts of Iraq are not “safe.” Without a safe environment, civilian agencies have a hard time operating. However, the work that these civilian agencies conduct is, in fact, one of the best counterinsurgency tools we have. When the basic human condition of safety is not met, the local military commander must still be in charge at the tactical level.

In a counterinsurgency, it is not enough for a Marine staff to coordinate interagency activities in a civil-military operations center. The MEF commander must have organic control and tasking authority of the resources provided by the inter-Service and interagency community at his disposal to succeed in a counterinsurgency environment. An organizational model without tasking authority and organic assets can lead to a duplication of effort, inefficiencies, efforts at cross purposes, and ultimately, it can challenge mission accomplishment. Despite expected opposition, the commander should push for organic authority of those forces operating in his AO.

Leaders during the Vietnam War had to struggle with similar structural problems. One effective arrangement came in 1967 when all pacification-related programs were organized under a single manager, Robert Komer. Known as the Deputy to the American Military Commander, he had tasking authority over interagency assets. To put him on equal footing with reluctant military commanders, his rank was equivalent to that of a four-star general. The civilian agencies, weary of military leadership, were comforted to have a civilian in the post. The military's interest in unity of command was also preserved. The result was a structure that meshed the political-civil-military relationships more effectively.³

Include detailed interagency input in operational planning annexes. Military staffs are not proficient in interagency operations. What little experience staffs do have is generally that of coordination. As a result, military staffs do not have a full appreciation for all of the assets in the greater interagency community. The military staff must understand multiagency and NGO operational and analytical capabilities, including their organizational structures. With that working knowledge, the staff can make informed support requests to help achieve mission accomplishment.

Operational planning should work backward—not from the military ob-

jective but, rather, from the economic, political, or cultural goal. In Iraq, the goal is security. Prior to a military operation, the end state should be defined with input from our experts in a multiagency environment. This concept applies both regionally and at the village level. Combined civil-military operation plans (OpPlans) can then be created. Having integrated OpPlans creates the synergy between military and civilian agencies. The best vehicle to reach this state is with the military commanders having organic interagency assets at their disposal.

The military staff must understand multiagency and NGO operational and analytical capabilities, including their organizational structures.

Include the Iraqi cultural perspective as input during the normal staff process, to include operational planning and after-action review. In any counterinsurgency, gaining support of the people is the main effort. Without the support of the people, an insurgency will wither on the vine. In Iraq, the people must ultimately determine that they no longer want to support an insurgency in their country. We must reach a state where Iraqi citizens are willing to deny active support to the insurgents and turn in their neighbors who do. Connecting with the people in such a way will require true cultural understanding at the village level with respect to everything that the coalition does.

Marine staffs should produce local cultural assessments. Cultural understanding must be part of the planning and after-action processes for both military and civil activities. It must be embodied in all functional areas, much as

force protection is integrated into everyday operations. The point is to look at things from the Iraqi point of view. This may be best accomplished by including local Iraqi input to the staffing process. The challenge then becomes the safety and vetting of those individuals. However, the gain will be well worth the cost.

In the book, *In Retrospect*, by Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense during most of the Vietnam War, Mr. McNamara lists several lessons learned from the Vietnam War. The following two excerpts seem prophetic.

We viewed the people and leaders of South Vietnam in terms of our own experience. We saw in them a thirst for—and a determination to fight for—freedom and democracy. We totally misjudged the political forces within the country.

Our misjudgments of friend and foe alike reflected our profound ignorance of the history, culture, and politics of the people in the area, and the personalities and habits of their leaders.⁴

Enhance tactical intelligence networks in order to exploit the insurgency. In Iraq there are multiple enemies. We might use the word “insurgency” to lump them all into one convenient basket, but that is an oversimplification. On the contrary, we can use the fact that there are multiple groups, with different grievances and alliances, to our advantage. It is critical to clearly define all subgroups accurately in an effort to devise our microstrategy.

The role of local intelligence is paramount in exploiting insurgency weaknesses. Just as in network-centric warfare, there are many points of information input that help build the intelligence picture. Input comes from the local population, other governmental agencies, and coalition assets. Again, having a central commander with organic control of these assets helps clarify the local intelligence picture. At the same time, tactical control does not preclude information from flowing up via multiple parallel channels.

Develop and deliver clear and customized messages. Poor communica-

tions leads to misunderstanding and conflict. We must connect with the Iraqi people. Currently, we try to do this with loudspeakers and pamphlets. We should be leveraging professional U.S. marketing firms and “Hollywood.” Marine Corps Recruiting Command produces high-quality commercials that communicate our Marine Corps message. Why not apply these same techniques to getting out our local “message” in Iraq? Certainly we can sell stability and self-governance to a thirsty population.

There is not a “one message fits all” in Iraq. Our professionally produced messages should be targeted and customized, not generic. Applying generic messages could have the effect of trying to jam a square peg into a round hole. Again, having cultural representation and input to the message format,

content, and delivery can make our communications much more effective.

Final Thought

My purpose is not to oversimplify the hard work required in Iraq, but rather to offer suggestions that may help with our fight. The ideas listed in this article in no way imply that commanders in the field are not doing their duty. Yet, the insurgency continues to grow. I am convinced that the path to victory lies in creating a structure that encourages independent thinking and creative solutions. If giving the MEF commander control of multiagency assets provides a new structure in Iraq that will set the conditions for an ultimate victory, then we should waste no time. We must win. We can win. But nothing in Iraq is a foregone conclusion.

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Twenty-Eight Articles

Fundamentals of company-level counterinsurgency

by LTC David Kilcullen, Australian Army

Your company has just been warned for deployment on counterinsurgency operations in Iraq or Afghanistan. You have read David Galula, T.E. Lawrence, and Sir Robert Thompson. You have studied *Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency*, and now understand the history, philosophy, and theory of counterinsurgency. You've watched *Black Hawk Down* and *The Battle of Algiers*, and you know this will be the most difficult challenge of your life. But what does all of the theory mean at the company level? How do the principles translate into action—at night, with the global positioning system down, the media criticizing you, the locals complaining in a language you don't understand, and an unseen enemy killing your people by ones and twos? How does counterinsurgency actually happen?

There are no universal answers, and insurgents are among the most adaptive opponents you will ever face. Countering them will demand every

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Prepare to hand over your battlespace, hopefully to local forces. (Photo by Cpl Ryan M. Blaich.)

ounce of your intellect. But be comforted; you are not the first to feel this way. There are tactical fundamentals you can apply to link the theory with the techniques and procedures you already know.

What Is Counterinsurgency?

If you have not studied counterinsurgency theory, here it is in a nutshell. It is a competition with the insurgent for the right and the ability to win the hearts, minds, and acquiescence of the population. You are being sent in because the insurgents, at their strongest, can defeat anything weaker than you. But you have more combat power than you can or should use in most situations. Injudicious use of firepower creates blood feuds, homeless people, and societal disruption that fuels and perpetuates the insurgency. The most beneficial actions are often local politics, civic action, and beat-cop behaviors. For your side to win, the people do not have to like you, but they must respect you, accept that your actions benefit them, and trust your integrity and ability to deliver on promises, particularly regarding their security. In this battlefield, popular perceptions and rumor are more influential than the facts and more powerful than 100 tanks.

Within this context, what follows are observations from collective experience—the distilled essence of what those who went before you learned. They are expressed as commandments, for clarity, but are really more like folklore. Apply them judiciously and skeptically.

Preparation

Time is short during predeployment, but you will never have more time to think than you have now. Now is your chance to prepare yourself and your command.

Article 1. Know your turf. Know the people, topography, economy, history, religion, and culture. Know every village, road, field, population group, tribal leader, and ancient grievance. Your task is to become the world expert on your district. If you don't know pre-

cisely where you will be operating, study the general area. Read the map like a book; study it every night before sleep, and redraw it from memory every morning until you understand its patterns intuitively. Develop a mental model of your area—a framework in which to fit every new piece of knowledge you acquire. Study handover notes from predecessors; better still, get in touch with the unit in theater and pick their brains. In an ideal world, intelligence officers and area experts would brief you. This rarely happens. Even if it does, there is no substitute for personal mastery. Understand the broader “area of influence.” This can be a wide area, particularly when insurgents draw on “global” grievances. Share aspects of the operational area among platoon leaders and noncommissioned officers; have each individual develop a personal specialization and brief the others. Neglect this knowledge and it will kill you.

Article 2. Diagnose the problem. Once you know your area and its people, you can begin to diagnose the problem. Who are the insurgents? What drives them? What makes local leaders tick? Counterinsurgency is fundamentally a competition between many groups, each seeking to mobilize the population in support of their agenda. Counterinsurgency is always more than two sided, so you must understand what motivates the people and how to mobilize them. You need to know why and how the insurgents are getting followers. This means you need to know your real enemy, not a cardboard cutout. The enemy is adaptive, resourceful, and probably grew up in the region where you will operate. The locals have known him since he was a boy. How long have they known you? Your worst opponent is not the psychopathic terrorist of Hollywood; it is the charismatic “follow me” warrior who would make your best platoon leader. His followers are not misled or naïve. Much of his success is due to bad government policies or security forces that alienate the population. Work this problem collectively with your platoon

and squad leaders. Discuss ideas, explore the problem, understand what you are facing, and seek a consensus. If this sounds “unmilitary,” get over it. Once you are in theater, situations will arise too quickly for orders or even commander's intent. Corporals and privates will have to make snap judgments with strategic impact. The only way to help them is to give them a shared understanding, then trust them to think for themselves on the day.

Article 3. Organize for intelligence. In counterinsurgency, killing the enemy is easy. Finding him is often nearly impossible. Intelligence and operations are complementary. Your operations will be intelligence driven, but intelligence will come mostly from your own operations, not as a “product” prepared and served up by higher headquarters. So you must organize for intelligence. You will need a company S-2 intelligence section—including analysts. You may need platoon S-2s and S-3s (operations), and you will need a reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S) element. You will not have enough linguists—you never do—but consider carefully where best to employ them. Linguists are battle-winning assets, but like any other scarce resource, you must have a prioritized “bump plan” in case you lose them. Often during predeployment preparations the best use of linguists is to train your command in basic language skills. You will probably not get augmentation for all of this, but you must still do it. Put the smartest Marines in the S-2 section and the R&S squad. You will have one less rifle squad, but the intelligence section will pay for itself in lives and effort saved.

Article 4. Organize for interagency operations. Almost everything in counterinsurgency is interagency. And everything important—from policing to intelligence to civil-military operations to trash collection—will involve your company working with civilian actors and local indigenous partners you cannot control but whose success is essential for yours. Train the company in interagency operations. Get



Train the Iraqis and trust them. (Photo by Cpl Ryan M. Blaich.)

briefings from the State Department, aid agencies, and the local police or fire brigade. Train point men in each squad to deal with the interagency. Realize that civilians find rifles, helmets, and body armor intimidating. Learn how not to scare them. Ask others who come from that country or culture about your ideas. See it through the eyes of a civilian who knows nothing about the military. How would you react if foreigners came to your neighborhood and conducted the operations you planned? What if somebody came to your mother's house and did that? Most importantly, know that your operations will create temporary breathing space, but long-term development and stabilization by civilian agencies will ultimately win the war.

Article 5. Travel light and harden your combat service support (CSS). You will be weighed down with body armor, rations, extra ammunition, communications gear, and 1,000 other things. The enemy will carry a rifle or rocket propelled grenade, a shemagh (a traditional Arab head scarf worn as protection from bright sunlight, sun glare, and blowing sand in the desert), and a water bottle if he is lucky. Unless you ruthlessly lighten your load and enforce a

culture of speed and mobility, the insurgents will consistently outrun and outmaneuver you. But in lightening your load, make sure you can always “reach back” to call for firepower or heavy support if needed. Also, remember to harden your CSS. The enemy will attack your weakest points. Most attacks on coalition forces in Iraq in 2004 and 2005, outside of preplanned combat actions like the two battles of Fallujah or Operation IRON HORSE, were against CSS installations and convoys. You do the math. Ensure that your CSS assets are hardened, have communications, and are trained in combat operations. They may do more fighting than your rifle squads.

Article 6. Find a political/cultural adviser. In a force optimized for counterinsurgency, you might receive a political/cultural adviser at company level—a diplomat or military foreign area officer who is able to speak the language and navigate the intricacies of local politics. Back on planet Earth, the division commander will get a political/cultural advisor. You will not, so you must improvise. Find a political/cultural adviser from among your people, perhaps an officer, perhaps not. (See Article 8.) Someone

with people skills and a “feel” for the environment will do better than a political science graduate. Don't try to be your own cultural adviser. You must be fully aware of the political and cultural dimension, but this is a different task. Also, don't give one of your intelligence people this role. They can help, but their task is to understand the environment. The political adviser's job is to help shape it.

Article 7. Train the squad leaders and then trust them. Counterinsurgency is a squad and platoon leader's war, and often a private Marine's war. Battles are won or lost in moments. Whoever can bring combat power to bear in seconds on a street corner will win. The commander on the spot controls the fight. You must train the squad leaders to act intelligently and independently without orders. If your squad leaders are competent, you can get away with average company or platoon staffs. The reverse is not the case. Training should focus on basic skills—marksmanship, patrolling, security on the move and at the halt, and basic drills. When in doubt, spend less time on company and platoon training and more time on squad training. Ruthlessly replace leaders who do not make the grade. But

once people are trained, and you have a shared operational “diagnosis,” you must trust them. We talk about this, but few company or platoon leaders really trust their people. In counterinsurgency, you have no choice.

Article 8. Rank is nothing; talent is everything. Not everyone is good at counterinsurgency. Many people don’t understand the concept, and some who do can’t execute it. It is difficult, and in a conventional force only a few people will master it. Anyone can learn the basics, but a few “naturals” do exist. Learn how to spot these people and put them in positions where they can make a difference. Rank matters far less than talent; a few good men under a smart junior noncommissioned officer can succeed in counterinsurgency where hundreds of well-armed Marines under a mediocre senior officer will fail.

Article 9. Have a game plan. The final preparation task is to develop a game plan—a mental picture of how you see the operation developing. You will be tempted to try to do this too early. But wait. As your knowledge improves, you will get a better idea of what needs to be done and of your own limitations. Like any plan, this plan will change once you hit the ground and may need to be scrapped if there is a major shift in the environment. But you still need a plan, and the process of planning will give you a simple, robust idea of what to achieve, even if the methods change. This is sometimes called “operational design.” One approach is to identify basic stages in your operation. For example, establish dominance, build local networks, and marginalize the enemy. Make sure you can easily transition between phases, both forward and backward in case of setbacks. Just as the insurgent can adapt his activity to yours, you must have a simple enough plan to survive setbacks without collapsing. This plan is the “solution” that matches the shared “diagnosis” you developed earlier. It must be simple and known to everyone.

The Golden Hour

You have deployed, completed re-

ception and staging, and (if you are lucky) attended the in-country counterinsurgency school. Now it is time to enter your sector and start your tour. This is the golden hour. Mistakes made now will haunt you for the rest of the tour, while early successes will set the tone for victory. You will look back on your early actions and cringe at your clumsiness. So be it, but you must act.

Article 10. Be there. The first rule of deployment in counterinsurgency is to be there. You can almost never outrun the enemy. If you are not present when an incident happens, there is usually little you can do about it. So your first order of business is to establish presence. If you cannot do this throughout your sector, then do it wherever you can. Establishing presence demands a residential approach—living in your sector, in close proximity to the population, rather than raiding into the area from remote, secure bases. Movement on foot, sleeping in local villages, night patrolling, all of these seem more dangerous than they are. These actions establish links with the locals who see you as real people they can trust and do business with, not as aliens who descend from an armored box. Driving around in an armored convoy—day-tripping like a tourist in hell—degrades situational awareness, makes you a target, and is ultimately more dangerous.

Article 11. Avoid knee-jerk responses to first impressions. Don’t act rashly; get the facts first. The violence you see may be part of the insurgent strategy, it may be various interest groups fighting it out, or it may be people settling personal vendettas. Or, it may just be daily life. “Normality” in Kandahar is not the same as in Kansas. So you need time to learn what normality looks like. The insurgent commander also wants to goad you into lashing out at the population or making a mistake. Unless you happen to be on the spot when an incident occurs, you will have only secondhand reports and may misunderstand the local context or interpretation. This fragmentation and “disaggregation” of the battlefield—particularly in urban areas—means

that first impressions are often highly misleading. Of course, you cannot avoid making judgments. But if possible, check them with an older hand or a trusted local. If you can, keep one or two officers from your predecessor unit for the first part of the tour. Try to avoid a rush to judgment.

Article 12. Prepare for handover from day one. Believe it or not, you will not resolve the insurgency on your watch. Your tour will end, and your successors will need your corporate knowledge. Start handover folders, in every platoon and specialist squad, from day one. Ideally, you would have inherited these from your predecessors, but if not, you must start them. The folders should include lessons learned, details about the population, village and patrol reports, updated maps, photographs—anything that will help newcomers master the environment. Computerized databases are fine, but keep good backups and ensure that you have a hard copy of key artifacts and documents. This is boring, tedious, and essential. Over time you will create a corporate memory that keeps your people alive.

Article 13. Build trusted networks. Once you have settled into your sector, your next task is to build trusted networks. This is the true meaning of the phrase “hearts and minds,” which comprises two separate components. “Hearts” means persuading people that their best interests are served by your success; “minds” means convincing them that you can protect them and that resisting you is pointless. Note that neither concept has to do with whether people like you. Calculated self-interest, not emotion, is what counts. Over time, if you successfully build networks of trust, these will grow like roots into the population, displacing the enemy’s networks, bringing him out into the open to fight you, and seizing the initiative. These networks include local allies, community leaders, local security forces, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other friendly or neutral nonstate actors in your area, and the media. Conduct village and neighborhood surveys to identify needs in the

community and then follow through to meet them, build common interests, and mobilize popular support. This is your true main effort; everything else is secondary. Actions that help build trusted networks serve your cause. Actions—even killing high-profile targets—that undermine trust or disrupt your networks help the enemy.

Article 14. Start easy. If you were trained in maneuver warfare you know about surfaces and gaps. This theory applies to counterinsurgency as much as any other form of maneuver. Don't try to crack the hardest nut first. Don't go straight for the main insurgent stronghold, try to provoke a decisive showdown, or focus efforts on villages that support the insurgents. Instead, start from secure areas and work gradually outward. Do this by extending your influence through the locals' own networks. Go with, not against, the grain of local society. First win the confidence of a few villages and then see with whom they trade, intermarry, or do business. Now win these people over. Soon enough the showdown with the insurgents will come. But now you have local allies, a mobilized population, and a trusted network at your back. Do it the other way around and no one will mourn your failure.

Article 15. Seek early victories. In this early phase your aim is to stamp your dominance in your sector. Do this by seeking an early victory. This will probably not translate into a combat victory over the enemy. Looking for such a victory can be overly aggressive and create collateral damage, especially since you really do not yet understand your sector. Also, such a combat victory depends on the enemy being stupid enough to present you with a clear-cut target, a rare windfall in counterinsurgency. Instead, you may achieve a victory by resolving longstanding issues your predecessors have failed to address or co-opting a key local leader who has resisted cooperation with your forces. Like any other form of armed propaganda, achieving even a small victory early in the tour sets the tone for what comes later and helps seize the initiative, which you have probably

lost due to the inevitable hiatus entailed by the handover/takeover with your predecessor.

Article 16. Practice deterrent patrolling. Establish patrolling methods that deter the enemy from attacking you. Often our patrolling approach seems designed to provoke, then defeat, enemy attacks. This strategy is counterproductive; it leads to a raiding, day-tripping mindset or, worse, a bunker mentality. Instead, practice deterrent patrolling. There are many methods for deterrent patrolling, including "multiple" patrolling where you flood an area with numerous small patrols working together. Each is too small to be a worthwhile target, and the insurgents never know where all of the patrols are, making an attack on any one patrol extremely risky. Other methods include so-called "blue-green" patrolling where you mount daylight overt humanitarian patrols that go covert at night and hunt specific targets. Again, the aim is to keep the enemy off balance and the population reassured through constant and unpredictable activity that, over time, deters attacks and creates a more permissive environment. A reasonable rule of thumb is that one- to two-thirds of your force should be on patrol at any time, day or night.

Article 17. Be prepared for setbacks. Setbacks are normal in counterinsurgency, as in every other form of war. You will make mistakes, lose people, or occasionally kill or detain the wrong person. You may fail in building or expanding networks. If this happens, don't lose heart. Simply drop back to the previous phase of your game plan and recover your balance. It is normal in company counterinsurgency operations for some platoons to be doing well, while others do badly. This is not necessarily evidence of failure. Give local commanders the freedom to adjust their posture to local conditions. This freedom creates elasticity that helps you survive setbacks.

Article 18. Remember the global audience. One of the biggest differences between the counterinsurgencies our

fathers fought and those we face today is the omnipresence of globalized media. Most houses in Iraq have one or more satellite dishes. Web bloggers; print, radio, and television reporters; and others are monitoring and commenting on your every move. When the insurgents ambush your patrols or set off a car bomb, they do so not to destroy one more track, but because they want graphic images of a burning vehicle and dead bodies for the evening news. Beware of the "scripted enemy" who plays to a global audience and seeks to defeat you in the court of global public opinion. You counter this tactic by training people to always bear in mind the global audience, assume that everything they say or do will be publicized, and befriend the media. Document everything you do. Have a video or photographic record, or an independent witness, wherever possible. This documentation makes it harder for the enemy to put negative "spin" on your actions with disinformation. Get the press on your side, help them get their story, and trade information with them. Good relationships with nonembedded media—especially indigenous media—dramatically increase your situational awareness and help get your message across to the global and local audience.

Article 19. Engage the women; beware of the children. Most insurgent fighters are men. But in traditional societies, women are hugely influential in forming the social networks that insurgents use for support. Co-opting neutral or friendly women through targeted social and economic programs builds networks of enlightened self-interest that eventually undermine the insurgents. You need your own female counterinsurgents, including interagency people, to do this effectively. Win the women and you own the family unit. Own the family and you take a big step forward in mobilizing the population. Conversely, though, stop your people from fraternizing with local children. Your troops are homesick; they want to drop their guard with the kids. But children are sharp-eyed, lacking in empathy,

and willing to commit atrocities that their elders would shrink from. The insurgents are watching. They will notice a growing friendship between one of your people and a local child and either harm the child as punishment or use him against you. Similarly, stop throwing candies or presents to children. It attracts them to your vehicles, creates crowds the enemy can exploit, and leads to children being run over. Harden your heart and keep the children at arm's length.

Article 20. Take stock regularly. You probably already know that a “body count” tells you little, because you usually cannot know how many insurgents there were to start with, how many moved into the area, how many transferred from supporter to combatant status, or how many new fighters the conflict has created. But you still need to develop metrics early in the tour and refine them as the operation progresses. They should cover a range of social, informational, military, and economic issues. Use metrics intelligently to form an overall impression of progress—not in a mechanical “traffic light” fashion. Typical metrics include percentage of engagements initiated by our forces versus those initiated by insurgents, longevity of friendly local leaders in positions of authority, number and quality of tipoffs on insurgent activity that originate spontaneously from the population, and economic activity at markets and shops. These mean virtually nothing as a snapshot. Trends over time are the true indicators of progress in your sector.

Groundhog Day

Now you are in “steady state.” You are established in your sector, and people are settling into that “groundhog day” mentality that hits every unit at some stage during every tour. It will probably take people at least the first third of the tour to become effective in the environment, if not longer. Then in the last period you will struggle against the short-timer mentality. So this middle part of the tour is the most productive. But keeping the flame alive

and bringing the local population along with you takes immense leadership.

Article 21. Exploit a “single narrative.” Since counterinsurgency is a competition to mobilize popular support, it pays to know how people are mobilized. In most societies there are opinionmakers—local leaders, pillars of the community, religious figures, media personalities, and others who set trends and influence public perceptions. This influence—including the pernicious influence of the insurgents—often takes the form of a single narrative—a simple, unifying, easily expressed story or explanation that organizes people’s experience and pro-

might use a nationalist narrative to marginalize foreign fighters in your area, or a narrative of national redemption to undermine former regime elements that have been terrorizing the population. At the company level you do this in baby steps by getting to know local opinionmakers, winning their trust, learning what motivates them, and building on this trust to find a single narrative that emphasizes the inevitability and rightness of your ultimate success. This is art, not science.

Article 22. Local forces should mirror the enemy, not ourselves. By this stage you will be working closely with local forces, training or supporting them, and building indigenous capability.



He is the one who must eventually take the fight to the insurgent and win. (Photo by LCpl Christopher Zahn.)

vides a framework for understanding events. Nationalist and ethnic historical myths, or sectarian creeds, provide such a narrative. The Iraqi insurgents have one, as do al-Qaeda and the Taliban. To undercut their influence you must exploit an alternative narrative, or better yet, tap into an existing narrative that excludes the insurgents. This narrative is often worked out for you by higher headquarters, but only you have the detailed knowledge to tailor the narrative to local conditions and generate leverage from it. For example, you

The natural tendency is to build forces in our own image with the aim of eventually handing our role over to them. This is a mistake. Instead, local indigenous forces need to mirror the enemy’s capabilities and seek to supplant the insurgent’s role. This does not mean they should be “irregular” in the sense of being brutal or outside proper control. Rather, they should move, equip, and organize like the insurgents but have access to your support and be under the firm control of their parent societies. Combined with a mobilized pop-

ulation and trusted networks, this allows local forces to “hardwire” the enemy out of the environment, under top cover from you. At the company level, this means that raising, training, and employing local indigenous auxiliary forces (police and military) are valid tasks. These tasks require high-level clearance, of course, but if support is given, you should establish a company training cell. Platoons should aim to train one local squad and then use that squad as a nucleus for a partner platoon. Company headquarters should train an indigenous leadership team. This mirrors the “growth” process of other trusted networks and tends to emerge naturally as you win local allies who want to take up arms in their own defense.

Article 23. Practice armed civil affairs. Counterinsurgency is armed social work, an attempt to redress basic social and political problems while being shot at. This situation makes civil affairs a central counterinsurgency activity, not an afterthought. It is how you restructure the environment to displace the enemy from it. In your company sector, civil affairs must focus on meeting basic needs first and then progress up Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs as each successive need is met. A series of village or neighborhood surveys, regularly updated, is an invaluable tool to help understand the population’s needs and track progress in meeting them over time. You need intimate cooperation with interagency partners here—national, international, and local. You will not be able to control these partners. Many NGOs, for example, do not want to be too closely associated with you because they need to preserve their perceived neutrality. Instead, you need to work on a shared diagnosis of the problem, building a consensus that helps you self-synchronize. Your role is to provide protection, identify needs, facilitate civil affairs, and use improvements in social conditions as leverage to build networks and mobilize the population. Thus, there is no such thing as impartial humanitarian assistance or civil affairs in coun-

terinsurgency. Every time you help someone, you hurt someone else—not the least the insurgents. So civil and humanitarian assistance personnel will be targeted. Protecting them is a matter not only of close-in defense, but also of creating a permissive operating environment by co-opting the beneficiaries of aid—local communities and leaders—to help you help them.

Article 24. Small is beautiful. Another natural tendency is to go for large-scale, mass programs. In particular, we have a tendency to template ideas that succeed in one area and transplant them into another, and we tend to take small programs that work and try to replicate them on a larger scale. Again, this strategy is usually a mistake. Often programs succeed because of specific local conditions of which we are unaware, or because their very smallness kept them below the enemy’s radar and helped them flourish unmolested. At the company level, programs that succeed in one district often also succeed in another (because the overall company sector is small), but small-scale projects rarely proceed smoothly into large programs. Keep programs small. Small scale makes them cheap, sustainable, low key, and (importantly) recoverable if they fail. You can add new programs—also small, cheap, and tailored to local conditions—as the situation allows.

Article 25. Fight the enemy’s strategy, not his forces. At this stage, if things are proceeding well, the insurgents will go over to the offensive. Yes, the *offensive* because you have created a situation so dangerous to the insurgents, by threatening to displace them from the environment, that they have to attack you and the population to get back into the game. Thus it is normal, even in the most successful operations, to have spikes of offensive insurgent activity late in the campaign. This activity does not necessarily mean you have done something wrong (though it may—it depends on whether you have successfully mobilized the population). At this point the tendency is to go for the jugular and seek to destroy the enemy’s forces in

open battle. This strategy is rarely the best choice at the company level, because provoking major combat usually plays into the enemy’s hands by undermining the population’s confidence. Instead, attack the enemy’s strategy. If he is seeking to recapture the allegiance of a segment of the local population, then co-opt them against him. If he is trying to provoke a sectarian conflict, go over to “peace enforcement mode.” The permutations are endless, but the principle is the same—fight the enemy’s strategy, not his forces.

Article 26. Build your own solution—only attack the enemy when he gets in the way. Try not to be distracted or forced into a series of reactive moves by a desire to kill or capture the insurgents. Your aim should be to implement your own solution—the game plan you developed early in the campaign and then refined through interaction with local partners. Your approach must be environment-centric (based on dominating the whole district and implementing a solution to its systemic problems) rather than enemy-centric. This means that, particularly late in the campaign, you may need to learn to negotiate with the enemy. Members of the population that support you also know the enemy’s leaders (they may have grown up together in the small district that is now your company sector), and valid negotiating partners sometimes emerge as the campaign progresses. Again, you need close interagency relationships to exploit opportunities to co-opt segments of the enemy. This helps you wind down the insurgency without alienating potential local allies who have relatives or friends in the insurgent movement. At this stage, a defection is better than a surrender, a surrender is better than a capture, and a capture is better than a kill.

Getting Short

Time is short, and the tour is drawing to a close. The key problem now is keeping your people focused, preventing them from dropping their guard, and maintaining the rage on all of the multifarious programs, projects, and

operations that you have started. In this final phase, the previous articles still stand, but there is an important new one.

Article 27. Keep your extraction plan secret. The temptation to talk about home becomes almost unbearable toward the end of a tour. The locals know you are leaving and probably have a better idea than you of the generic extraction plan. Remember, they have seen units come and go. But you must protect the specific details of the extraction plan, or the enemy will use this time as an opportunity to score a high-profile hit, recapture the population's allegiance by scare tactics that convince them they will not be protected once you leave, or persuade them that your successor unit will be oppressive or incompetent. Keep the details secret, within a tightly controlled compartment in your headquarters. And resist the temptation to say goodbye to local allies. You can always send a postcard from home.

Four 'What Ifs'

The articles above describe what *should* happen, but we all know that things go wrong. Here are some "what ifs" to consider.

What if you get moved to a different area? You prepared for Ramadi and studied Dulaim tribal structures and Sunni beliefs. Now you are going to Najaf and will be surrounded by al-Hassan and Unizzah tribes and Shi'a communities. But that work was not wasted. In mastering your first area, you learned techniques you can apply—how to "case" an operational area or how to decide what matters in the local societal structure. Do the same again. This time the process is easier and faster. You have an existing mental structure and can focus on what is different. The same applies if you get moved frequently within a battalion or brigade area.

What if higher headquarters doesn't "get" counterinsurgency? Higher headquarters is telling you that the mission is to "kill terrorists" or is pushing for high-speed armored patrols and a base

camp mentality. They just do not seem to understand counterinsurgency. This is not uncommon since company grade officers today often have more combat experience than senior officers. In this case, just do what you can. Try not to create expectations that higher headquarters will not let you meet. Apply the adage "first do no harm." Over time you will find ways to do what you have to do. But never lie to higher headquarters about your locations or activities. They own the indirect fires.

What if you have no resources? Yours is a low-priority sector. You have no linguists, the aid agencies have no money for projects in your area, and you have a low priority for funding. You can still get things done, but you need to focus on self-reliance, keeping things small and sustainable, and ruthlessly prioritize effort. Local community leaders are your allies. They know what matters to them more than you do. Be honest with them, discuss possible projects and options with community leaders, and get them to choose what their priorities are. Often they will find the translators, building supplies, or expertise that you need and will only expect your support and protection in making their projects work. And the process of negotiation and consultation will help mobilize their support and strengthen their social cohesion. If you set your sights on what is achievable, the situation can still work.

What if the theater situation shifts under your feet? It is your worst nightmare. Everything has gone well in your sector, but the whole theater situation has changed and invalidates your efforts. Think of the first battle of Fallujah, the al-Askariya shrine bombing, or the Sadr uprising. What do you do? Here is where having a flexible, adaptive game plan comes in. Just as the insurgents drop down to a lower posture when things go wrong, now is the time to drop back a stage, consolidate, regain your balance, and prepare to expand again when the situation allows. But, see Article 28. If you cede the initiative, you must regain it as soon as

the situation allows, or you will eventually lose.

Conclusion

This then is the tribal wisdom, the folklore that those who went before you have learned. Like any folklore it needs interpretation and contains seemingly contradictory advice. Over time, as you apply unremitting intellectual effort to study your sector, you will learn to apply these ideas in your own way and will add to this store of wisdom from your own observations and experience. So only one article remains. If you remember nothing else, remember this one.

Article 28. Whatever else you do, keep the initiative. In counterinsurgency, the initiative is everything. If the enemy is reacting to you, you control the environment. Provided you mobilize the population, you will win. If you are reacting to the enemy—even if you are killing or capturing him in large numbers—then he is controlling the environment, and you will eventually lose. In counterinsurgency, the enemy initiates most attacks, targets you unexpectedly, and withdraws too fast for you to react. Do not be drawn into purely reactive operations. Focus on the population, build your own solution, further your game plan, and fight the enemy only when he gets in the way. This strategy gains and keeps the initiative.



>Author's Note: This article reflects the author's personal judgments and does not represent the views of any department or agency of the U.S. Government or any other government. This article was written from field notes compiled in Baghdad, Taji, and Kuwait City in 2006.

>>Editor's Note: A similar version of this article has recently been published by the Military Review.

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Kilcullen's Principles in Action

Miracle in Anbar

by Maj Matthew Tracy & Ed Darack

My first foot patrol as a photojournalist in the city of Haditha comes under the guidance of squad leader Cpl Nicholas J. Carson and the Marines of 3d Squad, 1st Platoon, Company E, 2d Battalion, 3d Marine Regiment (2/3). We pass outside the wire a few hours after sunset, under a cloudless January sky, and move silently through the dusty streets and alleyways of this Al Anbar Province city. Although each will undertake an average 200 patrols during this 8-month deployment, no footstep, no corner turn, no sight through an ACOG (advanced combat optical gunsight) is ever considered routine or taken for granted by any of the Marines. They travel the corridors of the once brutal urban landscape with un-

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canny familiarity, noticing even tiny plastic bags new to a gutter since their last patrol.

The Area of Operations

A city of approximately 44,000 (90,000 when including the populations of the satellite cities of South Dam Village, Haqlaniyah, and Barwanah), Haditha lies along the shores of the Euphrates River in the northern Al Anbar Province. The Anbar, which shares a border with Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Syria, contains only a few population centers, most notably the capital, Ramadi, as well as Anah, Falujah and, of course, Haditha. While population maps indicate the people of the Anbar to be almost entirely Arab Sunni Muslim, the allegiances of the population here cannot be painted with so broad a brush. The province's demographic landscape is comprised of a medley of groups of intellectual and socioeconomic backgrounds; the divisions are often referred to as tribal.

Haditha, home to one of Iraq's two major hydroelectric projects (the Haditha Dam, behind which lies Lake Qadisiya), became known as a hub of affluence with a solid intellectual base, due in large part to the construction and maintenance of the dam. Shortly after the close of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM I, the Anbar, with its access to countries through which terrorists may easily pass and its wide-open areas into which infiltrators may "disappear," became a hotbed of anticoalition activity. The Haditha triad region, including Barwanah to the east and Haqliniyah/Albu Hyatt to the south, would become one of the primary nodes of terrorist activity in the Anbar. The enemy had grown strong enough that in 2006 at the confluence of the beginning of Ramadan, the transfer of Marine authority from 3/3 to 2/3, and



Outreach with the local populace is critical to success. (Photo courtesy of Ed Darack.)

the final stretch toward the U.S. congressional election, they began a concerted and coordinated attack on all fronts. But as the patrol I was on showed, it was clear that they were not succeeding.

I'm scared out of my wits, wondering if I'll trip an improvised explosive device (IED), either in the ground or hidden within the stone walls we pass by. I'm then shocked as we turn a corner and see a brightly lit storefront. I peer inside to see two rows of flickering computers, each console with a local Iraqi tapping away.

"What's that? What's going on?" I ask.

"An Internet café," LCpl Richard Brown, a rifleman I am closely trailing, turns and answers.

"Huh? Are you kidding me? An Internet café?"

"Just one of about five in this part of Haditha," the 20-year-old replies with a grin. I realize instantly that this desert city is not the lifeless catastrophe I'd come to envision before I set foot in Iraq.

The most salient and enduring facet of the battalion's efforts was in forging relationships with the Iraqi police, allowing the Marines to accelerate stabilization. 2/3's senior leadership embraced a strong outside-the-wire mentality for the Marines of the battalion from day one. The Marines acted aggressively, both in seeking out al-Qaeda and in their outreach with the local populace. The first few months on the ground took their toll—a bold enemy, who had control of the populace, freedom of movement, and cash incentives for pre-U.S. congressional election attacks, staged numerous improvised IED, sniper, and small arms attacks. However, the relentless and persistent attitude of maintaining a continuous presence throughout the triad paid long lasting dividends of ever-increasing stability (and insurgent frustration).

Company E Commander's Notes

Any success we enjoyed came from casting our lot in with a handful of Iraqi police. LTC David Kilcullen, Australian Army, said it best in his "Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals

of Company-Level Counterinsurgency," which may be found in the counterinsurgency handbook.¹ Kilcullen emphasizes "building trusted networks." We are novice intruders into this social culture that is predicated on deception, bluff, and intrigue. The Iraqi people read Americans like books. To begin to build the trust necessary to get an "in," we need leaders who are totally committed to the positive agenda. I trusted the Iraqis and eventually they trusted us. This mutual trust opened a world of intimacy with the people of the town that I will never know in the United States. I made friends there for life, and when we parted ways, we were saddened. Critical information was an easy outgrowth of this relationship. The Iraqi people can see deeply into our souls. Once they see that we are genuine, they respond with unparalleled brotherhood making counterinsurgency easy. The

Any success we enjoyed came from casting our lot in with a handful of Iraqi police.

risk associated with this type of openness is no greater than an IED sweep on the main supply route, but the rewards are much greater. The Iraqis will sense if the commander is not genuine. If the commander is not completely committed to ensuring the security of the populace, supporting the Iraqi Security Forces, and rebuilding the town, then few tactics and procedures will be effective.

For those with the openmindedness to embrace the people we are trying to save, the following paragraphs outline some additional, previously quoted techniques and procedures that we found effective.

"Live amongst the people," another Kilcullen byline, is essential to developing an understanding of the popu-

lace. Once immersed within the people's lives, Marines cannot help but begin to feel a stewardship toward the people in their town. Not only does intelligence begin to blossom, but escalation of force and disproportionate force incidents wane as Marines begin to see themselves as stewards. A third order of consequence occurs once the local populace believes that Marines are deployed not as conquerors but as liberators and enablers of stability. A tactical benefit of living amongst the people is the dissolution of recognizable friendly patrol patterns, such as patrol times, routes, etc. Living amongst the people also maintains the offensive mindset crucial for capturing enemy personnel. Furthermore, the Marines learn the city much faster than they would by being based aboard a single large forward operating base.

Once you learn the city you can "distribute," leading to another of Kilcullen's recommendations, "be there." Kilcullen states that you cannot pursue the enemy; rather, you must already be there. Distributed operations² is one of the greatest force multipliers known to the world of counterinsurgency warfare. To mitigate the risk to smaller operational units, commanders must train fire teams and squads to be able to aggregate and coordinate their resources while in a firefight. My "trinity" in conducting urban distributed operations consisted of technical and tactical expertise, a complete navigational understanding of the area of operations, and the organizational courage to employ aggressive tactics in order to persevere regardless of mistakes and casualties. We must distribute to be there, and we must be there to push our positive agenda to the townspeople and to protect them from the enemy. The populace must see us as providing security for them and not force protection for ourselves. If they don't we will be seen as occupiers not liberators.

By planting IEDs, sniping at Marines, and mortaring forward operating bases, the enemy attempts to precipitate a collapse into our own force

protection downward cycle. As we attempt to catch an enemy who is targeting our Marines, we spend less time working with the local people. This focus grants the enemy greater freedom of movement, allowing more attacks and necessitating a greater emphasis on force protection. Commanders who hold a low number of coalition casualties as their primary metric of success fall into this trap. As Marines chase mortar points of origin and ambush old IED craters, the enemy roams freely to force his will upon the populace. Murder, bombings, and extortion of locals allow the enemy to infiltrate municipalities and influence community services. The main effort of the enemy is to control the population. Once anti-Iraqi forces control the population they can achieve their true goals.

Finally, Kilcullen discusses “dominating the enemy early.” Do not be afraid to inconvenience the population when attempting to provide for its security. Responsible control and force provide security, the foundation for a successful society. Control also destroys the anonymity of the enemy forces and their freedom of movement. In Haditha the enemy’s primary method of maneuver and resupply was via automobile. By constructing an impassable berm around the town and restricting vehicle traffic, Marines and local Iraqi forces retook the maneuver initiative within the city from the enemy. We also instituted a program of licensing for individuals and vehicles so that nonmilitary supplies continued uninterrupted into the city, yet enemy materials could not. Foot traffic into the civil military affairs center quadrupled, information began to blossom, and the population opened up to us. Significant anticoalition events in Haditha dropped from 5 to 10 per day (at the beginning of our deployment) to zero during the last 60 days, yet the atmospherics of the town remained friendly since the populace knew we were enacting these measures for *their* security vice *ours*. This domination of the enemy and control of the populace al-



The Iraqi people can see deep into our souls. (Photo courtesy of Ed Darack.)

lowed us the breathing room to stand up a cogent local police force.

If you live amongst the people, are there when events occur, build trusted networks, and dominate the enemy, lines of operations begin to cascade in your favor. Ensure that you have decentralized your organization to capitalize on this cascade and you are comfortable with short-term risk for long-term gain. In doing so your organization will generate the tempo necessary to fold the enemy back upon himself³ and gain a decisive counterinsurgency victory.

A Photojournalist’s Observations

I had the fortune to accompany patrols from each of the line companies as well as Weapons Company during my time with 2/3. Each patrol brought a new meeting of locals and an ever-strengthened notion that Al Anbar Province was not a realm dominated by fractious disarray but by burgeoning unity and hope. I experienced this hope most saliently with the under-16 crowd—the children who, without hesitation, bounded from their homes to greet our patrols and pose for pictures with Marines. I came to learn that this miraculous transformation has been occurring throughout the entire Anbar Province, not just in the Haditha

triad, and under the presence of Marine units from throughout the Marine Corps. Only time will tell what the future holds for all of Iraq, but based on what I experienced in the triad, that future is bright.

Notes

1. Kilcullen, LtCol David, “Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency,” republished in *The United States Marine Corps Small Unit Leaders’ Guide to Counterinsurgency*, United States Government, Washington, DC, June 2006, Annex C, pp. 113–126.

2. Volumes have been written concerning distributed operations; however, the foundational published document remains BGen Robert E. Schmidle’s “Distributed Operations From the Sea,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, July 2004, pp. 37–43.

3. My philosophical underpinnings remain grounded in the uncopyrighted works of Col John Boyd. I recommend that all company and battalion commanders preparing for the current fight imbibe the base documents that created *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1, Warfare*. These tenants resonate stronger today than in 1989. As a start point I recommend the website at http://www.d-n-i.net/second_level/boyd_military.htm.



Winning in Iraq

It's time to change our operational paradigm

by LtCol Julian D. Alford & Maj Edwin O. Rueda

The debate over the number of forces required to win the Iraq war and what constitutes an exit strategy is at the crux of the discussion over the future of the military mission in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). It is a debate that must focus on fourth-generation warfare and should not assume that we are fighting a homogenous enemy in a static conventional fight.

Initial Steps

Immediately following kinetic operations it is necessary to have a strong, visible, and numerous military force that can take care of all of the security and civil administration tasks needed to start the reconstruction process. Arguably, a major operational mistake of the Iraq war was not surging the force in March/April 2003 when U.S. forces quickly transitioned to reconstruction and stabilization activities. The problem of force availability was compounded by the dreaded decision to dismantle the Iraqi Army (IA), rather than quickly reorganizing and reshaping this indigenous force to support manpower intensive security and stability operations. In the early days of postconflict operations in Iraq there was just not enough manpower available to provide security, control the population, and execute civil administration.

Three years later the war morphed. What is true in Al Kut is not necessarily the case in Al Qaim or Mosul. Even within regions the situation changes from town to town. The fight is now driven by local conditions and local politics. The tactical commander is directly behind the wheel of the counterinsurgency fight.



People slowly start to resent the visible presence of troops. A paradigm change must occur. (Photo by Cpl Ryan C. Heiser.)

The Al Anbar Province in Iraq is a vast desert with semipopulated cities that primarily stretch across the length of the Euphrates River valley. Arguably it is in this province, and in these cities, that Iraq will be won or lost. In the Al Qaim region, coalition forces and the IA recently executed decisive offensive operations to kill insurgents and destroy their base of operations. Following kinetics, U.S. Ma-

rines and their Iraqi counterparts immediately established battle positions inside the cities of Husaybah, Karabilah, Sadah, Ubaydi, and Ramana in the Al Qaim region. The force was sizeable, strong, and visible. Security was provided immediately, and the actions of the forces were overt and clearly evident to the population. The technique facilitated the immediate execution of a reconstruction plan that became the focus of effort for the military in the area. At the point in time immediately following kinetic operations, a surge of forces was required, and the forces needed to be active and visible to the population.

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The Changing Scene

Fast forward in time, or look at what is currently happening in Al Anbar in the cities of Fallujah (where coalition forces executed Operation AL FAJR in November 2004) and Ramadi. In time (and figuring when that time is be-

comes the art of command) visible and numerous forces become counterproductive against an insurgency. The tasks that military forces have to execute for security—both active and passive antiterrorism and force protection activities—start to have a negative affect on the population. People slowly start to resent the visible presence of foreign troops, and they begin to show antipathy toward some of the tactics that are militarily necessary—checkpoints, roadblocks, detention of suspects, patrols, etc. In time people begin to support (passively or actively) the insurgency.

At the tactical level the commander on the ground must make the assessment on when the posture of forces must change and when having more overt forces becomes a liability rather than an asset. It is at this point in time that a gray area exists and that the counterinsurgency fight is won or lost.

In this gray area, there needs to be a shift in force posture and tactics, where forces become less visible and provide less restriction to the population. It is in this gray area that host-nation military and police forces must provide the primary elements of security.

In this gray area—and for the remainder of the counterinsurgency fight—a small cadre of capable, professional, and experienced military advisors can make the difference. In the 1960s and 1970s such teams advised South Vietnamese units and were composed of men such as then-Maj Walter E. Boomer, then-Capt John R. Ripley, then-Maj William G. Leftwich, then-Capt Ray L. Smith, and then-1stLt Anthony C. Zinni. As the transition is made from conventional warfighting to counterinsurgency methods, quantity must be replaced with quality. Advisors must be career Marine officers and staff noncommissioned officers

(SNCOs) with combat knowledge and experience and regional and cultural smarts who can immerse themselves within the ranks of the host-nation army and provide key advice to commanders at the brigade, battalion, and company levels.

The Advisor Group

In Al Anbar a Marine infantry battalion (by table of organization nearly 1,000 Marines and sailors) now operates in a 450-square-kilometer area near the Syrian border with responsibility for the security and reconstruction of a region comprised of 5 towns with a population of over 150,000 Iraqis. This Marine force also supports one brigade from the newly established IA.

Soon a paradigm change must occur. A force of 1,000 Marines must be transformed, and in its wake, a unit of IA personnel, advised by a capable



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core of Marine professionals, must be born. In this portion of Al Anbar, with some of the fiercest fighting and most active levels of insurgency, the Iraq Marine advisor group (IMAG) at the IA brigade level would be composed of 76 officers and SNCOs—the best from a Marine infantry battalion. The battalion's commanding officer, along with his sergeant major, would serve as the senior advisors to the IA brigade commander. Line company commanders and their first sergeants become senior advisors to the IA battalions, while the junior officers and SNCOs work closely with the IA companies and platoons in their advisor duties. Battalion staff officers and SNCOs, ideally with extensive combat and planning experience, would be strung across the staff sections of the IA brigade and battalions to advise and assist the units on all of the warfighting functions—maneuver, intelligence, logistics, command and control, force protection, and fires. These men would live, eat, and work with their Iraqi counterparts, donning Iraqi uniforms and continuously working to become immersed in the life of an Iraqi infantry unit. These Marines would work with the same units for extended periods of time (12-month tours of duty) to ensure continuity, increased familiarization, and the development of trust between the Marines and the host-nation officers and soldiers. Arabic language training and significant regional, cultural, and religious immersion would be a required and pivotal phase of the pre-deployment curriculum.

The IMAG would provide the IA with a cadre of Marines who could provide continuous education and guidance on the principles of war, small unit tactics, force integration, counterinsurgency activities, and leadership development. More importantly, the IMAG would bring to the fight the tangible aspect of massive firepower. Equipped with the best command, control, and communications (C³) equipment available to the military, these Marines would have the

ability to immediately call upon ground forces and airpower tucked away in remote locations in the Iraqi desert.

The C³ capability of the IMAG must be robust. This capability is the lifeline between the advisor contingency and the U.S. intelligence community. It also provides the capability to bring overwhelming joint fires, medevac, and logistics when required to support the IA forces. All of the IMAG personnel must have the capability for mobile and tactical satellite communications (SatCom) access. Tactical SatCom must be augmented with secure, mobile, antijam, reliable, tactical terminal capability to access real-world feed from intelligence platforms and provide the ability for teams to communicate via chat technology, such as multiuser Internet relay chat. C³ suites become the force multipliers that connect the IMAG to the rest of the in-theater military capability.

The size and capability of the quick reaction force (QRF) for a region like Al Anbar would vary based on the size and capability of the threat. With the current threat levels, a U.S. Marine infantry battalion would suffice as a QRF provided the IMAG capability and manning is adequate. The QRF could deploy to the Iraqi theater of operations (ITO) for 7-month tours. Aside from the primary responsibility as the regional QRF, the infantry battalion would assume the base security mission for air support and logistics units supporting the IA through the IMAG, further reducing the number of troops in the ITO since these security tasks are currently assigned to noncombat arms forces.

The combination of an advisor capability, suitable reaction forces, logistical support and massive airpower accomplishes two primary objectives—the major drawdown of military forces in the theater and the decrease of the conventional military force posture in the region. Achieving these primary objectives leads to two significant results: (1) posture the military for an effective and prolonged

counterinsurgency mission, and (2) decrease the end strength requirement for forces in support of the mission in Iraq, allowing all units to continue training and planning efforts in support of other war plans. (Even commands deploying advisors to Iraq can have robust remain-behind elements—using a small number of officers and SNCOs—that continue to achieve unit and individual training and readiness goals.)

Shifting Focus

The change of paradigm needs to be complete—not just in the manner that the military fights the counterinsurgency fight but in the way that the Marine Corps selects and awards those who serve in the role as military advisors. Infantry commanders serving in these IMAG billets must be rewarded in the same manner as commanders following successful combat tours with their units. All things begin equally. The Marine serving as a military advisor must be seen as performing an equally demanding billet as that of command. The paradigm change guarantees that the officers and SNCOs serving in these billets are uniquely qualified to perform in this demanding, independent, and geostrategically important mission.

Counterinsurgency operations are complex. These operations demand the military's ability to learn, adapt, and quickly change to overcome the enemy's constant modification of tactics and techniques. Conventional forces are not suited to fight this unconventional fight. There needs to be a significant drawdown of forces from the ITO—not as a withdrawal from the fight but as a major paradigm change in the manner in which the fight is executed.



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Twenty-Seven Articles of Lawrence of Arabia

A perspective on training Iraqis during OIF

by Maj Jonathan P. Dunne

Assigned to a 1-year military transition team (MiTT) tour to Iraq in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM 5.7 (OIF 5.7), I diligently prepared myself. It's a daunting mission—embed within an Iraqi Army (IA) unit and transition it from “starter-kit” status to one that is prepared to assume “independent battlespace,” all within an austere counterinsurgency (COIN) environment. As part of that preparation, and with the hopes of better understanding how to assimilate into Iraqi culture, it was suggested that I read *The Arab Bulletin*, dated 20 August 1917, that outlines the 27 articles of T.E. Lawrence. It wasn't until about the ninth month of my deployment that I truly understood the articles.

In an effort to prepare future MiTTs for this rewarding assignment, I have attempted to translate World War I-era British vernacular (*italicized text*) into 21st century Marine-speak. The bold text is my summation of Lawrence's articles.

T.E.'s Truths

Go easy for a few weeks. A bad start is difficult to atone for. Your priority of work for the first week to 10 days as a MiTT is not to train to standard or to conduct COIN operations. **Initially, your priority of work is to build relationships;** once those bonds of trust and confidence are built, **sustaining quality relationships with quality leaders is an enduring task.** Capitalize on your one opportunity to make a good first impression. Take the time to

>Col Dunne, from 3d Bn, 11th Mar, Twentynine Palms, is forward deployed as a MiTT member embedded with an IA brigade in the northern Al Anbar Province, Iraq.

determine who your quality leaders are—the men who will influence your IA unit to conduct independent COIN operations in independent battlespace—and then invest in them.

Learn all you can about the leaders, families, clans and tribes, friends and en-

emies, hills and roads. Marines have utilized the acronym METT-T to analyze mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available-time available. **Never has the application of METT-T been so important.** Constant communications and a proactive turnover with the preceding MiTT will facilitate a new MiTT's acclimation into this unfamiliar environment.

In a matter of business, deal only with the commander of the army. **All Iraqi decisions, critical or not, are centralized to the commander.** Although



1stLt Alden Hingle III, a member of a MiTT, goes over squad leader responsibilities with two IA soldiers. Building relationships is critical. (Photo by SSGt Brenda L. Varnadore.)

MiTT members must closely embed with key Iraqi leadership in an effort to decentralize decisionmaking and enhance the efficiency of the IA unit, it will be the MiTT chief who ultimately engages the Iraqi commander to solve many problems.

Always approve your counterpart's ideas. Praise them, modify them, and then convince your counterpart that it was his idea. Gain his approval and hold him to those ideas. Use an Iraqi solution for an Iraqi problem. Whether it's purely an IA initiative or has been shaped by the MiTT and then adopted by the IA leadership, an Iraqi solution always works best. We desire IA leaders to actively participate. MiTTs have to limit their inclination to micromanage.

Formal visits to give advice are not so good as the constant dropping of ideas in casual talk. Formal meetings are confirmation briefs. Prior to a formal meeting, MiTT rehearsals (MiTT-only meetings to discuss all pertinent issues and develop general themes) are paramount. Once the MiTT speaks with one voice, the IA commander and his staff can be shaped, influenced, and coached. The result is a formal meeting (confirmation brief) that is succinct, purposeful, and unified.

Be shy of too close relations with the subordinates. Development of the junior officers is the key to the development of an IA unit. Don't shy away from them; embrace them. Iraqis will not embrace their enlisted ranks in the same manner that Marine officers embrace their noncommissioned officers. Do not attempt to break a social paradigm. Make your "new Army" company grade officers competent and confident. Invest in them; they are the key to the future IA. They can be molded into aggressive, proactive, concerned, positive leaders.

Treat the subchiefs quite easily and lightly. Hold yourself above their level. Treat your Iraqi peers and seniors with the respect due their rank and their humanity, but you are a United States Marine. We are aiding the nation of Iraq in the reconstruction of its army.

You are the duty expert; act as such—graciously.

Your ideal position is when you are present and not noticed. For those who have served on inspector-instructor duty, this same tenet applies. **The MiTT may be the energy behind a decision or action, but make it an Iraqi success.** Iraqi success hastens acceptance of new ideas and creates further confidence in the unit's leadership abilities.

Magnify and develop the growing conception of the sheriffs as the natural aristocracy of the Arabs. As we strive to assume IA lead battlespace, it is essential that our competent IA leaders be pushed to lead from the front. **Within your capabilities, screen IA leaders and advocate for the quality performers.** The IA is not focused on a merit-based system; it's all based on whom you know.

Make your "new Army" company grade officers competent and confident. Invest in them; they are the key to the future IA.

Call the sheriff "sidi" (sir). Call others by their ordinary names without title. In intimate conversation, call by an informal nickname. Just like at home, **start formal** and as you develop relationships, the formalities will disappear.

The foreigner/Christian is not a popular person in Arabia. Remember always that your foundations are very sandy ones. Americans will never be Iraqis, and those in your Iraqi unit will never become Americans. We are different from one another—and always will be. **Understand and respect those cultural differences and MiTT-Iraqi relationships succeed. Don't make it more than it is.** The IA recognizes that we, as Americans, have a culture of our own.

Cling tight to your sense of humor. There are some things that happen on this duty that only other MiTTs will understand. You have to **laugh at least once a day on this job** or you will lose your overall perspective and sense of mission.

The less you lose your temper the greater your advantage—also, then you will not go mad yourself. The Iraqis have been around Americans long enough to have seen American displays of anger. If this is your modus operandi, you will soon be tuned out. An infrequent, timely **display of anger served as a "silver bullet" to emphasize a critical point can be effective;** it will disrupt the unit's harmony for half of a day, but it will be enough to leverage a critical issue that is paramount for the unit's development or success. Good cop/bad cop works well.

While very difficult to drive, the Bedu are easy to lead if you have the patience to bear with them. This statement is painfully true. You are driving a battleship. It takes time to turn an IA unit in the direction you want it to go. The small unit leaders and "jenud" (soldiers) are not any different. **With established trust and strengthened relationships, you will elevate Iraqi productivity, but there is a limit.** Energize an incentive—or a consequence—and keep the unit focused on it.

Do not try to do too much with your own hands. It is better that the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. How true. **A well-focused, productive plan that is stifled by Iraqi inefficiencies is still an IA success.** As a MiTT member:

- Sustain the force (food, pay, and leave) must become a MiTT priority. Get intimately involved.
- Training/operational items should be trained to and then turned over to the IA to lead.
- Any other issues that are not centered on fighting or sustaining the force are inconsequential. If you allow those minor issues to become MiTT concerns, the MiTT will become a slave to the IA "give me more" motto.



Marines from MiTT 7 and IA soldiers patrol the streets of Fallujah, Iraq. Shared experiences build trust. (Photo by Rueben D. Maestre.)

A well-placed gift is often the most effective in winning over a suspicious sheikh. Do not let them ask you for things, since their greed will then make them look upon you only as a cow to milk. A MiTT implied task is to sustain the force. Just to feed and outfit our IA unit requires countless MiTT and adjacent supporting coalition agencies' resources. Just **don't let the "I needs" evolve into "I wants."**

Wear an Arab headdress when with a tribe. Except in special areas, let it be clearly known that you are a British officer and a Christian. If you wear Arab things, wear the best. Leave your English friends and customs on the coast, and fall back on Arab habits entirely. The IA respects its own army—and ours. Iraqis equate the uniform of a Marine with that of the highest of qualities. Wear your uniform with pride. The best investment you can make, both in the direct performance of your job and as an intangible gain in trust and confidence from your Iraqi unit, is to **learn some of the language, share meals with them, and suffer in some of their pain.** Many of your soldiers' families are suf-

fering from the reality of this COIN. Share that with them.

Religious discussions will be frequent. With the Bedu (Arabs), Islam is so all-pervading an element that there is little religiosity, little fervor, and no regard for the externals. In the practice of their religion, Iraqis are not any different than Americans. Some are very devout, some do not practice, but most fall in the middle. **Whether Iraqis practice Islam or not, it does permeate their culture.** It is not black voodoo. Ask about it. **Religion will be used as a crutch or excuse.**

Do not try to trade on what you know of fighting; learn the Bedu principles of war as thoroughly and quickly as you can. In familiar conditions they fight well, but strange events cause panic. Don't attempt unusual things. Make proper use of the knowledge of the country. Keep it simple stupid—KISS. It works well in America and even better in Iraq. The IA is not laden with idiots—far from it. Iraqis are bright individuals. Detailed, military-specific terms and detailed coordinating instructions are lost in translation and

generally not regarded by the Iraqi officers.

The open reason that Bedu give you for action or inaction may be true, but always there will be better reasons left for you to divine. **The majority of your Iraqis aren't telling you the truth—**only a variation thereof. Don't take this personally. **It's a MiTT's job to determine to what degree and why the truth is being enhanced.** Do not publicly embarrass the IA officer; always give your Iraqi an out.

Do not mix Bedu and Syrians, or trained men and tribesmen. You will get work out of neither, for they hate each other. Today's parallel in Iraq is do you mix the army and police? The answer ultimately depends on the **leadership of your unit's commander and the strength of his relationship with the local police chief.** This interaction is not natural and must be cultivated. **If both are favorable, combined Iraqi police/IA operations work very well.**

In spite of ordinary Arab example, avoid too freely talking about women. An Iraqi will **rarely offer any information about his wife or daughters—or**

women in general. It defies centuries of cultural imprint. They will not take offense to your inquiring as to the well-being of their families. Don't delve any deeper; it simply doesn't "translate." That being said, don't confuse the common Iraqi for the pure and pious.

Be careful of your servants as of yourself. Out of genuine respect for our interpreters ("terps"), I would never refer to them as servants; these critical individuals who serve the MiTT are critical enablers. **Find a good terp and take care of him.** He is your cultural advisor and will translate the meanings behind stated words if you forge a positive relationship with him.

Keep always on your guard; never say an unnecessary thing. Watch yourself and your companions all the time. Search out what is going on beneath the surface. Your success will be proportioned to the amount of mental effort you devote to it. Never did I feel threatened by the IA, and never did I feel completely relaxed. **Embrace your IA brothers-in-arms.**

T.E. Lawrence's 27 articles are available online at www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/resources/biblio/27articles.asp.

You will fight, sweat, bleed, laugh, and cry with them. Just don't become blind. Always leave your self an out—be it offensive or defensive.

Making Sense of It All

The last article by Sir Lawrence is 100 percent true. A successful MiTT requires patient, flexible, creative Marines who possess a relentless work ethic. While no single task in itself is difficult, the web of clashing command structures, individual motives, and misunderstood cultures weights every endeavor with friction. The basics become complex. You are pushing a boulder up a hill. It's hard work and worth stopping to occasionally catch your breath and enjoy the view, but don't let go of the rock or it is going back down to the bot-

tom. Every Iraqi success or failure has MiTT fingerprints on it.

Here is my advice for all current and future MiTTs. Spend the time to learn your Iraqi unit and its culture, but even more so, simply embrace those intangibles that embody Marines. Demonstrate to the IA how we earn our base pay. This tour has been and continues to be a rewarding and exciting one. Count on yours being an equally positive, memorable experience.



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A Counterinsurgency Dilemma in Al Anbar

What is the mission; what is the goal

by Col Mark F. Cancian, USMCR(Ret)

The senior officer was clearly uncomfortable.¹ The early part of the briefing had gone well. The operation targeted a large public space that was a known insurgent activity center. The unit's operation plan called for the rapid takedown of the objective and a thorough search of the extensive premises. Surveillance would produce high situational awareness; a double cordon would effectively isolate the objective; rapid action throughout the objective area would ensure that coalition forces maintained the initiative. All that seemed excellent. The plan also included screening of all of the civilians who would be caught in the cordon—an evolution that would take up to 12 hours. As a precautionary measure, all of the male detainees would be flex-cuffed² until cleared by the screening. This is where the senior officer had

>Col Cancian served 34 years on active duty and in the Reserves as an infantry and artillery officer. In March 2007 he returned from Iraq where he had been the G-7, Assistant Chief of Staff for Assessment, MNF-W.

hesitated. Hundreds of men, most of whom would turn out to be entirely innocent, would be flex-cuffed by coalition forces for an extended period. For many this humiliation would happen in front of their families. In addition, hundreds of women and children would be held against their will, an uncomfortable action in a traditional society.

The senior officer asked, "Could the unit offer something to the detainees while they awaited processing, tea

maybe?" Eyes rolled. Hundreds of warfighters were being prepared, thousands of planning details were being coordinated, and the senior officer was worried about tea! Some discussion then ensued about whether people who had been flex-cuffed could even drink tea. The senior officer thought they could. More eyes rolled.

But the senior officer had put his finger on two key points. In a counterinsurgency operation like this, was the price in potentially alienating the population worth the gain in capturing suspected insurgents and disrupting a center of insurgent activity? Beyond that, what price should be imposed on the civilian population in order to protect friendly forces?

Disrupting the Insurgents or Alienating the Population?

Judged as a warfighting operation, the operation was well planned and, in actual execution, a success. Units understood their mission and executed as intended. The public space was isolated without incident, facilities were searched, detained personnel were screened, and several dozen civilians on "bad lists" were identified and sent for further interrogation and processing. No one, military or civilian, was injured. The entire action was completed in less than a day, ahead of schedule. Coalition forces returned to their bases without incident.

Judged by its effects on the population, the operation's success was less certain. The "optics" (to use a currently fashionable military term) had been terrible. Although some Iraqi police had participated, the operation consisted mostly of U.S. forces conducting



Warfighting success has to be judged in part by its effect on the populace. (Photo by Cpl Joel Abshier.)

a mass detention of civilians. No “high-value targets” were captured. Because of a weak legal system, most detainees were soon released. No obvious insurgent facilities were discovered. Intelligence sources reported continued insurgent use of the facility after coalition forces had left. However, without polling or systematic “atmospherics” it was hard to say what the population thought of all of this.

The difference in perspective matters. No civilian population likes being occupied. Therefore, every operation has a price because, inevitably, the occupiers will annoy, inconvenience, or actually humiliate the population. Whether the occupying power can justify the operation to itself or under the laws of war is irrelevant; the local population makes its own judgments. In Al Anbar Province these judgments are clear. Polling shows a consistent 85 percent disapproval of U.S. forces and a high level of acceptance for the use of force against them, despite the recent improvement of conditions on the ground.³

A central criticism of the U.S. occupation of Iraq has been that military operations are too “kinetic”—that is,

operations rely too much on violent warfighting techniques and not enough on “soft power.” This criticism arose most publicly in 2005 when British Brigadier Nigel Aylwin-Foster published an article⁴ that politely but forcefully made this argument based on his experiences at the senior U.S. headquarters in Iraq. The U.S. Army Chief of Staff sent the article to his general officers. If the criticism were limited to one foreign observer, or to liberal critics of the war who also criticize U.S. military methods, then it would not be very interesting. However, many observers, military and civilian, have made the same criticism, particularly during the early days of the occupation but continuing to the present. For example, Tom Ricks in *Fiasco* cites many internal military commentaries about the excessive use of force.⁵ Similarly then-BGen (now MajGen) John F. Kelly observed that as the occupation began:

There was a default to ‘meet violence with violence’ by some US forces, which led to civilian casualties and hardened the attitudes of many Iraqis against Americans.⁶

The recently rediscovered writings of David Galula⁷ capture the alternative perspective, emphasizing the importance of population control and the futility of chasing insurgents in the wilderness. In response, the new U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine⁸ focuses on the population as the battlefield.

This debate is an old one. After the Vietnam War, for example, Andrew Krepinevich made a similar observation in his widely read book, *The Army in Vietnam*.⁹ In it he argued that a military force built to fight the conventional forces of other nation-states was poorly prepared to conduct a counterinsurgency campaign. U.S. military culture focused on locating, closing with, and destroying enemy forces. It regarded the civilian population as an impediment, not as the battleground.

On the other hand, commentators like Ralph Peters forcefully point out that the United States must not shrink from violent action.

Only by killing [terrorists] . . . may we deter their weaker supporters. The humanitarianism we cherish is regarded as a sign of impotence by such opponents.¹⁰

Peters has argued for a decade that some opponents are irreconcilable and must be killed. Therefore, there is a limit to what soft power can accomplish. This tension was reflected in the drafting of the new counterinsurgency manual. Early drafts were viewed as too soft. Later drafts acknowledged more clearly the need for the use of force.

Many Marines and outside commentators point to the *Small Wars Manual* as evidence of Marine Corps expertise in counterinsurgency, applying both hard and soft power. The manual is, indeed, a magnificent document. Containing insights distilled from the many Marine Corps interventions of the 1920s and 1930s, it covers all elements of counterinsurgency—from combat patrols and guarding infrastructure to organizing elections and dealing with the State Department. Although some sections are dated, much of the manual has en-



We're now relying more on soft power to influence the local populace. (Photo by Cpl Rick Nelson.)

during value, and Marines in Al Anbar continue to benefit from it. However, the manual was published in 1940, just as the Marine Corps was reorienting itself from small wars to amphibious operations. The experience of World War II and then Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War focused the Marine Corps as an institution on large-scale amphibious operations against conventional forces. Although the interest in small wars/operations other than war never entirely disappeared (Marine expeditionary units (special operations capable) leaned heavily in this direction) the institutional focus was at the other end of the spectrum—major combat operations.

Two generations of focus on major combat operations have created a culture that shapes expectations about what objectives combat operations will target, how forces will operate, what tasks are appropriate, and what risks are acceptable. This makes fighting the “three block war” difficult; the right outlook for one block is inappropriate for another. For example, since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. military (not just the Marine Corps) has argued that well-trained, well-disciplined infantry can be effective peacekeepers as well as warfighters. But there is a key difference in mindset. Police look at the civilian population as basically law abiding against whom violence is not authorized. Violence must be targeted only against the few criminal elements. Warfighters look at the civilian population as all potentially hostile. As a result they are much more willing to use force.

This dilemma was the core of the senior officer’s concern. He regarded the civilians as mostly innocent and worried about the psychological effect that the operation might have on them. The warfighters viewed the civilians as all potentially dangerous until proven otherwise.

What Price Force Protection?

Marines understand that a landing on a hostile shore will get a lot of peo-



The civilian population has become the battlefield. (Photo by Cpl Thomas J. Griffith.)

ple hurt. Although regrettable, casualties are intrinsic to the nature of the operation. But what risks are acceptable in a counterinsurgency operation? In this particular operation, the risk that male detainees might become violent, even when confined to holding areas, was considered great enough that all were flex-cuffed. For commanders concerned about force protection that just seemed prudent. But the action could be looked at another way; to reduce a small risk to the force, hundreds of Iraqi men were humiliated by the occupier. Was this tradeoff worthwhile?

For the U.S. public, casualties are the principal metric by which they measure success or failure in Iraq. The United States, as a democratic country that values the lives of its citizens, is naturally sensitive to casualties. But the public also cannot avoid focusing on casualties because every day the press headlines casualty-producing incidents. Then, at the end of each month, the press tabulates the cost and compares the results with previous months, often in a construct such as, “The most casualties since. . . .” The military as an institution rejects using casualties as

metric of progress. Casualties are regarded as a regrettable, but inevitable, consequence of military operations; security, governance, and economics are the key metrics. But the senior leadership cannot ignore the public's sensitivity to casualties.

Military culture also plays a role. Leaders take care of their people, so a good leader implements every force protection measure possible. On the other hand, counterinsurgency doctrine calls for many actions—moving among the people, establishing vehicle checkpoints, setting up local observation posts—that expose friendly forces to enemy action in order to further the abstract goal of securing the population. A conscientious commander instinctively tries to mitigate these dangers, and mitigating often means minimizing; that is, reducing to the lowest possible level. But minimizing the risk of friendly casualties imposes costs on the civilian population.

The attitude was not limited to flex-cuffing, to a particular operation, or to a particular unit but broadly affected coalition actions. Escalation of force

Surveys of the Anbar population show that civilians are much more afraid of coalition forces than of the insurgents.

(EOF) incidents are an example. In order to protect the force from suicide bombers, Marines and soldiers in Al Anbar end up killing, on average, a dozen Iraqis every month at checkpoints or encounters with convoys.¹¹

These are not wanton killings caused by an overly aggressive or poorly trained force. Virtually all occur after U.S. forces follow proper warning procedures—flags, pyrotechnics, warning shots, vehicle-disabling shots. But the end is still the same—dead Iraqi civilians whose only crime was that they froze up, got confused, or were not paying attention.

The issue is not judicial. Marines in these EOF incidents are following the rules of engagement and are authorized the use of deadly force. They are not criminally culpable. Instead, the issue is strategic. Can we protect the force like this and still win the allegiance of the population? In the case of EOF casualties, every dead civilian is a family or clan alienated from the coalition and perhaps incited to a blood feud, despite mitigating actions, such as condolence payments.

Surveys of the Anbar population show that civilians are much more afraid of coalition forces than of the insurgents. In an April 2007 poll 80 percent of Anbaris said that the American military was “always” or “usually threatening,” whereas only 28 percent said the same about “the armed resistance.”¹² U.S. commanders find this statement hard to believe. They have rigid rules of engagement, and insurgents routinely commit terrible atrocities. U.S. firepower is also much more tightly controlled than in the early days of the war, but to Anbari civilians, insurgent violence looks targeted while coalition violence looks random and unnecessary. Further, civilians have seen the measures that U.S. forces will take to protect themselves. One Army civil affairs officer (working elsewhere in Iraq) summed up this dilemma. On the one hand, he spent every day trying to improve the daily lives of Iraqis. On the other hand, he saw the military's aggressive response to perceived threats:

I think of the children who burst into tears when we point our weapons into their cars (just in case), and the countless vehicles we sideswipe [to avoid potential improvised explosive devices].



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. . . I also think of the reality of being attacked and it all makes sense—the need to smash their cars and point our weapons at them and detain them. . . . But how would I feel in their shoes?¹³

Taken to an extreme, this attitude—that the force must be protected by any measures necessary—induces Marines to shoot 40 civilians in an attempt to evade a perceived car bomb threat, as allegedly happened in Afghanistan.¹⁴

Culture and Strategy

The senior officer in this story faced a dilemma. On the one hand he did not want to tell subordinates how to fight the war in their area of operations. These subordinates had been given the forces and authority to operate independently on the well-established theory that commanders at the lowest level possible should take the lead. They understood local conditions best, and counterinsurgency is a local struggle. On the other hand, the senior officer was concerned about the indirect effects that coalition operations might have on the population, which was, according to counterinsurgency theory, the main battlefield. Did the operation meet the test of not creating more enemies than it eliminated, as GEN David H. Petraeus once asked?¹⁵ The senior officer's solution—providing amenities like tea—was an attempt to mitigate adverse effects without interfering with his subordinates' prerogatives.

If these different perspectives had arisen only in one operation by one unit, then the divergence in outlook would be of little interest. But these different perspectives arose repeatedly because they got at the central question of counterinsurgency warfare—what are military forces supposed to accomplish? The answer to this question drives operations and, ultimately, strategy. If the purpose is to attack insurgents while minimizing friendly casualties, then the operation was structured appropriately. If the purpose is to control and win the allegiance of the population, then the structure of this operation was prob-

lematic. Because of deep cultural attitudes, military organizations may not even be aware that they are making a choice. They are doing what, over the course of decades, the institution expected to do.

Not only is this question culturally difficult to address, it is also institutionally difficult to address because the answers appear to reflect praise or criticism of particular units or commanders. Grappling with the issue is therefore uncomfortable and requires a tremendous act of will. But these issues are too fundamental to be avoided. If they are not discussed and decided inside the military, then they will be discussed and decided in the press and the political establishment.

Notes

1. This story reflects an actual event that occurred in Al Anbar Province, Iraq during the fall of 2006. Details have been obscured for security reasons.

2. Flex-cuffs, or quick ties, are plastic handcuffs used by coalition troops to secure detainees.

3. *Al Anbar Trend Survey April 2007*, Lincoln Group, Unclassified, and *Final Survey Report Al Anbar Information Operations (IO) Survey 11*, September/October 2006, Lincoln Group, Unclassified, both produced for Multinational Force-West (MNF-W).

4. Aylwin-Foster, Brigadier Nigel, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," *Military Review*, U.S. Army, Fort Leavenworth, KS, November-December 2005, p. 2–15.

5. Ricks, Thomas, *Fiasco*, Penguin Press, New York, 2006, pp. 367–370.

6. Gordon, Michael and Bernard Trainor, *Cobra II*, Pantheon Books, New York, 2006, p. 494.

7. *Pacification in Algeria, 1956–1958*, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, originally published in 1963, republished in 2006, and *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, Praeger, New York, originally published in 1964 and reissued in 2006. Galula based the books on his experiences fighting guerrillas in French Algeria during the 1950s as well as tours as an observer in China, Greece, and Indochina.

8. *Field Manual 3–24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3–33.5, Counterinsurgency*, Head-

quarters Marine Corps, Washington, DC, December 2006, for example, Para 1–3, p. 101; Para 1–108, p. 1–20; Para 1–159, p. 1–28.

9. Krepinevich, Jr., Andrew F., *The Army in Vietnam*, Johns Hopkins University Press, New York, 1986. For application of this argument to the current situation, see, for example, Jeffrey Record, *The American Way of War: Cultural Barriers to Successful Counterinsurgency*, Cato Institute, Washington, DC, 2006 and Colin S. Gray, "Stability Operations in Strategic Perspective: A Skeptical View," *Parameters*, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, Summer 2006, pp.4–14.

10. Peters, Ralph, *Beyond Baghdad*, Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA, 2003, p. 135.

11. Iraqi Security Forces also cause many civilian casualties and are, arguably, more dangerous to civilians than U.S. forces. The "Iraqi death blossom," where Iraqi Security Forces fire in all directions when under attack, is infamous. Polling results indicated that civilians feared Iraqi Security Forces also—the Iraqi Army more than the police.

12. The polls made a distinction between "foreign fighters" and "armed resistance," the former being foreign jihadists, the latter Iraqi natives. Foreign fighters are regarded as much more threatening than the armed resistance. These results have not changed substantially over the last year despite recent improvements in security conditions, *Al Anbar Trend Survey April 2007* and *Final Survey Report Al Anbar IO Survey 11*.

13. Estrada, Oscar, "The Military: Losing Hearts and Minds?," *The Washington Post*, 6 June 2004. Estrada worked north of Baghdad, not in Al Anbar, but the dilemma he described was universal.

14. Tyson, Ann Scott and Josh White, "Marines Killed Civilians, U.S. Says," *The Washington Post*, 15 April 2007, p. 1, citing statements by MajGen Frank Kearney III, the local commander.

15. Then-LtGen David H. Petraeus, "Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations From Soldiering in Iraq," *Military Review*, January-February 2006, pp.2–12.



Twelve Things I Wish I Had Known

Think about the issues; find the right people

by BGen David G. Reist

Upon returning from my latest deployment in February, our commanding general asked me what things I wish I had known prior to leaving in February 2006. Though assigned as the Deputy Commanding General for Support within Al Anbar Province, the title is a bit of a misnomer. The focus of this billet was to deal with issues relating to economics and governance. These areas are not commonplace for Marines, but when given a mission, we salute smartly and attempt to do our best. In retrospect, the mission was not as foreign as one might have imagined. I make this statement based on the skill sets and capabilities resident within our civil affair groups, the education process taught in our military schools—we teach how to think, not what to think (I can personally applaud intermediate-level school and the Ma-

>BGen Reist was the Commanding General, 1st Marine Logistics Group, Camp Pendleton. He is currently serving as the Assistant Deputy Commandant, Installations and Logistics, Headquarters Marine Corps.

rine Corps War College here), and an economics and governance conference that was held prior to the deployment at Camp Pendleton. I will relate back to these points throughout this article, but first let's examine "12 things I wish I'd known."

(1) The relationship between security, economics, and governance. I have no idea what exact level of security is needed to ensure economic and governance growth. Make no mistake though, a level of security is a must. The exact level of security needed is open to debate. Does economic growth

bring security, or does security bring economic growth? Will legitimate government assuage the violence? There are security concerns everywhere in the world, yet economies and governments exist. Growth in economics and governance cannot occur within total chaos, but that growth happening in conjunction with security seems logical.

(2) Economics and governance is a deep fight. If you are looking for immediate results, you will be disappointed daily. Plant the seeds and trust that you can make the right things happen over time.

(3) Find people with a bias for action. We strive to find these individuals in our Corps, and we tend to use the word initiative to describe them. They are priceless. At the opposite end of the spectrum, we have those who embrace inaction. There are many of these people out there, and they can be more dangerous than could ever be imagined. Whether they fear failure, will not take risks, or have become so entrenched in their jobs that they will not try anything new, they undercut change, and in the Iraq environment daily reassessment is mandatory. The landscape changes quickly and vision is required. Al Anbar is dynamic, and risk is required. Keep in mind that organizations have different objectives, and friction may result from action or inaction. In sum, find people who can make things happen.

(4) Understand the interagency process. All elements of national power are required when dealing with such complex issues as the rebuilding of economics and governance in Iraq. During our tour, representation in some areas outside of the Department of De-



Accept the tribal organization for what it is—a cultural dynamic that must be appreciated. (Photo by Cpl Luke Blom.)



Appreciate the embryonic nature of the Iraqi Government and military. (Photo by LCpl Andrew M. Kalwitz.)

fense was sufficient, while others still could do more to assist in making a huge difference. It is critical to understand who does what to whom and establish personal relationships to get things done. Midway through our deployment the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, Business Transformation (Paul Brinkley) initiated an aggressive campaign to stimulate economic growth. His effort is gaining traction and, if reinforced by all elements of our national power, could be even more effective. Synergy would be extremely powerful here, but to date this is just barely beginning to happen.

(5) Tribes. The tribal culture is the most complex issue in Al Anbar. The complexity of this issue stems from the simple fact that the Western mind does not (and may never) understand it. We do not have to understand though; simply accept it for what it is. There are some who claim they understand this dynamic, and they may be correct, but

I doubt it. Appreciate the complexity of this issue, but do not fear it, and listen very carefully. Know that tribal en-

The tribal culture is the most complex issue in Al Anbar. The complexity of this issue stems from the simple fact that the Western mind does not (and may never) understand it.

gagement has resulted in many positive things, the predominant one being Anbari participation in their own security forces, both army and police. This se-

curity force participation was first seen in Al Qaim in 2005, then in Baghdad in early 2006, and again in Ramadi in mid-2006.

(6) Read. If I were to do it all over again, I'd first reread the Old Testament, followed by *The Peloponnesian Wars* by Thucydides. These are chosen because we are all sons of Abraham, and war is timeless. After that, while there is more out there than could possibly be digested, delve in and never stop learning.

(7) Appreciate the impact of the neighboring countries on Al Anbar. Jordan and Syria have large Sunni populations. Amman, Jordan, in particular, is home to a large number of influential businessmen who have ties to Al Anbar and Iraq writ large. Some of these men could afford to displace when the violence became too much to deal with. Others have had businesses in Amman for decades, as Amman is a still blossoming center for economic activity in the Middle East. As Iraq's

economy begins to emerge, do not discount the other countries in the Middle East as potential business and trade partners.

(8) Appreciate the embryonic nature and fragility of the Iraqi Government and economic architecture. The country is just getting on its feet. Mistakes have been made on all sides, but Iraq (and particularly Al Anbar) is loaded with talent and natural resources. Al Anbar has virtually unlimited potential for agricultural growth, untapped oil and gas reserves, and has other economic areas that are ripe for exploitation. Yes, security, security, security! (Go back to number 1.)

(9) Sit down with anyone and everyone to get ideas and opinions. I mean sit down with both U.S. forces and Iraqis. Iraq is complex. Even within Al Anbar itself you will find many divergent views. Listen to all. An idea that works in the eastern portion of Al Anbar may not work in the western sector.

(10) Reach to people who can help. The chain of command is important and must be kept informed. In the midst of attempting to get things done within the complex relationship of Multinational Coalition-Iraq, Multinational Force-Iraq, the U.S. Embassy, etc., the measure of effectiveness needs to be results. The process is important, but without a result you have accomplished nothing. Go back to number 3 (action/inaction) and find the right people. Avoid the people of inaction. Get a result.

(11) Incorporate reservists. The skill set that is brought to the table by some of our reservists is irreplaceable. We had reservists (both officers and enlisted personnel) who were agricultural experts, Chamber of Commerce representatives, doctors, lawyers, telecommunications specialists, etc. Although active duty personnel possess some of these skills, the reservists have focused on them their entire lives, and I found

these individuals priceless. Most importantly, though, is the thought process they bring to the table. We think like military men, and we should. It is our profession. They tend to think out of the box instinctively; they think outside the military box. When dealing with economics and governance issues, I would not want it any other way.

(12) Get the message out (strategic communications). We have a hard time getting our message out compared to our enemy. They do not care about facts. In saying this, I'm describing more the messaging that is affiliated with the conflict. In the area of economics and governance, though, it is imperative to have a plan that is understood by all and is simple. This is extremely difficult for a number of reasons. If you advertise your economic plan or its successes, you in essence broadcast a target for the enemy. The same is true of any governance initiatives that might take hold.

As I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) prepares to reengage and deploy in 2008, numerous efforts are underway to monitor and analyze the efforts of II MEF and capitalize on their efforts and successes. An exercise is being developed to enhance interagency cooperation—an EMERALD EXPRESS-type event that was instituted in the mid-1990s by Gen Anthony C. Zinni to address the interagency complexities that arose from our operations in Somalia. Security is the focus of effort in Iraq and needs to be, along with transitioning responsibility to the Iraqis. Could economics and governance be the decisive effort though? Although we loudly bang the drum of a military and political solution, one of the pillars of America is capitalism. In promoting an economics and governance policy that supports economic growth and investment in Iraq, capitalism could likely be the vehicle that carries the solution.

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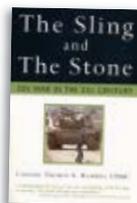
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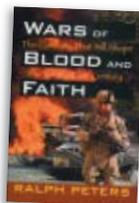
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Winning on the Information Battlefield

Is the story getting out

by LtCol Roger S. Galbraith, USMCR

The traditional dimensions of warfare are known and taught to us as land, sea, air, and space. In the book, *Endgame: The Blueprint for Victory in the War on Terror* (Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2004) by LtGen Thomas McInerney, USAF(Ret) and MG Paul Valley, USA(Ret), a fifth dimension is introduced that is applicable to the global war on terrorism (GWOT)—the dimension of information. Many Department of Defense personnel and senior officials say we are losing the information war in the GWOT, using as evidence the discrepancy between actual conditions and successes on the ground in Iraq and the reporting of news in Iraq by national-level U.S. media.

The military public affairs (PA) community is the primary conduit between military operational forces and media representatives. Measuring PA effectiveness in getting the military's story to the American public and others is crucial to the commander's decisions as to how he can effectively do battle in the dimension of information.

The Marine Corps Forces Command PA Office conducted an analysis of U.S. media reporting on Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) from August

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Getting the story out quickly is critical in winning the information war. (Photo by Cpl Mark Sixbey.)



To get the Marine Corps story out the media has to be supported. (Photo by SSgt Houston F. White, Jr.)

2004 to August 2006 in an effort to determine if there really is a media bias, and to determine effective PA techniques to get the Marine Corps' story more widely reported. The sample chosen for the study included mostly print media reports with an Iraqi dateline attributed to a certain author. (Many Associated Press or other wire service reports are not attributed to an author, so they were excluded from the sample.) Marine expeditionary force PA officers (PAOs) deal directly with media repre-

sentatives in Iraq, not with Washington-based reporters or editorial page columnists, so those were not included in the study. The study focused primarily on reporting of large circulation newspapers because those articles are easily retrievable for free and can be easily categorized for trends. A comparison of print to television (TV) reporting was performed on a small sample of TV reports aired in August and September 2005 to determine any differences or similarities from the print media study

results. The sample eventually included over 1,500 print and TV reports from Iraq. Reports were graded with a standardized scoring system for the presence of military PA products to help military PAOs determine which products are reported by the civilian media and which are not. For the purpose of the study, a military PA product may be quotes from named military sources from interviews or press conferences, information from military press releases or statements, or reporting from embedded reporters.

Bias in Reporting

The study showed conclusively that the print and TV media reporting from Iraq is not biased. Not a single report was found to purposefully paint a military spokesperson or servicemember in a bad light, try to twist his words in an interview, or even misrepresent his statements by creative editing. When the U.S. media travels to Iraq they are there to report the story they observe. The choice to engage the media and support their reporting is a choice between getting coverage of our Marines and other servicemembers or getting no coverage at all. Getting bad or distorted coverage should not be a concern that keeps us from engaging the civilian media and supporting their reporting of Marines.

Effective PA Techniques

Getting the U.S. media correspondents out of Baghdad and into the provinces is the single largest factor in getting U.S. military visibility into their reports. It sounds easy, but in reality, the coordination of airlift, ground transportation, and media escorts, and the availability of correspondents and events to report on, is difficult.

If a civilian correspondent cannot be on the ground outside of Baghdad to report on a military operation, then the next most effective technique is to provide timely PA products to the media. For example, a timely press release describing an operation in November 2005 was widely published in U.S. print, network news, and cable news

outlets within 24 hours of its release. However, photos and excellent combat correspondent reports from the operation sat on a senior officer's desk waiting to be cleared for over 2 weeks, losing all news value in the delay and thus were never published. What military PA staffs do is effective and will be used in civilian media but only if their products are timely and newsworthy.

TV and other video images are the most popular and most preferred means by which Americans receive their information. In fact, nearly 80 percent of Americans get their news from TV. This study addressed broadcast reporting from Iraq and compared it to print media reporting. TV is a visual medium, and video from Iraq, particularly from the front, is very difficult to get. It takes a much larger footprint to embed TV media, and where a national newspaper will have three or more correspondents in Baghdad, a TV network will have only one crew, so they may not be able to send that one team outside of the city. Without video to support a TV story, the typical TV story from Iraq only includes a few words about the Marines killed or injured that day. TV news producers will not spend more than a few seconds of a broadcast on a story that has no video, so TV coverage of Marines in Iraq is very limited. The PA community must work toward providing nearly realtime (within the news cycle) video imagery to support TV media and increase the presence of the U.S. military in a typical nightly news broadcast in the absence of civilian videographers.

What Will Work Tomorrow

The exponential growth of the Internet and the development of 24-hour news networks have radically expanded the media space available for information on combat operations, most notably OIF. The growth of information mediums has made the transfer of information become consumer controlled, instead of source and medium controlled. All organizations, even the very disciplined Marine Corps, should

not think that all information on an actual physical operation that involves large combat formations can be controlled. For example, if you want to see videos of Marines blowing up or shooting things in Iraq, go to an Internet site that is not controlled by the Marine Corps but is a direct outlet for Marines (and others) to get videos to consumers. Marine Corps commands and PA staffs can use the explosion of information

The future of the information battlefield will see an increase in video-based reporting. . . .

mediums to their advantage. Such techniques as creating interesting, relevant websites with information of interest to the consumer and then publishing the existence of those websites on other media (roadside billboards, communications and interviews in mainstream media, etc.) can help make more consumers aware of our PA-controlled communications efforts. It is easy to imagine a day when instead of the MC-News page of the Headquarters Marine Corps website being populated by text and photo articles (ready to print in a base newspaper), it will be populated by video-based reports, aided by computer graphics, scans of maps, etc., to help the consumer understand and stay interested in the report.

In conclusion, winning the GWOT will demand that the world, particularly the American public, knows its military is winning the war on the battlefield. In the span of this study, when the U.S. media report from the front or use our PA products, the outcome is positive, and the story of our Marines is told. The choice is to support the U.S. media and get our story widely published or have no story published. If we want to win on the information battlefield, we need to be engaged, which means we need to support mass

media efforts to tell the Marine Corps story. In the absence of civilian media, we need to document that story in newsworthy formats for the civilian media to use. The future of the information battlefield will see an increase in video-based reporting, with the Internet taking the place of more traditional media as an outlet for those reports. We can win in the information dimension of GWOT, but just like the land, sea, air, and space dimensions, we need to recognize that the information battlefield exists and be engaged in that dimension with the same tenacity that Marines take to every other battlefield.



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Counterinsurgency in Iraq Started With Fallujah

Early errors in countering the Iraqi insurgency

by LtCol H. Thomas Hayden, USMC(Ret)

Vacillation, indecision, and signs of weakness fuel an insurgency. The decision by the U.S. National Command Authorities to withdraw the Marines from Fallujah in April 2004 was a mistake. Fallujah stood as a symbol that the Americans could be made to quit. Before any realistic counterinsurgency campaign can begin, any pocket of insurgent dominance must be eliminated.

The problems that exist today stem from five failures: (1) failure to adequately provide enough coalition troops on the ground to assure security and stability at the end of organized hostilities, (2) failure to keep a major portion of the Iraqi Army and police forces intact, (3) failure to keep employed enough of the Iraqi Government bureaucracy to ensure some form of government services, (4) failure to work with the established Muslim religious and tribal leaders who were in place, and (5) failure to adequately plan for long-range internal security, stability, and reconstruction after major combat operations.

The original U.S. Central Command estimate for military forces for a war in Iraq called for 500,000 military personnel in the region. This figure was based on the former regional combatant commander's estimate (Gen Anthony C. Zinni, USMC(Ret)) to successfully complete an invasion and secure the country until a new form of government could take control and establish security and stability. GEN Tommy Franks balked at the Department of De-

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fense "guidance" and successfully argued for 175,000 for the invasion and 220,000 in the region.

U.S. forces are now expected to successfully conclude the "occupation" and accomplish the following: (1) conduct a successful counterinsurgency campaign, (2) stop border infiltration by Islamic militants, (3) secure the lines of communications, (4) rebuild an Iraqi Army

Before any realistic counterinsurgency campaign can begin, any pocket of insurgent dominance must be eliminated.

and police force, and (5) provide for security, transition, and reconstruction operations throughout Iraq.

There are currently four major types of insurgent forces in Iraq: (1) former Saddam Hussein regime loyalists, to include the Ba'athist, the fedayeen, and the remnants of the Republican

Guards and Special Security forces; (2) the Abu Musab al-Zarqawi Tawhid and jihad groups, with links to al-Qaeda; (3) Islamic fundamentalists who operate independently; and (4) criminals who use kidnapping and robbery for profit.

If one cliché fits Iraq, it is "it's the economy, stupid." As many have reported in the news media, there was a plan for the "end game," but it was the wrong plan. The L. Paul Bremer plan for a laissez-faire economic policy, in which multinational corporations would rebuild Iraq, a "prosperous economy" would create jobs, and peace would flourish, was doomed to failure from the start. The wartime destruction of the Iraqi infrastructure that put a lot of people out of work, not to mention alienated all of the people, together with the unemployed masses from the disbanded Iraqi Army and police forces, created a 75 percent unemployment rate that even today still hovers—from some press reports—at 65 percent.

The pre-Iraqi war establishment in Iraq had Islamic clerics and tribal leaders who had some relative power. Bremer ignored the recognized power of the clerics and the clan chieftains and picked and chose the clerics he would



Working effectively with Iraqi forces will lead to reduced U.S. troop levels. (Photo by Cpl Wayne Edmiston.)

work with totally ignoring the tribal chiefs. At the end of his tour of duty, Bremer had started to talk to the chief clerics he had originally ignored.

The Pentagon has recognized that it underestimated the potential for an organized insurgency. The battles that have occurred in Fallujah, Ramadi, Mosul, and Najaf were fought not only by the remnants of holdout Iraqi forces isolated after the war, but many battles involve an indigenous uprising, commonly called an insurgency, that has the support, either forced or willingly provided, of the people. The foreign jihad “holy warriors” are much smaller than reported in the news media.

The battle fought against insurgents in Ramadi was a model for successful counterinsurgency. The U.S. forces worked hand in hand with Iraqi forces. Success in many other areas will only come with increased Iraqi military and police forces taking over the major activities against the insurgents. The first sign that the insurgency can be reversed

will come when the people decide that they have had enough from living in fear of the insurgents and foreign fighters and stop supporting the insurgency.

Ultimate success in an insurgency comes from the local people, not U.S. or coalition troops. However, the coalition and Iraqi Government have to work closely in a combined civil-military counterinsurgency campaign plan.

There are 11 basic principles for a counterinsurgency campaign plan.

- The center of gravity is the people.
- Focus on security for the people and the establishment of public safety.
- Establish an effective intelligence collection system.
- Establish small, specialized counterinsurgency units to hunt down, destroy, or neutralize the insurgent leadership and the infrastructure that supports them.
- Establish well-disciplined, specially trained, and highly mobile counter-guerrilla forces.

- Incorporate psychological operations and/or information operations in every action.

- Establish population and resource controls and a census grievance program.

- Reconstruction and/or development of the economic and public works infrastructure must have local popular support.

- Balance overmatching firepower with considerations for the population.

- Operate within established international law.

- Organize police, military, and civilian agencies under one civil-military campaign plan.

The first priority in counterinsurgency operations is creating an effective intelligence collection effort. Effective and trustworthy local police, paramilitary, and military forces, who have proven that they are in the fight against the insurgency, can be very effective in human intelligence. Intelligence in-

surgency is more than learning order of battle and estimating intentions and capabilities. In an insurgency, intelligence teams have to reorient on the population, the leaders of the insurgency, the infrastructure that supports the insurgency, and the funding. Follow the money.

The next priority is to establish effective “population and resource control”; e.g., issue new identification cards to the friendly or neutral population and code suspected enemy agents/forces.

Establish or reestablish a “census grievance.” All Arab and most Southeast Asia countries have a long tradition of the local tribal chief or governor meeting once a month with the people (anybody) to petition their leaders for a redress of grievances. This tradition has proven to be a valuable tool in collecting intelligence.

Combined action platoons were very successful in Vietnam with the Marine Corps combined action program (CAP). The first try at a CAP in Iraq got off to a bad start due to poor timing and poor implementation. It has recently been reported that the senior military leadership in Iraq is now considering placing “advisors” with Iraqi units. It is time to reconsider a CAP-type organization for some Iraqi units.

Additionally, pseudo-operations, or black operations, can produce very favorable results. This is where you take returnees, Chieu Hoi in Vietnam, and turn them back into the enemy community to scout targets and collect intelligence. They should not be used as strike forces or they are quickly compromised. The so-called “El Salvador” option, or assassination teams, is not a good idea. As was learned with the Phoenix Program in Vietnam, this technique can be used to effectively eliminate legitimate political opposition.

Language proficiency cannot be overemphasized. Even rudimentary greetings can go a long way in making friends. All advisors of any kind must have a basic knowledge of the lan-

guage, and every Marine, soldier, or civilian who comes in contact with the people must know simple greetings, customs, and local laws. Knowing who are the religious leaders and the tribal chieftains and who belongs to what group is important. Knowing the religious practices of the specific group is of paramount importance.

Interestingly, there is one item in the Iraqi insurgency that the U.S. political and military leadership has not recognized and exploited—Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and his followers are foreigners. A carefully planned and executed psychological warfare campaign to highlight the non-Iraqi interference in the Iraqi political life could drive a wedge between the foreign fighters and the Iraqis. This very important counterinsurgency tool seems to be sorely lacking. Separate the fish from the sea and the fish will die.

The civil-military campaign plan must unite all civil and military forces operating in the counterinsurgency campaign to identify a main focus of effort and execution of the commander’s intent. The counterinsurgency campaign may involve the concept, first enunciated by Gen Charles C. Krulak, USMC(Ret), of a three block war—peacekeeping on one block, counterinsurgency operations on another, and full-scale conventional battles on another.

Whether it is development or reconstruction of essential economic infrastructure, local indigenous participation must be assured. All civic action projects must be approved and supported by the people and their leadership.

Originally, the United States planned to do everything at once by trying to reestablish security and, at the same time, complete reconstruction projects and build new democratic institutions.

If approved by the U.S. Congress, the transfer of \$2 billion of reprogrammed money to expand programs to train and equip Iraqi police and military forces will go a long way in fighting the insurgency.

The London Times, 15 September 2004, reported the same story that I heard time and again in Vietnam. The ordinary citizens of Iraq are more concerned with their welfare and their future than the battles in Fallujah and Najaf. *The Times* quoted an Iraqi:

It’s all meaningless. What are we [*London Times*] talking about? Impose a siege, end a siege. Fight or retreat. This is not what we should be talking about. Let’s talk about sewage, water, utilities, security, and the basic needs of life. . . . We have two hours of electricity and ten hours off.

Until the Iraqis see a better life for themselves and their children, the insurgency may continue to have some form of support. Insurgents can be self-generating and can draw plenty of support from angry indigenous sources. The 30 January elections may have been a sign of what is to come.

There is an important element of an insurgency that cannot be overlooked—public opinion at home and abroad. Case studies of Vietnam, Algeria, Cypress, Lebanon, Somalia, etc. are proof of how one can win all the battles but lose the war. There may be some positive signs developing in Iraq. There seems to be a quiet shift to more pragmatism.

As we saw in the early mistakes made in Fallujah, where political considerations were tied to tactical decisions, perceptions often become reality. The only way to lose in Iraq is for the coalition and Iraqi armed forces to fail in the counterinsurgency campaign and the doom and gloom pundits in the United States to weaken American resolve.

>Editor’s Note: This article was originally published in MCG, July 2005.





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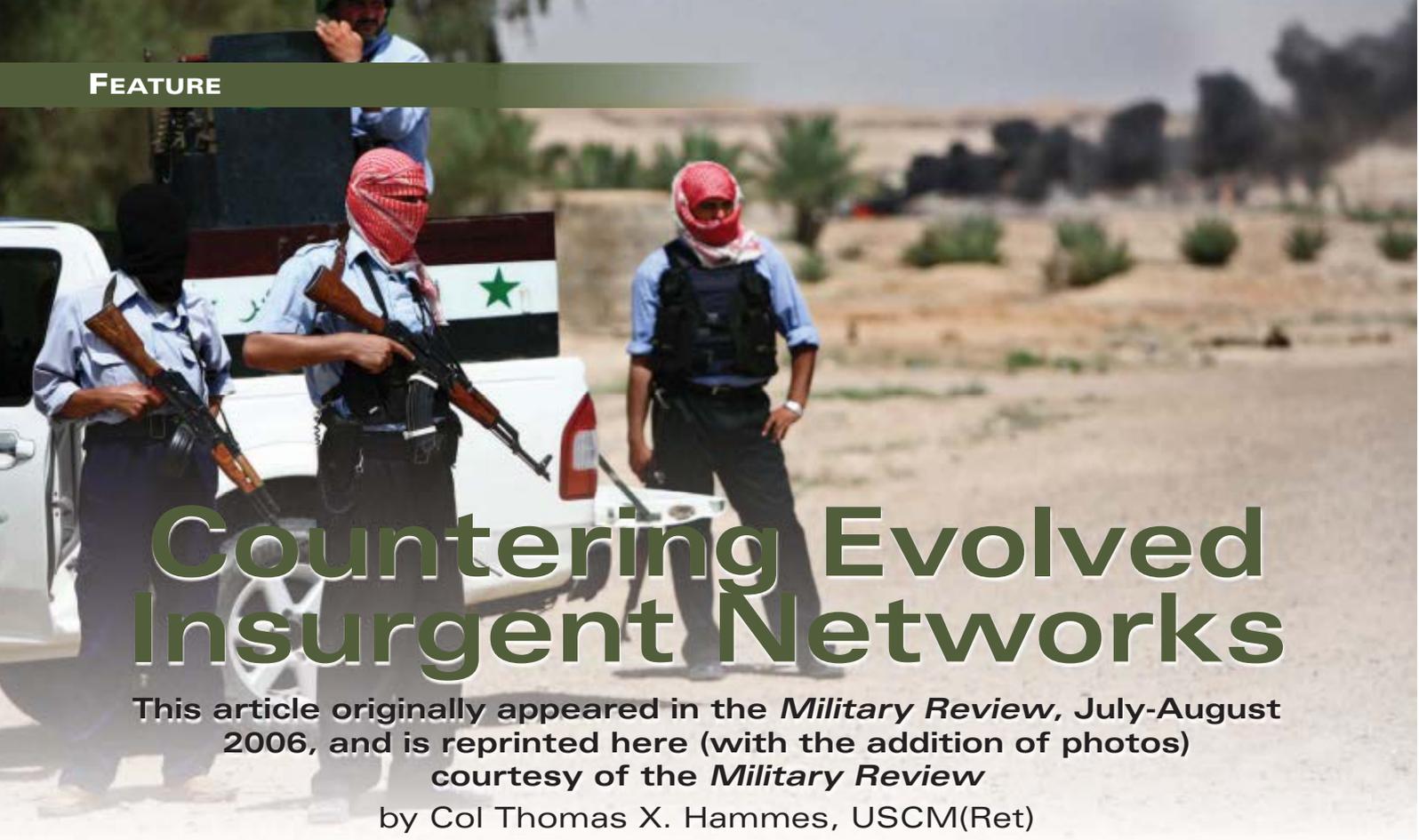
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Countering Evolved Insurgent Networks

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by Col Thomas X. Hammes, USCM(Ret)

The first step in meeting the challenge facing us in Iraq today or in similar war zones tomorrow is to understand that insurgency and counterinsurgency are very different tasks. The use of Special Forces against insurgents in Vietnam—“out-guerrilla-ing the guerillas”—provided exactly the wrong solution to the problem. It assumed that the insurgent and the counterinsurgent can use the same approach to achieve their quite different goals.

To define insurgency, I use Bard O’Neill’s definition from *Insurgency and Terrorism*. He states: “Insurgency may be defined as a struggle between a nonruling group and the ruling authorities in which the nonruling group consciously uses *political resources* (e.g., organizational expertise, propaganda, and demonstrations) and *violence* to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of one or more aspects of politics.”¹

Counterinsurgency, as defined by Ian Beckett, “is far from being a purely military problem . . . co-ordination of both the civil and military effort must occur at all levels and embrace the provision of intelligence. . . .”²

On the surface, these definitions suggest that insurgency and counterinsurgency are similar because each requires political and military action. However, when one thinks it through, the challenge is very different for the government. The government must accomplish something. It must govern effectively. In contrast, the insurgent only has to propose an idea for a better future while ensuring the government cannot govern effectively.

In Iraq, the resistance does not even project a better future. It simply has the nihilistic goal of ensuring the government cannot function. This negative goal is much easier to achieve than governing. For instance, it is easier and more direct to use military power than to apply political, economic, and social techniques. The insurgent can use violence to de-legitimize a government (because that government cannot fulfill the basic social contract to protect the people). However, simple application of violence by the government cannot restore that legitimacy. David Galula, in his classic *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, expresses the difference between insurgency and counterinsurgency very clearly: “Revolutionary warfare . . . represents an exceptional case not only because as we suspect, it has its special rules, different from those of the conventional war, but also because most of the rules applicable to one side do not work for the other. In a fight between a fly and a lion, the fly cannot deliver a knockout blow and the lion cannot fly. It is the same war for both camps in terms of space and time, yet there are two distinct warfares [sic]—the revolutionary’s, and shall we say, the counterrevolutionary’s.”³

Enduring Traits of Insurgency

Mao Tse Tung wrote his famous *On Guerilla War* [Yu Chi Chan] in 1937. Despite the passage of time, many of his basic observations about insurgency remain valid. First and foremost, insurgency is a political, not a military, struggle. It is not amenable to a purely military solution without resort-

Photo: Counterinsurgency forces cannot fight with the same tactics as the insurgent. (Photo by Cpl Ryan M. Blaich.)

ing to a level of brutality unacceptable to the Western world. Even the particularly brutal violence Russia has inflicted upon Chechnya—killing almost 25 percent of the total population and destroying its cities—has not resulted in victory.

The second factor has to do with the political will of the counterinsurgent's own population. If that population turns sour when faced with the long time-frame and mounting costs of counterinsurgency, the insurgent will win. This has been particularly true whenever the United States has become involved in counterinsurgency operations. Insurgents have learned over the last 30 years that they do not have to defeat the United States militarily to drive us out of an insurgency; they only have to destroy our political will. Today's insurgents in both Afghanistan and Iraq understand this and have made the political will of the U.S. population a primary target of their efforts.

A third unchanging aspect of insurgency involves duration. Insurgencies are measured in decades, not months or years. The Chinese Communists fought for 27 years. The Vietnamese fought the U.S. for 30 years. The Palestinians have been resisting Israel since at least 1968. Even when the counterinsurgent has won, it has taken a long time. The Malaya Emergency and the El Salvadoran insurgency each lasted 12 years.

Finally, despite America's love of high technology, technology does not provide a major advantage in counterinsurgency. In fact, in the past the side with the simplest technology often won. What has been decisive in most counterinsurgencies were the human attributes of leadership, cultural understanding, and political judgment.

In short, the key factors of insurgency that have not changed are its political nature, its protracted timelines, and its intensely human (versus technological) nature.

Emerging Traits of Insurgency

While these hallmarks of insurgency have remained constant, the nature of insurgency has evolved in other areas. Like all forms of war, insurgency changes in consonance with the political, economic, social, and technical conditions of the society it springs from. Insurgencies are no longer the special province of single-party organizations like Mao's and Ho Chi Minh's. Today, insurgent organizations are comprised of loose coalitions of the willing, human networks that range from local to global. This reflects the social organizations of the societies they come from and the reality that today's most successful organizations are networks rather than hierarchies.

In addition to being composed of coalitions, insurgencies also operate across the spectrum from local to transnational organizations. Because these networks span the globe, external actors such as the Arabs who fought alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Afghans who fought in Bosnia, and the European Muslims who are showing up in Iraq are now a regular part of insurgencies.

In a coalition insurgency, the goals of the different elements may vary too. In Afghanistan today, some of the insurgents

simply wish to rule their own valleys; others seek to rule a nation. Al-Qaeda is fighting for a transnational caliphate. In Iraq, many of the Sunni insurgents seek a secular government dominated by Sunnis. Other Sunnis—the Salafists—want a strict Islamic society ruled by Sharia. Among the Shi'a, Muqtada Al-Sadr operated as an insurgent, then shifted to the political arena (while maintaining a powerful militia and a geographic base in the slums of Sadr City). Although temporarily out of the insurgent business, his forces remain a factor in any armed conflict. Other Shi'a militias are also prepared to enter the military equation if their current political efforts do not achieve their goals. Finally, criminal elements in both Afghanistan and Iraq participate in the unrest primarily for profit.

At times, even their hatred of the outsider is not strong enough to keep these various coalition groups from fighting among themselves. Such factionalism was a continuing problem for anti-Soviet insurgents in Afghanistan in the 1980's, and savvy Soviet commanders exploited it at times. We see major signs of the same symptom in Iraq today.

This complex mixture of players and motives is now the pattern for insurgencies. If insurgents succeed in driving the Coalition out of Afghanistan and Iraq, their own highly diverse coalitions of the willing will not be able to form a government; their mutually incompatible beliefs will lead to

What has been decisive in most counterinsurgencies were the human attributes of leadership, cultural understanding, and political judgment. . . .

continued fighting until one faction dominates. This is what happened in Afghanistan when the insurgents drove the Soviets out. Similar disunity appeared in Chechnya after the Soviets withdrew in 1996, and infighting only ceased when the Russians returned to install their own government. Early signs of a similar power struggle are present in the newly evacuated Gaza Strip.

The fact that recent insurgencies have been coalitions is a critical component in understanding them. For too long, American leaders stated that the insurgency in Iraq could not be genuine because it had no unifying cause or leader; therefore, it could not be a threat. The insurgents in Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Palestine have never had a unified leadership or belief other than that the outside power had to go. Yet these insurgents have driven out the Soviet Union and continue to contest the United States, Russia, and Israel. The lack of unity in current insurgencies only makes them more difficult to defeat. It is a characteristic that we have to accept and understand.

Showing the adaptability characteristic of successful organizations, many insurgencies are now transdimensional as

well as transnational. As Western efforts have reduced the number of insurgent safe havens, insurgents have aggressively moved into cyberspace. There, the higher capacity of broadband has greatly increased the Internet's utility for insurgents. Expanding from simple communications and propaganda, insurgents and their terrorist counterparts have moved to on-line recruitment, vetting of recruits, theological indoctrination, training, and logistical arrangements. Insurgents never have to meet an individual recruit until they feel comfortable, then they can use the Internet as a meeting site that they control. The wide availability of password-protected chat rooms allows insurgents to hold daily meetings with very little chance of discovery. Not only do Western intelligence agencies have to find the insurgents' chat room among the millions out there and crack the password, but they also must do so with a person who can speak the insurgents' language and who is convincing enough to keep the other chat participants from simply logging off. And, of course, insurgents can also move out of the larger chat room into private chat, which makes the infiltration problem even harder.

Another major change in insurgencies is that they are becoming self-supporting. Modern insurgents do conventional fundraising, but they also run charity organizations, businesses, and criminal enterprises. In the past, most insurgen-

cies depended on one or two major sponsors, which the United States could subject to diplomatic or economic pressure. Now, the insurgents' more varied money-raising schemes, combined with the ability to move funds outside official banking channels, make it increasingly difficult to attack insurgent finances.

Enduring Characteristics of Counterinsurgency

Just as insurgencies have enduring characteristics, so do counterinsurgencies. The fundamental weapon in counterinsurgency remains good governance. While the insurgent must simply continue to exist and conduct occasional attacks, the government must learn to govern effectively. The fact that there is an insurgency indicates the government has failed to govern. In short, the counterinsurgent is starting out in a deep hole.

The first governing step the counterinsurgent must take is to establish security for the people. Without effective, continuous security it does not matter if the people are sympathetic to the government—they must cooperate with the insurgent or be killed. Providing security is not enough, however. The government must also give the people hope for a better future—for their children if not for themselves. Furthermore, this better future must accord with what the people want, not what the counterinsurgent wants. The strategic hamlets campaign in Vietnam and the ideological emphasis on freedom in Iraq are examples of futures the counterinsurgent thought were best, but that didn't resonate with the population. In Vietnam, the peasants were intensely tied to their land; in Islamic culture, justice has a higher value than freedom.

The view of the future must address the "poverty of dignity" that Thomas L. Friedman has so clearly identified as a driving motivator for terrorists.⁴ The people must have hope not just for a better life as they see it, but also the feeling of dignity that comes from having some say in their own futures.

There has been a great deal of discussion recently about whether the war in Iraq has progressed from terrorism to an insurgency and then to a civil war. While this is very important from the insurgents' point of view, it does not determine the first steps a counterinsurgent must take to win. As always, the first step is to provide security for the people. If the people stop supporting the government out of fear of insurgents, terrorists, or other violent groups, the government can only begin winning back its credibility by providing effective security. How that security is provided can vary depending on the threat, but the basic requirement is nonnegotiable. Thus, the fundamental enduring concepts of counterinsurgency are to provide security for the people and genuine hope for the future.

Emerging Characteristics of Counterinsurgency

The counterinsurgent must also come to grips with the emerging characteristics of insurgency. To deal with the networked, transnational character of insurgents, the counterinsurgent must develop a truly international approach to the security issues he faces. In addition, he must counter not



Trust is built from the ground up. (Photo by Cpl Eric C. Schwartz.)

just a single ideology, but all the ideologies of the various groups involved in the insurgency. This is daunting because attacking the ideology of one group might reinforce that of another. Successful ideological combat also requires the counterinsurgent to have deep cultural and historical knowledge of the people in the conflict. Success in this kind of fight will be difficult to achieve, but it can be attained if the government attacks the insurgents' coalition by exacerbating individual group differences.

Finally, the government must find a way to handle the numerous external actors who will come to join the insurgency. The true believers among them can only be killed or captured; the rest must be turned from insurgents to citizens. If possible, the counterinsurgent should keep foreign fighters from returning to their homes to spread the conflict there. Obviously this will require a great deal of international cooperation. However, the nations involved should be anxious to cooperate to prevent these violent, potentially rebellious fighters from returning home.

Visualizing the Insurgency

With the mixture of enduring and emerging characteristics in insurgencies, the question arises as to how best to analyze the modern form. A clear understanding of the insurgency is obviously essential to the counterinsurgent. Unfortunately, recent history shows that conventional powers initially tend to misunderstand insurgencies much more often than they understand them. In Malaya, it took almost 3 years before the British developed a consistent approach to the communist insurrection there. As John Nagl has noted, "Only about 1950 was the political nature of the war really grasped."⁵ In Vietnam, it took until 1968 before General Creighton Abrams and Ambassador Robert Komer provided an effective plan to deal with the Viet Cong in the south. In Iraq, it took us almost 2 years to decide that we were dealing with an insurgency, and we are still arguing about its composition and goals.

To fight an insurgency effectively, we must first understand it. Given the complexity inherent in modern insurgency, the best visualization tool is a network map. The counterinsurgent must map the human networks involved on both sides because—

- A map of the human connections reflects how insurgencies really operate. A network map will reveal the scale and depth of interactions between different people and nodes and show the actual impact of our actions against those connections.
- A network map plotted over time can show how changes in the environment affect nodes and links in the network. Again, such knowledge is essential for understanding how our actions are hitting the insurgency.
- Models of human networks account for charisma, human will, and insights in ways a simple organizational chart cannot.
- Networks actively seek to grow. By studying network maps, we can see where growth occurs and what it implies

New Insurgency Traits

Emergence of networked coalitions of the willing.

Evolution into transdimensional organizations.

Ability to fund themselves.

Wide variety of motivations behind different coalition elements.

for the insurgent and the government. By studying which areas of the insurgent network are growing fastest, we can identify the most effective members of the insurgency and their most effective tactics, and act accordingly.

- Networks interact with other networks in complex ways that cannot be portrayed on an organizational chart.
- Network maps show connections from a local to a global scale and reveal when insurgents use modern technology to make the "long distance" relationships more important and closer than local ones.
- Networks portray the transdimensional and transnational nature of insurgencies in ways no other model can. Networks can also reveal insurgent connections to the host-nation government, the civilian community, and any other players present in the struggle.
- Finally, if we begin to understand the underlying networks of insurgencies, we can analyze them using an emerging set of tools. In *Linked: The Science of Networks*, Albert-Laszlo Barabasi points to these new tools: "A string of recent breathtaking discoveries has forced us to acknowledge that amazingly simple and far reaching laws govern the structure and evolution of all the complex networks that surround us."⁶

We should also use network modeling when we consider our own organizations. Unlike the hierarchical layout we habitually use when portraying ourselves, a network schematic will allow us to see much more clearly how our personnel policies affect our own operations. When we chart an organization hierarchically, it appears that our personnel rotation policies have minimal effect on our organizations. One individual leaves, and another qualified individual immediately fills that line on the organization chart; there is no visual indication of the impact on our organization. If, however, we plotted our own organizations as networks, we could see the massive damage our personnel rotation policies cause. When a person arrives in country and takes a job, for some time he probably knows only the person he is working for and a few people in his office. In a network, he will show up as a small node with few connections. As time passes, he makes new connections and finds old friends in other jobs throughout the theater. On a network map, we

will see him growing from a tiny node to a major hub. Over the course of time, we will see his connections to other military organizations, to U.S. and allied government agencies, host-nation agencies, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and so forth. Just as clearly, when he rotates we will see that large hub instantaneously replaced by a small node with few connections. We will be even more alarmed to see the massive impact the simultaneous departure of numerous hubs has on the functionality of our network.

To assist us in building our network maps, we can use any of a number of sophisticated anti-gang software programs that allow us to track individuals and visualize their contacts. Essentially sophisticated versions of the old personalities-organizations-incidents databases, these programs allow us to tie together the intelligence reports we get to build a visual picture of the connections revealed. For instance, we pick up a suspect near a bombing site, check him against the database, and find that although he has not been arrested before, he is closely related to a man we know to be involved in a political party. We can then look at other members of the family and party to see if there are other connections to the incident, to the person we arrested, or to the organization possibly involved.

Good software will allow for instant visualization of these relationships in a color-coded network we can project on a wall, print out, or transmit to other analysts. Good software almost instantly accomplishes the hundreds of hours of scut work that used to be required to tie isolated, apparently unrelated reports together. It allows us to look for third- and even fourth-level connections in a network and, thus, to build a much more useful network map. In particular, we will be able to see the gaps where we know there ought to be connections.

Ten years ago, software of this analytical quality was available and being used to track gang activity in the United States. I am uncertain of the status of current DOD [Department of Defense] human intelligence software, but I doubt it reaches down to the critical company and platoon levels of the counterinsurgency fight. We have to take aggressive action to get better software and make it work. If cities can give this kind of information to policemen on the streets, we owe it to our companies and platoons.

By mapping the human connections in insurgent networks and then applying cultural knowledge and network theory to the networks, we can understand them more clearly. We can also apply the common-sense observation that most networks grow from pre-existing social networks. In fact, such an approach has already been used. Marc Sageman has done a detailed study of Al-Qaeda and its affiliated organizations, mapped the operational connections, and then compared them to pre-existing social connections.⁷ His work points the way to much more effective analysis of insurgent and terrorist organizations.

Sageman's studies have revealed the key nodes and links in each of Al-Qaeda's parts and how changes in the operating environment over time have affected those parts. Sageman has also identified both the real and virtual links between in-

dividuals and Al-Qaeda's constituent organizations. Most important, however, the studies give us a starting point from which to examine any network: the preexisting social connections of a society. Rather than starting from scratch, we can analyze the limited intelligence we do obtain within the social and cultural context of the insurgency. In short, Sageman's approach allows us to paint a picture of the enemy network that we can analyze.

Security Not Defensive

For the counterinsurgent, the central element in any strategy must be the people. The counterinsurgent has to provide effective government in order to win the loyalty of the people. This is easy to say, but helping another country establish good governance is one of the most challenging tasks possible. The conflict in Iraq highlights how difficult it is to help establish a government in a fractious society. Beyond the discussion of whether or not there is a civil war in Iraq, we can't even agree on whether a strategy that focuses on the people is inherently



To prevail, the government must prove it can govern effectively. (Photo by Cpl Rick Nelson.)

offensive or defensive. Obviously, if our approach is perceived to be a defensive one, most strategists will be reluctant to adopt it, simply because defense rarely wins wars.

Actually, the entire thesis of providing security for the people as the only effective approach for counterinsurgency is based on the fact that providing security is an offensive action. During conventional wars, attacks that seize enemy territory to deny the enemy resources, a tax base, and a recruiting base are considered offensive actions. But for some reason, when we conduct population control operations in counterinsurgency, they are considered defensive even though these operations have the same effect: They deny the insurgent the things he needs to operate.

A population control operation is the most offensive action one can take in a counterinsurgency. Just like in conventional war, once you have seized a portion of the enemy's territory, you cannot then evacuate it and give it back to him. If you do so, you simply restore all the resources to his con-

trol while eroding the morale of the government, the people, and your own forces.

In a counterinsurgency, big-unit sweeps and raids are inherently defensive operations. We are reacting to an enemy initiative that has given him control of a portion of the country. We move through, perhaps capture or kill some insurgents, and then move back to our defensive positions. In essence, we are ceding the key terrain—the population and its resources—to the insurgent. We might have inflicted a temporary tactical setback on our enemy, but at a much greater cost to our operational and strategic goals. The fact that we sweep and do not hold exposes the government's weakness to the people. It also exposes them to violence and does little to improve their long-term security or prospects for a better life.

Clearly, population control operations are the truly offensive operations in a counterinsurgency. Just as clearly, host-government and U.S. forces will rarely have sufficient troops to conduct such operations nationwide at the start of the counterinsurgent effort. Thus, we need to prioritize areas that will receive the resources to provide full-time, permanent security, population control, and reconstruction. The clear, hold, and build strategy is the correct one. However, it must recognize the limitations of government forces and, for a period, cede control of some elements of the population to the insurgent to provide real protection for the rest of the population. This is essentially the “white, grey, and black” approach used by the British in Malaya.⁸ As Sir Robert Thompson has noted, “Because a government's resources, notably in trained manpower, are limited, the [counterinsurgent] plan must also lay down priorities both in the measures to be taken and in the areas to be dealt with first. If the insurgency is countrywide, it is impossible to tackle it offensively in every area. It must be accepted that in certain areas only a holding operation can be conducted.”⁹

Further, by focusing our forces to create real security in some areas rather than the illusion of security across the country, we can commence rebuilding. The resulting combination of security and prosperity will contrast sharply with conditions in insurgent-controlled areas. When we have sufficient forces to move into those areas, the people might be more receptive to the government's presence.

Command and Control

There is an old saying in military planning: Get the command and control relationships right, and everything else will take care of itself. It is a common-sense acknowledgement that people provide solutions only if they are well-led in a functional organization. Thus the first and often most difficult step in counterinsurgency is to integrate friendly-force command and execution. Note that I say “integrate” and not “unify.” Given the transnational, transdimensional nature of today's insurgencies, it will be impossible to develop true unity of command for all the organizations needed to fight an insurgency. Instead, we must strive for unity of purpose by integrating the efforts of all concerned.

While the U.S. military does not like committees, a committee structure might be most effective for command in a counterinsurgency. There should be an executive committee for every major political subdivision, from city to province to national levels. Each committee must include all key personnel involved in the counterinsurgency effort—political leaders (prime minister, governors, and so on), police, intelligence officers, economic developers, public services ministers, and the military. The political leaders must be in charge and have full authority to hire, fire, and evaluate other members of the committee. Committee members must not be controlled or evaluated by their parent agencies at the next higher level; otherwise, the committee will fail to achieve unity of purpose. This step will require a massive cultural change to the normal stovepipes that handle all personnel and promotion issues for the government. One of the biggest hindrances to change is that many think the current hierarchical organization is effective. They think of themselves as “cylinders of excellence” rather than the balky, inefficient, and ineffective stovepipes they really are.

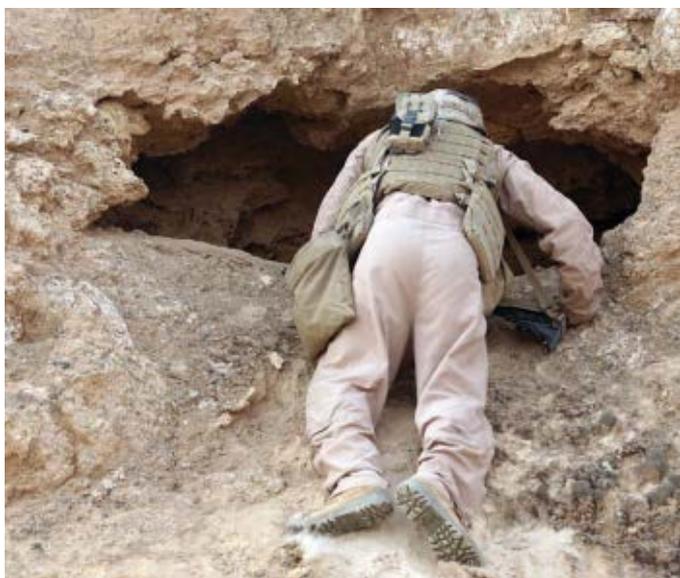
Above the national-level committee, which can be established fairly quickly under our current organization, we need a regional command arrangement. Given the transnational nature of modern insurgency, a single country team simply cannot deal with all the regional and international issues required in effective counterinsurgency. Thus we will have to develop a genuine regional team. The current DOD and Department of State organizations do not lend themselves well to such a structure and will require extensive realignment. This realignment must be accomplished.

Once the national and regional committees are established, Washington must give mission-type orders, allocate sufficient resources, and then let in-country and regional personnel run the campaign. Obviously, one of the biggest challenges in this arrangement is developing leaders to head the in-country and regional teams, particularly deployable U.S. civil leaders and host-nation leaders. An even bigger challenge will be convincing U.S. national-level bureaucracies to stay out of day-to-day operations.

Once established, the committees can use the network map of the insurgency and its environment to develop a plan for victory. The network map provides important information about the nature of the interaction between the key hubs and smaller nodes of the insurgency. While the hubs and nodes are the most visible aspects of any network, it is the nature of the activity between them that is important. We must understand that well to understand how the network actually functions. This is difficult to do, and what makes it even more challenging is that one cannot understand the network except in its cultural context. Therefore, we must find and employ people with near-native language fluency and cultural knowledge to build and interpret our map.

Speed Versus Accuracy

For counterinsurgencies, Colonel John Boyd's observation-orientation-decision-action (OODA) loop remains



No stone can be left unturned in rooting out the insurgent. (Photo by Cpl Ryan C. Heiser.)

valid, but its focus changes.¹⁰ In conventional war, and especially in the aerial combat that led Boyd to develop his concept, speed was crucial to completing the OODA loop—it got you inside your opponent’s OODA loop. We have to use a different approach in counterinsurgency. Stressing speed above all else in the decision cycle simply does not make sense in a war that can last a decade or more.

In counterinsurgency, we still want to move speedily, but the focus must be more on accuracy (developed in the observation-orientation segment of the loop). The government must understand what it is seeing before it decides what to do. To date, network-centric concepts have focused on shortening the sensor-to-shooter step (Boyd’s decision-action segment). Now, we must focus on improving the quality—and the speed, too, if that’s compatible with accuracy—of the observe-orient segment. Even more important, the OODA loop expands to track not just our enemy’s reaction, but how the entire environment is reacting—the people, the host-nation government, our allies, our forces, even our own population.

Attacking the Network

Because effective offensive operations in a counterinsurgency are based on protecting the people, direct action against insurgent fighters is secondary; nevertheless, such action remains a necessary part of the overall campaign plan. Once we understand the insurgent network or major segments of it, we can attack elements of it. We should only attack, however, if our attacks support our efforts to provide security for the people. If there is a strong likelihood of collateral damage, by definition, lessens the people’s security. In addition, the fundamental rules for attacking a network are different from those used when attacking a more conventional enemy. First, in counterinsurgency it is better to exploit a known node than attack it. Second, if you have to attack, the best at-

tack is a soft one designed to introduce distrust into the network. Third, if you must make a hard attack, conduct simultaneous attacks on related links or else the attack will have little effect. Finally, after the attack, increase surveillance to see how the insurgency tries to communicate around or repair the damage. As they are reaching out to establish new contacts, the new nodes will be most visible.

Information Campaign

An integral part of counterinsurgency is an effective information campaign. It must have multiple targets (the host-country population, U.S. population, international community, insurgents and their supporters); it must be integrated into all aspects of the overall campaign; and it can only be effective if it is based on the truth—spin will eventually be discovered, and the government will be hard-pressed to recover its credibility.

Further, our actions speak so loudly that they tend to drown out our words. When we claim we stand for justice, but then hold no senior personnel responsible for torture, we invalidate our message and alienate our audience. Fortunately, positive actions work too. The tsunami and earthquake relief efforts in 2004 and 2005 had a huge impact on our target audiences. Consequently, our information campaign must be based on getting information about our good actions out. Conversely, our actions must live up to our rhetoric.

To study a highly effective information campaign, I recommend looking at the one conducted by the Palestinians during Intifada I. A detailed examination of how and why it was so successful can be found in *Intifada*, by Schiff and Ya’ari.¹¹

Summary

Today’s counterinsurgency warfare involves a competition between human networks—ours and theirs. To understand their networks, we must understand the networks’s preexisting links as well as the cultural and historical context behind the struggle. We also have to understand not just the insurgents’ network, but those of the host-nation government, its people, our coalition partners, NGOs, and, of course, our own.

Counterinsurgency is completely different from insurgency. Rather than focusing on fighting, strategy must focus on establishing good governance by strengthening key friendly nodes while weakening the enemy’s. In Iraq, we must get the mass of the population on our side. Good governance is founded on providing effective security for the people and giving them hope for their future; it is not based on killing insurgents and terrorists. To provide that security, we must be able to visualize the fight between and within the human networks involved. Only then can we develop and execute a plan to defeat the insurgents.

Notes

1. Bard E. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare* (Washington, DC: Brassey's Inc, 1990), 13.
2. Ian F. W. Beckett, ed., *Armed Force and Modern Counter-Insurgency: Armies and Guerrilla Warfare 1900-1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 8.
3. David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1966), xi.
4. Thomas L. Friedman, "A Poverty of Dignity and a Wealth of Rage," *New York Times*, 15 July 2005, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/15/opinion/15friedman.html?ex=1279080000&en=881732206e2082d5&ei=5090&partner=rssuserland&emc=rss>>, accessed 7 July 2006.
5. John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 71.
6. Albert-Laszlo Barabasi, *Linked: The New Science of Networks* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 2002). See also Lewis Sorley, *A Better War* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 2003).
7. Mark Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

8. Used by the British in Malaya, the white-grey-black scheme is a corollary of the clear-hold-build strategy now in use in Iraq. White areas were those declared completely cleared of insurgents and ready for reconstruction and democratic initiatives. Grey areas were in dispute, with counterinsurgents and insurgents vying actively for the upper hand. Black areas were insurgent-controlled and mostly left alone pending the reallocation of government resources from other areas. See Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Vietnam and Malaya* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), Chapter 10.

9. Thompson, 55.

10. COL Boyd articulated the OODA loop concept in a lengthy slide presentation. For a discussion of the OODA loop and other Boyd theories, see "Boyd and Military Strategy," <www.d-n-i.net/second_level/boyd_military.htm>, accessed 10 July 2006.

11. Zeev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising-Israel's Third Front* (New York: Simon and Schuster, March 1990).



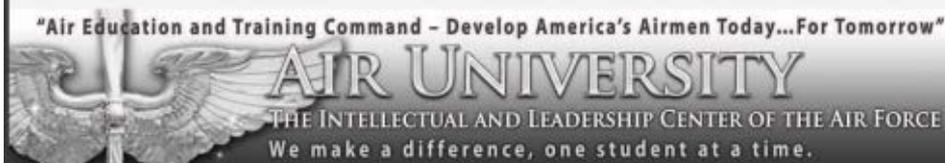
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Identity-Based Conflict

reviewed by LtCol F.G. Hoffman, USMCR(Ret)

Ralph Peters has established a reputation as one of the most fearless, most perceptive, and most accurate analysts of modern conflict. He is also a prolific writer. He is a regular contributor to the *Armed Forces Journal* and several other journals and newspapers. Stackpole Books has bundled together this Army intelligence veteran's best material over the past 2 years into *Wars of Blood and Faith*. It is, simply stated, a stunning compilation of the most provocative and prescient writing on foreign affairs and future national security challenges you can buy in a single volume.

This latest anthology is organized into five parts. The opening section on the 21st century military begins with a searing essay titled, "The Shape of Wars to Come." It's a fabulous introduction to this millennium's new normalcy of religious-based violence. Our biggest challenges will come "from governments and organizations willing to wage war in spheres now forbidden or still unimagined."

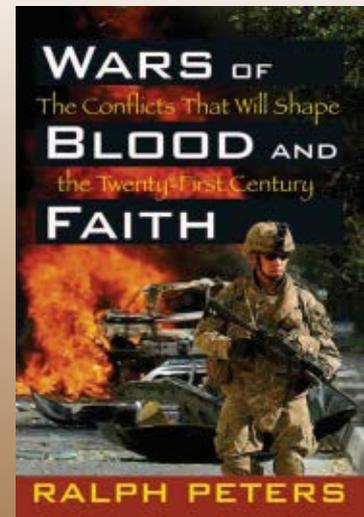
The American infatuation with bloodless war is a theme in one of the opening essays. The author takes the Services to task (with the Marine Corps charitably cited as an exception) for designing Service strategies and concepts around systems they want to buy, rather than developing capabilities and hardware to best support our strategy and our understanding of future warfare. Sterile visions of technowar are deeply rooted in our American culture,

>See p. 42 for bio.

but they are increasingly at odds with the nature of modern conflict.

Peters' best essays and articles address the human dimension of modern conflict better than any other analyst today. To the author, we have exited a brief aberration of conflict and reentered a much longer era of fundamental struggles over God and blood. "No matter how vociferously," we want to deny it, "our wars will be fought over religion and ethnic identity. Those wars will be cruel and hard."

Modern theories of irregular warfare, including the new counterinsurgency manual, come in for some sustained commentary in *Wars of Blood and Faith*. With little tact, Peters argues that the manual's authors "ignored myriad relevant historical examples and focused instead on the counterinsurgency campaigns with which they were comfortable." The prescriptions in *Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency*, are outdated. The manual is replete with remedies tied to political struggles over social organization and the distribution of resources. The manual claims, "You cannot fight former Saddamists and Islamic extremists the same way you would have fought the Viet Cong, Moros, or Tupamaros." But it never really accepts or makes any distinctions in approach; the Maoist-era counterinsurgent model is the default position. But as LtCol Peters emphasizes:



WARS OF BLOOD AND FAITH: The Conflicts That Will Shape the Twenty-First Century. By Ralph Peters. Stackpole Books, Harrisburg, PA, 2007
ISBN 9780811702744, 367 pp.
\$27.95 (Member \$25.15)

A Maoist in Malaya could be converted. But Islamist terrorists who regard death as a promotion are not going to reject their faith any more than an ethnic warrior can—or would wish to—change his blood identity.

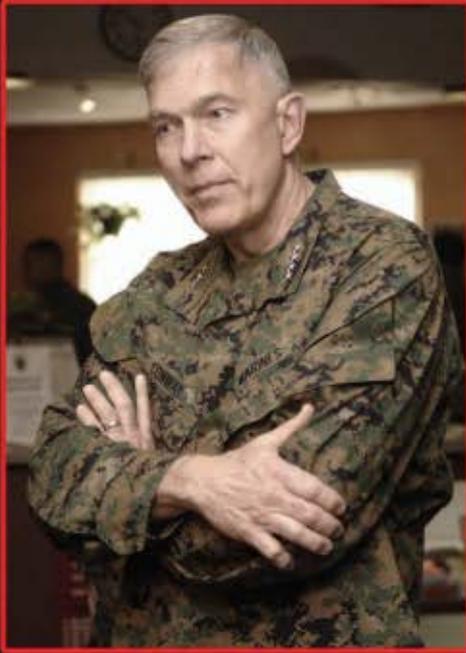
The remaining sections are even more controversial and address Peters' take on Iraq and the summer of 2006 Israeli campaign against Hezbollah. The final section deals with the "The World Beyond" and provides assessments of the pending geostrategic center of gravity in the Indian Ocean and emerging hotspots in Africa.

When you need to get past the media's mendacious meddling and twisted presentation of facts, turn to Ralph Peters for a dose of reality and realism. His is a coherent assessment of today's most pressing problems. Ralph Peters and *Wars of Blood and Faith* provide the most penetrating assessment of the emerging age of extremism.



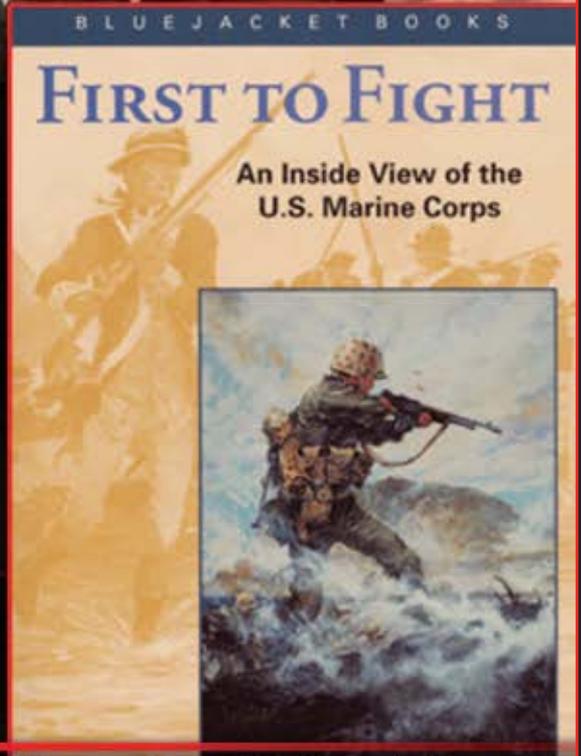
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The Board of Governors of the Marine Corps Association has given authority to approve manuscripts for publication to the editorial board and editor. Editorial board members are listed on the *Gazette's* masthead in each issue. The board, which normally meets once a month, represents a cross section of Marines by professional interest, experience, age, rank, and gender. The board reads and votes on each manuscript submitted as a feature article. A simple majority rules in its decisions. Other material submitted for publication is accepted or rejected based on the assessment of the editor. The *Gazette* welcomes material in the following categories:

- **Commentary on Published Material:** Submit promptly. Comments normally appear as letters (see below) 3 months after published material. BE BRIEF.
- **Feature Articles:** Normally 2,000 to 3,000 words, dealing with topics of major significance. Manuscripts should be DOUBLE SPACED. Ideas must be backed up by hard facts. Evidence must be presented to support logical conclusions. In the case of articles that criticize, constructive suggestions are sought. Footnotes are not necessary, but a list of any source materials used is helpful.
- **Ideas and Issues:** Short articles, normally 750 to 1,500 words. This section can include the full gamut of professional topics so long as treatment of the subject is brief and concise. Again, please DOUBLE SPACE all manuscripts.
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