A Concept for Countering Irregular Threats: A Comprehensive Approach

by Marine Corps Combat Development Command, 2006

Introduction

Failed and failing states that harbor transnational terrorists, foment insurgencies against friendly governments, or promote irregular warfare against our allies **present problems whose resolution is critical to our national well-being**. However, the history of the last hundred years demonstrates that we cannot reasonably expect to solve these problems by military action alone. The Marine Corps must take a broader approach to the defense of the United States and of its national interests overseas in an age of irregular threats.

People hungry for release from tyranny, poverty, and despair are susceptible to manipulation by the unscrupulous and the ideological fanatic, who combine age-old strategies of insurgency and subversion with technological savvy and rapid global access to information to make themselves into information age enemies. This requires military and civilian agencies of the U.S. Government to join together in the strongest interagency partnership to help the local people and their governments relieve the immediate crisis, reduce existing internal contradictions, and move toward a condition that will preserve them against further trouble. Only this kind of holistic response can help a state quell the violence and chaos that provide fresh opportunities for those who would exploit a people's frustration in order to threaten the United States.

In many efforts to counter Irregular Threats, the political and cultural aspects of the conflict rather than combat will be primary, and

Marines will be asked to do many things other than combat operations to beat our adversaries. This means that the "commander" of some interventions may not be a serving military officer but could be an Ambassador, a U.S. Foreign Service officer, or a police officer, each with a heavily civilian staff that ties together the political and military strategy. Marines need to be educated and trained to support humanitarian and development initiatives as well as perform combat operations to protect the civilian population. With this mix of skills and abilities, the Marine Corps will have the means to more effectively apply its maneuver warfare-based warfighting philosophy to irregular threats and to attack our enemies from many angles at once, wearing them down and drawing away their popular support. The U.S. military will contribute to winning wars against our irregular enemies with kinetic and non-kinetic means, diminishing the conditions that create instability while destroying or pushing into irrelevance those who seek to promote chaos, disorder, and suffering.

Concept

The nature of war has not changed since ancient times, and insurgencies present complex irregular threats which military force alone cannot resolve. The 19th century military theorist Carl von Clausewitz described a trinity of war consisting of the military, the state, and the population. He proposed a triangular relationship in which each of these elements is equally relevant and in which all three must remain in balance to achieve successful resolution of a conflict. In the past, we have concentrated on destroying the enemy's military. But in non-industrial, counterinsurgency wars, our strategic objective is the hearts and minds of the people. Though the Clausewitzian Trinity remains relevant, the focus must be re-balanced as the fight to win the people becomes central. In these *savage wars of peace,* modern technology has greatly enhanced the insurgent's speed, reach, and power. **Marines need to learn when to fight with weapons and when to fight with information, humanitarian aid, economic advice, and a boost toward good governance for the local people.** This ability to adapt resembles a group of jazz musicians improvising on a theme. To do that, Marines need to understand that defeating an insurgency is first about winning the support of the local people. We may use violence to suppress an insurgency for a time, but the only way to destroy it is by changing the way people think about the insurgency.

The Single Campaign

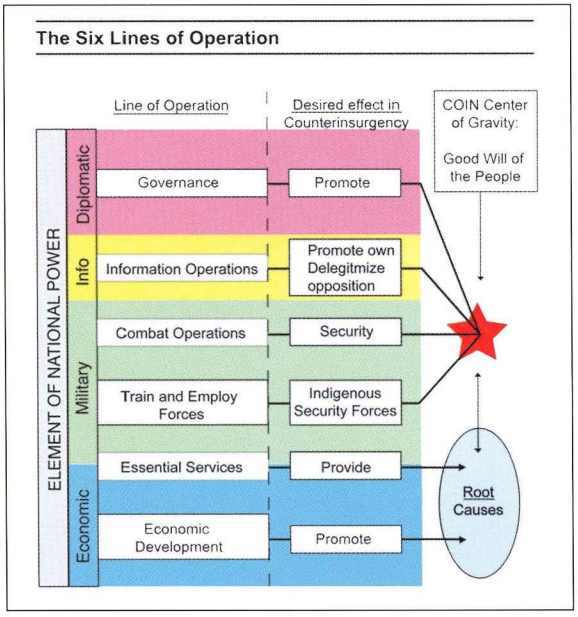
Countering irregular threats requires a holistic application of the elements of national power to maintain or re-establish a friendly government's legitimacy in the eyes of its people.

Two elements are required for an effective insurgency. Underlying social grievances result in a population that is dissatisfied with the status quo. The insurgent leadership provides catalysts to move a population from dissatisfaction with its government or ruling authority to active support of the opposition. These two elements mean that:

- Countering insurgency requires us to develop a comprehensive understanding of the complex character of a conflict, of its social, political, historical, cultural, and economic contexts, and of its participants. If we are going to fight among the people, we must understand them.
- Popular support for insurgency is always about the people's seeking a better life or relief of suffering by overthrowing the existing regime.
- Human beings hesitate to move to radical action, so popular support for an insurgency is evidence that the people consider that any hope for government or societal reform is futile.

With clarity and sincerity, we must communicate to the local population through every decision and action that our intervention's purpose is to support the needs of the people and to ensure stability. It is important to remember that, if we treat the people as our enemies, they will become our enemies. Treat them as friends, and they may become our friends.

We can rally the local people to our side and undermine the insurgency that torments them and threatens U.S. interests by designing a campaign



of inclusion. Today, real power is not about armaments—it is about collaborative relationships. First, we must include U.S. Government civilian agencies with Marine planners and with units in the field. Second, we must develop a fully collaborative partnership with personnel from the local government and its military. Only by genuine inclusion of all of these players can we hope to produce and implement a campaign that is perceived as legitimate by the local populace, earns the support of the American people, and poises us to defeat or destroy the insurgents and eliminate their cause.

This approach elevates the Marine Corps to a position as a full partner in the humanitarian, development, and nation building work of civilian agencies. It also makes those agencies full partners in the Marine Corps' planning, preparation, and implementation of combat and security operations. The most direct method of guiding our efforts to achieve national objectives is to focus on Lines of Operation.

Operational Approach to the Six Lines Governance

"For the People." The **rule of law** and effective **public administration** are essential to a functioning society. There can be no lasting stability in a nation that lacks effective enforcement of its national laws and sound management of the work of the government. Re-establishing these capacities in a country will go a long way to preventing the need for further U.S. intervention. In partnership with local authorities, the counterinsurgent team will need to assess the state of the existing government's legal and administrative systems and refurbish or return them to effectiveness. As underlying social grievances, often expressed by the insurgents in ideological terms, are key to an insurgency, the local government must be assisted in ameliorating grievances and resolving the internal contradictions that became the root causes of the insurgency. To do this, our diplomats and civilian agency personnel will need to become *expeditionary,* as comfortable in flak jackets as they are in business suits, and will need to stand ready to serve on the front lines.

Information Operations

"Nothing but the Truth." Information Operations are key to the success of all the other Lines of Operation and must be viewed from both the internal and external perspective. Externally, the information campaign must aim at two things: isolation of the insurgents from their support and rebuilding the credibility of the government with the local population. These aims should never be put at risk by deception. Falsehoods serve no purpose for U.S. objectives and are too easily discovered in this information age. Only **information campaigns built on truth**, no matter how painful that truth may be for us, can help undermine an insurgency. Marines at every level need to know how to use the information campaign to improve civil-military relations, develop intelligence, and shape local attitudes in advance of operations. Internally, information is key to keeping high the morale of the individual Marine. Overcoming the often frustrating environment of counterinsurgency can be achieved through understanding the people, the enemy, and the mission. This understanding will help maintain the morale upon which military efficiency and discipline often rest. Both internally and externally, legitimacy is fundamental to information operations. Legitimacy can only be fostered if the mes-

sage that is transmitted is reinforced by the actions of the Marines who interact directly with the population. Our words and actions must be mutually supporting to win the goodwill of the people and destroy the insurgency. We must show the people how bad the insurgents are and how good our forces are.

Combat Operations (Protecting the Civil Populace)

"War of the Stiletto." An insurgent, fighting a war of ideas in a guerrilla style, does not need to win any battles to achieve his objective of persuading a population to accept his cause. Counterinsurgency demands a decentralized operational approach built on a strong foundation of comprehensive understanding and rapid distribution of information in order to **"out adapt" the enemy.** This will demonstrate that the insurgents are not able to defend themselves and the people they claim to want to protect. Large units and large bases rarely are effective in this kind of struggle. Large unit operations often create animosity in the population, and guerillas are only too happy for us to provide them big, fixed targets for theatrical attacks. Counterguerrilla warfare requires distributed units adapted for fast, agile, and multi-axis attacks and for conducting combat operations aimed at developing intelligence. Small unit leaders must be trained to carry much more of the burden of combat decision making, supported by **a rapid flow of tactical information and cultural intelligence.** Properly trained and disciplined, our small units will out adapt the insurgents by moving asymmetrically to isolate them, attack their command and control, and demonstrate a determination to help address the legitimate grievances of the population. In this war among the people, collateral damage must be seen as unacceptable as it will undermine the intervention's objectives to win popular support and to restore security and stability. Any misuse of force feeds the insurgents' propaganda campaign and makes the intervention more difficult and risky. Even more so in a counterinsurgency environment, combat operations demand the discriminate and precise use of force. This line of operation provides **the wall of security behind** which all of the other lines are free to operate to positive effect and **a windbreak** behind which the host nation can gather its resources to restore stability for its people.

Train and Employ Forces

"Breathing Room." Well-trained and energetic indigenous security forces can so narrow the geographic terrain available to the insurgents as to squeeze them out of their area of operations and nullify the insurgency by keeping them on the run. It is critical that we tailor security programs and train security forces in a manner that can be sustained by the indigenous government and in ways that are politically and socially acceptable to the people. This work should not be delayed as it is tied to the departure of U.S. military forces, an action that is critically important to the legitimacy of the local government in the eyes of its people, Americans at home, and the world community. Imposing U.S. models on indigenous security forces rarely succeeds. We must find ways to **do things the local way**. This demands exquisite understanding of local conditions, tactical maturity, and cunning by all unit leaders down through the squad level.

Essential Services

"Stop the Bleeding." The provision of essential services must be an interagency effort as it ultimately will reduce grievances of the local population and allow mission success. With their resource and logistic capabilities, Marines will be key players with their interagency, coalition, and local partners. Often, **Marines will need to be the first providers or coordinators** of food, power, water, and rudimentary medical care until civilian agencies arrive to take up the task. This must be done in collaboration with the local people to assure that their needs are met in culturally acceptable ways and can be sustained by the indigenous government. The local population must be included as early as possible in order to bolster the economy, build self-esteem, and to place authority where it naturally should

USMC *Small Wars Manual* (1940)

Small Wars are operations undertaken under executive authority, wherein military force is combined with diplomatic pressure in the internal or external affairs of another state whose government is unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life and of such interests as are determined by the foreign policy of our Nation. The application of purely military means may not by itself restore peace and orderly government because the fundamental causes of the condition of unrest may be economic, political, or social. There may be many economic and social factors involved completely beyond military power. Peace and industry cannot be restored permanently without appropriate provisions for the economic welfare of the people. The efforts of the different agencies must be cooperative and coordinated to the attainment of the common end.

lie—in the hands of local leaders. Establishing essential services is critical to the establishment of local security.

Economic Development

"Toward a Better Life." This line of operation has implications that last far beyond the departure of an intervention force. Reinvigorating or creating a sustainable local economy requires planning for immediate relief and for long-term economic well-being. Marine commanders and their staffs must work with U.S. civilian agencies to further stop the bleeding by stabilizing the local economy with public works projects that relieve unemployment, micro-finance programs that put back on their feet small businesses and farms, and by seeking the help of those nongovernmental and charitable organizations capable of helping to get things moving. While the long-term plan largely will be managed by civilian agencies, Marines will need to provide security and support in identifying those economic activities in which the host nation has comparative advantage and which ought to be promoted, encouraging the host nation to engage with the U.S. and other countries in trade agreements that open jobs and promote business, persuading the host nation to encourage U.S. and other countries' industry to move in, and expanding Peace Corps, other countries' advisory programs, and educational exchanges. The complexity of this work means that, more than in any other Line of Operation, Economic Development demands that Marines and U.S. civilian agencies work in intimate partnership with local authorities to develop the culturally appropriate, sustainable programs that can restore economic well-being.

Implications for Force Development

To meet the requirements of this concept, the Marine Corps should:

- Develop the fullest **mutual understanding and collaboration with U.S. Government civilian agencies,** by sharing in training exercises and war games, to assure intimate cooperation in a counterinsurgency effort.
- **Train Marines to be both fighters and peace builders,** capable as ever in combat operations but able to support humanitarian and development activities as well.
- Train Marines in **foreign languages, cultural intelligence, negotiation, and dispute resolution.**
- Develop a **counterinsurgency campaign and operations planning program** to mentor and evaluate operational headquarters, from battalion to Marine Expeditionary Force levels, in campaign planning along the Lines of Operation approach.

Conclusion

While traditional Marine combat power remains essential to victory over an insurgency, it is unlikely to be decisive in defeating an adversary that relies for its own power on the grievances and aspirations of the local population. Winning and preserving the goodwill of the people is the key to victory. That can be achieved by deftly applying the six Lines of Operation in partnership with the other U.S. Government civilian agencies and the indigenous government. War is war but, in counterinsurgency, it often is best fought with the tools of peace.

Part II
Philippine Insurrection, 1899–1902

Lessons from a Successful Counterinsurgency: The Philippines, 1899–1902

by Timothy K. Deady

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> "It should be the earnest and paramount aim of the military administration to win the confidence, respect, and affection of the inhabitants of the Philippines . . . and by proving to them that the mission of the United States is one of benevolent assimilation, substituting the mild sway of justice and right for arbitrary rule."
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> —President William McKinley, 21 December 1898

The United States topples an unsavory regime in relatively brief military action, suffering a few hundred fatalities. America then finds itself having to administer a country unaccustomed to democratic self-rule. Caught unawares by an unexpectedly robust insurgency, the United States struggles to develop and implement an effective counterinsurgency strategy. The ongoing U.S. presidential campaign serves as a catalyst to polarize public opinion, as the insurrectionists step up their offensive in an unsuccessful attempt to unseat the incumbent Republican President.

These events—from a century ago—share a number of striking parallels with the events of 2003 and 2004. The Philippine Insurrection of 1899–1902 was America's first major combat operation of the 20th century. The American policy of rewarding support and punishing opposition in the Philippines, called "attraction and chastisement," was an effective operational strategy. By eliminating insurgent resistance, the campaign successfully set the conditions necessary for achieving the desired end-state.

After a brief review of the conflict, this article will examine the strategic and operational lessons of America's successful campaign. It will consider the belligerents' policy goals, strategies, and their centers of gravity. (While neither side planned their campaign using these strategic concepts, these terms will be used in analyzing the campaign to facilitate understanding.) Without addressing the considerations of any particular ongoing campaign, the article will identify lessons applicable for winning today's counterinsurgencies.

In order to determine the relevance of the campaign today, this article will consider changes in the international environment that mitigate the direct application of methods successfully employed in the Philippines. To apply some lessons, one must identify alternative ways more appropriate for modern norms that achieve the same ends.

Historical Overview

Annexation

Unfamiliar to many, the major events of the insurrection that followed America's victory in the Spanish-American War bear review. Admiral George Dewey's May 1898 naval victory over the Spanish fleet was followed in August by a brief, face-saving Spanish defense and surrender of Manila. Filipino forces had vanquished the Spanish from the rest of the country, but the Spanish surrendered the capital to U.S. Army forces under Major General Wesley Merritt. Filipino forces were under the command of Emilio Aguinaldo, a 29-year-old member of the educated class known as the *illustrados*. Having led an insurrection against Spanish rule in 1896, Aguinaldo, the self-proclaimed president, was wary but hopeful that the American victory would facilitate Philippine independence.

U.S. President William McKinley decided to annex the archipelago for two principal reasons, one ideological, the other interest-based. He announced his decision to a group of missionaries, citing America's duty to "educate the Filipinos and uplift them and Christianize them."[1] Like many, he believed the Filipinos

were too backward to capably govern themselves.[2] The practical consideration in an era of unbridled colonialism was that a weak, independent Philippines would be a tempting acquisition for other colonial powers.

Insurrection

Filipinos were shocked when it became known that the Treaty of Paris provided for the United States to purchase the islands from Spain for $20 million. Buoyed by their success in defeating nearly all of the Spanish garrisons, Filipino insurgents under Aguinaldo attacked American forces in Manila on 4 February 1899. The failure of this and subsequent conventional battles with the Americans caused the rebel leader to disband the field army and commence guerrilla operations in November 1899. Almost captured in December, Aguinaldo fled to northern Luzon.

The Philippine geography had a significant effect on the conduct of the campaign. An archipelago of over 7,000 islands with few roads and dozens of languages, the Philippines is diverse. In 1900 the population was 7.4 million. It consisted of 74 provinces, 34 of which never experienced rebel activity.[3] Luzon, the largest island in the archipelago and site of the capital, was home to half the population. As such, Luzon's military operations were the most extensive in the insurrection. Communications between insurgent forces, never great, broke apart after Aguinaldo's flight. Significant centers of resistance after his escape included those led by General Vincente Lukban on the island of Samar and General Miguel Malvar in southern Luzon. Most insurgent leaders were *illustrados* from the Tagalog ethnic group; Aguinaldo himself was Tagalog and Chinese. As author Brian Linn emphasizes, the insurrection was conducted differently in different regions. Resistance was fragmented and varied from island to island.

Estimates of the insurgent forces vary between 80,000 and 100,000, with tens of thousands of auxiliaries.[4] Lack of weapons and munitions was a significant impediment to the insurgents. U.S. troop strength was 40,000 at the start of hostilities and peaked at 74,000 two years later. Typically only 60 percent of American troops were combat troops. With a field strength ranging from 24,000 to 44,000, this force was able to defeat an opponent many times its size.[5]

Major General Elwell Otis, the U.S. commander at the start of hostilities (Merritt had joined the Paris negotiations), initially focused his pacification plan on civic action programs, targeting action at the municipal level.[6] When he relinquished command of his 60,000 troops in May 1900, he believed the insurrection to be broken. Later in the summer of 1900, Aguinaldo began to urge his followers to increase their attacks on Americans. His goal was to sour Americans on the war and ensure the victory of the anti-imperialist William Jennings Bryan in the presidential election.[7] Concentrating forces for attacks in September 1900, the guerrillas achieved successes against company-sized American units.

McKinley's reelection sapped motivation from the resistance that had anticipated his defeat. On the heels of this setback came another blow in December 1900 with the reinvigorated pacification efforts of Otis's successor, Major General Arthur MacArthur. MacArthur declared martial law and implemented General Orders 100, a Civil War-era directive on the law of war that, among other tough provisions, subjected combatants not in uniform, and their supporters, to execution. This program forced civilians to take sides and served to increasingly isolate guerillas from popular support. After more than a year on the move, Aguinaldo was captured in March 1901.

The war's final year witnessed increased atrocities on both sides. In southern Luzon, Brigadier General J. Franklin Bell set up "concentration camps" for the regions 300,000 civilians.[8] Modeled on Indian reservations, the camps isolated the guerrillas from their supporters. Bell then sent his troops to hunt down the region's insurgents and destroy their supply caches. On the island of Samar, a bolo (machete) attack killed 48 of the 74 American soldiers in the garrison at Balangiga in August 1901. A punitive expedition on Samar was conducted so brutally that the island's commander, Brigadier General Jacob Smith, was subsequently convicted at court-martial. Nonetheless, the

increasingly fragmented resistance continued to wither. Lukban surrendered in February 1902 and Malvar two months later, effectively ending resistance. President Roosevelt, who had succeeded McKinley after his assassination, waited until the 4th of July to declare victory. The insurrection resulted in 4,234 American fatalities, over tenfold the 379 soldiers killed worldwide in the relatively quick victory over Spain.

Strategy

American Policy and Centers of Gravity

Initially the U.S. policy toward the Philippines was undetermined. McKinley directed Merritt to provide order and security while the islands were in U.S. possession, without defining their eventual disposition. The President appointed a Philippine Commission to evaluate and report on the islands and recommend a disposition. The chairman, Jacob Schurman, president of Cornell University, concluded the natives were not yet capable of self-government but should eventually become independent. The desired end-state was determined to be a stable, peaceful, democratic, independent Philippines allied to the United States.[9] Key to this were preventing a power vacuum (which could lead to colonization by another developed country), improving the country's education and infrastructure, and implementing and guiding the development of democracy. The method decided upon to achieve the end-state was annexation.

Strategy is the manner in which a nation employs its national power to achieve policy goals and a desired end-state. The "center of gravity" is an important concept for understanding how and where to employ the elements of power. The concept's originator, Carl von Clausewitz, identified it as the source of the enemy's "power and movement, upon which everything depends."[10] Current U.S. doctrine extends the concept to both belligerents in a conflict and differentiates between strategic and operational levels of the center of gravity.[11] The essence of strategy then is to apply the elements of power to attack the enemy's centers of gravity and to safeguard one's own.

The Filipino insurgents accurately targeted the U.S. strategic center of gravity—the national willpower as expressed by the Commander-in-Chief and supported by his superiors, the voting public. The American populace's will to victory was the powerful key that brought the nation's formidable elements of power to bear.

America's source of operational power, its operational center of gravity, was the forces fielded in the Philippines. Particularly important were the small garrisons. Their ability to eliminate local resistance pacified regions and kept them peaceful. From 53 garrisons in May 1900 when Otis departed, American presence had expanded to over 500 by the time Aguinaldo was captured.[12] Largely isolated from higher-echelon control, small garrisons lived and worked in communities. They tracked and eliminated insurgents, built rapport with the populace, gathered intelligence, and implemented civil works. The process was slow, but once an area was pacified it was effectively denied to the insurgency.

Filipino Policy and Centers of Gravity

Although a full evaluation of Filipino insurgent strategy is beyond the scope of this article, its effect on the United States must be considered. The goal, or end-state, sought by the Filipino insurgency was a sovereign, independent, socially stable Philippines led by the *illustrado* oligarchy.

Local chieftains, landowners, and businessmen were the *principales* who controlled local politics. The insurgency was strongest when *illustrados, principales*, and peasants were unified in opposition to annexation. The peasants, who provided the bulk of guerrilla manpower, had interests different from their *illustrado* leaders and the *principales* of their villages. Coupled with the ethnic and geographic fragmentation, unity was a daunting task. The challenge for Aguinaldo and his generals was to sustain unified Filipino public opposition; this was the *insurrectos'* strategic center of gravity.

The Filipino operational center of gravity was the ability to sustain its force of 100,000 irregulars in the field. The Filipino General Francisco Macabulos described the insurrection's aim as, "not to vanquish the [U.S. Army] but to inflict on

them constant losses."[13] They sought to initially use conventional (later guerrilla) tactics and an increasing toll of U.S. casualties to contribute to McKinley's defeat in the 1900 presidential election. Their hope was that as President the avowedly anti-imperialist William Jennings Bryan would withdraw from the Philippines. They pursued this short-term goal with guerrilla tactics better suited to a protracted struggle. While targeting McKinley motivated the insurgents in the short term, his victory demoralized them and convinced many undecided Filipinos that the United States would not depart precipitately.[14]

American Strategy

American strategy effectively targeted both the insurgents' strategic and operational centers of gravity. The oft-repeated observation of Mao Zedong, arguably the most successful insurgent leader of the 20th century, bears repeating: "The people are the sea in which the insurgent fish swims and draws strength." The American pacification program targeted the sea in which the insurgents swam. It lowered the water level until the sea became hundreds of lakes. As American garrisons drained the local lakes, the insurgent fish became easier to isolate and catch. When the insurgents were unable to sustain a formidable force in the field, confidence in victory—and hence unified opposition—withered.

The elements of power America employed in the Philippines were diplomatic, legal, informational, military, and economic. These instruments were adapted to local conditions, sometimes without the permission of the Office of the Military Governor. While there is some discretion as to the category under which an activity should be discussed (for example, the United States concluded an agreement with the Vatican that exercised both diplomacy and economic power), the aggregate effect shows the United States successfully employed its power to target the Filipino centers of gravity.

After the role of the original Philippine Commission was complete, McKinley appointed a second Philippine Commission under William Howard Taft, which arrived in June 1900. The presidential charter to this body was to transition the Philippines from military to civilian rule. As implemented, the policy transferred control of each province from the jurisdiction of the Office of the Military Governor to the commission once the province was pacified. When MacArthur departed command in July 1901, all administrative responsibility was transferred to the commission, with Brigadier General Adna Chaffee taking command of the army. Taft added Filipino members to the commission. He also organized local governments so the elected Filipino officials were under close American supervision.[15]

Taft supported formation of the Federal Party, a group founded by Manila *illustrados* and former revolutionary officers that advocated recognition of U.S. sovereignty as a step toward representative government. The party channeled Filipinos' desires for independence into a peaceful, democratic undertaking. Party members also negotiated the surrender of a number of insurgent leaders.[16]

The famous baseball manager Casey Stengel once described the secret of managing as being able to "keep the guys who hate you away from the guys who are undecided." Realizing that a unified opposition would be more difficult to quash, the United States exploited the natural divisions within Filipino society. Given its geographic and cultural divides, the Philippines was more easily divided than unified. Whereas Otis had cultivated the elite, MacArthur assumed all *principales* not publicly committed to the United States were guilty of collaboration.[17] They had the most to lose, and once convinced of their personal safety, were the most willing to cooperate with the Americans. It was 80 Filipino scouts from the Macabebe ethnic group—under four American officers—who served as a Trojan horse that was admitted to Aguinaldo's camp. Presenting themselves as insurgents, upon entering the camp they captured the insurgent leader and his local supporters.

The United States employed political power to make cooperation lucrative. As Filipinos' participation in government grew, so did the autonomy the United States granted. Army garrison commanders approved local government officials, including mayors and town councils.[18] By

checking civilians' passes and providing labor, local politicians earned the right to offer patronage and licenses.[19] As commanders, Otis and MacArthur headed both the army and the Office of the Military Governor. Even commanders of the smallest detachments were dual-hatted, with their civil governance roles gradually assuming primary importance as regions were pacified. The Office of the Military Governor established civil government and laws, built schools and roads, and implemented other civic actions. With time, more Filipinos came to believe in the promise of democratic government, and a tutored transition.

Often considered a subset of diplomatic power, the law enforcement and judicial power employed were significant. While there were some abuses, prisoners generally were treated well by the standards of the day.[20] Three months after the end of the revolt, the U.S. Congress extended most of the protections of the U.S. Constitution to Filipinos.[21]

The United States employed collective punishments that involved families and communities.[22] Municipal officials or *principales* were held responsible for events that occurred in their towns. Prisoners were held until they—or family or friends—provided information, weapons, or both. Crops, buildings, and other property could be confiscated or destroyed as punishment. General Orders 100 lifted some restrictions on courts, resulting in more prisoners being executed. Rebel leaders were deported to Guam.[23] Filipino police under American control were an extension of U.S. law enforcement powers. The 246 native Manila police officers were responsible for arresting 7,422, including three revolutionary generals.[24]

In an era that preceded mass media, informing the people of events and progress was key to winning Filipinos over to America's goals. The teaching of Spanish had been restricted during Spain's 300 years of occupation. Only 40 percent of the population could read any language.[25] English instruction served as a unifying force, a lingua franca that compensated for differences in tribal speech and the lack of written languages.

Education was one of the few points of agreement between Americans who opposed and those who supported annexation. It demonstrated goodwill and made a lasting contribution to the Philippines. Major John Parker credited the 18 soldiers he employed as teachers in Laguna as being more valuable in the classroom than if they had been used more traditionally. Parker's wife ran schools for 2,000 students, which he believed tranquilized the country more "than a thousand men."[26] In a forerunner of the Peace Corps, 1,000 Americans came to the Philippines to teach.[27] The United States also founded a university in Manila. The commitment to education supported American goals by indicating steadfastness and the intent to build for the long term. Education was the most popular civic-action mission that did not offer a direct military benefit.[28]

When General Orders 100 was implemented, it was proclaimed in English, Spanish, and Tagalog. It clarified that civic works were a secondary priority to "punitive measures against those who continued to resist."[29] Over time, information operations convinced an increasing number of Filipinos that their interests were best served by the American administration and not the *principales*.

While it was clear that positive incentives might "reconcile the Filipinos to American rule in the long run, the insurgency could . . . be defeated in the short term [only] by military means."[30] The additional garrisons, Filipino troops, and effective use of the Navy all were important to expanding the reach of American military power.

General Otis had resisted creating large formations of Filipino troops. Faced with the imminent departure of U.S. volunteer units whose term of service would expire in December 1900, General MacArthur authorized the recruitment and training of indigenous Filipino formations.[31] Filipino scouts, police, and auxiliaries often were recruited from social and ethnic groups hostile to the wealthier Tagalog supporters of Aguinaldo. With time it became clear that local police were "some of the most effective counterinsurgency forces the Army raised."[32] The military auxiliary corps of Filipinos loyal to the United States grew to 15,000.[33]

As befits a campaign in an archipelago, a pri-

mary Navy role was interdiction of arms and other shipments. Beyond that, the Navy provided coastal fire support and supported amphibious landings. The embargo's success is shown in a number of facts. The insurgents' primary weapon source was captured rifles and ammunition. Guerrillas outnumbered firearms. This led to the unusual order that if unable to save both, rifles were a higher priority than comrades. Successful interdiction meant that most insurgent ammunition was reloaded cartridges, up to 60 percent of which misfired.

The military power employed went beyond American troops engaged in fighting guerrillas. Soldiers contributed to diplomatic and economic activities as well as civic works. Even in remote locations, American troops supervised road construction. The Army built and ran schools and clinics, administered vaccines, and "conducted sanitation programs and other charitable works."[34]

As has become characteristic of the American way of war, the economic power employed was significant. Infrastructure improvements such as road-building and laying telegraph lines aided both military operations and the local economy. In a single two-month period near the end of the conflict, 1,000 miles of roads were built.[35] Another program of dual benefit to soldier and citizen alike was disease eradication. The Philippines was plagued with malaria, smallpox, cholera, and typhoid.[36] Army garrison commanders worked with local leaders to ensure clean water and waste disposal.[37] Civil servants were paid relatively high wages.[38] These and other policies convinced the populace of America's sincere desire to improve the lot of the average Filipino.

Taft negotiated the purchase of 400,000 acres of prime farmland from the Vatican for $7.2 million, more than its actual value. Although the land could have been appropriated, the purchase kept the church, which had performed many municipal government functions under the Spanish, from resisting the U.S. administration. Filipino peasants gained a significant benefit by purchasing parcels of land from the American administration. The U.S. land purchase and resale was astute. It offered benefits that could not be matched by the insurgents to two constituencies. It also served as a wedge issue that separated the interests of the peasant guerrillas from their land-owning *principale* leaders.[39]

Sometimes curbing economic power aided U.S. efforts. Congress barred large landholdings by American citizens or corporations.[40] By avoiding even the appearance of any ulterior motive or conflict of interest, America strengthened its claim to benevolence.

The weapon collection policy also merits a mention. When implemented in 1899, a 30-peso bounty was initially a dismal failure, with only a few dozen weapons turned in nationwide. By 1901, when coupled with other successful pacification policies, it was common for hundreds of rifles to be surrendered by disbanding insurgent groups. The lesson is that any given tactic, technique, or procedure employed in isolation may fail, but as part of a comprehensive mix of carrots and sticks can be part of an effective program.

In summarizing the application of the tools of American power, it bears repeating that they were not uniformly employed. They varied by region and evolved over time. One district commander, Brigadier General J. Franklin Bell, identified his civil functions as head of the police, judiciary, civil administration, mail, telegraph, tax collection, and road construction activities.[41] Having unified control of the elements of power enabled Bell and his counterparts to effectively orchestrate the counterinsurgency.

Lessons Learned

The campaign holds a number of lessons at the strategic and operational levels that are valuable for those planning and conducting stability operations.[42] Pacifying the Philippines proved to be more difficult than anyone had predicted. A total of 126,468 U.S. soldiers served there, with troop strength averaging 40,000.

Negligible insurgent activity did not mean victory. Major General Otis headed home in May 1900 convinced that he had succeeded in suppressing the insurrection; yet the war continued for more than two years. Rebel sources subse-

quently revealed that the early 1900 lull was a period of reorganization and reconstitution.

Effective strategy and tactics took time to develop. There was considerable local variation in the tactics, techniques, and procedures used. American officers implemented forms of civil government often contrary to guidance from the Office of the Military Governor. Some permitted elections; when none were willing to serve, other commanders appointed Filipino leaders.

Strategic and Operational Errors

American victory came about despite a number of strategic and operational errors. President McKinley had not determined U.S. policy toward the Philippines when Admiral Dewey was dispatched and had still not done so after General Merritt arrived. There was no unity of command in political and military channels until MacArthur relinquished his posts and General Chaffee was subordinated to Taft.[43] Various generals prematurely announced victory—attained or imminent—a number of times. Theodore Roosevelt prudently waited until a few months after field forces had surrendered before declaring the war over. Clearly, one does not need to execute perfectly to prevail.

The insurgents made a number of political and military errors that helped the Americans. Their support was too narrowly based; it rested principally upon a relatively small *principale* oligarchy and the Tagalog-speaking regions of Luzon.[44] Their military errors were substantial. They failed to attack Manila after they had already seized the rest of the country, and then attempted to fight a conventional war. They delayed implementing unconventional tactics. Having adopted the guerrilla tactics of protracted warfare, Aguinaldo and his generals mistakenly led their followers to expect a quick victory with McKinley's defeat. The pre-election peak of guerrilla activity in late 1900 cost soldiers, equipment, weapons, and morale that were never replaced.

Changes in the International Environment

The 20th century saw the greatest technological and social changes in history. Some of these clearly mitigate the direct application of methods successfully employed in the Philippines. One need only consider Kipling's poetic admonition to "Pick up the White Man's Burden" for a quick jolt into how different the prevailing standards of acceptable discourse are today. It was an era when the major powers often acted, either unilaterally or in alliance, to secure colonial advantages.[45] Changes in human rights, the media, and international organizations are among those that most significantly limit direct application of the tactics, techniques, and procedures applied in the Philippine Insurrection to early 21st-century stability operations.

The standards for acceptable treatment of prisoners of war and non-combatants also have changed considerably. In the 19th century, General Orders 100 was considered such a model for the humane conduct of war that it was adapted for use by European nations. Yet it provided for sanctions such as suspension of civil rights, deportation, and summary execution.[46] American soldiers moved hundreds of thousands of Filipino civilians into concentration camps to separate them from the guerrillas. The camps served to separate the insurgents from their source of strength, the general populace. While incidents of torture and murder by U.S. troops were recorded, they were not widespread. Corporal punishment and physical hazing of American soldiers was still permitted, including use of the stockade. One American soldier was tied, gagged, and repeatedly doused with water as punishment for drunkenness. Though he died, his superiors were found not to have used excessive force.[47]

As unseemly as some treatment of Filipinos may be to modern sensibilities, American soldiers generally acted benevolently. The best testimony to this comes from the Filipinos themselves. Manual Quezon was an officer of Aguinaldo's who later became President of the Philippines. He complained of the difficulty the insurgents faced in fostering nationalism under their colonial master, "Damn the Americans! Why don't they tyrannize us more?"[48] The lesson here is not merely that prevailing standards have changed. Rather, Americans found legal means to separate the population from the guerrillas and did so while acting more humanely than the

generally accepted standards of the time.

Telecommunications did not exist in 1902. One need only consider the visibility of the 2004 prisoner abuse scandal in Iraq to appreciate the ubiquity and impact of global news and electronic mail today. News coverage influences multiple audiences: the American people, opposition forces, the undecided population of the occupied territory, and third parties such as current and potential allies.

Discussing the impact of the modern media on combat operations could fill volumes. Considerations that particularly deserve mention are the U.S. populace's famous impatience and aversion to casualties. Americans prefer quick, decisive, and relatively bloodless victories like Urgent Fury and Desert Storm. The United States suffered 4,234 dead and 2,818 wounded in the Philippine Insurrection.[49] Filipino casualties dwarfed those of the Americans. Combat losses exceeded 16,000, while civilian casualties numbered up to 200,000 due to disease, starvation, and maltreatment by both sides.[50] In today's 24-hour news cycle, every combatant and collateral death is grist for at least one day's news mill.

At the time of this writing, Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom are in their second and third years, respectively. America is unlikely to accept years of trial and error to develop the proper mix of tactics, techniques, and procedures if the casualty flow remains steady. Future planners will be expected to engage more troops, sooner, to speed pacification.

The United States acted alone in the Philippines. One marked change in the international environment in the past century is the increase in the prominence of international organizations. The United Nations and NATO are two of the most prominent institutions which may aid or hinder U.S. objectives, but which cannot be ignored. No such organizations existed in 1900.

Today's strategic planner must account for the ubiquitous presence of international and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Credibility is more freely granted to an alliance than to a nation acting unilaterally. The challenge is to incorporate the inevitable presence of international organizations and NGOs into U.S. goals. Ideally this can be done in ways that channel their elements of power toward American ends. At the least, it requires minimizing effects contrary to U.S. aims.

Applying the War's Lessons

Warfare, culture, and geography vary over time and place. No plan can be transposed unchanged from one context to another. The key for the military planner is to glean the proper lessons from principles and history, then apply them to the challenge at hand. By focusing on the strategic and operational lessons of the Philippine Insurrection, this article seeks to identify those higher-level lessons most likely to retain relevancy across centuries and hemispheres.

What then does one take away as the overriding lessons of the Philippine Insurrection? At the strategic level, two flaws in the Philippine experience are easily avoided. Joint force commanders today can expect clearer mission guidance than General Merritt had and a better understanding of the strategic end-state. Political and military elements operating together today, while not free of friction, will be much more closely integrated than those of Taft and General MacArthur.

At the operational level, one observes that each of the elements of national power was effectively employed for at least one of three purposes: separating the guerrillas from the populace, defeating the guerrillas, and gaining the cooperation of the populace. These lessons are comparable to other compilations of generally accepted counterinsurgency principles.[51] Separation denies support to insurgents and facilitates protecting noncombatants from coercion. Cooperation is best gained by a mix of positive and negative inducements.

Incentives without sanctions, largely the case before December 1900, are much less effective. Unlike General Otis, General MacArthur made known that there were limits to American benevolence. As the cost and risks of supporting the insurrection increase, support will decrease. To return to Mao's metaphor, as the water

becomes hotter, it evaporates from around the fish. While these principles are simple and constant, the appropriate tactics, techniques, and procedures must be developed, adapted to local conditions, constantly reassessed, and permitted to evolve.

Civic action and benevolent treatment alone were unable to win the Philippine campaign. Armed only with good deeds, soldiers were unable to either protect Filipino supporters from retribution or deny support to the insurgents. It was only with the addition of the chastisement tools—fines, arrest, property destruction and confiscation, population concentration, deportation, and scorching sections of the countryside—that soldiers were able to separate guerrillas from their support. The proper mix of tactics and techniques appropriate for each local situation was determined by officers in hundreds of garrisons throughout the archipelago.[52]

During the peak of the insurrection, the United States had 74,000 soldiers deployed there—one for every 110 Filipinos. By 1903, a year after America's victory in the Philippines, the number of U.S. troops garrisoning the archipelago had been reduced to 15,000—a ratio of about one soldier for every 500 residents. This timeline and troop level transposed to Iraq would see the U.S. garrison there reduced to 44,000 soldiers by 2008. Although this would represent a significant reduction from current troop levels, it is still the equivalent strength of three Army divisions. A segment of the American populace has been expecting its soldiers to return home as rapidly and casualty-free as they did after Desert Storm. Most Americans do not expect Iraq to remain America's largest overseas presence for years to come.

Some lessons can be adopted almost directly: Take care of supporters. Exploit differing motives and competition between social, ethnic, and political groups. Identify where to insert, and how to hammer, wedges between insurgent leaders and potential supporters. Control or deny the complex terrain where the guerrillas find sanctuary—in the Philippines it was jungle; elsewhere it may be desert, urban, or mountain terrain.

Separating guerrillas from the general populace needs to be done, but camps are unlikely to be acceptable in our current era. Cordoning off neighborhoods, implementing regional pass systems, and enforcing curfews are some techniques that can help accomplish the same end.

In winning the Filipino population, 600 small garrisons were more effective than 50. Today's soldiers will never be as isolated from support or communications as the Philippine garrisons were. The proper size of a garrison, whether company or squad, must depend on the situation. But the broader the range of benefits—medical, educational, or economic—and sanctions—political, judicial, or military—over which the local leaders have control, the better they will be able to effectively mold the local population to behaviors that accord with mission accomplishment.

No diplomat, soldier, or pundit can know with total accuracy which tactics, techniques, and procedures will succeed in quelling a given insurrection. What is clear is that the odds of success decrease the further one strays from the basic, oft-tested principles of counterinsurgency: separate the population from the insurgents, give them more reasons to support the counterinsurgents, and deny the insurgents safe haven or support from any quarter.[53] Having empirically shown these lessons in the Philippines, one might add another: empower leaders with the freedom to experiment with tactics, techniques, and procedures that achieve the mission while adapting to local conditions. It was the initiative by soldiers at different levels that derived the principles and techniques that won America's first victory in quelling an overseas insurrection.

In the past century there have been tectonic-scale changes in technology, human rights, and the prevailing world order. Despite this, the strategic and operational lessons of the successful Philippine counterinsurgency remain valid and are worthy of study. Those who disparage today's employment of the Army in peace operations and other stability and support operations may be experiencing historical myopia. Although more officers are able to cite the campaign lessons of Douglas MacArthur, it may well be that the successful counterinsurgency cam-

paigns of his father Arthur hold more valuable historical lessons for operations in the coming decades.

At the strategic level there is no simple secret to success. Victory in a counterinsurgency requires patience, dedication, and the willingness to remain.[54] The American strategic center of gravity that Aguinaldo identified a century ago remains accurate today.

Notes

1. Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 105. Boot characterizes McKinley's statement, ignoring the fact that most Filipinos were Catholic, as reflecting the "twin currents of Protestant piety and American jingoism that defined the turn of the century zeitgeist."
2. Rudyard Kipling's poem "Pick up the White Man's Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands" also captures the spirit of the times. Originally published in the February 1899 edition of *McClure's* magazine, it admonishes the United States to "Fill full the mouth of Famine, And bid the sickness cease," for "Your new-caught sullen peoples, Half-devil and half-child." The title of Boot's book comes from a line in the poem.
3. Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899–1902* (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 2000), 185.
4. Glenn A. May, *A Past Recovered* (Manila: New Day Publishers, 1987), 157, quoted in Linn, 325.
5. Boot, 126, puts the figure at 80,000. Linn, 325, cites 80,000 to 100,000 and the auxiliary strength.
6. Linn, 200.
7. John Morgan Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags: The United States Army in the Philippines, 1898–1902* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973), 162–63.
8. Although the term's use is tainted by its Nazi-era usage, this is what the camps were called. They were temporary villages, similar in scope and function to the reservations familiar to some of the Army's old hands who had campaigned against the Plains Indians.
9. Stability did not mean the end of all opposition. The Muslim Moros on the southern island of Mindanao remained in resistance as they had during 300 years of Spanish rule, and as they continue today under Abu Sayef.
10. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), 595–96.
11. U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning*, Joint Publication 5-00.1 (Washington: U.S. Department of Defense, 25 January 2002).
12. The number of garrisons expanded to 639 by September 1901 under MacArthur's successor, Major General Adna Chaffee.
13. Linn, 187.
14. Gates, 273.
15. Oscar Theodore Barck, Jr., and Nelson Manfred Blake, *Since 1900: A History of the United States in Our Times* (New York: MacMillan 1974), 86. The commission's success enhanced Taft's reputation as a sound administrator and helped him attain the White House.
16. Linn, 215.
17. Ibid., 213.
18. Ibid., 128.
19. Ibid., 206.
20. Boot, 127.
21. Barck and Blake, 86.
22. Linn, 213.
23. Deportation continued a practice of the Spaniards. Aguinaldo himself had been deported following the collapse of the 1896 revolution.
24. Linn, 128.
25. Gates, 31.
26. Linn, 203.
27. Boot, 115.
28. Linn, 258.
29. Ibid., 214.
30. Boot, 115.
31. Linn, 215.
32. Ibid., 204.
33. Ibid., 128.
34. Boot, 126.
35. Linn, 258. The period was April–May 1902.
36. Ibid., 15–16.
37. Ibid., 128–29.
38. Ibid., 275.
39. Ibid., 196.
40. Boot, 125.
41. These were in addition to military roles such as fighting guerrillas and bandits, destroying supply caches, gathering intelligence, and supporting the district's garrisons.
42. The campaign in the Philippines included combat as well as stability and support operations. While Americans forces conducted what would be categorized today as the full spectrum of operations (offense, defense, stability and support), the stability operations predominated.
43. From their first meeting, MacArthur had treated Taft as an unwelcome intrusion. It was due largely to Taft's influence in Washington that Arthur MacArthur was recalled.
44. Linn, 323.
45. During the midst of the Philippine rebellion, the United States, Britain, Germany, Japan, Russia, France, Italy, and Austria acted together to relieve their Peking legations besieged in the Boxer Rebellion.
46. Linn, 211–14.

47. Ibid., 221.
48. Boot, 125.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Robert R. Tomes, "Relearning Counterinsurgency Warfare," *Parameters*, 34 (Spring 2004). Tomes identifies the principles of counterinsurgency as separating guerrillas from the civil populace to deny them assistance, denying them safe havens, and preventing outside support.
52. Linn, 237.
53. Edward J. Filiberti, "The Roots of U.S. Counterinsurgency Doctrine," *Military Review*, 68 (January 1988). Although Filiberti credits Franklin Bell with having invented counterinsurgency doctrine, like 26 of the 30 U.S. generals to serve in the insurrection, he had counterinsurgency experience fighting American Indians.
54. Gates, 285

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"We Will Go Heavily Armed": The Marines' Small War on Samar, 1901–1902

by Brian McAllister Linn

New Interpretations in Naval History: Selected Papers from the Ninth Naval History Symposium, 1989

The actions of Major Littleton W. T. Waller and his battalion in the American conquest of Samar have provoked controversy for almost a century. In this essay Professor Linn draws on Filipino sources as well as army, navy, and Marine operational records to integrate the Marines' experiences into the context of the entire campaign. Challenging those scholars who have portrayed Waller as a hero and scapegoat, Linn argues that his poor leadership contributed greatly to the uneven performance of the Marine Corps on Samar.

On 28 September 1901 villagers and guerrillas attacked the 74 officers and men of Company C, Ninth U.S. Infantry at the town of Balangiga, Samar Island, in the Philippines. Surprising the men at breakfast, the Filipinos killed 48 soldiers, "mutilating many of their victims with a ferocity unusual even for guerrilla warfare."[1] The "massacre," which occurred when many believed the fighting between U.S. military forces and Filipino nationalists was virtually over, shocked Americans. Amidst public cries for vengeance, U.S. patrols, under orders to "make a desert of Balangiga," soon did such a thorough job that "with the exception of the stone walls of the church and a few large upright poles of some of the houses, there is today not a vestage [sic] of the town of Balangiga left."[2] Determined to crush the resistance on Samar, the Army poured in troops, the Navy sent gunboats, and a battalion of 300

Marines was dispatched under the command of Major Littleton W. T. Waller. Some of these Marines had served with the victims of Balangiga in the Boxer Rebellion a year earlier. Their attitude may have been best summarized by Private Harold Kinman: "we will go heavily armed and longing to avenge our comrades who fought side by side with us in China."[3]

Although only a small part of the total U.S. manpower on the island, the Marine battalion soon became the most famous, or notorious, military force in the campaign—which in turn became one of the most famous, or notorious, episodes of the Philippine War. Even college freshmen may have read of Brigadier General Jacob H. Smith's orders directing Waller to take no prisoners, to treat every male over ten as an enemy, to make the interior of Samar a "howling wilderness," and to "kill and burn. The more you kill and burn, the better you will please me."[4] Equally controversial are the Marines' own exploits. Campaigning on Samar was such a hellish experience that for years afterwards, veterans would be greeted in mess halls with the toast, "Stand Gentlemen: He served on Samar." Yet in an early blunder, the Marines lost ten men in one expedition without encountering a single enemy guerrilla. In another incident, Waller had eleven Filipino guides summarily executed, an action that President Theodore Roosevelt believed "sullied the American name" and led to Waller's court-martial for murder.[5] Thus, both because it proved so controversial and because it represented the Marines' first encounter with twentieth-century guerrilla warfare, the Samar campaign serves as an excellent starting point for a discussion of the small wars heritage of the U.S. Marine Corps.

Charles E. Callwell, the contemporary British expert in irregular warfare, noted that in small wars, climate and terrain were often greater obstacles than the enemy forces. His observation is particularly true of Samar, where, as one saturnine Marine noted, there was no need for the orders to turn the interior into a "howling wilderness" because "nature had done it for us."[6] In the local dialect, the name "Samar" means "wounded" or "divided"—an apt description for an island whose 5,200 square miles are replete with rugged mountains, jungles, tortuous rivers, razor-sharp grasses, swamps, and parasites. Because the mountains confined most of its population to a narrow coastal region, for most of its colonial history Samar was "an island of dispersed settlements only loosely bound together by a common religion, a lightly felt administrative structure, and a few ties between pueblos."[7] In the towns and barrios, authority was wielded by a few priests, merchants, landowners, and municipal officials; and in the mountains, scattered groups practiced primitive slash-and-burn agriculture. The Samarenos exported abaca (Manila hemp) and coconuts from Calbayog, Catbalogan, and other ports; but they were unable to grow sufficient rice to meet their needs and suffered periodic food shortages. Although contemporary American officers described the population of the island as "savages" with a long and violent history of resistance to any authority, the Spanish praised the natives' docile acceptance of foreign rule.

Samar was untouched by the fighting between the Filipino nationalists and the Spanish in 1896; but with the declaration of Philippine independence by Emilio Aguinaldo on 12 June 1898, the Filipino revolutionaries, based predominantly on the island of Luzon, moved to secure the rest of the archipelago. On 31 December 1898, a month before the outbreak of the Philippine War between Filipino forces and the Americans, Brigadier General Vicente Lukban (or Lucban) arrived and with some 100 soldiers formally placed Samar under Aguinaldo's Philippine Republic. Although he demonstrated commendable energy, Lukban was greatly hampered in his efforts to mobilize the Samarenos by the fact that he was an outsider. Moreover, a U.S. naval blockade prevented him from obtaining reinforcements or sending the money and supplies he collected to Aguinaldo. The blockade compounded Samar's precarious food situation: "Famine appeared as early as 1899 and Lukban wrote in 1900 that his troops were close to mutiny because of it."[8]

The American infantrymen who landed on the island on 27 January 1900 had little idea of either the precariousness of the insurgents' situation or the trouble that Samar was later to give them.

Their mission was to secure the island's hemp ports and prevent a cordage crisis in the United States, a task they accomplished by brushing aside Lukban's forces and garrisoning a few towns. The soldiers' rapid seizure of the ports and the apparent collapse of the revolutionaries convinced the army high command that Samar was secured. With more important islands to pacify, army leaders quickly decided Samar was of minimal value. For the next eighteen months after their arrival, the isolated companies stationed on the island would cling precariously to little more than a few ports and river towns.

The weak occupation force allowed the Filipino revolutionaries, termed *insurrectos* by the Americans, to recover and counterattack. From the beginning, the *insurrectos* attempted to confine the soldiers to the Catbalogan-Calbayog area while mobilizing the inhabitants against the invaders. In some places the revolutionaries depopulated entire areas, setting fire to villages and barrios and driving civilians into the mountains. They informed the Samarenos that the U.S. Army came for the purpose of raping, pillaging, and "annihilating us later as they have the Indians of America."[9] To support their military forces, the guerrillas confiscated crops and engaged in extensive smuggling, seeking both to continue the hemp trade and to bring in rice. Filipinos who collaborated with the soldiers or lived in the towns risked kidnapping or assassination, often in the most grisly manner. One U.S. officer complained, "The Insurgents have been guilty of all kinds of cruelty to those persons friendly to us, such as burying them alive, cutting off parts of the body, killing them, etc."[10]

Although the guerrillas lacked modern weapons, they showed remarkable tactical ingenuity and ability. They made cannons out of bamboo wrapped with hemp, gunpowder from community niter pits, and cartridges from brass fittings soldered with silver taken from churches. Their primitive firearms made the guerrillas more than able both to harass the soldiers and to force compliance from civilians. Against American patrols, they relied on an ingenious variety of booby traps: covered holes filled with poisoned bamboo, spring-loaded spears set off by carefully hidden trip wires, and heavy timbers or baskets of rocks hung over trails and rivers. One soldier who painstakingly removed dozens of obstacles from a trail returned in two weeks to find dozens more in place, "and such traps one could not imagine could be made and set so cunningly."[11] The ubiquitous traps, supplemented by an extensive system of pickets and *vigilantes* who signaled the approach of an American patrol through bells, bamboo and carabao horns, or conch shells, effectively precluded surprise. Occasionally the *insurrectos* would go on the offensive. From carefully concealed trenches, bamboo cannons or rifles would fire on American patrols struggling along narrow trails or river beds. This sniping might be followed by a sudden "bolo rush" of machete-wielding guerrillas pouring out of the thick grass or jungle to overwhelm detachments.[12]

It was not until May 1901 that the Army began to give Samar more than a cursory interest, and then only because the end of military rule on neighboring Leyte Island made the continued turmoil on Samar intolerable. With much of the Philippines pacified, the Army was able to reinforce Brigadier General Robert P. Hughes on Samar and by September he had 23 companies of infantry stationed in some 38 towns located throughout the northern and central parts of the island. Hughes established two bases deep in the interior to allow U.S. troops to operate inland, and he ordered patrols to converge at Lukban's headquarters on the Gandara River, in the process crossing the island and sweeping the countryside. He expanded the Army's area of operations, stationing garrisons in heretofore ignored southern towns such as Basey and Balangiga. Through the laborious process of constructing roads, building supply camps, securing boats and porters, and constant patrolling, the Americans brought the war to the interior of the island.

Frustrated because the guerrillas rarely stood and fought, Hughes became convinced that the resistance would continue as long as the enemy could secure sufficient food. He determined to cut off smuggling and to destroy the guerrilla logistical base in order to give his soldiers "a fair opportunity to kill off the bands of utter savages who have hibernated in the brush."[13] He ordered

the Navy to step up its blockade and closed all ports in Samar, authorizing Army and naval officers to seize all boats not deemed necessary for fishing and to arrest anyone found carrying food without a pass. To increase the pressure further, he ordered U.S. expeditions in the interior and along the coast to destroy crops, houses, and fields. Although Hughes did not formally implement a policy of concentrating the population into protected zones or camps, it was common for his soldiers to deport all Filipino civilians found in the interior to the coast. The result was that the towns, often already burned by the *insurrectos*, soon filled up with destitute Filipinos with no access to food. Within two months after Hughes's policies took effect, hunger was widespread, and by September the situation was so critical that he had to authorize post commanders to purchase rice for the refugees.[14]

At the town of Balangiga, the American policies provoked a violent response. Despite his alleged sympathy for the Filipinos, the post commander, Captain Thomas Connell, destroyed much of the town's livestock, fishing supplies, and crops. In addition, he confined 70 townspeople in two tents designed for 16 men each, forcing them to work all day in the sun and refusing to pay them or give them adequate food. His men also behaved poorly, taking food without payment and probably committing at least one rape. Such abuses, coupled with weak security measures, provoked a retaliatory attack by townspeople and local guerrilla forces who slaughtered most of the garrison on 28 September.[15]

The Balangiga "massacre" provoked an equally enraged American response. In what was undoubtedly one of the worst decisions of the war, Major General Adna R. Chaffee, the commanding officer of the Army in the Philippines, selected Brigadier General Jacob H. Smith to take tactical command of the pacification of Samar. A product of the Army's seniority system, Smith owed his general's stars to his longevity, his physical bravery, and the mistaken belief that he planned to retire. Having spent most of his life commanding little more than a company, he was bewildered by the complexity of handling the 4,000 soldiers, Marines, and native scouts in his 6th Separate Brigade. To compound his problems, Smith displayed symptoms of mental instability and was subject to outbursts in which he urged the most violent and irresponsible actions.[16]

Unfortunately, among Smith's subordinates was an officer who himself was prone to rash and violent action: Major Littleton W. T. Waller, commander of the Marine battalion. At first glance Waller would seem to have made an ideal commander. He was a 22-year veteran whose combat exploits in Egypt, Cuba, and China had shown that he possessed several characteristics vital to a counterinsurgency fighter: he had tremendous powers of endurance and was personally brave, aggressive, and charismatic. These qualities would later make him a legendary combat leader in the Marines' small wars in Latin America. Nevertheless, Waller consistently relied on physical courage and endurance to make up for deficiencies in planning and judgment. In China, for example, he had engaged a vastly superior enemy force and had been driven back, losing an artillery piece and a machine gun, suffering eleven casualties, and leaving his dead behind. Prone to both braggadocio and self-pity, he was convinced that his services in the Boxer Rebellion had not been properly recognized. Moreover, he arrived in Samar under a personal cloud, having recently gone on an alcoholic binge that culminated in a 10-day suspension from duty. This disciplinary action does not appear to have cured him: one Marine later remembered that on operations in the field, Waller "had a bottle of liquor for his own use, and when it gave out he was in bad shape."[17] His drinking may explain his boastfulness and irritability, his willingness to blame his superiors, and his inability to accept the consequences of his actions.

It is not surprising that the Marines' organizational status within the 6th Separate Brigade is still the subject of much misunderstanding, given the confusion engendered by Smith's instability and Waller's penchant for acting rashly. Assigned to the two southern towns of Basey and Balangiga, the Marines fell under both Army and Navy authority. Not until after the campaign did

the U.S. Army's judge advocate general rule that the Marines on Samar were not detached from the Navy but only engaged in a "cooperative" venture with the Army.[18] Equally confused was Waller's area of responsibility. From 27 October 1902 on, he apparently believed he was in charge of an independent command he referred to as "Subdistrict South Samar," consisting of all territory south of a line from Basey on the west coast to Hernani on the east coast, an area totaling some 600 square miles and including two Army posts. A careful reading of the extensive U.S. Army operational correspondence concerning Waller makes it clear, however, that he commanded the Marines at Basey and Balangiga alone and that his Army superiors never considered him more than the "Commanding Officer, Basey." The actual extent of Waller's authority would later become a major issue, but at the time, nearly every army garrison and navy gunboat suffered from equally tangled command relations.[19]

The organizational vagueness surrounding Waller's command was compounded by his operational orders. Upon the arrival of the Marines at Balangiga and Basey, Smith ordered Waller to "kill and burn," take no prisoners, and regard every male over 10 as a combatant. In spite of these grim directives, Waller's own orders to the Marine battalion on 23 October conformed to Army policies already current on Samar. In common with American military efforts since June 1901, Waller focused on denying food to the guerrillas and ordered his Marines to confiscate all rice, allowing families only a small daily ration on which to survive. In an effort to break up the guerrillas' extensive smuggling organization in the south of the island, he ordered all hemp confiscated and all boats registered and painted red. Waller attempted to organize the population into similarly identifiable groups by allowing a short grace period for male civilians to come into the towns and register or be treated henceforth as hostile. His orders emphasized that the Samarenos were "treacherous, brave, and savage. No trust, no confidence can be placed in them." Therefore, civilians were required to perform all manual labor and Filipino guides were to walk at the head of military columns with long poles and probe for pits and traps. The area around Balangiga, garrisoned by some 159 Marines under Captain David D. Porter, was to be "cleared of the treacherous enemy and the expeditions, in a way, are to be punitive." Finally, Waller stressed that the Marines were to "avenge our late comrades in North China" and "must do our part of the work, and with the sure knowledge that we are not to expect quarter."[20] There were also disturbing indications that Smith's illegal orders were passed on unchanged to the men. One Marine wrote home that he and his comrades were "hiking all the time killing all we come across," and another veteran remembered that "we were to shoot on sight anyone over 12 years old, armed or not, to burn everything and to make the Island of Samar a howling wilderness."[21] Captain Porter later explained that although Smith had meant that the Marines were only to "kill and burn" *insurrectos*, it was "understood that everybody in Samar was an *insurrecto*, except those who had come in and taken the oath of allegiance."[22]

Under these guidelines, Waller pursued the objectives of destroying *insurrecto* supplies, bringing the guerrillas to battle, and establishing a defensive cordon. His men completed the destruction of the area around Balangiga and extended the devastation—between 31 October and 10 November the Marines burned 255 houses and destroyed one ton of hemp, one-half ton of rice, 13 carabao, and thirty boats while killing 39 men and capturing 18. Waller also learned from a Filipino who had escaped from the *insurrectos* that the insurgents had established a base about fifteen miles up the Sojoton River. The first attempt up the river on 6 November resulted in the death of two Marines and the loss of fifteen rifles. A second expedition was more successful. After 10 days of struggling through the jungles, the Marines launched an assault on 17 November that killed 30 guerrillas and drove the rest from their entrenchments. As congratulations poured in, Waller boasted that the "operations in the Sojoton were the most important of the whole campaign as far as their effect on the insurgents were concerned."[23]

This apparent success on the Sojoton River

may have led Waller to overlook some of the campaign's hard lessons. He underestimated the crucial role the Navy had played in supplying and transporting his expedition. Once separated from their waterborne logistical lifeline, his Marines could neither carry enough food nor live off the country. Despite their victory, they had to withdraw from the Sojoton immediately, and within a month, the area was again a guerrilla stronghold. Waller could take pride in the fact that his men "can and will go where mortal men can go," but he apparently disregarded the human cost inflicted on them.[24] He seems to have drawn no lesson from the fact that after its 10-day ordeal, his battalion was immobilized for almost a week.

Convinced that the Sojoton Valley was cleared, Waller launched operations into the interior to destroy other reputed guerrilla strongholds. He resolved the persistent problem of supply by ignoring it; in one telegram he arbitrarily decided that six days' rations could sustain his men for nine days. Unfamiliar with all of the deleterious effects of service in the Philippines and ignoring the lessons of the Sojoton campaign, he drove both himself and his men unmercifully. The Marines slogged through Samar's swamps and muddy trails, climbed the razor-backed mountains, and cut their way through jungles and congon grass. Constant rains, inadequate maps, and poor communications dogged them, and patrols often wandered lost. One Marine complained that "sometimes we do not have any thing to eat for 48 hours and never more than 2 meals per day. Our feet are sore, our shoes worn out and our clothes torn. It rains [and] half of the time we sleep on the ground with nothing but a rubber poncho to cover us."[25]

In December, asserting that Smith had requested him to find a route for a telegraph line, Waller decided to march from the east coast to Basey, "belting the southern end of Samar."[26] Although the planned march covered only some 30 miles in a direct line, an earlier Army expedition had already determined that no route existed in the region that Waller intended to cross. Not only would the Marines be marching at the height of the monsoon season, but most of their journey would be over narrow, jungle-covered valleys, necessitating the constant crossing of both mountains and rivers. Between climbing the steep hills, cutting a path through the vegetation, and fording the swollen and treacherous streams, the Marines would have to display epic stamina simply to cover a few miles on the map. The local army officers, far more experienced with the treacherous interior, urged Waller not to undertake the operation without establishing a secure supply line. Another officer who recently had returned from the very area Waller planned to explore warned the Marine commander immediately before he departed "of the hardships of mountain climbing, even when he had a supply camp and shelters for his men."[27]

The ensuing march of six officers, 50 Marines, two Filipino scouts, and 33 native porters from Lanang to Basey between 28 December 1901 and 19 January 1902 has been described by Allan R. Millett as "a monument to human endurance and poor planning."[28] The trail quickly disappeared, and the expedition slowed to a crawl as each foot of the way had to be cut through the sodden and steaming jungle. As Waller's men crossed and recrossed rivers and inched up hills so sheer they were almost perpendicular, their shoes and clothes became little more than torn and rotting rags. The constant immersion, parasites, razor-sharp tropical grasses, and piercing rocks literally peeled their skin off in layers.

Although the survivors' recollections of the march are vague and contradictory, it is clear that after only five days of marching, supplies ran dangerously low and the men were exhausted. On about 2 January, Waller and his officers decided to abandon their objective and return to the east coast along the Suribao River. The Marines cut down trees and made rafts, but the water-logged timbers sank immediately. Making a controversial decision, Waller took two officers and 13 of his strongest men and set out in an attempt to blaze a trail to the Sojoton Valley. By 6 January they managed to cut their way through to a Marine base camp. In the meantime, the rest of the expedition disintegrated. Captain Porter, receiving no word from Waller, hacked his way back to Lanang with seven Marines and six Filipinos. The remaining Marines and Filipino

porters were left on the trail under the command of Lieutenant Alexander Williams. Starving and suffering from prolonged exposure, Williams and several of his men became convinced that the porters not only had access to a large supply of food, but also that they were plotting against the Marines. The lieutenant later claimed that he was attacked by three of the porters, though his account of the event was somewhat confused. An Army relief force, battling heavy floods, reached Williams's men on 18 January, but by that time 10 Marines had either died or disappeared and an eleventh was to die shortly afterwards. Starving, barefoot, and their clothes in rags, the Marines who survived were literally helpless, and their rifles and ammunition had to be carried by the Filipino porters. Some of the Marines were even crazed by their exertions. Although the expedition cost him over 20 percent of his command, Waller admitted: "As a military movement it was of no other value than to show that the mountains are not impenetrable to us."[29]

One result of Waller's ill-considered march was the virtual collapse of his battalion as an effective combat force. After they returned to their familiar quarters at Basey and Balangiga, the Marines were incapable of further sustained operations. Instead of the large and protracted expeditions they had launched in the fall, the Marines now sent between 20 and 40 men out on "hikes" that seldom moved more than a day from camp. Marine patrols continued to destroy food and shelter and occasionally skirmished with guerrillas, but the real fighting of the campaign occurred elsewhere. Southern Samar returned to the backwater status it had enjoyed before Balangiga, and Waller's battalion may have been content to let the war be won elsewhere. Certainly neither Waller nor his men made any protest when the shattered battalion was withdrawn from Samar and returned to Cavite on 29 February.[30]

A second, more serious result of the march was the execution of 12 Filipinos without benefit of trial or even the rudiments of an impartial investigation. The first killing occurred on 19 January; the victim was a Filipino whom the mayor, or *presidente*, of Basey denounced as a spy. Because Waller was running a temperature of as high as 105 degrees, the camp surgeon judged him incompetent to command. As a result, authority in Basey fell to Lieutenant John H. A. Day. Through the use of "a real third degree," or torture, Day secured a confession, the specifics of which he later had trouble remembering. Acting "on the spur of the moment," he decided that the Filipino's confession warranted his immediate execution. Although Waller denied authorizing a summary execution, in a few minutes Day organized a firing squad, personally shot the suspect, and left his body in the street as a warning. Court-martialed for murder, Day was acquitted on the grounds that he was obeying Waller's orders.[31]

The following day saw an even bloodier incident. Williams and many of the survivors were in the hospital on Leyte Island; and no one at Waller's headquarters at Basey appears to have been certain of the magnitude of the disaster that had befallen their comrades. Some believed that not 10 but 20 Marines had died, and nearly everyone accepted the rumor that the porters had acted treacherously. Although Basey was connected by telephone with brigade headquarters on Leyte, Waller neither requested an investigation nor brought charges against the suspects. Instead, hovering between delirium and lucidity, he ordered that the surviving porters be brought over from Leyte and executed. He then apparently collapsed. When these men arrived, it fell to Private George Davis to pick out those who had been guilty of specific crimes. Davis identified three porters whom he recalled had hidden potatoes, stolen salt, failed to gather wood, and disobeyed orders. He then selected another seven men on the grounds that, as he later claimed, "they were all thieves, sir, that I know of; and they were all worth hanging, if I had anything to do with it."[32] Solely on the basis of this reasoning, 10 civilians were promptly shot by Day's firing squad. At Waller's insistence, a final victim was executed later that afternoon—providing through his grim arithmetic a total of 11 Filipino victims in exchange for the 11 men he had lost on the march.

In a report written three months after the incident, Waller gave a variety of reasons for the

executions: the hostility of the townspeople of Basey, an inquiry with his officers, "reports of the attempted murder of the men and other treachery by the natives," his own weakened physical condition, as well as his power of life and death as a district commander. He concluded: "It seemed, to the best of my judgment, the thing to do at that time. I have not had reason to change my mind."[33] Even after conceding him an unusual measure of moral obtuseness, it is hard to follow his reasoning. Clearly, he engaged in no procedure that either a civil or military court would recognize as an inquiry or investigation. Neither then nor since has any evidence emerged to prove that his victims were guilty of "attempted treachery" or any other action that warranted the death penalty under the laws of war. General Chaffee, who believed that Waller's actions were those of a man suffering from "mental anguish," drew attention to the fact that "no overt acts were committed by the *cagadores* [porters]; on the contrary, those sent to their death continued to the last to carry the arms and ammunition after they [the Marines] were no longer able to bear them, and to render in their impassive way, such service as deepens the conviction that without their assistance many of the Marines who now survive would also have perished." Noting that the laws of war only justified summary executions in "certain urgent cases," Chaffee pointedly commented that after the march was over, "there was no overwhelming necessity, no impending danger, no imperative interest and, on the part of the executed natives, no overt acts to justify the summary course pursued."[34] Chaffee drew attention to the fact that in executing the porters, Waller had assumed powers that both the "military laws of the United States and the customs of the service, confer only upon a commanding general in time of war and on the field on military operations." What made Waller's crime even more heinous was that he "was in telephonic communication with his Brigade Commander, but deliberately chose not to consult him regarding his contemplated action."[35] Concluding that Waller's acquittal was "a miscarriage of justice," the general chastised the major's illegal actions and publicly condemned the killings as "one of the most regrettable incidents in the annals of the military service of the United States."[36]

The subsequent court-martial of Waller for murder is almost as controversial today as it was 90 years ago. Taking place against the background of the last death throes of the Philippine War, the trials seem to embody the brutality, ambiguity, and frustration of the Marines' first Asian guerrilla conflict. Waller's revelation that he had been ordered by General Smith to make the interior of Samar a "howling wilderness" and to regard every male Samareno over 10 as a combatant provoked national outrage. American opponents of Philippine annexation, who had suffered a crushing defeat in the presidential election of 1900, now rallied behind the issue of atrocities to attack U.S. military policy in the Philippines.[37] Waller's acquittal did little to resolve the controversy, for both the military authorities who examined the trial transcript and the commander in chief himself condemned Waller's actions as illegal and immoral. For years afterward, Waller was known as the "Butcher of Samar," and many attributed his being passed over for commandant to the notoriety he gained on the island.

Waller's supporters have since claimed that he was a scapegoat, a victim of politics, a Marine forced to stand trial for crimes that the U.S. Army committed with impunity in the Philippines. Joseph Schott entitled one of the chapters in *The Ordeal of Samar* "The Scapegoat"; Paul Melshen cites Waller's "high moral courage"; Stuart Miller praises him as an "honorable warrior" and a "sacrificial victim"; and Stanley Karnow terms Waller "a scrupulous professional" and a "scapegoat."[38] The charge that Waller was a victim of interservice rivalry is difficult to sustain. His conduct cannot be defended on the grounds that he was only following orders. In the first place, Waller claimed that as a Marine, he did not fall under U.S. Army authority. Moreover, he clearly understood that Smith's instructions to take no prisoners and regard all males over 10 as enemies were illegal, for by Waller's own testimony he immediately told Captain Porter that despite Smith's instructions, the Marines had not come to make war on women and children.[39] The excuse that Waller did nothing that the U.S. Army had not