

U.S. Marines and Irregular Warfare, 1898-2007:
**ANTHOLOGY AND SELECTED
BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Colonel Stephen S. Evans



Cover:

Top Photo: Sandinos colors captured at Ocotal, Nicaragua. (USMC Official Photo.)

Bottom Photo: Marines and Iraqi Police distribute school supplies and toys to Iraqi children outside the Fallujah Civil-Military Operations Center, 28 June 2005. (Photo by LtCol David A. Benhoff, USMCR.)

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Quantico, Virginia
2008

PCN
160 00000 500

Foreword

This anthology presents a collection of 27 articles on counterinsurgency warfare and includes a broad bibliography that collectively describe the role played by the United States in various counterinsurgency and irregular warfare efforts from 1898 until 2007, with a particular emphasis on the role of the Marine Corps in the conduct of such efforts. Like other previously published USMC History Division anthologies on earlier wars, the purpose of this volume is to provide readers with a general overview and introduction to the topic of counterinsurgency and irregular warfare. Designed essentially as a primer, this volume is intended to serve as an initial educational resource that provides Marine officers and other national security professionals with the historical basis for modern-day USMC counterinsurgency strategy and operational doctrine.

Using a broad range of historical and contemporary examples of U.S. involvement in counterinsurgency and irregular warfare, this particular anthology has drawn its articles from an equally wide range of publishers. As such, I would like to thank the editors of the *Naval Institute Press*, *Parameters*, *Military Review*, *Marine Corps Gazette*, *Strategic Forum*, *Aerospace Power Journal*, *Revista/Review Interamericana*, *Orbis*, *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, *Washington Quarterly*, *Royal United Services Institute Journal*, and *Foreign Service Journal* for permitting the reproduction of the articles that comprise this volume. Their valued support has made the creation of this volume possible.



Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer
Director of Marine Corps History

Preface

This anthology joins a growing number of works whose topic is counterinsurgency and irregular warfare. Continuing discussion and study of these subjects is of critical importance to the ongoing efforts of the United States and its allies in the Global War on Terrorism.

The 27 articles presented here, as well as the works referenced in this book's "Selected Bibliography," represent only a small fraction of the enormous body of literature written about these subjects. Especially since the tragic events of 9/11 and the consequent advent of the Global War on Terrorism, there has been a remarkable surge of interest in counterinsurgency, reflected most notably in the very large number of recent articles, monographs, studies, and reports that are found in a variety of highly divergent sources. These run the academic gamut from traditional military, government, and university studies and publications to those produced by a host of think tank and nongovernmental organizations. The articles selected for inclusion in this anthology all help to illustrate the complexity involved in conducting counterinsurgency and irregular war efforts, both historically and in the contemporary Global War on Terrorism.

The anthology is divided broadly into two halves: the first half presents historical examples of counterinsurgency involving the United States, while the second half addresses the nation's contemporary efforts in this regard. Part One contains three articles on counterinsurgency doctrine and theory. Parts Two through Six present articles about historical counterinsurgency efforts by the United States, with particular emphasis on the role played by the Marine Corps. Specifically, Part Two recounts the United States' first taste of fighting a prolonged, overseas counterinsurgency—the Philippine Insurrection. The experience gained in this conflict soon came to be employed on numerous occasions and at various locations in the Caribbean during the course of the "Banana Wars"; most prominently in the long-term military occupations of Nicaragua (Part Three), Haiti (Part Four), and the Dominican Republic (Part Five). Because of its all-too-frequent involvement in a range of counterinsurgency efforts, the United States in general, and the Marine Corps in particular, became quite proficient in conducting a variety of civil and military counterinsurgency operations. In fact, many of the experiences and lessons garnered from the Philippines and the Banana Wars eventually came to be incorporated into one of the Marine Corps' seminal publications—the *Small Wars Manual*—in 1940. Regrettably, some of these lessons had to be relearned for America's involvement in Vietnam (Part Six).

After a 30-year hiatus, the United States once again finds itself engaged in several prolonged counterinsurgencies and a number of related counterterrorism efforts, all part of the ongoing, overarching Global War on Terrorism (Part Seven). The princi-

pal—though certainly not the exclusive—focus of these contemporary counterinsurgency and counterterrorism efforts is on al-Qaeda and other proponents of radical Islamist ideologies (Part Eight). While the Global War on Terrorism is truly global in scale, with operations stretching from Columbia to Indonesia and the Philippines, the main battlefields are in Afghanistan (Part Nine), Iraq (Part Ten), and the Horn of Africa (Part Eleven). Compared with America’s counterinsurgency operations of the previous century, contemporary counterinsurgency and counterterrorism efforts are far more likely to be multinational, joint-service, interagency affairs that are correspondingly far more difficult to plan and to coordinate successfully.

Although further details can be found in the initial section of the volume’s “Selected Bibliography,” several things should be noted here in regard to the rationale and development of the bibliography. First, like the anthology itself, the bibliographic entries deal with topics concerning counterinsurgency and irregular warfare involving only the United States; the experiences of European nations, the Soviet Union, and others are left largely unexplored. Beyond this, because it is intended primarily as an introduction and educational resource, the entries comprise English-language and secondary sources only. Lastly, because the cutoff for research for this volume was mid-2007, the impact of the surge in Iraq is not addressed. Despite these constraints, the references manage to address a broad range of subjects: on higher-end operational/strategic level of war considerations, on geopolitical context, and on a varied array of related topics—political theory, historical case studies, failed states, cultural studies and analysis, and many others—that all provide context or play a role in conducting a counterinsurgency and achieving success in the realm of irregular warfare.

My sincere thanks to Dr. Charles Neimeyer, Director of the Marine Corps History Division, for granting me wide latitude in determining the scope of the project, in organizing the topics to be addressed, in selecting the articles that would be included in the anthology, and in compiling and selecting the bibliographic entries. Thanks also to Captain C. Cameron Wilson for researching various photo collections and helping to select the photographs contained in this volume. Major Valerie Jackson’s Editing and Design section at History Division, and in particular W. Stephen Hill and Greg Macheak, were responsible for transforming an eclectic array of electronic files, photocopies, and photographs into a manageable format. Additional guidance and advice was provided by Colonel Patricia Saint, Deputy Director, by Charles D. Melson, Chief Historian, and by Kenneth H. Williams, Senior Editor. Wanda J. Renfrow aided with the editing, and Emily D. Funderburke, an Editing and Design intern, helped re-create many of the graphics from the articles.

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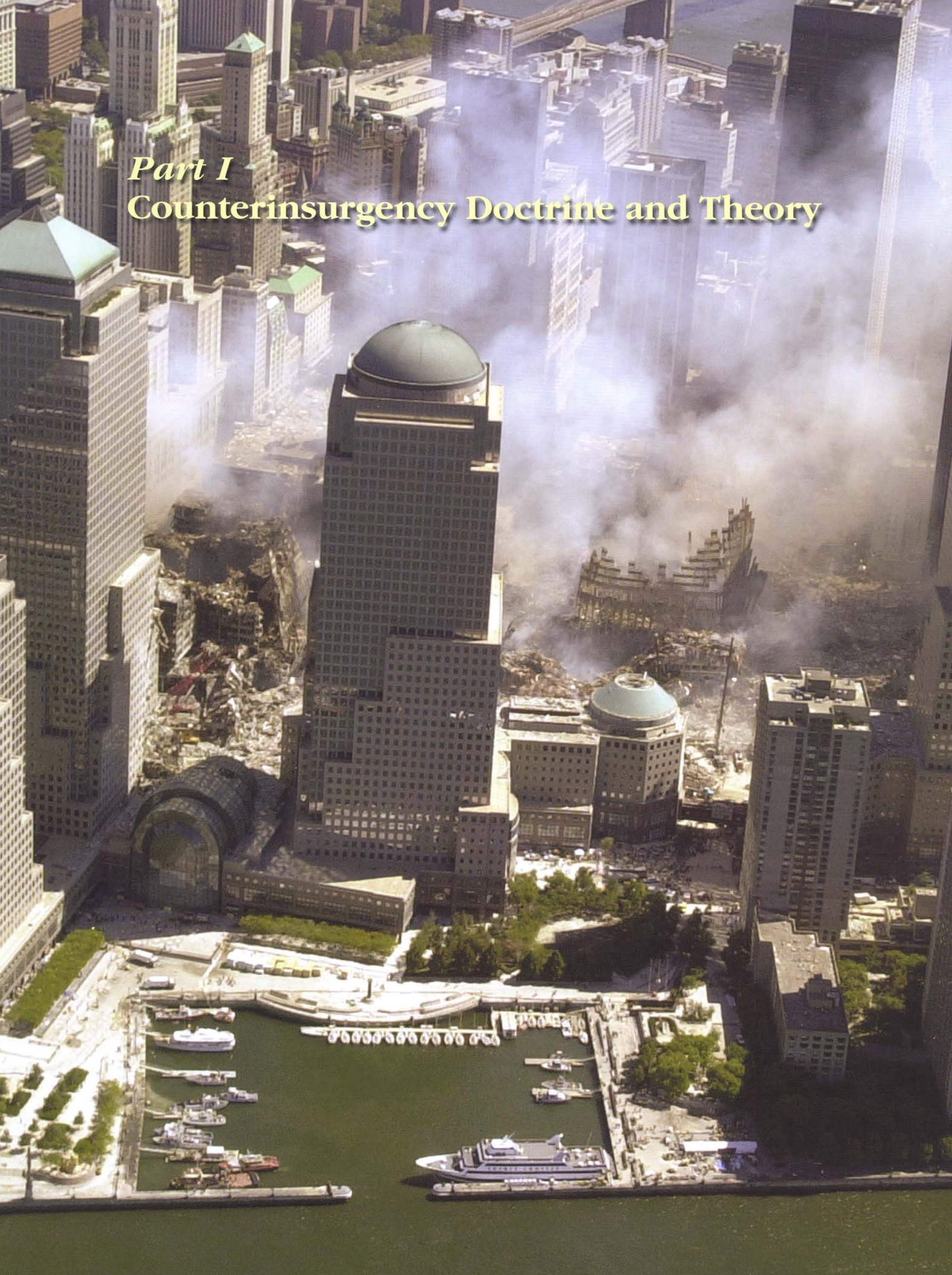
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Part I
Counterinsurgency Doctrine and Theory



Insurgency: Modern Warfare Evolves into a Fourth Generation

by *Thomas X. Hammes*

Strategic Forum, January 2005

Fourth-generation warfare, which is now playing out in Iraq and Afghanistan, is a modern form of insurgency. Its practitioners seek to convince enemy political leaders that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit. The fundamental precept is that superior political will, when properly employed, can defeat greater economic and military power. Because it is organized to ensure political rather than military success, this type of warfare is difficult to defeat.

Strategically, fourth-generation warfare remains focused on changing the minds of decisionmakers. Politically, it involves transnational, national, and subnational organizations and networks. Operationally, it uses different messages for different audiences, all of which focus on breaking an opponent's political will. Tactically, it utilizes materials present in the society under attack—to include industrial chemicals, liquefied natural gas, or fertilizers.

Although these modern insurgencies are the only type of war that the United States has lost (Vietnam, Lebanon, and Somalia), they can be overcome—witness Malaya (1950s), Oman (1970s), and El Salvador (1980s). Winning, however, requires coherent, patient action that encompasses the full range of political, economic, social, and military activities. The United States cannot force its opponents to fight the short, high-technology wars it easily dominates. Instead, the nation must learn to fight fourth-generation wars anew.

On 1 May 2003, President George W. Bush declared the end of major combat in Iraq. While most Americans rejoiced at this announcement, students of history understood that it simply meant the easy part was over. In the following months, peace did not break out, and the troops did not come home. In fact, Iraqi insurgents have struck back hard. Instead of peace, each day Americans read about the death of another soldier, the detonation of deadly car bombs, the assassination of civilians, and Iraqi unrest.

Barely three months later, in August, a series of bombs hit a police academy graduation ceremony, the Jordanian Embassy, and United Nations (UN) headquarters in Baghdad. The Ayatollah Mohammed Bakr al-Hakim (leader of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq) was killed, and an attempt was made to kill the Baghdad chief of police. These attacks marked the opening of the anti-coalition campaign that continued through the turnover of authority to the Interim Iraqi Government. As of this writing, the violence continues as Iraqi authorities struggle to provide security for their people and work to rebuild their country. Unfortunately, Iraq has become the scene of another fourth-generation war.

At the same time things were degenerating in Iraq, the situation in Afghanistan was moving into fourth-generation conflict. While al-Qaeda and the Taliban were not attacking U.S. troops directly, they were moving aggressively to defeat the U.S.-supported Hamid Kharzai government. Decisively defeated in the conventional campaign by a combination of U.S. firepower and Northern Alliance troops, the anti-coalition forces have returned to the style of warfare that succeeded

against the Soviets. The Taliban's emphasis on derailing the recent presidential elections shows they understand that fourth-generation warfare is a political rather than military struggle. By trying to prevent Afghans from voting, they sought to undermine the legitimacy of whoever won the elections. Instead of defeating the government's security forces, they plan to destroy its legitimacy. While polling for the presidential election proceeded without major incident, it remains to be seen whether this positive step has set the Taliban back politically—and much more contentious legislative elections are just over the horizon.

In Iraq, the attacks on and threats against oil pipelines are economic and political in nature. The insurgents are assessing a tax on the entire world's economy by raising the price of oil. They hope such attacks will weaken the Iraqi government while simultaneously bringing economic and political pressure to bear on the United States. Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr's shift from military action to the political arena most likely means no real change in goals, only methods. He can use his political and social networks in conjunction with his militias to advance his goals.

In Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Spain, al-Qaeda and its affiliates managed a series of high-profile attacks and are promising a major attack on the United States. Despite the Bush administration's declaration of victory in Iraq and Afghanistan, the war on terror has not been an entirely one-sided fight.

As debilitating and regular as these attacks are, this kind of warfare is not new but rather has been evolving over the last seven decades. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have moved from third-generation warfare, America's forte, to fourth-generation warfare. It is much too early to predict the outcome of either fight, but the anti-coalition forces in Afghanistan and Iraq are attempting to tie their fourth-generation tactics into integrated strategic campaigns. At the same time, al-Qaeda is maintaining its own strategic campaign: to defeat the United States and its allies.

Opponents in various parts of the world know that fourth-generation warfare is the only kind the United States has ever lost—and not just once, but three times: in Vietnam, Lebanon, and

Somalia. This form of warfare also defeated the French in Vietnam and Algeria and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. It continues to bleed Russia in Chechnya and the United States in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other areas where it is engaged in the war on terror. This record of defeat of major powers by much weaker fourth-generation opponents makes it essential to understand this new form of warfare and adapt accordingly.

Mao Zedong was the first to define modern insurgency as a *political* struggle and use it successfully. Each practitioner since has learned, usually through a painful process of trial and error, from his predecessors or co-combatants. Each then has adjusted the lessons to his own fight and added his own refinements. The cumulative result is a new approach to war. The anti-coalition forces in Iraq, the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Chechens, and the al-Qaeda network are simply the latest to use an approach that has been developing for decades.

Since World War II, wars have been a mixed bag of conventional and unconventional conflicts. Conventional wars—the Korean War, the Israeli-Arab wars of 1956, 1967, and 1973, the Falklands (Malvinas) War, the Iran-Iraq war, and the first Gulf War—generally have ended with a return to the strategic status quo. While some territory changed hands and, in some cases, regimes changed, each state came out of the war with largely the same political, economic, and social structure with which it entered. In short, the strategic situation of the participants did not change significantly.

In contrast, unconventional wars—the Communist revolution in China, the first and second Indochina wars, the Algerian war of independence, the Sandinista struggle in Nicaragua, the Iranian revolution, the Afghan-Soviet war of the 1980s, the first intifada, and the Hizbullah campaign in South Lebanon—display a markedly different pattern. Each ended with major changes in the political, economic, and social structure of the territories involved. While the changes may not have been better for the people, they were distinct. Even those unconventional wars where the insurgents lost (Malaya, Oman, El Salvador) led to significant changes. The message is clear for anyone wishing to shift the political balance

Fourth-Generation Warfare in Perspective

The term fourth-generation warfare came into use among military strategists and planners in the late 1980s as a way to characterize the dynamics and future direction of warfare. This community postulated the evolution of warfare in several distinct phases. The first generation of modern (post-Westphalian) war was dominated by massed manpower and culminated in the Napoleonic Wars. Firepower characterized the second generation, which culminated in World War I. The third generation was dominated by maneuver as developed by the Germans in World War II. The fourth generation has evolved in ways that take advantage of the political, social, economic, and technical changes since World War II. It makes use of the advantages those changes offer an unconventional enemy. For background and a compilation of papers and articles on the subject, see the Defense and the National Interest Web site at <http://www.d-n-i.net/dni/category/strategy-and-force-employment/4gw-articles/>.

of power: only unconventional war works against established powers.

Strategic Aspects

Fourth-generation warfare attempts to change the minds of enemy policymakers directly. But this change is not to be achieved through the traditional first- through third-generation objective of destroying the enemy's armed forces and the capacity to regenerate them. Both the epic, decisive battles of the Napoleonic era and the wide-ranging, high-speed maneuver campaigns of the 20th century are irrelevant to this new warfare. More relevant is the way in which specific *messages* are targeted toward policymakers and those who can influence them. Although tailored for various audiences, each message is designed to achieve the basic purpose of war: to change an opponent's political position on a matter of national interest.

The struggles in Iraq and Afghanistan show these characteristics. In each, the insurgents are sending one message to their supporters, another to the undecided population, and a third to the coalition decisionmakers. Supporters are told that they are defending the faith and their country against outside invaders. The message to uncommitted or pro-coalition countrymen is to stay out of the fight between the insurgents and the invaders, who will eventually leave. Finally, the coalition, particularly the Americans, is advised to withdraw or be engaged in an endless, costly fight.

Fourth-generation warfare is not bloodless. As shown in the chart on page 6, the casualties we

have sustained in fighting insurgents in Iraq long ago passed those we sustained in the comparatively short, high-intensity phase that toppled Saddam. And even then, most casualties will tend to be civilian, a pattern borne out by fighting in Iraq, Chechnya, Palestinian areas, and elsewhere. Further, many of those casualties will be caused not by military weapons but rather by materials made available within society. Thus, the opponent does not have to build the warfighting infrastructure required by earlier generations of war.

As displayed in the Beirut bombings, the Khobar Towers bombing, the Northern Ireland campaign, the American Embassy bombings in Africa, the 9/11 attacks, and the ongoing bombing campaign in Iraq, fourth-generation warfare practitioners are increasingly using materials made available by the society they are attacking. This allows them to take a very different strategic approach. It relieves the practitioners of the necessity of defending core production assets and frees them to focus on offense rather than defense. It also relieves them of the burden of moving supplies long distances. Instead, only money and ideas—both of which can be digitized and moved instantly—must be transported.

Furthermore, even at the strategic level, the importance of the media in shaping the policy of the participants will continue to increase. This was demonstrated when U.S. interest in Somalia, previously negligible, was stimulated by the repeated images of thousands of starving Somali children. Conversely, the images of U.S. soldiers being dragged through the streets ended that commitment. The media will remain a major factor from

the strategic to the tactical level. In fact, worldwide media exposure can quickly give a tactical action strategic impact.

Political Aspects

Fourth-generation warriors exploit international, transnational, national, and subnational networks politically for their own purposes. A growing variety of international conduits are available: the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the World Bank, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, and dozens of others. Each organization has a different function in international affairs, but each has its own vulnerabilities and can be used to convey a political message to its leadership and then to target capital cities. While these international organizations may not be able to change the minds of national leaders directly, they can be used to slow or paralyze an international response.

The prime objective of the fourth-generation practitioner is to create political paralysis in both the international organizations (usually not a difficult task) and the target nation (difficulty varies with the nation being targeted). In addition to normal political attacks, planners can influence other aspects of the target society. For instance, they know that the security situation in a country has a direct effect on the ability of that nation to get loans. This gives the attacker a different venue to affect the position of a nation—the mere threat of action may be enough to impact

the financial status of the target nation and encourage it to negotiate. Thus, if the objective is to paralyze the political processes of a target nation, a number of methods can be used.

Attacks by the al-Sadr militia on oil production infrastructure in southern Iraq have illustrated this fact. Nigerian rebels have also used the threat to oil production to force negotiation on the Nigerian government. The fact that oil prices were at a record high gave the rebels more leverage because each day's delay increased the costs to the Nigerian government. As the world becomes ever more interconnected, the potential for varied approaches increases, and the effects may reinforce each other.

A coherent fourth-generation warfare plan always exploits transnational elements in various ways. The vehicles may include not only extremist belief-based organizations such as Islamic Jihad, but also nationalistic organizations such as the Palestinians and Kurds, mainline Christian churches, humanitarian organizations, economic structures such as the stock and bond markets, and even criminal organizations such as narco-traffickers and arms merchants. The key traits of transnational organizations are that none are contained completely within a recognized nation-state's borders; none have official members that report back to nation-states; and they owe no loyalty to any nation—and sometimes little to their own organizations.

The use of such transnational elements will vary with the strategic situation, but they offer a number of possibilities. They can be a source of

Insurgencies throughout History

Insurgency, often referred to as guerrilla warfare, is not new. The very name guerrilla ("little war") dates back to the Spanish resistance against Napoleon's occupation of Spain (1809-1813). In fact, insurgency far predates that campaign. Darius the Great, King of Persia (558-486 BC), and Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) both fought insurgents during their reigns. Insurgency continued as a form of war through the ages. The Irish nationalist, Michael Collins, drove the British out of Ireland with an insurgent campaign during 1916-1921. In all cases, the weaker side used insurgent tactics to counter the superior military power of its enemies. However, in the 20th century, the political aspects of insurgency came to dominate these struggles. The goal became the destruction of the enemy's political will rather than the exhaustion of his conventional military power. Advances in communications technology and the growth of formal and informal networks have greatly increased the ability of the insurgent to attack the will of enemy decisionmakers directly.

recruits. They can be used (at times unwittingly) as cover to move people and assets. They can be an effective source of funds; charitable organizations have supported terrorist organizations as diverse as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and al-Qaeda. During the 1970s, for example, Irish bars on the east coast of America often had jars where patrons could make donations, ostensibly to provide support to Irish families, but in fact much of the money went directly to support IRA insurgent operations.

At times, entire organizations can be used openly to support the position of the fourth-generation warfare operator. Usually this is done when the organization genuinely agrees with the position of one of the antagonists, but false flag operations are also viable. Such support can lend legitimacy to a movement and even reverse long-held international views of a specific situation.

National political institutions are primary targets for fourth-generation messages. Insurgents fighting the United States—whether the North Vietnamese, the Sandinistas, or the Palestinians—know that if Congress cuts off funds, U.S. allies would lose their wars. Thus, congressmen have been targeted with the message that the war was unwinnable and it made no sense to keep fighting it. The Sandinistas even worked hard to make individual congressmen part of their network by sponsoring trips for congressional aides and mainline church groups to insurgent-held areas in Nicaragua. If they could convince their guests that Anastasio Somoza's government was indeed corrupt, they would actively lobby other aides and the congressmen themselves to cut off aid to Somoza. Nongovernmental national groups—churches, diaspora associations, business groups, and even lobbying firms—have been major players in shaping national policies. The United States must assume its opponents will continue these efforts.

Subnational organizations can represent both groups who are minorities in their traditional homelands, such as the Basque, and those who are self-selecting minorities, such as Sons of Liberty and Aryan Nation. These groups are in unusual positions; they can be either enemies or allies of the established powers. It simply depends upon who best serves their interests.

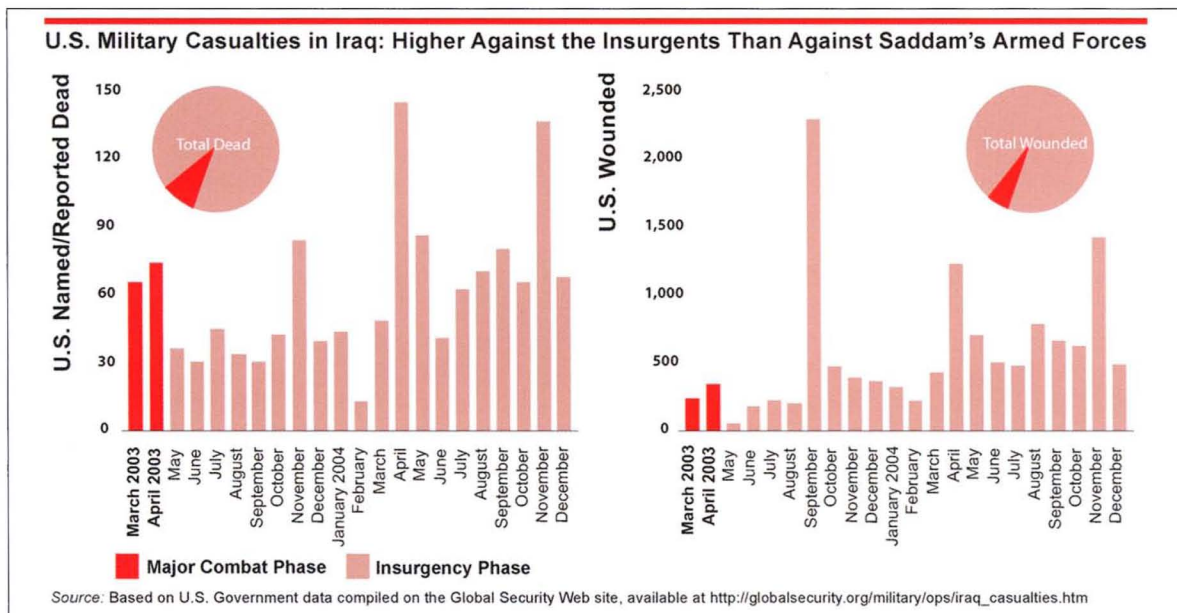
Even more challenging is the fact that since they are not unified groups, one element of a subnational group may support the government while another supports the insurgents.

Political alliances, interests, and positions among and between insurgents will change according to various political, economic, social, and military aspects of the conflict. While this has been a factor in all wars (Italy changed sides in the middle of World War II, the largest conventional war), it will be prevalent in fourth-generation war. It is much easier for nonstate entities (tribes, clans, businesses, criminal groups, racial groups, subnational groups, and transnational groups) to change sides than it is for nation-states or national groups. A government usually ties itself to a specific cause. It has to convince decisionmakers or its people to support it. Thus, it can be awkward for that government to change sides in midconflict without losing the confidence of its people. Often, the act of changing sides will lead to the fall of the government. In contrast, nonstate entities get involved only for their own needs, and, if these needs change, they can easily shift loyalties.

Operational Techniques

To influence this wide variety of networks effectively, the fourth-generation warfare operational planner must seek different pathways for various messages. Traditional diplomatic channels, both official and unofficial, are still important but are no longer the only route for communication and influence. Other networks rival the prominence of the official ones. The media have become a primary avenue, as seen in places such as Vietnam, the West Bank, and Iraq. However, the sheer diversity and fragmentation of the media make it much more challenging for either side to control the message. Professional lobbying groups also have proven effective.

An increasingly important avenue is the Internet and the power it provides grassroots campaigns. Whether it is the international campaign to ban landmines or Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's terror campaign in Iraq, the Internet provides an alternative channel for high-impact messages unfiltered by editors or political influ-



ence. It can also be used to raise money.

A key factor in a fourth-generation warfare campaign is that the audience is not a unified target. It is increasingly fragmented into interest groups that may realign or even shift sides depending on how a particular campaign affects their issues. During the first intifada, the Palestinians tailored messages for different constituencies. The Israelis have used the same technique during the al-Aqsa intifada, and the anti-coalition forces are doing so today in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The United States has been slow to understand the importance of these communications. As recently as last year [2004], military spokesmen insisted that the insurgent attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq were “militarily insignificant.” This was at a time when each attack was on the front page of major daily newspapers in the United States and Europe. While the actual casualties may have been few, each story reached the decisionmakers in Congress and the public.

To succeed, the fourth-generation operational planner must determine the message he wants to send; the networks best suited to carry those messages; the actions that will cause the network to send the message; and the feedback system that will tell him if the message is being received. In Bosnia, the seizure of UN hostages by Serb forces

during the NATO bombing campaign of 1995 was the first step of a cycle. The media were used to transmit images of the peacekeepers chained to buildings. Then the Serbs watched television to determine the response of the various governments. It allowed them to commit the act, transmit it via various channels, observe the response, and then decide what to do next. All this occurred much faster than the bureaucratic reporting processes of NATO could complete the same cycle.

During the first intifada, the Palestinians made an operational decision to limit the use of violence. They confronted the Israeli Army not with heavily armed guerrillas but with teenagers armed only with rocks. Thus, they neutralized U.S. support for Israeli action, froze Israeli defense forces, and influenced the Israeli national election, which led to the Oslo Accords.

Similarly, the series of bombings conducted by the Iraqi insurgents throughout the fall and winter of 2003–2004 carefully targeted the organizations most helpful to the Coalition Provisional Authority—police, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), coalition partners, the Kurdish political parties, and Shia clerics. Each event was tactically separated by time and space, but each fit together operationally to attack America’s strategic position in the country.

In Iraq, the United States has found no evidence of central direction at this early date in the insurgency, yet the pattern of the attacks has represented a coherent approach to driving the coalition out of the country. The question is: With no coordination, how could the insurgents reinforce each others' actions?

The insurgents could track each attack and, to a degree, measure its effectiveness by monitoring the Iraqi, U.S., and international media. Those attacks that succeeded were quickly emulated; those that failed ceased to be used. The insurgents showed many of the characteristics of a self-organizing network. Each attack is designed to prevent a stable, democratic government from emerging. Not all attacks have succeeded, but they have kept UN presence to a minimum and have driven many NGOs out of the country. Further, the coalition is shrinking, and the insurgency has clearly affected the price of oil. And the threat of instability spreading to the rest of the Persian Gulf increases the upward pressure on oil prices.

To complicate matters, fourth-generation warfare will incorporate elements of earlier generations of war. Even as the Israelis struggled with the intifada, they had to remain aware that major conventional forces were on their border. In Vietnam, the United States and later South Vietnam had to deal with aggressive, effective fourth-generation guerrillas while always being prepared to deal with major North Vietnamese conventional forces. Clearly, the new generation of warfare seeks to place an enemy on the horns of this dilemma. Just as clearly, this is an intentional approach that reaches all the way back to Mao.

Action in one or all of the fields above will not be limited to the geographic location (if any) of the antagonists but will take place worldwide. From New York to Bali and Madrid, al-Qaeda and its affiliates have forcefully illustrated this to their enemies. Though some elements will be more attractive as targets, no element of American society, no matter where it is in the world, is off limits to attack. The Bush administration actions in Afghanistan and elsewhere against the al-Qaeda network show that effective counters must also be worldwide.

The range of possible fourth-generation opponents is broad. It is important to remember that such an opponent does not need a large command and control system. At a time when U.S. forces are pouring more money and manpower into command and control, commercial technology makes worldwide, secure communications available to anyone with a laptop and a credit card. It also provides access to 1-meter-resolution satellite imagery, extensive information on U.S. troop movements, immediate updates on national debates, and international discussion forums. Finally, it provides a worldwide financial network that is fairly secure. In fact, with the proliferation of Internet cafes, one needs neither the credit card nor the laptop—only an understanding of how e-mail and a browser work and some basic human intelligence tradecraft.

Ideas and funds can be moved through a variety of methods from e-mail to surface mail to personal courier to messages embedded in classified advertisements. The opponent will try to submerge his communications in the noise of the everyday activity. He will use commercial sources and vehicles to disguise the movement of material and funds as commerce. His people will do their best to merge into whatever civil society they find themselves in. As a result, detecting the operational-level activities of a sophisticated opponent will be extraordinarily difficult.

Tactical Considerations

Fourth-generation warfare takes place in the complex environment of low-intensity conflict. Every potential opponent has observed the Gulf War, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and operations in Afghanistan. They understand that if the United States is provided clear targets, no matter how well fortified, those targets will be destroyed. Just as certainly, they have seen the success of the Somalis and the Sandinistas. They have also seen and are absorbing the continuing lessons of Chechnya, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. They will not fight with conventional means.

In attempting to change the minds of key decision makers, antagonists will use several tactical paths to get their message through to presidents, prime ministers, cabinet members, legislators, and

even voters. Immediate, high-impact messages will probably come via visual media—and the more dramatic and bloody the image, the stronger the message. Longer term, less immediate, but more thought-provoking messages will be passed through business, religious, economic, academic, artistic, and even social networks. While the messages will be based on a strategic theme, the delivery will be by tactical action such as guided tours of refugee camps, exclusive interviews with insurgent leaders, targeted kidnapping, beheadings, car bombings, and assassinations.

This warfare will involve a mixture of international, transnational, national, and subnational actors. Since the operational planner of a fourth-generation campaign must use all the tools available, the United States probably will have to deal with actors from all these arenas at the tactical level as well. Even more challenging, some will be violent actors and others nonviolent. In fact, the term *noncombatant* applies much more readily to conventional conflicts between states than to fourth-generation war involving state and non-state actors. Nonviolent actors, while being legally noncombatants, will be a critical part of tactical actions. By using crowds, protesters, media interviews, Internet Web sites, and other nonviolent methods, fourth-generation warriors can create tactical dilemmas for opponents. Tactical resources in police, intelligence, military, propaganda, and political spheres will be needed to deal with the distractions they create.

Tactical military action (for example, terrorist, guerrilla, or, rarely, conventional) will be tied to the message and targeted at various groups. The 19 August 2003 bombing of the UN headquarters in Iraq convinced the organization that continuing to operate in Iraq would be too costly. The 19 August 2004 burning of southern Iraq oil buildings had an immediate effect on the per-barrel price of oil. These were two tactical actions with different messages for different target audiences, yet they both support the strategic goal of increasing the cost to the United States of staying in Iraq.

WMD Attacks

Only by looking at current conflicts as fourth-generation warfare events can America's true vul-

nerabilities to an attack with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) be seen. Even a limited biological attack with a contagious agent, such as plague, will result in a shutdown of major segments of air travel, shipping, and trade. Smallpox will require a total quarantine of the affected areas until the incubation period has passed. The potential for billions of dollars in losses to disrupted trade is obvious, as well as years of continuing loss due to subsequent litigation.

WMD attacks may not focus on physical destruction but rather on area denial or disruption. The ability of a single person to shut down Senate office buildings and post offices with two anthrax letters is a vivid example of an area denial weapon. Disruption can easily be made even more widespread. The use of containerized freight to deliver either a WMD or a high-yield explosive will have more far-reaching and costly effects on the international trade network than the shutdown of international air routes. Security for airliners and air freight is easy compared to the problem of inspecting seaborne shipping containers. Yet containers are the basic component for the majority of international trade today, and the United States has no current system to secure or inspect them. By taking advantage of this vulnerability, terrorists can impose huge economic costs with little effort. They do not have to limit their actions to the containers but can also use the ships themselves. Ships flying flags of convenience do so to minimize the ability of government efforts to regulate or tax them. It is logical to assume the same characteristics will appeal to terrorists.

Finally, terrorists do not even have to provide the materials for simple chemical attacks. The 1984 chemical plant disaster in Bhopal, India, killed more people than 9/11 and left more with serious long-term injuries. While Bhopal was an accident, it presents a precedent for a devastating chemical attack.

The existence of chemical plants and the movement of toxic industrial chemicals needed to support the American lifestyle ensure the raw material for a chemical attack is always present. In addition to the widely recognized potential for chemical attack, it is fairly certain terrorists are today exploring how to use liquid natural gas

tankers, fuel trucks, radioactive waste, and other available material for future attacks. These are just a few of the resources available to an intelligent, creative opponent.

Long Timelines

Fourth-generation warfare timelines, organizations, and objectives are very different from those of conventional war. Of particular importance is the fact that timelines are much longer. Failure to understand that essential fact is why many observers do not fully appreciate the magnitude of the challenge presented by a fourth-generation enemy.

When the United States has to fight, it prefers to wage short, well-defined wars. For the United States, a long war is five years—which, in fact, was the duration of major U.S. involvement in Vietnam (1965–1970). The nation entered when the war was already under way and left before it was over. Even then, the U.S. public thought the country had been at war too long.

But fourth-generation wars are long. The Chinese Communists fought for 28 years; the Vietnamese Communists for 30; the Sandinistas for 18. The Palestinians have been resisting Israeli occupation for 37 years so far—and some would argue they have been fighting since 1948. The Chechens have been fighting over 10 years—this time. Al-Qaeda has been fighting for their vision of the world for 20 years since the founding of Maktab al-Khidamar in 1984. Numerous other insurgencies in the world have lasted decades. Accordingly, when getting involved in this type of fight, the United States must plan for a decades-long commitment. From an American point of view, duration may well be the single most important characteristic of fourth-generation warfare. Leadership must maintain the focus of effort through numerous elections and even changes of administration to prevail in such an effort.

The United States must understand that fourth-generation organizations are different. Since Mao, they have focused on the long-term political viability of the movement rather than on its short-term tactical effectiveness. They do not see themselves as military organizations but rather as webs that generate the political power central to this

type of warfare. Thus, these organizations are unified by ideas. The leadership and the organizations are networked to provide for survivability and continuity when attacked. And the leadership recognizes that their most important function is to sustain the idea and the organizations, not simply to win on the battlefield.

These opponents focus on the political aspects of the conflict because they accept that war is ultimately a political act. Since the final objective is changing the minds of the enemy's political leadership, the intermediate objectives are all milestones focused on shifting the opinion of the various target audiences. They know that time is on their side.

Noted military strategist Harry Summers recounted how he once told a North Vietnamese colonel that the United States had never been beaten on the battlefield. The officer replied, "That may be so, but it is also irrelevant."¹ Because of the long timelines and its political nature, the objectives are different. Fourth-generation opponents do not seek the defeat of the enemy forces. They seek the erosion of the enemy's political will and can win even if the opposing military force is largely intact. They focus on winning wars, not battles.

U.S. Response

Fourth-generation opponents are not invincible. They can be beaten, but only by coherent, patient actions that encompass all agencies of the government and elements of the private sector. Their warfare encompasses the fields of diplomacy, defense, intelligence, law enforcement, and economic and social development. American efforts must be organized as a network rather than in the traditional vertical bureaucracies of Federal departments. This interagency process will have to exert its influence for the duration of the war—from the initiation of planning to the final withdrawal of forces.

Besides dealing with the long timelines, developing genuine interagency networks will be the most difficult U.S. problem in fighting a fourth-generation opponent. This will require fundamental changes in how national security leadership trains, develops, promotes, deploys, and employs

personnel across the Federal Government. The current system, which is based on 19th-century bureaucratic theory, cannot support 21st-century operations. In particular, the United States must be able to:

- ◆ train personnel in a genuine interagency environment. From the classroom to daily operations to interagency training exercises, personnel must think and act as part of a network rather than a hierarchy.

- ◆ develop personnel through the equivalent of military joint tours. As in the military, these tours must be an essential step for promotion.

- ◆ deploy interagency personnel from all segments of the U.S. Government overseas for much longer tours. The current 3- to 12-month overseas tours in a crisis cannot work in fights lasting decades.

- ◆ operate as interagency elements down to the tactical level. This means abandoning the agency-specific stovepipes that link operations overseas to their U.S. headquarters. The British War Committee system used in the Malaya emergency provides one model that eliminated the stovepipes and ensured unified effort at every level of government. Starting in peacetime, personnel must be trained to be effective linking into the interagency process, and those who do so should be rewarded. The current process of rewarding those who work entirely within a specific agency prevents effective networking.

- ◆ eliminate the detailed, bureaucratic processes that characterize peacetime government actions (particularly contracting and purchasing). People have to be trusted and held accountable. Longer tours of duty will be essential, both to ensure that personnel understand the specific situation well enough to make decisions and can legitimately be held accountable for their actions. The current short tours mean no one masters his or her job, the records are incomplete, and accountability cannot be maintained.

- ◆ develop procedures for fully integrating the range of international organizations, NGOs, allies, and specialists necessary to succeed against an adept, agile insurgent.

These are major challenges, but a model exists with which to work. Presidential Decision Directive 56 provides an excellent starting point.² Based on lessons learned from U.S. involvement in multiple crises and complex contingencies during the 1990s, it provides guidance for both training and operations in an interagency environment that can be adapted for the purpose of waging fourth-generation warfare.

Yet this is only a starting point. In the same way that the Armed Forces had to learn to fight jointly to master third-generation war, the entire government must learn to operate in a genuine interagency fashion to master fourth-generation conflict. There are no simple, one department, one-dimensional solutions to these wars. Even with a fully functioning interagency process, the assumption must be made that fourth-generation wars will last a decade or more.

Conclusion

As German military strategist Carl von Clausewitz once observed: “The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature.”³ Fourth-generation war, like its predecessors, will continue to evolve in ways that mirror global society as a whole. As the United States moves away from a hierarchical, industrial-based society to a networked, information-based society, its political, socioeconomic, and technological bases will also evolve.

With this evolution come opportunity and hazard. The key to providing for security lies in recognizing these changes for what they are. In understanding the kind of war being fought, the United States must not attempt to shape it into something it is not. Opponents cannot be forced into a third-generation war that maximizes American strengths; they will fight the fourth-generation war that challenges U.S. weaknesses. Clausewitz’s admonition to national leaders remains as valid as ever, and it must guide the planning for future wars

Notes

1. Harry G. Summers, *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982), 1.
2. Presidential Decision Directive 56 was developed by the Clinton administration to manage complex contingency operations. Although canceled by the Bush administration, it still provides a well-thought-out model for insurgency operations.
3. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Peter Paret and

Michael Howard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 88.

About the Author

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Back to the Street without Joy: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam and Other Small Wars

by *Robert M. Cassidy*

Parameters, Summer 2004

“The deplorable experience in Vietnam overshadows American thinking about guerrilla insurgency.”

— Anthony James Joes¹

“Fools say they learn from experience; I prefer to learn from the experience of others.”

— Otto von Bismark²

In 1961, Bernard Fall, a scholar and practitioner of war, published a book entitled *The Street Without Joy*. The book provided a lucid account of why the French Expeditionary Corps failed to defeat the Viet Minh during the Indochina War, and the book’s title derived from the French soldiers’ sardonic moniker for Highway 1 on the coast of Indochina—“Ambush Alley,” or the “Street without Joy.” In 1967, while patrolling with U.S. Marines on the Street without Joy in Vietnam, Bernard Fall was killed by an improvised explosive mine during a Viet Cong ambush. In 2003, after the fall of Baghdad and following the conventional phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom, U.S. and Coalition forces operating in the Sunni Triangle began fighting a counter-guerrilla type war in which much of the enemy insurgent activity occurred along Highway 1, another street exhibiting little joy. Learning from the experience of other U.S. counterinsurgencies is preferable to the alternative.

The U.S. military has had a host of successful experiences in counterinsurgency war, including some distinct successes with certain aspects of the Vietnam War. However, the paradox stemming from America's unsuccessful crusade in the jungles of Vietnam is this—because the experience was perceived as anathema to the mainstream American military, hard lessons learned there about fighting guerrillas were neither embedded nor preserved in the U.S. Army's institutional memory. The American military culture's efforts to expunge the specter of Vietnam, embodied in the mantra "No More Vietnams," also prevented the U.S. Army as an institution from really learning from those lessons. In fact, even the term counterinsurgency seemed to become a reviled and unwelcome word, one that the doctrinal cognoscenti of the 1980s conveniently transmogrified into "foreign internal defense." Even though many lessons exist in the U.S. military's historical experience with small wars, the lessons from the Vietnam War were the most voluminous. Yet these lessons were most likely the least read, because the Army's intellectual rebirth after Vietnam focused almost exclusively on a big conventional war in Europe—the scenario preferred by the U.S. military culture.³

Since the U.S. Army and its coalition partners are currently prosecuting counterinsurgency wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is useful to revisit the lessons from Vietnam and other counterinsurgencies because they are germane to the wars of today and tomorrow. Capturing all or many of these lessons is beyond the scope of this article and is most likely beyond the scope of a single-volume book. However, this article aims to distill some of the more relevant counterinsurgency lessons from the American military's experiences during Vietnam and before. A bigger goal of this article, however, is to highlight some salient studies for professional reading as the U.S. Army starts to inculcate a mindset that embraces the challenges of counterinsurgency and to develop a culture that learns from past lessons in counterinsurgency. This analysis also offers a brief explanation of U.S. military culture and the hitherto embedded cultural obstacles to learning how to fight guerrillas. To simplify and

clarify at the outset, the terms counterinsurgency, counterinsurgency warfare, small war, and asymmetric conflict are used interchangeably. It is a form of warfare in which enemies of the regime or occupying force aim to undermine the regime by employing classical guerrilla tactics.⁴

The U.S. Army and the broader American military are only now, well into the second decade after the end of the Cold War, wholeheartedly trying to transform their culture, or mindset. Senior civilian and military leaders of the defense establishment realize that military cultural change is a precondition for innovative and adaptive approaches to meet the exigencies of a more complex security landscape, one in which our adversaries will most likely adopt unorthodox strategies and tactics to undermine our technological overmatch in the Western, orthodox, way of war. Military culture can generally be defined as the embedded beliefs and attitudes within a military organization that shape that organization's preference on when and how the military instrument should be used. Because these institutional beliefs sometimes tend to value certain roles and marginalize others, military culture can impede innovation in ways of warfare that lie outside that organization's valued, or core, roles.⁵

For most of the 20th century, the U.S. military culture (notwithstanding the Marines' work in small wars) generally embraced the big conventional war paradigm and fundamentally eschewed small wars and insurgencies. Thus, instead of learning from our experiences in Vietnam, the Philippines, the Marine Corps' experience in the Banana Wars, and the Indian campaigns, the U.S. Army for most of the last 100 years has viewed these experiences as ephemeral anomalies and aberrations—distractions from preparing to win big wars against other big powers. As a result of marginalizing the counterinsurgencies and small wars that it has spent most of its existence prosecuting, the U.S. military's big-war cultural preferences have impeded it from fully benefiting—studying, distilling, and incorporating into doctrine—from our somewhat extensive lessons in small wars and insurgencies. This article starts by briefly

examining some of the salient lessons for counterinsurgency from Vietnam and lists some of the sources for lessons from that war that have been neglected or forgotten. This article also examines some sources and lessons of counterinsurgencies and small wars predating Vietnam.

Vietnam—The “Other War” and Valuable Lessons

If and when most Americans think about Vietnam, they probably think of General William C. Westmoreland, the Americanization of the war that was engendered by the big-unit battles of attrition, and the Tet Offensive of 1968. However, there was another war—counterinsurgency and pacification—where many Special Forces, Marines, and other advisers employed small-war methods with some success. Moreover, when General Creighton Abrams became the commander of the war in Vietnam in 1968, he put an end to the two-war approach by adopting a one-war focus on pacification. Although this came too late to regain the political support for the war that was irrevocably squandered during the Westmoreland years, Abrams’ unified strategy to clear and hold the countryside by pacifying and securing the population met with much success.

Abrams based his approach on a study prepared by the Army staff in 1966 that was entitled *A Program for the Pacification and Long-Term Development of South Vietnam* (PROVN Study). The experiences of the Special Forces in organizing Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG), the Marines’ Combined Action Program (CAP), and Abrams’ PROVN Study-based expansion of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary (later Rural) Development and Support (CORDS) pacification effort under Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) all offer some valuable lessons for current and future counterinsurgencies.⁶

For much of the Vietnam War, the 5th Special Forces Group trained and led CIDG mobile strike forces and reconnaissance companies that comprised ethnic minority tribes and groups from the mountain and border regions. These

strike forces essentially conducted reconnaissance by means of small-unit patrols and defended their home bases in the border areas, denying them to the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese regular units. What’s more, during 1966–67 American field commanders increasingly employed Special Forces-led “Mike” units in long-range reconnaissance missions or as economy-of-force security elements for regular units. Other CIDG-type forces, called mobile guerrilla forces, raided enemy base areas and employed hit-and-run guerrilla tactics against regular enemy units. The Special Forces also recruited heavily among the Nung tribes for “Delta,” “Sigma,” and “Omega” units—Special Forces-led reconnaissance and reaction forces. To be sure, the CIDG program provided a significant contribution to the war effort. The approximately 2,500 soldiers assigned to the 5th Special Forces Group essentially raised and led an army of 50,000 tribal fighters to operate in some of the most difficult and dangerous terrain in Vietnam. The CIDG patrolling of border infiltration areas provided reliable tactical intelligence, and the units secured populations in areas that might have been otherwise conceded to the enemy.⁷

Another program that greatly improved the U.S. military’s capacity to secure the population and to acquire better tactical intelligence was the U.S. Marine Corps’ Combined Action Program (CAP). The CAP was a local innovation with potential strategic impact—it coupled a Marine rifle squad with a platoon of local indigenous forces and positioned this combined-action platoon in the village of those local forces. This combined Marine/indigenous platoon trained, patrolled, defended, and lived in the village together. The mission of the CAP was to destroy the Viet Cong infrastructure within the village or hamlet area of responsibility; protect public security and help maintain law and order; protect friendly infrastructure; protect bases and communications within the villages and hamlets; organize indigenous intelligence nets; participate in civic action; and conduct propaganda against the Viet Cong. Civic action played an important role in efforts to destroy the Viet Cong, as it acquired impor-

tant intelligence about enemy activity from the local population. Because of the combined-action platoon's proximity to the people and because it protected the people from reprisals, it was ideal for gaining intelligence from the locals. The Marines' emphasis on pacifying the highly populated areas prevented the guerrillas from coercing the local population into providing rice, intelligence, and sanctuary to the enemy. The Marines would clear and hold a village in this way and then expand the secured area. The CAP units accounted for 7.6 percent of the enemy killed while representing only 1.5 percent of the Marines in Vietnam. The lessons from CAP provide one model for protracted counterinsurgencies, because the program employed U.S. troops and leadership in an economy of force while maximizing indigenous troops. A modest investment of U.S. forces at the village level can yield major improvements in local security and intelligence.⁸

Although CORDS was integrated under MACV when Abrams was still the Deputy Commander in 1967, it was Abrams and William Colby, as the Director of CORDS, who expanded and invested CORDS with good people and resources. Under the one-war strategy, CORDS was established as the organization under MACV to unify and provide single oversight of the pacification effort. After 1968, Abrams and Colby made CORDS and pacification the main effort. The invigorated civil and rural development program provided increased support, advisers, and funding to the police and territorial forces (regional forces and popular forces). Essentially, this rural development allowed military and civilian U.S. Agency for International Development advisers to work with their Vietnamese counterparts at the province and village level to improve local security and develop infrastructure. Identifying and eliminating the Viet Cong infrastructure was a critical part of the new focus on pacification, and Colby's approach—the Accelerated Pacification Campaign—included the Phuong Hoang program, or Phoenix. The purpose of Phoenix was to neutralize the Viet Cong infrastructure, and although the program received some negative attention in the instances when it was abused,

its use of former Viet Cong and indigenous Provisional Reconnaissance Units to root out the enemy's shadow government was very effective. The CORDS' Accelerated Pacification Campaign focused on territorial security, neutralizing Viet Cong infrastructure, and supporting programs for self-defense and self-government at the local level.⁹

The Accelerated Pacification Campaign began in November 1968, and by late 1970 the government of the Republic of Vietnam controlled most of the countryside. The "other war"—pacification—had essentially been won. "Four million members of the People's Self-Defense Force, armed with some 600,000 weapons" constituted a powerful example of the commitment of the population in support of the Republic of Vietnam and in opposition to the enemy. Expanded, better advised, and better armed, the Regional Forces and Popular Forces represented the most significant improvement. Under CORDS, these forces became capable of providing close-in security for the rural population. The Hamlet Evaluation System, though imperfect and quantitative, indicated that from 1969 to 1970, 2,600 hamlets (three million people) had been secured. Other more practical measures of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign's success were a reduction in the extortion of taxes by the Viet Cong, a reduction in recruiting by the enemy in South Vietnam, and a decrease in enemy food provisions taken from the villagers.

In addition to the MACV and CORDS pacification efforts, other factors contributed to South Vietnam's control of the countryside. First, the enemy's Tet Offensive in January 1968 and Mini-Tet in May 1968 resulted in devastating losses to Viet Cong forces in the south, allowing MACV/CORDS to intensify pacification. Second, the enemy's brutal methods (including mass murder in Hue) during Tet shocked the civilian population of South Vietnam, creating a willingness to accept the more aggressive conscription required to expand indigenous forces. Last, one can surmise that Ho Chi Minh's death in September 1969 may have had some negative effect on the quality and direction of the North Vietnamese army's leadership.¹⁰

In and of themselves, the CIDG, CAP, and CORDS programs met with success in prosecuting key aspects of the counterinsurgency in Vietnam. Each program expanded the quality and quantity of the forces conducting pacification and counterinsurgency, improved the capacity for dispersed small-unit patrolling, and consequently improved the scope and content of actionable intelligence. One can only postulate, counterfactually, how the war might have gone if both CAP and CIDG had been harmonized and unified under CORDS and MACV, with Colby and Abrams at the helm, back in 1964. Ironically, Abrams had been on the short list of those considered for the MACV command in 1964. The lessons and successes of these programs are salient today because in both Afghanistan and Iraq, improving the quantity and capabilities of indigenous forces, ensuring that there is an integrated and unified civil-military approach, and the security of the population all continue to be central goals.¹¹

None of these Vietnam-era programs, however, was without problems. The CIDG program was plagued by two persistent flaws. First, continuous hostility between the South Vietnamese and the ethnic minority groups who comprised CIDG strike forces impeded the U.S. efforts to have Republic of Vietnam (RVN) Special Forces take over the CIDG program. Second, partly as a consequence of that, 5th Special Forces Group failed to develop an effective indigenous U.S. counterpart organization to lead the CIDG—the RVN Special Forces proved ineffective in this role. Moreover, U.S. Marines themselves who have written studies that generally laud the benefits of the CAP model also reveal that the combined-action platoons were not all completely effective. In some instances the effects of CAP “were transitory at best” because the villagers became dependent on the Marines for security. In other instances, especially before General Abrams ushered-in a new emphasis on training popular forces, the local militia’s poor equipment and training made them miserably incapable of defending the villages without the Marines. As for CORDS, the one major problem with rural development was that until 1967 it was not integrated under

MACV, which seriously undermined any prospect of actually achieving unity of effort and unity of purpose. Abrams’ influence resolved this by allowing MACV to oversee CORDS as well as regular military formations.¹²

Three works written during or about the Vietnam era are highly relevant to fighting counterinsurgencies: *The Guerrilla and How to Fight Him*, edited by Lieutenant Colonel T.N. Greene; the U.S. Army’s 1966 PROVN Study; and Lewis Sorley’s *A Better War*, published in 1999. *The Guerrilla and How to Fight Him* is a great single-volume compendium on the nature and theory of guerrilla warfare. The most germane chapter the book is “The Theory and the Threat,” which includes a primer on guerrilla warfare by Mao; an analysis of Mao, time, space, and will by Edward Katzenbach; and a section on guerrilla warfare by Peter Paret and John Shy. This book also includes two sections on why the French lost the first Indochina War, one written by Vo Nguyen Giap and the other by Bernard Fall. The PROVN Study and *A Better War* offer valuable insights on pacification and the command and control required for integrating the civil and military efforts in counterinsurgency. *A Better War* is the shorter and more readable of the two, but the executive summary, the “resume,” and chapter five of the PROVN Study merit reading because this analysis formed the foundation of the approach explained in *A Better War*.

Lessons from Counterinsurgencies before Vietnam

Before Vietnam, both the Army and the Marine Corps had much experience fighting guerrilla-style opponents. The Army seemed to learn anew for each counterinsurgency, while the Marines codified their corpus of experience in the 1940 Small Wars Manual. In fact, the Marines’ lessons from leading Nicaraguan Guardia Nacional indigenous patrols in counter-guerrilla operations against Sandino’s guerrillas may very well have served as the basis from which to design their CAP model in Vietnam. Nonetheless, there are a host of good works

and lessons from the Banana Wars, from the Philippine Insurrection, and from the Indian Wars. This section encapsulates some of the common lessons from these wars and recommends some key books that cover them. The Hukbullahap Rebellion in the Philippines following World War II is excluded because the U.S. role there was essentially limited to providing money and the advice of Edward Lansdale.

From the Marines' experience in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua during the first part of the 20th century, they learned that small wars, unlike conventional wars, present no defined or linear battle area and theater of operations. While delay in the use of force may be interpreted as weakness, the *Small Wars Manual* maintains, the brutal use of force is not appropriate either. "In small wars, tolerance, sympathy, and kindness should be the keynote to our relationship with the mass of the population." For small wars, the manual urges U.S. forces to employ as many indigenous troops as practical early on to confer proper responsibility on indigenous agencies for restoring law and order. Moreover, it stresses the importance of focusing on the social, economic, and political development of the people more than on simple material destruction. It also underscores the importance of aggressive patrolling, population security, and the denial of sanctuary to the insurgents. An overarching principle, though, is not to fight small wars with big-war methods—the goal is to gain results with the least application of force and minimum loss of civilian (non-combatant) life.

The 1940 *Small Wars Manual* and the draft of its 2004 addendum, *Small Wars*, are the best sources for distilling the Marines' lessons from the Banana Wars and beyond. While the logistical and physical aspects of the 1940 manual have become obsolete, the portions that address the fundamentals and principles of small wars are still quite relevant. One indication of this manual's continued relevance is the fact that the 2004 draft, *Small Wars*, is not intended to supplant the earlier version but to complement it by linking it to the 21st century.¹³

During the Philippine insurgency, the

American military won a relatively bloodless but unambiguous victory in three and a half years in a way that established the basis for a future friendship between Americans and Filipinos. Anthony James Joes, a scholar on American and guerrilla warfare, succinctly explains why:

There were no screaming jets accidentally bombing helpless villages, no B-52s, no napalm, no artillery barrages, no collateral damage. Instead, the Americans conducted a decentralized war of small mobile units armed mainly with rifles and aided by native Filipinos, hunting guerrillas who were increasingly isolated both by the indifference or hostility of much of the population and by the concentration of scattered peasant groups into larger settlements.¹⁴

During the Philippine Insurrection from 1899 to 1902, the U.S. military learned to avoid big-unit search and destroy missions because they were counterproductive; to maximize the employment of indigenous scouts and paramilitary forces to increase and sustain decentralized patrolling; to mobilize popular support by focusing on the improvement of schools, hospitals, and infrastructure; and to enhance regime legitimacy by allowing insurgents and former insurgents to organize anti-regime political parties. In *Savage Wars of Peace*, an award-winning study on America's role in small wars, Max Boot attributed American success in the Philippine Insurrection to a balanced and sound application of sticks and carrots; the U.S. military used aggressive patrolling and force to pursue and crush insurgents; it generally treated captured rebels well; and it generated goodwill among the population by running schools and hospitals, and by improving sanitation. In addition to Boot's book, *America and Guerrilla Warfare* by Anthony James Joes and *America's Forgotten Wars* by Sam C. Sarkesian both offer insightful chapters on U.S. military counterinsurgency methods in the Philippines.¹⁵ Sarkesian writes

There is a need to learn from history, analyze American involvement and the nature

of low-intensity conflict, and translate these into strategy and operational doctrines. Without some sense of historical continuity, Americans are likely to relearn the lessons of history each time they are faced with a low intensity conflict.¹⁶

When Brigadier General Jack Pershing returned to the Philippines to serve as military governor of the Moro Province between 1909 and 1913, he applied the lessons he had learned as a captain during the Philippine Insurrection to pacify the Moros. He established the Philippine Constabulary, comprising loyal Filipinos from the main islands and serving as a police force, to assist in the campaign to pacify the Moros. Pershing did not attempt to apply military force alone to suppress the Moro rebellion. "Pershing felt that an understanding of Moro customs and habits was essential in successfully dealing with them—and he went to extraordinary lengths to understand Moro society and culture." Pershing understood the imperative of having American forces involved at the grass-roots level. He also comprehended the social-political aspects and knew that military goals sometimes had to be subordinated to them. "He scattered small detachments of soldiers throughout the interior, to guarantee peaceful existence of those tribes that wanted to raise hemp, produce timber, or farm." To influence and win the people, there had to be contact between them and his soldiers. During his first tour there as a captain, he was allowed inside the "Forbidden Kingdom" and as an honor not granted to any other white man, he was made a Moro Datu.¹⁷

More removed in time and context, the Indian Wars of the 19th century nonetheless provide some lessons for counterinsurgency. These lessons also demonstrate that the overarching fundamentals for fighting small wars are indeed timeless. With little preserved institutional memory and less codified doctrine for counterinsurgency, the late-19th-century U.S. Army had to adapt on the fly to Indian tactics. A loose body of principles emerged from the Indian Wars: to ensure the close civil-military coordination of the pacification effort, to pro-

vide firm but fair and paternalistic governance, and to reform the economic and educational spheres. Good treatment of prisoners, attention to the Indians' grievances, and the avoidance of killing women and children (learned by error) were also regarded as fundamental to any long-term solution. Additionally, General George Crook developed the tactic of inserting small teams from friendly Apache tribes into the sanctuaries of insurgent Apaches to neutralize them, to psychologically unhinge them, and to sap their will. This technique subsequently emerged in one form or another in the Philippines, during the Banana Wars, and during the Vietnam War.¹⁸

One of the better books on the U.S. Army's role in counterinsurgency warfare against the Indians is Andrew J. Birtle's *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941*. It includes some interesting and relevant sections entitled "Indian Warfare and Military Thought," "U.S. Army Counter-guerrilla Operations on the Western Frontier," and "The Army and Indian Pacification." Birtle describes one of the few manuals published during the era on how to operate on the Plains, *The Prairie Traveler*, as "perhaps the single most important work on the conduct of frontier expeditions published under the aegis of the War Department." Captain Randolph Marcy's *The Prairie Traveler* was a "how-to" manual for packing, traveling, tracking, and bivouacking on the Plains. More important, it was also a primer on fighting the Indians.

In formulating principles for pacification, Marcy looked at his own experiences on the frontier as well as the French and Turkish experiences conducting pacification operations in North Africa to arrive at three lessons: over-dispersion strips the counterinsurgent force of initiative, increases its vulnerability, and saps its morale; mobility is an imperative (mounting infantry on mules was one way of increasing mobility during that era); and the best way to counter an elusive guerrilla was to employ mobile mounted forces at night to surprise the enemy at dawn. However, *The Prairie Traveler* conveys one central message that is still salient

and germane today: it urges soldiers to be adaptive by coupling conventional discipline with the self-reliance, individuality, and rapid mobility of the insurgent.¹⁹

A Mindset for Winning the “War of the Flea”

In *The War of the Flea: Guerrilla Warfare in Theory and Practice*, author Robert Taber wrote:

Analogically, the guerrilla fights the war of the flea, and his military enemy suffers the dog’s disadvantages: too much to defend; too small, ubiquitous, and agile an enemy to come to grips with. If the war continues long enough—this is the theory—the dog succumbs to exhaustion and anemia without ever having found anything on which to close its jaws or to rake with its claws.²⁰

The “war of the flea” is harder than fighting against enemies who opt, imprudently, to fight the U.S. military according to the conventional paradigm it has historically preferred and in which it is unequaled. Our current and future adversaries in the protracted war on terror are fighting—and will continue to fight—the “war of the flea.” Employing hit-and-run ambushes, they strive to turn Coalition lines of communication and friendly regime key roads into “streets without joy.” However, the lessons from previous U.S. military successes in fighting the elusive guerrilla show that with the right mindset and with some knowledge of the aforementioned methods, the war of the flea is in fact winnable.

The U.S. Army is adapting in contact, learning and capturing lessons anew for beating the guerrilla. As it transforms and develops a mindset that places much more emphasis on stability operations and counterinsurgency, the books listed in this article are ones that should appear on reading lists and in the curricula of professional schools, beginning with the basic courses.

Notes

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About the Author

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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**

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.

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.

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:

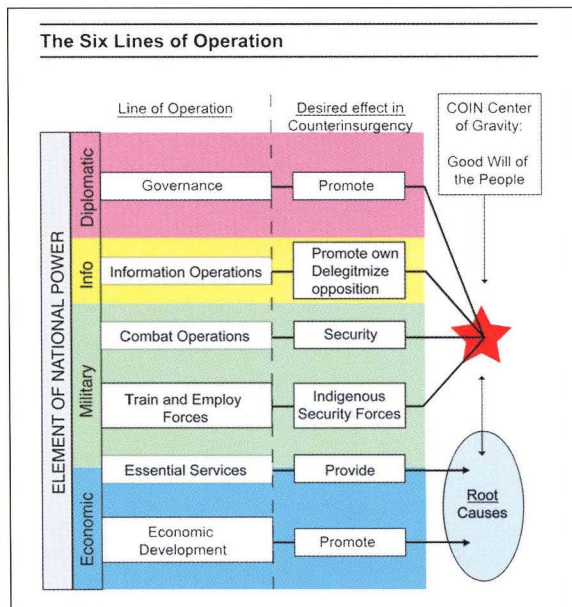
- ◆ Countering insurgency requires us to develop a comprehensive understanding of the complex character of a conflict, of its social, political, historical, cultural, and economic contexts, and of its participants. If we are going to fight among the people, we must understand them.

- ◆ 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 non-governmental 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

Parameters, Spring 2005

“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.”

—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 *ilustrados*. 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 guerrillas 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 *ilustrado* oligarchy.

Local chieftains, landowners, and businessmen were the *principales* who controlled local politics. The insurgency was strongest when *ilustrados*, *principales*, and peasants were unified in opposition to annexation. The peasants, who provided the bulk of guerrilla manpower, had interests different from their *ilustrado* 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. Manuel 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 non-governmental 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 interna-

tional 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 popu-

lace 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 vestige [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 Samareños 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 Samareños 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 Samareños 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 bas-

kets 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 Samareños 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 congong 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 regret-

table 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

been doing for years is not only morally bankrupt but factually incorrect. Although the Army's operational records give ample evidence that throughout the Philippine War, far too many Filipinos were indiscriminately fired on or shot "attempting to escape," the premeditated execution of prisoners was neither a common nor an accepted practice among American soldiers in the archipelago. Even on Samar, where both a thirst for vengeance and a lack of supervision led to war crimes and unnecessary cruelty, soldiers were expected to follow the laws of war. Smith, who openly advocated illegal policies, was relieved, court-martialed, found guilty, and immediately retired in disgrace. Army officers on Samar suspected of atrocities were investigated, court-martialed, and, as in the case of Waller, either acquitted or given mild reprimands. Given the nature of their offenses and the lightness of their punishments, it is hard to view any of these men, soldiers or Marines, as scapegoats.⁴⁰

A third result of the Marines' march and the tragic events that followed was that Waller's court-martial and the charges of American brutality overshadowed Lukban's capture in February and the surrender of the last prominent guerrilla leader on 28 April. Despite Smith's attempts to turn his men into mindless butchers, the victory was due to careful planning, detailed organization, and persistence. In order to combat the guerrillas in Samar's rugged interior, the army constructed a string of supply dumps from which long-ranging columns could sweep the countryside. Through a combination of large expeditions and hundreds of small patrols that operated from towns and field camps, the soldiers demonstrated to the population that the Americans intended to stay. By recruiting Filipino volunteers, promising local autonomy, and offering generous surrender terms, the Army began providing attractive alternatives to resistance. These methods, along with the destruction of most of the island's foodstuffs, eventually convinced all but the most intransigent rebels to accept American authority.

The brutality and excesses that characterized the conduct of soldiers and Marines on Samar represented a radical departure from the pacification methods employed elsewhere in the

Philippines. Too often lessons that had been painfully learned in the previous three years of warfare were disregarded, and only the most primitive elements were retained. Barring the first few months of American occupation, there was little attempt to found schools, build roads, or win over the population—methods that proved effective in other areas where the topography was only a little less daunting and the guerrillas better organized. Nor did the Americans on Samar later take advantage of their vastly expanded intelligence capabilities or seek to exploit the deep and bitter divisions among various sections and classes in Samar society. With some exceptions, pacification methods remained crude and undeveloped. In part, this was the result of Samar's isolation and topography, which cannot be overemphasized. Yet it should not be forgotten that Samar's topography was equally harsh to the guerrillas, who, despite having little more experience of the interior than the Americans and being led by a "foreigner" from another island and culture, learned to control an unruly populace and to fight effectively with small units and with limited supplies. The Marines, of course, fresh from China, could hardly be aware of this mass of tested lore; and in following their Army superiors down the path of directionless retaliation, they wrote one of the most painful chapters in the history of the corps.⁴¹

In assessing the Marines' performance in their first modern small war, it is essential to recognize that in the early 20th century, before most Marines had any experience with expeditionary warfare and interventions and before the emergence of a specific doctrine for fighting "small wars," the character of the commanding officer was all important. Certainly the physical stamina and rugged endurance that the Marines displayed on their disastrous attempt to march across the island may be sufficient justification for the old U.S. Marine Corps toast, "Stand Gentlemen. He served on Samar." Yet this glorification of suffering and tenacity should not obscure the fact that they did not display much expertise in their first modern guerrilla war. Inexperienced and, in the case of Waller, unwilling to learn, the Marines' tactics were as physi-

cally devastating to themselves as they were punishing to their opponents.

Whether this ambiguous performance led to institutional growth or lessons learned is beyond the scope of this work. The Marine Corps took no action against Waller, and there is no indication that he displayed any remorse for his actions. He went on to become the mentor of a generation of counterinsurgency experts who emerged within the corps to fight the small wars of the Caribbean. Perhaps much of Waller's physical courage and endurance, his charismatic leadership, and his love of combat found their way into the Marines' expeditionary forces. Yet it is important to note that his junior officers rejected Waller's headlong individual aggressiveness, choosing instead to discuss, disseminate, and eventually codify their experiences in the *Small Wars Manual* of the Marine Corps.

Research for this article was made possible through a U.S. Marine Corps Historical Center Research Fellowship and a research grant from Old Dominion University. The author wishes to thank V. Keith Fleming, Jack Shulimson, Patricia Morgan, and the rest of the staff of the U.S. Marine Corps Historical Center for their professionalism, their willingness to discuss Marine Corps history, and their many helpful suggestions of sources to consult. He would also like to thank Daniel P. Greene and James R. Linn for their comments on drafts. The views expressed in this paper are the author's own and should not be taken to represent those of the U.S. Marine Corps Historical Center.

Notes

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 18. Brig. General George Davis to Secretary of War, 27

June 1902, RG 153, G.C.M. 30313, NA.

19. Waller Report, 8–10. Waller's defenders have perpetuated the confusion over his authority by claiming he was in charge of all of southern Samar or even the entire island. Paul Melshen, "He Served on Samar," *Proceedings* 105 (1979): 45; Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York, 1989), 191.

20. Headquarters, Marine Battalion, Samar, 23 October 1901, Waller Report, 6–7.

21. Quote "hiking all the time" from Harold Kinman to Sister, 23 December 1901, Kinman Papers; quote "we were to shoot" from *Modesto Bee*, 31 May 1965.

22. "Testimony of Captain David D. Porter, RG 153, G.C.M. 30313, NA. Waller to Smith, 31 October 1901, Waller Report, 10–12; Porter to Waller, 2 November 1901, Waller Report, 15–16; Waller to Anon., 10 November 1900, Waller Report, 21.

23. "Waller to Anon., 10 November 1900, Waller Report, 25. See also *ibid.*, 23–31; Waller to Adjutant General, 6 November 1901, RG 395, 2571, Box 1, no. 129, NA; Kinman to Sister, 23 November 1901, Kinman Papers.

24. Waller to Adjutant General, 6SB, 19 November 1901, Waller Report, 26. Clifford, *Pioneer Marine Battalion*, 34; RG 153, G.C.M. 10196, Lieutenant John H. A. Day, NA.

25. Kinman to Sister, 23 December 1901, Kinman Papers; Waller to Adjutant General, 6SB, 30 November 1901, RG 395, 3451, Box 1, NA; Waller to Adjutant General, 6SB, 6, 18, and 20 December 1901, Waller Report, 43–48; Waller to Rodgers, 17 December 1901, RG 45, Area File 10, NA.

26. Waller to Smith, 19 November 1901, RG 395, 3451, Box 1, NA. For the confusion over Waller's mission, see Waller to Smith, 31 October 1901, and Judge Advocate's Summary, RG 153, G.C.M. 30313, NA; Waller Report, 42; Schott, *Ordeal of Samar*, 104–106; Smith to Chief Signal Officer, 2 November 1901, RG 395, 3451, Box 1, NA; Adjutant General, 6SB, to Adjutant General, Division of Philippines, 1 December 1901, RG 395, 2571, Box 1, no. 1188, NA; Smith to the adjutant general, 11 December 1901, RG 395, 2573, Box 1, no. 166, NA.

27. Waller to Adjutant General, 6SB, 25 January 1901, Waller Report, 49. For the Army's 1901 expedition, see *War Department*, 1902, 1:9:601; Brown, Ninth Infantry, 561. It should be noted that judged by the campaign conditions on Samar, Waller's march was neither over particularly difficult terrain nor of more than moderate distance.

28. Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the U.S. Marine Corps* (New York, 1980), 154.

29. Waller to Adjutant General, 6SB, 25 January 1902, Waller Report, 58. See also Commander William Swift to Smith, 20 December 1901, RG 395, 2574, Box 1, NA; Lieutenant Kenneth P. Williams to C.O., Lanang, 19 January 1902, *War Department*, 1902,1:9:446; Porter to Waller, 8 February 1902, Waller Report, 60–64; Lieutenant A. S. Williams to Waller, 18 February 1902, Waller Report, 64–68; Schott, *Ordeal of Samar*, chap. 5.

30. Waller Report, 68–88; Lieutenant Commander J. M. Helms to Swift, 6 January 1902, RG 395, 2571, Box 2, no. 43, NA; Waller to Adjutant General, 8, 9, 18, and 20 February 1902, RG 395, 2573, Box 1, NA; 1902 entry, 1902, Charles G. Clifton Diary; Clifford, *Pioneer Marine Battalion*.

31. Quotations from Testimony of Lieutenant John H. A. Day, RG 153, G.C.M. 10196, NA. The identity of the victim was unknown at the time of the killing, but it was later alleged that he was an *insurrecto* leader named Captain Victor.

32. Testimony of Pvt. George Davis, RG 153, G.C.M. 30313, NA. Despite voluminous correspondence and records, the events of 19–20 January 1902 are still unclear and the evidence is inconclusive as to how many Filipinos were executed on 20 January. The above is based on the correspondence in the Waller Reports; RG 153, G.C.M. 30313 and G.C.M. 10196, NA; and General Orders 93, Headquarters, Division of the Philippines, 7 May 1902, RG 395, 2070, NA. For the confusion over the number of U.S. Marine deaths, see RG 153, G.C.M. 10196, NA; and Schott, *Ordeal of Samar*, 139, 142.

33. Waller Report, 76–77.

34. General Orders 93, Headquarters, Division of the Philippines, 7 May 1902, RG 395, 2070, NA.

35. For Waller's incapacity for command, see Testimony of Dr. George A. Ling, RG 153, G.C.M. 10196, NA.

36. General Orders 93, Headquarters, Division of the Philippines, 7 May 1902, RG 395, 2070, NA. For the judge advocate's ruling that Waller's acts were illegal and contrary to the laws of war, see Brig. General George Davis to Secretary of War, 27 June 1902, RG 153, G.C.M. 30313, NA.

37. Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 154; Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags*, 256; Welch, *Response to Imperialism*, 138–41.

38. Schott, *The Ordeal of Samar*, chap. 9; Melshen, "He Served on Samar," 45; Stuart C. Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation: The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899–1903* (New Haven, 1982), 227; Karnow, *In Our Image*, 193.

39. RG 153, G.C.M. 30313, NA.

40. Major Charles H. Watts to Adjutant General, 1 April 1902, RG 94, AGO 482616, NA; RG 153, G.C.M. 30756, Lieutenant Julien E. Gaujot, NA; RG 153, G.C.M. 34401, Major Edwin F. Glenn, NA; RG 153, G.C.M. 30757, Lieutenant Norman E. Cook, NA.

41. An excellent discussion that demonstrates that the Samar campaign was an anomaly in Army pacification in the Philippine War can be found in Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags*, chap. 9. For a study of Army

pacification on Luzon, see Brian McAllister Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899–1902* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1989).

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Part III

Nicaragua, 1909–1933





Airpower and Restraint in Small Wars: Marine Corps Aviation in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, 1927-33

by Wray R. Johnson

Aerospace Power Journal, Fall 2001

Air control, as exhibited by the Royal Air Force during the British occupation of Iraq, is often cited as the consummate example of the successful and effective use of airpower. However, the U.S. military need look no further than its own Marine Corps for an equally compelling example. As Dr. Johnson argues, unlike their European counterparts, Marine air leaders understood the need for restraint in using airpower for air control in Nicaragua during the first half of the 20th century.

IT IS ONE of the peculiarities of airpower history that proponents have often claimed airpower to be a more humane instrument of war, whereas many critics have claimed that bombs dropped from the air are somehow more immoral than an artillery barrage or economic sanctions—even if the latter results in a greater number of civilian deaths.¹ Yet, it is rare to find historical examples of airmen accused of war crimes, much less tried for the same. This has created a paradox of sorts. For example, following revelations that U.S. troops deliberately fired upon civilian refugees at No Gun Ri during the Korean War, James Webb, a Marine Corps combat veteran and former secretary of the Navy, wrote in *The Wall Street Journal*, “Perhaps the greatest anomaly of recent times is that death

delivered by a bomb earns one an air medal, while when it comes at the end of a gun it earns one a trip to jail.”² If we were to take this line of reasoning to its logical extreme, the tragedy at My Lai would have been regarded differently in history had a pair of F-4 fighter-bombers napalmed the village. Of course, the distinction appears to be that Lieutenant William Calley and his soldiers killed Vietnamese women and children face to face whereas the F-4 pilots would have been, to use popular jargon, simply “servicing a target.”

According to Colonel Phil Meilinger, former dean of the School of Advanced Airpower Studies at Maxwell Air Force Base (AFB), Alabama, “Whether women and children are blown to bits by artillery, starved to death as a result of blockade, or killed in a bombing attack is a distinction the victims would not trouble themselves to make.”³ But airpower theorists and airmen themselves have over the years invariably pointed to the distinct psychological impact of airpower as being potentially far greater than the actual physical destruction wrought. If that is true, then civilians do in fact make a distinction between death by artillery fire and death by bombs. Giulio Douhet certainly believed in the efficacy of aerial terror to weaken, if not wholly undermine, the will of civilian populations, and as recently as 1997, the director of Defence Studies at the Royal Air Force Staff College averred that “airpower when used properly can be a devastatingly effective psychological weapon.”⁴

A basic premise of classical airpower theory, then, has always been that people targeted from the air—whether combatants or noncombatants—react with much greater fear to aerial bombardment than to surface attack.⁵ Apparently, this is equally true among guerrillas and other irregulars. In his book *Viet Cong Memoir*, Truong Nhu Tang described B-52 strikes as “undiluted psychological terror.” Despite having been hunted by South Vietnamese and American ground forces and having endured all of the privations and hardships associated with the life of a guerrilla, Truong Tang noted that “nothing the guerrillas had to endure compared with the stark terrorization of the B-52 bombardments.”⁶ Thus,

since the advent of the airplane, airpower enthusiasts have noted the psychological dimension of airpower and sought to exploit it. In that light, the use of the airplane by Great Britain to police its empire in the early part of the 20th century serves as a case in point.

As Dr. Jim Corum has noted in his article “The Myth of Air Control,” the British long relied upon terror in the form of punitive expeditions to bring rebellious native populations to heel.⁷ Indeed, Colonel C. E. Callwell, in his seminal work *Small Wars*, first published in 1896, considered what we today would think of as wanton acts of destruction perpetrated against civilians to be a sound military principle:

It is so often the case that the power which undertakes a small war desires to acquire the friendship of the people which its armies are chastising, that the system of what is called “military execution” is ill-adapted to the end in view. The most satisfactory way of bringing such foes to reason is by the rifle and the sword, for they understand this mode of warfare and respect it. Sometimes, however, the circumstances do not admit of it, and then their villages must be demolished and granaries destroyed.⁸

Although Colonel Callwell acknowledged “a limit to the amount of license in destruction” in small wars, he nevertheless acceded to a certain expediency in such “havoc” and noted that, despite the fact that burning crops and killing civilians was something “the laws of regular warfare do not sanction,” it was oftentimes a necessary, albeit unfortunate, characteristic of small wars.⁹

The Royal Air Force (RAF) advanced air control as a substitute for the traditional punitive expedition on the ground. In short, such expeditions by air were relatively cheap, could inflict serious casualties upon recalcitrant natives without exposing English soldiers to any harm, and capitalized on the fact that primitive people were quite often terrified by airplanes. Thus, when combined with surface operations conducted by native levies or other non-English imperial troops, these operations were quite successful,

and the RAF exploited the results to its own political ends. But in keeping with the nature of punitive expeditions in general, these aerial operations also tended to be quite brutal. For example, at the time, Wing Commander J. A. Chamier of the RAF insisted that airplanes were to be used relentlessly, carrying out attacks “on houses, inhabitants, crops, and cattle.”¹⁰ Although repugnant to modern sensibilities, such an attitude was wholly in keeping with an imperial policy intended to crush native resistance to British authority as quickly and effectively as possible. Moreover, Great Britain was not alone in this matter, as the French displayed an equal disregard for the lives and property of native peoples.

French imperial policy was similar to that of the British, and the French use of airpower to police their own colonial possessions was no less brutal—perhaps greater. The French air force played a significant role in the colonial fighting in Morocco and Tunisia prior to, during, and after World War I. Aerial bombardment of civilians by the air force in policing the French Empire was the norm. In fact, at Nalhout, Tunisia, in the fall of 1916, the French used chemical weapons against civilian targets, including mosques. Apparently, the French made no distinction between combatants and noncombatants in punitive operations; therefore, the use of gas was not regarded as particularly unethical or immoral—or even counterproductive. French use of aircraft in colonial warfare increased during the 1920s, with 21 squadrons operating in Morocco alone. According to Dr. Bill Dean, a professor on the faculty at Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell AFB, “As had been the case a decade before, the French had no qualms about bombing villages that were strictly civilian targets.”¹¹ They even used American mercenary aviators at one point.¹²

Ironically, the British public was not especially outraged by their own soldiers or other soldiers in the employ of the empire torching villages in Iraq or Yemen, but they were moved to protest the use of airplanes for the same purpose. Early RAF reports on air-control operations stressed effectiveness and lethality, but later statements emphasized the use of airplanes in a

more humane and less lethal manner. The proximate cause of this shift in emphasis was the rising chorus of protest in the British press and in Parliament. It would appear, however, that no such compunction developed about matters on the ground because punitive expeditions continued as before, and British troops repeatedly shelled villages without warning. But the restraint claimed by the RAF was probably mostly fiction, especially in the more isolated outposts of the British Empire. Contrast this state of affairs with the operations of United States Marine Corps aviation elements in Nicaragua during roughly the same time frame.

In *Quijote on a Burro*, a privately published classic on American intervention in Nicaragua between 1912 and 1934, Lejeune Cummins wrote in 1958 that “perhaps the only subject regarding the American intervention . . . upon which all authorities are able to agree is the efficacy with which the Marines employed the air power at their disposal.”¹³ Indeed, Secretary of the Navy Curtis Wilbur reported in 1929 that Marine Corps aviation was “of inestimable value” in Nicaragua.¹⁴ Cummins was thus moved to observe that “it is probably not an exaggeration to say that the marine occupation . . . could not have been accomplished” without Marine Corps aviation.¹⁵

Beginning in 1919, the Marine Corps had employed airplanes against the *cacos* in Haiti and “bandits” in the Dominican Republic, but the accompanying air units were added to these expeditions mostly as an afterthought and, therefore, generally operated without a clear idea of their role in each undertaking.¹⁶ Six Curtiss JN-4B “Jennies” of the 1st Air Squadron, commanded by Captain Walter McCaughtry, deployed in February 1919 to San Pedro de Macoris, the Dominican Republic, while another six Jennies and six Curtiss HS-2L flying boats of the 4th Squadron under Captain Harvey Mims began operations at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on 31 March.¹⁷ Although some of these aircraft took part in active combat operations—experimenting with improvised bombing tactics against the indigenous irregular forces—it was not until improved radios became available in 1921 that air-to-ground cooperation proved at all practica-

ble. Consequently, in both the Dominican Republic and Haiti, Marine Corps aviation proved its worth mostly in combat-support operations such as scouting, communications, mapping, transportation, and medical assistance. Nevertheless, as one Marine Corps aviator concluded afterwards, "We were there and they used us, and they used us to their advantage, and consequently we became a useful and integral part of the Marine Corps."¹⁸ In fact, not unlike the British and the French, the Corps became increasingly aware of the facility of close air-ground counter guerrilla operations. And in Nicaragua, the Marine Corps began to perfect these techniques in a manner that ultimately laid the foundation for the highly effective system of close air support still in use by that service today.

United States interests in Nicaragua did not arise suddenly with the emergence of the revolutionary disturbances of the 1920s; this small country had been of strategic importance to the U.S. government since the war with Mexico, when, along with the Isthmus of Panama, Nicaragua became vital to transcontinental communications. Suffice it to say that as a result of the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, the United States took on the role of hemispheric gendarme in order to protect American commercial interests throughout Latin America. President William Howard Taft subsequently made "dollar diplomacy" the paramount strategic consideration in Latin America, and when American capital investment was threatened in Nicaragua in 1926, the United States sent in the Marines.¹⁹

In February 1927, Marine Observation Squadron 1, commanded by Major Ross "Rusty" Rowell, landed at Corinto, Nicaragua, with eight officers, 81 enlisted men, and six de Havilland DH-4B aircraft. In May, Marine Observation Squadron 4, with seven officers, 78 enlisted Marines, and six Boeing O2B-1s (a metal-fuselaged derivative of the venerable DH-4B) also arrived and were placed under Major Rowell's command. Combined, the two units were designated Aircraft Squadrons, 2d Brigade.²⁰ Major Rowell, an experienced pilot who had received instruction in dive-bombing during exercises conducted by U.S. Army fliers at Kelly Field in

San Antonio, Texas, was quick to appreciate the value of dive-bombing: "[It] seemed to me that it would be an excellent form of tactics for use in guerrilla warfare."²¹ Thus, when he took command of the 1st Squadron in San Diego in 1924, Rowell had U.S. Army A-3 bomb racks installed on the squadron's DH-4Bs and set about training his pilots in the technique.

Dive-bombing—more accurately, what we would today describe as glide bombing—had earlier been employed in Haiti. During the intervention there in 1919, Lieutenant Lawson Sanderson of the 4th Squadron realized that the usual practice of horizontal release of bombs by the rear observer was inaccurate, to say the least. By trial and error, Lieutenant Sanderson settled upon the technique of dropping the nose of his aircraft in what was then considered a steep dive of 45 degrees. Flying directly at the target, Sanderson then released the bomb himself at an altitude of roughly 250 feet. The tactic proved considerably more accurate than horizontal bombing, and the other pilots in the squadron soon abandoned the old method in favor of the new one. Such accuracy would prove its worth to the Marine Corps in Nicaragua.²²

Although much has been written about Marine Corps aviation in Nicaragua during what officially became known as the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, none of it is considered definitive. General Vernon McGee, a Marine Corps aviator, wrote one of the better essays on the topic in 1965. A veteran of the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, General McGee helped author his service's *Small Wars Manual*, perhaps the finest doctrine ever written regarding counterrevolutionary warfare. The general was convinced that concepts learned in Nicaragua were applicable to the ongoing counterinsurgency effort in Vietnam. His essay emphasized the technological aspect—specifically, the characteristics of airplanes useful in a counter guerrilla campaign—but his larger idea of looking to the Nicaraguan experience as a model for airpower in small wars bears consideration, particularly in contrast to the British air-control example.

Perhaps there is no better starting point than to examine what Major Rowell had to say regarding the lessons of Nicaragua. In an article pub-

lished in the *Marine Corps Gazette* in September 1929, he acknowledged the examples set by the British and French (as well as the Italians and Spanish) with respect to the use of aircraft in “bush, or guerrilla warfare” but went on to assert that “no broader experience has been gained, or greater success achieved through the employment of aircraft in minor warfare, than that which attended the operations of [the] Marines during the Nicaraguan campaign of 1927 and 1928.”²³ Major Rowell spent the bulk of his article detailing organization, tactics, and so forth, but, particularly, his remarks regarding the unique character of the conflict warrant our attention in the context of airpower and restraint.

The Marine Corps had been dispatched to Nicaragua to aid the Conservative government of Adolfo Diaz and to protect Americans and their property from Liberal opposition forces led by Dr. Juan Sacasa. The Liberal army had disintegrated as a unified force but was replaced by small bands of guerrillas, the most prominent of which was led by Augusto C. Sandino. Although in rebellion against the government, Sandino also set about to rid the country of the American presence that had dominated it since the Taft administration. Waging a ruthless guerrilla war, Sandino presented the Marine Corps with an unprecedented challenge. Whereas in earlier conflicts in Central America and the Caribbean, the Corps had faced nominally guerrilla formations ranging from organized criminals to politicized, disgruntled elements of society, in Nicaragua it faced a different kind of guerrilla opponent—one schooled and educated by Mexican Marxists and enjoying international support. The Marine Corps, therefore, was among the first regular forces in the 20th century to face the “revolutionary guerrilla.” Whereas in Haiti and the Dominican Republic the Corps functioned as an occupation force, invoking martial law and having a free hand in the conduct of military operations in the field, in Nicaragua it supported the extant government and was thus constrained by political limitations that its predecessors in the Caribbean as well as British and French counterparts would have regarded as unthinkable.

Major Rowell in particular was sensitive to the

limitations imposed on his operations, not the least of which was the impact of public opinion back home in the United States: “Public opinion, always to be respected, is sensitive to bloodshed and the newspapers are prone to publish rumors of scandals or abuses. . . . The practical effects . . . are numerous. For example: we may not bomb towns because it would not be consistent with a policy advocated at some international convention. . . . The safety of noncombatants becomes a matter of prime importance.”²⁴

It is important to note that Major Rowell’s comments were offered in the context of a complaint: “We are required to conform to all of the rules of civilized warfare, while the enemy will torture prisoners, murder the wounded and mutilate the dead.” Nevertheless, Major Rowell was bound by the restraints imposed upon him and at least grudgingly conceded to their political necessity. In a subsequent essay, he recounted how, in the earliest stages of the Marine Corps intervention, “the American mission was to stop the war—not to become involved in it.”²⁵ This necessarily led to certain operational constraints. Major Rowell, therefore, “appealed to all pilots to avoid hostilities and to return fire only when necessary to save their own lives.”²⁶

But neutrality soon gave way to active combat operations as Sandino deliberately attacked Marine Corps patrols and garrisons as well as other Americans and their property. As the American role in Nicaragua became wider and deeper, operational constraints on the Corps were loosened but never approximated the freedom its aviators enjoyed in the Caribbean—and certainly bore no similarity to the freedom of European air arms in their air-policing roles. For example, despite the fact that Major Rowell and other Marine Corps authors argued for the use of nonlethal chemicals such as tear gas (in contrast to the French use of lethal chemicals), U.S. policy forbade such usage.²⁷

It became clear to diplomats and Marine Corps commanders in Nicaragua that direct and even indirect infliction of casualties on the civilian population was not only contrary to policy, but also carried negative value. Whereas British and French aviators routinely bombed villages and strafed collections of suspicious men—as

well as women, children, and animals—the Corps clearly understood that this was counter-productive and modified its tactics. Major Rowell, therefore, encouraged the service's pilots to use their best judgment when attempting to tell guerrillas from civilians on the ground: "It is sometimes rather difficult to distinguish between the hostile groups and the noncombatants. No fixed rules can be laid down in such cases. The aviators must have an intimate knowledge of the characteristics of and habits of each group. . . . [However,] pilots will always bear in mind that innocent people will sometimes flee upon the approach of airplanes."²⁸ Contrast this statement with that of an RAF pilot who stated that nine unidentifiable people in a group constituted an illegal assembly, so he dropped bombs on them.²⁹

All of the above is not to say that innocent civilians did not die in Nicaragua as a result of air action. In his classic account of the Marine Corps fight with Sandino, Neill Macaulay described the service's tactics as "aerial terrorism."³⁰ Citing a particular mission led by Major Rowell, Macaulay noted that after observing several horses around a large house, Rowell and the pilot of another aircraft dropped bombs on the house and in the yard. Unknown persons were seen darting from the house into a nearby grove. Major Rowell strafed the grove but apparently to no effect. Macaulay, however, fails to mention the indicators that the Marine Corps recognized as pointing to probable guerrilla activity and the often extraordinary lengths to which its aviators would go to ensure that suspicious persons were indeed guerrillas.

Major Rowell instructed his pilots to fly no higher than 2,000 feet and generally 1,500 feet or lower—well within small-arms range—in order to distinguish between men and women, horses and cattle, and so forth.³¹ He also stressed that pilots and their observers should become expert in the "organization, equipment, and habits of the enemy" through careful study. "Basically," he wrote, "reconnaissance consists of distinguishing between the normal and the abnormal."³² When something on the ground seemed out of the ordinary, Marine pilots would swoop down to investigate. Towns that appeared to be aban-

doned were especially regarded as suspicious: "If the enemy is hiding there, some member of the party will probably decide to find a better place and make a dash for it. This may be induced by the patrol making a feint to attack. Under some circumstances, it will be possible to develop the situation by use of a few bursts from the front or rear guns. Occasionally a bomb may be expended for the same purpose."³³

Several points of this statement are noteworthy. Major Rowell insisted that his pilots be able to distinguish between guerrillas and civilians in order to avoid harming the latter. In circumstances in which all indications pointed to guerrilla activity, attempts to flush them out were graduated (feint, then use guns, then maybe a bomb or two) and employed when civilians were unlikely to be in the way.³⁴ If the town were abandoned by the civilian populace, the expenditure of bombs was certainly less problematic than if the area were bustling with activity. Such restraint certainly appears to refute any accusation of aerial terrorism and seems almost magnanimous compared to the British propensity to bomb any suspicious activity.

As alluded to earlier, the Marine Corps went to improbable lengths to determine the nature of suspicious activity in order to avoid unnecessary civilian casualties. In his annual report dated 20 June 1928, Major Rowell recounted how Marine aircraft would approach suspicious locales "from behind hills or mountains, the planes gliding in with throttled engines," whereupon the pilots would fly low enough to the ground that the observer in the rear of the aircraft could "look into windows and doors." As a counter to this extraordinary tactic, the guerrillas often included women and children among their parties, "secure in the knowledge that the women [would] not be attacked."³⁵ This is not surprising, given that Major Rowell and his pilots were often (although not always) under standing orders not to attack towns and villages at all, even if the presence of guerrillas was indisputable. In February 1928, for example, Rowell discovered Sandino and his main column in the town of Rafael del Norte. His fully armed patrol flew within a few feet of the building in which Sandino was being interviewed by an American journalist, at a level

“where the pilots and observers looked into the muzzles of the enemy rifles.” But Major Rowell did not attack. He later wrote that “this rare opportunity was passed by because it was the policy of the Commanding General to avoid the possibility of injury to the lives and property of innocent persons by refraining from attacks on towns.”³⁶

Unquestionably, Sandino and his guerrillas respected and feared the Marine Corps *lanzabombas*, as they were called by the Sandinistas.³⁷ Not only were Marine aircraft useful and lethal weapons in counterinsurgent warfare, but also they facilitated the political process crucial to counterrevolutionary warfare. To that end, these aircraft supported the national elections in 1928 at the height of the guerrilla war, especially in remote areas of the country:

It was necessary to ferry by plane most of the American personnel to outlying districts, to supply them there, to maintain communication with them, to patrol the towns and mesas on registration and election days, and, finally, to bring to Managua the ballots. In order to accomplish this work, flying time generally reached its peak during the weeks immediately before and after the election periods. . . . [In 1928] on election day 237 cantons were visited by airplanes.³⁸

As the war wound down, leading to eventual withdrawal of the Marine Corps in 1933, aviation continued to play a significant role in the political process. Because of an earlier agreement with the government and the insurgents, the United States agreed to oversee national elections again in 1932. The assistance provided by Marine aviators was invaluable, constituting the most extensive use of aviation in a political-support role during the intervention in Nicaragua.³⁹

With the close of this chapter in Marine Corps history, much of what the corps had learned in Nicaragua was synthesized and eventually codified in the *Small Wars Manual*, first published in 1935 and revised in 1940.⁴⁰ As noted earlier, General McGee and other Marine Corps aviators participated in this effort, and an entire chapter of the manual was devoted to aviation.⁴¹

Although the chapter was limited mostly to the composition of the aviation element, organization, types of missions, and so forth, the *Small Wars Manual* as a whole represented a major departure in the history of American military doctrine for small wars.

The 1935 edition was written by Major Harold Utley, who had commanded Marines in Eastern Nicaragua, as well as other Marines experienced in small wars. The work was informed by the research of U.S. Army officers and foreign experts in colonial warfare—including Colonel Callwell of the British army.⁴² The 1940 edition was an encyclopedic work with over 400 pages of text comprising detailed treatments regarding organization, tactics, intelligence, propaganda, and a host of other topics, including the care and feeding of pack animals. But its treatment of revolutionary guerrilla warfare was groundbreaking and remarkably prescient regarding the nature of emerging revolutionary warfare: “After a study has been made of the people who will oppose the intervention, the strategical plan is evolved. . . . Strategy should attempt to gain psychological ascendancy over the outlaw or insurgent element prior to hostilities. [The] political mission . . . dictates the military strategy of small wars.”⁴³ This statement is quite remarkable in that this was the first time that U.S. military doctrine placed the political mission ahead of military requirements. It also illustrates the extent to which the Marine Corps recognized the “new” guerrilla threat, including the realization that “the motive in small wars is not material destruction; [it] is usually a project dealing with the social, economic, and political development of the people.”⁴⁴

The authors of the *Small Wars Manual* gave special consideration to the underlying socioeconomic and political grievances that gave rise to insurgency and thus defined the theory of victory in such situations as relying upon an accurate assessment of the root causes of internal rebellion. For example, “the application of purely military measures may not, by itself restore peace and orderly government because the fundamental causes of the condition of unrest may be economic, political, or social.” Consequently, “the solution of such problems being basically a political adjustment, the military measures to be

applied must be of secondary importance and should be applied only to such an extent as to permit the continuation of peaceful corrective measures.”⁴⁵ Given the primacy of the nonmilitary dimension, it is not surprising that the Marine Corps would acquiesce to the need for restraint—including the application of airpower. If the operational objective is to detach popular support from the guerrillas and reattach it to the central government, deliberately bombing civilians from the air is counterproductive.

In contrast to the service’s recognition of the political dimension of small wars, the British, French, and other European powers of the same period continued to regard small wars as exclusively a military problem. Indigenous peoples were regarded as “inferior races” who understood only the sword and fire.⁴⁶ Resistance was to be smashed. European officers failed to discern and appreciate the manner in which ideologies borne out of Marxism, nationalism, Islam, and so forth, served to focus discontent and unify native peoples in a social, political, and military organization capable of resisting the regular armies of Europe. One must remember that the period encompassing the Marine Corps experience in Nicaragua (1910–33) and the British air-control experience between the world wars gave rise to such revolutionary figures as Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, and Emiliano Zapata, among others. The Corps appears to have understood the emergent political nature of small wars in the 20th century, including the need for restraint in the application of airpower, better than their European counterparts.

But as Dr. Corum pointed out in his article, the United States Air Force retains a certain fascination with the British concept of air control. It goes without saying that Air Force officers pay less attention to the airpower experience of the Marine Corps in Nicaragua in the 1920s. This is unfortunate because in the context of the emerging challenge of small wars in the 21st century, the model provided by the Corps in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign is probably more appropriate. One must wonder, then, why the British concept is often stressed in the U.S. Air Force and the Marine experience is largely ignored.

One answer, perhaps the best one, is that

Marine Corps aviation in Nicaragua does not serve the interests of autonomous operations and institutional independence held sacrosanct by the U.S. Air Force. The RAF was one of the first major air forces to attain institutional independence, and air control served to solidify that independence as well as advance the timeless idea of achieving victory through airpower alone. Using the British example appears to validate theoretical and doctrinal propositions that the U.S. Air Force has long held dear. Marine Corps aviation, on the other hand, has always been subordinate, and the Nicaragua experience in fact laid the foundation for this relationship between the air element and the ground commander. As General McGee wrote, “Undeterred by any necessity for counterair operations, and untempted by any ‘wild blue yonder’ schemes of semi-independent strategical forays, the Marines buckled down to their primary mission of supporting Marine ground forces.”⁴⁷ The fact of the matter, however, is that airpower in a counterinsurgency environment is probably best suited to a supporting role, but this flies in the face of the airman’s conviction that airpower is decisive.

Ironically, during the post-World War II counterinsurgency era, the RAF generally found itself subordinate to a ground-force commander—a fact often overlooked by people who promote the idea of air control. For example, during the 10-year war against communist Dhofari guerrillas in Oman, the air element “defied a time-honoured Royal Air Force principle in that it came under the command of [an] Army brigadier.” But as the British commander of the Dhofar Brigade pointed out, “all its work was in close support of the Army . . . and few disapproved of the arrangement.”⁴⁸

Compare this disposition with that of the Marine air element in Nicaragua. Based upon that experience, Major Rowell recommended the following:

The senior air officer should have the same dual staff and command status that is given the artillery commander in the infantry division. In other words, the senior air officer should actively command the air organization and at the same time serve as

the advisor to the [overall] commander on air matters. . . . The air squadrons will operate in support of ground organizations and also independently. In certain special situations, planes may be attached temporarily to ground units. As a general rule this practice should be discouraged. Better support can be given in most cases if the control is centralized.⁴⁹

The similarity between this ordering of control and authority to the relationship between the joint force air component commander and the joint force commander today is so obvious as to require no further elaboration. In short, Major Rowell was advocating a structure not unlike what stands as current joint doctrine.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the RAF concept of air control is generally held up as a model for “air constabulary” missions, and the Marine Corps example in Nicaragua is ignored.⁵¹

In closing, Air Force officers over the years have advanced various schemes by seeking to capitalize on the British air-control example, but much of the analysis regarding air control tended to ignore certain inconvenient facts—such as the presence of British ground forces and the apparent brutality of punitive expeditions conducted by British airmen. One must also note that these latter-day American studies tended to eschew any analysis of the political dimension—something also ignored by the British during the heyday of air control and something the U.S. military has struggled with since the end of World War II. A primary weakness of C. E. Callwell’s book as a useful guide for today has always been its emphasis on military operational solutions to political and social problems. In that sense, the Marine Corps *Small Wars Manual* is better doctrine. By the same token, the Marine airpower experience in Nicaragua is a better model for airpower in small wars.

Notes

1. For an excellent discussion of ethics, morality, and aerial bombardment, see Louis Manzo, “Morality in War Fighting and Strategic Bombing in World War Two,” *Air Power History*, Fall 1992, 35–50. For a contrasting view, see Phillip Meilinger, “Winged Defense:

Airwar, the Law and Morality,” *Armed Forces and Society*, Fall 1993, 103–23. Another excellent discussion of the law of war and airpower can be found in W. Parks, “Air War and the Law at War,” *Air Force Law Review* 32, no. 1 (1990): 1–55.

2. James Webb, “Making Sense of No Gun Ri,” *Wall Street Journal*, 6 October 1999.

3. Col Phillip S. Meilinger, letter to the editor, *Air Power History*, Winter 1992, 58.

4. Group Captain Andrew P. N. Lambert, “Shattering Impact: The Psychology of Air Attack,” in *Air Power Confronts an Unstable World*, ed. Richard Hallion (London: Brassey’s, 1997), 105.

5. In fact Group Captain Lambert asserts, “The evidence suggests that the psychological responses of a civilian population to bombing mirror almost exactly the reactions of soldiers to enemy fire.” *Ibid.*, 94.

6. Truong Nhu Tang, *Viet Cong Memoir: An Inside Account of the Vietnam War and Its Aftermath*, with David Chanoff and Doan Van Toai (New York: Vintage Books, April 1986), 167. The B-52 was equally feared by Iraqi soldiers during the Gulf War. Consequently, one of the most successful psychological-operations (PSYOP) leaflets of the war displayed a photo of a B-52 unloading its deadly cargo, accompanied by text warning of continued B-52 strikes. Regrettably, many observers concluded that the “B-52 leaflet” was a universally applicable leaflet in PSYOP, forgetting that, although the Vietcong were terrified by B-52 strikes, they rarely surrendered as a result.

7. Dr. James S. Corum, “The Myth of Air Control: Reassessing the History,” *Aerospace Power Journal* 14, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 61–77.

8. Col C. E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 3d ed. (London: Printed for Her Majesty’s Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1906), 41.

9. *Ibid.*, 41–42.

10. Wing Comdr J. A. Chamier, “The Use of Air Power for Replacing Military Garrisons,” *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute*, February–November 1921, 210.

11. William Dean, “The Colonial Armies of the French Third Republic: Overseas Formation and Continental Deployment, 1871–1920” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1999), 315–24.

12. *The Escadrille Cheriflenne* flew 470 missions—often attacking towns that had already submitted to French authority—before being disbanded. *Ibid.*, 324.

13. Lejeune Cummins, *Quijote on a Burro: Sandino and the Marines, A Study in the Formulation of Foreign Policy* (Mexico City: Distrito Federal: La Impresora Azteca, 1958), 54

14. *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy*, Fiscal

Year 1928 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Navy, 1920), 50, cited in *ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*, 55.

16. By 1910, revolutions in Haiti followed a well-established pattern. A military strongman would form a caco army, consisting mostly of military adventurers and conscripts. The caco army would seize the capital city of Port-au-Prince, surround the legislature, and oversee the election of the insurgent leader as the new president. When the Marine Corps landed in July 1915, a number of caco armies supporting Rosalvo Bobo resisted. Suppressing these irregular forces became the primary military objective of the Marine Corps in Haiti. Likewise, when the United States intervened in the Dominican Republic in 1916, armed clashes between Marines and various irregulars erupted almost immediately. Generally lumped together as “bandits,” these irregular forces actually comprised professional highwaymen known as *gavilleros*, ordinary criminals, discontented politicians who used banditry to advance their own ambitions, unemployed laborers, and peasants, the latter generally impressed into service.

17. Lt Col Edward Johnson, *Marine Corps Aviation: The Early Years, 1912–1940* (Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 1977), 49–51.

18. Major General Ford O. Rogers, USMC, retired, transcript of oral history interview, Oral History Collection (Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 3 December 1970), 25, cited in *ibid.*, 49.

19. For a full treatment, see Ivan Musicant, *The Banana Wars: A History of United States Military Intervention in Latin America from the Spanish-American War to the Invasion of Panama* (New York: Macmillan, 1990).

20. Johnson, 55–56.

21. *Ibid.*, 53.

22. The use of aircraft to support Marines on the ground is an important yet much overlooked aspect of airpower history. It is beyond the scope of this article to address the topic in the detail it deserves, but every student of airpower history should spend time examining the tactics, techniques, and procedures developed by the Marine Corps in Nicaragua, as it laid the groundwork for our concept of close air support today.

23. Major Ross Rowell, “Aircraft in Bush Warfare,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, September 1929, 180.

24. *Ibid.*, 181.

25. Major Ross Rowell, “The Air Service In Minor Warfare,” *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, October 1929, 872.

26. *Ibid.*

27. Rowell, “Aircraft in Bush Warfare,” 195. See also Captain H. Denny Campbell, “Aviation in Guerilla Warfare,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, pt. 3 (November 1931): 33. In both articles, the authors advocated the use of nonlethal chemicals (“a sneezing gas, a lachrymatory gas, a laughing gas, a cholic-producing gas or even a simple and harmless anaesthetic”) over lethal compounds. According to Captain Campbell, such use “humanizes bullet warfare” (33).

28. Rowell, “Aircraft in Bush Warfare,” 193–94.

29. Robin Cross, *The Bombers: The Illustrated Story of Offensive Strategy and Tactics in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 70.

30. Neill Macaulay, *The Sandino Affair* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1985), 116.

31. As a result, Marine aircraft were struck by ground fire on virtually every mission.

32. Rowell, “Aircraft in Bush Warfare,” 191–92.

33. *Ibid.*, 193.

34. Macaulay recounts one incident, however, in which Major Rowell machine-gunned purported guerrillas in a house in a town where women and children were present. Sarcastically, Macaulay wrote, “The women and children were presumably not endangered by the machine gun fire.” But one can argue persuasively that at such low altitude and speed and with the superior marksmanship prevalent among the Marine aviators at the time, Rowell took the women and children into account when he made his decision to open fire. Given the absence of reported civilian casualties associated with this incident, Major Rowell apparently took a calculated risk and succeeded. See Macaulay, 116.

35. Major Ross Rowell, “Annual Report of Aircraft Squadrons, Second Brigade, U.S. Marine Corps, July 1, 1927, to June 20, 1928,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, December 1928, 250–51.

36. *Ibid.*, 254.

37. Cummins, 54.

38. Captain Francis Mulcahy, “Marine Corps Aviation in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign,” *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, August 1933, 1131.

39. Cummins, 45.

40. In addition to Major Rowell, who left Nicaragua in August 1928, three other Marine aviators commanded the air element in Nicaragua: Major Louis Bourne (August 1928 to December 1929), Major Ralph Mitchell (December 1929 to July 1931), and Captain Francis Mulcahy (July 1931 to January 1933). As a colonel, Rowell rose to become director of Marine Corps Aviation from 1 April 1936 to 10 March 1939 and as a major general was at one point the senior Marine

Corps aviator in the Pacific during World War II. But following a disagreement with the commandant of the Marine Corps and Adm Chester Nimitz regarding the use of Marine aircraft on escort carriers (as opposed to supporting Marines on the ground), he was relieved and sent to Lima, Peru, as chief of the Naval Air Mission. It was a sorry end to the career of an otherwise illustrious and dedicated Marine Corps aviator. See Mulcahy, 1122; *Marine Corps Aircraft, 1913–1965*, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 1967), 49; and Peter Mersky, *U.S. Marine Corps Aviation: 1912 to the Present*, 3d ed. (Baltimore: Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1997), 98.

41. See *Small Wars Manual* (1940; reprint, Washington, D.C.: Department of the Navy, 1987), 9-1-1 to 9-36-24.

42. Much of what the U.S. Army had learned in terms of “pacification” came from its own experience in the Philippines at the turn of the century. During the guerilla phase of that war, the official U.S. policy under President William McKinley was one of “benevolent assimilation,” emphasizing conciliation over military solutions. See Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899–1902* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 30.

43. *Small Wars Manual*, 1-8-13.

44. *Ibid.*, 1-10-18

45. *Ibid.*, 1-9-15, 1-9-16.

46. In truth, the Marines of the time were no less racist than the British or French. In his article on the use of aircraft in small wars, Captain H. Denny Campbell regarded the use of propaganda to be an “effective weapon . . . against races of uneducated, uncivilized, indolent and superstitious peoples.” The distinction, however, is that Marines recognized that mistreatment and brutality—even directed at what they considered

to be inferior peoples—made success in counterrevolutionary war all the more difficult and perhaps impossible. (For the specific reference cited, see Campbell, pt. 3 [note 26], 33.)

47. General Vernon McGee, “The Evolution of Marine Aviation,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, pt. 1 (August 1965): 24.

48. John Akehurst, *We Won a War: Campaign in Oman, 1965–1975* (Wilton, Salisbury, Wiltshire, England: Michael Russell [Publishing], 1982), 38.

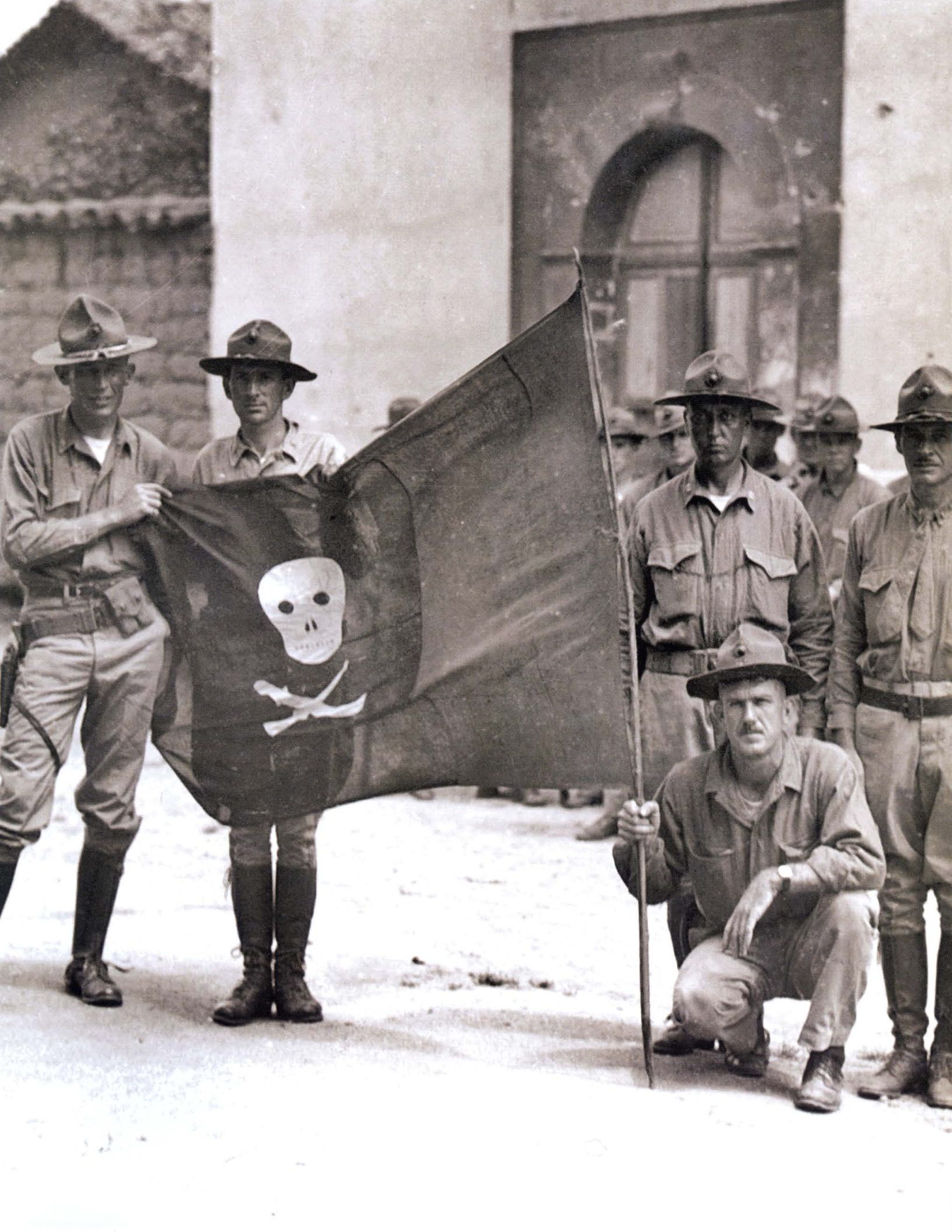
49. Rowell, “Aircraft in Bush Warfare,” 203.

50. According to Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 12 April 2001, “the joint force air component commander derives authority from the joint force commander who has the authority to exercise operational control, assign missions, direct coordination among subordinate commanders, redirect and organize forces to ensure unity of effort in the accomplishment of the overall mission” (222). Centralized control in support of the overall commander’s objectives is at the heart of the joint force air component commander concept and was the principal concern of Major Rowell and the Aircraft Squadrons, 2d Brigade.

51. See, for example, Carl H. Builder, “Doctrinal Frontiers,” *Airpower Journal* 9, no. 4 (Winter 1995): 6–13.

About the Author

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U.S. Marines and Miskito Indians: The Rio Coco Patrol of 1928

by David C. Brooks

Marine Corps Gazette, November 1996

While most military histories of the Marine involvement in Nicaragua have focused on light infantry tactics, it's the political aspects of the Second Nicaragua Campaign that might provide the more relevant lessons.

When it comes to the history of the U.S. Marine Corps, few names stand out more than Major General Merritt A. “Red Mike” Edson’s. Famous for winning the Medal of Honor on Guadalcanal, Edson is also recognized for his leadership during the Rio Coco patrol during the Second Nicaragua Campaign (1926–33). Although several historians have treated the Rio Coco patrol, they mostly have emphasized Edson’s composure in the face of natural hazards and determined opposition from Sandinista guerrillas or his creativity in employing light infantry tactics.¹ Most of these accounts have not dealt with the unique political aspect of the mission. Yet this “other side” of the Rio Coco patrol is perhaps the more significant for today’s Marines. Edson’s story illustrates how the many campaigns of that era, together known by the trivializing term “Banana Wars,” may have much to say to the Marines of today.

Though the link between the 1920s and the 1990s may not be obvious, the two eras share a basic similarity: The collapse of the United States’ great power rival (in the earlier case imperial Germany, in the latter the Soviet empire) has led to a period of prolonged peace characterized by limited war and multiple forms of small-scale military engagement. Historically, the burden of these messy kinds of political-military missions has fallen heavily upon the U.S. Marines. Like

their Banana Wars' ancestors, today's Marines have to carry out a variety of complex tasks—peacekeeping, hostage rescue, refugee support, drug interdiction, counterinsurgency, and combinations thereof—on the shoestring budgets typical of these periods of military retrenchment. In its own way, Edson's Rio Coco patrol illustrates how Marines in the past successfully adapted to similar exigencies. The full story of the patrol, however, also shows some of the stickier and unanticipated difficulties that accompany any effort at foreign intervention, even a relatively successful one.

Background to Intervention

Before discussing Edson's mission, it is important to recall the circumstances that brought about the Second Nicaragua Campaign. In 1926, a vicious civil war broke out in Nicaragua between the country's two rival political parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives. Washington responded, as it so often had in the past, by sending Marines to Nicaragua to establish neutral zones and protect U.S. lives and property.

Along with the Marines came Special Presidential Envoy Henry Stimson in May 1927. Stimson put forward a plan to get the warring factions to move their struggle from the battlefield to the ballot box. U.S. Marines would both train a new, nonpartisan Nicaraguan army, the Guardia Nacional, and would supervise a free election. Under pressure from Stimson, Liberal and Conservative leaders agreed to the American representative's plan—all save one. In May of that year, Liberal General Augusto C. Sandino rejected the U.S. sponsored scheme as unwarranted Yankee interference in his country's affairs and retreated into the mountains of the Nicaraguan north with about 200 men to launch an early "war of national liberation" against what he called Nicaragua's *vendepatria* (country-selling) elites and the U.S. Marines.

Within a year, the conflict had become a stalemate, locking itself into a pattern familiar to students of counterinsurgency. The Marines easily controlled the cities and towns of western Nicaragua. Sandino and his men, however, were masters of the rugged hills of Nueva Segovia. In

addition, when pressed from Marine patrols, the Sandinistas could cross the mountains that divide Nicaragua and descend the Coco River, or Rio Coco as it is known in Spanish, which forms the border between Honduras and Nicaragua, and attack the country's Caribbean side—the site of many important U.S. and foreign investments. This region of Nicaragua, known locally as the Atlantic Coast, served as a kind of strategic rear for the insurgents.

The Marines recognized the military significance of the Atlantic Coast and moved into this zone in 1928, establishing the Eastern Area, under the command of Major Harold H. Utley. Working under Utley was an innovative young captain named "Red Mike" Edson. In the weeks before landing, Edson and his shipmates aboard the USS *Denver* eagerly followed the campaign in Nicaragua by studying a Christian Brothers map of the country that hung from the bulkhead of the ship's mess. At that time, Edson noted how the Rio Coco dominated the northern part of the country. A kind of Nicaraguan Mississippi, the Coco begins in Nueva Segovia, in the heart of what was then Sandinista territory, and runs more than 300 miles to empty into the Caribbean Sea at Cabo Gracias a Dios. Edson reasoned that the Marines might use the mighty Central American waterway to penetrate Nicaragua's difficult terrain and blindsides Sandino, hitting him from a previously secure flank.

The Marines Land on the Atlantic Coast

Utley, Edson, and about 150 other Marines came ashore in January 1928. Almost immediately, Edson and several of Utley's other officers began a series of riverine penetrations, an experience that gave Edson the chance to try out his ideas about navigating the Coco. These first efforts became a test that his Marines would fail decisively. Edson himself later recalled what happened when the "can-do" attitudes of his men clashed with the realities of Central America's most formidable river. As he wrote:

While here [at Livings Creek on the Rio Coco] two men of the patrol made their

first attempt at navigating a native dugout with a pole and paddle as they had seen the Indians do. [The two Marines] pushed out into the river, both paddling frantically, first on one side, then the other. The boat went round and round in circles until finally the current washed it ashore a mile or so down stream and the two men gave up the attempt and walked back. It was ludicrous enough but it was a fair example of what might be expected from men whose only experience with water craft had been as passengers in a ship's motor sailer.²

In contrast to the early and rather bumbling efforts of the Marines, the Indians were masters of the Rio Coco. As Edson described them:

[They] were taught to swim as soon as they were taught to walk, and once they could stand erect they found a pole and paddle thrust into their hands so that they could learn to navigate the native pitpan [dugout canoe].³

The natives that Edson referred to were Miskito Indians, members of an indigenous group that, along with their neighbors, the Sumu and the English-speaking black Creoles, made up the population of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. These different peoples constituted more than just a series of Nicaraguan ethnic groups. In fact, the Atlantic Coast was (and, some would argue, remains) a kind of submerged nation within Nicaragua that possessed distinct history, languages, and cultural rhythms from the rest of the country.

A Nation within a Nation-State

At the time of the intervention, the Miskito made up the largest and most important population group along the Rio Coco. As a people, they have a singular and proud history. Unlike other Central American Indian groups, the Miskito successfully resisted Spanish conquest in the 16th century. Later, in the 1600s they made common cause with British buccaneers who found them useful allies in raids against the Spanish for their canoeing and maritime skills. This de facto

Indian-English alliance would receive official expression in 1687 when British naval officers in Jamaica crowned the Miskitos' most prominent chief, Jeremy I. King of the Mosquito (the spelling commonly used by British of that time, as in Mosquito Coast).

For a little over two centuries, the Mosquitia, a separate kingdom with its own monarch, would remain independent from Nicaragua. Over time, the Indian society lost its military coloration as Moravian missionaries from Bethlehem, Pa., and American and British companies like Standard Fruit moved into the area. Along with the foreign companies and the missionaries came small businessmen—many of them Britons, Germans, and Americans—who settled in the interior of the Rio Coco. They settled into the region, married Indian women, and set up trading posts, ranches, boat yards, and lumber supply areas along the river. These people, called “bamboo whites” by the Marines, shipped raw wood from inside Nicaragua to sawmills located at Puerto Cabezas on the coast. Both politically and economically, they would prove critical in the war with Sandino.

As a result of all these developments—missionary activity, the development of foreign-owned “big businesses” along the coast, and the addition of a new strata of “bamboo businessmen” to the area's social structure—the Mosquitia remained more connected to the United States and the English-speaking Caribbean than to Hispanic Nicaragua. But if local history and economics pushed the coast in one direction, geopolitics moved it in another. Backed by pressure from the United States, Great Britain dropped the coast from protectorate status and officially ceded the area to Nicaragua in 1860. Since Nicaragua was too weak to exercise its claim, the coast remained in political limbo for decades until Nicaraguan President Jose Santos Zelaya sent troops into the area to capture Bluefields in 1894. Despite military occupation by Spanish-speaking troops, the Indians continued to resent the Nicaraguans. The inhabitants of the coast also kept looking to Great Britain for support. In the years following the 1894 takeover, Black Creoles and Miskito Indians would pepper the British Foreign Office with

petitions that asked the British to retake their territory, a tradition that would continue until the late 1950s.

Competing for Contacts

From the first, Edson worked hard to create a network of contacts that could help him win the cooperation of the local people. Fortunately, the area's social structure provided him with a natural "in" with the natives. Benny Muller, a bamboo businessman, was an American logger who had lived in the area since 1895. Through Muller, Edson:

met all of the influential people in this section and the chiefs of the larger settlements, and they in turn assisted in inculcating the ordinary Indian with the idea that we meant them no harm. . . .⁴

These same local notables also related to Edson the essentials of the Indians' history and culture, and he was quick to appreciate their implications for his own mission. As he wrote years later in the *Marine Corps Gazette*:

The Miskitos were inculcated from the time of their birth with a hatred of the Nicaraguans whom they called 'Spaniards' and so were potential allies if properly approached and handled. . . . By learning enough native words to make my wants known to them; by showing an interest in their mode of living; and by always treating them fairly, I believe that I succeeded in that part of my mission to establish cordial relations with the inhabitants.⁵

Despite his advantages, Edson's task would not be an easy one. Sandino, too, had recognized the Indians' importance and had taken steps to win their trust. In addition, the people of the coast had historically supported the Liberal Party, of which Sandino was a member, albeit a dissenting one. As Edson later recalled:

In his journey up the river in 1927, Sandino had treated the inhabitants of the river in a friendly and conciliatory manner so that the feeling, not anti-American, was

certainly not anti-Sandinista. Through his agents, Sandino exerted a distinct influence throughout the whole valley and he received tribute of both money and food from as far east as Bocay.⁶

Sandino, like the Marines, depended on Miskito help to move up and down the Rio Coco. One sign of the importance that the Nicaraguan guerrilla attached to the Indians' assistance was the able lieutenants whom he appointed to oversee his operations in this part of Nicaragua—Abraham Rivera and Adolfo Cockburn. Both were intimately familiar with the Rio Coco and performed services for Sandino that resembled those Muller carried out for Edson. Thus, the miniwar for the Rio Coco quickly became less a contest for territory and more a political one for the loyalty of people whose skills either side would need to control the region.

When in the Mosquitia, Do as the Indians Do

Soon after arriving on the Atlantic Coast, Edson suggested his idea for a long-range patrol up the Rio Coco, but this was at first rejected by the Marine command. In the meantime, he worked to extend his relations with the local people. Perhaps the most interesting facet of his efforts at this stage was his attempt to imitate the Indians and get other Marines to do the same. When he had the opportunity, Edson traveled with the Miskito in their canoes. In letters home, he recounted how he enjoyed shooting the Rio Coco's white-water rapids with the Miskito. As his correspondence shows, however, canoeing with the Indians constituted more than mere sport. By learning how to handle a fast-moving *pipante*, Edson and his men were later prepared when local help proved hard to find. As he wrote to his wife in early June 1928:

On the 2d . . . Linscott, eight enlisted and myself left Kalasanoki by boat and came down to Bocay. There is no trail down the river, so we came down to look it over. Due to the shortage of Indians, a corporal of my outfit and I paddled down in a small

boat. . . . You should have seen us shooting rapids—almost as good as Indians. It was a great trip and rather thrilling in spots.⁷

Patrols overland also benefited from the Miskito example. In a letter to his son, Austin, written in May 1928, Edson described how the Marines had adopted camping techniques from the Indians:

You are probably asking if these Indians live in tents, aren't you? They do not use tents, but lean-toos (sic) when stopping for only a few days. These lean-toos are made like this. Four bamboo poles are cut and tied together at the top. Then on the side towards the wind where the rain will come, they put up a roof or a wall of leaves something like this. [Illustrated in letter.] The floor is the sand, and their beds are made of big green banana leaves laid on the sand. Then they put down a blanket from the bark of a tree, and that is their sleeping plan. It is not a bad bed either, for your Daddy has slept several nights just like that.⁸

The Rio Coco Patrol

In July 1928, the Marine command decided to launch a patrol up the Rio Coco to take Poteca, Sandino's headquarters 350 miles into the interior of Nicaragua. This was a formidable task. First, the mission would take place at the height of the rainy season, when the Coco becomes a raging torrent that can rise as much as 20 feet, often tearing trees from its banks and hurtling them downstream with deadly force. All supply would be cut off except by air, and even that contact would be intermittent during stormy weather. In addition to natural obstacles, the Marines would also face the prospect of ambush by Sandinista guerrillas in the interior. On 26 July 1928, Edson set out with 46 other Marines and their Indian guides and oarsmen from Bocay to take Poteca.

Under these conditions, it became essential to win local cooperation if the mission was to succeed. Edson found that despite his successes with the Indians down the river, those who lived

closer to Poteca were more wary of the Marines. This often resulted in a shortage of willing Indian boatmen, and forced the Marines into a "stop and go" pattern in their advance.⁹ Still, Edson instructed his men to approach the river people in a friendly way, even though some had aided Sandino in the past.¹⁰

Utley backed Edson's patient approach. Although this slowed the advance, he realized that the Marines had to consider the Miskitos' delicate political situation, sandwiched as the Indians were between the forces of the intervention and those of Sandino. In a letter to the Marine command in Managua written in August 1928, he justified Edson's slow pace in political terms:

It appears that we are approaching one of the delays due to lack of transportation which while I anticipated, are nevertheless heartbreaking. . . . We are . . . handicapped by two factors; the lack of boats and the disinclination of the indians (sic) to go into the zone of operations. We can get enough to operate all the boats we have as far up as Bocay but it is difficult to get them to go farther than that. Impressment only serves to kill the goose that laid the golden egg, as it means that in the future the approach of Marines is the signal for abandoning of the towns and houses. We have been at some pains to establish a feeling of confidence among the indians (sic) and hope that the situation will improve. The fact that Edson did not have any of his indians hurt was an important factor and I took pains to broadcast that information down the river as well as at Bocay.¹¹

Delay was a small price to pay for good relations. Edson did resort to impressment on occasion, but his general treatment of the Indians appears to have been good. As he moved into the interior and captured Indians who had worked for Sandino, he had them disarmed, questioned, and then released in keeping with his attempts to win their favor.¹²

Edson and Utley's gradual and humane approach to the Indians of the Rio Coco contrasted markedly with the way that at least some

Marines treated Sandinista “collaborators” in Nueva Segovia on the other side of Nicaragua. There, the burning of the houses of guerrilla sympathizers and the loss of many prisoners “shot while attempting to escape” took place frequently enough that it compelled the Marine command to issue orders in 1928 and 1931 asking for restraint in dealing with the locals and prohibiting the destruction of homes.¹³ In 1930, the Marines in this region also tried to resettle villagers by force into secured zones, an effort that was called off when Matagalpa and Jinotega became flooded with refugees.¹⁴ In part, the Marines in Nueva Segovia resorted to harsher policies because they were engaged in a shooting war when Edson and Utley faced primarily a political situation. Nonetheless, the contrast between the Marine approaches to these two different regions of Nicaragua is noteworthy. Although the differences in Marine methods used is only one variable in a complex situation, it seems that Edson’s patience contributed importantly to his ultimate success along the Rio Coco and that the harsher measures used in Nueva Segovia probably aggravated an already bad situation in the Sandinistas’ home area.¹⁵

The patience of the Eastern Area Marines would pay off handsomely in strategic terms. After foiling an ambush by Sandinista guerrillas on 7 August, Edson and his men captured Sandino’s headquarters at Poteca 10 days later and sent the Nicaraguan guerrilla forces scattering into the interior of the country. This action not only threw the Sandinistas off balance, it also prevented them from massing to disrupt the U.S. supervised election in the fall of 1928.

Edson’s Rio Coco patrol would represent, in the words of Major Utley, the “elastic limit” of the Marines’ penetration of Nicaragua from its eastern shore.¹⁶ Along the river, behind Edson’s base, Marines began to set up strong points that secured the area from further Sandinista attacks. Both the Miskito and the region’s bamboo whites benefited from the added security. The Marine presence and careful treatment of the locals had won the Indians’ trust. After an initial period of wariness, more Indians began to cooperate freely with the Marines and many returned to their villages from the woods where they had hidden.¹⁷

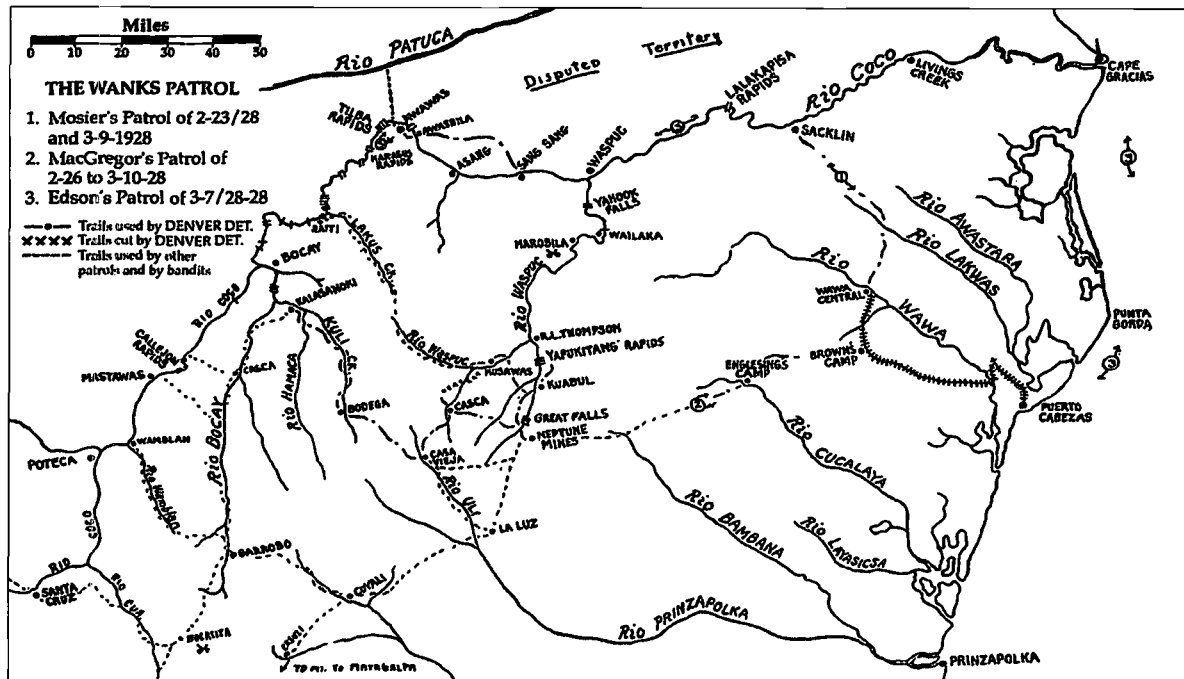
The stability achieved along the upper reaches of the Rio Coco did not endure, however. In March 1929, the Marine command in Managua ordered a pullback from the interior of the Rio Coco for later that year. Major Utley protested these orders in the name of a people whose friendliness he had cultivated. As he put it, the Indians of the interior:

... have gained confidence in our ability and willingness to afford them protection. To abandon Bocay will leave the entire north eastern (sic) part of the province of Jinotega open to any small band of marauders who—when organized bands are broken up—may be expected to continue their depredations.¹⁸

In fact, the Indians had gained more than just confidence in the Marines. Some decided to serve alongside the Marines by joining the Guardia Nacional. Although it has proven impossible to pin down exact numbers, one Marine report from 1930 that describes Guardia recruiting stated that, “On the Atlantic Coast a considerable number of Mosquito Indians are enlisted.”¹⁹ Evidence also exists that Marine trainers appreciated the special abilities of their Indian recruits. As one Marine instructor working at Bluefields in 1929 commented:

I can conceive of no more valuable soldier than a property [sic] trained and disciplined Mosquito boy with his knowledge of woodcraft and tracking and at the same time an ability to read a simple map and perhaps make a simple sketch.²⁰

While young Indians joined the Guardia Nacional, their community leaders looked at the Americans in new ways as well. In particular, they saw them as potential deliverers from the abuses and depredations of the “Spaniard” regimes in Managua, a development that added another wrinkle of complexity to the Marine-Miskito connection. Indians involved in land disputes with the Nicaraguan Government protested to Major Utley in 1929, and to a Marine Colonel Wynn in the Guardia Nacional in 1931.²¹ The concluding words to the petition sent to Colonel Wynn show how at least some Miskito



had come to view the Marines and, by extension, the United States. It read:

We Miskito Indians are clamoring for the Americans to sever us from our bonds, from this Nicaraguan yoke, [to] give us as before our reservation, and hold the sole rights of protectorate, given by us.²²

Washington, however, viewed the problem from a different perspective. The administration hoped to wrap up an unpopular intervention as soon as possible and so the planned withdrawal of the Marines took place. Soon after, the Sandinistas regained control of Bocay and used this as a staging area to rebuild their position along the upper reaches of the Rio Coco. In February 1931, Indian spies told Guardia Nacional Intelligence that the Sandinistas were once again gathering forces at their old headquarters. Driven from Jinotega and Matagalpa in the west by aggressive Marine patrols, they were preparing a strike downriver with the aid of agents located as far down as Puerto Cabezas. A critical part of the insurgents' preparations had involved successful political work among the Bocay Indians. As the report said:

A deliberate effort has been made to gain

favor with the Bocay Indians with a view to having their support, and has met with considerable success. The Indians in this reason professing (sic) themselves ready to take part in any attack on Guardia or expedition to Puerto Cabezas or Cabo Gracias [a Dios]. What means, exactly, has been used to gain the confidence of the Bocay Indians is not known, but their feelings and sympathies have been clearly brought over to the side of the bandits.²³

The United States' precipitous pullback combined with the effects of the global economic depression set the stage for a devastating guerrilla retaliation. In April 1931, the Sandinistas launched an offensive against the Atlantic Coast. Striking down the Rio Coco, they captured Cabo Gracias a Dios and assaulted Puerto Cabezas, the headquarters of the Standard Fruit Company and the home of hundreds of its American employees. The Sandinista raids caused panic within the city and disrupted Indian communities all along the river.²⁴

Despite these later reversals, Edson's and Uteley's careful work would not be completely undone. Miskito Indians, particularly those located on the lower Rio Coco and those along the

Caribbean coast, served in the Guardia Nacional alongside Marine officers and helped thwart these same attacks.²⁵ At least one reason for the Miskitos' continued loyalty to the Marine-led Guardia was a new-found fear of the Sandinistas. Although Sandino's lieutenants would still enjoy the help of some Indians from deep inside the Rio Coco region,²⁶ they abandoned the guerrilla general's earlier careful treatment of the inhabitants and resorted to terrorism in dealing with the Indians and bamboo whites. They beheaded a Moravian missionary for allegedly operating as a Guardia spy and burned his village because its inhabitants had helped Edson. In addition, Sandinista guerrillas roved the Rio Coco with hit lists of bamboo whites condemned to death for having aided the Marines. Finally, the insurgents captured and killed a number of employees of Standard Fruit, dismembering their bodies with machetes.

Despite their violence, these measures would do the guerrillas little good. Far from their logistical base, they became vulnerable to Marine counterattacks by aircraft and by ground patrols. After one of Sandino's top lieutenants, Pedro Blandon, was killed in the attack on Puerto Cabezas, the insurgents had to retreat back up the river. In the end, the depredations they carried out only turned the inhabitants against the insurgents and earned the earlier Sandinistas a reputation as "bandits" among the Indians, a perception that persists to this day and helps explain Miskito resistance to the Sandinista Government of the 1980s.²⁷

Lessons Learned

Soldiers are inclined to view history in a very technical fashion. Frequently, they want to know what tactic or gambit can be borrowed from the past and used in the future. This view, however, better fits large, conventional battles than it does small wars, interventions, and counterinsurgency campaigns, which rarely turn on a single dazzling maneuver. Instead, such endeavors prove the truth of the old cliché about presidential campaigns in the United States that "all politics is local." Small wars most often turn on local factors, and they are consummately political contests.

On this score, both Edson and Sandino have to be given high marks. Each possessed an ability to "read" the local situation and put that knowledge to effective use. If, in the end, Sandino "lost" the Atlantic Coast, this would appear to have happened not through any blunder of his own, but rather because he failed to control his lieutenants—a problem not uncommon to armies fighting guerrilla wars, as the examples of Marine tactics in Nueva Segovia cited above indicate. As the conflict with the Americans dragged on and as their frustration mounted, Sandino's lieutenants seemed to view the complex bamboo white social structure of the Atlantic Coast through the lens of their own militant Hispanic nationalism. Thus, missionaries and bamboo whites friendly to the Marines, many of them American, appeared as foreigners or *vendepatrias*, deserving only death. These actions only alienated the Miskito who looked upon these foreigners as friends, employers, and even kinsmen.

But beyond Edson's (or Sandino's) effectiveness as a "soldier-diplomat," the Rio Coco case study also shows, in an overall sense, how interventions are shaped by the complex, many-sided politics of underdeveloped countries. Since Vietnam, it has become fashionable in some circles to interpret interventions as primarily conflicts between the resented forces of foreign powers and outraged nationalists, between "imperialists" and local patriots. From the perspective of post-World War I decolonization, such a view seemed natural. Yet in the case discussed here, the conflict was not a two-sided military one, but a three-sided relationship between Indians, Marines, and insurgents—an association that was shaped as much by the politics of adhesion as by some reflex on the part of the locals to reject the outsider.

As Edson and Utley understood, special factors make the Miskito "potential allies if properly approached and handled." Yet this added new complications to the Marines' task, for to have remained effective along the Rio Coco, the Americans would have had to stay in the area. Overall, the Indians preferred the Marines to the largely Spanish-speaking Guardia Nacional. Still, to have created a purely Miskito army would

have been locally logical but also would have undercut the U.S. "nation-building" agenda in Nicaragua, its plan to bolster the elected regime of friendly "Spaniards" in Managua. Yet to fail to do either of these things left the Indians open to the angry Sandinista backlash of 1931. Thus, the Indians were not just "potential allies," but also potential victims, as Utley recognized, when Washington's shifts undercut the actions of creative Marines in the field.

In this way, the Rio Coco case study speaks to what happens when U.S. forces encounter a frustrated national group of the type that appears to be emerging in a variety of areas today. The Miskito example discussed here brings to mind the Montagnards in Vietnam and, more recently, the Kurds of northern Iraq. Alliances with communities like these quickly become very tricky and are charged with ethical implications because such peoples frequently become dependent on the forces of an occupation for protection and support or, more importantly, because they may want to use the intervention as a springboard for further political action. When these considerations do not parallel Washington's agenda, it is often up to the military to resolve the differences in the field, something that can be a difficult and messy task.

In conclusion, the Rio Coco patrol serves as more than just an apt illustration of how some members of an earlier generation of Marines modified their tactics to fit the politics of the areas in which they served. Ultimately, it also shows why counterinsurgency remains the most difficult of military tasks even when well executed under favorable circumstances. In the end, this may be the most important lesson that today's Marines can learn from the story of Edson's mission and the Marine-Sandinista struggle to control the Rio Coco from 1928–1931.

Notes

1. For an insightful discussion of Edson's use of light infantry tactics, see Major Jon T. Hoffman, "Edson's 'First Raiders,'" Vol. 5, No. 3, Fall 1991, 20–25.
2. Edson, "Coco Patrol," *Marine Corps Gazette*, August 1936.
3. Edson, "Coco Patrol," *Marine Corps Gazette*, August 1936, 41.

4. Edson, "Coco Patrol," *Marine Corps Gazette*, August 1936, 40.
5. Edson, "Coco Patrol," *Marine Corps Gazette*, August 1936, 41.
6. Edson, "Coco Patrol," *Marine Corps Gazette*, August 1936, 40.
7. Letter to Ethel R. Edson, Bocay, Nicaragua, 4 June 1928. File: "Letters Nicaragua. MAE to ERE. 5 April 1928 to 8 July 1928," Container 2, Edson Papers. Library of Congress (LC).
8. Letter to M. Austin Edson, Musawas, Nicaragua, 22 May 1928. File: "Letters Nicaragua. MAE to ERE. 5 April 1928 to 8 July 1928," #16 Container 2, Edson Papers, LC
9. A telegram from "Commanding Officer, Puerto Cabezas," (Utley) to "Brigade Commander," (Managua), 4 June 1928 reports that as Marine patrols penetrated the Bocay-Poteca region deep in Nicaragua's interior, "All reports indicate natives and Indians show fear of Marines." NA, RG 127, Entry 221, File 923 (Information from Eastern Area 1928).
10. Headquarters, Eastern Area, Nicaragua, Marine Barracks, Puerto Cabezas, Nic., 17 June 1928. Special Intelligence Report-Wanks River-Waspuc River-Bocay Area. Signed, "M.A. Edson." The report notes that most of the people in the area have aided Sandino at one time or another but that, "If properly handled, a great deal of assistance may be expect (sic) as boatmen, guides and laborers." The key, Edson asserts, is, "to maintain a friendly attitude towards them." Folder 20, Entry 204, RG 127, National Archives.
11. United States Marine Corps, Headquarters, Eastern Area, Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, 16 August 1928. Letter from Major Harold H. Utley to the Commanding General, NA, RG 127, Entry 221, File 922 (East Coast).
12. Headquarters, Second Brigade, Marine Corps, Managua, Nicaragua, 17 August 1928, "Dispatch-Outgoing-Code Underlined Words."
13. Headquarters, Northern Area, Western: Nicaragua, U.S. Marines, Ocotal, Nicaragua, 23 Mayu 1928, Memorandum for all Officers and Men of the Marine Corps and Guardia Nacional in the Northern Area from Col R.H. Dunlap, USMC, Commanding Officer, RG 127, Entry 220, File 811.0(2), 11th Regiment Correspondence. Therein, Col Dunlap reminds Marines that rural inhabitants are the victims of bandit predations and so, "they hide out. act suspicious and . . . become hunted creatures by both bandits and Marines." The Memorandum asks that Marines make sure that the houses they destroy belong to bandits. Two years later the commander of the Guardia Nacional, Col Julian C. Smith, would forbid all house burning and prohibit the Guardia from exercising arbi-

trary authority under martial law, although such was technically permitted in northern areas of the country at the time. See Headquarters Central Area, Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua, Jinotega, Nicaragua, 26 May 1931, Area Order from Col Julian C. Smith, Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua, Commanding Central Area, RG 127, Entry 202, File 32.0.

14. Telegram from the CO, GN Northern Area to Jefe Director GN Managua; All GN Northern Area, 9 June 1930. See also Telegram, Dept Comdr Matagalpa to D.C. McDougal, both located in RG 127, Entry 220, File 815: Commander of the Special Service Squadron.

15. For examples of the harder-edged approach that the Marines took toward pro-Sandinista peasants in Nueva Segovia, see Guardia Nacional, San Juan, 22 February 1931, Patrol Report [by 1st Lieutenant J.H. Satterfield, G.N.] which describes how a "bandit" was wounded and left where he fell, "Jaw broken, right arm broken also shot thru (sic) back" after attempts at interrogation. House burning is described in Headquarters, District of Palacaguina, Guardia Nacional, 9 March 1931, Patrol Report from J. Ogden Brauer, District Commander, which describes burning of houses. For an example of prisoner "shot while attempting to escape," see Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua, San Juan de Telpaneca, Nic., 13 March 1932. Patrol Report from 2dLt Donald G. Truesdale, Guardia Nacional. All of the above references are RG 127, Entry 202. The first two are from File: 52.0 and the last from File: 54.0. Further such information can be found in the same Entry (202) in File: 57.0 and among loose materials near File: 55 in the front of Box 13.

16. Headquarters, Eastern Area, Nicaragua, Marine Barracks, Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, 1 June 1928, Letter from Major Utley to the Commanding General. Utley's estimate of the situation attached, p.1 of Estimate.

17. On Indians returning to their homes, see Headquarters, Eastern Area, Nicaragua, Marine Barracks, Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, Intelligence Reports for 1 April 1928 and 3 June 1928, RG 127, Entry 204, Folder: 20.

18. Letter from the Commander Eastern Area to the Commanding General, Second Brigade, 26 March 1929, PC 127, Box IV, Utley Papers, Marine Corps Historical Center, Building 58, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.

19. "Estimate of the Situation in Nicaragua," Sec. Nav. General Corresp., 1925, "EF-49" Box 2009, Folder: EF 49/P9-2-(291112 to 30033).

20. Letter from H.D. Linscott, Department Commander, to The Area Commander, Area of the East, Guardia Nacional, Bluefields, Department of Northern blue-

fields, Guardia Nacional. Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, 6 September 1929, RG 127, Entry 202, File 92.0.

21. Letter from Major Harold H. Utley, Headquarters, Eastern Area, Nicaragua, Marine Barracks, Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, 18 February 1928, to H. Sanford London, Esquire, His British Majesty's Chargé D'Affaires, Managua, Nicaragua, Folder: Utley's Personal 3 Jan '28 to Jul '31, Box, 3, Utley Papers, Marine Corps Historical Center, Building 58, Washington Navy Yard.

22. Letter from the Miskito Indians of Bilwi to the Honorable Colonel Wynn, Commander, Guardia Nacional, Eastern Area, Bluefields, Nicaragua, 15 May 1931, File E. Bilwi, Entry 206, RG 127, National Archives.

23. Letter from H.N. Sent to The Department Commander, Department of Northern Bluefields, Guardia Nacional De Nicaragua, 20 February 1931, RG 127, Entry 43-A, File: 2d Brig B-3 Repts & Mess 1 Jan-24 Mar 31.

24. Months later, Marine Inspectors would report how previously secured areas remained in chaos as a result of the Sandinistas' resurgence. In describing the situation around Waspuc, one Marine author (unidentified) commented on how, as a result of Sandinista raids, "Several hundred Indians who previously lived in that region [the area around Waspuc, a town far behind the areas originally secured by Edson] have come into the town below Kisalaya, over crowding them (sic) and making living conditions almost impossible." Inspection Report (apparently a rough draft), Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua, 9th Company, Puerto Cabezas, 31 August 1932, located on back of last page of said report.

25. See "Estimate of the Situation in Nicaragua," Sec. Nav. General Corresp., 1925, "EF-49" Box 2009, Folder: EF 49/P9-2-(291112 to 30033); Letter from H.D. Linscott, Department Commander, to The Area Commander, Area of the East. Guardia Nacional, Bluefields, Department of Northern Bluefields, Guardia Nacional, Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, 6 September 1929, RG 127, Entry 202, File 92.0.

26. See Patrol Report from 2dLt E.J. Suprenant, G.N. to The Area Commander, Eastern Area, Bluefields, Nic., District of Kisalaya, Department of Northern Bluefields, Kisalaya, Nicaragua, 2 February 1932, NA, RG 127, Entry 202, File 58.0.

27. See Patrol Report by E.J. Suprenant, District Commander, to The Area Commander, Eastern Area, Bluefields, District of Kisalaya, Department of Northern Bluefields, Kisalaya, Nicaragua, 29 February 1932, RG 127, Entry 202, File: 54.0. Therein, Suprenant describes the enthusiastic participation of aggrieved

Miskitos in a Marine-led, Guardia Nacional patrol directed against Sandinistas who had recently raided several villages in the Kisalaya area. Suprenant conclusion relates his own frustration at not having enough men to “clean up” the area above Kisalaya and his inability to explain this deficiency to “the land owners [Miskito Indians, for land along the Rio Coco is plentiful] that (sic) have property above Kisalaya. . . .” On a similar sacking of Sacklin, a town with pro-Sandinista connections, for example, see patrol Report from Department Commander O.A. Inman to Area Commander, Area of the East, Guardia Nacional, Bluefields, Nicaragua, Department of Northern Bluefields, Guardia Nacional d Nicaragua, Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, 29 April 1931, RD 127, Entry 202, File: 57.0. In other areas, particularly along the Prinzapolka River, at least some Miskito sought more of a Marine presence to maintain order and protect them from elements they saw as lawless. For an exam-

ple, see Letter from Stephen Boudien (?), Head of Community Mosquitos (sic) Tungla to Commander in Chief of the USMC, Tungla (Nicaragua), 7 January 1929, RG 127, Entry 204. Folder 26.2. Numerous other reports document consistent Miskito cooperation with the Marines in terms of providing a rich flow of information about Sandinista or “bandit” movements. This contrasts with the often unreliable information Marines received in Nueva Segovia, Sandino’s major area of support.

About the Author

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Lessons from Yesterday's Operations Short of War: Nicaragua and the *Small Wars* *Manual*

by *Richard J. Macak Jr.*

Marine Corps Gazette, November 1996

Those who forget the past . . . As the Defense Department struggles to keep pace with a changing world, this author suggests it may be time to look back at one of our previous experiences with low-intensity conflicts.

As the U.S. Armed Forces develop and refine their doctrine for the use of military resources in low-intensity conflicts and military operations other than war, they should carefully assess the "small wars"¹ experiences of Marine forces through the first three decades of this century. These earlier campaigns are important, not only for their doctrinal contributions, but also because of their resemblance to conflict today

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.²

Probably the most significant small war experience in Marine Corps history was the lengthy conflict in Nicaragua. Fortunately, we still have extensive published and unpublished firsthand accounts of that campaign. More fortunately, we

have a complete manual of doctrinal statement and application—the *Small Wars Manual*—derived from that experience. Although the manual has remained unchanged since its second publication in 1940, it will nonetheless prove invaluable to U.S. planners. Let's look at the situation of the time, the Marine involvement, and the resulting publications.

During its 20-year military involvement in Nicaragua, which ended on 1 January 1933, the Marine Corps achieved State Department foreign policy objectives by stabilizing a country with a long history of political unrest and civil war. To do so, the Marines engaged in diverse and important missions promoting the internal stability of the Nicaraguan Government. For instance, they established neutral zones to protect American lives and property; they physically separated and disarmed warring political parties, thus ending the 1926–27 civil war; they successfully protected the election process ensuring free and impartial presidential elections in 1928 and 1932; and they organized and trained a nonpartisan national guard, known as the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua, into an effective fighting force.³ Just before withdrawal, the Marines completed a six-year counterinsurgency campaign against Augusto C. Sandino that was important for its intellectual contribution to counterinsurgency doctrine.

The involvement's contributions to counterinsurgency doctrine are the result of the cumulative efforts of many Marine officers who served in the lengthy campaign. Through their thoughtful articles in the *Marine Corps Gazette* and *Naval Institute Proceedings*, they provided a sizable reservoir of personal experience in counterinsurgency operations. As an institution, the Marine Corps focused these experiences at its Schools Command in Quantico, Va. Other Marine authors expanded the knowledge on counterinsurgency warfare by publishing the *Small Wars Manual* detailing the lessons learned from conflicts such as the Nicaraguan campaign.⁴

Before examining the military involvement in detail, let's review the historical highlights of U.S. regional interests and Nicaraguan political alignments. By the 1920s, U.S. economic, political, and military interests had grown considerably in

Central America, particularly in Nicaragua. For example, the American business community, searching for overseas markets, expanded into the region. Companies, such as the highly successful United Fruit Company, established branches throughout Central America, and these became lucrative investments for U.S. businessmen.

Also, the U.S. Government naturally considered the area vital to its national security, particularly because of the Panama Canal and its retention of construction rights to a future canal through Nicaragua. Likewise, the United States was concerned that Mexico, as a result of its recent revolution, would begin spreading its form of bolshevism or communism southward into the Central American countries.⁵

In Nicaragua, Americans through their investments and influences controlled the key elements of the economy. Internally, Nicaragua was politically divided between two powerful factions. The Conservative and Liberal Parties ruled through separate family alliances that constantly feuded over power. Always suspicious of each other's motives, they turned political unrest into a way of life in Nicaragua. The party occupying the Presidential Palace could expect unlawful attempts by the opposition to gain power. Thus, the United States faced a paradox in Nicaragua. On the one hand, U.S. national interests in the area required a stable political environment to survive, one conducive to growth and prosperity; on the other hand, the Nicaraguan Government was powerless to provide such an environment.⁶

With that historical and political context, let's turn to the campaign itself. In late 1922, the United States approached the problem from a diplomatic standpoint. From 4 December 1922 through 7 February 1923, the United States sponsored a conference in Washington on Central American affairs in which it proposed ways to stabilize the area. Representatives from all five Central American countries attended. The conference concluded with the General Treaty of Peace and Amity signed by all parties establishing several agreements.

First, no country would recognize a government that came to power through a coup d'etat

or revolution. Second, internal disputes would be submitted to an international board of arbitration. Third, no country would interfere in the internal affairs of another.⁷ Finally, standing armies would be replaced by nonpartisan constabulary forces. Thus, the 1923 treaty provided a means to preserve law and order. It also granted a degree of legitimacy to constabularies already established, especially the ones constituted in Haiti and the Dominican Republic in 1916 and 1917, respectively, during actions by U.S. naval forces.⁸

The first opportunity to apply the General Treaty of Peace and Amity occurred in October 1925, when a Conservative Party coup in Managua deposed the Liberal president and vice president. Invoking the treaty, the United States refused to recognize the new Conservative government, instead proposing a diplomatic solution that promised U.S. recognition to the party winning the 1928 presidential election. But this diplomatic initiative fell apart when Mexico, throughout the autumn of 1926, covertly supported the Liberal cause by encouraging the ousted vice president to return to Nicaragua and claim power. A hotly contested civil war ensued.⁹

By now, the State Department realized that more aggressive policies were necessary to end the civil war.¹⁰ As a result, beginning in December 1926, the State Department expanded the Marines' role and presence in Nicaragua. Thus, their involvement entered a new stage characterized by escalating intensity and diversity.

Since the State Department's initial concerns were with protecting American lives and property, the department directed the U.S. Navy to put landing parties ashore to safeguard these interests. Accordingly, on 23 December 1926 the USS *Denver* and USS *Cleveland* landed Marines and sailors at Puerto Cabezas on the east coast.¹¹ This naval contingent promptly established a neutral zone in a district containing American fruit, lumber, and mining companies. Generally, a neutral zone was an area in which combat would endanger American lives and property. The Marines established these zones where contending parties were incapable of guaranteeing the safety of

life and property and when conflict appeared imminent. Thereafter, neutral zones became a standard practice for the Marines, recognized by both Liberal and Conservative factions.¹²

Similarly, after initially landing in Corinto on the west coast, Marines and sailors from the USS *Galveston* arrived in Managua on 6 January 1927 and established themselves as the Legation Guard.¹³ This force symbolized the U.S. commitment to stabilize Nicaragua. In fact, the Legation Guard was the vanguard for several other landing parties and the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 5th Marine Regiment. By 9 March 1927, when Brigadier General Logan M. Feland arrived in Managua with his 2d Marine Brigade staff to take command of all naval forces ashore in western Nicaragua, the Marines totaled 2,000 men and possessed six aircraft from Observation Squadron-1 (VO-1M) for aerial reconnaissance of the opposing armies.¹⁴

By mid-March 1927, the Marines had placed themselves in key positions to protect American lives and property and to guard critical communications lines between major cities. On 1 February 1927, one Marine battalion garrisoned in Managua and took over its defense. The Corps opened railroad lines between the major cities of Corinto, Managua, and Granada by 13 February 1927, and on 12 March 1927 occupied Matagalpa to keep lines of communications open with Managua. Also, all large ports on both coasts and the major cities in the interior contained Marine detachments and neutral zones.¹⁵

With the Marines in position, State Department officials thought the time was appropriate to initiate a diplomatic solution to the civil war. On 31 March 1927, President Calvin Coolidge appointed a former Secretary of War, Colonel Henry Stimson, as his personal representative to explore possible solutions to the political situation in Nicaragua. Meeting with both Nicaraguan parties on 4 May 1927 under a large blackthorn tree along the banks of the Tipitapa River, Colonel Stimson negotiated an end to the fighting. Realizing the unlikelihood of a military victory and obtaining assurances from the State Department that U.S. forces would remain in Nicaragua as a stabilizing force, each side agreed to a truce, disarmament, supervised elections,

and the establishment of a nonpartisan constabulary.¹⁶

More importantly, while the negotiators finalized the details of the Treaty of Tipitapa, Marine detachments occupied positions between the Conservative and Liberal armies along the Tipitapa River. The Marines thus prevented any incidents from spoiling the diplomatic efforts underway. On 13 May 1927, however, Sandino, a general in the Liberal army, refused to abide by the treaty's terms and abruptly left the area with a small band of followers. On three separate occasions in the next few days, Marine patrols were fired upon.¹⁷ Despite these encounters with Sandino's rebels, the Marines maintained the peace between the contending parties.

According to Colonel Stimson's scenario, the next step for the Marines entailed disarming the warring factions. Over 800 Marines comprising elements of the 5th and 11th Marine Regiments arrived in Corinto on 19, 21, and 22 May 1927 to assist with this task.¹⁸ With the 5th Marine Regiment now manning the neutral zone along the river, the factions were disarmed—the Liberal forces turned in over 3,700 rifles and machine-guns, the Conservatives over 11,000, and both sides left over 5.5 million rounds of ammunition.¹⁹ Thus, the premature departure of Sandino's relatively small band became only a blemish on the disarmament process. Overall, the Marines had thus far successfully fulfilled State Department policy objectives.

With the civil war concluded and disarmament complete, the State Department focused on its pledge to supervise the forthcoming 1928 presidential election. Also looking ahead, the Marines realized that if they had any hope at all of effectively supervising this election they had to do two things. First, they had to transform the emerging Guardia Nacional into an effective force against the rising bandit threat. Second, they had to conduct an aggressive counterinsurgency campaign of their own to keep the bandits off balance until the election.

In accordance with the 1923 Treaty of General Peace and Amity and the Tipitapa Treaty, the United States and Nicaragua had agreed to establish a nonpartisan national constabulary. On 22 December 1927, both countries signed the

"Agreement Between the United States and Nicaragua Establishing the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua." Marine officers and senior enlisted men were appointed by the President under an act of Congress to serve with the Guardia. Eventually these Marines would be replaced by Nicaraguans. Marine Colonel Elias R. Beadle was appointed as the chief of the guard. The Guardia now filled the void left by the disarmed political factions. And with the Marines as the Guardia's impartial leadership, both countries regarded this new force as the most effective guarantee of fair and free elections.²⁰

Led by their Marine officers, Guardia detachments began a campaign against the rebels that totaled 510 engagements before the Marines withdrew.²¹ Employing aggressive patrolling techniques, the Guardia forces constantly pursued Sandino, keeping his forces away from populated areas.

One of the most famous Guardia units during the Nicaraguan involvement was Company M (for Mobile), commanded by Captain Lewis B. Puller. A combat veteran with experience in counterinsurgency operations, Captain Puller became a continual thorn in Sandino's side. Recognizing the need for mobility and speed, Puller organized his patrols into two units rather than one larger unit in order to reduce the logistical load and number of pack mules per patrol.²² In addition, by keeping one patrol at the base, he could respond quickly either to relieve the other patrol or to investigate other incidents in his area. Because of the stamina of the local mestizos he recruited into the Guardia, Puller could average 18 to 20 miles daily—stretching it some days to as many as 40 miles—to overtake rebel bands. He chose to travel on foot because horses not only drew fire but slowed progress since so little jungle forage was available for a fast-moving force. Mules, however, could feed on the foliage of felled trees after the company encamped.²³ The bandits used horses, thus had to rest them every third day, giving Puller an opportunity to close on them. In one instance, Puller chased a mounted rebel band of horse thieves for about a week before he overtook them near Malcate in the interior. For months after the capture, civilians came to

Puller's headquarters in Jinotega to claim previously stolen animals and saddles.²⁴

As a result of these successes, the State Department and Marine Corps recognized the value of and need for Guardia units such as Company M. Plans were made to organize eight additional companies. However, severe budget cuts forced by the worldwide depression prevented implementing this good idea.²⁵ Nonetheless, the Guardia had shown it was an effective force in the field. One reason was that the Nicaraguan guardsmen were intensely proud and excellent fighters. The guardsmen transferred their Conservative and Liberal Party loyalties to their Guardia units. Once trained, they exhibited a devotion to their Marine officers unequalled in previous Marine Corps constabulary experience. Deeds of bravery by guardsmen protecting the Marine officers were not uncommon, and many earned the coveted wound chevron. In short, Guardia efficiency was directly attributable to the excellent rapport between Marine officers and Nicaraguan enlisted men.²⁶

In addition to the Guardia, the 2d Marine Brigade conducted a similar counterinsurgency campaign, actively patrolling into the northern areas where the bandits crossed into Nicaragua. But while the Brigade's methods closely followed those of the Guardia, a whole new factor made possible by the Brigade's organic aircraft assets distinguished this campaign from any previous ones.²⁷

Never before had combat and logistical air support been combined to augment a ground campaign. By mid-1928, Marine aircraft had conducted "84 attacks on bandit forces" and carried "more than 1,500 people (including casualties and sick) and 900,000 pounds. Accident rate zero."²⁸ Aviation also provided "aerial mapping, photography, meteorology, daily message and mail drops, and packages through the country."²⁹ Airpower continually came to the aid of Marine and Guardia ground forces. For instance, on 16 July 1927 in the town of Ocotal, a seemingly overwhelming bandit force of approximately 500 men threatened to overrun the detachment of 39 Marines and 47 Guardia. "In the first organized dive-bombing attack in history—long before the Nazi Luftwaffe was popularly credited

with the innovation,"³⁰ a five-plane detachment from Managua routed the bandits with machine-gun fire and bombs. The Marines and Guardia sustained only one killed and one wounded, respectively, while Sandino suffered his worst defeat of the rebellion, losing 300 of the estimated 400–500 bandits in the attack. From this disaster at Ocotal, rebel forces gained a healthy respect for Marine aircraft, often moving at night and avoiding open areas during the day.³¹

Another important aspect of the Brigade's campaign was the civic action program created to reduce bandit influence on the population. Both a road-building project and a local volunteer defense group whose members were called "civicos" constituted this innovative program.

On 24 May 1929, the American Minister in Nicaragua initially proposed to the State Department the idea of the construction project with a "two-fold purpose: military necessity and employment."³² Building through the rugged bandit territory would let government forces respond more rapidly to all parts of the area. In addition, the construction would offer steady jobs to the inhabitants, thereby eliminating the manpower source for the bandits. And the roads would economically boost the country because they would serve to move products to the marketplace more efficiently. But, although the project began in August 1929, the same funding shortage that had prevented forming more mobile companies halted construction a little over a year later.³³ Conceptually, however, this project offered a real solution to the bandit problem. Had it continued, Sandino would have been faced with a shrinking manpower base and thus may have come to terms with the Nicaraguan government.

The other half of the program, the forming of the civicos, was a reaction to the financial realities of the day. With fewer funds available in 1930, the Nicaraguan government was forced to reduce the size of the Guardia. To supplement, the Marines proposed urban defense groups to work closely with the local Guardia commander. The civicos were citizens organized and trained as an emergency auxiliary.³⁴ The forming of the civicos indicates just how well the Marines understood counterinsurgency warfare.

With the counterinsurgency campaigns well underway, the State Department turned its attention to the upcoming 4 November 1928 presidential election. To supervise voter registration and balloting, Marines were detailed to each of the precincts throughout the country. The American Minister reported to the Secretary of State in an 11 October 1928 telegram that 35,000 more people registered to vote than in 1924 and that this was due to the Marines and Guardia. The Minister telegraphed:

[They were able to] protect citizens from intimidation. Detachments were stationed in key positions in towns and on patrol duty on roads leading to booths throughout registration period Sep23–Oct7 . . . No cases of intimidation, other disturbances [were] reported at any of 352 precincts in Republic [and] conduct of 352 Marine enlisted men who served as chairmen at precincts [was] . . . highly commended by both political parties.³⁵

The Minister was equally enthusiastic on election day when he telegraphed in short bullet style:

Complete order, heavy early vote throughout Nicaragua . . . polls opened 7 this morning with crowds of 100 to 300 waiting precincts in Managua and elsewhere. Final air reconnaissance overflowed every precinct yesterday and reported large crowds moving over trails to precincts with as many as 200 to 300 arriving late afternoon to vote early today . . . Heavy vote indicated Jinotega, Esteli, Segovia is considered proof banditry has been practically ended by Marine pacification program which has given peaceable citizens complete confidence in measure taken by Marines to prevent intimidation of voters.³⁶

The leading party newspapers appropriately summarized the Marines' efforts. The Conservative paper *La Prensa's* headlines read: "The American supervision has honorably observed its promise. The election Sunday was honest, tranquil, correct and honorable." The *El Comercio*, the leading Liberal paper, wrote: "The United

States is vindicated before the world."³⁷ Before their withdrawal in 1933, the Marines would also supervise the 1930 local elections and another presidential election in 1932. Sandino would remain at large, but he would not prevent the Marines from bringing stability and democratic processes to the country.

Lessons Learned

Back home, the involvement served as a catalyst for intellectual development within the Corps. Primarily, it motivated many Marine officers to regularly submit their combat experiences for publication in the *Gazette* and *Proceedings*. These articles offered valuable insights into the realities of "small wars." In a May 1931 article in the *Gazette* entitled "An Introduction to the Tactics and Techniques of Small Wars," Major Harold H. Utley noted that although the Marine Corps maintained many historical examples of small wars, "few real studies seem to have been made of them."³⁸ It would not be long, however, before the Marine Corps would be seriously analyzing all the evidence accumulated throughout the occupation.

By the mid-1920s, the Division of Operations and Training was frequently augmenting the pages of the *Gazette* with firsthand accounts of significant engagements, but the articles were merely compiled battlefield accounts rather than analysis and lessons learned. They dealt with subjects such as "Protection of American Interests" or "Combat Operations in Nicaragua." For instance, one article, presenting the after-action report of the Marine detachment's commanding officer at Ocotal, outlined Sandino's attack on the Marine and Guardia garrison there on 16 July 1927. The report also contained Sandino's attack order and a detailed map of the town. Even without discussion, by its detail and completeness the report gave the reader an insight into the tactics used by both sides.³⁹

Even while articles continued regularly in the *Gazette* on subjects such as "Aircraft in Bush Warfare," "The Supply Service in Western Nicaragua," and "The Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua," the Marine Corps began evaluating its formal school curriculum at Quantico.⁴⁰ In the

Gazette's August 1934 issue, Major Charles J. Miller highlighted the need to analyze the wealth of material collected thus far. He indicated that

this work would seem to devolve upon the schools to digest and place the material in presentable form for the guidance and instruction of all the officers of the Corps.⁴¹

He concluded by noting that “the subject as a whole has only received a cursory examination” and much more needed to be done to

furnish the students with a clear and complete picture of all the tasks, obligations, and responsibilities that may devolve on a Marine Corps expeditionary force when intervening as an occupation force.⁴²

Quantico had increased its small wars instruction from nine hours in 1924–25 to 19 hours by 1932. Possibly in response to Major Miller’s call to establish a systematic education in small wars techniques, the 1934–35 academic year featured 94 hours of instruction.⁴³

Beyond this educational improvement, the Marine Corps continued its efforts to produce a manual distilling the Caribbean experience into established principles. Based upon the efforts of Major Utley, a Nicaraguan veteran, and other small wars instructors at Quantico, the Marine Corps produced the first edition of the *Small Wars Manual* in 1935 and the final revision in 1940. They drew their material from published articles, small wars lesson plans, and Colonel C. E. Callwell’s 1906 book entitled *Small Wars—Their Principles and Practice*, which contained guerrilla warfare experiences from such places as Indochina, Cuba, Rhodesia, the Punjab frontier, the Sudan, the Philippines, and sub-Saharan Africa.⁴⁴

Not surprisingly, the manual’s blueprint for future counterinsurgency operations closely corresponded to past events in Nicaragua. In 428 pages, the authors provided

instruction for feeding and supplying troops, gathering intelligence, running a military government, patrolling in jungles, attacking houses, bombing and strafing villages, conducting river operations, and a

variety of other specific activities.⁴⁵

The manual addressed other facets of counterinsurgency warfare as well, such as the underlying causes of revolution, how to handle the host country’s population, and rules of engagement.

Furthermore, the manual divided the process of military intervention into five phases. First, the Marines should begin a gradual buildup of forces ashore. Second, they should commence combat operations using neutral zones or patrolling techniques. Third, they should develop a nonpartisan constabulary force to assist the civic affairs projects and internal defense. The constabulary should take on an active role in counterinsurgency patrols. As the bandits are subdued, the Marines should withdraw to garrison the large cities. Fourth, the Marines should begin preparations for the supervision of free elections. Fifth, once elections are complete, the constabulary should take control as the Marines withdraw.⁴⁶ From this review of the manual’s process of intervention, one can see how much of an impact the Nicaraguan campaign had on counterinsurgency doctrine. In short, the manual was a comprehensive and successful attempt to deduce the lessons learned from this vast amount of counterinsurgency experience.

Unfortunately, after 1940 the Marine Corps’ firsthand experience with and schooled knowledge of small wars declined significantly, due in part to the large-scale amphibious nature of World War II in the Pacific and the preoccupation with nuclear warfare in the 1950s. In fact, by as early as the 1946–47 academic year, the Marines deleted all small wars instruction from the curriculum at Quantico, although counterinsurgency classes were reintroduced two years later. In April 1950, Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. Heinl, Jr., bemoaned the loss of small-unit operations expertise in a *Gazette* article entitled “Small Wars—Vanishing Art?”⁴⁷ In another instance, a Marine officer preparing a 1960 study on counterinsurgency operations was not even familiar with the *Small Wars Manual's* existence.⁴⁸

Despite this decline in small wars emphasis, the Corps still retained a strong tie to its counterinsurgency heritage. This link to its institution-

al past was apparent in the Marines' approach to combat operations in Vietnam. According to Sir Robert Thompson, the noted British expert on counterinsurgency warfare:

Of all the United States forces the Marine Corps alone made a serious attempt to achieve permanent and lasting results in their tactical area of responsibility by seeking to protect the rural populations.⁴⁹

By 1965, the Marines opted to use combined action platoons (CAPs) that operated within established hamlets (neutral zones) to protect the inhabitants from Viet Cong intimidation. A notional CAP consisted of 14 Marines, one Navy corpsman, and 34 paramilitary Popular Forces (PFs, i.e., constabularies). By rigorous day and night patrolling, the CAPs sought to destroy the insurgent infrastructure, protect the local populace, organize intelligence nets, and train the constabulary. Unfortunately, the Marine Corps Combined Action Program was not a high priority effort with Army leadership, which emphasized search-and-destroy operations. Ultimately, this lack of priority combined with personnel shortages restricted the use of CAPs despite their promising accomplishments.⁵⁰

A more complete analysis of the concepts employed by the Army and Marine Corps in Vietnam lies beyond the scope of this study. However, the important point remains that although the *Small Wars Manual* is now almost 50 years old, it holds much to discover, thanks to its notable depth and range. And at a time of increasing likelihood of U.S. military involvement in operations much like the aging campaign in Nicaragua, the manual takes on even greater importance.

Notes

1. *Small Wars Manual*, United States Marine Corps, 1940 (Government Printing Office, Washington, DC), 1. The *Manual* recognized the wide variety of military operations the term "small wars" implied by indicating that "small wars vary in degrees from simple demonstration operations to military intervention in the fullest sense, short of war."
2. *Ibid.*
3. Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the*

United States Marine Corps (New York: MacMillan, 1980), 243–261.

4. *Ibid.*, 263; Major H.H. Utley, "An Introduction to the Tactics and Techniques of Small Wars," *Marine Corps Gazette*, May 1931, 50–53.

5. Millett, 236; Lieutenant Colonel Clyde H. Metcalf, *A History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1939), 408; Neil Macaulay, *The Sandino Affair* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967), 161–185.

6. Captain Evans F. Carlson, "The Guardia Nacional De Nicaragua," *Marine Corps Gazette*, August 1937, 7; Millett, 239.

7. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1927* (Washington, 1942), 288–289 (hereinafter cited as *Foreign Relations*).

8. Marvin Goldwert, *The Constabulary in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1962), 24.

9. Lester Langley, *The Banana Wars* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1982), 184–188.

10. Millett, 242–243.

11. *Ibid.*, 243; "Summary of Operations in Nicaragua, December 23, 1926–February 5, 1928," Appendix, U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings: "Use of United States Navy in Nicaragua." February 11–18, 1928, 70th Congress, 1st Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1928), 2 (hereinafter cited as "Use of United States Navy in Nicaragua").

12. Metcalf, 418. For an in-depth discussion on neutral zones, see *Small Wars Manual*, Chap. 5, Sec. 1, 1–4.

13. Use of United States Navy in Nicaragua, 2.

14. *Ibid.*, 3.

15. *Ibid.*, 3; A. Millett, 244.

16. Henry Stimson, *American Foreign Policy in Nicaragua* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927), 42–84; *Foreign Relations*, 351–353; United States Congress, Senate, Senate Document No. 288, 71st Cong. 30 Sess., Serial 9347, United States Marines in Nicaragua.

17. Use of United States Navy in Nicaragua, p. 3.

18. *Ibid.*, 4.

19. Metcalf, 422–23.

20. Agreement for the Establishment of the National Guard of Nicaragua, 22 December 1927, in *Foreign Relations*, 1927, III, 434–439; Dana Munro, "The Establishment of Peace in Nicaragua," *Foreign Affairs*, 11 (July 1933), 698.

21. Carlson, 7.

22. Robert D. Heinl, Jr., *Soldiers of the Sea: The U.S. Marine Corps, 1775–1962* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1962), 284.

23. Burke Davis, *Marine! The Life of Chesty Puller* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1962), 81.

24. *Ibid.*, 62.

25. Richard Millett, *Guardians of the Dynasty* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1977), 93.

26. Langley, 193–216; Neil Macaulay, 161–185; Col H.S. Reisinger, “La Palabra del Gringo, Leadership of the Nicaraguan National Guard,” *Naval Institute Proceedings*, 61, 2 (February 1935), 216–220.

27. Heinl, 289.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*, 290.

30. Captain Kenneth A. Jennings, USAF, “Sandino Against the Marines,” *Air University Review*, July–August 1986, 37, 86–88; Macaulay, 81.

31. Use of United States Navy in Nicaragua, 4; Jennings, 89.

32. *Foreign Relations*, 1929, 3:567–570.

33. R. Millett, 91.

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Foreign Relations*, 1928, 3,507–509.

36. *Ibid.*, 513–514.

37. *Ibid.*, 515.

38. Utley, 50–53.

39. Division of Operations and Training, “Protection of American Interests,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, 12 (Sept. 1927), 175–183; and “Combat Operations in Nicaragua,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, 14 (Mar 1929), 16–30.

40. Major Ross E. Rowell, “Aircraft in Bush Warfare,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, 14 (Sept. 1929), 180–203; Major

Roger W. Peard, “Bull Cart Transportation in the Tropics,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, 15 (February 1931), 29–49; Carlson, 7–20.

41. Major Charles J. Miller, “Marine Corps School 1934 1935,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, 19 (August 1934), 58.

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Ibid.*, 59.

44. Ronald Schaffer, “The 1940 Small Wars Manual and the Lessons of History,” *Military Affairs*, Vol 36, 1972, 46; Col C.E. Callwell, *Small Wars—Their Principles and Practice* (3d ed., London, 1906).

45. *Ibid.*, 47.

46. *Small Wars Manual*, 5–9.

47. Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. Heinl, “Small Wars—Vanishing Art?” *Marine Corps Gazette*, 34, April 1950, 23–25.

48. Schaffer, 49–50.

49. Major Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., USA, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 172.

50. Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak, USMC (Ret), *First to Fight* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 179–195; Krepinevich, 172–177.

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Part IV
Haiti, 1915–1934





The American Occupation of Haiti: Problems and Programs, 1920-1928

by Robert Debs Heintl Jr. and Nancy Gordon Heintl

Marine Corps Gazette, December 1978

By 1920, Haiti had been pacified. The Marines had stamped out banditry (known as Cacoism) in the north and the Artibonite Valley and had put down a major revolt, the Caco Rebellion, originating in the same regions with closet support from elite politicians in the national capital and abroad in exile. Now with the U.S. occupation of Haiti established, important questions as to its direction, destiny, and ultimate success remained to be answered.

A central paradox was that the specter of the “*Maitre blanc*” (the white master), whom Haitians had so spectacularly slaughtered in 1803, never seriously frightened the peasant *noirs* (blacks) but scared and angered the educated, mostly lighter-colored (*mulatre*) elite.

As early as 1917, the French minister in Port-au-Prince, reporting to Paris on “*la question de race qui prime ici toutes les autres*” (the racial question which, here, takes precedence over all others), said that the elite oligarchy that had so long exploited the country now feared possible reestablishment of a white society. Such fears were understandable in light of racial conditions then prevailing in the United States.

In supporting the Caco Rebellion of 1918-1920, the elite, characteristically at odds among themselves, had been playing with fire. President Dartiguenave’s enemies hoped to upset him, but at the same time had everything to lose from the defeat and expulsion of the Americans and a return to the bad old days and ways of Caco-dominated politics.

Thus, until the revolt was snuffed out, Dartiguenave, the elite *mulatre*, was happy enough to collaborate with the occupation. But in mid-1920, he felt secure enough to take on the Americans who had put him in office. In the December 1920 view of Colonel John H. Russell, Marine brigade commander in Port-au-Prince:

[Dartiguenave] threw off the mask, stepped into the arena, fought fiercely as the so called champion of the Haitian People and with the intention of posing as a martyr. The political situation at once became complex . . . Where formerly the scene of trouble had been in Central Haiti it quickly shifted to Port-au-Prince which became the one sore spot in Haiti.

Russell did not exaggerate. The terrain of resistance had shifted to the capital.

In early 1920, an American socialist, journalist, and associate of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Herbert J. Seligman, had briefly visited Haiti. On return, he wrote for the *Nation* a purported expose, "The Conquest of Haiti," which was the opening gun of a sustained American-Haitian campaign to undermine the U.S. occupation.

The tone of Seligman's article (which precipitated a sensation in July 1920 and typified the *Nation's* future style in dealing with the Haitian question) may be judged quickly:

Five years of American Occupation, from 1915 to 1920, have served as a commentary on the white civilization which still burns black men and women at the stake. For Haitian men, women, and children, to a number estimated at 3,000, innocent of any offense, have been shot down by American machine gun and rifle bullets; black men have been put to torture to make them give information; theft, arson, and murder have been committed with impunity by white men wearing the uniform of the United States. . . .

Seligman's sole source was a Haitian propaganda group formed in 1915 and called the Union Patriotique. Five years later, the Union had expanded to include every elite politician and

intellectual who opposed President Dartiguenave or the occupation, and claimed membership of 30,000, a figure hard to substantiate. In what surely must represent an apogee of self-deception, Ernest Gruening of the *Nation* (later a U.S. senator) claimed that the Union's leaders—every one a presidential hopeful—were without ambition and that the Union was "apolitical."

More realistically, British minister R. F. S. Edwards called the Union a set of "disgruntled politicians who would do anything to obtain a government position," a judgment amply confirmed by past, and in some cases future records of leading members of the Union.¹

Obviously the Union also contained high-minded men: to name one, Haiti's most eminent lawyer, Maitre Georges Leger, who worked so singlemindedly to end the occupation. But to protest the Union's political chastity is to be blind to the realities and personalities of Haitian politics. In the sardonic phrase of a fellow countryman, the men of the Union Patriotique now became "*les Cacos de Plume*" (Cacos of the pen), who in 1920 took up the cause against the Americans.

The American connection that gave the Union voice and support came through an interlocking relationship among the NAACP, the *Nation*, and an American front group, the Haiti-Santo Domingo Independence Society, which, by Gruening's admission, "we at the *Nation* organized." Very soon, the society's letterhead would include such prestigious names as Eugene O'Neill, Walter Lippmann, Felix Frankfurter, and even H. L. Mencken. For the voices at the heart of all this—NAACP president James Weldon Johnson, Seligman and Gruening—the *Nation* was to afford a strident, unbridled, antimilitary, and unashamedly partisan pulpit during the decade to come.

Despite his burning advocacy of the Haitian resistance, Gruening only belatedly came to the country. After his one interview with Colonel Russell, in November 1921, the Marine recorded, "Mr. Gruening, I am afraid, has come to Haiti with the idea of not seeing anything good, but only looking for something sensational to write up."

If the *Nation* and other foreign critics of the occupation stooped to irresponsibility and untruth, the flow of invective and invention from the Union Patriotique never faltered. In the sad

verdict of Dantes Bellegarde, Haiti's greatest 20th century historian: "Telling the truth is not a quality the majority of Haitians possess."

Rear Admiral Caperton, who had carried out the original occupation of Haiti, was charged, if one can believe it, with having simply sailed away the Haitian Navy to New York and sold it to ship-breakers for his personal account at \$500,000 profit. Russell was accused on every side of various embezzlements. When Colonel R. S. Hooker went home in 1921, *Le Courrier Haitien* wrote of "the fortune he had amassed" and said he had come to Haiti "for the sole purpose of enriching himself."

In August 1921, Stenio Vincent, later president of Haiti, assured a U.S. Senate investigating committee that 4,000 people were killed in the Cap Haitien jail from 1918 to 1920; that from the same prison, 78 bodies a day were "thrown into the pits" throughout 1918 (a total that would have amounted in one year to 28,470 deaths on an average prison population of 400); and that mortalities "just as high" occurred in prisons at Port-au-Prince and Gonaives.

B. Danache, an intimate of Dartiguenave, later wrote that when fires swept a downtown shopping district in Port-au-Prince in 1921, American officers' wives pillaged shops and houses. Haitian and French journals elaborated this story by accusing the Americans of setting this and other fires in the first place.²

Citing 1921 charges by the Union Patriotique, Britain's famed *Manchester Guardian* credulously reported the killing of entire families by Marines; wanton burning of houses and villages; burning, hanging and torturing of prisoners; and "outrages on pregnant women."

For all his devotion to veracity, historian Bellegarde stated as fact the propaganda rumor that Caco chief Charlemagne Peralte had been crucified by the Marines and charged the latter with "butchery of women, and children, massacre of prisoners, use of man-eating dogs, tortures of water and fire. . . ."

Pursuing the same line, French journalists told readers that Haiti's cities and villages had been sacked and burned by the Marines, and their inhabitants "devoured by war dogs imported from the Philippines."

Such vilification, carried on without cease by the *Cacos de Plume* and given a gloss of truth when filtered through the *Nation*, the *New York Times*, and foreign publications (notably the *Manchester Guardian*), would continue for a decade. In the long run, save for one or two serious falsehoods imbedded in history, this propaganda, however galling to Americans in Haiti, can be dismissed as the only resort of a group neither willing nor capable of pursuing resistance beyond the salon, or print shops whose freedom to operate was guaranteed by U.S. Marines.

The 1920 U.S. elections, combined with the *Nation's* continuing campaign, served, however, to light a fire under Congress, which typically reacted with an investigation. Commencing in August 1921, a Senate committee held 11 months of exhaustive hearings (1,842 pages of printed testimony) on U.S. activities in Haiti and Santo Domingo.

Chaired by Senator Joseph Medill McCormick, a cultivated Chicagoan who spoke fluent French, the hearings included every leading figure of the occupation as well as its main opponents, Haitian and American. To ensure fair play, the American lawyer representing both the NAACP and Union Patriotique was accorded adversary status, including cross-examination and summing-up. Despite this latitude, unheard of in congressional proceedings, and despite admitted stage-management by Dr. Gruening both at home and in hearings conducted in Haiti, the Union, while protesting "numberless abominable crimes" by Marines, made only a weak case with testimony the senators (including Haiti's partisans) frequently found to be gossip where not obviously coached or suborned.

The committee found that Haiti needed better administration, not U.S. withdrawal. To implement this, Senator McCormick called the administration to create a new post, an American high commissioner who would supervise treaty officials, Gendarmerie, Marines, and the American legation. And that on 11 February 1922 was what President Harding did.

To the surprise of many, not least the appointee, the lot fell to Colonel John H. Russell.

Important events that had done much to precipitate the Senate investigation and thus return newly promoted General Russell to Haiti dated

back three years to 1919 and to the region of Hinche in central Haiti.

Hinche lies far from Port-au-Prince. Remote, forbidding, wild, the place bore from ancient times a sinister title: "Hinche the Accursed." In January 1919, rumors came to Port-au-Prince that all was not well in Hinche. The *corvee* (forced roadgang labor), though officially abolished, still continued and Caco prisoners taken by Marines and Gendarmes were openly shot or simply disappeared.

When Brigadier General A. W. Catlin (then senior Marine in Haiti) heard these things, he directed Colonel A. S. Williams and the local commander, Major C. H. Wells, to investigate. He also sent a trusted subordinate, Lieutenant Colonel R. S. Hooker, to Hinche. On Wells' say-so, Williams told Catlin the charges were baseless. When Colonel Hooker got back, he told a different story: ". . . *corvee* going on at both Maissade and Hinche, and the Gendarmes had used the natives so brutally that many had left their gardens and either joined the Cacos or had come into town for safety."

Catlin went to see for himself. Visiting the region, talking to the priests, the *magistrats*, and to trembling peasants, the general satisfied himself where the truth lay. With sanction of Wells and local Haitian officials, the *corvee* was in full force, prisoners had been shot (escaping was always the excuse), and Major Wells (falsely reporting that his district was quiet when in fact Caco banditry was mounting) had made clear to subordinates he didn't want to see or hear of prisoners.

Catlin forthwith relieved Wells and shipped him home, transferred every Gendarmerie officer (each a Marine NCO) out of the district and out of Haiti, replaced the local Gendarmerie units with others, and put U.S. Marine garrisons under U.S. commissioned officers in each town. Believing, however, that the evidence, however damaging, would not sustain courts-martial, he ordered no trials. On this decision, later charges of whitewash mainly rest. But for an accident, the business, bad as it was, might never have been heard of again.

At Headquarters, Marine Corps, in September 1919, while reviewing a general court-martial from Haiti, Major General Commandant George Barnett was jolted by a passing assertion by counsel that "practically indiscriminate killing of natives has

gone on for some time."

Catlin, still suffering from his war wound at Belleau Wood at the head of the 6th Marines, had been invalidated home. Russell was back. In September 1919, General Barnett wrote a stern letter headed "Personal and Confidential," which, accepting at face value and stating in his own words the "indiscriminate killing" charge, told Colonel Russell, "I was shocked beyond expression to hear of such things . . . I know you will take up most seriously . . . I want every case sifted thoroughly and guilty parties brought to justice."

Then began a rigorous and extensive series of investigations. Russell put the case into the capable hands of Lieutenant Colonel Hooker, backstopped by one of the sternest and most probing disciplinarians in the Corps, the aviation pioneer Major Thomas C. Turner. The Hooker-Turner findings verified Hooker's initial conclusions. The Navy Department then ordered Major General John A. Lejeune and Brigadier General Smedley D. Butler to Haiti for a further, more formal, and broader investigation. The Lejeune-Butler report, filed 12 October 1920, unmistakably confirmed what Hooker had reported 18 months earlier.

Two days later, the *New York Times* reprinted on page one General Barnett's leaked private correspondence with Russell, including heavy play of the phrase "indiscriminate killing." With the 1920 elections at climax, the "indiscriminate killing" issue was ready-made for Republican foes of Woodrow Wilson and, of course, for the antioccupation constituency that had been gathering in the United States.

Typical of public and media reaction was the *Times*' wide-eyed interview (15 October 1920) with Harry Franck, a travel writer, shilling a just-published book about the West Indies. Wrote the *Times*:

American Marines, largely made up of and officered by Southerners, opened fire with machine-guns from airplanes on defenseless Haitian villages, killing men, women and children in open marketplaces; natives were slain for "sport" by a hoodlum element among these same Southerners; and the ancient *corvee* system of forced labor was

revived and ruthlessly executed. . . .

Another rapid reaction was that of James Weldon Johnson, well known black adviser of Republican Presidential candidate Warren G. Harding and secretary of the NAACP. Johnson counseled Harding to take immediate advantage of Haitian “atrocities” charges. Harding beat Johnson to the punch. He had already told election crowds, “Thousands of Haitians have been killed by American Marines.”

President Wilson’s response was one final full-dress court of inquiry under Admiral Henry T. Mayo, including among its members Lejeune and the former naval governor of the Virgin Islands. Even more exhaustive than its predecessors, the Mayo inquiry (dismissed in the *Nation* as “white-wash” before the court even heard its first witness) arrived at similar conclusions but added in its opinion, “Considering the conditions of service in Haiti, it is remarkable that the offenses were so few. . . .”

Sorting out all the investigations as well as antecedent events, several observations seem in order.

◆ Behind the smoke lay fire. Illegal executions did take place, and so did acts of violence against Haitians. The *corvée* was continued in violation of orders and was flagrantly misused as a form of peonage. Major Wells and a handful of U.S. subordinates condoned and tried to cover up these misdeeds.

◆ All abuses were localized in the Hinche-Maissade area and to a six-month period (December 1918 to May 1919). They were neither typical nor nationwide. The 1922 Senate investigation, energetically pressed at home and in Haiti, established only ten illegal executions.

◆ A major guerrilla war (the Caco Rebellion) was in progress. In the words of historian Ludwell Montague:

Operations were carried on by small detached patrols, generally led by enlisted men, remote from control or succor, alone in a wild country and momentarily expecting ambush. No mark distinguished hostile Caco from peaceful peasant, and, with one’s life at stake, there was a strong temptation to give oneself the benefit of the doubt. Had

the Marines not shown remarkable restraint, the havoc must have been greater.

◆ General Catlin’s decision not to press charges when evidence was fresh and all parties still in the service and in Haiti foreclosed further prosecution. Later, when General Barnett reopened the matter, the trail was cold and the guilty beyond reach.

◆ Although inevitably seen as “official white-wash,” if only because they tended to vindicate American military conduct in Haiti, the successive investigations, pursued in every instance by officers of high standing, come through 50 years later as fair and rigorous. That they failed to produce disciplinary results beyond actions taken at first instance by Catlin resulted from unavailability to military courts—as in the exponentially worse My Lai scandals in Vietnam—of persons clearly guilty (Marines dead or discharged) and the wildly unreliable and conflicting testimony of Haitian complainants.

◆ Behind all else lies the evident fact that Haitian peasants simply did not regard the Marines as the sadistic bullies and savage oppressors depicted in elite antioccupation literature.

Months later in 1921, after the uproar had begun to quiet, Colonel L. McC. Little, the Marine chief of staff in Haiti, wrote a thoughtful letter to Edwin Denby, the former Marine Secretary of the Navy in the new administration:

We have committed errors. . . . It is for this reason that our punishment of offenses by Marines and Gendarmes against Haitians has had to be prompt and severe. . . . We may have had to kill in our engagements but it was to prevent the slaughter or ill treatment of many thousands more. . . .

It remained for the British Foreign Office in London to extract a final lesson. Reading the reports from Port-au-Prince, and no doubt mindful of similar painful episodes of one’s own, such as the Amritsar massacre of 1919,³ the permanent undersecretary jotted down: “It is useful to remember cases of this kind when the U.S.A. take it upon themselves to preach to us about Mesopotamia or Persia.”

On the tropical night of 10 March 1922, while

the old battleship *North Dakota* plowed across the Gulf of Gonaives toward Port-au-Prince, General Russell, aft in the flag cabin, removed his whites then turned in as the land breeze brought Haiti's pungent presence—charcoal fires, dung, *frangipani*s, overripe mangoes, and the distant throb of drums—in through the open ports. Perhaps his mind dropped back to 1893 when, on a midshipmen's cruise, he had first seen and smelled Port-au-Prince.

Next morning when Russell came on the quarterdeck, bugles were already sounding officers' call, the barge's crew was standing by to hoist out, sailors were going to quarters, and the ship's guard, rifle stocks gleaming like fine mahogany, were paraded to honor the new high commissioner, still a bit awkward in the civilian clothes he had decided he would henceforth wear.

When Russell stepped ashore over the Port-au-Prince wharf, he was greeted by the *magistrat communal* (mayor), by a smart honor guard of Gendarmes, and the Port-au-Prince crowd that had cheered many another new ruler of Haiti. Behind a mounted Gendarmerie escort, the burnished Model T touring car clattered officiously up past the Cathedral where the priests, French to a man, watched impassively, and thence to his new headquarters in the American legation. Out in the bay, following her gun salute for the high commissioner (19 guns, six more than he would have rated as a brigadier), *North Dakota* hoisted in boats and gangways, hove short, and got underway. Ashore, Russell got down to work.

"The history of our intervention in Haitian affairs," Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes had written in Russell's instructions, "is not viewed with satisfaction by this Government." It was with these words before him that the new proconsul issued his first directive.

As previously worked out in Washington, the U.S. treaty services were reorganized. All correspondence to or from the Haitian government or Washington would pass over the high commissioner's desk. No policy statement, project of law, or budget item would issue save by Russell's writ. Not surprisingly, the organization and the way it functioned would resemble a military staff.

Prestigious as their offices and perquisites might appear—especially in the setting of the

gleaming new National Palace completed in 1918—the president, his ministers, and the council of state would not enjoy much power, or, if Russell and the financial adviser had anything to say, any pelf at all. Behind official pomp, invariably and tactfully sustained by the high commissioner, stood American officials from Russell down who, from reverse-slope positions, would direct the affairs of Haiti.

Yet there was another dimension. Back in 1920, with Caco leaders Benoit Batraville and Charlemagne barely cold in their graves, then Colonel Russell had issued an order he was to reaffirm as high commissioner, which in abridgement reads as follows:

Where the duty of officers and enlisted men brings them in contact with the Haitian People, such duty will be performed with a minimum of harshness . . . and a regard for decency and human kindness.

No people with any spirit can view the presence of troops of another *nation* in any light than as a heavy blow to their pride. Considerate treatment may soften the blow, but harshness is bound to harden into resentment that goes to defeat the larger interests of the intervening *nation*.

The Haitians are naturally courteous people and resent, and properly resent, rudeness and discourtesy. One rude act of any individual may undo much good work on the part of many others in the cause for which we are here.

/s/ John H. Russell

President Dartiguenave, whose term expired in May 1922, wanted to succeed himself, but his presidency was at a dead end. Never truly popular with the country, let alone the elite, he had alienated the Americans by maneuver, untrustworthiness, and obstruction. Yet hope died hard. After vainly seeking endorsement from Russell (who rightly said he intended to "preserve an absolute neutrality"), Dartiguenave declared for the presidency in early April.

Public reaction showed rare unanimity. The press, Union Patriotique, and virtually every organization in Port-au-Prince leveled its guns on Dartiguenave (even holding a mass in the

Cathedral for deliverance from his regime). As Dartiguenave's support crumbled, there began a period of jockeying (and of private visits, in vain hope, to lobby Russell). Louis Borno, former foreign minister—with financial propulsion from the wealthy Jamaican-German entrepreneur, O. J. Brandt—pulled ahead. On the evening of 10 April, after Dartiguenave failed to muster support in the electoral Council of State, Joseph Louis Borno was elected president.⁴

On 15 May 1922, for only the second time in Haiti's history since 1804, a constitutional transfer of power took place. With full honors, Dartiguenave surrendered office and Louis Borno was inaugurated. The outgoing president's seven-year term equaled the combined incumbencies of his seven immediate predecessors.

Onetime editor of *La Patrie*, poet of distinction, keen botanist, fluent in English and Spanish, lawyer and legal scholar, ardent Catholic, diplomat, and thrice foreign minister, Borno at 56 was a man of the world and of culture. In previous cabinets under Dartiguenave, he had opposed the Americans.

Borno had, therefore, amply demonstrated that he was his own man. Then, in the frank collaboration he extended to the occupation, he was to evince a pragmatism that would anger his fellow elite and in the end, linked with Russell, result in what has been called a two-headed dictatorship. On the day of his inauguration, Borno said he was "confident that earnest efforts and sincere cooperation with the Americans will secure to my people a large measure, if not all, the benefits contemplated in the spirit of the treaty."

It was with this common objective that president and high commissioner set to work.

Russell, to be sure, held the high cards. Every Haitian knew that the high commissioner's views were backed by more than pure reason. Behind him stood the Marine brigade. Yet Borno was not and would never be a figurehead. In the words of one U.S. treaty official, Arthur Millspaugh, who knew him well, "There was understanding, friendship, and cooperation between Borno and Russell; each was ready to yield at times; and each needed the other."

Seven years later, in 1929, R. F. S. Edwards, British minister in Port-au-Prince, assessed the

occupation: "What has America done for Haiti in the 14 years since the intervention? Primarily, maintained peace and allowed the peasant to work in safety."

To Edwards, an Englishman inclined to condescend toward lesser breeds, little else save overelaborate public buildings and a few roads had been the result. Viewing Haiti four decades after the end of the occupation, one might suppose Edwards had been right.

The facts, however, are otherwise. Financed entirely from efficiently managed Haitian revenue—foreign aid was then unknown, and dependencies were expected to pay their own way—the material achievements of the Borno-Russell years bely the British minister and can be summarized before we come to the politics, the problems and the shortcomings that occupy the other side of the ledger.

◆ In 1929, the year of Edward's assessment, Public Works (directed by a few U.S. Navy civil engineer officers, forebears of the Seabees) had built and were maintaining over a thousand miles of all-weather roads suitable for the 3,000 motor vehicles that had come to Haiti since the first touring car arrived in 1913. There were 210 major bridges, airfields at ten towns, and auxiliary landing fields in many remote places. Many of these are still in service today.

◆ In 1920, the lighthouses of Haiti amounted to three kerosene-burning relics at Port-au-Prince and one at the Cap. Nine years later, the republic boasted 15 automatic acetylene lighthouses, 54 buoys, 10 harbor lights, and extensive aids to navigation in the modernized smaller ports. At the Cap, Gonaives, St. Marc, Jeremie, and Les Cayes, harbors had been dredged. Modern concrete docks had replaced aged, tumbledown timbered wharves, thus enabling tramp freighters to ply these ports. Weekly first-class service for Port-au-Prince on the Panama Line's New York-to-Colon run had been arranged by Russell. In 1929, Pan American clippers from Miami commenced Haiti's first commercial aviation service to seaplane ramps at the foot of downtown Port-au-Prince.

◆ About 1912, the old French telephone system and telegraph had sputtered into silence. Ten years later, Port-au-Prince could take pride in the first automatic telephone exchange in any city in

Latin America, soon followed by a second such system at the Cap. By 1929, there were 1,250 miles of telephone long lines connecting 26 local exchanges. The telegraph had been completely rehabilitated, and national communications were paying for themselves and showing a profit. (On one sample day that year, Port-au-Prince logged 27,574 local calls.) There were working street lights in Port-au-Prince and three other cities. In 1927, Haiti's first radio station (HHK) went on the air at Port-au-Prince.

◆ Ten towns enjoyed potable running water and 64 villages had clean wells or springs. Port-au-Prince also had pressurized fire mains. Eighty-two miles of new irrigation canals had been dug in the Artibonite Valley. Among a wide range of agricultural reforms were national forests, mahogany and pine reforestation, and soil conservation. Sisal was introduced into Haiti, and for the first time in decades, sugar and cotton again became significant exports.

◆ "The U.S. Naval Medical Service stands alone and far ahead of all American services." Thusly in a rare moment of approbation, British Minister Edwards wrote in May 1929. Fourteen years earlier, Haiti had been rotten with hookworm, tuberculosis, filariasis, leprosy, malignant malaria, enteric diseases, yaws, syphilis, smallpox, and typhoid. "The whole country," wrote Captain Kent C. Melhorn, the able naval Director of Public Health, "teemed with filth and disease. . . ."

The Navy doctors responded by building and operating 11 modern hospitals and 17 rural or traveling clinics. In addition, there was the U.S. Naval Hospital, Port-au-Prince (later the famous Oloffson hotel and setting for Graham Greene's *The Comedians*). In 1929, 1,341,596 treatments were conducted, and nearly half the country's 159 physicians worked for Public Health. In 1926, the government allowed the occupation to take over and reorganize the National Medical School, which, with a hospital corps and dispensers' school, for the first time enabled Haiti to produce doctors and technicians with modern professional qualifications.⁵

◆ None of these achievements could have been accomplished without the public order that the Gendarmerie, backed by the Marines, had brought about by 1920. With Marines entirely

withdrawn to Port-au-Prince (except for a detachment at the Cap), the Gendarmerie (in 1928 renamed "Garde d'Haiti") efficiently pursued its nation-building tasks: police, fire, prisons, customs and immigration, emergency communications, lighthouse service, rural medicine, and communal advisership. Military marksmanship, a joke in pre-occupation times, was raised to professional standards—an achievement dramatically underscored, to great national pride, when a Haitian rifle team competing in the Olympics for the first time in 1924 tied France for second place, outclassed only by an American team composed largely of Marines.⁶

◆ The most far-reaching and controversial U.S. program was that of the Agricultural Extension and Teaching Service (usually referred to as the "Service Technique"). Its functions, as stated in General Russell's 1924 report, were:

. . . higher agricultural education for the training of experts, teachers, and advisers; rural farm schools . . . advice to adult farmers . . . direct aid through clinics and demonstrations . . . experiments in all phases of agricultural activity . . . and vocational; industrial education.

In more general terms, the goal the Service Technique set itself was creation among the peasants of a class of black yeomanry, obviously a matter of extreme social sensitivity for the largely *mulatre* elite. Leaving, however, the resulting controversy for later, it is enough to recite undeniable achievements: agricultural experimental stations, a cattle-breeding station at Hinche, the school of agriculture at Damien, demonstration farms and extension services, Plantation Dauphin at Ft. Liberte (eventually the world's largest sisal acreage), reintroduction of tobacco as a money crop, nationwide soil and resource surveys, and veterinary clinics which healed more than 100,000 sick beasts. That so many good intentions and, for that matter, good works should have ignited such hostility, so deepened divisions, and, in the end, left so little behind was not least among the tragedies of intervention—and of Haiti.

The Borno-Russell regime had accomplished much since 1922, but progress had been uneven. New problems had arisen, old ones went

unsolved, and original promises (and premises) of occupation remained unfulfilled.

Many hopes had stemmed from the belief that Haiti held hidden resources that U.S. capital might quickly exploit. The truth, as disclosed by geological surveys, was that Haiti had little or nothing save bauxite at Miragoane and marginal copper deposits near Port-a-Piment. As it was in the beginning, agriculture was the country's only resource. Yet plantation agriculture, based on large-scale foreign land acquisition, would outrage national feelings. Peasants, for example, forcibly resisted occupation projects to conduct a land-ownership survey bound to threaten tiny freeholds. In 1926, after Marine aviators completed air-photo coverage for such a survey, the building housing the negatives was burned down.

While U.S. investment in Haiti waxed almost fourfold, from \$4 million in 1913 to over \$14 million in 1930, it nonetheless mounted far faster in neighboring unoccupied countries during the same time, which in cause or effect refutes dollar-diplomacy theories as to American intervention.

Borno and Russell experienced common and continuing difficulties with the press. Edited in the polemic tradition of France, Haitian journals had only secondary regard for dissemination of news and none at all for truth. Enjoying freedom and security unknown before the Marines arrived, they delighted in attacking the U.S. occupation with irresponsibility and scurrility licensed by Haitian courts that refused to convict an editor. In December 1923, the State Department's astute Dana Munroe (later to be U.S. minister to Haiti) commented:

The fundamental difficulty is that Haitians cannot enjoy freedom of speech and of the press without outrageous abuse, and any attempt to punish editors or politicians . . . gives rise to the charge that the American occupation is throttling the press in Haiti.⁷

One of the occupation's most serious mistakes—mistake of ignorance—was to permit the Garde (and thus by implication the American authorities) to be used in ill-advised attempts to stamp out Voodoo. Yet who could blame newly arrived foreigners for enforcing a penal code written by elite Haitians, which proscribed sorcery as

a crime and recognized *zombi-ism* as a phenomenon.

President Borno was deeply anti-Voodoo. The elite, with whom U.S. officials and senior Marines had most contact, further confused the Americans with traditional condescending attitudes, giving the impression (whatever their inward beliefs) that Voodoo was superstitious rubbish capable of causing trouble among the peasants. It is a measure of the occupation's lost opportunities that no evidence can be found that senior U.S. officials ever seriously comprehended Voodoo in its impressive totality as Haiti's national religion.

Thus we find the Garde arresting and prosecuting Haitians for such "crimes" as preparing consecrated meals to win the good will of Voodoo *loa* (gods) or conducting various Voodoo services. To American officers of the Garde, it seemed only that they were enforcing anti-Voodoo provisions of the penal code. Among the Garde's Haitian officers, there was comprehension and tolerance, as indeed there was on the part of individual Americans such as the widely publicized Lieutenant Faustin Wirkus of La Gonave.

In social relations with Haiti, the occupation mirrored colonial attitudes of the day: paternal toward the masses and aloof and condescending toward the elite, who cordially reciprocated. As if Haiti were West Africa or British India, the Americans had their club, which no Haitian entered except as a servant. On the other hand, from 1918 on (as a direct consequence of Smedley Butler's tactlessness), no U.S. officer was admitted to the elite Cercle Bellevue.⁸ Some of this distance has been blamed, no doubt correctly, on U.S. racial attitudes, and particularly those of the wives of the lower-ranking among the 250 civilian treaty officials and less numerous NCOs who served as junior officers in the Garde.

British Minister Edwards, never at a loss where American failings were concerned, mused in 1929: "I do hate to see one's own colour and race behaving in a way that brings discredit to the whole white race. What respect can an educated Haitian have for a race that allows its women to get so drunk that they have to be taken home in the bottom of the car? And all that before native servants. . . ."

Only six months later, Edwards rendered his

final verdict: "The American in Hayti [sic] has shown himself quite unqualified to colonize."

A recurring theme in Minister Edwards's reports was typically stated in April 1927: "The U.S. Government has sent about 75 percent Southerners to Hayti [sic] as they are supposed to know how to handle coloured people."

The charge was not new. It seems to have appeared, not in Haiti, but in the October 1920 *New York Times* piece about Harry Franck who had laced his book, as we have seen, with sensational charges against the Marines. How Franck substantiated this assertion, or where he found it, is unknown. Unlike other charges, it does not seem to have sprung from the fertile imagination of the "*Cacos de Plume*" because it never appears in the 1921 Union Patriotique memorials to the U.S. Senate, where every possible stop was pulled out. Nor was it ever raised throughout the year-long McCormick Committee investigation.

Regardless of origin, this accusation eventually caught on. Because it was repeated widely by foreign and later by Haitian writers, it should be squarely addressed.

Following first enunciation by Franck, the charge that the Marines deliberately exported American racial prejudices to Haiti was echoed in 1927 by sociologist Emily Balch and future Marine Paul Douglas. In 1941, the sociologist Leyburn (who later admitted he could not substantiate the assertion) repeated the accusation as fact in his authoritative *Haitian People*. Only to cite further examples, historian Selden Rodman reinforced Leyburn. Two years later, in still another book, Edmund Wilson did the same. In 1954, *Time* repeated the charge as fact.

Curiously, however, no Haitian source throughout the entire range of antioccupation literature ever raised the issue. In fact, it was not until 1950, long years after the Marines departed, that Danache, one of the most anti-American Haitian writers, briefly alluded to the charge. Six years later, a second Haitian historian, Hogar Nicolas, gave it as fact.

How can we assess these unpleasant charges?

Originated and propagated by non-Haitian civilians otherwise critical of the occupation and unfriendly to the American military, the accusation was never raised by any Haitian during the occu-

pation or, for that matter, until long after American writers accepted and repeated it. Most significantly, no instance can be found early or late in which any person advancing this thesis substantiated it, or even tried to do so.

Now what were the facts?

This was the question raised in 1964 by a skeptical history student at Wellesley, Ann Hurst, who in a term paper, asked and answered the question: "Southerners to Handle Haitians?"⁹

Analyzing by name against U.S. Census data the record of every Marine officer on duty in Haiti from 1916 to 1932, Hurst found (1) that the proportion of southern-born officers in the Corps as a whole was lower than the percentage of southerners in the national population, and (2) that in 13 of the 19 years of occupation, the percentage of southern Marine officers in Haiti was below the percentage of southern officers in the Corps. Interestingly, according to Hurst, 1927, when the accusations seemed to peak, was one of six random years in which southern officers in Haiti did exceed the Corps-wide percentage, which, however, still fell below that in the U.S. population.

Critics have demurred that Hurst covered officers only and did not consider Marine NCOs breveted to junior ranks in the Garde. But partial data on such cases confirm Hurst. In 1930, for example—one year when complete statistics covering the Garde were compiled—only 24 of 116 officers (including ex-NCOs), or 20.6 percent, were southern at a time when 23.4 percent of all Americans were southern-born.

To nail down Hurst's findings, no other student (including the authors during a lifetime in the Corps) has found any trace in record or recollection that any such policy ever existed.

By 1927, the occupation seemed well established. Haiti was pacified. Its financial and economic affairs were, on the whole, doing well. General modernization was afoot. In social matters—education, incorrigibly corrupt courts and judiciary, and continued elite resentment and resistance toward the Americans—progress had been poor. It was ironic that the very interests, aspirations, and injuries which sparked the adamant resistance of the elite to the modernization of their country were, at the same time, wholly adverse to, and bound to estrange them—as if

they cared—from the mass of their downtrodden peasant countrymen. This contradiction has never been resolved.

As for the Marines, after 1920 they had settled into routine garrisons at Port-au-Prince and the Cap, keeping a low profile and leaving the tasks of public order and nation-building to a Marine-directed Garde and treaty administration. This had been General Russell's policy from the outset, a course encouraged by a perennially nervous Washington. Of the Marines, the American chargé d'affaires, Christian Gross, aptly remarked in 1927, "So long as they are here, there is no need for their being here."

Notes

1. Joseph Jolibois, a leader of the Union and one of Haiti's most vociferous journalists (and post-occupation president of the Chamber of Deputies), had, for example, a long police pedigree richly spiced with civil and criminal charges, including assaults and the attempted murder of his sister-in-law. Exiled to Argentina in 1928, he was detained in an asylum, and after return to Haiti, died mad at Pont Beudet, Haiti's national lunatic asylum. The year before he died, he asserted in print that the sun was composed of geometric blocks of ice shining by reflected light and was inhabited by a species of beings resembling Laplanders.

2. The Port-au-Prince *pompier*s (firemen), with their 12 buglers, leaky two-mule Belgian Steamers, and members who went home to shift into uniform before responding to a fire, originally stayed out of control of the occupation's Haitian Gendarmerie. In the wake of serious fires beginning in September 1918 (and coinciding closely with the fortunes of the Caco Rebellion), an experienced U.S. fireman was brought down as an adviser, but the *pompier*s would have none of him. The 1921 conflagrations persuaded President Dartiguenave to assign fire service to the *Gendarmes*, and eventually the *pompier*s ended up with two gasoline pumpers, four motorized steamers, two hose companies, and a chemical rig. Characteristically, when the first working fire to occur under the new regime was knocked down in minutes, the press said the American fire chief had set it in order to show off.

3. On 13 April 1919, British troops opened fire with rifles and machine guns on political demonstrators in a park in Amritsar, killing at least 400 and wounding some 1,200 more. This tragedy, exactly contemporane-

ous with the alleged "indiscriminate killing" at Hincemaissade, did not inhibit members of Parliament from running on about U.S. actions in Haiti in 1920.

4. It has been frequently charged that the Americans simply replaced Dartiguenave with Borno. Other than unsupported statements to this effect, no evidence has been found to justify the conclusion. On the known record, the forces that put Borno in office were not American, but rather Borno's political astuteness and O. J. Brandt's purse.

5. One product of this program, a 27-year-old Port-au-Prince student, graduated in the last American-supervised class in 1934. His name was Francois Duvalier.

6. When for four years, a Marine military mission returned to Haiti in 1959, one of its first steps was to reintroduce national rifle matches and international competition. In the Inter-American Rifle Matches of 1959 and 1960 held at Panama, Haitian teams each time defeated every country in Latin America, being only narrowly outpointed by U.S. teams sent down from the Army's advanced marksmanship unit at Fort Benning. After the Haitian team's triumphant second win, President Duvalier characteristically responded by withdrawing Haiti from international competition and disbanded the team, never to shoot again.

7. Visiting reporters to Haiti were told (and naively believed)—an outcry the U.S. and British press quickly took up—that Haitian editors "were being denied the right of *habeas corpus*," a process, of course, unknown to the Code Napoleon and thus unheard of in Haiti.

8. Not until 1960 was a U.S. Marine officer (one of the authors) elected to membership in this most exclusive Haitian club.

9. Ann Hurst will be recognized by many *Gazette* readers as the daughter of Brigadier General E. H. Hurst, USMC (Ret.) and now wife of Lieutenant Colonel Myron Harrington.

About the Authors

Robert Debs Heintl Jr. and Nancy Gordon Heintl lived in Haiti from 1959 to 1963, where Robert was Chief of the U.S. Naval Mission to Haiti until he was declared *persona non grata* by François Duvalier. He retired from the Marines as a colonel in 1964. Robert Heintl had already published several works of history before he retired, including World War II battle studies for the USMC History Division and *Soldiers of the Sea: The United States Marine Corps, 1775-1962* (1962). Upon retirement, he became a syndicated newspaper columnist and worked with his wife Nancy, an independent writer and journalist, on their major work, *Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People, 1492-1971* (1978), from which the article presented here was excerpted and condensed. Their son Michael has subsequently published revised and updated editions of *Written in Blood* in 1996 and 2005.





Administering the Protectorates: The U.S. Occupation of Haiti and the Dominican Republic

by Richard Millett with G. Dale Gaddy

Revista/Review Interamericana, 1976

The Spanish-American War marked the emergence of the United States as a significant colonial power. Some areas, notably the Philippines and Puerto Rico, were openly annexed. Others, especially in the Caribbean, though they continued to maintain some aspects of sovereignty, in reality became virtual protectorates. In all these cases, the United States found itself poorly prepared for the task of administering the territories under its control. This lack of preparation was compounded by a peculiar unwillingness of the American government and people to acknowledge that they had embarked upon colonial ventures. This attitude of reluctant imperialism meant that the United States could never establish a formal colonial office or prepare a professional corps of colonial administrators. Successive governments were even reluctant to request congressional appropriations to administer newly controlled territories. Instead, they called upon the military to assume the role of colonial administrator. At first the Army carried the major responsibility in this area, but from 1910 on, the Navy and the Marine Corps took over most of these duties. This paper examines two cases of Navy-Marine administration within foreign nations, Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

There has been considerable debate over the motivation for the American interventions in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and several other Latin American nations in the first third of the 20th century. The desire to protect American

investments and to expand economic controls, security interests involving the Panama control or fear over possible German influence, and even a rather confused paternalism have been among the more prominent motives which may have prompted the interventions.¹ While we find a rather confused notion of national security the most important of these factors, we have little new to contribute to this discussion and will concentrate our efforts on other areas.

The goals of the interventions are somewhat easier to discover. The prime goal, in most cases, was the restoration of internal order and the creation of relative political and economic stability.² This meant ending revolutionary outbreaks, reforming the military and police forces in an effort to make them effective supporters of established administrations, and controlling national finances in order to achieve stable and, for American investors, profitable economic conditions. At times the holding of relatively free elections was seen as an important means of promoting stability.

Secondary goals included maintenance and expansion of American political and economic dominance in the Caribbean and paternalistic concerns for uplifting and improving conditions within the occupied nations. The relative importance attached to any of these goals varied from intervention to intervention and, during American administration of its Caribbean "protectorates," from administration to administration back in Washington.

Our examination of the occupation of Haiti and the Dominican Republic focuses upon three basic questions. The first of these is how and why the prevalent system of American administration developed. This includes examination of the expansion and the limits of American areas of control in each nation, and some study of relations between the civil and the military personnel involved in the interventions. We compare United States administrative policies in Haiti and the Dominican Republic and try to explain the differences which we encounter. Finally, we try to determine to what extent these systems of military administration related to the original goals of the interventions. This involves analyzing the results of the interventions in an

effort to determine if American administration advanced or hindered the achievement of the original goals.

While both interventions occurred during the first term of President Woodrow Wilson, the essential background was created by the policies of the preceding administrations. Secretaries of State Elihu Root and Philander Knox both devoted considerable attention to relations with the nations of the Caribbean. Root established something of a model for future U.S. policy in the area with the Dominican Customs Treaty of 1907. This treaty authorized an American customs receivership with first priority on customs receipts going to payments to foreign bondholders. In addition, the Dominican Republic pledged not to increase its foreign debt without American consent. In return the United States helped arrange a new \$20 million loan to the Dominican government.³

Root's successor, Philander Knox, emphasized a policy of using loans and financial controls to promote stability and protect American investments.⁴ Efforts to extend customs controls to Haiti were unsuccessful, but Knox did succeed in blocking German and French efforts to gain a measure of financial control over that nation.⁵

The inauguration of Wilson as president and the appointment of William Jennings Bryan as secretary of state seemed to signal a change in America's Caribbean policy. Bryan had earlier opposed American imperialism in that area and the new president, speaking at Mobile in October 1913, condemned the use of power to gain economic advantages over smaller nations and pledged that the United States would never again acquire territory by conquest.⁶

However, the subsequent crisis in relations with Mexico, culminating in the 1914 occupation of Vera Cruz, made it clear that the new administration was no more willing to treat the nations of Latin America as sovereign equals than its predecessors had been. Wilson's heavy-handed paternalism, with its concept of "shooting men into self government," represented little improvement over the open commercial imperialism of Knox.⁷ Indeed, this policy resulted in even greater American interference with

the internal affairs and international relations of the Latin American governments.

Haiti

From the beginning of the 20th century until the United States intervened in 1915, conditions in the black republic of Haiti became increasingly unstable. In this 15-year period, which normally would have been a little over two presidential terms, Haiti had nine presidents.⁸ There was a continual struggle between upper-class mulattos of French language and culture and lower-class blacks, most of whom were illiterate and spoke Creole. Graft was rampant and elections were a farce. A group of peasants called *cacos* lived in the north near the Dominican border and made their living by participating in revolutions which often were financed by German merchants living in Haiti.⁹

This instability was of great concern to U.S. President Woodrow Wilson. Unfortunately, no one in Wilson's State Department knew much about Haiti. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan relied for information upon Roger L. Farnham, head of the National City Bank's interests in Haiti. This was bad because Farnham was unsympathetic toward the Haitians and was determined to bring about U.S. intervention in the republic. He was even able to convince Bryan that Germany and France, who were then at war, were working together to gain control of Mole St. Nicholas.¹⁰

Wilson decided that reforms in Haiti were essential to the security of the United States even though American financial interests in the republic were small. He also believed that the United States had an obligation to help its neighbors for their own sake. Wilson and his advisors decided that the only way to ensure Haiti's security was to have some control over expenditures and reorganization of the armed forces, as well as of customs. Free elections would also be necessary. A new minister to Haiti, Arthur Bailly-Blanchard—a mild-mannered, elderly career diplomat whose chief qualification was fluent French—was to try to persuade Haiti to agree to these proposals. Wilson's plan for free elections was virtually unworkable

because (1) there were no organized political parties, (2) contending leaders were little more than chiefs of mercenary bands, (3) the mass of the people were illiterate and indifferent to politics, and (4) the president of Haiti was chosen by congress and not by the people.¹¹ As each new president came to power, the United States attempted to get him to agree to Wilson's plan.

On 27 July 1915, Haitian President Guillaume Sam was overthrown. When it was apparent that he was going to fall, Guillaume ordered the shooting of political prisoners who were of the elite class and fled to the French legation. The commander of the prison carried out these orders and fled to the Dominican legation. Fearing trouble, the American chargé cabled Admiral William B. Caperton, who was at Cape Haitian with the cruiser *Washington* and a contingent of Marines. Caperton left immediately for Port-au-Prince, arriving on the morning of the 28th. Before his arrival, a mob invaded the French and Dominican legations and killed both Guillaume Sam and his prison commander. Caperton decided to land troops and take control of the city to protect foreign lives. After he had already made this decision, he received orders from the Navy Department to land Marines.¹²

About 250 Marines and an equal number of bluejackets were landed. They met no resistance, and the admiral assumed military control of the city. However, in anticipation of possible trouble, he asked that the Navy Department be prepared to send additional reinforcements of one or more regiments of Marines. At this point, United States policy in Haiti was unclear. On 4 August 1915, the chief of naval operations reported to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin Roosevelt, "The State Department has not yet informed us of their exact policy in Haiti, but Mr. Lansing has expressed the intention of outlining a definite policy in the near future."¹³

The U.S. Government was now in a position to obtain the control in Haiti which it had been seeking, but both Secretary of State Lansing and President Wilson had difficulty deciding what should be done. On July 30, Lansing asked the Navy to order Caperton not to turn over the government of Port-au-Prince to any Haitian

authority for the time being, but he wrote Wilson that he did not know what the United States should do or legally could do. He pointed out that the United States had no real excuse to take over Port-au-Prince as it had at Vera Cruz. Wilson was also concerned about legality, but felt there was nothing to do but “take the bull by the horns and restore order.”¹⁴

One of the first things to be done was to elect a new Haitian president. On August 10, Caperton was authorized to allow the election of a president, but the Haitian congress was to be informed that the United States would find unacceptable any president who would not end factional strife or who would not give “the United States practical control of the customs and such financial control over the affairs of the Republic of Haiti as the United States may deem necessary for efficient administration.”¹⁵ There were two candidates, Rosalvo Bobo, who had led the revolt against Guillaume, and Philippe Sudre Dartiguenave, president of the senate. Caperton interviewed both men and was satisfied with Dartiguenave’s answers, but when he asked Bobo if he would support the president if he were not chosen, Bobo replied, “No, I will not! . . . I alone am fit to be President; I alone understand Haitian aspiration, no one is fit to be President but me . . .”¹⁶ On August 12, the election was held. Dartiguenave received 94 votes, Bobo 16 votes, and 30 votes were scattered among other candidates.¹⁷ Dartiguenave was inaugurated as president, and in the early years he cooperated with the United States occupation.

In the meantime, the U.S. military was extending its control by disarming the Haitians and dissolving their army. On August 19, Caperton was ordered to take charge of customs collection and use the funds to develop a constabulary, and to conduct temporary public works to provide work for the unemployed. The United States was trying to get the Haitian president to request such action, but Caperton was ordered to take over the customs whether or not Dartiguenave requested it. Caperton feared a Haitian reaction to this and asked for additional troops. As troops became available, the admiral took over the customs houses one at a time.

Finally, on September 2, he took over the customs house at Port-au-Prince, and on September 3 declared a state of martial law.¹⁸

On August 14, President Dartiguenave had been sent a copy of the treaty proposed by the U.S. The provisions were to be accepted by Haiti without modification. It provided for American control of customs, finances, the constabulary, public works, and public health. It omitted control of Haitian courts and education, which the United States later regretted. President Dartiguenave readily accepted the treaty, but the Haitian congress was reluctant. After much delay, Caperton issued a statement that there were rumors that senators were accepting bribes to hold up the treaty. He threatened to prosecute anyone taking bribes in the provost court set up under martial law. Later that day, the treaty was ratified by the Haitian senate.¹⁹ Since the United States Senate was not in session, a *modus vivendi* was signed which put the treaty into force pending American action. The plan was to use officers of Caperton’s staff until the treaty was approved, but—as this would have violated U.S. law—officers were appointed to perform duties *similar* to those provided by the treaty. It should be pointed out that civilians could have been appointed to these positions with no conflict, but Caperton maintained that the Haitians preferred military officers.²⁰ The United States Senate ratified the treaty on 28 February 1916, and on 12 June 1916, an act of Congress made it possible for American military personnel to accept paid positions under the Haitian government.²¹

President Dartiguenave evidently supported the treaty in the belief that it would hasten American withdrawal. This did not prove to be the case. A large segment of the Haitian population seems to have accepted the treaty with less hostility than might have been expected. In fact, many of the elite felt United States intervention was the lesser of two evils.²² This attitude made it possible always to have a Haitian government to work with and eliminated the need to establish a military government.

With the transfer of Admiral Caperton in July 1916, no one person was responsible for United

States policy in Haiti. In Washington, authority was divided between the State Department and the Navy Department. Bailly-Blanchard, U.S. minister to Haiti, was ineffective and did not even keep the State Department informed about developments in the Republic. The dominant figure in Haiti became the Marine brigade commander, but he had no authority to direct the other treaty services.²³ Policy tended to drift. Colonel Eli K. Cole, brigade commander in 1916, wrote to Admiral Knapp, "I have absolutely no knowledge as to the policy that our government desires to follow in regard to Haiti. If I knew its desires it would be much easier to so conduct affairs here that they would work towards the end desired."²⁴

In some ways, the all-white Marine Corps was not a good organization to have working in a black republic. Many of the officers were prejudiced and hated the uppity black elite. Major Smedley Butler, first commander of the Haitian Gendarmerie, referred to the elite as cockroaches.²⁵ It was also reported²⁶ that when Butler—who was supposedly subordinate to the president of Haiti—traveled with Dartiguenave, it was Butler who slept in a bed while the president slept on the floor.²⁷ In addition, social relations between Marine officers and Haitians were greatly curtailed after the arrival of American wives.²⁸

The main arm of Marine authority was the Gendarmerie d'Haiti, which acted as both a police force and an army. Initially, all its officers were Marines. The treaty called for a gradual Haitianization of the officer corps, but by 1921, there were only nine Haitian officers out of a total of 117.²⁹ Through the Gendarmerie, the Marines tried to control almost everything in Haiti. In fact, Caperton said that the Marines were making an "effort to swipe all Haiti."³⁰ For military reasons, they wanted to control telephone and telegraph services, which were under the minister of the interior.³¹ In order to guarantee the health of their officers, the Gendarmerie wanted control of the sanitation department.³² Again, out of military necessity, they claimed control of the building and repair of roads. The road building was done by reviving the old French practice of *corvée*. The pub-

lic works engineer, who should have had charge of road building, contested the action of the Gendarmerie.³³ He went unheard until the abuses of the *corvée* led to a new *caco* revolt in 1919.

The abuse of the *corvée* was the work of Major Clarke H. Wells. The brigade commander had noted the increased opposition of the Haitian peasants to the *corvée*; therefore, in October 1918, an order was issued by Colonel John Russell abolishing it. Despite this order, it was illegally continued in the northern and central regions of Haiti by Major Wells. In his reports to headquarters, he denied this but in March 1919, a new brigade commander visited central Haiti to investigate rumors and found the *corvée* still in operation. This area was the center of the 1919 *caco* uprising. After further investigation, Marine Corps Commandant John Lejeune recommended that Wells be court-martialed, but too much time had passed to build a good case, and the charges were dropped because of insufficient evidence.³⁴

The *caco* revolt was the first real test of the Gendarmerie, and they failed it. The Marines had to be called in to put down the revolt. One reason for this was that the Marines had discouraged target practice because they figured it was dangerous to teach the natives to shoot because they might turn on the United States. Colonel Waller remarked, "You can never trust a nigger with a gun."³⁵

During this period, it was realized that some provisions of the United States–Haitian Treaty violated the Haitian Constitution. It was therefore decided to change the constitution. The Haitian Congress opposed the revisions, so Dartiguenave had to dissolve the senate in April 1916, and then the whole congress in June 1917. It was decided that the new constitution would be submitted to the people in a plebiscite. The constabulary was charged with running the election and drumming up support for the new constitution. The vote was held and the constitution was approved 98,225 to 768. This may well have been a true count of the votes since this was a small turnout and people who opposed the constitution simply did not bother to vote. The new constitution approved all United States actions

taken during the occupation and for the first time allowed foreigners to own land in Haiti. The president was allowed to decide when a new congressional election would be held; none were until 1930. Until then a council of state appointed by the president enacted legislation.³⁶ After 1918, constitution relations between Dartiguenave and the U.S. deteriorated; he resented the control exercised by treaty officials, which deprived him of authority. Dartiguenave was replaced as Haitian president by Louis Borno on 10 April 1922.³⁷

With the change from the Wilson to the Harding administration, a Senate committee was created to investigate the intervention. One of the main recommendations of the committee was that a high commissioner be appointed to oversee policy in Haiti. General John H. Russell, who had served two terms in Haiti as brigade commander, was selected for the position. He was responsible to the State Department but he also commanded the Marine Brigade.³⁸ Borno and Russell worked well together, and Haiti enjoyed one of its longest periods of peace.

There were problems over censorship of the press, but since 95 percent country was illiterate, this proved to be a minor difficulty. Russell enforced censorship with an even hand at the direction of the State Department.³⁹ At this time, the United States also wanted a constitutional amendment to give it control of education, but Borno was able to thwart this without bringing on a crisis.⁴⁰ Both Borno and Russell agreed that Haiti was not ready for elections, and both postponed holding them. This, of course, kept Borno in power.

During this period, 1921–29, the Constabulary was able to maintain law and order without Marine help. The 500 to 800 Marines were all stationed in Port-au-Prince or Cape Haitian.⁴¹ Haitianization of the guard was accelerated, and by 1929, 39.6 percent of the officers were Haitian.⁴² Training in the use of arms had been emphasized after the *caco* revolt, and in 1924 a rifle team composed entirely of Haitians tied for second place with France in the Olympic games.⁴³ Work with the fire departments also continued and the Gendarmerie, whose name had been changed in 1925 to Garde d'Haiti, was

effectively carrying on the job for which it had been developed.

The Borno-Russell government was brought to an end by student strikes which began in November 1929 and soon involved politicians and a call for elections. There was fear that the Garde would join the strike, and Russell called for Marine reinforcements. To quiet the discontent, Borno announced that he would not run for president in 1930. With this assurance, the trouble passed. The Garde did its job, and Marine reinforcements did not have to be landed.⁴⁴

As a result of the strike, a presidential commission headed by Cameron Forbes was sent to Haiti to investigate how and when the United States could withdraw. They recommended an increasingly rapid Haitianization of the treaty services and that Russell be replaced at the end of his term by a civilian minister who was to be charged with working out the details of United States withdrawal.⁴⁵ These recommendations were put into effect with the appointment of Dana Munro as minister to Haiti.

Stenio Vincent was elected president of Haiti in November 1930. Negotiations to end the occupation proved long and difficult. The occupation itself did not end until 15 August 1934, when the last Marines withdrew, and United States involvement with Haitian finances continued for some time afterwards.

The Dominican Republic

The 1916 intervention in the Dominican Republic and the subsequent creation of a military government was the culmination of a long history of American involvement in Dominican affairs. Under the terms of the 1907 treaty, which established the customs receivership, the United States believed it had acquired the right of intervention. A bitter, long-standing, political feud between the *horacistas*, followers of General Horacio Vasquez, and the *jimenistas*, partisans of ex-president Isidro Jimenez, combined with the growing strength of such regional *caudillos* as Desiderio Arias of Santiago, insured that excuses for such action would not be lacking. In May 1914, the direct threat of

American intervention ended one civil conflict, with both major factions agreeing to Wilson's demand that they select a provisional president, hold elections and abide by the results. The election, held in October, resulted in a narrow victory for former president Jimenez.

Regional uprisings against the new government began in 1915, and the possibility of intervention loomed large, especially after the July landings in neighboring Haiti. In November, William Russell, the American minister to the Dominican Republic and a longtime advocate of intervention, dispatched a lengthy note to the Dominican government demanding that they cease increasing the public debt, accept the appointment of an American financial adviser, and allow the United States to create a constabulary to replace existing military and police forces.⁴⁶ All Dominican political factions joined in denouncing these demands, which would have reduced their nation to the status of a protectorate. The United States, however, continued to press its demands while awaiting events which might force Dominican acceptance.

In April 1916, open conflict broke out between President Jimenez and General Arias. Arias occupied the capital and forced the Dominican congress to impeach the president.⁴⁷ President Jimenez denounced this action and gathered forces of his own to retake Santo Domingo. At the State Department's request, the Navy dispatched several ships to the area and landed a small force of Marines to protect the American legation.⁴⁸ When it became evident that the president's forces alone could not dislodge Arias, the American minister insisted that Jimenez ask for U.S. military assistance. After some vacillation, Jimenez instead resigned on May 6th.⁴⁹ Under the Dominican constitution, the selection of his successor fell to the congress, currently in session and under the control of Arias. Russell was determined to prevent the selection of Arias and, instead, to obtain the election of someone who would meet American demands for broad economic and military controls. Additional American forces were hurriedly landed and Admiral Caperton, at Russell's direction, gave Arias an ultimatum to surrender or be attacked by the Marines.⁵⁰ Unwilling to accept

either alternative, the Dominican *caudillo* slipped quietly out of town on the night of the 13th and headed north. A few hours later, Marines occupied the city without resistance.

In the intervention's initial stages, policy was clearly controlled by the State Department. When Admiral Caperton asked the Navy Department what American policy was, he was told to "consult with the American Minister, examine the archives of the legation and obtain there from the policy of the United States"⁵¹ Russell continued to direct operations for several weeks after the initial landings. At his urging, additional Marines were landed and sent north, where they easily defeated Arias' forces, disarming them and placing their leader under house arrest.⁵² The customs receivership took control of all internal as well as external taxes, and Russell attempted to use this financial leverage, combined with the threat of further actions by Caperton's forces, to prevent the Dominican congress from electing anyone unwilling to support American demands. This effort failed when, on July 25, congress selected Dr. Francisco Henriquez y Carbajal as provisional president.⁵³

Angered by Dominican defiance of American demands, the State Department refused to recognize the new administration and the Customs Receiver, on Russell's instructions, cut off all government funds.⁵⁴ When even this failed to force compliance, Secretary of State Lansing, at the urging of Russell, decided on an even more drastic course of action: on 26 November 1916, he obtained Wilson's approval of a proclamation establishing an American military government.⁵⁵

The Navy had long urged the establishment of martial law in the Dominican Republic "in order to legalize our military action," and the proclamation approved by Wilson had been drafted by Captain Harry Knapp, commander of American forces in the area.⁵⁶ Justifying this action on supposed Dominican violations of the 1907 treaty, Captain Knapp, on November 29, proclaimed the establishment of military government, declaring that government would continue under "such duly authorized Dominican officials as may be necessary, all under the oversight and control of the United States Forces exercising Military Government."⁵⁷ At the same

time, Knapp suspended all permits allowing Dominicans to carry firearms and established press censorship.⁵⁸

With the installation of Captain Knapp as military governor, control over American policy was vested in the Navy Department. In short order, without consulting the State Department, Knapp declared all cabinet offices vacant and appointed Navy and Marine officers, "none of whom had any knowledge of Dominican affairs or problems and the great majority of whom could not even speak the language of the country," to fill these posts.⁵⁹

In recommending a military government, Russell had urged that it be set up only for one year, but once in power, the officers showed no interest in returning control to the Dominicans.⁶⁰ Instead, they repeatedly expanded their authority into new areas. Occasional protests from Washington had little effect. Knapp's replacement of the cabinet caused considerable consternation in Washington, and Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels ordered him to suspend the appointments.⁶¹ Knapp replied by declaring that any such action would result in "loss of prestige and embarrassment to the Military Government" and appealed to Daniels to reverse his order.⁶² The secretary capitulated and cabled his approval, expressing the hope that the officers would eventually be replaced by "representative Dominicans."⁶³

In the following weeks, the military government's powers expanded rapidly. Congress was suspended and the governor issued decrees, known as executive orders, regulating many areas of Dominican life.⁶⁴ While Dominican courts were not interfered with at first, violations of executive orders were tried before Marine provost courts. A total of 821 such orders were issued during the occupation, covering everything from regulating the sale of lottery tickets to prohibiting insults against "the Government of the United States of America or any officer thereof, or the Military Government of Santo Domingo or any officer thereof."⁶⁵

By mid-December, Knapp was informing Washington that it was "much too early to think of permitting elections," asking instead for aid in road building and other programs of public

works.⁶⁶ Efforts also began to create a constabulary, trained and commanded by Marines. Before the year 1917 was far advanced, it became obvious that the military government was planning to continue for an indefinite period and had no intention of turning over any power to Dominicans after a year of operation. Captain Knapp was blunt about this, declaring that it would be "many years" before the Dominicans were "fit for democracy," and adding that until then it would be dangerous to place a Dominican in command of the constabulary, or indeed in any major position in that force.⁶⁷ With both the State and Navy Departments increasingly preoccupied with the coming war with Germany, no serious objections were raised to such views.

With no clear guidelines from Washington, the military government continued to expand. By mid-July, Knapp was seeking authority to remove Dominican judges from office, a power President Wilson had ordered removed from the original proclamation of military government.⁶⁸ The military also took over control of the educational system and issued new sets of regulations for all schools. The new Code of Education provided for a five-member National Council of Education to be composed of leading Dominican citizens, but this provision was ignored until at least 1920, when the Marine officer in charge of education finally decided that "the council should be appointed."⁶⁹

In September 1917, William Russell, who had remained in the odd position of American minister to the military government, tried, with the support of Secretary of State Lansing, to get the officers in the cabinet replaced by American civilians, even suggesting that perhaps the individuals appointed could be given reserve Navy commissions, but the Navy refused to even consider such a possibility.⁷⁰ The entry of the United States into World War I had strained the occupations personnel as many of the best officers were recalled to other duties, but even under such circumstances, the Navy remained unwilling to share any power.

The war created a host of new problems for the military regime, while at the same time it left it even freer of any direction from Washington.

Unlike Haiti, the Dominican Republic did not declare war on Germany, but German citizens were closely watched and arrested on virtually any pretext. The needs of shipping for the war effort disrupted the Dominican economy and created several serious shortages. The military government made numerous pleas for special consideration in shipping matters, arguing that the republic had become a ward of the United States.⁷¹

A more serious effect of the war was its influence upon the Guardia Nacional Dominicana, the newly organized constabulary. The withdrawal of some Marines for action in Europe combined with continued insurgent activity in the interior made a rapid expansion of this force necessary.⁷² While the higher posts in the Guardia were filled by Marine officers, company-grade officers were usually Marine sergeants or corporals or Dominicans willing to work for the occupation. Under the system of provost courts operating in the republic, these poorly prepared officers often found themselves operating as police chief, prosecuting attorney, judge, and jury in isolated communities. Abuses were inevitable. One observer reported that one such officer, after a brief hearing which "usually took place within ten minutes of the arrest," would pronounce judgment by saying, "Take the son of a bitch out and bump him off."⁷³ Accusations of atrocities against the Marines and the Guardia reached a peak during this period, further discrediting the occupation.

Conditions continued to deteriorate following Knapp's departure from office in mid-1918. Under the acting governor, Marine Brigadier General Fuller, some government actions seemed to border on absurdity, notably proposals to change the nation's name to Hispaniola and efforts to stamp out cockfighting.⁷⁴ The appointment of Rear Admiral Thomas Snowden as military governor, effective February 1919, did nothing to improve the situation. Snowden lacked Knapp's relative tact or sympathy for the Dominicans. The new governor considered the occupation analogous to a state of war, with the Dominican population having the status of enemies.⁷⁵ His main preoccupations as governor seem to have been continuing the crusade

against cockfighting and adding to it a campaign against prostitution. When the customs receiver, C. H. Baxter, criticized his actions and suggested that the Navy had "outstayed its usefulness," Snowden reacted by taking away his power to collect internal revenues.⁷⁶

Snowden made little effort to conceal his low opinion of Dominicans, declaring that without American control, they would quickly return to their former "insurrectionary habits," and adding that the occupation must last at least 10 more years until a new generation of Dominicans could be educated by Americans in the benefits of democratic government.⁷⁷ The admiral's secretary of finance, Lieutenant Commander Mayo, even drafted a declaration of policy which he tried to have the State Department issue, announcing that the occupation would continue at least 20 more years "until the people of the Dominican Republic have developed the character and ability to govern themselves."⁷⁸

The actions of the military government which aroused the greatest Dominican resentment were the strict press censorship and the trial of Dominican citizens by military courts.⁷⁹ Focusing on abuses in these areas, organized opposition to the occupation grew rapidly in late 1919. American policy was also coming under increasing attack from other Latin American nations.⁸⁰ Alarmed by these developments, the State Department's interest in Dominican affairs revived, and officials began to seek some way of ending the military government. As a preliminary step, Admiral Snowden was ordered to form an advisory council of leading Dominicans, including Archbishop Nouel, a former president. This commission's first recommendations called for lifting press censorship and restricting provost courts. The military governor responded by issuing an even more restrictive decree on censorship and the entire commission immediately resigned.⁸¹ While there is no direct evidence that Snowden deliberately provoked this response, it is clear that he was relieved to see the commission dissolved and made no effort to persuade its members to reconsider their resignations.⁸²

The resignations left the governor free to run the republic for most of the remainder of 1920,

but in November, Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby made yet another effort to regain control of the occupation. Snowden was again instructed to form a commission of representative Dominicans and to issue a proclamation announcing the American intention to withdraw as soon as possible.⁸³ This action infuriated the admiral, who denounced it as “premature” and “most unfortunate.”⁸⁴ He had no alternative but to obey the order, but when the Dominicans appointed to the commission attached minor conditions to their acceptance, the admiral brusquely denied their request, precipitating another mass resignation. This time his tactics did not work, as the State Department rebuked him, declared the Dominicans’ conditions acceptable, and the members withdrew their resignations.⁸⁵ Snowden’s aide in Washington denounced these actions, characterizing the State Department officials responsible as “conceited asses trying to throw a bluff to cover the grossest, but perhaps unknowing ignorance,” but the decision remained firm.⁸⁶

In mid-1921, the Harding administration finally removed Snowden, replacing him with Rear Admiral Samuel Robison. It took three more years of conflict with both Dominican politicians and officers of the military government before the intervention was finally ended, but State Department control of Dominican policy was never again seriously jeopardized. The main remaining obstacle to termination of the occupation was working out an arrangement for returning power to the Dominicans. Despite numerous setbacks, such a plan was reached in the fall of 1922, due in large part to the diplomatic skill of Sumner Welles.

Admiral Robison and Welles disagreed sharply over both the timing and the conditions of American withdrawal, but in virtually every case, the views of Welles and the State Department prevailed. At one point the military governor restored censorship and sentenced Dominicans to five-year jail terms for opposing land tax collections, but Welles’ sharp protests led to Washington ordering Robison to end censorship and suspend the sentences.⁸⁷ After this rebuke, the admiral confined his opposition to verbal protests, and by September 1922, Assistant

Secretary of State Francis White could write Welles that he “was very grateful to see . . . that the Admiral has recently been giving you less trouble.”⁸⁸

In October 1922, a provisional Dominican government was installed, and Admiral Robison was replaced as military governor by Brigadier General Harry Lee. Lee’s powers were sharply reduced, with his major functions being completing the training of officers for the Guardia and assuring that elections for a regular Dominican government went smoothly. These took place in March 1924, and six months later, the last Marines left the country, bringing the military government to an end.

Conclusion

These brief studies of the Haitian and Dominican occupations suggest several striking parallels, as well as some significant differences. An initial conclusion to this study might be that the State Department tended to turn affairs over to the military when its own policies were frustrated, and the degree of power given to the military was directly proportional to the extent of frustration. In both interventions, the decision to employ military force was apparently made without serious consideration of the long-range implications of such a decision. There was also little effort made to acquaint the officers or men involved in the intervention with the purpose or goals of the action. General Cole’s complaint that he had “absolutely no knowledge as to the policy that our Government desires to follow in Haiti” was by no means an unusual remark.⁸⁹ Interviews with numerous retired officers who had participated in the interventions elicited totally negative responses on the question of the extent of their briefings on American policy, or on the nature, culture, and politics of the society they were expected to govern.⁹⁰ It was the military’s availability, rather than its competence for the tasks assigned it, which led to its employment. In addition, as the State Department’s Solicitor’s Office noted in 1919, the president could order military officials to administer foreign areas, but lacked the authority to direct any other government department

to undertake such duty. When such action was taken, those involved drew no new or additional federal salaries, but if individuals not on active military duty were utilized, the problem of pay arose, and there was "no appropriation under which the government of the United States could pay such salaries."⁹¹

Once having occupied a nation, the officers, like any bureaucratic group, attempted to expand their control into virtually all possible areas on any available pretext. While nothing in the original goals of either intervention contemplated anything like a mammoth re-education of the entire society, within a few months of assuming power, officers in both nations were openly proclaiming the necessity of continuing the occupation until an entire new generation had grown up under American tutelage. They continued arguing in this vein until shortly before the interventions ended. Just what this tutelage would involve, or exactly how it would reform the national political and social structures, was never made clear, but its necessity, along with the alleged incompetence of the current generation of leaders, was constantly used as an excuse for prolonging and expanding the military's power.

The very nature of the military also influenced its constant efforts to expand its authority. Officers usually placed a high value on such qualities as order, obedience, and security. Attempts to impose such values on a foreign culture produced inevitable conflict. When such efforts were resisted, the military's solution was further expansion of controls. Each step could be logically defended at the time it was undertaken. For example, restoring internal order meant controlling the police. Control of the police made control over courts desirable. Direct involvement with the courts developed interest in the lawmaking process. All of this provoked criticism, which led to efforts at censorship. Such a process ultimately led the military into projects, such as the effort to control education in Haiti or to abolish cockfighting in the Dominican Republic, which bore no observable relationship to the original purposes of the interventions. In the long run, it was American political and diplomatic realities along with the

perceived needs and inherent rivalries of both the military and the State Department which created, expanded, and finally ended each occupation.

While the original goals, personnel employed, and basic patterns of conflict in both nations were often quite similar, there were some significant differences. The military in Haiti was never as free from State Department control as was the military government in the Dominican Republic and, therefore, the bitter conflicts between civil and military officials which characterized the State Department's effort to regain control of policy in the republic were largely avoided in Haiti. The continuing existence of at least the semblance of a Haitian government was one important reason for this. The limitations this placed upon the military's authority was keenly felt and many officers expressed a clear desire to create a military government in Haiti similar to the one operating in the Dominican Republic.⁹² Civilian officials in Haiti were well aware of this and, perhaps alarmed by developments next door, carefully avoided any move towards creating such a system.⁹³ This left unsolved the problem of coordination among the various agencies of the United States Government operating in Haiti, a failure which the 1921 Senate Investigation made clear. It was then that the expedient of appointing a high commissioner was adopted. The State Department felt that a Marine would have to fill this post in order to control the other officers, but was determined to appoint only an officer who would, in turn, be amenable to State Department direction. This led to a clear rejection of Smedley Butler and the ultimate selection of General Russell.⁹⁴

Racial prejudice played a stronger role in shaping American actions in Haiti, where it was often openly expressed by the Marines, than it did in the Dominican Republic, but it should by no means be assumed that it was lacking in the latter case. Lieutenant Colonel Harry Davis expressed the feelings of many Marines in the Dominican Republic when he wrote that "the application of White to these people is as true as saying that Haiti is white. The difference between the two peoples insofar as color is con-

cerned is that the Haitians are 100 percent black and proud of it and the Dominican is 99 percent black and ridiculously ashamed of it.”⁹⁵

In the long run, it appears that the military administration of the protectorates in some ways hindered and in some ways served American policy goals. The heritage of bitter anti-American feeling produced in the Dominican Republic by the provost courts and other actions of the military government, and the identification of Americans with extreme racial prejudice which was made in Haiti, both hurt United States influence and convinced many of the educated minority that close ties with the United States were to be avoided rather than sought. At the same time, through the creation of the constabularies, internal order and stability was certainly promoted. Unfortunately, this was an imposed, authoritarian stability. With the destruction of the *cacos* by the Marines, the Garde d’Haiti became for years the master of Haitian politics, making and unmaking presidents with a minimum of internal violence, but also with a minimum of popular participation. In the Dominican Republic, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo used his control of the Guardia Nacional, which the Marines had created, to take over the government, creating one of the longest lasting and most oppressive dictatorships in Latin American history.

Most of the acts of the military in these two nations, however, seemed simply irrelevant to long-range goals and had little lasting effect. With the Americans’ departure, life returned to normal; cockfighting and prostitution continued as always in the Dominican Republic, and in Haiti, the roads rapidly crumbled and the Army won no more Olympic sharpshooting medals. For the vast majority in both nations, life went on as before, seemingly unaffected by the years of occupation.

For both the military and the State Department, some basic lessons regarding the problems and limitations of using the military to impose American policy upon another nation had evidently been learned before the troops withdrew. In December 1919, A.F. Lindberg of the Customs Receivership wrote the head of the State Department’s Latin American Division that

“in practice it has been proven that military or naval men do not have either the sympathy or the ability of a civilian in handling affairs of this sort” and added “when the military once get into a place they like to stay put.”⁹⁶ Lindberg’s observation that the military—once involved in an intervention—was reluctant to leave was undoubtedly true and was never sufficiently taken into account by those in Washington who decided to use the military to administer the Caribbean protectorates. His claim that civilians would somehow have had more “sympathy” or “ability” in carrying out such administration is, however, highly questionable and reflects more the continuing conflicts and communications failures between American civilian and military personnel engaged in the interventions rather than any inherent weaknesses of American officers. It was the policy itself that was unworkable, and no officials on the scene, no matter how sympathetic or able, could have overcome this fundamental weakness. By 1921, many of the officers involved in administering the protectorates, in contrast to their civilian counterparts in the State Department, had come to realize this. A memorandum from the Chief of Naval Operations noted that.

It is fully realized that this Department is not called upon to determine what policy shall be followed in regard to the Dominican Republic. It is a fact, however, that this Department, through its personnel, will be called upon to carry out such policy as may be laid down in respect to Dominican affairs, and will undoubtedly receive the greater measure of any blame that may result or any discredit that may follow the application and enforcement of a policy which is defective and unworkable.⁹⁷

With the end of the interventions, lessons such as these were apparently soon forgotten and, in the years since, many of the problems created in the Caribbean interventions have reappeared in other areas. Hopefully, future studies—focusing on the administration rather than simply the formulation of policies which use the military to directly intervene in the inter-

nal affairs of other nations—will reveal more of the dangers and limitations of such actions.

Notes

1. For varying views on the motivations behind the interventions, see Dana G. Munro, *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1900–1921* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964); William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1962); and H. G. Mellman, “The American Policy of Intervention in the Caribbean,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois (1940).
2. The 1914 Veracruz intervention is probably the most notable exception to this rule.
3. Munro, 116–25. For a fuller description of Root’s policy, see Lajeune Cummins, “The Origin and Development of Elihu Root’s Latin American Diplomacy,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Berkeley (1964).
4. Wilfrid Hardy Callcott, *The Caribbean Policy of the United States, 1890–1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1942), 258–61.
5. Munro, 245–55.
6. Sumner Welles, *Naboth’s Vineyard: The Dominican Republic, 1844–1924* (New York: Payson and Clarke Ltd., 1928), II, 714–16.
7. This phrase was used in defending Wilson’s Mexican policy by the American Ambassador to Great Britain, Walter Hines Page. Burton J. Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, I, 188. For a fuller discussion of Wilson’s Caribbean policy, see George W. Baker, “The Caribbean Policy of Woodrow Wilson, 1913–1917,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Colorado (1961).
8. *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relation of the United States, 1916* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1928), 311. (Hereafter cited as *Foreign Relations*.)
9. Dana G. Munro, *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1900–1921* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press), 326–9. (Hereafter cited as Munro, *Intervention*.)
10. *Ibid.*, 337, 349.
11. *Ibid.*, 271, 326, 331, 337, 339, 342.
12. U.S. Congress, Senate, Select Committee on Haiti and Santo Domingo, *Inquiry into Occupation and Administration of Haiti and Santo Domingo, Hearings*, pursuant to Senate Resolution 112, 67th Cong, 1st session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922), 304–8. (Hereafter cited as *Hearings*.)
13. Benson (Navy Dept.) to FDR, Eastport, Me.

- 8/14/15, FDR Group 10 (Naval Affairs) Box 12.
14. Munro, *Intervention*, 353.
15. *Hearings*, 315.
16. *Ibid.*, 316.
17. *Ibid.*, 321.
18. *Ibid.*, 333–36, 347–8.
19. *Ibid.*, 327–8, 394–5.
20. *Ibid.*, 399–404.
21. Munro, *Intervention*, 361.
22. *Ibid.*, 358.
23. *Ibid.*, 365–6.
24. Cole to Knapp, 12/17/16, RG 45, Box 632.
25. Butler to Waller, Port-au-Prince, July 13, 1916, SDB IAN, and Butler to Thomas S. Butler, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, July 15, 1916. SDB papers.
26. Waller to Lejeune, June 11, 1916, Lejeune Papers, Box 4.
27. Hans Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915–1934* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1971), 110 fn. (Hereafter cited as Schmidt, *Occupation*.)
28. Munro, *Intervention*, 358–9.
29. James H. McCrokin, compiler, *Garde d’Haiti, 1915–1934* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1956), 212. (Hereafter cited as McCrokin, *Garde*.)
30. Waller to Lejeune, July 1, 1916, Lejeune Papers, Box 4.
31. Dept. of St., Div. of L.A. Affairs, Aug. 21, 1916. Paraphrase of telegram from Scholle, American Charge in Port-au-Prince, Aug. 19, RC 45, Subject File, Box 632.
32. General Waller to Major General Commandant USMC, July 13, 1917, RG 45, Subject File, Box 632.
33. Butler did not like the engineers and said that there were only five of them, so they could not take over any work outside the capitol. He said that it was not too hard to snow them under, but he was afraid that they would soon be able to take over because the Navy was behind them. Butler to McIlhenny, Dec. 31, 1917, Butler Papers.
34. Schmidt, *Occupation*, 101–5.
35. *Ibid.*, 103.
36. Munro, *Intervention*, 368–71.
37. McCrokin, *Garde*, 155.
38. Harding to Attorney General Harry Daugherty, Feb. 6, 1922, Harding Papers, Box 102.
39. Dana G. Mimro, *The United States and the Caribbean Republic 1921–1933* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), 110–1.
40. *Ibid.*, 93–4.
41. *Ibid.*, 85.
42. McCrokin, *Garde*, 212.
43. *Ibid.*, 166–7.

44. *Foreign Relations*, 1929, Vol. III, 175–204.
45. *Foreign Relations*, 1930, Vol. III, 237.
46. Russell to Dominican Foreign Office, 11/19/15, *Foreign Relations*, 1916, 333–37.
47. Russell to Secretary of State, 5/1/16, *Foreign Relations*, 1916, 222–23. *New York Times*, 5/2/16, 10.
48. Lansing to Russell, 5/2/16, Decimal Records of the Department of State, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (Hereafter cited as DS). 839.00/1810. Colonel Frederic May Wise and Meigs O. Frost, *A Marine Tells It To You* (New York: J.H. Sears and Co., n.d.), 141. C. H. Baxter, Customs Receiver, to General McIntyre, 5/11/16, Baxter Correspondence, Records of the Dominican Customs Receivership, Record Group 139, National Archives (hereafter cited as Baxter Papers).
49. Russell to Lansing, 5/6/16 and 5/7/16, *Foreign Relations*, 1916, 224–25. Baxter to McIntyre, 5/11/16, Baxter Papers. Wise, 142–43. Munro, *Intervention*, 306.
50. Caperton to Secretary of the Navy, 5/13/16, *Foreign Relations*, 1916, 226. Russell and Caperton to Generals Arias, Mauricio Jimenez, and Cesareo Jimenez, *Foreign Relations*, 1916, 226–27.
51. Admiral William B. Caperton, “Activities of Rear Admiral William B. Caperton, U.S.N., while in command of Cruiser Squadron, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, and Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet,” 256, unpublished ms., in William B. Caperton Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. (Hereafter cited as Caperton Papers.)
52. For an account of this operation, see Condit Turnbladh, *Hold High the Torch* (Washington: United States Marine Corps, 1960), 37–63.
53. Munro, *Intervention*, 309.
54. Melvin Knight, *The Americans in Santo Domingo* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1928), 76.
55. President Wilson to Secretary of State, 11/26/16, *Foreign Relations*, 1916, 242.
56. Memorandum of conference between Admiral Benson, Captain Knapp, Minister Russell, and Mr. Polk, 10/31/16, Subject File WA 7, Naval Records Collections, Record Group 45 (hereafter cited as RG. 45).
57. Proclamation of Occupation and Military Government, 11/29/16, *Foreign Relations*, 1916, 246–47.
58. Knapp to Secretary of the Navy. 12/1/16, DS, 839.00/1958.
59. Welles, II, 797.
60. David C. MacMichael, “The United States and the Dominican Republic, 1871–1940: A Cycle in Caribbean Diplomacy,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon (1965).
61. Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels to Knapp, 12/8/16, DS, 839.00/1972.
62. Knapp to Daniels, 12/8/16, DS, 839.00/1972.
63. Daneils to Knapp, 12/8/16, DS, 839.00/1972.
64. Executive Order No. 18, 1/2/17, Executive Orders Folder 1-25, Records of the Military Government of Santo Domingo, Record Group 38, National Archives (hereafter cited as RG. 38.)
65. Marvin A. Soloman, “Law, Order and Justice in the Dominican Republic,” unpublished M.A. thesis, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville (1970), 32–33.
66. Knapp to Secretary of the Navy, 12/17/16, RG. 45, Subject File WA 7.
67. Knapp to Secretary of the Navy, 1/14/17, DS 839.00/1985.
68. Knapp to Secretary of the Navy, 7/17/17, RG 45, Subject File WA 7.
69. Colonel Rufus H. Lane, “Report on Public Instruction, 1917–1920,” Papers relating to the Dominican Intervention, Marine Corps Historical Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as MCHA).
70. Russell to Secretary of State, 9/11/17, and Lansing to Secretary of the Navy, 9/19/17, DS 839.00/2051. Daniels to Secretary of State, 9/26/17, DS 839.00/2053.
71. Knapp to General McIntyre, 12/30/17, and Brigade Quartermaster to Chief Quartermaster, USMC, 5/21/17, RG 38.
72. Marvin Goldwert, *The Constabulary in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1961), 11–12.
73. Herbert Gould to Acting Secretary of State Phillips, 8/18/18, DS, 839.1051/16.
74. Nasario Suadri, Governor of La Vega, to Officer in Charge, Dept. of Interior and Police, 6/13/18, MCHA.
75. Snowden to Admiral Coontz, 9/4/20, DS 839.00/2241.
76. MacMichael, 473.
77. Snowden to Secretary of the Navy, 6/23/19, DS 839.1051/21.
78. Memorandum by J. C. Dunn, Division of Latin American Affairs, 9/11/19, DS, 839.00/2150.
79. Munro, *Intervention*, 321.
80. Welles, II, 829–30.
81. *Ibid.*, 824–27.
82. Brewer, Chargé in Santo Domingo, to Secretary of State, 1/9/20, DS, 839.00/2182.
83. Munro, *Intervention*, 322. Welles, II, 830. Daniels to Secretary of State, 11/30/20, DS 839.00/2182.
84. Quarterly Report of the Military Governor of Santo Domingo, 10/1/20 to 12/31/20, DS, 839.00/2352.

85. Welles, II, 833–34.
86. Lieutenant Commander Mayo to Snowden, 1/27/21, RG 38, Box 1.
87. MacMichael, 569.
88. Francis White to Welles, 9/16/22, DS, 839.00/2592.
89. General Eli Cole to Knapp, 12/17/16, RG 35, Subject File, Box 632.
90. In these interviews, conducted largely from 1965 to 1970, each officer was asked what briefing he received before arriving in Haiti or the Dominican Republic. Not a single respondent recalled receiving any briefing.
91. Memorandum by L.H.W. (Office of the Soliciter), 12/13/19, DS 839.00/2246.
92. Examples abound. See Smedley Butler to General Lejeune, 6/22/27, Butler Papers, MCHA; General Cole to Knapp, 4/18/17, RG 45, Subject File, Box 632. Colonel Waller to Lejeune, 2/14/16, John A. Lejeune Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
93. John McIlhenny to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 5/2/19, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N.Y., Personal Correspondence, Box 127.
94. Letter from Dana G. Munro to Richard Millett, 12/30/65.
95. Lieutenant Colonel Harry Davis to George Christian, Executive Secretary to the President, 6/10/21, Warren G. Harding Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio.
96. A. F. Lindberg to Dr. Rowe, Chief of Latin American Division, 12/18/19, DS, 839.00/2251.
97. Captain C. S. Freeman, Memorandum for Chief of Naval Operations, 4/30/21, General Records of the Department of the Navy, Record Group 80, National Archives, File 16870–625.

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Part V

Dominican Republic, 1916–1924





Caudillos and *Gavilleros* versus the United States Marines: Guerrilla Insurgency during the Dominican Intervention, 1916–1924

by Bruce J. Calder

Hispanic American Historical Review, November
1978

From 1917 to 1922, the peasants of the eastern region of the Dominican Republic successfully waged a guerrilla war against the forces of the U.S. military government. This conflict stands, along with the campaign against Augusto César Sandino in Nicaragua in the later 1920s, as the major military involvement of the United States in Latin America in the 20th century. And it deserves a significant place in the series of guerrilla wars which the United States has fought, from the Philippines at the turn of the century to Vietnam. Yet the record of the Dominican conflict has largely been buried or lost. No one has yet made a comprehensive study of the 1916–1924 seizure of the Dominican Republic by the United States despite its importance as a lengthy episode in Dominican history and as a major example of the implementation of Wilsonian diplomacy in Latin America. The program of the military government, the impact of the occupation on Dominican life, and the nature of the Dominican reaction, including the guerrilla war, remain largely undocumented.¹

This essay, based primarily on the records of

the U.S. military government,² explores several basic questions: Who were the guerrillas? And what motivated them to fight? The answers are revealed by the examination of two factors: first, the nature of eastern Dominican society, particularly the traditional political system and the new economic influences at work in the region which undermined long-established patterns of life; and, second, the U.S. Marines' conduct of the antiguerrilla war and their treatment of Dominicans.

Response to Intervention: The Case of the East

Early in 1916, U.S. armed forces entered the Dominican Republic in response to the latest in a series of revolutionary episodes which had begun in 1911. Although neither U.S. nor Dominican officials envisioned a lengthy occupation at that time, it was mid-1924 before the last of the occupying forces embarked from the island nation. During the eight intervening years, a military government of occupation attempted to bring about a number of fundamental changes in the hope that these reforms by fiat would create a stable and friendly neighbor, and a reliable customer, to the south of the United States.

The Dominican response to the intervention and occupation ranged from enthusiastic cooperation to determined resistance. The latter included a political-intellectual protest, supported mainly by the educated elite in the larger towns and cities, and a guerrilla resistance, sustained by peasants in a rural zone in the eastern part of the republic.

The guerrilla struggle was significant. For six years, the Marines failed to control most of the eastern half of the republic. Ranged against them at various times were eight to twelve guerrilla leaders who could enlist up to 600 regular fighters and who could count on the support of numerous part-time guerrillas, as well as on the aid and sympathy of the general population. The guerrillas, using their environment and experience to advantage, fought against a Marine force which possessed superior arms,

equipment, and training. The outcome of the six-year-long irregular war was a stalemate and finally a negotiated conditional surrender by the guerrillas in 1922, a capitulation at least partially predicated on the then impending withdrawal of all U.S. forces from the republic.

The guerrilla war was born early in 1917 when the military government sent Marines into the east and encountered a still-thriving vestige of 19th-century politics, the caudillo system. This irregular type of rule, which bestowed power and authority upon men who could combine military skills, economic resources, personal strength, charisma, friendship, family ties, and the ability to manipulate followers, had deep roots in Dominican history. Particularly during the 19th century, while the republic's political institutions were developing, Dominicans were often at war, fighting the Spanish, French, Haitians, or among themselves. The result was a society heavily influenced by caudillos, who soon came to dominate the nation's political life. Despite later reform efforts, the caudillo system persisted into the 20th century, with a few regional caudillos such as the northwesterner Desiderio Arias assuming great national political importance at the time of the intervention.³

The east had not boasted a regional leader of Arias' stature since the days of President Pedro Santana in the 19th century, but caudillo politics nevertheless continued to play a prominent part in eastern life in 1916. In fact, the east offered a particularly secure environment for this tradition because meager improvements in transportation and communication had hardly challenged the historic isolation and near-independence of most of the region. A kind of dual government existed. Alongside of the highly centralized de jure structure of provinces, communes, and sections, with a civil governor and other officials appointed by the national government, there was a de facto power structure dominated by popular local leaders, the caudillos. A relationship between the two structures existed because national political factions bid for the support of local and regional leaders and because, once a faction gained control of the central government in Santo Domingo, it could exercise its power in the east only when these local popular leaders,

under specified conditions, agreed to cooperate with its officials.⁴ As a consequence, national administrations actively sought the allegiance of local and regional caudillos, often with simple cash payoffs, government concessions or franchises, or appointments to public positions, such as the military command of a province or the garrison of a town, or simply a minor position with the rural police.⁵ If a government could not obtain the support of an important regional figure, it then had to concede him virtual autonomy in his own territory, or back a rival caudillo with arms and money in an attempt to defeat him.

The central government could not rely on its own military forces to back its authority against the caudillos. The Dominican army was small and so poorly trained, commanded, equipped, and paid that it provided no threat to anyone except the law-abiding and defenseless members of the lower class who fell afoul of its petty extortions and graft. In any case, the caudillos often controlled the army. As Sumner Welles noted, "the military branch of the Dominican Government was inevitably the means through which, by corruption or promise of corruption, revolutions were engineered."⁶ Not being able to count on this "meager Dominican soldiery," Military Governor Harry Lee later wrote, the central government had shown a "chronic attitude of passivity and tolerance" toward the caudillos.⁷

Local military chieftains, employed with the government or not, might rebel at any time. In mid-1915, a fairly serious uprising occurred in the east as part of the general restiveness against the administration of President Juan I. Jiménez. Though some casualties had resulted, the national government allegedly pacified the rebels and their followers by promising road construction contracts and appointments to the rural police, as well as by providing safe conducts to Puerto Rico for the leaders.⁸ Authorities continued their policy of accommodation when, a few months later, they brought another eastern caudillo to the capital and "in order to quiet him . . . assigned to him a salary of 150 dollars a month for doing nothing."⁹

The east's population accommodated itself to

the caudillo system. Although the influence of these traditional leaders was ultimately felt in every sector of society because of their military strength, it fell most heavily on rural areas and very small towns. In that milieu, no cohesive class or caste barriers frustrated the acceptance of the caudillo, who was most often a poor countryman by birth and upbringing. The tradition-oriented inhabitants admired, feared, and respected him as an authority, and from among these country dwellers he recruited his followers. The only potential countervailing force in the countryside was that based on wealth. But the few leading landowning families and the sugar corporations were no more able to control the caudillos than the central government. Instead, they manipulated the caudillo system to protect their own interests, paying one of the stronger local leaders to guard their crops and property.¹⁰

In the east's larger towns, all closely related to the extensive rural areas which surrounded them, the personal influence of the caudillo was quite strong, at least among the poorer citizens. Even the elite of such towns as Seibo, Hato Mayor, and Higüey, composed of landowners, a few professionals, and the more prosperous merchants was likely forced by political realities to deal with the caudillos, although it set itself apart socially and in other ways. The elite's financial interests were somewhat adversely affected by the caudillo system, for the warfare with which it was often associated caused economic declines which cut business and professional incomes. Elite political interests were in even sharper conflict with the system.¹¹ Inasmuch as the members of the upper stratum furnished personnel for the higher offices of the *de jure* governmental structure, they were tied to the national political system rather than to the regionalism of the caudillo. But their political survival was ultimately related to the goodwill of the traditional rural leader.¹²

Only in the city of San Pedro de Macorís, the third largest in the republic by 1916, did these traditional rural leaders have minimal influence. The city's obvious sources of independent strength lay in its size and wealth and in the international ties which resulted from its being

headquarters for the republic's sugar production and export. Perhaps even more important was the process of urbanization, which weakened ties with the rural area surrounding the city (except for the neighboring sugar estates) and resulted in a separate social structure in which the rural chieftains had no place and thus no power. San Pedro de Macorís' leading citizens, though they might ally themselves with the caudillos for their own political ends, could bargain from a somewhat more equal position than other citizens of the east.

Thus, local and regional caudillos effectively held power and maintained or broke the peace in most of the eastern region. The U.S. military government confronted this situation in late 1916 and either failed to understand it or completely misjudged the strength of the caudillo system. Military officials had learned during 1916 that some people in Macorís, as well as the sugar companies, strongly opposed the dispatch of Marines to the east. But the military authorities decided to ignore this opposition after they discovered that "the sugar estates were practically paying blackmail to bad characters to keep them from looting and burning, a part of the understanding being apparently that they themselves would keep other bad characters off."¹³

Though military officials might well have viewed the sugar companies' payments as a kind of tax collected by what was the effective police power of the region, they instead saw the situation as anarchic and criminal. When they sent in troops to enforce the authority of the central government, the local and regional caudillo leaders, whose prestige and power derived from the threatened system, went to war. As they had done many times before, the regional power holders determined to force the central government to deal with them.¹⁴

In the caudillo system, then, are found the roots of the guerrilla war which desolated the east for six years. But an important question remains. If the caudillo system existed in other parts of the republic, as it did, why should guerrilla war develop only in the east? The answer seems to be that there was such a possibility in other areas of the country, but various factors thwarted or redirected the energies which might

have sustained revolt.¹⁵ The east, more than other isolated areas of the country, had wealth and population in conjunction with a favorable topography. Thus food, money, and supplies were readily available to the insurgents. And the sizeable, though by no means dense, population of the east provided the guerrillas with recruits, shelter, refuge, and most important, an extensive system of intelligence.

The rapidly changing social and economic structure, however, more than any other factor, distinguished the east from other regions. The expansion of the predominantly foreign-owned sugar latifundia beginning in the late 19th century, which in a few years converted large portions of the east's fertile lands from subsistence minifundias into large capital intensive agricultural estates, had a severe impact on a significant portion of the eastern population. Independent peasants who for generations had lived in the area, holding and farming small *conucos* (garden plots) without interference, suddenly found themselves pushed from the land. By a combination of outright purchase, cajolery, tricks, threats, violence, and legal maneuvers, the sugar companies easily wrested homesites, farms, and grazing lands from their former holders or owners, leaving them landless and destitute.¹⁶

Large numbers of peasants either left the area or became part of a growing rural proletariat, laborers completely dependent on the sugar industry for money wages. Unfortunately for the laborers, the sugar estates needed a large work force only during the harvest, which lasted for less than six months of the year. The jobs, mostly for cane-cutters, were laborious and low paid. Work was not even assured during the harvest season because of the sugar companies' practice of importing laborers from Haiti and neighboring West Indian islands; for the remainder of the year, unemployment was inevitable for all but a few fortunate employees.

Thus, the east counted a substantial number of displaced and bitter peasants and many others who, similarly threatened, sympathized with them. And they had cause to direct their bitterness toward North Americans, whose corporations were among the chief beneficiaries of the

land acquisitions. Many of the men who fought with the caudillo-led bands were from the sugar *bateys*, the company-owned villages in which the workers lived. As James McLean, a Marine officer who commanded the Guardia Nacional in the east, noted unsympathetically in 1919, the guerrilla ranks included "a number of voluntary recruits from the riff-raff among the unemployed who were hanging around the sugar estates."¹⁷ Fighting alongside the guerrillas at least provided a livelihood for the landless and unemployed worker, if not for his family, and it was a convenient way to even a score with oppressors who were protected by the law. After the mass surrender of guerrillas in 1922, military officials found a significant percentage to be men who had recently lost their land.¹⁸ Realizing the relationship of landlessness and unemployment to the guerrilla war, the military government implored the sugar companies to increase "steady employment" during 1922, and to open up as much land for new *conucos* as possible, so that the sugar work force could maintain itself during the months after the *zafra* or harvest. "Any lack of employment," stated the military governor, "will have the most disastrous results in the increase in banditry"¹⁹ (as military officials preferred to call the guerrilla insurgency).

Marine documents indicate that the insurgents generally fought close to home. The greatest number came from the sugar growing heartland of the east, an expanse centering on Hato Mayor and Seibo and running south to the coast. Others came from adjacent areas; from the north coast near Sabana de la Mar, from the east in the vicinity of Higüey, and from the west around Monte Plata and Bayaguana. Most of the peasant partisans, both leaders and followers, were Dominicans, despite the presence in the eastern cane fields and the company-owned *bateys* of many imported laborers from Haiti and the British Caribbean.²⁰

Political Motivations of the Guerrillas

Two of the most important questions about

the guerrilla war concern the political nature of the movement.²¹ Were the insurgents politically conscious? If so, at what level? Many bits of evidence indicate that all the guerrillas had at least inchoate political motives: they resented the changes in their lives which resulted from the loss of their land to the large corporations; they resented being unemployed and poor; and they resented the fear and insecurity brought into their daily existence by the aggressive and arbitrary acts of the occupying Marines. Some guerrillas, moreover, were conscious that these issues were important to their struggle. They would, for instance, recruit followers by informing peasant smallholders that the American corporations were planning to take over their land.²² Going one step beyond this, various guerrilla leaders and groups openly identified themselves as political revolutionaries and claimed regional or national goals. They also conducted themselves, on some occasions, as an irregular government, exacted taxes, enforced popular law, and dispensed justice. For example, at the beginning of the struggle in 1917, the guerrilla leader Vicente Evangelista let it be known that he was fighting a "revolution" against the military government and, according to a Marine report, his stand received considerable support from the country people.²³

However, the statement that the guerrillas had political motivations must be qualified. As in most movements of this kind, both leaders and followers were sometimes motivated by personal rather than political considerations. Intergroup rivalries at times led guerrilla bands to fight one another.²⁴ Such rivalries were the product of the caudillos' preintervention competition for personal power and influence, and they persisted after 1916. Vicente Evangelista, for example, once tried to negotiate an agreement with the Marines which would have delivered a rival leader into his hands.²⁵ In addition, small groups of actual bandits took advantage of the social turmoil brought on by the guerrilla war, and even the organized guerrillas sometimes committed criminal acts against fellow Dominicans.

Considerable positive evidence demonstrates the political consciousness of the insurgents. In

1918, for instance, a group of Marines was scouting near Las Pajas, guided by a local official, the second alcalde of the section. An unidentified group of insurgents surrounded the Marines, and a battle began. At one point, the alcalde called out, taunting the guerrillas for being *gavilleros*, the Dominican word for rural bandits. Back came numerous cries to the effect that: "We are not *gavilleros*; we are revolutionists!"²⁶

During and after 1919, one of the most prominent groups operating in San Pedro de Macorís and eastern Santo Domingo provinces was that led by Eustacio "Bullito" Reyes. These guerrillas called their troop La Revolución, and when seizing money, arms, or supplies from their victims, they identified themselves as such.²⁷ And in 1920, on the eastern edge of the zone of hostilities, between La Romana and Higüey, an unidentified guerrilla unit accosted a mail carrier and sent him and his mail unmolested back to Higüey with a letter carefully explaining that the guerrillas were revolutionaries, not killers. A Marine report noted that this and similar incidents indicated that the "bandits" were "trying to pose as revolutionists" in order to "gain assistance and recruit[s]. . . ." ²⁸

By far the most important partisan leader was "General" Ramón Nateras, who campaigned with large groups between 1918 and 1922. In 1921, Nateras devised an obviously nationalistic operation which forced the military government to recognize the political motivations of the guerrillas. In the fall of that year, Nateras and his men abducted the British manager of the Angelina sugar estate. They released him unharmed after two days when he agreed to Nateras' demand that he and the other estate managers make known to the U.S. government the political and patriotic goal of the guerrillas, which was that the United States should terminate its occupation of the Dominican Republic.²⁹

Corroborating the guerrillas' direct statements is evidence which shows that they saw themselves as a kind of government. In January 1922, for example, Marines discovered the burial site of four men. The epitaph on a board above the grave read: "Emilio Gil, Miguel de León,

Reimundo Ramos, Juan Moraldo: fusilados por haber descalado la bodega Margarita [shot for having robbed the store 'Margarita'], diciembre 22 de 1921, Ramón Nateras;" and in three places the board had the inscription "General Ramón Nateras," imprinted with the rubber stamp which Nateras used in his correspondence. The Marine report on this finding noted "that Ramón Nateras purports to be a ruler in the section of the woods north of La Campina and that he undertakes to punish raids made upon the cane field bodegas when the raids are not made under his direction and control."³⁰ This system of justice applied equally within insurgent ranks. During a raid on a sugar estate bodega in early 1921, the guerrillas executed one of their troop on the spot for a violation of discipline.³¹ Departure from the guerrillas' code of ethics compromised their all-important relationship with other Dominicans.

Evidence indicates that the guerrillas regarded their seizures of money and property as a kind of taxation or as material requisitioned for a political movement. They "look upon themselves as heroes, and the food and clothing which they steal as prerogatives of their position," wrote an incredulous Marine lieutenant.³² In a similar vein, a Marine officer reported in late 1920 that a wealthy farmer living near Higüey had been "fined" \$100 by the guerrillas.³³

Occasionally, Marine reports suggest that the guerrillas had some connection with the national political structure and with the bourgeois party system. But no national politician was ever directly implicated in the guerrilla activity despite numerous investigations by the military government.³⁴

Personal Response to Marine Conduct

There can be little doubt that personal motivations had more significance for the ordinary guerrilla than political or patriotic considerations. Unemployment certainly played an important part in swelling guerrilla ranks. Yet men had other reasons for fighting; included

among the partisans and their supporters were many who still had small farms and other means of employment. Some of these men may have fought for adventure's sake, others to vent economic fears or frustrations. But overshadowing all other factors was that of personal hatred and fear of the Marines and the Marine-created and -controlled Guardia Nacional Dominicana (National Guard). The Marines, as they fought to exert U.S. control over the eastern Dominican Republic, frightened, insulted, abused, oppressed, injured, and even killed hundreds of Dominicans, combatants and noncombatants alike, who lived and worked in the area of hostilities. No more effective agent existed for the guerrilla cause.

These abuses ranged from major atrocities to minor, if infuriating, Marine rudeness. If cases such as that of a Marine captain who allegedly machine-gunned to death as "bandits" some 30 peasants working a sugar *cañaveral* (cane field) were exceptional,³⁵ other incidents such as that involving a group of armed and uninvited Marines who invaded a party at a social club in Seibo and drank up much of the champagne³⁶ are so common that many probably went unrecorded. Also very common and often recorded, but only occasionally punished, were serious crimes such as the well documented case of Altigracia de la Rosa. As this teenage peasant woman prepared dinner one evening in December 1920, four armed Marines entered her house in Ramón Santana, raped her, and then took her and her mother prisoner and held them for 10 days. No charges were brought against the Marines involved.³⁷

What factors underlay the friction between the Marines and the inhabitants in the east? In the first place, the Dominican peasants feared the Marines because they were outsiders. In peasant eyes, the invaders had an unfamiliar physical appearance; they dressed queerly, they spoke an unintelligible language, and they practiced unfamiliar customs. Besides, the Marines were armed and many of them were brusque, discourteous by Dominican standards, and not a few abusive.³⁸

The Marines and other American officials arrived in the Dominican Republic completely

unprepared for the experience. Most enlisted men had little education; neither officers nor enlisted men knew anything about Dominican culture; and few could speak Spanish.³⁹ The jingoistic nationalism prevalent in the early 20th-century United States affected the Marines as much or more than others. Many North Americans possessed a patronizing sense of superiority, the belief that they had taken up what Military Governor Thomas Snowden referred to as "the white man's burden; the duty of the big brother."⁴⁰ Such attitudes flourished in the impoverished, exploited, and underdeveloped Dominican Republic. More important than ignorance or chauvinistic nationalism was the deeply ingrained, anti-black racism of many Marine officers and men. North American racism found a fertile field in the Dominican Republic, "a country whose people," Military Governor Harry Knapp noted, "are almost all touched with the tarbrush."⁴¹ The Marines' prejudice caused them to look down upon Dominicans generally, but the problem became even worse among the peasants of the east, poor and darker-skinned than many other citizens of the republic. Furthermore, the Marines' racist culture had accustomed them to patterns of white superiority and black subservience in both the northern and southern United States, a fact which in the Dominican Republic led to Marine abuse and Dominican bitterness.⁴²

Race was a potential irritant in any encounter between Dominicans and Marines. A North American woman resident in Santo Domingo reported that Marines commonly referred to Dominicans as "spigs" and "niggers," a habit also noted by several visitors.⁴³ When a writer accused Marine officers and men of using the terms "spig" and "spik," Military Governor Knapp came to their defense, questioned whether officers would do so, and denied that the enlisted men's use of this "slang" caused bad feelings among Dominicans.⁴⁴

A typical incident occurred on the streets of San Pedro de Macorís. An offended black artisan reported, probably in cleaned-up language, that when he and a Marine corporal accidentally brushed each other in passing on the sidewalk, the corporal whirled around and yelled,

"Look here, you damned negro! Don't you know that no damned negroes are supposed to let their body touch the body of any Marine? And that they are always to give them way in the street!" The Marine then assaulted the man. The victim, an English-speaking immigrant, fully understood and reported the encounter.⁴⁵ The provost marshal of San Pedro de Macorís essentially refused to investigate the matter, and it was dropped.⁴⁶

In another instance of abuse, one which involved the killing of several men, all testimony against the Marine defendant was discounted by the Marine officer in charge of the investigation because of "the unreliability of the Dominican as a witness under oath . . . and . . . the hopelessness of finding any Dominican who can differentiate between what he has seen and he has heard." The charges in the case, the investigator argued, coming from "an individual of different race . . . who has no conception of honor as we understand it," would best be dropped. Because "of the wide gulf separating the white from the negro race," because of the basic "difference in psychology," the officer added, the Dominican "race has a totally different conception of right and wrong from that held by the white race." Finally, the Marine officer in charge of handling the case suggested prosecuting the complainant, "for the maintenance of the prestige of the white race."⁴⁷

The conduct of the guerrilla war itself greatly frustrated the Marines. Their frustration at times led to abuse of Dominicans, irrespective of whether they were guerrillas or *pacíficos*, as the noncombatants were called. The Marines were not prepared to fight a guerrilla war. They found themselves in often futile pursuit of an elusive enemy, repeatedly fell into ambushes and other tactical situations of the guerrillas' choosing, and were unable to establish permanent control over any area. Even if they had understood the guerrillas' style of warfare, the Marines would still have suffered difficulties. They were strangers in an environment in which the guerrillas had lived all their lives. Unlike the Marines, the guerrillas blended into that environment perfectly; as a result, it was usually impossible for the North Americans to

distinguish guerrillas from *pacíficos*.⁴⁸

As the war progressed, the Marines began to discover that frequently there *was* no difference between the two groups. A peasant tilling a field might be behind a rifle 30 minutes later, ambushing a Marine patrol. A woman innocently washing clothes, or a child at play, might, as soon as the Marines moved out of sight, convey news of their direction and numbers to a guerrilla agent. As the Marines began to grasp the situation, they came to treat everyone as the enemy. In the process, they created more guerrillas and guerrilla supporters from among the previously uninvolved.

As Marine harshness touched the lives of an increasing number of people, both individuals and families began to flee their homes, seeking greater security by establishing new homes and *conucos* in more isolated areas of the forests and in the mountains to the north. It was simply not safe to be in areas where the Marines were actively pursuing guerrillas. Numerous incidents occurred in which people who could not or would not reveal information concerning the guerrillas were beaten, tortured, and killed, or, if they were more fortunate, imprisoned. A peasant might also be the object of gratuitous violence by the Marines, such as rape or the destruction of a home or other property. Ever present was the danger of being attacked as a suspected guerrilla.⁴⁹ On the other hand, the danger existed of being robbed by individuals or groups who used the guerrilla war as a cover for their ordinary criminal behavior. As a result of all these circumstances, the whole central area of the east became, in the words of a Marine commander, "a scene of desolation and long abandoned homes . . . a sad and pitiful spectacle."⁵⁰

Flight did not necessarily help. Marine patrols began to run across hidden homesteads or even small villages with permanent houses and surrounding *conucos*, and populations of men, women, and children. The Marines assumed, generally without evidence, that the inhabitants were guerrillas. It became common to burn their homes and possessions, although the Marine command attempted to stop this practice, hoping that such homes would serve

as gathering places where patrols might easily locate insurgents in the future.⁵¹ If the inhabitants fled, as fear often impelled them to do, the Marines fired at them, even though they were usually unarmed. "People who are not bandits do not flee at the approach of Marines," noted one Marine officer.⁵²

In a typical incident in 1918, a Marine detachment located two peasant homes north of Hato Mayor, at the foot of the Mancho hills. "There were two bandit houses," wrote Sergeant Morris Stout Jr., "and I would say, four men, four women and some children occupied same. They did not have any property of importance." When the inhabitants fled the approaching intruders by climbing a steep hill next to the houses, the Marines "formed a skirmish line and opened fire, but all got away except one woman and child and one horse and saddle."⁵³ This particular incident brought an admonition from Marine headquarters in Santo Domingo to "exercise extreme caution in firing on fleeing parties which contain women and children."⁵⁴ But a 1919 communication, not five months later, revealed that a Marine raid had severely wounded three of the four children of one "bandit."⁵⁵

Olivorio Carela, a follower of the guerrilla leader "Bullito" Reyes, provides evidence of the results of Marine policies. Carela had joined the guerrillas, he testified, when "American forces had fired at his house and he had run away to take refuge."⁵⁶ Another guerrilla, Ramón Batía, said in an interview that after a Marine captain had threatened his life, he believed "that his only remaining option was to flee into the hills." There he joined the guerrilla leader Vicente Evangelista and later formed his own group.⁵⁷

As the guerrilla war progressed, the insurgents became more and more indistinguishable from the rest of the populace. A number of Marine reports in 1918 show that women had begun accompanying guerrilla bands, a fact which is corroborated by the few guerrilla documents which exist.⁵⁸ The incorporation of women and sometimes whole families into guerrilla life, and the establishment of permanent villages, made it all the more difficult to distinguish guerrillas from refugees and other

ordinary inhabitants of the rural areas.

In time, nearly the entire population of some areas of the east became involved in the guerrilla war. The Marines faced not only full-time guerrillas and former *pacíficos* who had fled their homes, but also those who had stayed behind in villages and small towns. These rural centers became hotbeds of guerrilla activity, serving as centers for intelligence, for the gathering of money and supplies, and for recruitment. Several incidents occurred which revealed that a town's male population had turned out almost en masse to ambush a Marine patrol shortly after its departure from the town.⁵⁹ Marine reports frequently noted that many of the "so called bandits or gavilleros have relatives in all the outlying towns and it is understood that they are frequently visited by the gavilleros."⁶⁰ Similarly large numbers came from the *bateys* located on the sugar estates to the south. In periods of guerrilla inactivity, a Marine lieutenant surmised, many of them "can be found in the southern district near the *colonias* [sugar workers' villages] and living in the houses of the sugar cane workers. Some of them may even be working the sugar mills." In any case, he continued, "it is a certainty that they are being supplied with rum, clothes and all sorts of supplies by their friends around the mills."⁶¹

Of course, *pacíficos* were not the only victims of Marine abuse. The guerrillas themselves sometimes suffered brutal treatment, torture, and even death while captives of the Marines. In one 1918 incident, a Marine lieutenant murdered eleven jailed followers of Ramón Nateras. His explanation was that he became angry after having heard that a friend of his, a Marine captain, had been killed in an encounter with guerrillas.⁶² One of the more common methods of eliminating guerrilla prisoners was to shoot and kill them while they "attempted to escape." In 1919, after two and a half years of such incidents, Marine authorities in Santo Domingo cautioned Marines in the field to secure prisoners more carefully, since "there is always suspicion produced by reports of this character that the prisoner was given an opportunity to escape so that he might be killed."⁶³

A Dominican who watched the events in the east unfold described the effects of the Marine presence quite clearly: "The gavillerismo [rural unrest] increased with the occupation, or was created by it, . . . because of the increasing danger and difficulty of living in those districts. . . . When someone . . . was killed, his brothers joined the gavilleros, to get revenge on the Marines. . . . Some joined the ranks inspired by patriotism, but most of them joined the ranks inspired by hate, fear or revenge."⁶⁴

Efforts to Eliminate Marine Abuses

Higher officials of the military government soon became aware of the developing pattern of Marine abuse in the east and took some corrective action. But the remedies were often weak and ineffective, either for lack of enforcement or because of the difficulty of controlling the hour-to-hour conduct of units in the field. Furthermore, many officials devised rationalizations which enabled them to ignore much of the evidence which steadily accumulated during the occupation.

Military officials did make efforts to get Dominicans to come forward with their charges,⁶⁵ but few chose to complain to the authorities. Many who had experienced or witnessed the Marines' system of justice, based on provost courts, believed that to bring charges was useless and possibly dangerous, since those who did so were sometimes jailed, fined, harassed, or physically harmed. Otto Schoenrich, a North American writer of moderate opinions who was well acquainted with the Dominican Republic and the occupation, wrote that: "the provost courts have gained the reputation of being unjust, oppressive and cruel, and seem to delight in excessive sentences. These provost courts, with their arbitrary and overbearing methods, their refusal to permit accused persons to be defended by counsel, and their foreign judges, foreign language and foreign procedure, are galling to the Dominicans, who regard them with aversion and terror."⁶⁶

Military records indicate that the Marines'

investigative officers and courts of justice deserved their poor reputation. Investigating officials in general showed themselves unsympathetic to the views of Dominican complainants, often accepting the word of their cohorts over that of a Dominican as a matter of course. And the Marines viewed the court system as a weapon to be used against the guerrillas and their supporters. Like the officers in charge of preliminary investigations, the military tribunals were notoriously biased in favor of Marine defendants. Prosecutions of offending Marines were often halfhearted, and sentences, if any, were light, especially when the defendant was an officer. On the other hand, the court system was often prejudiced and sometimes even vindictive against Dominican plaintiffs. And Dominican defendants could only expect the worst. One Dominican observer of the Marines' judicial efforts commented: "When an American officer has committed a crime, the effort of his superiors is to hide it, to prove the innocence of the criminal, believing that to admit the truth would tarnish the honor of the American forces."⁶⁷

One example of the misuse of the system of military justice is the case of Licenciado Pelegrín Castillo. This man, a lawyer, accused Marine Captain Charles R. Buckalew with killing four guerrilla prisoners in cold blood, and of other atrocities, such as crushing the testicles of a prisoner with a stone. Although evidence pointed unequivocally to the captain's guilt, a preliminary court of inquiry, headed by Marine Lieutenant Colonel C. B. Taylor, found the evidence unreliable and suggested that Buckalew "deserves praise and not censure." Furthermore, the court recommended that Pelegrín Castillo be stripped of his right to practice law.⁶⁸ Pelegrín Castillo was then tried by a military court for making false accusations.⁶⁹ Much later, such massive evidence accumulated against Buckalew that he was made to stand trial before a military court. Despite the defendant's confession, which essentially corroborated Pelegrín Castillo's earlier charges, the court acquitted Buckalew on technical grounds.⁷⁰

Not only was testimony given by Dominicans discounted by the courts, but clear evidence

exists of the intimidation of witnesses. Such intimidation prevented some cases from ever reaching the courts and prevented others from being tried fairly. One instance of the former involved a man who volunteered to turn in some firearms. A Marine, assisted by members of the Guardia whom he commanded, apparently believed that the man had knowledge of the whereabouts of additional arms and so began to torture him, beating him on his testicles with sticks and burning his feet. His daughters were taken naked from their house and forced to watch and then all of them were imprisoned. Complaints concerning the incident subsequently produced an investigation, but it reached no conclusion because witnesses were afraid to talk.⁷¹

During one of the investigations into the misconduct of Captain Buckalew, all of the prosecution's witnesses suddenly "voluntarily recanted and acknowledged that they falsely testified," thus making it "impossible to establish the truth of the accusations made against Charles R. Buckalew."⁷² It is reasonable to conclude, in light of Buckalew's later confession, that the witnesses were under pressure to recant their previous, accurate testimony.

Some of the sentences of the military courts were so blatantly unfair that higher military officials were compelled to protest. Occasionally this caused a retrial or the reopening of an investigation. In one case involving the killing of prisoners, Military Governor Harry Knapp called the acquittal of the obviously guilty Marine defendants a "shocking occurrence, utterly reprehensible."⁷³ On another occasion, Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels wrote that he viewed with "distinct regret and disapprobation" the "inadequate sentence" given to a Marine private for a serious offense.⁷⁴ In 1922, Marine Lieutenant Colonel Henry C. Davis was dismayed to discover that of a number of Dominicans sentenced to five years' imprisonment at hard labor for alleged guerrilla connections, "none of these men were legally tried but were 'railroaded' into jail." Tried by a provost court in San Pedro de Macorís, the prisoners had not been allowed to present witnesses on their behalf, nor did any prosecution witnesses

appear against them, a procedure approved by Rear Admiral Thomas Snowden, the military governor at the time. Lieutenant Colonel Davis believed that "other cases of this kind" existed and asked for a special investigation.⁷⁵

Dominicans ordinarily received harsher treatment in the military courts than did Marines. Though there are not many precisely comparable cases recorded, a revealing exception occurred in early 1922. A group of four Marines, thought by other Marines in the half-light of dusk to be guerrillas because they carried rifles and wore the blue denim typical of the peasant fighters, had been flushed out of the brush by a Marine patrol. An investigation proved that the Marines had set out "on a robbing expedition in the Consuelo [sugar estate] settlements," one of several in which they had participated. For this crime they each received a sentence of 30 days' imprisonment on bread and water.⁷⁶ Dominicans tried for similar but less devious acts received sentences from five years to life.

The failure of the system of military justice to deal fairly with Dominicans caused them to distrust and fear it, and thus eliminated legal recourse for those who suffered mistreatment by the Marines or the Guardia. Another obstacle to an effective crackdown on Marine misconduct lay in the fact that military officials often sought to ignore, suppress, or make excuses for incidents which did come to their attention.

Among the explanations which the authorities of the military government gave for the misconduct of troops in the field was that the problem originated with Dominicans of the Guardia Nacional fighting under Marine command rather than with the Marines themselves. Since Guardia members lacked adequate training, argued Military Governor Knapp, their breaches of discipline were a natural "reversion to the intolerable conditions which existed in the late pre-intervention Dominican Army and Guardia Republicana."⁷⁷ His view found support in reports from the field, such as one from the brutal Captain Buckalew, who complained that, after his men had been through an area, he had "to listen to complaints of stolen horses, poultry and produce . . . as well as iron-handed

methods used, which were in vogue in the old Guardia. . . .”⁷⁸

The Guardia *was*, no doubt, a source of problems. But in reality, the responsibility for abuse and atrocities lay as much with the Marines. This fact became obvious in the case of Captain Charles Merkle, whose infamous deeds are still remembered in the Dominican Republic in the 1970s. In October 1918, only after the Archbishop of Santo Domingo interceded on behalf of terrified citizens in the east, Marine authorities arrested Merkle, charging him with numerous incidents of torture and murder.⁷⁹ When Merkle conveniently committed suicide,⁸⁰ the military government dropped its investigation and brushed off his numerous atrocities as unique and isolated incidents, attributable to his Germanic ancestry rather than to Marine attitudes, the problems of fighting a guerrilla war, or the occupation itself. Captain Merkle, wrote Military Governor Snowden, “was a German who used the well-known German methods on the native population.”⁸¹

In the years following Merkle’s death, as it became clear that other Marines had been involved in similar atrocities, officials created a new rationalization. Many Marine officers in the east, they explained, were actually corporals and sergeants who, without further training, had been hurriedly promoted to captain because of the World War I officer shortage.⁸² “It is hardly equitable,” argued Military Governor Knapp, “to expect young and inexperienced officers, some of whom have just been appointed from the ranks, to be thoroughly familiar with all the regulations and rules of warfare governing their conduct, especially as many of these have been rushed into field service as soon as their commissions were received.”⁸³

Charges made by C. M. Ledger, the British chargé d’affaires in San Pedro de Macorís in late 1921, within six months of the end of the guerrilla insurgency, indicate clearly that both the abuses and the failure to deal adequately with them continued throughout the war. Ledger sought an investigation into events surrounding the killing in cold blood of a British citizen, a black worker from St. Kitts, by Marines. The chargé saw this incident as part of a “reign of

terror” and mentioned several *bateys* from which the inhabitants had fled their homes in fear of Marine violence after incidents during which Marines had beaten men and raped women. Though the Marines were theoretically protecting the *bateys* from guerrilla raids, the chargé noted, the guerrillas were “not in the habit of killing their victims nor of interfering with their women folk.” He asked a thorough investigation.⁸⁴ Military officials at first ignored the charges, but repeated insistent requests finally brought some action. Indications pointed strongly to a particular Marine officer and his unit, but the investigator seemed unable to produce sufficient concrete evidence for anything more than a minor charge against one enlisted Marine. Eventually the entire matter was quietly shelved and the criminals remained free.⁸⁵

The occupation forces compiled a lengthy record of wrongdoing, even if, as appears likely, not all cases were recorded. The most blatant offenses occasionally resulted in investigations, trials, and convictions. But, in a sense, these judicial processes were irrelevant: the abuses had already occurred, the peasants had learned to hate the Marines, and the guerrilla cause had gained adherents.

Only in 1921 and 1922, during a U.S. Senate investigation of the military occupations of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, did some of the details concerning Marine misbehavior come to light.⁸⁶ By then the damage had long since been done. The only beneficiaries were those who somehow could obtain a sense of vindication from the far-off, after-the-fact hearings, which in themselves did not declare anyone innocent or guilty or pass any sentences.

Concluding Summary

In early 1917, representatives of the U.S. military government in the Dominican Republic had disembarked in the east to carry out what appeared to be a relatively simple task: the pacification of a few local troublemakers and the establishment of the authority of the central government. But when the newly arrived and poorly prepared Marine leaders attempted to implement their orders by riding roughshod

over the traditional autonomy of the east, they sparked an armed uprising. Thereafter, several factors combined to feed the flames of war. One was the tension and resentment associated with the region's rapidly expanding sugar industry and the resulting social and economic dislocations. Another was the anger which the Marines' own mishandling of the conflict generated.

There can be no doubt that the Marines' opponents were something other than the "bandits" born of military government propaganda and accepted by subsequent writers. They were peasant guerrillas fighting for principles and a way of life. Although the precise nature and the degree of their motivation remains open to exact definition, it is certain in some cases that both the guerrillas and their leaders were conscious of political issues.

The end of the guerrilla conflict came in the spring of 1922, shortly after U.S. and Dominican representatives had signed an agreement for the termination of the occupation. The peasant rebels, faced by combined forces of Marines and Dominican paramilitary auxiliaries, were encountering their first effective opposition in six years. After long negotiations, they laid down their arms in return for a nearly total amnesty.⁸⁷

In their surrender, the guerrilla leaders paid obeisance to a new way of political life. They may have hoped that the new order would last only until the Marines departed, but, if so, they were mistaken. No longer would the central government be forced to negotiate with the eastern caudillos to gain the region's allegiance. Never again would these traditional leaders successfully defy the central government or raise their followers in rebellion.

Despite the Marines' ineffectiveness in combatting the guerrillas, changes had occurred in the east which ensured the demise of the old system. Over the course of the war, the military government had greatly improved transportation and communication networks and continued to do so until 1924. By then, for the first time, the east was effectively linked to the rest of the nation. More important, military authorities had created in the Dominican constabulary, the Guardia Nacional Dominicana, a force

which would soon hold an effective monopoly of military control, power that would be directed from the national capital, Santo Domingo. The reality of the new situation became clear in 1930 when the head of the Guardia, General Rafael Trujillo, overthrew the constitutional government and began his 31-year dictatorship.

Notes

1. The most balanced account of the 1916–1924 period is the work of Luis F. Mejía, *De Lilís a Trujillo: Historia contemporánea de la República Dominicana* (Caracas, 1944), chs. 6–8. Also valuable are Sumner Welles, *Naboth's Vineyard: The Dominican Republic, 1844–1924*, 2 vols. (New York, 1928), chs. 8–15, reflecting the views of an enlightened State Department official; and Melvin M. Knight, *The Americans in Santo Domingo* (New York, 1928), a somewhat disorganized radical critique of the occupation and the events leading up to it. Stephen M. Fuller and Graham A. Cosmas have written a brief Marine history, *Marines in the Dominican Republic, 1916–1924* (Washington, D.C., 1974). Other books treat individual aspects of the intervention or present documents from the period. Only recently have several authors begun to portray the guerrilla war, namely Gregorio Urbano Gilbert, in his autobiographical *Mi lucha contra el invasor yanqui de 1916* (Santo Domingo, 1975) and Felix Servio Ducoudray, *Los "gavilleros" del este: Una epopeya calumniada* (Santo Domingo, 1976).

2. The bulk of the papers of the military government of Santo Domingo are in the U.S. National Archives, particularly in Record Groups 38, 45, and 80. Subsequent references to these papers will denote the record group, the series, and the box number of the document, e.g. NA, RG38, E6, B3. Other papers of the military government are located in the Archivo General de la Nación in Santo Domingo, D.R. These documents are the correspondence of the several executive departments, such as Police and Interior, Agriculture, etc., and cover a wide range of subjects. Lack of organization, however, renders them very difficult to use. Subsequent references to these records will appear as: AGN, *Mil. Govt. Papers*. Since the U.S. Department of State maintained a diplomatic mission in Santo Domingo during the entire occupation period, numerous relevant documents are also located in File 839, *Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of the Dominican Republic, 1910–1929*, which is also available on microfilm as United States National Archives Publication, Microcopy

No. 626 (hereafter cited as *Records*, D.R., 1910–1929).

3. For an analysis of the Dominican caudillo system by a man who despised its effects, see Francisco Henríquez y Carvajal, “Memorandum” to Stabler, Chief of the Div. of Latin American Affairs, State Dept., in *U.S. Dept. of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1919* (Washington, D.C., 1934), 111–113 (hereafter cited as *FR*, with appropriate year). See the U.S. Commission of Inquiry to Santo Domingo, *Report of the Commission of Santo Domingo* (Washington, D.C., 1871), 8–9, for a description of the caudillo system by North American investigators in 1870. Miguel A. Monclus, *El caudillismo en la Republica Dominicana*, 2d ed. (Ciudad Trujillo, 1948), is heavy on biographical facts but light on analysis.

4. Henríquez y Carvajal, “Memorandum,” in *FR*, 1919, 112.

5. Payoffs to caudillos are cited in Welles, *Naboth's Vineyard*, 589; and in Dana Gardner Munro, *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1900–1921* (Princeton, N.J., 1964), 82, 274–277, and 311–312.

6. Welles, *Naboth's Vineyard*, 908.

7. Lee to Sec. of the Navy, May 19, 1924, NA, RG38, E6, B74.

8. Chargé Johnson, Santo Domingo, to Sec. of State, Sept. 15, 1915; and Minister William Russell to Sec. of State, Nov. 30, 1915, in *FR*, 1915, 294, 297.

9. Russell to Sec. of State, Mar. 14, 1916, in *FR*, 1916, 221.

10. Military Gov. Harry S. Knapp to Major General Cmdt., U.S. Marine Corps (hereafter cited as USMC), Oct. 27, 1918, NA, RG45, WA7, B647. The analysis in this and the two following paragraphs is in part speculative, based on the author's study of contemporary commentaries by Dominican civilians and many military government documents which infer the existence of the social situation described.

11. Officials of the military government argued, with statistics, that a close relationship existed between political strife and economic decline. See, for instance, U.S. Military Government of Santo Domingo, *Santo Domingo: Its Past and its Present Condition* (Santo Domingo, 1920), 13.

12. A typical incident in Seibo in 1916, when the *comandante de armas* rebelled against his civilian superior, the governor, is a graphic example. See Bernardo Pichardo, *Resumen de historia patria*, 3d ed. (Buenos Aires, 1947), 297.

13. Knapp to Major General Cmdt, USMC, Oct. 27, 1918, NA, RG45, WA7, B647.

14. One regional leader, Vicente Evangelista, made

this point explicitly in the surrender terms he proposed to the military government. Knapp to Sec. of the Navy, July 14, 1917, NA, RG45, WA7, B647. It is important to note that the notorious pre-1917 caudillos were killed or captured during the first year of fighting. Thereafter, with the war underway, new leaders appeared.

15. Several tense situations developed in the west. In Barahona province there was some unrest over land and water rights and in neighboring Azua province there existed a messianic movement led by Dios Olivorio Mateo, whom the Marines hunted over a period of years and killed in 1922.

16. Beginning from almost nothing in 1870, the sugar estates had grown very rapidly. By the early 20th century, sugar had become the nation's most important crop, with the bulk of the production on the plains of the east, centered around San Pedro de Macorís. Knight, *The Americans*, 139–140, notes that by 1925, between 350,000 and 400,000 acres of the east's best land was in sugar. Knight, who devotes a chapter to the growth of the sugar industry, is one of the best sources of information on this aspect of Dominican life. Juan J. Sánchez, *La caña en Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo, 1972), is a short, excellent book on the industry in the late 19th century.

17. James T. McLean, Director, Southern District, to Cmdt., Guardia Nacional Dominicana (hereafter cited as GND), NA, RG38, EG, BU (BU indicates box number unknown).

18. Military Gov. Samuel S. Robison to sugar companies, mailing list attached, June 13, 1922, NA, RG38, E6, B36.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Of more than 100 men who were imprisoned on charges of banditry in the spring of 1922 in San Pedro de Macorís jail, only 14 had French names and were scheduled for deportation, probably to Haiti. Provost Marshal, to Commanding General, Aug. 14, 1922, NA, RG38, E6, B50. Of the more than 140 guerrillas who surrendered in April and May 1922, only four had names which could possibly be Haitian-French. Commanding General Lee to Military Gov., May 22, 1923, NA, RG38, E6, B64.

21. The military government consistently referred to the insurgents as “bandits,” although military documents frequently belied this thesis. Most Dominican writers, until the recent works of Felix Servio Ducoudray and Gregorio Urbano Gilbert, have for various reasons left the “bandit” thesis unchallenged. The cover-up of the guerrilla war is discussed at length in my dissertation. See Calder, “Some Aspects of the United States Occupation of the Dominican

- Republic" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Texas, 1974).
22. Colonel C. Gamborg-Andresen, CO, 3d Provisional Regiment, to Brigade Commander, Feb. 27, 1919, NA, RG45, WA7, B645.
 23. D. B. Roben, CO, 44th Co., to Regimental Commander, July 30, 1917, NA, RG45, WA7, B646.
 24. Julio Peynado, a Dominican observer, makes this observation in a letter to Horace G. Knowles, Apr. 22, 1922, Peynado Family Papers (hereafter cited as PFP). Knowles was a former diplomat, an active lawyer and writer, and one of the organizers in the U.S. of the campaign against the Dominican and Haitian occupations.
 25. Knapp to Sec. of the Navy, July 14, 1917, NA, RG45, WA7, B646.
 26. Captain T. P. Cheatham, 114th Co., to Battalion Commander, Nov. 22, 1918, NA, RG45, WA7, B646.
 27. Record of the Proceedings of a Superior Provost Court, Santo Domingo, convened Feb. 16, 1920, Trial of Olivorio Carela, NA, RG38, E6, B36.
 28. Captain Robert Yowell, Seibo Barracks, to Battalion Commander, Sept. 14, 1920, NA, RG38, E6, B22.
 29. Sugar estate managers to Military Gov. Robison, Oct. 4, 1921, NA, RG38, E6, B24.
 30. William C. Harlee, Commander, 15th Regiment, to Commanding General, Jan. 25, 1922, NA, RG38, E6, B48.
 31. R. Sánchez González, Gov., San Pedro de Macoris province, to Colonel P. M. Rixey Jr., Sec. of State for Interior and Police, Mar. 8, 1921, NA, RG38, E6, BU.
 32. William O. Rogers, 15th Regiment, to District Commander, Apr. 25, 1919, NA, RG45, WA7, B645.
 33. Major Watson, 9th Co., GND, to Cndt., Nov. 23, 1920, NA, RG38, E6, BU.
 34. In 1918 a regional leader of the Horacista party, Basilio Camilo, was accused of connivance with guerrillas. One of his lawyers, Luis F. Mejía, wrote later that Camilo was sentenced to prison "despite the lack of proof against him," but was pardoned soon afterwards. Mejía, *De Lilís a Trujillo*, 164.
 35. Horacio Blanco Fombona, *Crímenes del imperialismo norte-americano* (México, 1927), 122.
 36. President and members, Club Faro de Hicayagua, to Military Gov. Thomas Snowden, May 25, 1920, NA, RG38, E6, B24.
 37. Dispatch, Marine Corps to Flag Santo Domingo, Mar. 17, 1922, NA, RG80, CNO Planning File 159-9; and Knowles to U.S. Senator Medill McCormick, Mar. 17, 1922, PFP.
 38. Colonel George C. Thorpe, a Marine commander in the east, notes that Dominican peasants feared the Marines' very appearance. Thorpe, "American Achievements in Santo Domingo, Haiti and the Virgin Islands," *Journal of International Relations*, 11 (July 1920), 63-64.
 39. Military Gov. to Bureau of Navigation, Sept. 9, 1920, NA, RG38, E6, B32, contains the estimate that "the majority" of naval enlisted personnel in Santo Domingo had not completed grade school and only "a few" had begun high school; the figure is probably no higher for the Marines. Harry Alverson Franck, *Roaming through the West Indies* (New York, 1920), 245-246, and Otto Schoenrich, "The Present American Intervention in Santo Domingo and Haiti," in George H. Blakeslee, ed., *Mexico and the Caribbean* (New York, 1920), 211, both note the Marines' lack of ability to use Spanish. Military Gov. Knapp admitted that in late 1916 he could not read a simple pamphlet in Spanish. Knapp to Sec. of the Navy, Dec. 17, 1916, NA, RG45, WA7, B643. Kenneth W. Condit and Edwin T. Turnbladh, *Hold High the Torch: A History of the 4th Marines* (Washington, D.C., 1960), 76, notes the Marines' general unpreparedness for their occupation duties.
 40. Snowden to Josephus Daniels, Sec. of the Navy, June 2, 1920, NA, RG38, E6, B31.
 41. Knapp to Arthur T. Hadley, President of Yale University, Sept. 20, 1917, NA, RG38, E6, BU.
 42. A Dominican, Mejía, *De Lilís a Trujillo*, 157, noted U.S. racial prejudices. For a fuller description, see Franck, *West Indies*, 239-240. Rubin Francis Weston, *Racism in U.S. Imperialism: The Influence of Racial Assumptions on American Foreign Policy, 1893-1946* (Columbia, S.C., 1972), thoroughly documents the racist views of U.S. citizens regarding the Dominican Republic and other nations. See especially 209-256.
 43. Mrs. Helen Leschorn to U.S. Senator Atlee Pomerence, Jan. 24, 1922, enclosed in letter of W. C. MacCrone, Regimental Intelligence Officer to Brigade Intelligence Officer, Mar. 25, 1922, NA, RG38, E6, B48; and Franck, *West Indies*, 239.
 44. Knapp to Russell, Nov. 2, 1918, NA, RG45, WA7, B644.
 45. J. I. Bowman to Military Gov., Dec. 21, 1921, NA, RG38, E6, B37.
 46. Provost Marshal G. M. Kincade to Military Gov, Jan. 11, 1922, NA, RG38, E6, B37.
 47. Finding of Facts, Opinion, and Recommendations of Court of Inquiry convened at Marine Barracks, San Francisco de Macoris, Feb. 24, 1920, NA, RG38, E6, B38.
 48. News Release, Oct. 29, 1921, issued by Eastern District Headquarters, San Pedro de Macoris, cites the problem of guerrillas "appearing like any other citi-

- zen." Located in NA, RG38, E6, B37. Franck, *West Indies*, 236, also notes this problem.
49. U.S. Senate, Inquiry in Occupation and Administration of Haiti and Santo Domingo, *Hearings before a Select Committee of Haiti and Santo Domingo*, 2 vols., 67th Cong., 1st and 2d sess., 1922 (hereafter cited as U.S. Senate, *Hearings*), I, 1106–1155, documents a large number of incidents of Marine violence against captured guerrillas, suspected guerrillas, and *pacíficos*. Franck, a journalist who spent some time with the Marines in the Dominican Republic circa 1920, gives a sketch of Marine abuses and suggests some possible motivations for them in *West Indies*, 234–235. Military courts tried 85 persons during the first three years of the occupation for allegedly having concealed information regarding guerrillas or arms. See Summary of Exceptional Military Courts in the Dominican Republic from November 29, 1916, to December 29, 1919, Covering Cases of Dominicans and Sojourners in the Dominican Republic, Tried by Provost Courts, Superior Provost Courts and Military Commissions, NA, RG38, E6, B13.
 50. Harllee, Eastern District Commander, to Commanding General, Jan. 25, 1922, NA, RG38, E6, B48.
 51. Thorpe, Chief of Staff, to Brigade Commander, May 29, 1917, NA, RG45, WA7, B645. Thorpe's order was not necessarily obeyed. In October 1918, he angrily denounced two recent home burnings. Thorpe to 2d Lieutenant William A. Buckley, Oct. 7, 1918, NA, RG45, WA7, B646.
 52. Harllee, Eastern District Commander, to Commanding General., Jan. 25, 1922, NA, RG38, E6, B48.
 53. Sgt. Stout, Detachment of 113th Co., to Senior Officer, Oct. 16, 1918, NA, RG45, WA7, B646.
 54. Brigade Commander B. H. Fuller to Colonel Thorpe, Oct. 31, 1918, NA, RG45, WA7, B646.
 55. Company report[?], unsigned, 1919, contained in Marine Operations, 1919–1924 file, NA, RG45, WA7, B646.
 56. Record of the Proceedings of a Superior Provost Court, Santo Domingo, convened Feb. 16, 1920, Trial of Olivorio Carela, NA, RG38, E6, B36.
 57. "Ramón Batía dice . . .," *Listin Diario*, May 18, 1922.
 58. Ibid.
 59. Colonel Thorpe to Regimental Commander, Sept. 8, 1918, NA, RG38, E6, B6.
 60. CO, 2d Battalion, 15th Provincial Regiment, to District Commander, Sept. 28, 1921, NA, RG38, E6, B36.
 61. 1st Lieutenant Allan S. Heaton, 2d Battalion, 15th Provisional Regiment to Brigadier Commander, June 11, 1919, NA, RG45, WA7, B645.
 62. Findings of a Court of Inquiry held at Seibo, Mar. 27, 1918, NA, RG38, EG6 139.
 63. Brigadier General Fuller to CO, 15th Regiment, Mar. 1919, NA, RG38, E6, B19.
 64. Peynado to Knowles, Apr. 22, 1922, PFP.
 65. Lieutenant Colonel Henry C. Davis, District Commander, "Public Notice," May 10, 1921, NA, RG38, E6, B36.
 66. Schoenrich, "American Intervention," 212.
 67. Blanco Fombona, *Crímenes*, 123–124.
 68. Finding of Facts, Opinion and Recommendation of Court of Inquiry convened at Marine Barracks, San Francisco de Macorís, Feb. 24, 1920, NA, RG38, E6, B38.
 69. Colonel C. M. Perkins, Brigade Law Officer, to Brigade Commander Logan Feland, May 1, 1920, NA, RG38, E6, B38. Luis F. Mejía, one of Pelegrín Castillo's lawyers, describes the case in *De Lilís a Trujillo*, 172.
 70. Colonel Constantine Perkins to Lieutenant Colonel C. B. Taylor, Mar. 4, 1921, NA, RG38, E6, B38.
 71. Sworn and notarized statement concerning the case of José Cepeda, signed and witnessed, May 31, 1920, Casa de Don Federico y Biblioteca del Maestro, Santo Domingo, D.R. (hereafter cited as BDM).
 72. Commanding General Charles G. Long to Military Gov., Jan. 11, 1921, NA, RG38, E6, B38.
 73. Knapp to CO, 2d Provisional Brigade, June 14, 1918, NA, RG38, E6, B6.
 74. Daniels to Brigade Commander Pendleton, July 9, 1917, NA, RG38, E6, B4.
 75. Davis, Southern District Commander, to Military Gov., May 13, 1922, NA, RG38, E6, B49.
 76. Harllee, Eastern District Commander, Jan. 25, 1922, NA, RG38, E6, B48.
 77. Knapp to Brigade Commander, Confidential, Oct. 17, 1918, NA, RG38, E6, B6.
 78. Buckalew, CO, 6th Co., GND, to Cmdt., June 8, 1918, NA, RG38, E6, B6[?].
 79. Merkle's crimes are documented in U.S. Senate, *Hearings*, I, 1117–1147.
 80. Thorpe, Battalion Commander, to Regimental Commander, Oct. 9, 1918, NA, RG45, WA7, B646.
 81. Snowden to Sec. of the Navy Daniels, June 2, 1920, NA, RG38, E6, B31.
 82. They are listed in Ernesto Vega y Pagán, *Historia de las fuerzas armadas*, vols. XVI and XVII of *La era de Trujillo: 25 años de historia dominicana* (Ciudad Trujillo, 1955), XVII, chs. 1–5.
 83. Knapp to Brigade Commander, Oct. 21, 1921, NA, RG45, WA7, B64G.

84. Ledger to Military Gov., Note no. 79, Nov. 4, 1921, NA, RG38, E6, B37.

85. See file of letters and Report of Investigation, all attached to letter of Chargé Ledger, cited above.

86. U.S. Senate, *Hearings*, vols. I and II.

87. The events leading to the surrender are detailed

in Calder, "Some Aspects," ch. 6.

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Cacos and Caudillos: Marines and Counterinsurgency in Hispaniola, 1915-1924

by Graham A. Cosmas

New Interpretations in Naval History: Selected Papers from the Ninth Naval History Symposium, Naval Institute Press, 1991

During and after World War I, the U.S. Marine Corps engaged in prolonged counterinsurgency campaigns in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Dr. Cosmas examines the methods used to quell the guerrillas in these two countries, assesses the accomplishments as well as the failures of these early pacification efforts, and summarizes the counterinsurgency lessons that the Marine Corps learned from its experiences in Hispaniola.

The Marines who occupied Haiti and the Dominican Republic during and after World War I possessed little specific preparation for counterinsurgency or other types of low-intensity conflict. During the decades preceding these interventions, the Corps had concentrated its attention on developing an advance base force for use with the fleet in conventional naval warfare. Marine leaders viewed expeditionary duty as a secondary mission of the advance base infantry regiments. Nevertheless, when the Marines sent an expeditionary brigade to Haiti in 1915 and another to the Dominican Republic in 1916, they confronted challenges across the entire spectrum of low-intensity conflict, from semi-conventional and guerrilla warfare by organized military forces through terror-

ism, banditry, and rural crime and social disorder. The Marines in response employed a wide variety of counterinsurgency tactics and techniques. They also experienced the dilemmas and frustrations often encountered by troops sent overseas to battle an elusive, resourceful enemy on the enemy's own ground.¹

In Haiti, the First Provisional Marine Brigade encountered the *cacos*, peasant warriors from the wild, mountainous northern and central regions of the country. These men, recruited by local chieftains on the basis of personal loyalty and the promise of loot, fought in the mercenary armies of a succession of presidential aspirants from Haiti's urban, elite political class. During the years preceding the American intervention, *caco* revolts had made and broken governments at a rate of about one per year. The American landings in July 1915 aborted still another *caco*-enforced change of presidents. The Marines quickly suppressed initial resistance to the occupation, and the *cacos* remained quiet for nearly three years. During that interval, the Marines organized and trained a Haitian Gendarmerie, which took over most of the day-to-day work of garrisoning and policing the interior of the country.

Misconduct by the gendarmes and some of their Marine commanders brought the *cacos* to arms again in late 1918. To secure labor for building roads, the Gendarmerie reinstated the unpopular *corvée*, an old Haitian practice of drafting peasants for short terms of construction work near their homes. In the northern district, heart of *caco* country, gendarmes under Marine Major Clark W. Wells administered the *corvée* in a brutal and corrupt fashion. Correction of these abuses by the First Brigade commander came too late to prevent thousands of *cacos* from taking to the hills and to arms. The insurgency found a charismatic leader in Charlemagne Massena Peralte, a politician from the fringes of the black elite. Charlemagne, recognized by lesser *caco* chiefs as the head of a revolutionary government, proclaimed the objective of expelling the Americans from Haiti; but he seemed equally interested in ousting the Americans'

client, President Sudre Dartiguenave, and replacing Dartiguenave with a candidate from Charlemagne's own faction. Whatever his political goals, Charlemagne was a formidable threat to the occupation. His *cacos*, who began attacking Gendarmerie outposts in October 1918, numbered, by American estimate, almost 5,000 full-time fighters. Perhaps 15,000 additional peasant supporters turned out for operations near their homes or kept the insurgents supplied with food and intelligence. In the capital, Port-au-Prince, anti-American and anti-Dartiguenave politicians organized a rudimentary underground on Charlemagne's behalf. Fortunately for the Marines and gendarmes, the *cacos* were poorly armed. A minority of them carried old-model black-powder rifles; the majority went into battle with swords, machetes, and pikes.

When Marines landed in the Dominican Republic in May 1916, they had little difficulty in securing the capital and the central and western regions of the republic. In the eastern provinces of Seibo and Macorís, however, they encountered armed opposition which, while less militarily formidable than the *cacos*, proved more difficult to suppress. Rural Haiti, while extremely poor, was a stable and comparatively harmonious society of peasant freeholders. The eastern Dominican Republic, by contrast, was a region in transition from subsistence agriculture to an export economy dominated by foreign-owned sugar estates. The region was geographically isolated from the rest of the republic. It possessed only weak local governments and police forces and long had been ruled by *caudillos*, military strongmen whose power rested on their ability to maintain armed bands recruited, like the *cacos*, on the basis of personality and plunder. The *caudillos* participated in the country's periodic revolutions, often receiving local political offices for their services. Between revolutions, both the *caudillos* and professional bandits, called *gavilleros*, sustained themselves and their followers by robbery and extortion at the expense of whomsoever in the region possessed any surplus wealth, mostly rural storekeepers, sugar

estate owners, and the citizens of smaller municipalities. The stronger chieftains maintained informal alliances with the political elites of the few existing towns and cities as protection against the central government's rare, feeble attempts to assert its authority. Some chiefs also accepted regular cash payments from the sugar companies in return for keeping company properties safe from attack by lesser *caudillos* and *gavilleros*.

The American military government in Santo Domingo City,² unlike its Dominican predecessors, was determined to assert its authority and to restore law and order in the eastern provinces. Hence, from 1917 to 1922, Marines of the Second Provisional Brigade waged armed conflict against the *caudillos*. The Dominican leaders were inspired in some instances by nationalist political motives, but more often fought to maintain their regional authority and military reputations. Their followers were fewer in number than the *cacos*, amounting to a maximum of perhaps 600 full-time fighters and an indeterminate number of occasional or seasonal adherents, many of whom were economically motivated. Indeed, rural disorder waxed and waned with the annual sugar industry employment cycle. The Dominican insurgents acknowledged no supreme leader comparable to Charlemagne Peralte and usually operated in groups of less than 150 men. After late 1919, these bands rarely engaged even the smallest Marine patrols. Like the *cacos*, the Dominicans possessed mainly antiquated rifles and, more commonly, were armed only with pistols and shotguns. *Caudillos* and *gavilleros*, however, could count on at least the passive support of much of the rural population, support based in part on fear of reprisal, in part on local and personal loyalties, and in part on resentment of the Marines as occasionally brutal and heavy-handed foreign intruders.

The Marines, in operating against both *cacos* and *caudillos*, assumed as the foundation of their strategy the necessity of minimizing the use of force and devoting maximum attention to winning the friendship, or at least

the tolerance, of local civilians. Marine leaders continually informed their troops that they were not at war with the Dominicans or the Haitians, but in each instance were instead protecting a law-abiding majority against a minority of troublemakers. To reinforce this image, the Marines deliberately labeled their opponents "bandits." In July 1919 the First Brigade, for example, instructed its troops to use that term, rather than "*caco*," when referring to "natives, who, in certain sections are menacing the peace of the country." The Marines in both countries tried to avoid seizing or destroying civilian property and attempted to minimize disruption of the normal routine of the rural population. Brigadier General Harry Lee, the last commander of the Marines in the Dominican Republic, summed up the basic principles of Marine counterinsurgency in Hispaniola:

There are records where civilized powers, whose armed forces were engaged in the suppression of banditry, countenanced the most drastic methods. These . . . included the destruction of stocks and crops . . . , the burning of homes and villages, the laying to waste of entire sections, where the inhabitants harbored brigands. However, such drastic measures were never employed in Santo Domingo, because there exists one great disadvantage of their use: the moral effect upon the peaceful inhabitants, who become so exasperated as to forfeit their friendship for generations. That the friendship of the people of an occupied state should be sacrificed by any unnecessary measure was avowedly contrary to the policy of the United States.³

Efforts to implement these enlightened principles were hampered by deficiencies in the number and quality of available Marines. Counterinsurgency theorists of the 1960s contended that a troop ratio of ten to one or better was necessary for victory over guerrillas; the Marine brigades in Haiti and the Dominican Republic never approached that advantage. The 1st Brigade numbered about 900

officers and men when the *caco* revolt began and nearly 1,200 when it ended. In the Dominican Republic, the 2d Brigade could spare only 500 or so officers and men to pacify the eastern provinces until early 1919, when the arrival of an additional regiment increased Marine strength in the area to about 1,200. Both brigades were supplemented by native constabularies organized and officered by Marines. The 2,700-man Haitian Gendarmerie, although inferior to the Marines in training and armament, bore much of the burden of combat and freed the Marines of garrison duty in secure areas. By contrast, the *Guardia* (later *Policia*) *Nacional Dominicana*, counterpart of the Haitian Gendarmerie, provided the Marines little reinforcement. Delays in organizing the *Guardia*, rapid turnover in its Marine commanders, and a lack of money and equipment kept the Haitian force weak, ineffective, and well under its authorized strength of about 1,200 men throughout the period of hostilities. During final operations in the east, only two small *Guardia* companies performed auxiliary duties, leaving the field campaigning largely to the Marines.⁴

In 1917 and 1918, both occupation brigades gave up many of their most experienced and most capable officers and men to the brigade in France and to other elements of the expanding Marine Corps. Mobilization, followed rapidly by demobilization, brought wholesale personnel turnover to the two brigades in Hispaniola as they received large infusions of newly promoted officers and NCOs and first-term enlisted men. The resulting deterioration in small-unit leadership and troop quality, combined with racial and cultural antagonisms and the strains of operating against guerrillas, contributed to repeated incidents of misconduct by Marines in command of constabulary units as well as their own organizations. These incidents included the torture and execution of prisoners, indiscriminate firing on civilians by patrols, arbitrary seizure of peasants' food and livestock, and off-duty crimes and acts of violence and discourtesy toward ordinary Haitians and

Dominicans. Such abuses occurred in both countries; however, they appear to have been more numerous and damaging to the occupation in the Dominican Republic, where small Marine units were dispersed more widely and where the counterinsurgency campaign was more prolonged and indecisive.⁵

Marine misconduct, often exaggerated and sensationalized by critics of the interventions, became an issue in the 1920 American presidential campaign and was the subject of U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Senate investigations. In response to such exposure, both brigades during the early 1920s attempted to improve troop conduct and attitudes. Marine offenses against local citizens were investigated more thoroughly and punished more rapidly and sternly than before. Brigade leaders also intensively indoctrinated their men in the peaceable nature of their mission and the necessity of winning the friendship of the population. These efforts, combined with the end of active operations and the concentration of most Marines in fewer, larger garrisons, eliminated the worst abuses. By that time, however, much damage had been done. *Corvée* abuses in Haiti had helped set off the *caco* uprising, and widespread hatred of the Marines among rural Dominicans swelled guerrilla ranks and hindered Marine efforts to end the insurgency and banditry.⁶

The Marines directed the preponderance of their military effort to the pursuit and destruction, or at least the dispersal, of organized rebel bands. They attempted to do this by saturating the countryside with small patrols, rarely larger than 20 men, which operated from permanent posts or temporary bases. Patrols followed up attacks or engagements, intensively searched fixed zones, and set ambushes on known enemy movement routes. Marine patrols also went after particular enemy bands or leaders when reliable information as to their location could be obtained. The brigades directed these operations through regimental and battalion headquarters, each of which was responsible for a section of territory and a varying number of garrisons. Patrols normally went out under

lieutenants and senior NCOs; but company, battalion, and even regimental commanders at times took the field to familiarize themselves with the terrain, to respond to major enemy raids, or to follow up especially promising intelligence leads. Command and control were difficult, especially before portable field radios became available in the early 1920s. Headquarters often lost track of patrol routes and positions. Clashes inevitably occurred between friendly forces; in the most costly of these, Marines in Haiti killed a *gendarme*, a civilian scout, and a *caco* prisoner in an ambush of one patrol by another.

Marine commanders distilled their patrolling experience into standard operating procedures. These covered such basics as employment of point men, the conduct of stream crossings and house searches, security at halts and bivouacs, hand signals for silent control of movement, telltale signs of enemy ambushes, and mundane but vital details such as foot care. In the Dominican Republic, where much territory had to be covered and horses were available locally, the Marines often patrolled mounted; the 2d Brigade stationed a full company of such "horse Marines" in the eastern provinces. Supply was simple. Patrols in the field carried iron rations with them on their persons or on pack animals; when these ran out, they lived off the country—a practice unavoidable in many cases, but one also productive of some of the abuses noted previously.⁷

Even the smallest Marine patrols had little to fear in combat from enemies poorly armed and untrained in small-unit tactics. When *cacos* and guerrillas sprang successful ambushes, as they frequently did, the insurgents' poor weapons and worse marksmanship usually rendered their fire ineffective. Insurgent attempts to close for hand-to-hand combat, more frequent in Haiti than in the Dominican Republic, occasionally cost Marine and constabulary forces heavily, but more often simply gave them easier targets to shoot.

The Marines' problem was finding the enemy. In the roadless, heavily wooded hills and mountains of Hispaniola, the insurgents

were difficult to bring to battle unless they chose to fight or the Marines and constabulary surprised them in their camps. The *cacos*, accustomed to waging more or less conventional warfare in their various revolutions, made the Marines' work easier by launching frequent attacks on Gendarmerie posts, not to mention two mass assaults on Port-au-Prince and an abortive storming of Grande Riviere du Nord during which Charlemagne Peralte was killed in a Gendarmerie raid on his command post. Even in the hills, the *cacos* tended to move in large groups and to remain too long at customary concentration points, often old forts dating back to the French occupation. The Dominicans, by contrast, though ineffective in combat, were masters of evasion and never attacked posts or defended towns. Bringing them to battle, a Marine commander admitted,

to a large extent, depends on the bandit leader. If he wants to fight, and sometimes he does, he will open fire on the detachment, mostly on the point, and then disappears in the brush, where his retreat . . . is facilitated by the dense vegetation, intimate knowledge of the numerous trails . . . , and . . . fleetness of foot. If the bandit does not want a fight he simply lets the detachment pass by undisturbed.⁸

To help find the enemy and also to assist in governing the occupied republics, the Marine brigades built up elaborate intelligence services. Patrols in the field, interrogation of *caco* and guerrilla prisoners and defectors, as well as networks of voluntary and paid local informants were the Marines' principal sources of information about the enemy. After air squadrons were attached to the brigades in early 1919, the Marines used aerial reconnaissance to improve their knowledge of the countryside and occasionally to find enemy bands and camps. At brigade and lower headquarters, intelligence officers collated, evaluated, and distributed information from all sources. They paid attention to more

than purely military matters, assembling as well material on social and political conditions and the indigenous culture. Timely, accurate intelligence contributed substantially to the deaths of Charlemagne Peralte and Benoit Batreville in Haiti; but Marine intelligence also had its failures. During 1917—1918, for example, commanders and intelligence officers wasted much effort in futile attempts to establish that local German businessmen and landowners were stirring up and arming *cacos* and guerrillas. The Marines also were more efficient at accumulating a large volume of information than they were at evaluating and distributing that information. A regimental commander in the Dominican Republic declared: “Though a vast amount of information is secured, the greater part of it is of no value, either by reason of absolute inaccuracy . . . or by reason of delay in delivery”⁹

New technologies—principally aircraft and radios—assisted Marine operations after the end of World War I. In both Haiti and the Dominican Republic, Marine aircraft occasionally bombed and strafed enemy camps or fleeing troops, inflicting casualties and causing temporary panic. Such incidents, however, were rare, due to the inability of Marines on the ground to communicate rapidly with the aviators. Of more substantial value was the air squadrons’ work in reconnaissance; in transporting mail, supplies, and personnel; and in evacuating the sick and wounded from remote posts. In the Dominican Republic, aircraft also helped to coordinate patrol activity by dropping messages to the infantry. Meanwhile, stationary radio sets at unit headquarters and a limited number of portable field radios speeded response to incidents, simplified the task of coordinating widespread patrols, and reduced the need to tie up scarce mounted personnel in escorting couriers.¹⁰

In both Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the insurgents drew recruits, supplies, and information from the rural population and, especially in the latter stages of the Dominican disorders, lived with the peasants between occasional forays. The Marines,

therefore, experimented with measures for separating their armed enemies from the people and for enlisting local help against the insurgents.

Such efforts in Haiti were comparatively modest. The Marine brigade and the Gendarmerie revived an earlier Haitian system of internal passports to restrict civilian movement in *caco* areas. In 1919, the Marines and gendarmes began recruiting and paying citizens called *vigilantes* to guide patrols within their home areas and to help identify *cacos* and their sympathizers. The Marines also set *cacos* against *cacos*. They enlisted a well-to-do Haitian, Jean Conze, to organize a Gendarmerie-sponsored band and allowed him to win several noisy mock battles to enhance his military reputation. Conze succeeded in establishing himself as a principal lieutenant of Charlemagne Peralte and used this position to lure Peralte into the fatal expedition against Grande Rivière, an action for which Conze received a large cash reward.

Population control efforts by the Marines in the Dominican Republic were much more extensive and elaborate. Guerrilla warfare and banditry in the eastern provinces centered about areas of thick woods, interspersed with small farming settlements called *canucos*, which abutted the large sugar estates. There guerrilla leaders maintained their hideouts. Between raids, many of their followers lived in the *canucos* or in the company-owned villages on the sugar plantations, where they were seasonally employed.

After several limited population control and screening efforts during 1918 and 1919 produced few results, the 15th Regiment under its new commander, Lieutenant Colonel William C. Harllee, launched a systematic effort in the autumn of 1921 to drive the guerrillas from their hideouts. Between 24 October 1921 and 11 March 1922, Harllee conducted nine large-scale cordon and search operations against guerrilla base areas. In these drives, which involved most of the 15th Regiment and elements of the *Policia Nacional*, Marine patrols, directed by radio

and air-dropped messages, encircled an objective area and then moved inward, rounding up most of the adult population at a central collecting point. There a specially assembled corps of Dominican informers, supervised by Marine intelligence personnel and screened from sight of the detainees, picked alleged bandits out of the multitude. The suspects were held for further investigation and trial by Marine provost courts. Colonel Harlee provided food and medical assistance for the remaining detainees and, after personally explaining that the operation had been for the purpose of removing the criminals who had preyed upon the people, allowed them to return home. The Marines thoroughly mapped the areas in which they operated and used prisoners convicted by the provost courts as work gangs to cut networks of trails through the woods in order to make them more readily penetrable by military patrols. The operations met no armed resistance and resulted in few Dominican casualties. After one of the first of these drives, however, the 2d Brigade, in response to civilian complaints, ordered that citizens "will not be collected, tied, and marched to distant points" for screening, an indication that the 15th Regiment's roundup methods were other than gentle.

The effectiveness of Harlee's operations became a matter of controversy. No major guerrilla leaders were caught in these dragnets, but several hundred part-time fighters and supporters were captured and the groups still at large were forced out of their accustomed areas of operation. Harlee himself contended that his operations disrupted the guerrilla infrastructure and taught the people "that the bandit chiefs are no longer masters in their areas." Pro-occupation Dominican municipal officials and sugar estate managers alike complained, however, that the cordons terrorized the people and upset normal economic activity without halting the guerrillas. The cordons probably did bring effective pressure to bear on the insurgents' civilian support network and greatly increased the Marines' ability to operate in what formerly

had been almost impenetrable forest redoubts. Nevertheless, the 2d Brigade commander, Brigadier General Harry Lee, who had orders from Washington to conciliate the Dominicans, sided with Harlee's critics. On 5 March 1922, the general ordered an end to the concentrations.¹¹

Lee abandoned cordon operations in part because he believed he had a more effective weapon in hand: combined patrols of Marines and Dominican counterinsurgents. The Marine brigade had experimented with the use of indigenous irregulars early in the occupation, at one point employing one *caudillo* and his band to attack another. The military government, however, devoted most of its effort to the maintenance of law and order. It sought to disarm Dominican civilians, to suppress the private security forces of the sugar companies, and to confine military activity on the part of the Dominicans to the *Policia* and small municipal police forces. Throughout most of the occupation, relations remained contentious between the Marines and the sugar estate managers, who had access to much valuable intelligence and whose employees offered a potential source of both antiguerrilla and guerrilla manpower (to include the guerrilla chiefs themselves). Marine commanders justifiably complained that the company managers withheld information, especially about guerrilla leaders whom they paid off. The Marines also contended that the estate managers and large landowners often fabricated reports of guerrilla activity in order to encourage the establishment of Marine garrisons near their property, less to fight the insurgents than to intimidate their own workers. The estate managers for their part freely criticized Marine tactics and accused the American military government of failing to protect their properties.¹²

Brigadier General Lee set out to co-opt the estate managers. After listening sympathetically to their protests against Harlee's cordons, he adopted a suggestion made by the managers and local Dominican officials that civilian irregulars who knew both the terrain and the enemy be enlisted to hunt down the

insurgents. Planning for the irregular force began in November 1921, and by early the following April, five groups of so-called Civil Guards were ready to take the field. Each consisted of 15 Dominicans who were selected by their municipal governments or estate managers, armed and trained by the Marines, and commanded by a Marine officer assisted by two or three Marine NCOs. Operating in their own neighborhoods and backed by Marine firepower, the irregulars proved able to find insurgent groups, engage them, and inflict casualties. Their operations during April, according to Lee, "fairly broke and led to the disintegration of the bandit groups." The principal chiefs as a result all surrendered in the following month.¹³

To secure these surrenders, Lee employed still another counterinsurgency weapon: amnesty. The Marines treated their foes legally as criminal offenders either against the American forces in the Dominican Republic or against the client government in Haiti. Once they established military superiority over their adversaries, however, the Marines offered exemption from prosecution and punishment to the guerrilla leaders and any of their men who surrendered voluntarily with their weapons. In Haiti, the 1st Brigade provided not only amnesty but also cash rewards and civilian jobs to *cacos* who gave up. In return for leniency, *caco* chiefs were required to tour the countryside with Marine and Gendarmerie patrols, to urge other *cacos* to surrender, and to speak in favor of the government and the occupation. Chiefs who thus identified themselves with the Americans, the brigade commander reasoned, "would not again be accepted by the bandits." Accepting these terms, 165 *caco* commanders and more than 11,000 of their soldiers reportedly turned themselves in during late 1919 and early 1920.¹⁴

In the Dominican Republic in 1917, the 2d Brigade employed negotiation and offers of amnesty to secure the surrender of several major *caudillos* and their bands. The military government, however, subsequently prosecuted one of these leaders and several of his

lieutenants for the murder of two American civilians. The long sentences these men received, followed by the killing of their leader while reportedly attempting to escape from prison, diminished the value of offering amnesty for some time.

In early 1922, General Lee took advantage of the intensified military pressure of the cordon operations and the Civil Guards to revive the offer of amnesty. Using the sugar estate managers and local Dominican politicians as go-betweens, Lee declared a temporary cessation of hostilities and in May secured the surrender of seven major insurgent chiefs and some 140 of their followers—a majority of the guerrillas still fighting at the time. Lee's terms were strict. Insurgents who surrendered were required to give up their weapons and stay near their homes or a Marine or *Policia* post where they could be kept under surveillance. The leaders had to stand trial before military commissions that imposed 15-year prison sentences, suspended during good behavior. Supplementing the amnesty program, Lee and his superior, Rear Admiral Samuel S. Robison, the military governor, sought with only limited success to persuade the sugar estates to employ more workers during the normally slack season in an effort to reduce the common economic incentive for banditry.¹⁵

Even before the last Dominican rebels had surrendered, Marine officers began digesting their campaign experience in Hispaniola and using what they had learned there to devise a doctrine for the conduct of what they called "small wars." The results of their work appeared in their professional journal, the *Marine Corps Gazette*, as well as in classes taught at the Marine Corps schools at Quantico, Virginia. Much of this early doctrine simply stated what had been practiced in Hispaniola and included such obvious lessons as the indispensability of accurate, timely intelligence; the importance of top-caliber small-unit leadership and individual training; the desirability of restraint in the employment of firepower; and the necessity of not offending the inhabitants of small countries being "cleaned up." The scandals and investigations

accompanying the occupation of Hispaniola had left at least some Marines aware of the difficulties of waging war under the eye of public opinion. Major Earl H. Ellis, a former 2d Brigade intelligence officer, noted that in pacification, the United States government must appear as "the good angel"; hence, its military agents must behave in ways that would not "cause undue comment among [their] own people or among foreign governments."¹⁶

The Marines, despite some lapses in their conduct, were successful counterinsurgents in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. They engaged traditional military forces that had defied or disrupted national governments for generations. When the Marines finally withdrew, they had defeated those forces thoroughly enough and had left the central authorities strong enough that *cacos* and *caudillos* never regained their pre-intervention influence.¹⁷

It should be noted, however, that the Marines' antagonists in these wars lacked not only modern weaponry but also a modern political ideology and organization. Indeed, in the Dominican Republic, the *caudillos* and their followers resembled criminal gangs more closely than they did guerrilla revolutionaries. As a result, the enemy leaders in Hispaniola were driven by thoroughly pragmatic considerations of power and ambition; they stopped fighting for equally pragmatic reasons when it became too dangerous and difficult to resist further and when the Americans made it worth their while to quit. Even these forces might have proved more than the Marines could handle had the guerrillas been equipped with bolt-action rifles and plentiful ammunition. Nevertheless, the Marines learned many useful lessons from what was up to that time their most ambitious counterinsurgency effort, and a generation of Marine officers acquired hard-won experience. Both would stand them in good stead later in Nicaragua, where the Marines would encounter an enemy both politically and militarily more formidable than the *cacos* and *caudillos*.

Notes

1. The evolution of the advance base mission is covered in Graham A. Cosmas and Jack Shulimson, "Continuity and Consensus: The Evolution of the Marine Advance Base Force, 1900-1920," *Proceedings of the Citadel Conference on War and Diplomacy, 1977* (Charleston, S.C., 1979), 31-36. Unless otherwise noted, the discussion of the Haitian occupation in this paper is based on the following sources: Hans Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934* (New Brunswick, 1971), 43-91, 100-107, 119-23; Robert D. Heinl, Jr., and Nancy Gordon Heinl, *Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People, 1492-1971* (Boston, 1978), 449-73; and Headquarters, Garde d'Haiti, *The History of the Garde d'Haiti*, April-July 1934, Geographical Files, Reference Branch, U.S. Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, D.C., 33-34, 49-67. This comprehensive history of the Haitian Gendarmerie, later renamed Garde d'Haiti, was prepared by a board of Marine officers headed by Major Franklin A. Hart and will hereafter be cited as the "Hart Report." Unless otherwise noted, the discussion of the occupation of the Dominican Republic is based on Bruce J. Calder, *The Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic during the U.S. Occupation of 1916-1924* (Austin, 1984), chap. 4-5, esp. 123-32, 140-43, 151-53, 162-63, 168-78; and Captain Stephen M. Fuller, USMC, and Graham A. Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic, 1916-1924* (Washington, 1974), 13-22, 28-43, 45-48, 57-58, 65. Material has been drawn also from the Records of the Military Government of Santo Domingo, Record Group 38, Entry 6, Boxes 13, 23, 24, 36, 37, 48, 50, 64, and 74, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as RG 38, E6), and from the Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library, Record Group 45, WA-7, Boxes 755-57 and 761, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as RG 45, WA-7).
2. In the Dominican Republic, in contrast to Haiti, the United States in 1916 installed a military government, which was normally headed by a navy rear admiral as military governor. The 2d Marine Brigade came under the military governor's command, and the brigade commander headed the combined ministries of War and Marine and Interior and Police, in effect making him responsible for the provincial and municipal governments, law enforcement, and national defense.
3. First quotation is from Headquarters, First

Provisional Brigade, General Order 17, 18 July 1919; the second is from Report, Military Governor of Santo Domingo to the Secretary of the Navy, subject: Claim of Dugal McPhail . . . , 19 May 1924; both of these documents are in RG 38, E6, Boxes 13 and 74.

4. The manpower needs of counterinsurgency are emphasized in Message, Flag San Domingo to OpNav, 24 November 1918, and Report, Commanding Officer, Third Provisional Regiment, to Brigade Commander, subject: Field Operations, etc., 27 February 1919, RG 45, WA-7, Boxes 756-57. For the size of the Marine brigades, see Robert D. Heinl, Jr., *Soldiers of the Sea: The United States Marine Corps, 1775-1962* (Annapolis, 1962), 237, 241-42.

5. For typical comments on manpower turbulence and its effects, see Quarterly Reports of the Military Governor of Santo Domingo, 1 October through 31 December 1919 and 1 January through 31 March 1921, RG 38, Entry 15, Box 1.

6. Commanding General, 2d Brigade, to All Officers of the Brigade, subject: General Instructions, 19 August 1921; Commanding General, Second Brigade, to All Officers of the Brigade, subject: The Brigade attitude toward the inhabitants and its place in the occupation, 15 November 1921; both letters are in RG 45, WA-7, Boxes 761 and 757. See also Headquarters, 2d Brigade, Brigade Order No. 9, 20 August 1921, RG 38, E6, Box 37.

7. Lieutenant Colonel G. C. Thorpe, 3d Provisional Regiment, Campaign Order No. 2, 4 September 1918; Order, Regimental Commander to Captain Thomas J. Watson, 9 January 1919; both orders are in RG 45, WA-7, Box 757, and illustrate patrolling procedures in the Dominican Republic.

8. Colonel C. Gamborg-Andresen, 3d Provisional Regiment, Report to Brigade Commander, 2d Brigade, subject: Field Operations, etc., 27 February 1919, RG 45, WA-7, Box 757.

9. Quotation is from Colonel C. Gamborg-Andresen, 3d Provisional Regiment, Report to Brigade Commander, subject: Field Operations, etc., 27 February 1919, RG 45, WA-7, Box 757. For an example of concern with the Germans, see study by Lieutenant Colonel G. C. Thorpe, 11 June 1918, RG 45, WA-7, Box 756. For an appreciation of the vital importance of intelligence, see Major Earl H. Ellis, "Bush Brigades," *Marine Corps Gazette* 6 (March 1921): 12-14.

10. Air operations are summarized conveniently in Lieutenant Colonel Edward C. Johnson, USMC,

Marine Corps Aviation: The Early Years, 1912-1940 (Washington, 1974), 49-53. The value of radios in Dominican operations is indicated in Colonel C. Gamborg-Andresen, 3d Provisional Regiment, Report to Brigade Commander, subject: Field Operations, etc., 27 February 1919, RG 45, WA-7, Box 757.

11. Harllee described and defended his operations in his Report to the Commanding General, 2d Brigade, subject: Operations of 15th Regiment . . . , 2 January 1922, RG 38, E6, Box 48. See also John Harllee, *The Marine from Manatee: A Tradition of Rifle Marksmanship* (Washington, 1984), 258 and chap. 28. Brig. General Harry Lee, Report to the Major General Commandant . . . , subject: Report of activities of the 2nd Brigade . . . , for the year ending June 30th, 1922, RG 45, WA-7, Box 757, gives the brigade commander's evaluation. See also unsigned memorandum of conversation with sugar estate managers, 2 November 1921, RG 38, E6, Box 37. For the brigade order on roping suspects, see Lieutenant Colonel W. C. Harllee, 6th endorsement to report from Department of Justice and Public Instruction, 8 December 1921, and accompanying documents in RG 38, E6, Box 37. Harllee had served in the U.S. Army in the Philippine War before joining the Marine Corps. He was a veteran of Marine expeditionary service and one of the leading promoters of rifle practice in the corps.

12. Harllee, *Marine from Manatee*, 260-61, illustrates the suspicion with which Marine commanders viewed the estate managers.

13. Brig. General Harry Lee, Report to Major General Commandant . . . , subject: Report of activities of the 2d Brigade. . . for the year ending June 30th, 1922, 24 August 1922, RG 45, WA-7, Box 757.

14. Headquarters, 1st Brigade Daily Diary Report, 1 April 1920, RG 38, E6, Box 24.

15. For Lee's terms and disposition of cases, see Brig. General Lee, Report to Major General Commandant . . . , subject: Report of activities of the 2nd Brigade. . . for the year ending June 30th, 1922, 24 August 1922, RG 45, WA-7, Box 757; Rear Adm. Samuel Robison to Sugar Estate Managers, 13 June 1922; Lee, Report to Military Governor, subject: Bandits and bandit leaders, status of, 22 May 1923, RG 38, E6, Boxes 36 and 64.

16. The evolution of small wars doctrine in the Marine Corps during the 1920s and 1930s is described in Ronald Schaffer, "The 1940 Small Wars Manual and the 'Lessons of History,'"

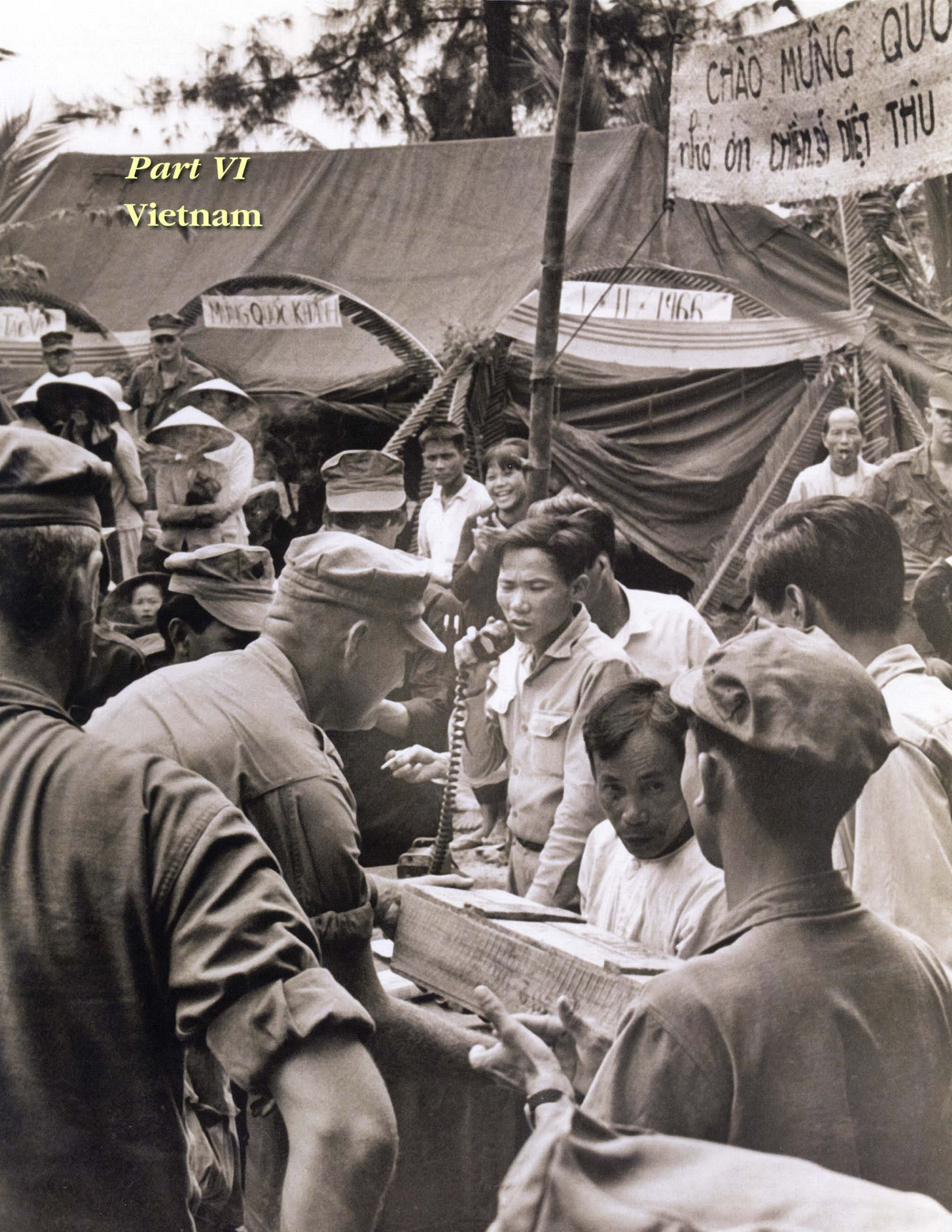
Military Affairs 36 (April 1972): 46-51. For Marine views in the early 1920s, see Ellis, "Bush Brigades," 1-16, from which the quotation is taken, and Major Samuel M. Harrington, "The Strategy and Tactics of Small Wars," *Marine Corps Gazette* 6 (December 1921): 474-91; and 7 (March 1922): 84-93. Both these authors devote as much or more attention to urban street fighting as they do to rural operations against guerrillas.

17 Calder, *Impact of Intervention*, 181-82, notes the *caudillos'* post-intervention loss of local influence.

About the Author

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Part VI
Vietnam



A Feather in Their Cap? The Marines' Combined Action Program in Vietnam

by Lawrence A. Yates

New Interpretations in Naval History: Selected Papers from the Ninth Naval History Symposium, Naval Institute Press, 1991

Critics who argue that American troops in Vietnam were not employed effectively to fight a people's war point to the Marines' Combined Action Program as one of the few exceptions to an otherwise bleak record of U.S. counterinsurgency efforts. In this essay, Dr. Yates provides an overview and assessment of the program's origins, mission, implementation, and accomplishments. He also makes some comparisons between the Combined Action Program and the Marines' involvement in the small wars of the early 20th century.

British counterinsurgency expert Sir Robert Thompson praised it as "the best idea I have seen in Vietnam"; U.S. Army Major General William DePuy dismissed it as "counterinsurgency of the deliberate, mild sort." The object of these conflicting assessments was the Combined Action Program (CAP) employed by the U.S. Marine Corps in Vietnam from 1965 to 1971. CAP united "a Marine rifle squad with a Vietnamese Popular Force platoon to provide village security and pacification in Vietnam."¹ The controversy the program generated from its inception persists today in the historiographical debate over the appropriate use of American military power against the Vietcong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA). That debate is not going to be resolved any time soon. The purpose of this article is more modest: to outline the origins and evolution of CAP, to discuss some aspects of the CAP experience, and to conclude with a few observations relating CAP to the small wars tradition of the Marine Corps.

The Combined Action Program was the product of military necessity and strategic prefer-

ence.² The primary mission of the Marine combat forces that entered South Vietnam in the spring and summer of 1965 was to provide base security for the three enclaves they occupied in the I Corps Tactical Zone, comprising the country's five northern provinces. In the Marine Tactical Areas of Responsibility (TAOR) at Phu Bai, Da Nang, and Chu Lai, U.S. military installations were vulnerable to attack from nearby hamlets and villages controlled, as was most of the rural population in I Corps, by the Vietcong. To secure the Phu Bai TAOR, Marines and the local, part-time Vietnamese militia known as Popular Forces (PFs) formed a Joint Action Company.³ In the fall of 1965, this improvised unit sent patrols into the area around the enclave and placed integrated platoons containing both Marines and PFs in four villages north of Phu Bai in order to disrupt Vietcong activities and to obtain much-needed intelligence. The success of this combined effort impressed Major General Lewis Walt, commander of the III Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF). In November, Walt authorized similar operations in support of base security around Da Nang; in January 1966, he and his Vietnamese counterpart extended the program of integrated operations by Marines and PFs to all Marine TAOR in I Corps.⁴

By this time, according to the *Pentagon Papers*, the Marine Corps "to a degree then unequalled among other American units was deeply engaged in pacification operations."⁵ These endeavors, undertaken in I Corps largely on III MAF's own initiative, quickly involved key Marine officers in a stormy debate with the Army-dominated U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) over the appropriate strategy for winning the war. In articulating the Marines' emphasis on pacification, Lieutenant General Victor Krulak, commanding general, Fleet Marine Force Pacific (FMFPac), contended that the "Vietnam conflict ultimately has to be decided among the people in the villages of South Vietnam," a point the Communists under-

stood all too well, if MACV did not. In Krulak's opinion, MACV's war of attrition against North Vietnamese and Vietcong main forces was not only counterproductive, given the enormous pool of Communist manpower, but also largely irrelevant to the more important war being waged by the Vietcong political cadre and guerrillas for the support of the people. The people's loyalty, Krulak argued, was the "real prize" in the conflict; and to win the prize, Saigon and the United States had to put "the full weight of our top level effort into bringing all applicable resources . . . into the pacification process."

Krulak specifically recommended that the United States and South Vietnam neutralize VC political cadre in the villages and "comb the guerrillas out of the people's lives," thus denying the Vietcong food, sanctuary, and intelligence. At the same time, to overcome the "provincialism" of the Vietnamese people and to help "win their allegiance and loyalty in an unbroken governmental chain stretching from the hamlet to Saigon," the United States had to "press" its ally to launch a major land reform program. The creation of a strong society also required reforms in health, education, agriculture, transportation, and communications—areas in which the U.S. military could play a direct role through the introduction of civic action programs. Americans were "far more efficient at civic action than the Vietnamese officialdom," Krulak judged, because they were "more aggressive, more resourceful, more compassionate and less venal." In I Corps, the Marines already had begun introducing a variety of civic action projects into coastal villages where most of the rural population lived. There was little hope, however, that these programs—much less more fundamental reforms—would succeed unless the people could be guaranteed protection from Communist reprisals. Emphasizing that "*if the enemy cannot get to the people, he cannot win*," Krulak concluded that "it is therefore the people whom we must protect as a matter of first business."⁶

All participants in the strategy debate of 1965 acknowledged this cardinal rule of counterinsurgency but disagreed sharply over whose mission it was to provide village security. General William Westmoreland, the MACV commander,

paid lip service to pacification, but in his commitment to waging a war of attrition against enemy main forces took the position that he "simply had not enough numbers to put a squad of Americans in every village and hamlet."⁷ The Marines for their part were conducting small-unit offensives to clear their expanding TAOR of VC cadre and guerrillas, but these operations were not designed to provide permanent security for the villages and hamlets.⁸ Many Americans argued persuasively that it was up to the South Vietnamese to secure areas cleared by U.S. forces, but the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) evinced little enthusiasm or aptitude for taking on the "village war."⁹

That left South Vietnamese Regional Forces (RFs) and PFs to perform the task. Of the two, the local volunteers known as PFs, who were organized into squads and platoons to defend the villages in which they lived, seemed ideally situated for the mission. The drawback was that, because they fell at the bottom of the South Vietnamese military hierarchy, PFs suffered the contempt and neglect of those above them. They consequently lacked leadership, motivation, discipline, training, and equipment. But home defense, the Marines argued, gave the PFs a "powerful motivation potential."¹⁰ The question was whether that potential could be realized. The experience with combined operations around Phu Bai and Da Nang in 1965 held out the promise that, under Marine tutelage, the PFs could perform effectively. The mission of providing 24-hour protection to villages and hamlets in I Corps thus fell to an expanded Combined Action Program. What had started as a limited experiment for the defense of U.S. military bases became the linchpin in 1966 in the Marines' pacification strategy for winning the war.

On paper, the CAP concept appeared simple and effective, a marriage between Marine tradition and the peculiar circumstances of Vietnam.¹¹ The critical unit in the program was the Combined Action Platoon,¹² formed by integrating a Marine rifle squad of fourteen volunteers and a navy corpsman into a PF platoon of 35 men. Although district chiefs and their subordinate village chiefs retained control of PF units, the Marine squad leader (a sergeant or in some

cases a corporal) served as an adviser to the PF platoon leader and assumed de facto command of the platoon during combat operations. The remainder of the Marine squad (three four-man fire teams, not including the Navy corpsman and a Marine grenadier attached to platoon headquarters) merged with the three rifle squads of a PF platoon. The Marine fire team leaders served as squad leaders in the CAP platoon.

Once activated, a Combined Action Platoon lived in a compound built in or near a hamlet of the home village of the PFs. According to official accounts of the program, "Marine members of the CAPs live in the same tents, eat the same food, and conduct the same patrols and ambushes as their Vietnamese counterparts." When not engaged in combat operations, the Marines trained PFs in military fundamentals and counter-guerrilla methods and offered advice on civic action projects proposed by village officials. The PFs, in return, furthered the Marines' education in the language and customs of the people, provided knowledge of the terrain, and passed along vital intelligence. Marine leaders presumed that this interaction would encourage mutual trust and respect, both between the Marines and PFs and between the Marines and the villagers. As the inhabitants of a village grew accustomed to the Marine presence and came to realize that the CAP platoon would not depart each day before sundown, they would gradually welcome the Americans into the community and provide information to help the platoon destroy the local Vietcong infrastructure and keep guerrilla bands at bay. Progress could then be made in improving living conditions in the village and in making the basic reforms that would shift the people's loyalty to the national government.

Once a village attained a respectable level of stability and the PFs acquired a high degree of military proficiency, the Marines could move on to a new community in need of protection. As the Marines spread outward from minimally contested villages in their enclaves, they would, through an "oil spot" effect, create a security network that would gradually cover all of the highly populated coastal region in I Corps. The VC, isolated from the population, would become little more than a military nuisance, the insurgency

would wither, and the Marines could depart the country, "leaving behind a more substantial Vietnamese rural security structure."¹³

The CAP concept was ambitious. Whether or not the Marines could implement it successfully depended in part on their ability to activate more Combined Action Platoons. The Marines wanted III MAF to have 74 CAP platoons in the field by the end of 1966, but had to settle for 57 when confronted simultaneously with a Buddhist rebellion against the Saigon government, the reluctance of many district chiefs to assign PFs to the program, and large-unit operations that drained Marine manpower. A variety of other disruptions, including the demilitarized zone (DMZ) campaign, the siege of Khe Sanh, and the 1968 Tet Offensive similarly delayed realization of the 1967 goal of 114 CAP platoons until 1969, the peak year for the program.

As the number of platoons increased, III MAF made administrative changes and reorganized command and control relationships. In 1967, for example, the program acquired Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) status, and Lieutenant General Robert Cushman, the new III MAF commander, placed CAP under the supervision of his deputy. Under this arrangement, operational control of CAP Marines was transferred from line units to Combined Action Companies (CACOs) and, at the next higher echelon, to newly created Combined Action Groups (CAGs). In January 1970, III MAF created the short-lived Combined Action Force (CAF) as a headquarters with command status for the four CAGs then in existence; CAF was deactivated that September as part of the troop withdrawal from Vietnam. As the Marines added tiers in the CAP chain of command, the lines of coordination and control with the Vietnamese involved in the program invariably became more complex as well.¹⁴

Despite the magnitude of these changes and the added bureaucratic layers brought about by the expansion of CAP, the mission of the CAP platoon remained by and large unchanged. That mission had six parts: "destroy the Vietcong hamlet-village infrastructure; provide public security and help maintain law and order; protect the local governing structure; guard facilities and important lines of communications within the vil-

lage and hamlet; organize local intelligence nets; and participate in civic action and psychological operations against the Vietcong." The Marines in the platoon had additional missions: "conduct training in general military subjects and leadership for Popular Forces assigned to the platoon; motivate, instill pride, patriotism, and aggressiveness in the Popular Force soldier; conduct combined day and night patrols and ambushes; conduct combined operations with other allied forces; and ensure that information gathered was made available to nearby allied forces."¹⁵

Statistics were amassed by III MAF and FMFPac to prove that the Combined Action Program was an unqualified success. The basis for these statistics was a monthly reporting system initiated by General Walt in February 1966 that attempted to quantify "indicators" of pacification within a village. Although this system was replaced within a year by the more sophisticated Hamlet Evaluation System, both methods, according to FMFPac, confirmed the accomplishments of CAP.¹⁶ CAP villages, for example, allegedly achieved high degrees of pacification much more rapidly than villages without CAP Marines. FMFPac assessments of counterinsurgency operations further concluded that PFs belonging to CAP platoons enjoyed lower desertion rates and higher kill ratios and generated better intelligence than PFs working without Marine supervision. In support of its figures and charts, FMFPac cited numerous examples of successful CAP field operations and constantly hammered home the point that "the clearest evidence of CAP effectiveness is the fact that the Vietcong have never been able to reestablish control over a village occupied by a CAP platoon."¹⁷

Critics then and later have regarded the mass of data and glowing reports of CAP activities as "Krulak's fables," mere propaganda in the continuing debate over strategy between the Marines and MACV. The authors of the *Pentagon Papers* charged that "the Marine strategy was judged successful, at least by the Marines, long before it had even had a real test." Others questioned the methods used in compiling the statistics or asked whether it was even possible to quantify what in fact was a state of mind—a villager's sense of security or "a man's devotion to a cause." Also,

the figures could be misleading. It was possible, a Marine colonel claimed, for CAP Marines to accumulate enough points on a survey to classify their village as "pacified," when in reality the Vietcong infrastructure, the most important of Walt's indicators, remained virtually undisturbed.¹⁸

It would be a mistake to dismiss FMFPac reports about CAP out of hand: many CAP platoons achieved significant successes in counterinsurgency operations and civic action. Still, the critics are correct in saying that the reports ignored or glossed over serious problems besetting the program, beginning with the recruitment and preparation of CAP Marines. Initially, Marines entering the program were to be combat-tested volunteers from line units—mature troops dedicated to helping the Vietnamese and free of xenophobia, racial prejudice, and other undesirable characteristics. To be sure, many such individuals volunteered, but others signed up to land what was perceived as a soft job, to escape the boredom of rear area duties, or to leave behind problems they encountered in their line units. Still other Marines were "volunteered" by commanding officers who, reluctant to relinquish their best men to CAP, sent misfits and other "problem" leathernecks instead. The CAP screening process detected many of the unmotivated and undesirable candidates for the program, but others slipped through "perfunctory" interviews by saying what was expected of them—"pretending to Christian sufferance and forgiveness," as one of the less committed Marines put it.¹⁹

Once screened, CAP Marines were to receive at least two weeks of instruction in counterinsurgency skills and Vietnamese customs and language before joining their PF platoons. Judging from the testimony of a very small proportion of the Marines who served in the program, it would appear, however, that a significant number of recruits either did not attend the course or found it wanting, especially with respect to language training, the program's "most glaring weakness."²⁰ For these Marines, CAP became an "earn while you learn" proposition in which the platoon itself provided the skills and knowledge they needed to survive and succeed.

It was not uncommon for a CAP platoon, once activated, to suffer supply and manpower shortages. Until the program attained TO&E status, it relied largely on Marine or Army line units for supplies. These units jealously guarded their materiel, making logistics an erratic and frustrating experience for CAP. To acquire equipment needed for operations, base protection, and civic action, CAP Marines scrounged, begged, borrowed, bartered, and, not infrequently, resorted to "midnight requisitions."²¹

The same combination of initiative and ingenuity could not so readily correct the manpower deficit that plagued some CAP platoons. It was not uncommon for the PF contingent to be well below the 35-man norm. A district or village chief, operating on his own agenda or punishing the Marines for some slight, could withdraw PFs from the program without warning. Furthermore, PFs, as part-time militia, were not always present for duty. The Marines themselves, particularly in the early days of the program and later during the withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam, frequently had to operate with rifle squads that were under strength and led by very young corporals. These conditions adversely affected the ability of CAP platoons to perform their missions and, more important, made it more difficult for them to defend against enemy attack.

Even under the best of conditions, a full-strength, 49-man platoon could not by itself hope to defeat a large VC or NVA unit. While trying to keep the enemy at bay, CAP platoons would call in fire support from nearby bases and wait for reaction forces from line units or CACOs to arrive. Without outside support, compounds were often overrun. Indeed, so frequently were they overrun during the Tet Offensive that CAP platoons sought to reduce their vulnerability by operating thereafter as mobile units without a fixed base. The decision was controversial, since many Marines regarded the compound as a symbol of CAP's 24-hour presence and the "focal point for civic action." Proponents of the mobile concept countered that abandoning the "siege mentality" of the compound led to more frequent and meaningful contact with villagers, thus compensating for the decline in civic action projects.²²

The vulnerability of CAP platoons exacerbated another sensitive issue: the relationship between CAP units and regular line units. According to the operating tenets of pacification strategy, the two forces were supposed to complement one another. CAP platoons would secure villages while Marine or other friendly battalions maneuvered to clear the area of organized enemy forces. In the course of operations, line units would benefit from the intelligence and the knowledge of local conditions provided by the CAP platoons, while those platoons relied on line units for fire support and reaction forces should enemy troops in the vicinity of a CAP village attack.

What should have been a complementary relationship often degenerated into a fractious affair characterized by feelings ranging from ambivalence to outright hostility. Troops in line units constantly on the move resented what they perceived as the "easy" life of the stationary CAP Marines who had "gone Asiatic"; moreover, battalion commanders fumed when they had to divert men and weapons to "bail out" a CAP platoon under fire, often under conditions only vaguely known to the troops mounting the relief mission. CAP Marines countered by charging that line units ignored vital intelligence, provided only erratic support, and worst of all, failed to understand the nature of pacification. The mission of the battalion was to find and kill the enemy. The line Marine regarded villages as combat zones, not pacification areas, and the people living in the villages as possible enemies, not potential friends. Generally insensitive to the needs of the inhabitants and often emotionally taut from the dangers and frustrations of field operations, line Marines entering a CAP village posed a threat to the program. Whether inadvertently trampling on a garden or deliberately beating a VC suspect, the unwelcome intruders could wreck in minutes the progress CAP platoons had made over many mouths.²³

Although CAP personnel often saw themselves as protecting villagers from friendly as well as Communist forces, the available evidence suggests that many of the CAP Marines themselves had difficulty understanding the people and the society they were defending and, through pacification, trying to change. Virtually

all Marines entering the program brought with them the cultural baggage of Western society. CAP schools could impart—at least to those who attended them—a cursory overview of Vietnamese history, politics, society, and culture, together with guidelines for what constituted proper behavior in the traditional society of the rural village. But in the time allotted, instructors could not begin to explain how customs varied from province to province or to analyze adequately the complex interactions in an agrarian society; the instructors could only hope that the Marines in time would develop a higher level of toleration and understanding for a belief and value system quite different from their own. For 18-year-old Marines, this was a tall order. Consequently, as one CAP veteran has observed, Marines and PFs met “across a deep cultural gulf.”²⁴

That gulf often became deeper after Marines joined a PF platoon. Sanitary conditions and the personal hygiene of the Vietnamese appalled many of the Americans who were assigned to CAP platoons. Moreover, the soap and toiletries ordered by the Marines to alleviate the situation often ended up on the black market or in the possession of crooked officials. Corruption seemed endemic and in some locales contaminated the PFs who, as local henchmen of the district or province chiefs, ran “mafia-like” operations in which they used their paramilitary status to eliminate or intimidate the competition. Theft was another source of friction in some CAP villages, as PFs made off with rations, equipment, and personal items left unguarded by the Marines. Recurring thefts generated ill feelings that occasionally led to incidents of threatened or actual violence. Less likely to cause violence but equally troubling to CAP Marines were the rigid sexual mores of the Vietnamese villagers. Warned that “premarital sex is forbidden, but mutual masturbation by members of the same sex is not,” Marines were advised that it might be better to “acquiesce” in “what might seem to us homosexual advances” rather than “create an incident.” One CAP Marine probably spoke for all in observing that “one can expect an average group of young Marines to go only so far above and beyond the call of duty.”²⁵

Cultural differences reinforced Marine complaints about the military dedication and prowess of the PFs. Rumor had it that PF platoons had been infiltrated by the Vietcong or at least had reached an understanding with the enemy about what was permissible in the conduct of military operations. Thus, many Marines began their association with PFs by “trusting none of them.” If the PFs subsequently failed to respond to training or did not carry their weight in the field, suspicion and distrust turned readily into dislike and contempt. By the time a Marine finished his CAP tour, it was not uncommon for him to look upon the PFs “with a real sense of violence.” This hostility was easily transferred to the villagers in general, with Marines deliberately violating various taboos just “to get a rise out of the PFs” and those sullen Vietnamese who regarded the Americans not as saviors but as an occupation force. Surveys conducted in Vietnam in the late 1960s revealed racial prejudice (“Luke the Gook”) and strong anti-Vietnamese feelings on the part of a significant number, albeit a minority, of Marines.²⁶

This picture of mutual animosity can be overdrawn. There were, to be sure, CAP villages where the Marines and PFs worked together well, each learning from the other; where Marines were gradually, if not totally accepted into the community; and where the people assisted the CAP platoons in civic action and counterinsurgency campaigns. There were also Marines who came to accept, if not fully comprehend, that PFs who resorted to theft did so out of economic hardship and familial responsibility; that corruption can be found in any society, and in South Vietnam, if kept within limits, was regarded as acceptable and even as a mark of status; that family ties were key to a way of life based on a complex set of personal, impersonal, and mystical relationships; and that in the provincial world of the village, nationalism had little meaning except to a small, educated elite. “Outside Saigon and a few other places,” one CAP Marine recently noted, “there was no South Vietnam.”²⁷ Caught in the middle of an ideological war in which neutrality could prompt severe retribution, villagers who otherwise might believe they had no stake in the conflict often

ended up assisting the Vietcong out of a sense of self-preservation or because relatives, through persuasion or coercion, had joined the VC. Many CAP Marines understood such arrangements and bore no grudge against the hapless victims of the war.

Nevertheless, the conflict, whatever its impact on village society, remained a fact of life, and it was the duty of CAP platoons to help sway the outcome. Both sides, through greatly divergent means, sought to transform traditional Vietnamese society into a modern nation-state. With a strong faith in the universal applicability of Western ideals and institutions and in the efficacy of reform and social engineering, CAP Marines tried to convince villagers that an increasingly responsive government in Saigon offered the best blueprint for a more equitable, prosperous, and secure life. The effort was well-intentioned, but good intentions could only effect so much: they could often atone for inadvertent breaches of village etiquette, but they could not transform overnight, or even in a few years, what history had taken centuries to set in place. Although progress in the village war *was* being made by 1971, the extent of that progress was, and still is, difficult to assess.

Amid this uncertainty, the last CAP platoon was deactivated in 1971 as Americans gradually withdrew from Vietnam. Supporters of the program have argued then and since that had the CAP concept been applied throughout South Vietnam, the war's outcome might have been different. This seems an exaggerated claim, given the problems—both niggling and profound—that plagued the program. The question remains: What *can* be said about a program that engaged only a few thousand Marines and left behind scant testimony as to its successes and failures? While some generalizations are possible, they do not always prove as illuminating as one might wish. There were good and bad, successful and unsuccessful CAP platoons. Accomplishments varied depending on such factors as time, place, and personnel, not to mention a host of other variables that were beyond the control of CAP Marines. When engaged in counterinsurgency operations, CAP platoons often disrupted enemy activities, but few CAP units claimed to have

eliminated the VC infrastructure from their respective villages. The effectiveness of PF training varied from one CAP platoon to another, allowing some CAP Marines to relocate to new villages, but leaving others in place for the duration of the war. Moreover, despite the reforms and self-help programs that were introduced to improve the lives of the villagers, the persistence of traditional patterns of behavior caused many Marines to demand in frustration, "Why do you do that? This is crazy!" The cultural gap, one CAP Marine concluded, was simply "unbridgeable."²⁸

Marines who had conducted counterinsurgency operations, trained indigenous troops, and engaged in pacification programs in Latin America from 1915 to 1934 would have empathized with this sense of frustration. There as in Vietnam, ethnocentrism came into conflict with alien cultures as leathernecks tried to bring stability to Hispaniola and Nicaragua. The Chesty Pullers and Smedley Butlers of the small wars era fared reasonably well against the guerrilla bands arrayed against them, but they could not impose stability based on the type of representative democracy, free enterprise, egalitarianism, and military professionalism found in the United States. By the time the Marines departed the area in the mid-1930s, they had come to recognize the limited effectiveness of American power and the limited applicability of American institutions in what would later be labelled Third World countries. The frustrations encountered in Haiti and Nicaragua dampened enthusiasm for pursuing the effort elsewhere.

This "lesson," however, did not find its way into the Marines' professional journals, school curricula, or *Small Wars Manual*. The latter, for example, addressed the social and economic causes of revolution and explained how Marines should interact with native populations, but it also perpetuated the notion that countries in the throes of revolutionary upheaval could be stabilized through the infusion of Western-style reforms.²⁹ Ethnocentrism toward the Third World remained undiluted when the United States entered Vietnam a quarter of a century later. As Edward Lansdale, one of the architects of that intervention, unabashedly avowed, "I took my American beliefs into these Asian struggles."³⁰

So, too, did most American policymakers and soldiers, however sophisticated their appreciation of the complex dynamics and nuances of Vietnamese society. In time, hubris again yielded to disillusionment and frustration, much as it had at the end of the “banana wars” in Latin America. What the United States could not do in Haiti and the Dominican Republic—that is, restructure both countries according to an American blueprint—stood even less chance of succeeding in Vietnam. The United States had enjoyed complete control of an occupied country in Hispaniola. That was not the case in Vietnam, however. There Americans fought in an alien setting on behalf of a sovereign government that until the eleventh hour seemed unwilling or, perhaps more accurately, unable for fear of losing its hold on power to enact programs with enough grassroots appeal to win the allegiance of a large portion of the citizenry.

Just as the lessons of American’s small wars in the first half of this century failed to prevent an encore performance in Vietnam, the “lesson” of Vietnam concerning the risks involved in trying to build nations for governments of countries fundamentally different from the United States is likely to be forgotten in the long term. A belief in the universal appeal and applicability of the American way of life is too deeply ingrained in the American character to expect otherwise. Despite what happened in Vietnam, Americans have not lost faith in the “middle way,” that path of moderate and progressive reform through which the United States can lead the world to peace and harmony, while fending off the dangers of reaction on the Right and revolution on the Left.

It is in the context of ethnocentrism and cultural conflict that one must approach an assessment of the Combined Action Program. Many of the problems CAP encountered in Vietnam can be attributed to organizational growing pains. At the same time, CAP was a small but significant part of a broader strategy that, despite its admirable intentions, was predicated on the existence of the “middle way” in Vietnam, that is, on the efficacy and relevance of American-style solutions. If the “middle way” existed at all, it contained so many obstacles that it could not be

traversed easily or quickly. Given time, pacification might have worked; but time ran out. Alternative strategies appeared unattractive, so the Americans departed, the CAP platoons disbanded. Whether the Combined Action Program should be resurrected in another country under different circumstances is problematical. The possibility should not be dismissed out of hand. But before this innovative approach to local security is applied to another counterinsurgency effort, the CAP experience in Vietnam should be studied at length. For if the guiding strategy is infused with ethnocentrism and minimizes cultural differences, the prospects for the success of another Combined Action Program in the future would seem bleak.

Notes

1. Thompson and Depuy quoted in Andrew Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore, 1986), 174-75. The definition of CAP is taken from Bruce C. Allnut, *Marine Combined Action Capabilities: The Vietnam Experience* (McLean, Va., 1969).
2. On the origins of the Combined Action Program, see Fleet Marine Force, Pacific (FMFPac), *The Marine Combined Action Program Vietnam*, n.d. [but covers CAP from August 1965 through January 1967], in FMFPac documents, U.S. Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as USMCHC); “Joint Action Company,” in Third Battalion, Fourth Marines Command Chronology, September-October 1965, USMCHC; Jack Shulimson and Charles M. Johnson, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: The Landing and the Buildup, 1965* (Washington, 1978), 133-38; Robert A. Klyman, “The Combined Action Program: An Alternative Not Taken” (Honors thesis, University of Michigan, 1986), 6-16; Michael E. Peterson, *The Combined Action Platoons: The U.S. Marines’ Other War in Vietnam* (New York, 1989), 21-29; Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York, 1980), 560-66, 571-72.
3. In late 1965, the designation Joint Action Company was changed to Combined Action Company in accordance with military terminology that defines U.S. military operations with troops of another country as “combined” operations.
4. On expanding combined Marine and PF operations throughout Marine enclaves in I Corps, see Lewis W. Walt to Commanding General, I Corps, 5 January 1966; Lieutenant General Nguyen Chanh Thi to Commanding General, III MAP, 28 January 1966; Thi

to various subordinates, 28 January 1966; Walt to Commanding Officer, I Corps Advisory Group, 4 February 1966; and Walt to Commanding General, Third Marine Division, 4 February 1966—all attached to FMFPac, *Marine Combined Action Program Vietnam*. Note that in early 1966, the term “Combined Action Program” had not gained wide currency. As late as 1967, CAP and CAC (Combined Action Company) were often used interchangeably.

5. U.S. Congress, Senate Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Grounds, *The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decision Making on Vietnam (The Senator Gravel Edition)*, 4 vols. (Boston, 1975), 2:534.

6. Victor Krulak, “A Strategic Appraisal,” December 1965, in Robert A. Klyman Papers, USMCHC. While my text relies on this paper to describe the Marine approach to pacification, additional information can be found in Shulimson and Johnson, *Landing and Buildup*, 37-39, 46-48, 133-46; Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam* (New York, 1988), 629-38; FMFPac, *Operations of the III Marine Amphibious Force*, USMCHC. Originally classified secret, the FMFPac volumes contain monthly reports, each of which includes a section on the pacification program. See also “III MAP Civic Action Summary,” December 1965, Klyman Papers, USMCHC; Russel H. Stolfi, *U.S. Marine Corps Civic Action Efforts in Vietnam March 1965-March 1966* (Washington, 1968); Shulimson and Johnson, *Landing and Buildup*, 37-39, 46-48, 133-46; Jack Shulimson, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: An Expanding War, 1966* (Washington, 1981), 11-15, 229-58; Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 566-71.

7. William C. Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports* (Garden City, N.Y., 1976), 166. Similarly, Westmoreland argued, “Had I had at my disposal virtually unlimited manpower, I could have stationed troops permanently in every district or province and thus provided an alternative strategy. That would have enabled the troops to get to know the people intimately, facilitating the task of identifying the subversives and protecting the others against intimidation.” *Ibid.*, 147. The debate over strategy should not be seen in terms of the Army versus the Marine Corps. Not all Marine officers shared Krulak’s views, while within the Army, a study commissioned by the chief of staff of the Army challenged Westmoreland’s attrition strategy. According to this study completed in March 1966, “Present U.S. military actions [against Communist regiments] are inconsistent with that fundamental of counterinsurgency doctrine which establishes winning popular allegiance as the ultimate goal.” Reference to this document, known as the PROVN study, together with a critique of

Westmoreland’s handling of the war can be found in Guenter Lewy, *America in Vietnam* (New York, 1978), 77-126. See also Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 548-49; Reports, Commandant of the Marine Corps to Secretary, Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Status of the Development of Counter guerrilla Forces,” 1 February 1962 and 13 March 1962, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1961, Record Group 218, 3360 Unconventional Warfare (10 February 1961) files, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

8. For Marine small-unit counter guerrilla operations during the first two years of the war, see *U.S. Marine Corps Forces in Vietnam, March 1965-September 1967: Historical Summary, vol. 1, Narrative*, USMCHC.

9. Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 571; Lewy, *American in Vietnam*, 87-88, 97. In October 1966, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara complained that ARVN had still not fully committed itself to the pacification program. *Pentagon Papers*, 4:350-51.

10. This description and assessment of the PFs is taken from FMFPac, *Marine Combined Action Program Vietnam*, 3-5.

11. Many Marines regarded CAP as a direct descendant of programs the corps employed to train native constabularies in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua during the 1920s and 1930s. Shulimson and Johnson note, however, that Combined Action Platoons were much more a “cooperative effort” than the “Marine-officered” units of the “banana war” era. *Landing and Buildup*, 134-35.

12. The Combined Action Program and the Combined Action Platoon share the same acronym, CAP. For the sake of clarity, I will use the acronym solely in reference to the former and refer to the latter as “CAP platoon(s).”

13. For a more detailed description of the organization and methods of the Combined Action Platoon, see FMFPac, *Marine Combined Action Program Vietnam*; Lieutenant Colonel W. R. Corson, USMC, “Marine Combined Action Program in Vietnam,” n.d. [1967], USMCHC.

14. Details regarding the expansion of CAP can be found in the FMFPac monthly reports and in the CAF and CAG command chronologies, as well as those of the line units that prior to October 1967 had operational control over CAP platoons. These documents are located at the Marine Corps Historical Center. For cogent summaries of CAP’s growth, see Klyman, “Combined Action Program,” 12-43, and Peterson, *Combined Action Platoons*, 31-83. See also Shulimson, *Expanding War*, 239-43; Gary L. Telfer, Lane Rogers, and V. Keith Fleming, Jr., *U.S. Marines in Vietnam*:

Fighting the North Vietnamese, 1967 (Washington, 1984), 186-94; Charles R. Smith, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: High Mobility and Standdown, 1969* (Washington, 1988), 288-94; Graham A. Cosmas and Terrence P. Murray, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: Vietnamization and Redeployment, 1970-1971* (Washington, 1986), 139-61.

15. Smith, *High Mobility and Standdown*, 290-91. See also FMFPac, *Operations of the III MAF*, January 1967, 37.

16. Walt's system was based on five "progress indicators": destruction of enemy units; destruction of enemy infrastructure; government of Vietnam (GVN) establishment of security; GVN establishment of local government; degree of development of new life program. Each indicator received a value of 20 points and was broken down into related subdivisions. A score of 60 points indicated "firm GVN/U.S. influence," while a score of 80 points indicated pacification. The Hamlet Evaluation System was developed by the CIA to provide a uniform measure of progress throughout Vietnam. It "borrowed freely" from the Marine system, but differed in several respects. According to FMFPac, however, the two systems reinforced one another and led to the same conclusions. Shulimson, *Expanding War*, 257-58. Allan Millett notes in his history of the Marine Corps that "a more sophisticated system of evaluating hamlet security showed that much of the Marine civic action program had produced no lasting GVN control." *SemperFidelis*, 575.

17. FMFPac, *Marine Combined Action Program Vietnam*, 3, 7-17; FMFPac, *Operations of the III MAF*, monthly reports, 1966-1971.

18. *Pentagon Papers*, 2:535; Shulimson, *Expanding War*, 258; Klyman, "Combined Action Program," 3, 17-18, 77-78 n. 6. The Marine colonel may have been exaggerating his point. According to Shulimson, each indicator "was dependent on the other, providing a balance to the total picture." In other words, a high score in four of the five indicators (needed to reach the 80-point level) could not be achieved unless progress had been made in the area of the fifth indicator. Another complaint, however, has been that the determination of points for any given indicator was based as much on guesswork as solid analysis. Shulimson, *Expanding War*, 257; Klyman, "Combined Action Program," 77-78 n. 6.

19. Peterson, *Combined Action Platoons*, 32-34, 48. Peterson indicates that many volunteers came not from line units but from combat support and combat service support units. See also Klyman, "Combined Action Program," 19, 28, 37-39; David Sherman, "One Man's CAP," *Marine Corps Gazette* 73 (February 1989):

58; Edward F. Palm, "Tiger Papa Three: A Memoir of the Combined Action Program," pt. 1, *Marine Corps Gazette* 72 (January 1988): 36-37; Edward Palm to Major Charles Driest, USMC, 5 January 1989, copy in author's possession; Harry A. Scarr, et al., *Marine Combined Action Capabilities: Training for Future Contingencies* (McLean, Va., 1971), C 9-10; James DuGuid interview, San Francisco, Calif., 14 October 1984; Colonel Byron F. Brady interview, San Francisco, Calif., 12 October 1986; Eugene H. Ferguson interview, San Francisco, Calif., 13 October 1984; Igor Bobrowsky interview, San Francisco, Calif., 3 December 1982—transcripts of each of the above interviews at USMCHC.

20. Klyman, "Combined Action Program," 23-25; Peterson, *Combined Action Platoons*, 24, 48; Sherman, "One Man's CAP," 58; DuGuid, Ferguson, Bobrowsky interviews. Palm recalled of his language training that "we went off to our respective villages armed with the Vietnamese equivalent of *la plume de ma tante* and other useless phrases." Another Marine recalled that the Vietnamese dialect taught in the CAP school at Da Nang was of no use to him in his assigned village south of the base. Palm, "Tiger Papa Three," pt. 1, 37-38; Scarr, et al., *Combined Action Capabilities*, C 34.

21. Peterson, *Combined Action Platoons*, 36, 47; William F. Lockridge interview, San Francisco, Calif., 13 October 1984, copy at USMCHC; C.W. Miller taped telephone interview with Major Driest, 1988, notes from tape in author's possession.

22. Klyman, "Combined Action Program," 30-34, 45-46, 73 n. 14; Peterson, *Combined Action Platoons*, 56-62; "A Discussion of the Mobile CAP Concept," Enclosure 7 to "Fact Sheet on the Combined Action Force," 31 March 1970, FMFPac Records, USMCHC; Scarr, et al., *Marine Combined Action Capabilities*, C 20; DuGuid, Brady, Ferguson, Bobrowsky interviews. A graphic account of a CAP compound being overrun is contained in F. J. West, Jr., *The Village* (New York, 1972), 105-27. DuGuid noted that he has yet to meet a CAP Marine whose compound was not overrun.

23. Peterson, *Combined Action Platoons*, 35-38; Klyman, "Combined Action Program," 22; author's conversations with Jack Shulimson, Washington Navy Yard, 19 July 1989, and Brig. General E. H. Simmons, USMC (Ret.), Washington Navy Yard, 20 July 1989; Brady, Miller, Ferguson, and Bobrowsky interviews.

24. Palm, "Tiger Papa Three," pt. 1, 35.

25. Peterson, *Combined Action Platoons*, 44-45, 93-94, 104; Palm, "Tiger Papa Three," pt. 1, 37; Edward F. Palm, "Tiger Papa Three: A Memoir of the Combined Action Program," pt. 2, *Marine Corps Gazette* 72 (February 1988): 69-70; Scarr, et al., *Marine Combined*

Action Capabilities, C 4; Simmons, Brady, Miller, Ferguson interviews.

26. Peterson, *Combined Action Platoons*, 41-43, 88; Palm, "Tiger Papa Three," pt. 1, 40-41, pt. 2, 67-68; Sherman, "One Man's CAP," 61; Simmons, Brady, Miller interviews.

27. Palm to Driest, 5 January 1989, copy in author's possession.

28. Lockridge interview; Palm, "Tiger Papa Three," pt. 1, 35.

29. U.S. Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual* (Washington, 1940). For an enlightening analysis of American ethnocentrism toward the Third World, see Howard J. Wiarda, "At the Root of the Problem:

Conceptual Failures in U.S.-Central American Relations," *Central America: Anatomy of Conflict*, ed. Robert S. Leiken (New York, 1983), 261.

30. Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image; America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York, 1989), 348.

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CORDS/Phoenix: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam for the Future

by Dale Andrade and
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Military Review, March-April 2006

As the United States ends its third year of war in Iraq, the military continues to search for ways to deal with an insurgency that shows no sign of waning. The specter of Vietnam looms large, and the media has been filled with comparisons between the current situation and the “quagmire” of the Vietnam War. The differences between the two conflicts are legion, but observers can learn lessons from the Vietnam experience—if they are judicious in their search.

For better or worse, Vietnam is the most prominent historical example of American counterinsurgency (COIN)—and the longest—so it would be a mistake to reject it because of its admittedly complex and controversial nature. An examination of the pacification effort in Vietnam and the evolution of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program provides useful insights into the imperatives of a viable COIN program.

Twin Threats: Main Forces and Guerrillas

In Vietnam, the U.S. military faced arguably the most complex, effective, lethal insurgency in history. The enemy was no rag-tag band lurking in the jungle, but rather a combination of guerrillas, political cadre, and modern main-force units capable of standing toe to toe with the U.S. military. Any one of these would have been sig-

nificant, but in combination they presented a formidable threat.

When U.S. ground forces intervened in South Vietnam in 1965, estimates of enemy guerrilla and Communist Party front strength stood at more than 300,000. In addition, Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese main forces numbered almost 230,000—and that number grew to 685,000 by the time of the Communist victory in 1975. These main forces were organized into regiments and divisions, and between 1965 and 1968, the enemy emphasized main-force war rather than insurgency.¹ During the war, the Communists launched three conventional offensives: the 1968 Tet Offensive, the 1972 Easter Offensive, and the final offensive in 1975. All were major campaigns by any standard. Clearly, the insurgency and the enemy main forces had to be dealt with simultaneously.

When faced with this sort of dual threat, what is the correct response? Should military planners gear up for a counterinsurgency, or should they fight a war aimed at destroying the enemy main forces? General William C. Westmoreland, the overall commander of U.S. troops under the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), faced just such a question. Westmoreland knew very well that South Vietnam faced twin threats, but he believed that the enemy main forces were the most immediate problem. By way of analogy, he referred to them as “bully boys with crow-bars” who were trying to tear down the house that was South Vietnam. The guerrillas and political cadre, which he called “termites,” could also destroy the house, but it would take them much longer to do it. So while he clearly understood the need for pacification, his attention turned first to the bully boys, whom he wanted to drive away from the “house.”²

Westmoreland’s strategy of chasing the enemy and forcing him to fight or run (also known as search and destroy) worked in the sense that it saved South Vietnam from immediate defeat, pushed the enemy main forces from the populated areas, and temporarily took the initiative away from the Communists. South Vietnam was safe in the short term, and Communist histories make clear that the intervention by U.S. troops was a severe blow to their plans.³ In the end,

however, there were not enough U.S. troops to do much more than produce a stalemate. The Communists continued to infiltrate main-force units from neighboring Laos and Cambodia, and they split their forces into smaller bands that could avoid combat if the battlefield situation was not in their favor.

The enemy continued to build his strength, and in January 1968 launched the Tet Offensive, a clear indication that the Americans could never really hold the initiative. Although attacks on almost every major city and town were pushed back and as many as 50,000 enemy soldiers and guerrillas were killed, the offensive proved to be a political victory for the Communists, who showed they could mount major attacks no matter what the Americans tried to do.

Counterinsurgency, or pacification as it was more commonly known in Vietnam, was forced to deal with the twin threats of enemy main forces and a constant guerrilla presence in the rural areas. MACV campaign plans for the first two years of the war show that pacification was as important as military operations, but battlefield realities forced it into the background. In January 1966, Westmoreland wrote, “it is abundantly clear that all political, military, economic, and security (police) programs must be completely integrated in order to attain any kind of success in a country which has been greatly weakened by prolonged conflict.”⁴ He looked to the enemy for an example of how this was done. “The Viet Cong, themselves, have learned this lesson well. Their integration of efforts surpasses ours by a large order of magnitude.”⁵

Westmoreland knew that he lacked the forces to wage both a war of attrition and one of pacification, so he chose the former. The argument over whether or not this was the right course of action will likely go on forever, but undoubtedly the shape of the war changed dramatically after the Tet Offensive. The enemy was badly mauled and, despite the political gains made, militarily lost the initiative for quite some time.

As the Communists withdrew from the Tet battlefields to lick their wounds, the ensuing lull offered a more propitious environment for a pacification plan. Westmoreland never had such an advantage. When American ground forces

entered the war in 1965, they faced an enemy on the offensive, but in June 1968, the new MACV commander, General Creighton W. Abrams, confronted an enemy on the ropes. Abrams plainly recognized his advantage and implemented a clear-and-hold strategy aimed at moving into rural enclaves formerly dominated by the VC. A Communist history of the war notes that “[b]ecause we did not fully appreciate the new enemy [allied] schemes and the changes the enemy made in the conduct of the war and because we underestimated the enemy’s capabilities and the strength of his counterattack, when the United States and its puppets [the South Vietnamese] began to carry out their ‘clear and hold’ strategy our battlefronts were too slow in shifting over to attacking the ‘pacification’ program. . . .”⁶

To cope with the new battlefield situation, the Communist Politburo in Hanoi revised its strategy in a document known as COSVN Resolution 9.⁷ North Vietnam considered its Tet “general offensive and uprising” to be a great success that “forced the enemy [U.S. and South Vietnam] to . . . sink deeper into a defensive and deadlocked position,” but admitted that new techniques were required to force the Americans out of the war.⁸ Rather than fight U.S. troops directly, Resolution 9 dictated that guerrilla forces would disperse and concentrate their efforts on attacking pacification. The main objective was to outlast the allies: “We should fight to force the Americans to withdraw troops, cause the collapse of the puppets and gain the decisive victory. . . .”⁹ Implicit in the plan was a return to more traditional hit-and-run guerrilla tactics with less emphasis on big battles.

Between late 1968 and 1971, the battle for hearts and minds went into full swing, and the government made rapid advances in pacifying the countryside. Historians and military analysts still debate the merits of Abrams’s strategy vis-à-vis Westmoreland’s, but the bottom line is that the two generals faced very different conflicts.¹⁰ There was no “correct” way to fight; the war was a fluid affair with the enemy controlling the operational tempo most of the time. The successes in pacification during Abrams’s command owed a lot to the severely weakened status of the VC after the 1968 Tet Offensive. Even so,

with U.S. President Richard Nixon’s order to “Vietnamize” the war, the South Vietnamese would be left to cope with both the enemy main forces and the Communist insurgency in the villages. Pacification alone simply could not do the job.

Essentials of Counterinsurgency

Insurgencies are complex affairs that defy all attempts at seeking a common denominator. The counterinsurgent’s strategy will depend on how he is organized and how he chooses to fight. The enemy is never static, and every situation will differ from the next. Still, when an insurgency is stripped to its essentials, there are some basic points that are crucial to any COIN effort.

Security forces must be prepared to use armed force to keep the enemy away from the population. To conclude that large-scale operations play no role in COIN is a mistake. The big-unit war of 1965 and 1966 robbed the Communists of a quick victory and allowed the South Vietnamese breathing space in which to begin pacifying the countryside. Without the security generated by military force, pacification cannot even be attempted.

At the same time, government forces must target the insurgents’ ability to live and operate freely among the population. Given time, insurgents will try to create a clandestine political structure to replace the government presence in the villages. Such an infrastructure is the real basis of guerrilla control during any insurgency; it is the thread that ties the entire insurgency together. Without a widespread political presence, guerrillas cannot make many gains, and those they do make cannot be reinforced. Any COIN effort must specifically target the insurgent infrastructure if it is to win the war.

These objectives—providing security for the people and targeting the insurgent infrastructure—form the basis of a credible government campaign to win hearts and minds. Programs aimed at bringing a better quality of life to the population, including things like land reform,

medical care, schools, and agricultural assistance, are crucial if the government is to offer a viable alternative to the insurgents. The reality, however, is that nothing can be accomplished without first establishing some semblance of security.

Key to the entire strategy is the integration of all efforts toward a single goal. This sounds obvious, but it rarely occurs. In most historical COIN efforts, military forces concentrated on warfighting objectives, leaving the job of building schools and clinics, establishing power grids, and bolstering local government (popularly referred to today as nation building) to civilian agencies. The reality is that neither mission is more important than the other, and failure to recognize this can be fatal. Virtually all COIN plans claim they integrate the two: The Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and the defunct Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq were attempts to combine and coordinate civilian and military agencies, although neither really accomplished its objective. In this respect, the development of the CORDS program during the Vietnam War offers a good example of how to establish a chain of command incorporating civilian and military agencies into a focused effort.

Foundation for Successful Pacification

During the early 1960s, the American advisory effort in Vietnam aimed at thwarting Communist influence in the countryside. The attempt failed for many reasons, but one of the most profound was the South Vietnamese Government's inability to extend security to the country's countless villages and hamlets. This failure was, of course, the main factor leading to the introduction of American ground forces and the subsequent rapid expansion of U.S. military manpower in 1965. (U.S. troop strength grew from 23,300 in late 1964 to 184,300 one year later.) The huge increase in troop strength exacerbated the already tenuous relationship between the military mission and pacification. As a result, many officials argued that the latter was being neglected.

In early 1965, the U.S. side of pacification con-

sisted of several civilian agencies, of which the CIA, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. information Service, and the U.S. Department of State were the most important. Each agency developed its own program and coordinated it through the American embassy. On the military side, the rapid expansion of troop strength meant a corresponding increase in the number of advisers. By early 1966, military advisory teams worked in all of South Vietnam's 44 provinces and most of its 243 districts. The extent of the military's presence in the countryside made it harder for the civilian-run pacification program to cope—a situation made worse because there was no formal system combining the two efforts.

In the spring of 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration turned its attention toward pacification in an attempt to make the existing arrangement work. Official trips to South Vietnam as well as studies by independent observers claimed there was little coordination between civilian agencies. Most concluded that the entire system needed a drastic overhaul. Johnson took a personal interest in pacification, bringing the weight of his office to the search for a better way to run the "other war," as he called pacification. American ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge received written authority from the president to "exercise full responsibility" over the entire advisory effort in Vietnam, using "the degree of command and control that you consider appropriate."¹¹

It was not enough. Westmoreland was cooperative, yet the civilian and military missions simply did not mesh. After a trip to South Vietnam in November 1965, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara told Westmoreland, "I don't think we have done a thing we can point to that has been effective in five years. I ask you to show me one area in this country . . . that we have pacified."¹²

McNamara's observation prompted quick action. In January 1966, representatives from Washington agencies concerned with the conduct of the war met with representatives from the U.S. mission in Saigon at a conference in Virginia. During the ensuing discussion, participants acknowledged that simply relying on the

ambassador and the MACV commander to “work things out” would not ensure pacification cooperation. A single civil-military focus on pacification was needed; however, the conference ended without a concrete resolution.¹³

Although Johnson was displeased by slow progress and foot dragging, the embassy in Saigon continued to resist any changes that would take away its authority over pacification. Then, at a summit held in Honolulu in February 1966 with South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu and Premier Nguyen Cao Ky, Johnson pushed an agenda that tasked the South Vietnamese Army with area security, allowing the U.S. military to concentrate mostly on seeking out enemy main forces. Johnson also demanded greater American coordination in the pacification effort and called for a single manager to head the entire program. In April, he assigned Robert W. Komer, a trusted member of the National Security Council, the task of coming up with a solution. Johnson gave Komer a strong mandate that included unrestrained access to the White House—a key asset that was put in writing. That authority gave Komer the clout he needed to bring recalcitrant officials into line.¹⁴

Other steps followed in quick succession. In August 1966, Komer authored a paper titled “Giving a New Thrust to Pacification: Analysis, Concept, and Management,” in which he broke the pacification problem into three parts and argued that no single part could work by itself.¹⁵ The first part, not surprisingly, was security—keeping the main forces away from the population. In the second part he advocated breaking the Communists’ hold on the people with anti-infrastructure operations and programs designed to win back popular support. The third part stressed the concept of mass; in other words, pacification had to be large-scale. Only with a truly massive effort could a turnaround be achieved, and that was what Johnson required if he was to maintain public support for the war.

It was Westmoreland himself, however, who brought the issue to the forefront. Contrary to popular belief, the MACV commander understood the need for pacification, and, like a good politician, figured it would be better to have the assignment under his control than outside of it.

On 6 October 1966, despite objections from his staff, he told Komer: “I’m not asking for the responsibility, but I believe that my headquarters could take it in stride and perhaps carry out this important function more economically and efficiently than the present complex arrangement.”¹⁶

Komer lobbied McNamara, arguing that with 90 percent of the resources, it was “obvious” that only the military “had the clout” to get the job done. Komer believed that the U.S. Defense Department (DOD) was “far stronger behind pacification” than the Department of State and was “infinitely more dynamic and influential.”¹⁷

Now the DOD was on board, but the civilian agencies uniformly opposed the plan. As a compromise, in November 1966 the Office of Civil Operations (OCO) was formed, with deputy ambassador William Porter in charge. The OCO combined civilian agencies under one chain of command, but failed to bring the military into it. The entire plan was doomed from the start.

The OCO was really no different from the old way of doing business because it kept the civilian and military chains of command separate. Johnson was deeply dissatisfied. So in June 1966, Komer went to Vietnam to assess the situation. He wrote that the U.S. embassy “needs to strengthen its own machinery” for pacification. Komer met with Westmoreland, and the two agreed on the need for a single manager. “My problem is not with Westy, but the reluctant civilian side,” Komer told the president.¹⁸

The Birth of CORDS

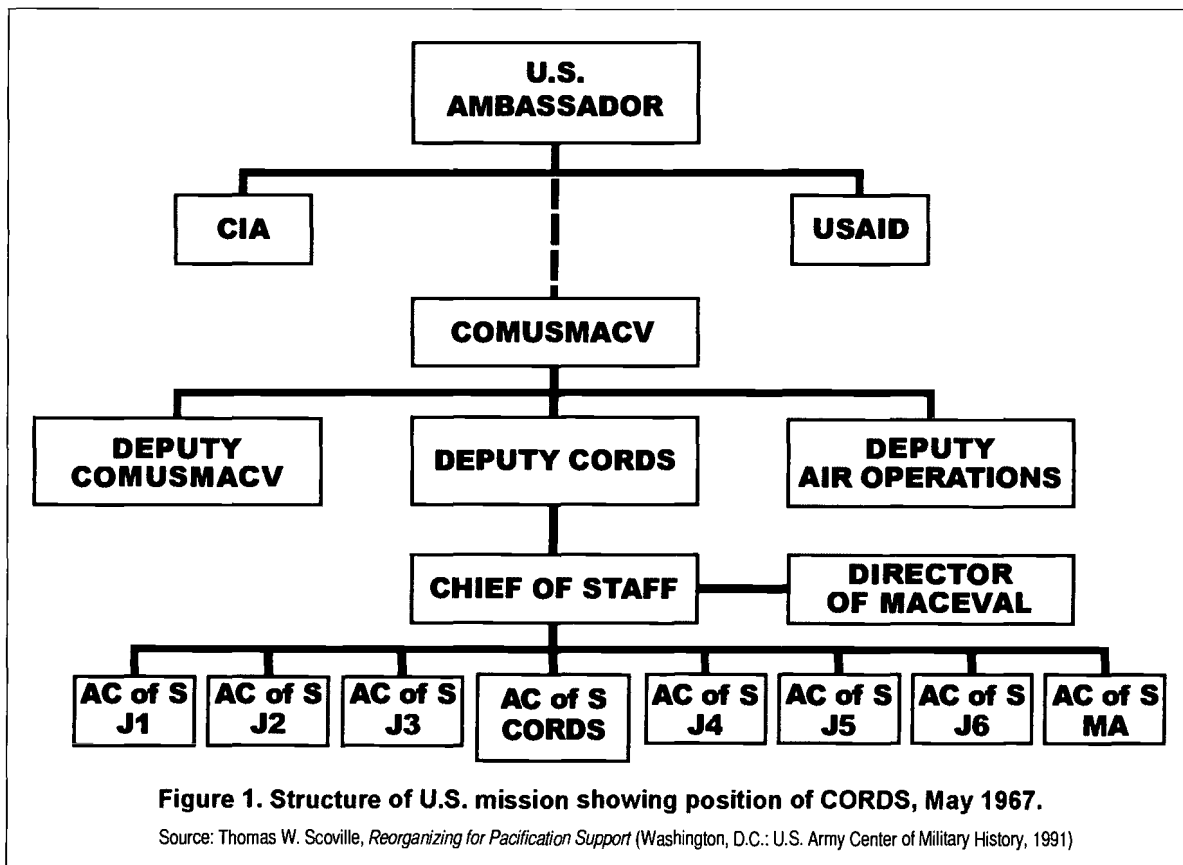
In March 1967, Johnson convened a meeting on Guam and made it clear that OCO was dead and that Komer’s plan for a single manager would be implemented. Only the paperwork remained, and less than two months later, on 9 May 1967, National Security Action Memorandum 362, “Responsibility for U.S. Role in Pacification (Revolutionary Development),” established Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support, or CORDS.¹⁹ The new system unambiguously placed the military in charge of pacification. As MACV commander, Westmoreland would have three deputies, one of them a civilian with three-star-equivalent rank in charge of

pacification, and there would be a single chain of command. Komer took the post of deputy for CORDS, which placed him alongside the deputy MACV commander, Abrams. Below that, various other civilians and civilian agencies were integrated into the military hierarchy, including an assistant chief of staff for CORDS positioned alongside the traditional military staff. For the first time, civilians were embedded within a wartime command and put in charge of military personnel and resources. CORDS went into effect immediately and brought with it a new urgency oriented toward making pacification work in the countryside.²⁰ (See figure 1.)

The new organization did not solve all problems immediately, and it was not always smooth sailing. At first Komer attempted to gather as much power as possible within his office, but Westmoreland made it clear that his military deputies were more powerful and performed a broad range of duties, while Komer had author-

ity only over pacification. In addition, Westmoreland quashed Komer's direct access to the White House, rightly insisting that the chain of command be followed. Westmoreland naturally kept a close watch over CORDS, occasionally prompting Komer to complain that he was not yet sure that he had Westmoreland's "own full trust and confidence."²¹ Their disagreements were few, however, and the relationship between the MACV commander and his new deputy became close and respectful, which started the new program on the right track.

Time was the crucial ingredient, and eventually Komer's assertive personality and Westmoreland's increasing trust in his new civilian subordinates smoothed over many potential problems. According to one study, "[a] combination of Westmoreland's flexibility and Komer's ability to capitalize on it through the absence of an intervening layer of command permitted Komer to run an unusual, innovative program within what



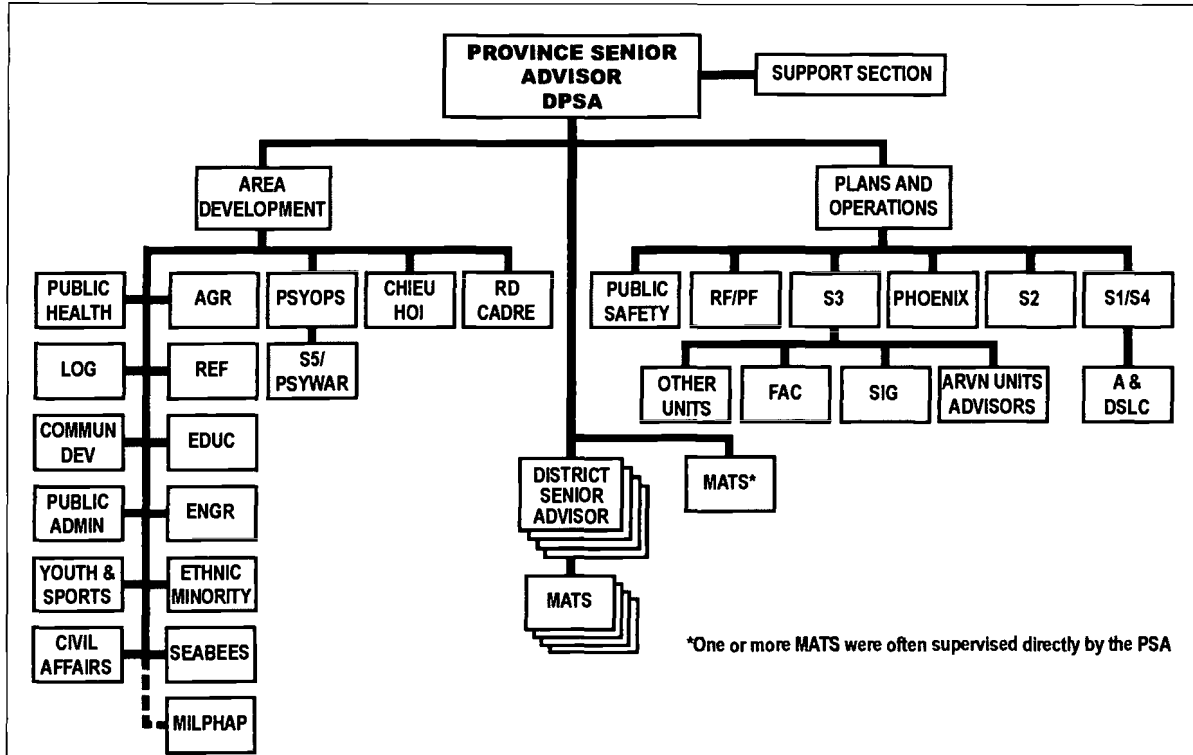


Figure 2. Organization of the CORDS team at province level.

Source: Ngo Quang Truong, *Indochina Monographs: RVNAF and US Operational Cooperation and Coordination* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1980), p. 154

otherwise might have been the overly strict confines of a military staff.”²²

With the new organization, almost all pacification programs eventually came under CORDS. From USAID, CORDS took control of “new life development” (the catch-all term for an attempt to improve government responsiveness to villagers’ needs), refugees, National Police, and the Chieu Hoi program (the “Open arms” campaign to encourage Communist personnel in South Vietnam to defect). The CIA’s Rural Development cadre, MACV’s civic action and civil affairs, and the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office’s field psychological operations also fell under the CORDS aegis. CORDS assumed responsibility for reports, evaluations, and field inspections from all agencies.²³

CORDS Organization. At corps level, the CORDS organization was modeled on that of CORDS at the MACV headquarters. (See figure 2.) The U.S. military senior adviser, usually a

three-star general who also served as the commander of U.S. forces in the region, had a deputy for CORDS (DepCORDS), usually a civilian. The DepCORDS was responsible for supervising military and civilian plans in support of the South Vietnamese pacification program within the corps area.²⁴

Province advisory teams in the corps area of responsibility reported directly to the regional DepCORDS. Each of the 44 provinces in South Vietnam was headed by a province chief, usually a South Vietnamese Army or Marine colonel, who supervised the provincial government apparatus and commanded the provincial militia as well as Regional Forces and Popular Forces (RF/PF).

The province advisory teams helped the province chiefs administer the pacification program. The province chief’s American counterpart was the province senior adviser, who was either military or civilian, depending on the security sit-

uation of the respective province. The province senior adviser and his staff were responsible for advising the province chief about civil-military aspects of the South Vietnamese pacification and development programs.

The province senior adviser's staff, composed of both U.S. military and civilian personnel, was divided into two parts. The first part handled area and community development, including public health and administration, civil affairs, education, agriculture, psychological operations, and logistics. The other part managed military issues. It helped the province staff prepare plans and direct security operations by the territorial forces and associated support within the province.

The province chief exercised authority through district chiefs, and the province senior adviser supervised district senior advisers, each of whom had a staff of about eight members (the actual size depending on the particular situation in a district). District-level advisory teams helped the district chief with civil-military aspects of the pacification and rural development programs. Also, the district team (and/or assigned mobile assistance training teams) advised and trained the RF/PF located in the district. All members of the province team were advisers; they worked closely with the province chief and his staff, providing advice and assistance, and coordinating U.S. support.

CORDS Gains Muscle. Sheer numbers, made possible by the military's involvement, made CORDS more effective than earlier pacification efforts. In early 1966, about 1,000 U.S. advisers were involved in pacification; by September 1969—the high point of the pacification effort in terms of total manpower—7,601 advisers were assigned to province and district pacification teams. Of those, 6,464 were military, and 95 percent of those came from the Army.²⁵

CORDS' ability to bring manpower, money, and supplies to the countryside where they were needed was impressive. Some statistics illustrate the point: between 1966 and 1970, money spent on pacification and economic programs rose from \$582 million to \$1.5 billion. Advice and aid to the South Vietnamese National Police allowed

total police paramilitary strength to climb from 60,000 in 1967 to more than 120,000 in 1971. Aid to the RF/PF grew from a paltry \$300,000 per year in 1966 to over \$1.5 million annually by 1971, enabling total strength to increase by more than 50 percent. By 1971, total territorial militia strength was around 500,000—about 50 percent of overall South Vietnamese military strength. Advisory numbers increased correspondingly: in 1967, there were 108 U.S. advisers attached to the militia; in 1969, there were 2,243.²⁶ The enemy saw this buildup as a serious threat to his control in the countryside, and Communist sources consistently cited the need to attack as central to their strategy.²⁷

What effect did all of this have on the security situation? Numbers alone do not make for successful pacification, but they are a big step in the right direction. By placing so much manpower in the villages, the allies were able to confront the guerrillas consistently, resulting in significant gains by 1970. Although pacification statistics are complicated and often misleading, they do indicate that CORDS affected the insurgency. For example, by early 1970, 93 percent of South Vietnamese lived in “relatively secure” villages, an increase of almost 20 percent from the middle of 1968, the year marred by the Tet Offensive.²⁸

The Phoenix Program

Within CORDS were scores of programs designed to enhance South Vietnamese influence in the countryside, but security remained paramount. At the root of pacification's success or failure was its ability to counter the insurgents' grip on the population. Military operations were designed to keep enemy main forces and guerrillas as far from the population as possible, but the Communist presence in the villages was more than just military. Cadre running the Viet Cong infrastructure (VCI) sought to form a Communist shadow government to supplant the Saigon regime's influence.

In 1960, when Hanoi had formed the Viet Cong movement (formally known as the National Liberation Front), the VCI cadre was its most important component. Cadre were the building blocks of the revolution, the mechanism

by which the Communists spread their presence throughout South Vietnam. Cadre did not wear uniforms, yet they were as crucial to the armed struggle as any AK-toting guerrilla. The cadre spread the VCI from the regional level down to almost every village and hamlet in South Vietnam. A preferred tactic was to kill local government officials as a warning for others not to come back.

Indeed, the VC's early success was due to the VCI cadre, which by 1967 numbered somewhere between 70,000 and 100,000 throughout South Vietnam. The VCI was a simple organization. Virtually every village had a cell made up of a Communist Party secretary; a finance and supply unit; and information and culture, social welfare, and proselytizing sections to gain recruits from among the civilian population. They answered up a chain of command, with village cadre answering to the district, then to the province, and finally to a series of regional commands which, in turn, took orders from Hanoi.

The Communists consolidated their influence in the countryside by using a carrot-and-stick approach. The VCI provided medical treatment, education, and justice—along with heavy doses of propaganda—backed by threats from VC guerrillas. The VC waged an effective terror campaign aimed at selected village officials and authority figures to convince fence-sitters that support for the revolution was the best course. In short, the VCI was the Communist alternative to the Saigon government.

The South Vietnamese Government, on the other hand, was rarely able to keep such a presence in the villages, and when they could, the lack of a permanent armed force at that level meant that officials were usually limited to daytime visits only. Unfortunately, in the earliest days of the insurgency (1960 to 1963), when the infrastructure was most vulnerable, neither the South Vietnamese nor their American advisers understood the VCI's importance. They concentrated on fighting the guerrillas who, ironically, grew stronger because of the freedom they gained through the VCI's strength and influence.

The VCI was nothing less than a second center of gravity. By 1965, when the United States intervened in South Vietnam with ground troops,

Communist strength had grown exponentially, forcing Westmoreland to deal with the main force threat first and making pacification secondary.

The U.S. did not completely ignore the VCI. As early as 1964, the CIA used counterterror teams to seek out and destroy cadre hiding in villages. But the CIA had only a few dozen Americans devoted to the task, far too few to have much effect on tens of thousands of VCI. The advent of CORDS changed that, and anti-infrastructure operations began to evolve. In July 1967, the Intelligence Coordination and Exploitation Program (ICEX) was created. It was basically a clearinghouse for information on the VCI, information that was then disseminated to district advisers.²⁹ Unfortunately, given the lack of anti-VCI operations during the first three years of the war, little intelligence was available at the start. A few organizations, such as the RF/PF, actually lived in the villages and gathered information, but their main task was security, not intelligence gathering.

Phoenix rising. In December 1967, ICEX was given new emphasis and renamed Phoenix. The South Vietnamese side was called Phung Hoang, after a mythical bird that appeared as a sign of prosperity and luck. CORDS made Phoenix a high priority and within weeks expanded intelligence centers in most of South Vietnam's provinces.

At this stage, the most important part of Phoenix was numbers. CORDS expanded the U.S. advisory effort across the board, and the Phoenix program benefited. Within months, all 44 provinces and most of the districts had American Phoenix advisers. This proved vital to the effort. Only by maintaining a constant presence in the countryside—in other words, by mirroring the insurgents—could the government hope to wage an effective counterinsurgency. By 1970, there were 704 U.S. Phoenix advisers throughout South Vietnam.³⁰

For the Phoenix program—as with most other things during the war—the Tet Offensive proved pivotal. The entire pacification program went on hold as the allies fought to keep the Communists from taking entire cities. If there was any doubt

before, Tet showed just how crucial the VCI was to the insurgency, for it was the covert cadres who paved the way for the guerrillas and ensured that supplies and replacements were available to sustain the offensive. On the other hand, the failure of the attacks exposed the VCI and made it vulnerable. As a result, anti-infrastructure operations became one of the most important aspects of the pacification program.

In July 1968, after the enemy offensive had spent most of its fury, the allies launched the Accelerated Pacification Campaign (APC), which devoted new resources to pacification in an attempt to capitalize on post-Tet Communist weakness. While enemy main forces and guerrillas licked their wounds, they were less able to hinder pacification in the villages.

Under the APC, Phoenix emphasized four aspects in its attack on the VCI:

- ◆ Decentralization of the old ICEX command and control (C2) apparatus by placing most of the responsibility on the provinces and districts. This included building intelligence-gathering and interrogation centers (called district intelligence and operations coordinating centers, or DIOCCs) in the regions where the VCI operated.

- ◆ Establishment of files and dossiers on suspects, and placing of emphasis on “neutralizing” (capturing, converting, or killing) members of the VCI.

- ◆ Institution of rules by which suspected VCI could be tried and imprisoned.

- ◆ Emphasis on local militia and police rather than the military as the main operational arm of the program.³¹

This last aspect was crucial. While military forces could be used to attack the VCI, they had other pressing responsibilities, and anti-infrastructure operations would always be on the back burner. So the program concentrated on existing forces that could be tailored to seek out the VCI, the most important of these being the RF/PF militia, the National Police, and Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRU).

Recruited locally, the RF/PF were ideally suited to anti-VCI operations because they lived in the villages. In addition to providing security against marauding VC guerrillas, the RF/PF react-

ed to intelligence sent from the DIOCC. The National Police had two units specially tailored to VCI operations: the intelligence-gathering Police Special Branch and the paramilitary National Police Field Force. For the most part, however, the police did not perform well, although there were exceptions. PRUs, which were recruited and trained by the CIA, were the best action arm available to Phoenix. However, as was generally the problem with CIA assets, PRUs were not numerous enough to deal effectively with the VCI. Never numbering more than 4,000 men nationwide, the PRU also had other paramilitary tasks to perform and so were not always available.³²

DIOCCs. The district was the program's basic building block, and the DIOCC was its nerve center. Each DIOCC was led by a Vietnamese Phung Hoang chief, aided by an American Phoenix adviser. The adviser had no authority to order operations; he could only advise and call on U.S. military support. The DIOCC was answerable to the Vietnamese district chief, who in turn reported to the province chief. DIOCC personnel compiled intelligence on VCI in their district and made blacklists with data on VCI members. If possible, the DIOCC sought out a suspect's location and planned an operation to capture him (or her). Once captured, the VCI was taken to the DIOCC and interrogated, then sent to the province headquarters for further interrogation and trial.³³

Because Phoenix was decentralized, the programs differed from district to district, and some worked better than others. Many DIOCCs did little work, taking months to establish even the most basic blacklists. In many cases, the Phung Hoang chief was an incompetent bureaucrat who used his position to enrich himself. Phoenix tried to address this problem by establishing monthly neutralization quotas, but these often led to fabrications or, worse, false arrests. In some cases, district officials accepted bribes from the VC to release certain suspects. Some districts released as many as 60 percent of VCI suspects.³⁴

Misconceptions about Phoenix

The picture of Phoenix that emerges is not of

a rogue operation, as it is sometimes accused of being, but rather of one that operated within a system of rules. Special laws, called an tri, allowed the arrest and prosecution of suspected Communists, but only within the legal system. Moreover, to avoid abuses such as phony accusations for personal reasons, or to rein in overzealous officials who might not be diligent enough in pursuing evidence before making arrests, An Tri required three separate sources of evidence to convict any individual targeted for neutralization.

If a suspected VCI was found guilty, he or she could be held in prison for two years, with renewable two-year sentences totaling up to six years. While this was probably fair on its surface, hardcore VCI were out in six years at most and then rejoined the guerrillas. The legal system was never really ironed out. The U.S. has the same problem today: accused terrorists held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and in other prisons fall within a shadowy middle ground that our policy-makers and legal system have yet to deal with.

An assassination bureau? Between 1968 and 1972, Phoenix neutralized 81,740 VC, of whom 26,369 were killed. This was a large piece taken out of the VCI, and between 1969 and 1971, the program was quite successful in destroying the VCI in many important areas.³⁵ However, these statistics have been used to suggest that Phoenix was an assassination program. It was not. People were killed, yes, but statistics show that more than two-thirds of neutralized VC were captured, not killed. Indeed, only by capturing Viet Cong could Phoenix develop the intelligence needed to net additional Viet Cong. Abuses did occur, such as torture, which U.S. advisers could not always halt, but most advisers understood the adage that dead Viet Cong do not tell about live ones.

Phoenix was also accused of sometimes targeting civilians because the VCI did not wear military uniforms. But the VCI was an integral—indeed paramount—aspect of the insurgency and a legitimate target. We Americans should have done a better job of pointing this out to critics.

Contracting out the dirty work? Another charge was that Phoenix relied on other units to

neutralize the VCI. Of the 26,000 VCI killed, 87 percent died during operations by conventional units. How effective was Phoenix if it accounted for only 13 percent of those killed in action? A later study found that a still-low 20 percent of the killed or captured neutralizations came from Phoenix assets, with most of the rest caught up in sweeps by regular units or by the RF/PF. Both claims are almost irrelevant: direct physical action was the conventional force, RF/PF part of a two-part job. The bottom line should have been 26,000 VCI permanently eliminated, never mind by whom.

Statistics themselves caused problems. During the first two years of Phoenix, each province was given a monthly quota of VC to neutralize, depending on the size of the infrastructure in the province. The quotas were often unrealistic and encouraged false reporting—or the capture of innocent people with whom South Vietnamese officials had a grudge. The quotas were lowered in 1969, and thereafter no VC could be counted in the total unless he or she had been convicted in court.³⁶

Aiming low? Others critics attacked Phoenix for netting mostly middle- and low-level VC while senior leaders eluded capture. In fact, in 1968, before the VCI adapted to aggressive pursuit by Phoenix, about 13 percent of neutralizations were district and higher-level cadre. In 1970 and 1971, that figure dropped to about 3 percent.³⁷ The drop, however, masks two positive results: thanks to Phoenix, ranking VC had been forced to move to safer areas, thereby removing themselves from the “sea of the people” (which did not negate their ability to control village populations, but did make the job more difficult); and by attacking mid-level Viet Cong, Phoenix actually severed the link between the population and the party-level cadre calling the shots—a serious blow to the VCI.

Communist Testimony to Phoenix's Success

In the end, attacking the VCI was not as difficult as it might seem. the VCI was a secret organization, but to be effective in the villages, it had

to stay among the population, which made it vulnerable. Guerrillas could melt into the bush; in contrast, the VCI had to maintain contact with the people.

Although they were not completely successful, anti-infrastructure operations were a serious problem for the enemy, and he took drastic steps to limit the damage. By 1970, Communist plans repeatedly emphasized attacking the government's pacification program and specifically targeted Phoenix officials.³⁸ District and village officials became targets of VC assassination and terror as the Communists sought to reassert control over areas lost in 1969 and 1970. Ironically, the VC practiced the very thing for which critics excoriated Phoenix—the assassination of officials. The VC even imposed quotas. In 1970, for example, Communist officials near Danang in northern South Vietnam instructed VC assassins to “kill 1,400 persons” deemed to be government “tyrant[s]” and to “annihilate” anyone involved with the pacification program.³⁹

Although the anti-infrastructure program did not crush the VCI, in combination with other pacification programs, it probably did hinder insurgent progress. In Vietnam, with its blend of guerrilla and main-force war, this was not enough to prevail, but it seems clear that without Phoenix, pacification would have fared far worse. Communist accounts after the war bear this out. In *Vietnam: A History*, Stanley Karnow quotes the North Vietnamese deputy commander in South Vietnam, General Tran Do, as saying that Phoenix was “extremely destructive.”⁴⁰ Former Viet Cong Minister of Justice Truong Nhu Tang wrote in his memoirs that “Phoenix was dangerously effective” and that in Hau Nghia Province west of Saigon, “the Front Infrastructure was virtually eliminated.”⁴¹ Nguyen Co Thach, who became the Vietnamese foreign minister after the war, claimed that “[w]e had many weaknesses in the South because of Phoenix.”⁴²

Clearly, the political infrastructure is the basic building block of almost all insurgencies, and it must be a high-priority target for the counterinsurgent from the very beginning. In Vietnam, the allies faced an insurgency that emphasized political and military options in equal measure, but before the Tet Offensive weakened the

Communists sufficiently to allow concentration on both main-force warfare and pacification, it was difficult to place sufficient emphasis on anti-infrastructure operations. Yet in just two years—between 1968 and 1970—the Phoenix program made significant progress against the VCI. What might have happened had the Americans and South Vietnamese begun it in 1960, when the Viet Cong were much weaker?

Assessing Pacification in Vietnam

Historian Richard A. Hunt characterizes the achievements of CORDS and the pacification program in Vietnam as “ambiguous.”⁴³ Many high-ranking civilians and other officials who participated in the program, such as Komer, CIA director William Colby, and Westmoreland's military deputy, General Bruce Palmer, assert that CORDS made great gains between 1969 and 1972.⁴⁴ Some historians disagree with this assessment, but clearly the program made some progress in the years following the Tet Offensive. The security situation in many areas improved dramatically, releasing regular South Vietnamese troops to do battle with the North Vietnamese and main-force VC units. The program also spread Saigon's influence and increased the government's credibility with the South Vietnamese people.

Evidence suggests that one of the reasons Hanoi launched a major offensive in 1972 was to offset the progress that South Vietnam had made in pacification and in eliminating the VCI.⁴⁵ In the long run, however, those gains proved to be irrelevant. Although the South Vietnamese, with U.S. advisers and massive air support, successfully blunted North Vietnam's 1972 invasion, U.S. forces subsequently withdrew after the signing of the Paris Peace Accords. When the fighting resumed shortly after the ceasefire in 1973, South Vietnamese forces acquitted themselves reasonably well, only to succumb to the final North Vietnamese offensive in 1975. In the end, Communist conventional forces, not the insurgents, defeated the South Vietnamese.

Lessons Learned

Despite the final outcome, there were lessons to be learned from Vietnam. The U.S. military applied some of these lessons to conflicts in the Philippines and El Salvador during the 1980s, and now that counterinsurgency is again in vogue, it would be wise for planners to reexamine pacification operations in Vietnam. The most important lessons to heed follow:

◆ Unity of effort is imperative; there must be a unified structure that combines military and pacification efforts. The pacification program in Vietnam did not make any headway until the different agencies involved were brought together under a single manager within the military C2 architecture. Once CORDS and Phoenix became part of the military chain of command, it was easier to get things done. The military tends to regard pacification tasks as something civilian agencies do; however, only the military has the budget, materiel, and manpower to get the job done.

◆ An insurgency thrives only as long as it can sustain a presence among the population. Make anti-infrastructure operations a first step in any COIN plan. Immediately establish an intelligence capability to identify targets, and use local forces to go after them.

◆ Do not keep the anti-infrastructure program a secret or it will develop a sinister reputation. Tell the people that the government intends to target the infrastructure as part of the security program. Locals must do most of the anti-infrastructure work, with the Americans staying in the background.

◆ Establish a clear legal framework for the pacification program, especially the anti-infrastructure effort. If this is done immediately and the program is run consistently, people will be more likely to accept it. Legality was a problem in Vietnam, and it is clearly a problem today.

◆ An insurgency will not be defeated on the battlefield. The fight is for the loyalty of the people, so establish a government-wide program to better the lives of people in the countryside. Improvement must go hand in hand with anti-infrastructure operations, or the population will

likely regard government efforts as repressive.

◆ Above all, Americans must never forget that the host nation is responsible for maintaining security and establishing viable institutions that meet the people's needs, especially since the host nation will have to do the heavy lifting for itself after U.S. forces leave.

These lessons might seem obvious, and it is true that with hindsight they might be easily identified; however, in practice, they are hard to execute. This should not, however, stop us from trying to apply the lessons learned in Southeast Asia to Iraq and Afghanistan. CORDS was one of the Vietnam War's success stories, and its well-conceived, well-executed programs and successful synthesis of civilian and military efforts offer a useful template for current and future COIN operations.

Notes

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3. For an important source from the Communist perspective, see Merle L. Pribbenow, trans., *Victory in Vietnam: The Official History of the People's Army of Vietnam, 1954-1975* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002).
4. Message, Westmoreland Military Advisory Command 0117 to BG James Lawton Collins, Jr., Washington, 7 January 1966, Westmoreland files, U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH), Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.
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6. Pribbenow, 237.
7. Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) Resolution 9, 4, 19. English translation available at the Texas Tech Virtual Vietnam Archive, item no. 4080418002.
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12. Robert S. McNamara, quoted in Military Advisory Command Vietnam Command History, 1965, 229, Historians files, CMH, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.
13. Thomas W. Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support* (Washington, D.C.: CMH, 1991), 18-19.
14. National Security Action Memorandum 343 of 28 March 1966 charged Robert W. Komer with assuring "that adequate plans are prepared and coordinated covering all aspects [of pacification]. [Komer] will also assure that the Rural Construction/Pacification Program is properly coordinated with the programs for combat force employment and military operations."
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16. Westmoreland Historical Briefing, 17 October 1966, cited in Scoville, 38.
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22. *Ibid.*, 76.
23. Richard A. Hunt, *Pacification: The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 93.
24. The CORDS organization in IV Corps was different. Because there were fewer U.S. forces in the Mekong Delta than in the other corps areas, IV Corps had no U.S. three-star general.
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26. Thayer, 884-87.
27. The history of the North Vietnamese 9th Division points out that one of its primary missions in 1969-1970 was to "frustrate the enemy's pacification plan." See *Su Doan 9 [9th Division]* (Hanoi: Nha Xuat Ban Quan Doi Nhan Dan [People's Army Publishing House], 1990), 100.
28. Hamlet Evaluation Survey (HES) Annual Statistical Analysis, 1968-71, Historians files, CMH, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.
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37. MACCORDS-PSD, "Fact Sheet," 2.
38. By mid-1969, U.S. Army division operational reports contained numerous references to captured enemy plans that aimed to "disrupt pacification," in particular the Regional Forces/Popular Forces (RF/PF) and Phoenix programs, because these were a constant threat to Communist domination in the villages. See also memorandum to William Colby from Wilbur Wilson, Deputy for CORDS, Subject: Motivation of [Government of Vietnam] GVN Leadership in the Phung Hoang Program, 24 June 1971, Historians files, CMH, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.
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Part VII
**Global War on Terrorism:
Overview and Strategy**





Challenges in Fighting a Global Insurgency

by David W. Barno

Parameters, Summer 2006

“War is . . . an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.”

—Carl von Clausewitz¹

The strategic nature of war has changed, and our military and government are striving to adapt to fight and win in this new environment. Today we are engaged in a global counterinsurgency, an unprecedented challenge which requires a level of original strategic thought and depth of understanding perhaps comparable only to that of the Cold War. Our ongoing political-military actions to achieve success in Iraq and Afghanistan are simply subordinate efforts of this larger, complex world war.

Our enemies today clearly understand the value of asymmetrical approaches when dealing with the overwhelming conventional combat power of the United States military. Unfortunately, our unmatched conventional capability has slowed the U.S. response to the changing, asymmetrical nature of modern war.² We as a military are at risk of failing to understand the nature of the war we are fighting—a war which has been characterized as “a war of intelligence and a war of perceptions.”³ We must confront this dilemma and take our thinking to a new strategic level in this era to understand the tools and strategic approaches required to create victory in this very different 21st-century environment.

Fourth Generation Warfare: Global Insurgency

Retired Marine Colonel T. X. Hammes, in his recent book *The Sling and the Stone*, outlines an

innovative construct to better understand the evolution of warfare.⁴ The book's striking cover photo epitomizes the paradox in today's warfare of "weak against strong": it shows a young Palestinian boy, arm upraised, about to hurl a rock at a huge, U.S.-made Israeli M60 tank. The shades of meaning are rich. In his insightful work, Hammes describes four evolutions of warfare, which he characterizes as First through Fourth Generation War. This theory is helpful as we examine the context of war today and assess the effectiveness of today's military to engage in—and win—these wars. Hammes's description provides us an alternative model to compare with our current "network-centric" model of war, which often seems primarily designed for nation-states engaged in force-on-force battles.⁵ First Generation Warfare in this alternative construct dates from the invention of gunpowder, which produced the first military formations and tactics cued to firearms.

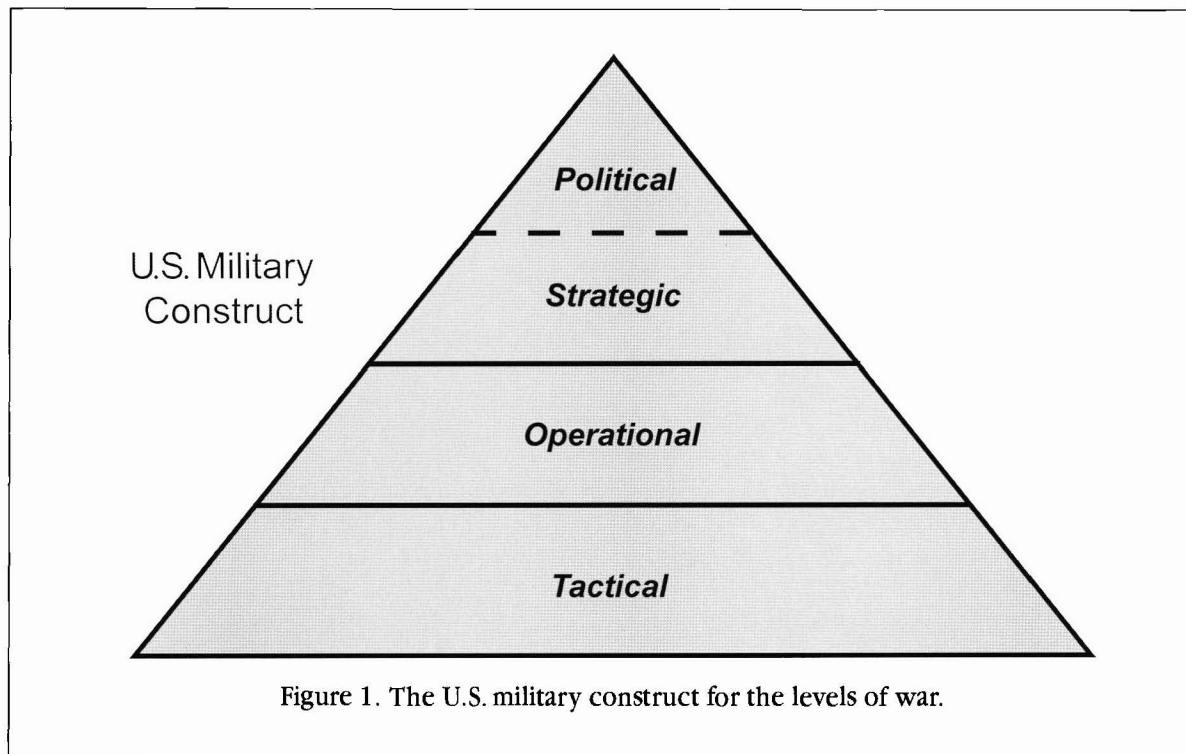
First Generation Warfare was an offensively oriented type of war, where light weaponry, limited-size armies, and horse and foot mobility provided very limited strategic mobility—armies walked everywhere—but some modest tactical mobility, with small armies unencumbered by extensive heavy weaponry. This era culminated in the Napoleonic wars of the early 1800s, and warfare began to change dramatically by the middle of the 19th century. By the time of the U.S. Civil War, the advent of advanced transportation and communications systems, combined with heavier mobile firepower, signified the emergence of a new model—Second Generation Warfare.

Second Generation Warfare revolved around rapidly growing strategic speed of communication and transport—telegraphs and railways—in concert with massed armies armed with ever-deadlier small arms and artillery. This phase encompassed the Franco-Prussian War of the 1870s, the turn-of-the-century Boer War and Russo-Japanese conflicts, and ultimately the huge, million-man armies of World War I. The latter were massive formations linked to devastating direct and indirect firepower, leading inexorably to the strategic and tactical stalemate of trench warfare. Second Generation Warfare was

characterized by large armies with strategic (but limited tactical) mobility, unprecedented weaponry, and explosive "throw weight," resultant heavy casualties, and gradual diminishment of maneuver, all of which pointed toward the defense achieving gradual dominance over the offense.

In response to this battlefield paralysis, Third Generation Warfare emerged in the 1920s and 30s and produced "blitzkrieg" and the age of maneuver warfare, with the offense once again gaining supremacy. This era of mounted mechanized maneuver continued from World War II through the Arab-Israeli wars of the 1950s and 60s, included Desert Storm in 1991 (perhaps its zenith), and culminated with the race to Baghdad in March 2003. (Excursions into counterinsurgency conflicts in places like French Indochina, Algeria, Malaya, Vietnam, and the two Intifadas in Israel not only failed to significantly affect mainstream military thinking, but they often turned out rather badly for Western armies.) Today, after 40 years of Cold War experience and billions of dollars spent on weapon system investments, the United States and most Western militaries remain optimized for Third Generation Warfare, reflecting nearly 50 years of tactical, operational, and strategic thought and resource commitments originally designed to contain and deter the Soviet threat, and if necessary to defeat a Warsaw Pact armored invasion of Western Europe.⁶

Hammes contends that we have now entered into the age of Fourth Generation Warfare, which he brands "netwar." (The term is a bit confusing given the better-known "network-centric operations" terminology.⁷) Fourth Generation Warfare "uses all available networks—political, economic, social, and military—to convince the enemy's political decision makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit. *It is an evolved form of insurgency.*"⁸ Fourth Generation Warfare argues that the enemy's target becomes the political establishment and the policymakers of his adversary, not the adversary's armed forces or tactical formations. The enemy achieves victory by putting intense, unremitting pressure on adversary decision makers, causing them to eventually capitulate.



late, independent of military success or failure on the battlefield. Fourth Generation Warfare deserves to be studied closely by the military, primarily because it outlines a compellingly logical way to look at asymmetrical warfare, a challenging topic for Western militaries.

Competing Paradigms of War

Another way to view the challenge we face with an asymmetrically oriented enemy is to examine our current warfighting construct: the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war, often represented as a triangle, as shown in Figure 1. At the base is the tactical level, where engagements and battles are fought, entailing direct combat actions ranging from squad to brigade echelon. The tactical level is the stage at which the vast preponderance of our troops and equipment are committed and engaged daily. The second level, the center of the triangle, is the operational level. At this echelon, campaigns are developed which give shape to the battles and connect them in ways that ultimately lead to campaign, and eventually strategic, success.

Next, most often displayed at the top of the triangle, is the strategic level, where policymakers lay out the broad political-military goals and end-states which the operational campaigns are designed to serve.⁹

This model represents an accepted view of modern warfare which has become largely institutionalized as the warfighting paradigm within the U.S. military since the Vietnam War. In fact, the addition of the operational level of war was perhaps the most significant change in U.S. military doctrine to emerge as the military's direct response to the largely unexamined lessons of Vietnam.¹⁰ Of note is a distinct "political" level, often omitted from this paradigm, which rightfully belongs at the apex. This top-most position reflects recognition of the "grand strategic" level but also acknowledges the inherent purpose that lies beyond the purely military character of war and its intended results—results that are often if not always political in nature.¹¹ Students of war and military professionals overlook the political level in our paradigm of warfare at great risk.

Arguably, Figure 1 also represents the investment balance of organizational effort within the

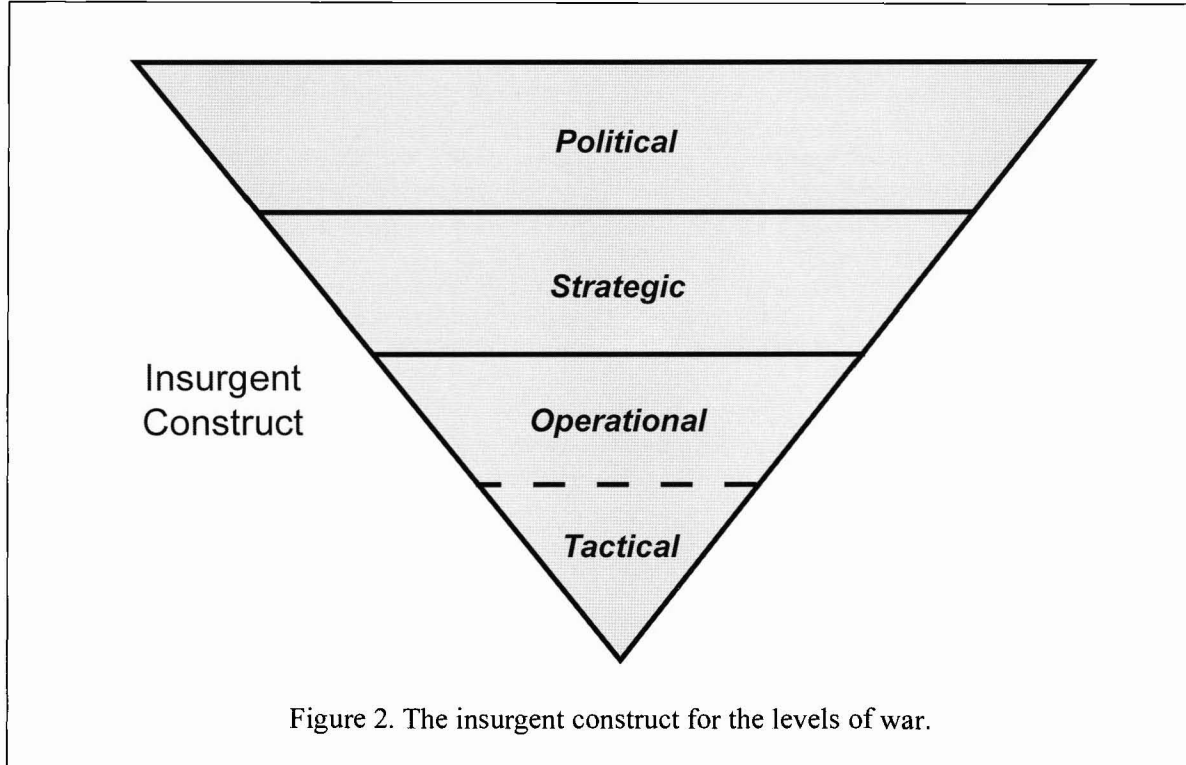
U.S. military as it prepares for and thinks about war. Doctrine, organization, training, leadership, materiel, personnel, and facilities are weighted heavily toward the tactical level—the large base of the triangle—with proportionally much less effort assigned to the operational and strategic levels. A cursory look at defense spending will identify that by far the greatest amounts of both procurement and future research and development are allocated for tactical-level requirements.¹² Tanks, helicopters, fighter planes, individual body armor, assault amphibians, cruise missiles, munitions of all sorts, unmanned aerial vehicles, “littoral combat ships”—all provide the combat power to fight and win battles at the tactical level. Unfortunately, winning more tactical-level battles in an era of Fourth Generation Warfare does not lead inevitably to winning the war. In point of fact, with more and more responsibility for the operational and strategic levels of war shifting to joint organizations—a by-product of the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act—the military services have become more tactical in their focus, charged to “organize, train, and equip” rather than to “fight and win.” Service jargon is replete with references to “warfighting” but rarely speaks of the vastly more important “war-winning.” The decisive strategic responsibility of “winning our wars” has been largely shifted away from the services toward others in the “joint world” with far shallower institutional, intellectual, and resource foundations. This is a little-recognized development with complex implications when fighting a global “long war.”

The Insurgent Paradigm

Ironically, our enemies in this “long war” may have developed their own version of our paradigm of warfare. Assessing the enemy’s efforts over the past five years, one could argue that they are employing the same construct and levels of war, but with the orientation reversed—apex low, base high, as shown in Figure 2, on the following page. Al-Qaeda and their associated elements—the “global insurgents”—have clearly chosen to place their foremost effort at the top: the political and strategic level. They appear to understand and seem to be employing

Hammes’s concept of Fourth Generation Warfare. Their political strategic targets are the decisionmakers and influencing elites in the United States and in the global community. Their operational level works to string together minor tactical engagements (often carefully chosen) via global media coverage to create international strategic and political effects. Their lowest dollar investment, unlike ours, is at the tactical level, where improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers carry their strategic freight with great effect. Their command and control system is the Internet, the laptop, the courier, and the cell phone, drawing on technologies which were invented and paid for by their adversaries in the developed world. Their intelligence system does not rely on satellites or unmanned aerial vehicles, but commonly upon human sources inside our bases and near our operational units, employing a family, tribal, or ethnic-based network that is impenetrable to Westerners. Their biggest operational weapon is the global information grid, particularly the international media. Indeed, the media are a weapon system of “mass effect” for the terrorist to achieve his strategic and political “grand strategy” objectives, and he relishes the fact that we rightly cherish and protect both our freedom of speech and an adversarial media as central tenets of one of our most important freedoms, because it aids him immensely in pursuing his strategic goals.

An interesting example of the terrorists’ sophistication in blending these levels occurred in March 2005 in Afghanistan. One evening in the area of the Afghan-Pakistan border near Khowst, a major enemy attack began to develop. Three border checkpoints controlled by Afghan forces came under mortar and ground attack, and at the same time, two U.S. sites which hosted reinforcing artillery and attack helicopters also were hit with rockets. One Afghan border post was pressed hard by more than 100 enemy fighters. Despite the unprecedented nature of this nighttime, five-point coordinated attack, Afghan forces fought back well, and in concert with attack helicopters and timely artillery support, they repulsed the border-post attacks and inflicted many enemy casualties. This attack occurred with no apparent advance warning during a tra-



ditionally quiet winter period in a rugged mountainous region of the country. What made it particularly notable was that it coincided precisely with Afghan President Hamid Karzai's first official state visit to meet with his Pakistani counterpart, President Pervez Musharraf, in Islamabad—and that early in the morning following the attack, an Al Jazeera news crew suddenly drove up to the point of the main attack in this very remote part of the border to capture what they obviously expected to be a very different outcome on film. Clearly, this enemy understands the political and strategic level of a global insurgency.

General John P. Abizaid, commander of U.S. Central Command, has described the war against al-Qaeda and their associated movements as “a war of intelligence and a war of perceptions.”¹³ Both aspects present enormous challenges for the United States and our Coalition friends and allies. Our intelligence systems and capabilities are among the most sophisticated and expensive in the world, but their ability to give us credible insight into the minds and planning of our adver-

saries remains problematic. The war of perceptions—winning a battle of ideas, influencing other cultures, countering the virulent message of hate and intolerance promoted by our enemies—is a bitter conflict fought out every day in an environment of 24/7 news coverage and a continuous global news cycle. Both of these crucial battlegrounds remain arenas where the West and the United States face serious challenges and are often swimming against the tide in a complex foreign culture.

Intelligence: The “80/20 Rule” and “Boiling Frogs”

Clausewitz observed that “many intelligence reports in war are contradictory, even more are false, and most are uncertain.”¹⁴ What military intelligence officer today would publicly stand up and endorse Clausewitz’s admonition during a senior-level intelligence briefing? Yet the assertion that intelligence reports tend to be contradictory, false, and uncertain represents intelli-

gence realities. To the contrary, the 40-year Cold War gave us powerful capabilities and unprecedented levels of confidence in our modern intelligence systems. At the height of this half-century conflict, we had devised technological solutions to our intelligence challenges which surpassed any capabilities previously known in the history of conflict. From the modest successes of the U2 surveillance aircraft program (brought into high profile after the 1962 shoot down of Francis Gary Powers over the Soviet Union), the United States designed, built, and deployed a comprehensive satellite surveillance program which ultimately provided unprecedented overhead access to historically denied territories around the world. Listening posts dotted the periphery of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). A human spy network behind the Iron Curtain provided uniquely sensitive information. After four decades of primary focus on a fixed enemy, our intelligence capabilities became singularly optimized to peer at ICBM fields, observe submarine fleet anchorages, scan bomber-packed airfields, monitor Warsaw Pact tank divisions, and—with a network of spies—look deep inside the Soviet governmental and military bureaucracies.

Our human intelligence penetration of the USSR was significant and priceless, tragically revealed by the betrayals of numerous American agents by Soviet moles Aldrich Ames inside the CIA and Robert Hanssen inside the FBI.¹⁵ The ideological power of our Western influence as functioning and prosperous democracies of free people gave us leverage in recruiting Soviet citizens to spy on their own country, a “Free World” ideological advantage noticeably absent in penetrating terrorist networks today. Billions of dollars were devoted to these holistic intelligence efforts, and the results were clearly impressive. One could unscientifically estimate that a U.S. president sitting down to his daily intelligence briefing in the 1960s, 1970s, or well into the 1980s could have perhaps an 80-percent confidence level in the veracity and completeness of the intelligence picture painted on at least the Soviet Union, our most dangerous opponent. The existence of an aggressive foreign power with the largest nuclear arsenal in the world

aimed at the United States was a powerful incentive for massive spending on intelligence and unsparing efforts to discern not only the capabilities, but the intentions, of this prime adversary.

As the Soviet Union began to disintegrate in the late 1980s, however, our intelligence system remained largely unchanged. Presidents continued to get their daily worldwide intelligence briefings, but gradually the levels of confidence and certainty in the picture began to slip from the peak Cold War performance levels of an optimized system. It was a slip unnoticed by the participants, and perhaps by the briefers as well. Institutional momentum and past successes kept investments steady or growing in high-technology systems, and one can surmise that satellites and other overhead collectors continued to receive robust resourcing.

But in comparison to the perhaps 80 percent confidence level in the accuracy of the products against the Soviets, our level of confidence in today’s intelligence products against an obscure worldwide enemy network ought to perhaps be more like 20 percent. In an environment of global insurgency, fighting a loosely organized worldwide terrorist network enabled by modern technology, a movement based upon twisted religious interpretations and playing upon feelings of economic and political inadequacy in a world racing toward globalization in all aspects of life, our technology-dependent intelligence system is operating at a huge disadvantage. Our enemy has no ICBM fields, no submarine pens, no tank divisions, and no standing governmental or military bureaucracy to penetrate. Aside from cars, trucks, and motorcycles, he has no “platforms,” yet most of our costly intelligence tools tend to be optimized to find and report on just that. Acquiring high-value human intelligence continues to be extremely difficult, and penetrating a closed culture with intense internal loyalties and a strong bias toward family and tribal lines is immensely tough.

Most important, though, our military leaders and commanders today have to recalibrate their thought processes to better understand what they are seeing and what they are not. In my experience, no intelligence officer worth his or her salt will give a senior leader an intelligence

briefing without crisp certainties in the conclusions. In fact, in our military we expect and demand the intelligence officer, the “G2,” to take a defined stance, to tell us definitively what the enemy is going to do. Again, in the Cold War era, the West had multiple overlapping and redundant means of detecting, assessing, and confirming key intelligence findings. In today’s environment, operating against a shadowy terrorist network distributed globally in loosely aligned autonomous cells, our ability to have any significant degree of confidence in our intelligence certainty should be very much in question and viewed with extreme skepticism. In my estimation, we simply do not know what, or how much, we do not know. We’re back to the world of Clausewitz. What was an 80-percent certainty during the Cold War is now 20 percent—this is “the 80/20 Rule” of modern intelligence.

The “Boiling Frog” theory characterizes another intelligence challenge that bedevils our professionals: the tyranny of short time horizons. When fighting an enemy who views time in decades or generations, Americans—perhaps particularly those fighting overseas on one-year tours of duty—are at a great disadvantage. We live in a “microwave society” of instant results, and our trend analysis in counterinsurgency operations reflects this. During 2003-2005 in Afghanistan, our “long-term” time comparisons were inevitably to events just one year prior. We essentially had no data from 2001 or 2002 for a variety of reasons—early-stage operations, inadequate records keeping, staff turnover—so our longitudinal assessment of the counterinsurgency was at best a one- to two-year comparative look.

My U.S. military intelligence team in Afghanistan dreaded the inevitable question: “Are we the boiling frog?” Legend has it that a frog placed in a shallow pot of water heating on a stove will remain happily in the pot of water as the temperature continues to climb, and will not jump out even as the water slowly reaches the boiling point and kills the frog. The change of one degree of temperature at a time is so gradual that the frog doesn’t realize he is being boiled until it is too late. Our limited Western time horizons often precluded any serious look at a ten-year (much less a 25-year) timeline to discern the

long-term effect of our policies, or a long-term comprehension of what the enemy might be attempting, ever so slowly. This is a significant risk to any Western intelligence system, perhaps most so with Americans and our perceived “need for speed.” In a culture of generational conflicts, centuries-old tribal loyalties, and infinite societal and family memories, we are at a significant disadvantage.

The War of Perceptions: Information Operations

Clausewitz also wrote that war “is a trial of moral and physical forces through the medium of the latter. Naturally, moral strength must not be excluded, for psychological forces exert a decisive influence on the elements involved in war.”¹⁶ The counterinsurgency campaign waged in Afghanistan from late 2003 until mid-2005 was underpinned by information operations. Unfortunately, in a war of ideas, our ability to influence ideas and shape perceptions as Westerners briefly transplanted into this remote, isolated region of the world with an infinitely different culture was an enormous challenge. As Westerners and Americans, we tended to be linear and impassive thinkers focused on quick solutions—operating in a foreign world of nuance, indirection, and close personal relations tied to trust, with extended time horizons. The Taliban often reminded villagers: “The Americans may have all the wristwatches, but we have all the time.”

Our U.S. information operations doctrine was designed for a different era and in many ways simply did not fit the war we were fighting. It doctrinally bundled together “apples, oranges, pianos, Volkswagens, and skyscrapers” into one package—psychological operations, operational security, military deception, offensive and defensive computer network operations, and electronic warfare.¹⁷ This official collection of disparate conceptual entities did little to assist us in our struggle to understand and operate in a war that was ultimately about winning hearts and minds, and about keeping our side resolutely in the fight.

The enemy instinctively seemed to understand how to exploit the media (international and local), tribal customs and beliefs, rumors and cultural predispositions toward mystery and conspiracy, and a host of other subtle but effective communications. Al-Qaeda and the Taliban targeted their messages to influence both decision makers and ordinary people—in Afghanistan, in Pakistan, in the Gulf region, in Europe, in the United States, and across a global audience. A blatant lie or obviously false claim by the Taliban would resonate throughout the cultural system of Afghanistan down to every valley and village, and it would be next to impossible to subsequently counter such falsehoods with facts. In a tribal society, rumors count, emotions carry huge weight, the extreme seems plausible, and “facts” reported outside the trusted confines of family, village, and tribe are subject to great skepticism. This “local” phenomenon carried weight throughout the region and is arguably the norm across much of the Islamic world.

The deadly outbursts in Afghanistan following the ultimately false reports of American desecration of the Koran at Guantanamo demonstrated the emotional power of “breaking cultural news.” Widespread rioting and protests across the Muslim world after the publication in Europe of cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad reflect the same powerful and emotional cultural religious phenomenon. Messages from “the West” were often viewed with inherent suspicion, simply because they were from outsiders. We worked hard to overcome these difficulties, mostly through exercising the most effective information operations technique—having a good story to tell, and always telling the truth.

The public affairs component of this strategy deserves some discussion. In late 2004, General Richard Myers, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, published a directive message explicitly separating public affairs from information operations in the U.S. military, and he articulated some very powerful reasons why this separation should be so.¹⁸ U.S. public affairs officers around the world cheered, but many commanders cringed. The work of winning a “war of ideas” was not made any easier for deployed commanders, but Myers’s point was a valid one—the

recognition that we waged 21st-century warfare in the “spin zone” of both international media and domestic politics could not permit or excuse an environment where facts might be changed or reporters manipulated to deliberately create false perceptions.

The line remains a fine one for commanders. In an environment where the enemy leverages global media to get out a recurrent message of hopelessness and despair, of carnage and fear, how do military leaders counter the overwhelming impression that all the victories are on the enemy’s side? How do we overcome the perception that every bombing or ambush resulting in American casualties signifies that we are “losing”? As some pundits have noted, if Americans at home had been able to watch the 1944 D-Day invasion of Normandy in real time on CNN from the first wave at Omaha Beach, there would have been little hope in the public mind that the Third Reich would surrender just 11 months later! Some Americans might have clamored for a negotiated settlement. But no one in the global audience in 1944 viewed Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan as the “moral equivalents” of the Allies, nor did any news organization in the West report on World War II as though it was a neutral observer at a sporting event. The Allies against the Axis was not a game show where the outcomes were unimportant to the average citizen, and the news media did not report on it as though they were neutral about the results.

It’s increasingly apparent that this “values-neutral” approach and largely detached moral position prevail across much of the international (and U.S.) media today. Are the bloody terrorists who decapitate innocent hostages on camera morally equivalent to the democratically elected governments of the United States and Great Britain? Are they as deserving of empathy and respect as the freely elected leaders in Afghanistan and Iraq? Some media outlets—and not insignificant numbers of citizens in the Muslim world—would contend it is so. We do not have to agree with these chilling perceptions to register them and to reflect seriously on what measures are required to reverse them. The painful implications of this set of arguably common Islamic perceptions should give us pause. Is

nothing commonly reprehensible to all peoples? All these complexities of perception and culture are alive in a 24/7 news-cycle world of instant communications, and they utterly change the dynamics of fighting and winning a war against a global insurgency today.

Finally, a growing phenomenon subtly capitalized on by our terrorist enemies is the instant politicization of distant battlefield events (especially reverses) in the American political process here at home. There are surely disturbing echoes of the bitter political contentiousness of Vietnam in today's party-centric debates over the nature and strategy of this war, but that debate also reflects a healthy symptom of politics in a free society. That said, it is unfortunate that in an era of continuous electoral politics, somehow successful activities in this war—from battles won to elections held to civil affairs projects completed—seem to be scored as “wins” for the present administration, while tactical setbacks, bombings, heavy casualties, or local political reverses are construed as “losses,” and seem to somehow be twisted to add to the political capital of the opposition party. Although largely unintentional, this perverse situation is flat-out wrong, and it does a disservice to our fighting men and women in harm's way. Wars should always supercede “politics as usual,” especially in an age of Fourth Generation Warfare with the enemy deliberately targeting decision makers on the home front as part of its premeditated strategy. There was a time in American politics, especially in time of war, when politics stopped at the water's edge and our friends and enemies alike saw a unified, bipartisan approach to foreign policy from American elected leaders. In the current “long war,” fought out 24/7 under the bright lights of continuous talk shows, and where resolve, staying power, and American and allied unity are the very principles that the enemy is desperately trying to undermine, that once respected bipartisan principle in our foreign policy needs to be recaptured.

Conclusion: Our Strategic Challenge

Strategy in a global counterinsurgency requires a new level of thinking. A world of

irregular threats and asymmetrical warfare demands that we broaden our thinking beyond the norms of traditional military action once sufficient to win our wars. The focus of this global insurgency of violent Islamist extremism exploits the concepts of Fourth Generation Warfare with a calculated assault on perceptions at home, on our decision makers, and on the public. In a war of intelligence and a war of perceptions, we grapple to understand how to best devise a war-winning strategy given the predominantly conventional warfighting tools in our military toolbox—and our vulnerabilities outside the military sphere. Realities are that an unbroken series of tactical military victories in today's war, the primary focus of our Army and Marine Corps, will not assure strategic success, yet our conventional military organizations and service cultures seem increasingly tactical. An effective strategy does not result from the aggregate of an unlimited number of tactical data points. Commanders assert, “We simply cannot be defeated militarily in this war.” That may be true, but this statement masks the fact that we can potentially be defeated by other than purely military means.

How big is our concept of war? With our enemies committed to an unlimited war of unlimited means—al-Qaeda will clearly use a nuclear weapon against the United States if it gains the means—how can we continue to regard this fight as a limited war and keep our focus chiefly on accumulating an unbroken series of battlefield tactical successes which we somehow think will collectively deliver victory? How do we justify our military services' institutional fixation with accruing more and more tactical capability in the face of an enemy which places no value on tactical engagements except to achieve his strategic and political objectives? Where do we best invest our future defense dollars to gain leverage over this new “global insurgent,” an enemy with no tanks, no air force, no navy, and no satellites? What type of provocation will it take for Americans to fully commit to a “long war” against an enemy who is engaged in a war without limits against us? And what does an all-out “long war” mean for America within the ethical and moral values of our nation in the 21st century?

Many of these questions are beyond the scope

of this article, but they point to the complex dimensions of understanding the nature of the war we fight today—a Fourth Generation War—and the means required for us *to win*. As a military charged with fighting this new type of war, a global insurgency, we must better grasp ownership of the fight. In some sense, as society's trustee in the conduct of our nation's wars, we must accept the full range of war, tactical to strategic level. After all, winning wars—and preventing them—are the only reasons our military exists. If we as a nation or a member of a coalition are ultimately defeated by our enemies, the reasons for that defeat—whether military, political, or economic—will be far less important than the result. We must more fully leverage all the intellectual as well as physical capabilities inside our military to assure such a defeat remains unthinkable. We need to contribute more directly toward a comprehensive strategy leading to long-term victory. Battlefield victories result from good tactics, training, and leadership; strategic victories result from thinking through the right strategy and executing it aggressively. Our military should be the repository of the deepest reservoirs of strategic thinking on winning our wars—of any type. But for our military to deny that an asymmetric defeat at the strategic level is even possible in this unconventional war is the equivalent of burying our heads in the sand and increases our risk.

While protecting against tactical or operational-level defeat on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, our military needs to also guard against the dangers of strategic-level defeat. This is not just “someone else's problem.” We need to understand the nature of the war we are fighting, and we need to avoid the temptation to define our war as the *tactical* battle we would like to fight rather than the *strategic* fight we are in with a thinking enemy who strikes daily at our national political will here at home.

The military's role in addressing this asymmetrical “war of wills” is hypersensitive. This predicament is a very real problem inherent in 21st century warfare, and the military needs to understand and support the civilian leadership in defending this flank. Bipartisan recognition and defense of this Achilles' heel is also necessary to

deprive our enemies of its effect. America's military contribution needs to evolve toward designing a war-winning series of campaigns and, perhaps even more important, helping our civilian leadership to craft the broad political-military grand strategy necessary to succeed against a dangerous and resourceful enemy in this “long war.” We as a military must fully understand, accept, and take ownership of “war-winning” as well as “war-fighting” if we are to fulfill our role in defending the society we are pledged to serve. If this conflict is truly a “long war” against violent global extremism, against an ideology of hate and destruction as dangerous as fascism in the 1930s and communism in the 1950s, then we as a military have to take on the institutional and intellectual challenges to fight and to win this very different war against a determined and dangerous enemy.

Notes

1. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), 75.
2. Asymmetrical warfare in this context is best described as the means by which a conventionally weak adversary can fight and win against the conventionally strong opposite number. The term “insurgency” in this article describes irregular warfare characterized by unconventional elements battling against a prevailing or established order.
3. General John P. Abizaid, personal conversation with the author, 2004.
4. Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul, Minn.: Zenith Press, 2004). This is perhaps the most original book on present-day warfare in an era of weaker powers battling conventionally strong adversaries via asymmetrical approaches. Hammes casts serious doubt on the notions of technology, information, and speed of decision making as effective attributes in dealing with an insurgent enemy.
5. Arthur K. Cebrowski and John J. Gartska, “Network Centric Warfare: Its Origins and Futures,” *Proceedings*, January 1998.
6. Hammes, 16-31.
7. Cebrowski and Gartska. “Network-centric operations”—much different from Fourth Generation network—describes a theory of war which argues in effect that rapid war-winning results can be rendered by

speed of decisions and actions produced by centralized networks of communications, intelligence, and command and control.

8. Hammes, 2. Italics added.

9. U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Pub 1-02 (Washington: GPO, 2005). The tactical level of war is defined as, "The level of war at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to accomplish military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces." The operational level is, "The level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or other operational areas." The strategic level is, "The level of war at which a nation, often as a member of a group of nations, determines national or multinational (alliance or coalition) security objectives and guidance, and develops and uses national resources to accomplish those objectives."

10. Harry R. Summers, *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio, 1981).

11. The essence of grand strategy is described by Colonel John Boyd (USAF Ret.) as to "shape pursuit of the national goal so that we not only amplify our spirit and strength (while undermining and isolating our adversaries) but also influence the uncommitted or potential adversaries so that they are drawn toward our philosophy and are empathetic toward our success." Boyd, "Patterns of Conflict," briefing, December 1986,

slide 140, <http://www.d-n-i.net/boyd/pdf/poc.pdf>.

12. U.S. Congress, *Fiscal Year 2006 National Defense Authorization Act*, H. R. 1815 (Washington: GPO, 2005). Available at U.S. House Armed Services Committee website, <http://www.house.gov/hasc/>.

13. Abizaid conversation.

14. Clausewitz, 117.

15. Chitra Ragavan, "Kings of Cold War Treachery: Robert Hanssen and Aldrich Ames," *U.S. News & World Report*, 27 January 2003.

16. Clausewitz, 127. Emphasis added.

17. U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Doctrine for Information Operations*, Joint Pub 3-13 (Washington: GPO, 1998), 18.

18. General Richard B. Myers, "Myers Letter to Commanders on Public Affairs and Information Operations," 27 September 2004, quoted by Mark Mazzetti, "U.S. Use of Media in War Sparks Debate," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 December 2004: "Although both [public affairs] and [military information operations] conduct planning, message development, and media analysis, the efforts differ with respect to audience, scope and intent, and must remain separate."

About the Author

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Countering Evolved Insurgent Networks

by Thomas X. Hammes

Military Review, July-August 2006.

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

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

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

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

In Iraq, the resistance does not even project a better future. It simply has the nihilistic goal of ensuring the government cannot function. This negative goal is much easier to achieve than governing. For instance, it is easier and more direct to use military power than to apply political, economic, and social techniques. The insurgent can use violence to delegitimize a government

(because that government cannot fulfill the basic social contract to protect the people). However, simple application of violence by the government cannot restore that legitimacy. David Galula, in his classic *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, expresses the difference between insurgency and counterinsurgency very clearly: “Revo-lutionary warfare . . . represents an exceptional case not only because as we suspect, it has its special rules, different from those of the conventional war, but also because most of the rules applicable to one side do not work for the other. In a fight between a fly and a lion, the fly cannot deliver a knockout blow and the lion cannot fly. It is the same war for both camps in terms of space and time, yet there are two distinct war-fares [sic]—the revolutionary’s, and shall we say, the counterrevolutionary’s.”

Enduring Traits of Insurgency

Mao Zedong wrote his famous *On Guerrilla War* [Yu Chi Chan] in 1937. Despite the passage of time, many of his basic observations about insurgency remain valid. First and foremost, insurgency is a political, not a military, struggle. It is not amenable to a purely military solution without resorting to a level of brutality unacceptable to the Western world. Even the particularly brutal violence Russia has inflicted upon Chechnya—killing almost 25 percent of the total population and destroying its cities—has not resulted in victory.

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

of the U.S. population a primary target of their efforts.

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

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

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

Emerging Traits of Insurgency

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

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

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

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

This complex mixture of players and motives is now the pattern for insurgencies. If insurgents succeed in driving the Coalition out of Afghanistan and Iraq, their own highly diverse coalitions of the willing will not be able to form a government; their mutually incompatible beliefs will lead to continued fighting until one faction dominates. This is what happened in Afghanistan when the insurgents drove the Soviets out. Similar disunity appeared in Chechnya after the Soviets withdrew in 1996, and infighting only ceased when the Russians returned to install their own government. Early signs of a similar power struggle are present in the newly evacuated Gaza Strip.

The fact that recent insurgencies have been coalitions is a critical component in understanding them. For too long, American leaders stated that the insurgency in Iraq could not be genuine because it had no unifying cause or leader; therefore, it could not be a threat. The insurgents in Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Palestine have never

New Insurgency Traits

- ◆ Emergence of networked coalitions of the willing
- ◆ Evolution into transdimensional organizations
- ◆ Ability to fund themselves
- ◆ Wide variety of motivations behind different coalitions elements

had a unified leadership or belief other than that the outside power had to go. Yet these insurgents have driven out the Soviet Union and continue to contest the United States, Russia, and Israel. The lack of unity in current insurgencies only makes them more difficult to defeat. It is a characteristic that we have to accept and understand.

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

Another major change in insurgencies is that they are becoming self-supporting. Modern insurgents do conventional fund-raising, but they also run charity organizations, businesses, and criminal enterprises. In the past, most insurgencies depended on one or two major sponsors, which the United States could subject to diplomatic or economic pressure. Now, the insurgents' more varied money-raising schemes, combined with the ability to move funds outside official banking channels, make it increasingly difficult to attack insurgent finances.

Enduring Characteristics of Counterinsurgency

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

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

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

of dignity that comes from having some say in their own futures.

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

Emerging Characteristics of Counterinsurgency

The counterinsurgent must also come to grips with the emerging characteristics of insurgency. To deal with the networked, transnational character of insurgents, the counterinsurgent must develop a truly international approach to the security issues he faces. In addition, he must counter not just a single ideology, but all the ideologies of the various groups involved in the insurgency. This is daunting because attacking the ideology of one group might reinforce that of another. Successful ideological combat also requires the counterinsurgent to have deep cultural and historical knowledge of the people in the conflict. Success in this kind of fight will be difficult to achieve, but it can be attained if the government attacks the insurgents' coalition by exacerbating individual group differences.

Finally, the government must find a way to handle the numerous external actors who will come to join the insurgency. The true believers among them can only be killed or captured; the rest must be turned from insurgents to citizens. If possible, the counterinsurgent should keep foreign fighters from returning to their homes to spread the conflict there. Obviously, this will

require a great deal of international cooperation. However, the nations involved should be anxious to cooperate to prevent these violent, potentially rebellious fighters from returning home.

Visualizing the Insurgency

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

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

- ◆ A map of the human connections reflects how insurgencies really operate. A network map will reveal the scale and depth of interactions between different people and nodes and show the actual impact of our actions against those connections.

- ◆ A network map plotted over time can show how changes in the environment affect nodes and links in the network. Again, such knowledge is essential for understanding how our actions are hitting the insurgency.

- ◆ Models of human networks account for charisma, human will, and insights in ways a simple organizational chart cannot.

- ◆ Networks actively seek to grow. By studying

New Counterinsurgency Traits

- ◆ Develop an international approach
- ◆ Counter multiple ideologies
- ◆ Know the culture and its history
- ◆ Handle the outsiders

network maps, we can see where growth occurs and what it implies for the insurgent and the government. By studying which areas of the insurgent network are growing fastest, we can identify the most effective members of the insurgency and their most effective tactics, and act accordingly.

- ◆ Networks interact with other networks in complex ways that cannot be portrayed on an organizational chart.

- ◆ Network maps show connections from a local to a global scale and reveal when insurgents use modern technology to make the “long-distance” relationships more important and closer than local ones.

- ◆ Networks portray the transdimensional and transnational nature of insurgencies in ways no other model can. Networks can also reveal insurgent connections to the host-nation government, the civilian community, and any other players present in the struggle.

- ◆ Finally, if we begin to understand the underlying networks of insurgencies, we can analyze them using an emerging set of tools. In *Linked: The Science of Networks*, Albert-Laszlo Barabasi points to these new tools: “A string of recent breathtaking discoveries has forced us to acknowledge that amazingly simple and far reaching laws govern the structure and evolution of all the complex networks that surround us.”⁶

We should also use network modeling when we consider our own organizations. Unlike the hierarchical layout we habitually use when portraying ourselves, a network schematic will allow us to see much more clearly how our personnel policies affect our own operations. When we chart an organization hierarchically, it appears that our personnel rotation policies have minimal

effect on our organizations. One individual leaves, and another qualified individual immediately fills that line on the organization chart; there is no visual indication of the impact on our organization. If, however, we plotted our own organizations as networks, we could see the massive damage our personnel rotation policies cause. When a person arrives in country and takes a job, for some time he probably knows only the person he is working for and a few people in his office. In a network, he will show up as a small node with few connections. As time passes, he makes new connections and finds old friends in other jobs throughout the theater. On a network map, we will see him growing from a tiny node to a major hub. Over the course of time, we will see his connections to other military organizations, to U.S. and allied government agencies, host-nation agencies, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and so forth. Just as clearly, when he rotates, we will see that large hub instantaneously replaced by a small node with few connections. We will be even more alarmed to see the massive impact the simultaneous departure of numerous hubs has on the functionality of our network.

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

Good software will allow for instant visualization of these relationships in a color-coded network we can project on a wall, print out, or transmit to other analysts. Good software almost instantly accomplishes the hundreds of hours of scut work that used to be required to tie isolated,

apparently unrelated reports together. It allows us to look for third-and even fourth-level connections in a network and, thus, to build a much more useful network map. In particular, we will be able to see the gaps where we know there ought to be connections.

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

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

Sageman's studies have revealed the key nodes and links in each of al-Qaeda's parts and how changes in the operating environment over time have affected those parts. Sageman has also identified both the real and virtual links between individuals and al-Qaeda's constituent organizations. Most important, however, the studies give us a starting point from which to examine any network: the preexisting social connections of a society. Rather than starting from scratch, we can analyze the limited intelligence we do obtain within the social and cultural context of the insurgency. In short, Sageman's approach allows us to paint a picture of the enemy network that we can analyze.

Security not Defensive

For the counterinsurgent, the central element in any strategy must be the people. The coun-

terinsurgent has to provide effective government in order to win the loyalty of the people. This is easy to say, but helping another country establish good governance is one of the most challenging tasks possible. The conflict in Iraq highlights how difficult it is to help establish a government in a fractious society. Beyond the discussion of whether or not there is a civil war in Iraq, we can't even agree on whether a strategy that focuses on the people is inherently offensive or defensive. Obviously, if our approach is perceived to be a defensive one, most strategists will be reluctant to adopt it, simply because defense rarely wins wars.

In fact, in counterinsurgencies, providing security for the people is an inherently offensive action. No one questions that during conventional wars, attacks that seize enemy territory to deny the enemy resources, a tax base, and a recruiting base are considered offensive actions. But for some reason, when we conduct population control operations in counterinsurgency, they are considered defensive even though these operations have the same effect: they deny the insurgent the things he needs to operate.

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

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

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

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

Command and Control

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

ed to fight an insurgency. Instead, we must strive for unity of effort by integrating the efforts of all concerned.

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

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

Once the national and regional committees are established, Washington must give mission-type orders, allocate sufficient resources, and then let in-country and regional personnel run the campaign. Obviously, one of the biggest challenges in this arrangement is developing leaders to head the in-country and regional teams, particularly deployable U.S. civil leaders and host-nation

leaders. An even bigger challenge will be convincing U.S. national-level bureaucracies to stay out of day-to-day operations.

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

Speed versus Accuracy

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

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

Attacking the Network

Because effective offensive operations in a counterinsurgency are based on protecting the people, direct action against insurgent fighters is secondary; nevertheless, such action remains a necessary part of the overall campaign plan. Once we understand the insurgent network or major segments of it, we can attack elements of it. We should only attack, however, if our attacks support our efforts to provide security for the people. If there is a strong likelihood of collateral damage, we should not attack because collateral damage, by definition, lessens the people's security. In addition, the fundamental rules for attacking a network are different from those used when attacking a more conventional enemy. First, in counterinsurgency it is better to exploit a known node than attack it. Second, if you have to attack, the best attack is a soft one designed to introduce distrust into the network. Third, if you must make a hard attack, conduct simultaneous attacks on related links, or else the attack will have little effect. Finally, after the attack, increase surveillance to see how the insurgency tries to communicate around or repair the damage. As they are reaching out to establish new contacts, the new nodes will be most visible.

Information Campaign

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

Furthermore, our actions speak so loudly that they drown out our words. When we claim we stand for justice but then hold no senior personnel responsible for torture, we invalidate our message and alienate our audience. Fortunately, positive actions work, too. The tsunami and earthquake relief efforts in 2004 and 2005 had a huge effect on our target audiences. Conse-

quently, our information campaign must be based on getting information about our good actions out. Conversely, our actions must live up to our rhetoric.

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

Summary

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

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

Notes

1. Bard E. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1990), 13.

2. Ian F. W. Beckett, ed., *Armed Force and Modern Counter-Insurgency: Armies and Guerrilla Warfare 1900-1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 8.

3. David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Praeger, 1966), xi.

4. Thomas L. Friedman, "A Poverty of Dignity and a Wealth of Rage," *New York Times*, 15 July 2005.

5. John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 71.

6. Albert-Laszlo Barabasi, *Linked: The New Science of Networks* (Cambridge, Mass: Perseus Publishing, 2002). See also Lewis Sorley, *A Better War* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 2003).

7. Mark Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

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

9. Thompson, 55.

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

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

About the Author

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Advances in Predeployment Culture Training: The U.S. Marine Corps Approach

by *Barak A. Salmoni*

Military Review, November–December 2006

This article is dedicated to the memory of Captain Brian S. Letendre, USMC, and Lance Corporal Cory R. Guerin, USMC.

The history and self-identity of the United States Marine Corps are based on operations in foreign environments in close proximity to peoples from foreign cultures and with indigenous security personnel. Still, the systematic study of foreign cultures in an operationally focused fashion is a relatively new phenomenon for Marines.

Since late 2003, Marine units deploying to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) have undergone orientation training on the culture of places to which they will deploy. A three-stage evolution has taken place in the conception and execution of such training.

At first, the moniker was “cultural sensitivity training.” The goal of the training was to learn how to avoid offending indigenous people by focusing on decorum, taboos, “do’s and don’ts,” pleasantries, and the etiquette of face-to-face nonmilitary interactions. Some referred to this as “culturization.” The training also included an introduction to the history of the operational areas. Marines returning from deployments later commented that social aspects of such training only partially reflected realities in what were diverse, changing areas of operations, while the coverage of history was too academic, with insufficient links to contemporary dynamics.

“Culture awareness classes,” a term used into

2004, placed more emphasis on the *contemporary* history, political legacies, and visible religion of the OIF and OEF theaters. The training began to address evolving social dynamics, and it was based on the firsthand observations of deployed troops and the personnel teaching the classes. The training also paid more attention to culturally important tactics, techniques, and procedures, such as the use of translators. In this sense, culture trainers moved beyond a priori assumptions of what might be important to deploying troops, to a method of curriculum development that integrated soldiers' and Marines' recent experiences and articulated needs.

Into 2005, "tactical culture training" or "operational culture learning" replaced culture awareness classes. The focus shifted from not offending people (a *negative* incentive) to grasping local human dynamics in order to accomplish the mission (a *positive* incentive). Thus, culture *knowledge*—knowledge applied toward achieving mission goals—became an element of combat power and a force multiplier. Increasingly realistic culture dynamics were injected into field exercises, in particular the stability and support operations exercises coordinated by Marine Corps Training and Education Command (TECOM).

The responsibility for finding qualified instructors and appropriate learning materials evolved in a similar fashion. In the 2003-2004 phases, battalion, regimental, and division commanders preparing for second deployments into theater recognized the need for culture and language education and attempted to identify the knowledge necessary and those who could teach it. Their conscientious but improvised efforts in a new field of predeployment military learning yielded uneven results across the deploying Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF).

In late 2004, TECOM took over the responsibility for all aspects of predeployment training in the Corps. It too turned to culture training, coordinating and eventually encompassing efforts already in progress while continuing to consult with operating forces.

Along with removing the burden of developing and coordinating culture training from the

operating forces, TECOM, via ongoing consultation with OIF and OEF veterans, initiated changes to help determine who was a subject-matter expert for warfighter culture training. Instead of generalist historians, religion specialists, and journalists, younger personnel who combined recent operational experience with academic study, site visits, and debriefing of returning units conducted the training. In this respect, cultural trainers have been working to shorten the lessons-learned feedback loop from deployment to deployment.

From Ad Hoc to Institutional and Operational

The culmination of the culture training process was the emergence in May 2005 of the Marine Corps Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL), established on the initiative of Lieutenant General James Mattis, the commanding general of Marine Corps Combat Development Command, and based on his experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq. The planning and initial stand-up of CAOCL occurred under the guidance of TECOM's commanding general at the time, Major General T. S. Jones.

Mattis and Jones were guided by the emphasis the Marine Corps Commandant, General Michael Hagee, put on invigorated training and education for global contingencies in an irregular warfare environment. Hagee's vision called for more and better training and education on foreign cultures, languages, and the regional and cultural contexts of counterinsurgency and irregular warfare.¹

CAOCL immediately assumed the role of coordinating, sourcing, and planning operational culture predeployment training throughout the Marine Corps. By August 2005, CAOCL staff had visited the MEF area of responsibility (AOR) in al-Anbar province, Iraq, to evaluate previous culture training in order to develop new material for the upcoming training cycle. The staff emerged with standardized procedures for culture training assessment and sustainment teams that would go to other areas of operation. By partnering on these visits with instructors from Marine Corps

Professional Military Education (PME) schools and students in regional learning programs, CAOCL affirmed two central principles: first, to conduct effective culture training, culture trainers need to know and understand cultures in a military context by experiencing them first-hand; second, to effect change across the service, there must be a feedback loop from predeployment culture training to the schoolhouses.

Although CAOCL brought onto its staff Marines and civilians who had been involved in culture training since 2003, it suffered and continues to suffer from the need to quickly and continually expand its educational and training ambit in a time of war, as opposed to gradually and methodically building up in a time of peace. Nevertheless, the hectic operational tempo has helped CAOCL to better understand its mission and to evolve responsively and responsibly. Thus, even with a skeleton staff, by January 2006 its trainers had begun to service training requests in Hawaii and Okinawa, supporting I, II, and III MEF. This was in addition to providing predeployment classes and learning tools for culture and language to detachments deploying to OEF and areas of responsibility in the Caucasus and Africa.

CAOCL is chartered as the Marine Corps' operational culture and operational language center of excellence, with chief responsibility for the training and education continuum. The latter currently consists of three main waypoints:

- ◆ *Predeployment training at the small-unit to major-subordinate-command level.* This remains CAOCL's overarching, highest priority. Through small one-to-three-man teams, the center teaches Marines in classrooms, observes and evaluates field exercises, and provides scenario-development assistance to command post exercises, often through solicited "injects" to the efforts of already existing TECOM elements.

- ◆ *Integration of culture training into PME.* Commanders at all levels have articulated a concern that predeployment training, be it for culture or language, is in reality just-in-time, last-ditch training. TECOM leaders have thus made it a priority to ensure that PME at all appropriate levels integrates curricula on operational culture

concepts and tools, aligned with the rank of PME students and the roles they are to take up after graduation. TECOM seeks to create a chain linking all phases in operational culture PME on both the officer and enlisted levels, and CAOCL has been charged with ensuring these linkages. To best do this, in summer 2006 CAOCL established a professorship of advanced operational culture at Marine Corps University, filled by a cultural anthropologist with significant fieldwork abroad.

- ◆ *Establishment of institutional culture and language programs.* A cardinal principle of the post-Cold War world of irregular warfare is uncertainty about the nature and location of military engagements. An effective military will feature operating forces seeded with personnel possessing a baseline capability to operate with culture and language knowledge in many environments and types of operations, from disaster relief through police actions and counterinsurgency up to high-intensity, force-on-force combat. To meet this challenge, the Marine Corps has begun to develop career-long regional culture and language learning opportunities to be offered via the Internet and at language learning resource centers at the major Marine bases across the globe. These opportunities will be directed at noncommissioned and commissioned officers in the career force and are intended to draw on the conceptual learning underway in the PME schools.

CAOCL is also tasked to liaise with the other services' emerging centers for culture education. It bears noting that the Army, in particular, has made fast strides of late in this direction, with the Navy and Air force in hot pursuit. Continuing collaboration and liaison will be important as each service seeks to ensure that its own needs are met. CAOCL has also pursued links and mutual learning opportunities with similar military centers among allies in Europe and the Middle East.

A Threefold Shift

The establishment of CAOCL marks a significant threefold shift. First, Marine Corps senior and field-grade leaders now understand that

operational culture and language are central to mission success, especially in the brave new world of irregular warfare and distributed operations. Second, learning from I MEF's and II MEF's past efforts, the Marine Corps has chartered CAOCL to take the burden off the operating forces in the culture-language realm while they (the forces) prepare for deployment. Battalion commanders, for example, will not have to make their best Rolodex-aided guess on whom to call for culture and language training. CAOCL staff will either provide the training or evaluate and recommend other providers. The key is that CAOCL will consult with the requesting unit to ensure defined needs are met.

Third, if we look at the body of literature about culture in warfighting, we see an evolution. In early 2004, writing focused on the same initial message, worthy of repetition: culture is important.² But from late 2004 on, writers attempted to define culture in a military context. The overall harvest has produced some intellectually abstract work ill-suited to warriors, along with approaches edging towards stereotypical conclusions.³ On the other hand, authors closer to the warfighting community began to produce work with conceptual and informational utility for culturally educating Marines and soldiers preparing to deploy. Some of this was published.⁴ Other materials were authored by service people looking after the needs of their units.⁵

As the proponent for service-level doctrine on operational culture in the training, educational, and operational domains, CAOCL aspires to carve out a niche focused on the operator. This focus is reflected in the emerging definition of operational culture CAOCL has provided for officer PME. The definition ignores factors that usually constitute generic definitions of "culture" and adds atypical factors from "operational culture." In this way, CAOCL seeks to ensure that training focuses on what can be broadly described as "the lived human dynamics that influence a particular military operation." There are three clusters of ideas to be defined: operational culture, operational culture learning, and culture operator.

◆ *Operational Culture*. Governed by a partic-

ular operation's goals, material assets, and functional areas of personnel, "operational culture" consists of—

▼ Operationally relevant behavior and expressed attitudes of groups within indigenous forces against or with whom Marines operate, civilians among whom Marines operate, and indigenous groups whom Marines wish to influence.

▼ Factors determining operationally relevant behavior and attitudes, to include biological, social, environmental, and individual.

▼ Historical mechanisms shaping the factors behind determinants of operationally relevant behavior and expressed attitudes.

▼ Knowledge in order to successfully plan and execute across the operational spectrum.

◆ *Operational Culture Learning*. In pre-deployment training scaled to rank and billet and focused on mission locality and objectives, "operational culture learning" includes—

▼ Study of a specific area of operation's (AO's) human environment and its shaping forces.

▼ Training in billet-focused language domains.

▼ Use of distance learning, face-to-face classes, and field exercises.

In PME phases geared to the responsibilities Marines will have to undertake at the completion of each level, the learning includes—

▼ Study of the concepts of operationally relevant culture.

▼ Development of skills necessary to succeed in diverse environments.

▼ Examination of human, print, and electronic resources for learning about operational culture.

▼ Exploration of the role of culture as suggested by past operations and simulations, along with discussion of the relevant skills needed for the deployment AO.

▼ Introduction to the application of skills to the current operating environment.

In the career continuum, appropriate to military occupational specialty (MOS), phase of career, and leadership responsibilities, learning includes—

▼ Service-, command-, and self-directed study of emergent operating environments.

▼ Maintenance of knowledge with respect to likely future areas of operation.

▼ Monitoring of service- and DOD-provided resources for culture learning.

▼ Fostering unit study of foreign cultures for operational benefit.

▼ Recording culture observations about deployment areas.

◆ *Culture Operator.* A “culture operator” works at the tactical, operational, and strategic level within his AO. He—

▼ Continually rereads the changing human terrain.

▼ Diagnoses the dynamic interaction among the conditions and parameters of human existence.

▼ Grasps the basic culture-influencing forces of the human environment.

▼ Considers the impact of Marine operations as a new condition and parameter of human existence.

▼ Influences local behaviors and attitudes.⁶

In such fashion, the Marine Corps is creating a training and educational program useful to deploying Marines at all levels. CAOCL’s staff has found the above three categories useful as it continues to improve its approaches to structuring, executing, and evaluating operational culture learning.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

The remainder of this article seeks to illuminate Marine Corps predeployment culture and language training lessons learned and suggest steps to the implementation of these lessons. Marine Corps lessons may be of benefit to sister services, each of which is now establishing centers for culture education and training.⁷

A seat at the table. Predeployment training and work-ups are planned, usually through a comprehensive process involving solicited opinions; interactions between units, higher commands, and training entities; and meetings of interested parties. This process enables the creation of a coherent overall training package.

The culture component must be included in this preplanning process. Doing so is difficult because the concept of robust, systematic culture training is new to military thinking, and the individuals responsible for providing it across all the services are also new and relatively unknown. However, when planning for predeployment culture training occurs late, as an add-on, it jeopardizes the training. Preplanning is necessary to provide the right training to the right audiences at the right intervals in the predeployment cycle. It is the first step to achieving integrated, holistic, and mission-relevant culture training.

Inclusion of culture training in the planning process should occur at the highest possible operating force level—in this case, the G-3 of the MEF. Although lower-level units do not like being told what to do by higher, particularly when it comes to training, command direction is necessary to ensure a properly sequenced, integrated approach to training. It will also prevent subordinate units from overtaxing their operations sections in planning and coordinating culture training. When the highest levels of command drive the overall planning process, including culture and language training, they can transfer that burden to CAOCL.

Timing it right. Training for different kinds of skills must be timed right: it has to be relevant to when Marines use those skills. This is particularly true in the realm of operational culture and language. If training on these two related topics comes too early or too late, many Marines will think it is irrelevant to the upcoming deployment, no matter what they are told to think by commanders who get up to lecture them. In addition, if it is done too early, Marines might lose some essential concrete skills—use of a translator, formulaic interaction, spatial dynamics, key phrases in the local language, culturally coded interaction with females, informational interviewing techniques, or de-escalation of tension techniques.

Conversely, cultural and language training too close to the deployment date runs the risk of finding Marines unavailable because of last-minute requirements. It is also too late then to include concepts for application in field exercises—they might appear to be added “bricks in the

pack.” Most important, at this point, the unit already has a fully crystallized deployment mindset: some commanders inculcate a perspective in which the indigenous culture is a core consideration, while others might permit a solely kinetic inclination.

In-unit, leader-mentored study of service-level-approved materials must precede the main block of face-to-face culture training. The face-to-face classes should precede, by 10 days to two weeks, the major field exercises that come a few weeks before deployment to a Marine Air-Ground Task Force Training Center at 29 Palms, California.

Language training should phase in a month earlier, and in a fashion that does not separate Marines from units during the important pre-deployment phase. Using audio/video and printed pre-study tools at this point can help commanders and trainers identify the appropriate personnel for further face-to-face language training. Language training can continue afterwards, through use of learned phrases at Mojave Viper exercises and through web- and CD-based sustainment materials. Additionally, due to the relatively quick decay of survival-level language learning, language training cannot end earlier than two weeks prior to deployment.

Eluding the fire hose. A well-known method of training in the military is the “fire hose” method: spewing out immense amounts of information to huge, disparate groups in a short amount of time. It results from extremely tight training timelines and intense operational tempos. Such a pedagogical method is detrimental to learning “soft skills” with concrete ramifications.

A different scenario suggests the needed course of action. From January 2004 through July 2005, 1st Marine Division Schools ran Combined Action Program (CAP) training, inspired by positive Marine experiences in Vietnam. By the summer of 2004, when it was in full stride, small groups (either platoons or two platoons accompanied by the company commander) would undergo a multi-day package. Sometimes in-unit reading and discussion preceded the training.

The CAP culture class took up a nine-hour day—long enough to teach concepts, answer questions and discuss solutions, practice certain

skills, and play hip-pocket tactical-decision games. Allowing enough time for several breaks and lunch permitted recovery as well as unstructured learning. CAP platoons took further learning materials away from the program, and they practiced skills at field exercises. It should be noted that over the past two years, CAP platoon commanders and Marines have continued to grow their culture and language skills during and between deployments, often acting as the larger company or battalion’s point man on these matters.⁸

Although breaking MEFs into platoon-size elements for culture training is the most pedagogically sound method, it is likely unrealistic. CAOCL currently breaks a battalion-sized unit into three groups, to which it sends small training teams. Sergeants and below receive three and a half hours of face-to-face training. Staff sergeants through first lieutenants receive four and a half hours, and captains and higher receive a five-and-a-half-hour class. Commanders are encouraged to determine whether they require senior NCOs and warrant officers from the company and battalion staff to join the third group. The substance of each class must be aligned according to the planning and operating functions of the Marines in grouping the class. Trainers work to catalyze students’ active engagement by responding to questions and employing hip-pocket tactical-decision games.

This only partly does away with fire hosing. Whatever the rank cutoffs, class size should not exceed two companies. To be fully effective, self- or commander-driven PME reading should precede classroom study. CAOCL then provides programs scaled to different ranks and functions. In the same spirit, the classroom only begins the learning process; it is followed by distance learning. CAOCL currently offers CD and web-based distance learning material consisting of audiovisual modules on human-terrain mapping, negotiations and meetings, the state of the Iraq insurgency, working with the Iraqi security forces, culture aspects of convoy operations, cultivating relationships with Iraqi officials, use of a translator, culture aspects of interacting with Iraqis in and around domiciles, and third-country/Arab journalist measures. This is in addition to basic

and basic-plus language support. Commanders who choose to prioritize this distance learning find that their units' performance in field exercises improves and that their Marines consider culture and language as integral to the overall tactical and operational fight.

Qualified instructors. Another issue having to do with culture training involves who is qualified to teach the operational culture of a particular AO. If the instructor is unformed, he or she must be a soldier or Marine who has recently deployed operationally to the AO in a job requiring ongoing interaction with the indigenous population—the division combat operations center watch officer from OIF-I will not do. MOS is not important here; interaction with Iraqis on a regular basis is.

The Marine instructor must be temperamentally inclined to teach culture as an operational force multiplier and be able to combine experience-based knowledge with further learning and research. He or she must pursue, and be afforded the time and opportunity for, cross-pollination with Marines who have just returned from deployments. Fundamentally, the Marine instructor must be a good communicator.

One military community conspicuously unsuited to executing predeployment culture training is the chaplaincy corps. For several reasons, studying a religion to minister to a flock does not prepare one to teach about other cultures. First, the chaplain's primary mission is to provide religious, moral, and psychological support to warfighters. Anything diluting this would be an imprudent distraction. Second, chaplains may be inclined to perceive culture as being determined by an AO's religion. They may also focus on the textual as opposed to the lived dynamics of the religion in that area. In OIF and OEF, this is equally true of Christian and Muslim chaplains because very few of the latter come from the Middle East or Central Asia. Third, all humans are biased, but chaplains, given their calling to minister for one particular religion, are more so. Additionally, because of their rank—O3 through O6—they have extra moral weight, so that if they allow religious bias into teaching, it would more likely be taken as truth.

If the teacher is a civilian, matters are more

delicate and criteria more subjective. The Marine Corps must seek out and benefit from the civilian Defense Department, academic, and general community; it cannot deny deploying Marines the benefits of such expertise. Civilians without prior service must have lived in the AO in question or in a similar adjoining country. It is preferred that they possess advanced academic training so they can speak at a level of expertise beyond the anecdotal or journalistic.⁹ This assumes they will also possess language skills for the AO, if only as a matter of credibility. They must also be familiar with the military, with the Marine Corps, and with the nature of the unit they are talking to, and they should have enough of a grasp of the mission to be instructionally useful to the Marines.

In fact, civilian authorities, especially academicians, must be positively inclined to the Corps and the mission. Fundamentally, they must know how to talk to Marines at various levels and be open to learning from Marines about the Corps, its culture, and their experiences. It is also important that they be able to teach: good analysts are not always good teachers; briefing is not teaching; and a good performance is not always the same as good teaching.

One final point: due to the global nature of Marine Corps deployments and the constantly evolving Marine demographic, deploying units or their neighbors will frequently have in their ranks Marines native to the upcoming deployment AO. Units and outside trainers must locate these Marines and use them to provide educational and operational value-added to personnel going forward.

Making communicators. Operating forces need language capabilities corresponding to actual functions, just as they need orientation to the dialect used in the actual AO. Marines and Marine units also require pedagogical methodologies that resonate with them.

Thus far, commanders have called upon various language learning resources, with mixed results. The Defense Language Institute (DLI) is rightfully promoted as the one-stop shop for language. Government-sponsored or commercial contracting organizations have presented quick fixes ranging from pointy-talky cards to machines

that translate as you go (phraselators). At times, MEF- or division-level training officers have worked with local community colleges to develop survival-level language courses. All of these resources have been helpful and have provided lessons for improvement. But they come with drawbacks:

- ◆ They all cost money.
- ◆ Different foci and impetuses have influenced quality. For example, contracting organizations are primarily interested in profit, not necessarily in what might work best for Marines on the ground. Government-sponsored think tanks, another source of possible solutions, tend to favor a technology-heavy approach to something that, by its very nature, cannot be solved solely by technology.
- ◆ DLI's primary mission has been to train cryptographic linguists and foreign area officers in 40- to 63-week courses. There has been less historical emphasis on the short-term preparation of operational units in the basic terms, phrases, and learning skills needed for specific AOs and functions. DLI has made strides in this direction, but the operating forces and services must still aid, guide, and craft the materials DLI produces, as well as supplement the classes they provide, so that DLI can continue its traditional role of preparing language professionals.
- ◆ Survival or familiarization language programs have had mixed success in filling the needs articulated by training officers, units, and returning Marines. "Market research" in the form of pre-program planning with receiving units, in-country site visits, no-holds-barred debriefing of returning units, and inclusion of returning Marines in subsequent planning sessions has often been one task too many for ad hoc programs whose personnel are scrambling to deliver training on very short timelines. Survival-level courses provided at community colleges close to Marine Corps bases have been a good alternative to unit-fabricated training. Proximity to the units has facilitated a feedback-to-teaching loop that has facilitated effective instruction. The survival-level courses at Coastal Carolina Community College, for example, have greatly improved thanks to Marine input.

To ensure Marines get the best possible pre-deployment language training, units and returning Marines must participate in the program planning stage to define skill sets for operating levels from fire teams to field-grade officers. This planning must also address what kind of pedagogical products will actually work in the Marine classroom and what kinds of operational language tools will work in the field. Unit representatives, higher-level developers of the overall predeployment training timeline, and service-level coordinators of language training must all meet to determine the timing and sequencing of language exposure as well as the mix of classroom and distance learning.

In executing language training, it is necessary though not sufficient that teachers be native or near-native speakers of the language. They must also understand Marine learning styles and the Marine mission in an area. Fundamentally, they must be teachers by profession and training, not by accident of native speaking skills. Like those who teach culture, ideally they should also have had operational experience with Marine or Army units in the field. Furthermore, to the extent possible, language-capable Marines, even if their skill levels are rudimentary, must be included in the training as instructors' assistants.

Audiences. Because Afghanistan and Iraq are so culturally foreign, everyone wants predeployment cultural orientation. The senior commander's intent has often been that every sailor and Marine receives it. This approach indicates the seriousness with which the Marine Corps now approaches the issue, but it is not certain that training "every sailor and Marine" is the most prudent course of action.

Any sailor or Marine who has to go outside the wire to interact with indigenous people should, when it is plausible, participate in distance learning and face-to-face training. The intensity and detail of the training should be the greatest for infantry units, civil affairs groups, military police units, military/police adviser teams, and air-naval gunfire liaison elements. Intensity and detail also need to be substantial for commanders and staffs at the regimental through MEF levels (although the issues and skills covered will differ).

Certain support units have a high likelihood of performing infantry-like roles or interacting with indigenous people. These include motor transport, combat engineers, engineer service battalions, medical personnel, and those components of the MEF logistics group who liaise with third-country contractors, laborers, and government officials. Intelligence assets external to infantry units, logistics units, and the wing also need specific culture training (although it should be provided by the intelligence community). For all of these units, culture awareness and culture skills are necessary in the planning and operating continuum.

There are, however, a large number of Marines and sailors who will never go outside the wire (or off the vessel): those who have no operational planning role, and those in the more technical fields where interaction with indigenous people will be limited. Aircraft mechanics, bulk fuel specialists, nuclear-biological-chemical specialists, aircraft ergonomics and aviator human stress specialists—these Marines will not interact meaningfully with indigenous people; such being the case, using limited culture training assets and time to deliver classes may ill-serve a laudable intent.

Thus, an integral part of culture training prior to planning must involve determining which personnel should get what kind of exposure to operational culture and what the mix of distance learning and face-to-face training should be for each audience. In this way, the commander's intent will indeed be served through economies of force benefiting both the training cadre and the personnel receiving the training. This method will have the added benefit of ensuring from the outset that the predeployment certification requirements of all echelons are met.

Current Status of Training

Predeployment operational culture and language training now unfolds in the following fashion: as soon as higher headquarters and TECOM begin to plan for predeployment training, those providing the culture components through distance learning, classroom interaction, and tactical exercises provide input, ensuring

that the culture piece is timed right and sequenced appropriately.

Then, as units are pegged on the deployment schedule and assigned dates for classroom teaching and field exercises, CAOCL representatives brief battalion-level operations officers to plan the distance learning phase that will precede and follow the face-to-face interactions. During this time, CAOCL conducts in-theater site visits to develop timely, relevant learning categories and materials based on critical reviews of past practices.

Face-to-face interactions in the predeployment phase follow up on and synchronize with distance learning. Rather than one-day, multi-hour fire-hose sessions, CAOCL mobile training teams engage in more, but shorter and less intrusive, teaching visits to units, making course corrections as leader evaluations of classes and unit performance require. Classes are followed by experiential culture learning at field exercises monitored and reported on by culture trainers. Instructional after-action reports, focusing on the performance of Marines and other exercise forces, are distributed to unit leaders and exercise controllers.

Immediately prior to deployment, leaders from platoon commanders on up receive the results of a CAOCL visit to the AO. The purpose of the visit is to cover evolving trends and access information that redeploying units might not transmit in the relief-in-place (RIP) process. Thus, through leaders' seminars or reports, the training cadre ensures that culture coordination occurs as part of the RIP. Finally, CAOCL personnel visit the theater to observe and interview Marines at mid-deployment to glean critical input about the efficacy of previous training. With this information, they then begin the education and training cycle for the next units.

Into the Future

As Marines and soldiers experience multiple tours in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other AOs, their insights about how to best conduct culture training matures. Based on participant observation and debrief of returning personnel, CAOCL thus works to evolve in response to articulated needs.

The Marine Corps will therefore embrace new training initiatives in the coming months. First, Language Learning Resource Centers at Marine bases will provide ongoing language training in Iraqi Arabic, Dari, and Pashto, in addition to supplemental languages for the Pacific Command region. This means that predeployment language learning will be continuous, beginning much earlier than before. Distance learning will therefore provide a basis of capability upon which more targeted face-to-face instruction will build.

Second, inspired by successes the U.S. Army TRADOC Culture Center has had with “train-the-trainer” methods, CAOCL will transition in this direction. CAOCL is now developing week-long curriculum packages to be executed at regiments. These will target senior NCOs and company-grade officers who have had previous tours involving substantial interaction with indigenous people. By combining Marines’ experiential knowledge with added instruction and training resources provided through TECOM, CAOCL will ensure units at the battalion and company level have organic training expertise available on demand, thus sustaining the credibility, responsiveness, and building-block nature of operational culture training. In effect, CAOCL instructors will assume the role of deep-fight resources, although they will continue to provide mobile training teams for more targeted, advanced-level seminars and exercise evaluation.

Conclusion

By establishing CAOCL, the Marine Corps articulated a vision of the human dynamics of indigenous peoples—culture—as a central planning and operating consideration for the present and future. This vision obliges CAOCL to provide culture learning worthy of the Marines whom the center serves. Through planning, program development, and consultation with sister services and foreign allies, TECOM has begun to implement a long-range vision encompassing Marine culture education at all levels and throughout the career continuum. Likewise, there is talk of a joint-level coordinating body or executive agent. However, before we contemplate any such initiatives, it would be prudent to continue to improve and

sustain the predeployment training and education of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines going forward into the close fight.

Notes

1. See General M.W. Hagee, Commandant of the Marine Corps, “33rd Commandant of the Marine Corps Updated Guidance (The 21st-Century Marine Corps—Creating Stability in an Unstable World),” ALMAR 018/05, 18 April 2005 <<http://www.usmc.mil/almars/almar2000.nsf/52f4f5d11f10b4c4852569b8006a3e35/35a74723d7bcc61085256fe70061040a?OpenDocument>>.
2. See Major Chris Varhola, “American Challenges in Post-Conflict Iraq,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes*, 27 May 2004 <www.fpri.org/enotes/20040527.americawar.varhola.iraqchallenges.html>; George W. Smith Jr., “Avoiding a Napoleonic Ulcer: Bridging the Gap of Cultural Intelligence (Or, Have We Focused on the Wrong Transformation?),” *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Strategy Essay Competition: Essays 2004* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2004), 21-38; Montgomery McFate, “The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 38 (2005); Barak Salmoni “Beyond Hearts and Minds: Culture Matters,” Proceedings of the Naval Institute Press, November 2004; Alex Davis and Dan Fu, “Culture Matters: Better Decision Making Through Increased Awareness,” *Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation, and Education Conference (I/ITSEC) 2004*: <www.stotterhenke.com/papers/IITSEC-04-culture.pdf>.
3. See Davis and Fu; Celestine Ntuen, “Culture-Centric Models for Military Simulation and Training,” The 7th Annual Symposium on Human Interaction with Complex Systems 2005, 18 November 2005. Regarding potential stereotype formation, see Helen Altman Klein, Anna Pongonis, and Gary Klein, “Cultural Barriers to Multinational C2 Decision Making,” Research Paper prepared through the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Contract No:DaaH01-00-C-R094:<www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/ccrp/2000ccrts_klein_culture.pdf>.
4. Maxie McFarland, “Military Cultural Education,” *Military Review* (March-April 2005); Philip C. Skuta, “Cross Cultural Savvy,” U.S. Army War College Strategic Leadership Program, December 2005; P. M. Zeman, “Goat-Grab Diplomacy in Iraq,” *Naval Institute Proceedings* (November 2005).
5. A growing number of company-grade soldiers and Marines have fulfilled this role within units. For examples, see John Koopman, “Marines Seal Bonds of trust: Special Unit Wants to Win Hearts and Minds,” San

Francisco Chronicle, 4 July 2004; and Greg Jaffe, "Trial by Fire: On the Ground in Iraq, Captain Ayers Writes His Own Playbook," *Wall Street Journal*, 22 December 2004.

6. See Barak Salmoni and Paula Holmes-Eber, *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications* (Quantico, Va.: Marine Corps University Press, 2008).

7. The Army has established a Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Culture Center, and has begun initiatives through its Combined Arms Center (CAC). Working through its Senior Language Authority, the Navy has also established a nucleus for systematic operational culture and language training, while the Air Force has established a Center for Culture and Language Studies. The JFK Special Warfare School features a robust culture and language training program, and has continued to improve it.

8. For information about the CAP Program in Iraq, see Jason Goodale and Jon Webre, "The Combined Action Platoon in Iraq," *Marine Corps Gazette* 89, 4 (April 2005); Phil Skuta, "Introduction to 2/7 CAP Platoon Actions in Iraq," *Marine Corps Gazette* 89, 4 (April

2005). For information about precursors to the Vietnam CAP, see Al Hemingway, *Our War Was Different: Marine Combined Action Platoons in Vietnam* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1994).

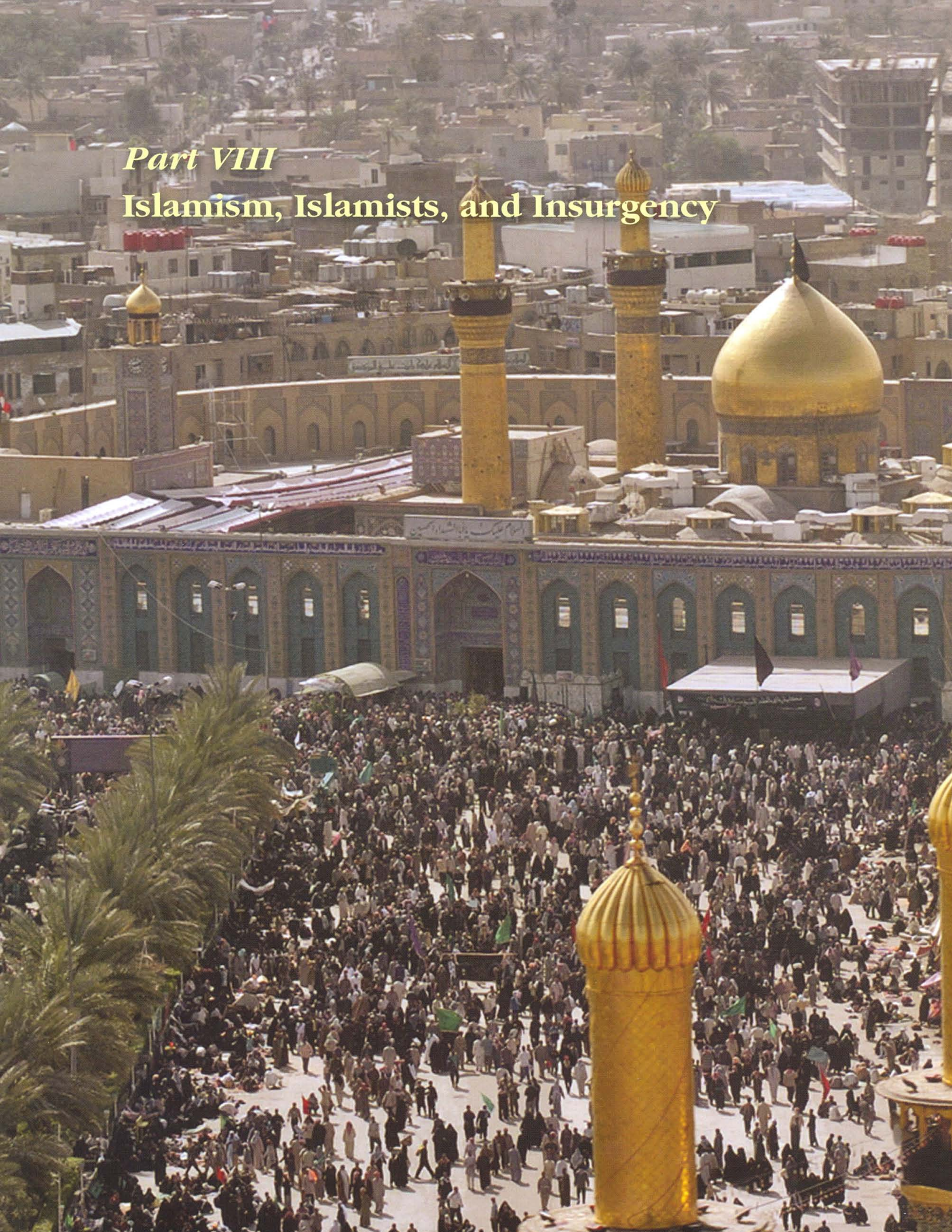
9. That is not to say journalists have no role. As guides to and informants about foreign cultures, they can be unrivaled resources. For an example from a region of growing concern to the Marine Corps, see Jeffrey Tayler, *Angry Wind: Through Muslim Black Africa by Truck, Bus, Boat, and Camel* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005).

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Part VIII

Islamism, Islamists, and Insurgency





A Clash of Systems: An Analytical Framework to Demystify the Radical Islamist Threat

by Andrew Harvey, Ian Sullivan, and
Ralph Groves

Parameters, Autumn 2005

In the Winter 2004-05 issue of *Parameters*, Philip Seib makes a laudable effort to establish the imperative for journalists, policymakers, and the American public to “undertake a more sophisticated analysis of how the world works.”¹ This is critical because the analytical framework adopted by the media and policymakers has a direct effect on how they approach news coverage and frame discussions regarding the threat posed by radical Islamist extremists. This in turn directly affects public opinion in the United States and the world, which in the context of a war of ideas is directly related to the success or failure of both sides. Professor Seib also pointed out the fact that the “clash of civilizations” theory espoused by Samuel Huntington has been widely criticized, and this article rejects it as an appropriate analytical framework. Our purpose is to provide an alternative framework that portrays the current global conflict as a clash of systems, not civilizations.

The central danger of accepting Huntington’s model as a basis for analysis is that it is the chosen model of radical Islamists, who in turn use it to mobilize support. If a clash of civilizations is accepted in the West—or worse, accepted by the populations in Muslim states—then the forces attempting to overturn the global system could eventually succeed. Success, however, is not battalions of extremist Islamists marching down

Pennsylvania Avenue; rather, it is the replacement of “apostate” regimes with an Islamic Caliphate, which can occur only once the current U.S.-led global system is destroyed. Therefore, it is imperative that the wider global war on terror focus on the systemic implications of the struggle, which provides a credible methodology to address and mitigate the root causes that fuel the ideology of extremist Islamism.

Many authors have identified the imminent threat posed to the United States by radical Islamists in the ongoing Global War on Terrorism, and a number of them have described it as a war of ideas. What is lacking in the ongoing discourse, however, is a conceptual framework necessary for an in-depth analysis of the basic conflict. The current threat environment is based on a clash of systems between the U.S.-led global system, in which the phenomenon of globalization has created unprecedented connectivity and prosperity in the developed world, and those who oppose this system and wish to replace it with another paradigm. The ideology seeking to overthrow the global system is extremist Islamism.² It is put into action by transnational Islamist terrorists as well as regional and indigenous extremists who wish to replace the secular, U.S.-led global system with an Islamist world order. States along the periphery of the U.S.-led system, where Western liberal democratic ideology and values underlying globalization directly clash with radical Islamism, constitute the main battleground. This is where the primary objective of U.S. national power should be aimed: at convincing the undecided multitudes that becoming part of the global system is a better option than fighting against it. In order to prevent states and populations in this periphery from accepting integration into the global system, radical Islamists attempt to frame the ongoing conflict as a clash of civilizations.

Clash of Systems Framework

The first part of this framework is to establish that there is an international system made up of states and non-state actors. Though there is no world government, rules that guide interactions among these actors on the world stage do exist.³

These are formed either by consensus (norms of international law and commerce) or are imposed by a major power such as the United Kingdom in the 19th century and the United States in the 20th.⁴ This system includes not only norms of interaction, international law, and treaties, but also institutions. The most important aspects of the post-World War II world system are the West’s multinational organizations. They owe their origins to the 1941 Atlantic Charter of liberal principles established to guide the postwar world, and the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference on monetary order (both American initiatives). These gave birth to various organizations, including the United Nations, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO). These organizations and the world order of open economics and dispute management were intended to prevent problems among Western industrial capitalist states—not to fight Soviet Communism, which was a separate system—and they continue to endure despite the end of the Cold War.⁵ Therefore, the underlying Western-inspired world order remains intact and is even expanding as China, Russia, and other states of the former Soviet Union join Western organizations. This demonstrates the ongoing vigor of Western values and principles in an international and multinational context. This system is still in place and forms the framework that enables “globalization” to occur, which is in many ways an acceleration of the speed of interactions within the system, and an indicator of their scope. The Islamists understand this relationship, which explains why these institutions are targets for al-Qaeda.

Thomas Friedman has described “globalization” as a system, and as operating within the “liberal rules of economics . . . the software being the rule of law, courts, regulatory institutions, oversight bodies, free press, and democracy.”⁶ He also observes that globalization is happening in a power structure that isn’t driven just by electrons and stock options. It’s a power structure maintained and preserved by the U.S. military. The U.S. military is the hidden fist that keeps the hidden hand operating—“Ain’t no McDonald’s without McDonnell Douglas, and

without America on Duty there's no America Online."⁷ This article agrees with Friedman's view of globalization as a system that promotes this increased mobility and the speed of exchange of these elements.

This global system established and maintained by the United States provides the background on which an analytical framework can be built. As the world's sole superpower, the United States will continue to dominate and influence all aspects of the global system for the foreseeable future. Although hegemonies are uncertain, there currently are no powers that accept the global system (this includes most of the world's major states) which are capable of overturning this hegemony without damaging the system itself. In this regard, the greatest threat to U.S. hegemony is not competition within the system, but is instead composed of elements that seek a complete overthrow of the global system. The United States owes this tremendous position of power to its ability to leverage its influence and leadership in the global system, which provides considerable benefit (economically, politically, and militarily) in return. Furthermore, in order to maintain this position as global hegemon, the United States is a status quo power within the global system that must protect and conserve it. In its relations with states that have not accepted the global system, the United States must be an agent for change in order to expand, if possible, the global system from which it derives such benefit.

Thomas Barnett describes the world in terms of a "Functioning Core" of states that have embraced the Western world system of "globalization." These states have stable governments, rising standards of living, liberal media, and are included in one or more systems of collective security. There are also states that have only begun to integrate or have not yet fully integrated into the world system, and are described as "Seam States" on the boundary of the "Functioning Core." Barnett calls other areas (which do not accept "globalization" or the global system) the "Non-Integrating Gap." It is no accident that these areas are trouble spots, and are where the United States is most likely to intervene militarily.⁸ This three-level construct of globalization indicates the global Western system has limits

that affect how it functions. These constraints are, interestingly enough, connected to liberal Western concepts such as the rule of law and individual rights, reflecting an important point regarding this global framework. It is built on ideas and values that stand in direct opposition to those of the extremist Islamists.

In return for setting the rules for international interactions (which benefit the rule-maker), the United States provides security to maintain the system. Other actors or powers will support the United States if they receive more benefit from the system's continuation than from its demise. At the same time, they may also jockey for position within the system. On the other hand, if they do not feel that the system provides appropriate benefits, then they will challenge the system and attempt to overthrow or change it through conflict.⁹ While many observers of the international system believe that states which clearly are part of the global system may seek to form partnerships and coalitions as a means of mitigating the dominating influence of U.S. power structures, there will be times when members of the system jockey for its leadership. No state is currently seeking to replicate our capabilities across all instruments of power. There is no "near peer competitor" with a desire to replace the current system. In fact, the major world powers—the United States, the European Union, China, Japan, and Russia—are in fact part of the system, or are attempting to integrate further into it (e.g., China and the WTO).

Though no state is attempting to overthrow the Western global system, there are states that are not fully integrated into it, and despite the intactness and growing inclusiveness of the system, there are still outsiders who believe the system is unjust and are unable to share its benefits. It is these latter areas, which are part of the seam, or the non-integrating gap, where the most critical battles in the wider clash of systems will occur.

The Islamist Challenge

Political Islam (Islamism), in various forms, is the most rapidly growing and persuasive ideology among Muslims today. Islamism is a socio-

political ideology which strives to institute governments under Allah's authority, not man-made constitutions, and administration of society according to *sharia* (Islamic law), not Western law.¹⁰ The ideology of Islamism is the cutting edge of Islamic militants' exertions against the West and its global system. As an ideology, Islamism is distinct from the religion of Islam, although it draws strength from zealous members of the Islamic resurgence. The Islamic resurgence does not protest against Islamic institutions, but rather protests against secular governments and social innovations modeled on the West. Understanding the Islamists' critique of modern life provides some clarity to these distinctions. Most Islamists (except for retrograde Salafists) are not against modern instrumentalities produced by industries (telephones, cars, airplanes, computers, etc.). Rather, Islamists are opposed to *modernism*, a sequel to industrialization and modernization, which is the ideology of social innovation in a secular environment completely unhinged from traditional and religious norms.

Islamism is ideological because it employs Islam for the socio-political goal of establishing governments under Allah's sovereignty with societies based on *sharia*. Islamism "fuses religion and politics, *din wa dawla*, in a way incompatible with Western analytical categories."¹¹ Establishing such governments and societies are meant to preserve Islamic religion and culture and to reverse Western domination. Culturally, many Islamic traditionalists feel eclipsed by the Western way of life in the globalized economy. Islamism is ascendant in its competition against secular Western political models within large segments of the Muslim world. In predominantly Islamic countries, Islamism has absorbed much of nationalist parties' ideologies, leaving nationalists weak. Generally in such countries, the left is marginal and in disarray and liberal democrats are few. Islamists heed the Koran's specific direction: "Fight in the cause of God against those who fight you."¹²

The Islamists' slogan, "Islam is the solution" (popularized by the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb), will continue to inspire political exertions against Western-type governments in Islamic countries until or unless the West convinces the Islamic

world that it can have an equitable stake in globalization. Islamists will resist cultural and political influences of the West's global system, even if they acquiesce to economic interaction and trade. Their resistance to the West is not to imply mainly overt clashes. Most clashes for the proximate future will occur within the Islamic world itself, just as industrial countries of the West's global system will have their own internal (especially social) problems.

There are significant elements of Western culture that make the West less than entirely appealing to many in the Islamic world, both Muslims and Islamists. Though many appreciate the material benefits and technological advances that the West has to offer, Islamists tend to believe the West diluted the basis of its classical Christian civilization due to the Renaissance and Scientific Revolution, followed by the Philosophical Revolution (based on natural law) and its empiricism, rationalism, and positivism. Even though this enabled technological innovation and industrialization, the removal of religion from its previous position as the basis for all knowledge meant that Christianity lost its centrality over the course of several centuries as the arbiter of how society should function. Today, religion in the West is compartmentalized due to increased secularization since the 1970s. Because of this, the overt manifestation of the West is characterized by its industrial order, which gives it overwhelming material superiority over agricultural or other resource-exporting countries,¹³ but not moral superiority because secularization has eroded traditional morality.¹⁴ Social relativism has become the norm, which Muslims and Islamists regard as unacceptable for emulation. In contrast, traditional societies still harboring tenets of their classical civilizations value spirituality (rather than consumerism), a God-centered view of the world (rather than a human-centered one), prescribed patterns of behavior (rather than innovative ones), extended families (rather than individualism and nuclear families), and a belief in absolutes (rather than relativism).

While the industrial West has emphasized secular rationalism, it also has engendered a certain degree of dissatisfaction with materialism as the primary focus of life. Westerners are likely to

seek spirituality in their “flight from the meaninglessness of the secular world,”¹⁵ reviving various sects of Christianity or importing other religions (such as Baha’ism) or creating new synergetic ones (such as Scientology). The fear of “importing” a similar spiritual void is one of the reasons why Islamists reject Western modernism. The West’s insistence on democratic government and the rule of law is a function of industrial and commercial efficacy, not high-minded principles from Western classical civilization.¹⁶ In any case, these features are integrated into industrial societies of the global system and may make it awkward for countries outside the system to join. For Islamic countries, democracy is more about access than process, and Islamic law is based on *sharia*, which is very different from Western law. Also, the West’s secularity presents serious cultural problems for Islam, creating tension alongside the potential economic benefits of joining the West’s global system.

Despite U.S. or Eurocentric views (such as Francis Fukuyama’s *End of History*), the West’s industrial order and global system do not have universal appeal. However, the West’s industrial order claims a universal applicability of its global system. This puts it in direct conflict with Islamists, who also proclaim the universality of their system. Radical Islamists will accept only *our* unconditional surrender.

Our current conflict of ideologies is centered on the answer to the question of what constitutes “a good life.” In the West, the answer is found in the individual rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. For the radical Islamists, the answer is in one’s submission to the will of God through the imposition of their interpretation of *sharia* throughout the Muslim world.

A Clash of Systems in the Middle East

To Huntington’s disciples, al-Qaeda’s strike on the economic and military power base of the United States clearly represents an attack by the Islamic civilization against that of the United States and the West. Such an argument is persuasive, particularly when one looks at the under-

currents of recent events in the Middle East: the ubiquitous Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the vicious campaign being conducted by foreign jihadists against U.S. forces in Iraq, a resurgence of the Islamist ideology across Barnett’s non-integrating gap,¹⁷ enhanced violent activity perpetrated by radical Islamist groups across the region, the spread of weapons of mass destruction in the region, and cooperation between regional states and militant groups. Yet Huntington’s thesis fails to capture the true nature of the conflict that currently grips the Middle East. It is not simply a result of irreconcilable differences between Western and Islamic civilizations; it is instead a deeper clash of international systems of order—globalization versus Islamism.

Under the current system of U.S.-led globalization, a given state has two options—beating the system or joining it. In the Middle East, this debate is raging in an emotional and often violent manner, and it is fast becoming a battle for the soul of the Islamic world. This conflict pits two sides against each other: those who embrace the system—i.e., moderates who seek to reconcile the Islamic culture, religion, and worldview with the benefits of modernization and globalization—against those who would seek to destroy it, personified by Osama bin Laden and other extremists of his ilk, and who wish to replace it with an alternative system, in this case a world guided by the ideology of Islamism.

For Islamists, there are two main targets in their effort to bring about an Islamist system. The United States and its Western allies constitute one target. The other, perhaps more important, is the governments and elites of the states across the Middle East, who walk a narrow tightrope between accepting the dramatic benefits of the global system and heeding the wishes of the majority of the populace who receive little in the way of benefits from their own governments, let alone from the wider global system.

As a result, Islamists are fighting a two-pronged conflict. On the one hand, they have initiated a wide-reaching war against U.S. interests and allies, which includes not only direct combat against U.S. military forces, but also attacks like those of 9/11 that target Americans and other Western civilians. Second, in the

Middle East the Islamists view the acceptance of a corrupt, godless, immoral system by the civilian populace as being responsible for the Western system's spread. Consequently, Islamists are engaged in a comprehensive battle for hearts and minds.

Their strategic objective to replace the Western system with one inspired by the divine hinges entirely upon successfully converting the populace to Islamist ideology. Islamists point to the hopelessness endemic throughout much of the region, where a handful of leaders and business elites reap economic rewards from collaborating with the U.S.-led system while the vast majority live in a pitiful squalor where daily life is a challenge. Instead of cooperating with a system where a few get rich, Islamists insist upon a strict interpretation of the Koran and look to the glory days of a bygone era when the Muslim world dominated the international system. Instead of buying into a system that is "corrupt" and accepting a culture that is "immoral," Islamists seek to create an alternative system similar to the one that once held a position of dominance. Islamists ask Muslims to accept the concept that "Islam is the solution," popularized by Qutb as early as 1952. Qutb argued that a philosophical break was required with modernism if a Muslim was to be true to his faith. This break is not a starting point for the intellectual study of the impact of modernism on the Islamic world, but instead becomes a manifesto demanding a radical change, inspired by the divine truths espoused in the Koran.¹⁸ In essence, Qutb's philosophy, which has been adopted by a long string of Islamist radicals culminating in bin Laden, espouses a clash of civilizations between the wider Islamic *umma* (community of believers) and the West.

For the West, and particularly the United States, it becomes imperative to prevent the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) from becoming such a clash of civilizations, thereby devolving into exactly the kind of conflict that will be to the Islamists' advantage. Instead, the United States also should follow a two-pronged strategy whereby it selectively confronts Islamists, not simply to crush them, but to demonstrate to the Muslim world the long-term futility of such a

conflict. The current focus of this active conflict is on Iraq and Afghanistan. In the words of Friedman, "America's opponents know just what's at stake in the postwar struggle for Iraq, which is why they flock there: beat America in Iraq and you beat them out of the whole region; lose to America there, lose everywhere."¹⁹ Friedman notes the Islamists understand the fight is not about oil, but is instead about "ideas and values and governance."²⁰ So for the United States, the active stratagem guiding the Global War on Terrorism is unlike anything it has attempted before; instead of concrete, military success, the GWOT is about reinforcing ideas and values (i.e., those that underpin the U.S.-led system), while at the same time demonstrating the inability of Islamists to advance their ideas and values to the wider Islamic community.

This in part explains the frustrating experience the U.S. military is encountering in its nation-building operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. For the enemies of the global system, each successful tactical operation against the U.S.-led Coalition becomes a strategic victory. Each successful attack against U.S. military targets, Coalition partners, or international relief workers is a ringing endorsement for those who oppose the system and seek its replacement. Successful attacks offer "proof" to the undecided masses that the United States will not be able to establish the system in the contested areas of Iraq and Afghanistan, and they help to sway opinion toward alternative systemic constructs. From a U.S. perspective, tactical victories are relevant only insofar as they help to buy time for the global system to take root. As a result, there is no classic definition of military "victory." Military operations in these circumstances should be aimed at implementing security and stability in order for the other elements of national power (e.g., economic and social) to bring concrete improvements to the wider society, which in turn will eventually lead the masses to decide that the U.S.-led global system is worth joining. Providing security and stability are the absolutely necessary preconditions that will allow this systemic acceptance to occur, and that should be the primary focus of U.S. military operations in areas of the non-integrating gap where societies are split between joining the

global system or choosing the Islamist alternative.

According to Daniel Pipes, the central task of the United States is to reinforce moderate Islam as a counterbalance to Islamism. Pipes postulates the central conflict in the GWOT is the one waged between militant and moderate Islam. While Washington can help in this struggle by providing assistance to the moderates and working to establish reforms in areas locked in a self-defeating bargain with the militants (such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan), the actual battle will be won or lost within the Islamic world itself.²¹ As a result, the second task implicit in a successful resolution to the GWOT is in supporting those elements in the Middle East that already accept the U.S.-led system, and, most critically, facilitating pro-Western change in those states that straddle the fence.

The issue that makes the Global War on Terrorism so fundamentally different from other ideological conflicts in history is that it pits the U.S.-led global system against non-state actors who transcend political boundaries. These non-state actors are striving to appeal to religion, culture, and even pan-Arab nationalism to forge a decentralized core of ideologically motivated insurgents fighting to overthrow the U.S.-led global system and replace it with one based on their radical interpretations of *sharia*. This conflict is completely asymmetrical, where the enemy realizes it lacks the military capability to directly challenge the U.S.-led system on a global scale. Instead, it relies on the strategy and tactics of the insurgent to selectively engage U.S. and Coalition forces (Khobar Towers, the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, the USS *Cole* attack, 9/11) while striking in other venues to make political gains (the Madrid bombing, Bali bombing, kidnappings and murder of foreign nationals in Iraq, the 7/7 bombings in London) to erode Coalition cohesion. Unlike other insurgencies, the GWOT is unique because of its scale. It is, in effect, a pansurgency.²²

Strategic Conflict of Perceptions

Islamist militants understand their desired strategic objectives. Although they are incapable

of militarily defeating the U.S. and Coalition forces on the battlefield, their success is determined by the achievement of their desired strategic political end state—the withdrawal of U.S. forces and the creation of *sharia*-based governments. This type of conflict is ideally suited to the cultural underpinning of Arab and Islamic concepts of warfare. In virtually every historical example involving Arab or Islamic conflict, tactical and even operational-level military operations are considered ancillary to the final political objective. As a result, even overwhelming defeats have been turned into victories or considered simply part of a longer-term conflict. A couple of historical examples highlight this perspective:

◆ Israel won the most dramatic and complete tactical victories in modern military history during the 1967 Six-Day War. In May 1967, just before launching the devastating air attack which crippled Egypt's air force, Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol commented to his generals, "Nothing will be settled by a military victory. The Arabs will still be here."²³ Thirty-plus years later, Arabs continue to resist the battlefield outcome of that conflict.

◆ In the French/Algerian conflict of the 1950s and early 1960s, conventional French military forces won the tactical fight against the insurgent forces but failed to achieve their strategic objectives due to the collapse of French national will.

The United States currently is facing a tremendous asymmetric challenge. U.S. military operations are focused on winning a tactical fight that does not answer the strategic challenge or target our adversaries' center of gravity, the attraction of their ideology. If U.S. forces fail to orient on the enemy center of gravity, the United States may continue to win the tactical fight while abandoning the strategic advantage to our adversaries, whose tactical operations are designed with a strategic objective in mind. In essence, U.S. forces are playing football while the militants are playing chess.

Meanwhile, the radical Islamists have fixed, and are directly targeting, the United States' center of gravity, its national will to carry on missions in both Iraq and Afghanistan. From the out-

set, anti-Coalition elements in both locations have relied on the media to target this center of gravity. Although part of this effort has been focused on shaping regional opinion (e.g., condemning U.S. foreign policy and military action, calling for armed resistance, etc.) to sustain their operations, the more damaging aspect of this approach is the targeting of public opinion in the West.

The militants are aided in this fight by some parts of the international media that are eager to report on situations unfavorable to U.S. policy. As a result of this coverage, the militants' tactical fight is elevated to the strategic level, whereby each tactical success (a bombing, a mortar attack, a kidnapping, even a single U.S. or Coalition casualty) becomes a strategic success. This is seen in their targeting selection, which aims to cause as much instability as possible, fracture the Coalition, and thereby compel elements of the international community to abandon active participation in these missions. This effort has succeeded in driving out several Coalition partners, NGOs, and regional-based companies participating in the reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The militants intend to take further advantage of a wider information operations campaign as a strategic weapon. Militants can rely on the coverage of Arab-language broadcast and print media, which often has an unmistakable bias against the United States and the West, to bolster their cause.

The growth of satellite broadcast networks such as al-Jazeera and al-Arabiya is one of the most significant developments in the Middle East in recent years. Although these independent outlets represent a fundamental shift away from state control of the media, they do play upon the emotions of the Arab masses. Suicide bombers in Israel, Iraq, and Afghanistan are not referred to as terrorists, but instead as martyrs. During a discussion of the outbreak of violence in Saudi Arabia following the murder of American contractor Paul Johnson, al-Jazeera anchor Abdul Samad Nasser referred to Saudi Arabia as "Jazeerat al-Arab" (or the Arabian Peninsula). This term was used in Arabic to describe the area prior to the formation of the Saudi state, and also has been adopted by Osama bin Laden in his ref-

erences to Saudi Arabia in an attempt to delegitimize the Saudi state in the eyes of his followers. In another case, the former chief editor of the pan-Arab daily *Asbarq al-Aswat* noted he once caught one his editors changing the caption of an Associated Press photo from "an American soldier chatting with an Iraqi girl" to "an American soldier asking an Iraqi girl for sex." In effect, Arab-language media sources are tacitly supporting the radical Islamists' agenda of creating a clash of civilizations.²⁴

Advocating a New System: The Islamist Agenda

The primary objective of Islamists is to overthrow the West's global system and replace it with a traditional Islamic system. From its political expressions during the early 20th century, Islamism challenged Western modernism as the basis for a just world order. Hasan al-Banna, the Egyptian school-teacher who established the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, railed against the modern world's encroachments on the Islamic world. Banna blamed Mustafa Kemal Attaturk's rise to power in a wave of secular liberalism in Turkey, which spread throughout the Middle East. In 1939, the Muslim Brotherhood transitioned from a social reform movement to a political organization adopting a radical, revolutionary agenda, and in essence became the ideological genesis of today's Islamism. The agenda espoused by the Muslim Brotherhood was three-fold:

- ◆ Islam is a comprehensive, self-evolving system; it is the ultimate path of life in all spheres.
- ◆ Islam emanates from, and is based on, two fundamental sources, the Koran and the Prophetic Tradition.
- ◆ Islam is applicable to all times and places.

According to Dilip Hiro, the platform of the Muslim Brotherhood presented an "all-encompassing entity," which offered "an all-powerful system to regulate every detail of the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the believers."²⁵ Seizing upon Banna's ideas, Qutb argued that true Muslims are in a perpetual state of war

against secular political leaders, in which Jihad becomes a “defensive response” to the “war of annihilation” the “apostates” wage against Islam. “True Muslims” are and must be set apart from the secular incarnation of government in a “counter-society” of the *umma* (community of believers). In this counter-society, true Muslims have no allegiance to state or government, but only to the *umma*, striving to create a system based on the Koran.²⁶ As early as the mid-1950s, Qutb was arguing for jihad against secular influences in Egypt and the Arab world, and also against Western society. He asked, “What should be done about America and the West given their overwhelming danger to humanity. . . ? Should we not issue a sentence of death? Is it not the verdict most appropriate to the nature of the crime?”²⁷ During his trial, Qutb made his final statement in support of his concept of Islamism as a system when he argued, “The bonds of ideology and belief are sturdier than those of patriotism based upon region.”²⁸ He was executed by Nasser in 1966.

There is a direct connection between the ideologies of Banna and Qutb and today’s radical Islamists. Judith Miller argues that Qutb’s primary legacy to radical Islam’s ideology is that of “literalism.” Qutb was able to use the words of the Koran and turn them against the Western-dominated system that permeated Middle East governments.²⁹ His calls for jihad against the West as a religious duty for all Muslims would not only permeate the mainstream of Islamic society but would be seized upon by a new generation of radicals, culminating in bin Laden. Like his ideological mentor Qutb, bin Laden considers Arab governments that have bought into the West’s system to be “morally depraved” and “hypocrites” worthy not only of enmity, but of overthrow.³⁰ According to Emmanuel Sivan, Islamist opposition movements concentrate on the “nearest enemy,” which in this case means Arab governments that cooperate with the U.S.-led system. In his view, Islamist opposition movements will engage the “further away enemies” (meaning the United States and Israel) at a later time.³¹

Despite bin Laden’s ideological diatribes against the United States, and even his direct attacks against U.S. power and influence, the

nearest enemy continues to be the dominant battleground in the war between systems. At the end of the day, radical Islam will seize upon challenges in the Middle East: the youth bulge, declining economies where wealth and opportunities are concentrated among small elites, lack of political expression in most states, foreign policy crises (e.g., the *Intifada* and the U.S. occupation of Iraq) where the Islamic world believes it is being challenged by the global system, and a future devoid of optimism. In the words of Moroccan Islamist Abdul Sallam Yassin, both “West and East have failed. The future is Islam.”³² The pervasiveness of Islamism, which even in its moderate form advocates a unity between religious and political life, means that until the global system shows its ability to benefit states of the non-functioning gap, the Arab street will be a willing audience for Islamism. As leading Egyptian journalist Muhammad Hasanein Heikal notes, “Only Islam makes sense, is authentic” to the Arab street.³³

Bridging the Gap: The Struggle Across the Middle East

From a geostrategic perspective, these areas include a variety of states across the region where Islamists are actively engaged in attempting to instill their vision of a *sharia*-based Islamic *umma*. Currently, radical Islamists do not wield complete control in any state. The only state that comes close is Iran, but even Iran is caught in the struggle between religious fundamentalists and moderates who seek to modernize their country and bring to it some of the benefits of globalization. A second category of states is those in which the leaders have attempted to strike bargains with their nation’s indigenous Islamist elements in order to remain in power, such as Egypt, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. Finally, there are also states whose governments have chosen to restrict or even eliminate all Islamist elements from gaining enough power, influence, and authority to establish themselves as a true force for change, such as Algeria, Tunisia, and Turkey.

A further complicating factor is the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian and wider Arab-Israeli conflict,

which is truly about land and not religion or ideology, counter to what the Islamists would have us believe. This aspect represents a true conundrum for U.S. Middle East policy, as it presents an opportunity for Islamists to encroach in an area that allows them to sway the opinion of the Arab street toward their ideology. Bin Laden's attempt to hijack the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for his own purposes, adding the removal of the "Zionists" from Arab territory as one of al-Qaeda's stated goals, illustrates clearly his attempt to develop a clash of civilizations.

If the United States is to be victorious in the Global War on Terrorism, it must not allow the situation to devolve into Huntington's simplistic, apocalyptic vision of a clash of civilizations. Instead, the United States must understand the implications of its leadership in the global system and how to use this position to demonstrate to moderates in the Islamic world why they should join us rather than attempt to beat us.

Notes

1. Philip Seib, "News Media and the Clash of Civilizations," *Parameters* 34 (Winter 2004-05), 71-85.
2. Niall Ferguson makes a key point by suggesting "it is a mistake to characterize Islamists as 'Islamofascists,' and it is better to think of them as 'Islamofascists' committed to a revolution and reordering of the world along anti-capitalist lines" in "Sinking Globalization," *Foreign Affairs* 84 (March/April 2005), 75.
3. This is a common construct regarding international relations. See: Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society* (New York: Columbia, 1977); Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1959); Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46 (Spring 1992); Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984); and Kenneth A. Oye, ed., *Cooperation under Anarchy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1986).
4. This is part of the basis for Hegemonic Stability Theory. See: Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982); and Duncan Snidal, "The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory," *International Organization* 39 (Autumn 1985).
5. G. John Ikenberry, "The Myth of Post-Cold War Chaos," *Foreign Affairs* 75 (May/June 1996).
6. Thomas Friedman, "National Strategies and Capabilities for a Changing World: Globalization and National Security," luncheon address, 31st Annual IFPA-Fletcher Conference on National Security and Policy, Washington, D.C., 15 November 2000.
7. Ibid.
8. Thomas Barnett, "The Pentagon's New Map," *Esquire*, March 2003.
9. This is the main argument of the hegemonic stability theory. Changes to the international system occur when the hegemon is unable or unwilling to provide the public goods necessary to maintain the system. A weak hegemon may be assisted in maintaining the system by other states that derive benefit from that system, or be challenged by others who do not benefit, or who wish to assume the role of the hegemon. See Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, and Snidal, "The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory."
10. *Sharia* (Islamic law) was codified in the eighth and ninth centuries, after the Abbasids seized the Islamic caliphate from the Umayyads. *Sharia* variants exist according to jurists' compilations and interpretations in different geographic areas: the *Hanafi* School (least strict) in Turkey, Central Asia, and India; *Shafi* in Iran and the coastal Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean areas; *Maliki* in North and Sub-Saharan Africa; *Hanbali* (most strict) in Saudi Arabia.
11. Charles Hirschkind, "What is Political Islam?" *Middle East Report*, No. 205 (October-December 1997), 14.
12. Koran, Sura 2: verse 190. Most *sharia* schools of law consider jihad an obligation if unbelievers begin hostilities. See also Desmond Stewart, *Early Islam* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1967): "Christ had taught Christians to forgive their persecutors and turn the other cheek; Muhammad, in contrast, had urged his followers to fight for Islam" (39-40).
13. See Theodore H. von Laue, *The World Revolution of Westernization: The Twentieth Century in Global Perspective* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), for his views of cultures and their abilities to assimilate modern ideas and technology.
14. See Alisdair McIntyre, *After Virtue* (South Bend, Ind.: Notre Dame Univ. Press, 1984), for a comprehensive review of the philosophical path taken by the West, with a critique mirroring many of the Islamists' complaints.
15. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Christianity in a Secularized World* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 57.
16. See Seizaburo Sato, "The Clash of Civilizations: A View from Japan," *The Asteion Magazine* (Okamoto

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مُجَاهِدِ إِسْلَامِ أَسَامَةُ بِنِ لَادِنِ



نُورِ خُدا هِے کُفر کی حُرکت پہ خُندہ زُن
پُھونکوں سِے یہ چِراغِ بُجھایا نہ جانِے گا

The Concept and Practice of Jihad in Islam

by Michael G. Knapp

Parameters, Spring 2003

“All these crimes and sins committed by the Americans are a clear declaration of war on God, his Messenger, and Muslims. . . . [T]he jihad is an individual duty if the enemy destroys the Muslim countries. . . . As for the fighting to repulse [an enemy], it is aimed at defending sanctity and religion, and it is a duty. . . . On that basis, and in compliance with God’s order, we issue the following fatwa to all Muslims: The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilian and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it.”

—Osama bin Laden et al., in “Declaration of the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders,” 23 February 1998

The word “jihad” means “struggle” or “striving” (in the way of God) or to work for a noble cause with determination; it does not mean “holy war” (war in Arabic is *harb* and holy is *muqadassa*). Unlike its medieval Christian counterpart term, “crusade” (“war for the cross”), however, the term jihad for Muslims has retained its religious and military connotation into modern times. The word jihad has appeared widely in the Western news media following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, but the true meaning of this term in the Islamic world (it is sometimes called the “sixth pillar” of the faith) is still not well understood by non-Muslims.

In war, the first essential is to know your adversary—how he thinks and why he thinks that way, and what his strategy and objectives are—so that you can attempt to frustrate his plans and protect the lives of your fellow citizens. Understanding how radical Muslims see jihad and are employing it asymmetrically against us can provide us with that kind of perspective.

This article will trace the development of jihad through early Islamic history into the present day and will focus on how jihad in concept and practice has been appropriated and distorted by Muslim extremists as part of their violent campaign against the West and their own governments. Jihad as a centerpiece of radical thought is illustrated by examining the doctrines of prominent extremist groups such as Hamas and Egyptian Islamic Jihad. Misuse of the term by prominent extremist leaders, such as by Osama bin Laden and others in the quote above, is also addressed.

The Classical Concept of Jihad

Qur’anic and Early Legal Perspectives. Muslims themselves have disagreed throughout their history about the meaning of the term jihad. In the Qur’an (or Koran), it is normally found in the sense of fighting in the path of God; this was used to describe warfare against the enemies of the early Muslim community (*ummah*). In the *hadith*, the second most authoritative source of the *shari’a* (Islamic law), jihad is used to mean armed action, and most Islamic theologians and jurists in the classical period (the first three centuries) of Muslim history understood this obligation to be in a military sense.¹

Islamic jurists saw jihad in the context of conflict in a world divided between the *Dar al-Islam* (territory under Islamic control) and the *Dar al-harb* (territory of war, which consisted of all lands not under Muslim rule). The inhabitants of the territory of war are divided between “People of the Book” (mainly Jews and Christians) and polytheists. This requirement to continue jihad until all of the world is included in the territory of Islam does not imply that Muslims must wage nonstop warfare, however. Although there was no mechanism for recognizing a non-Muslim government as legitimate, jurists allowed for the negotiation of truces and peace treaties of limited duration. Additionally, extending the territory of Islam does not mean the annihilation of all non-Muslims, nor even their necessary conversion: jihad cannot imply conversion by

force, since the Qur'an (2:256) states that "There is no compulsion in religion." More than a religious aim, jihad really had a political one: the drive to establish a single, unified Muslim realm justified Islam's supercession of other faiths and allowed for the creation of a just political and social order.²

Jihad was generally understood not as an obligation of each individual Muslim (known as *fard 'ayn*) but as a general requirement of the Muslim community (*fard kifaya*). Only in emergencies, when the Dar al-Islam comes under unexpected attack, do all Muslims have to participate in jihad. Under normal circumstances, therefore, an individual Muslim need not take part so long as other Muslims carry the burden for all of defending the realm.³

Other Philosophical Perspectives. This consensus view of a restricted, defensive version of jihad was contested by Muslim legal philosopher Taqi al-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328). He declared that a ruler who fails to enforce the shari'a rigorously in all aspects, including the conduct of jihad (and is therefore insufficiently Muslim), forfeits his right to rule. Ibn Taymiyya strongly advocated jihad as warfare against both the Crusaders and Mongols who then occupied parts of the Dar al-Islam, and most important, broke with the mainstream of Islam by asserting that a professing Muslim who does not live by the faith is an apostate (unbeliever). By going well beyond most jurists (who tolerated rulers who violated the shari'a for the sake of community stability), Ibn Taymiyya laid much of the groundwork for the intellectual arguments of contemporary radical Islamists.⁴

Islamic law condemns all warfare that does not qualify as jihad, specifically any warfare among Muslims. Thus, military action against Muslims is justified only by denying them the status of Muslims (e.g., classifying them as apostates or rebels).⁵ Islamic juristic tradition is also very hostile toward terror as a means of political resistance. Classical Muslim jurists were remarkably tolerant toward political rebels by holding that they may not be executed nor their property confiscated. This tolerance vanished, however, for rebels who conducted attacks against unsuspecting and defenseless victims or who spread terror through

abductions, rapes, the use of poisoned arrows and poisoning of wells (the chemical warfare of this period), arson, attacks against travelers, and night attacks. In these cases, jurists demanded harsh penalties (including death) and ruled that the punishment was the same whether the perpetrator or victim was Muslim or non-Muslim.⁶

Three main views of jihad thus coexisted in pre-modern times. In addition to the classical legal view of jihad as a compulsory, communal effort to defend and expand the Dar al-Islam, and Ibn Taymiyya's notion of active jihad as an indispensable feature of legitimate rule, there was also the *Sufi* movement's doctrine of *greater jihad*. The *Sufis* (a mystical sect of Islam) understood the greater jihad as an inner struggle against the base instincts of the body but also against corruption of the soul, and believed that the greater jihad is a necessary part of the process of gaining spiritual insight. To this day, most Muslims see jihad as a personal rather than a political struggle, while physical actions taken in defense of the realm are considered the *lesser jihad*. It is not surprising, then, that disagreement over the meaning of jihad has continued into the modern era.⁷

Origins of Radical Ideologies

Muslim reform movements in the Middle East first acquired a sense of urgency with the arrival of European imperialism in the latter part of the 19th century. The end of colonialism and acquisition of independence by most Muslim countries after World War II accelerated this drive. However, the massive social changes that accompanied these reforms and the simultaneous introduction of new ideas that were alien to classical Islamic tradition—such as nationalism, popular sovereignty, and women's rights—disrupted traditional ways of life and caused traumatic dislocations in these societies.⁸

Disillusionment with the path Muslim societies have taken in the modern period reached its height in the 1970s. Increasingly widespread rejection of Western civilization as a model for Muslims to emulate has been accompanied by a search for indigenous values that reflect traditional Muslim culture, as well as a drive to restore power and dignity to the community. The last 30 years have seen the rise

of militant, religiously-based political groups whose ideology focuses on demands for jihad (and the willingness to sacrifice one's life) for the forceful creation of a society governed solely by the shari'a and a unified Islamic state, and to eliminate un-Islamic and unjust rulers. These groups are also reemphasizing individual conformity to the requirements of Islam.⁹

Militant Islam (also referred to as political or radical Islam) is rooted in a contemporary religious resurgence in private and public life.¹⁰ The causes of Islamic radicalism have been religio-cultural, political, and socio-economic and have focused on issues of politics and social justice such as authoritarianism, lack of social services, and corruption, which all intertwine as catalysts. Many Islamic reform groups have blamed social ills on outside influences; for example, modernization (e.g., Westernization and secularization) has been perceived as a form of neocolonialism, an evil that replaces Muslim religious and cultural identity and values with alien ideas and models of development.¹¹

Islamic militancy is still not well understood by Americans. This is partly due to the secrecy which radical Islamic groups practice to protect themselves from the authorities and from outsiders who do not share their views and aims, but also because Western public communications media frequently tend to marginalize such groups. They are dismissed as religious fanatics, anti-Western hooligans, or mindless terrorists without making an attempt to comprehend the deep discontents that have produced these Islamic groups' violent actions or the logic of their radical cause which compels them to behave as they do.¹²

Differences in Sunni and Shi'a Interpretations of Jihad

Sunni and Shi'a (Shi'ite) Muslims agree, in terms of just cause, that jihad applies to the defense of territory, life, faith, and property; it is justified to repel invasion or its threat; it is necessary to guarantee freedom for the spread of Islam; and that difference in religion alone is not a sufficient cause. Some Islamic scholars have differentiated disbelief from persecution and injustice and claimed that

jihad is justified only to fight those unbelievers who have initiated aggression against the Muslim community. Others, however, have stated more militant views which were inspired by Islamic resistance to the European powers during the colonial period: in this view, jihad as "aggressive war" is authorized against all non-Muslims, whether they are oppressing Muslims or not.

The question of right authority—no jihad can be waged unless it is directed by a legitimate ruler—also has been divisive among Muslims. The Sunnis saw all of the Muslim caliphs (particularly the first four "rightly guided" caliphs to rule after the Prophet Muhammad's death, who possessed combined religious and political authority) as legitimate callers of jihad, as long as they had the support of the realm's *ulama* (Islamic scholars). The Shi'a see this power as having been meant for the Imams, but it was wrongly denied to them by the majority Sunnis. The lack of proper authority after the disappearance of the 12th ("Hidden") Imam in 874 A.D. also posed problems for the Shi'a; this was resolved by the *ulama* increasingly taking this authority for itself to the point where all legitimate forms of jihad may be considered defensive, and there is no restriction on the kind of war which may be waged in the Hidden Imam's absence so long as it is authorized by a just ruler (this idea reached its zenith under Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini).

Both sects agree on the other prerequisites for jihad. Right intention (*niyyah*) is fundamentally important for engaging in jihad. Fighting for the sake of conquest, booty, or honor in the eyes of one's companions will earn no reward; the only valid purpose for jihad is to draw near to God. In terms of last resort, jihad may be waged only if the enemy has first been offered the triple alternative: accept Islam, pay the *jizyah* (the poll tax required for non-Muslim "People of the Book" living under Muslim control), or fight.¹³

Conditions also are placed on the behavior of combatants in jihad: discrimination of noncombatants from warriors is required, along with the prohibition of harm to noncombatants such as women, children, the disabled, monks and rabbis (unless they are involved in the fighting), and those who have been given the promise of immunity; and proportionality, meaning that the least amount

of force is used to obtain the desired ends in combat.¹⁴

Ideas on Jihad in the Modern Era

Sayyid Abu al-A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979) was the first Islamist writer to approach jihad systematically. Warfare, in his view, is conducted not just to expand Islamic political dominance, but also to establish just rule (one that includes freedom of religion). For Mawdudi (an Indo-Pakistani who agitated for Pakistan's independence from India), jihad was akin to war of liberation and is designed to establish politically independent Muslim states. Mawdudi's view significantly changed the concept of jihad in Islam and began its association with anticolonialism and "national liberation movements." His approach paved the way for Arab resistance to Zionism and the existence of the state of Israel to be referred to as jihad.¹⁵

Radical Egyptian Islamist thinkers (and members of the Muslim Brotherhood) Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949) and Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) took hold of Mawdudi's activist and nationalist conception of jihad and its role in establishing a truly Islamic government, and incorporated Ibn Taymiyya's earlier conception of jihad that includes the overthrow of governments that fail to enforce the shari'a. This idea of revolution focuses first on dealing with the radicals' own un-Islamic rulers (the "near enemy") before Muslims can direct jihad against external enemies. If leaders such as Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, for example, are not true Muslims, then they cannot lead jihad, not even against a legitimate target such as Israel. Significantly, radical Islamists consider jihad mandatory for all Muslims, making it an individual rather than a communal duty.¹⁶

The Use of Jihad by Islamic Militants

Regional Islamic Militant Groups' Perceptions.

Classical Islamic criteria for jihad were based on the early unified Muslim empire. The imposition of the modern nation-state on Middle East societies, however, has made such ideas no longer applicable; this can be seen by examining contemporary

Muslim militant groups' ideologies.

The Islamic Resistance Movement (commonly known as Hamas) sees its situation as similar to that of the Muslim ruler Saladin in his struggle against the Christian Crusaders, as can be seen by examining portions of its Charter. The goal of Hamas is to establish an Islamic Palestinian state in place of Israel, through both violent means (including terrorism) and peaceful political activity. Hamas argues that the current situation of the Palestinians, living under Israeli control or dispersed from their homeland, is part of an ongoing crusade by Christians to take the Holy Lands out of Palestinian hands. The loss of Palestine and the creation of Israel, the Charter continues, were brought about by the great powers of East and West and taken together constitute a great tragedy not only for the Palestinians but for the entire Islamic community. This, Hamas proclaims, requires jihad not in the sense of expanding the territory of Islam, but of restoring it, and to recover land rather than conquer it. Nor is it a rebellion in the classical sense; rather, this is a struggle to regain a lost portion of the territory of Islam. The Hamas Charter thus provides a uniquely Islamic rationale for *al-intifada*, the "shaking off" of illegitimate rule.¹⁷ This language thus seems to suggest defensive jihad, rather than an offensive struggle.

Since Hamas is not acting on behalf of an established government, it must find authorization elsewhere for its struggle against not only external enemies but also so-called "Muslim" governments that collaborate with the non-Muslim powers (by cooperating with Israel or allowing the basing of Western troops on their soil). The group considers Muslim governments that cooperate with the West as ignorant of the non-Muslim nations' true intentions, or corrupt. Hamas argues that it obtains its authority to declare jihad in another way: the Western powers' invasion of Islamic territory has created an emergency situation where Muslims cannot wait for authorization other than that given directly by God, so jihad is a required duty for all conscientious Muslims.¹⁸ This exceptional situation suspends the usual lines between parties in a relationship so that every Muslim can participate in the struggle. Hamas's Charter thus relates the current situation of Muslims to the classical period, but also marks a break with that classical past. This extraor-

dinary situation also means a change in the nature of Muslim obligation under jihad, from a collective responsibility to extend the Dar al-Islam to a duty for each individual Muslim to restore that territory.¹⁹

The same pattern of thinking is present in “The Neglected Duty,” a pamphlet produced by Egyptian Islamic Jihad (or EIJ, the group that assassinated Anwar Sadat in 1981). This pamphlet, the group’s announced “testament,” is also a clear expression of the Sunni Islamist perspective on political violence as jihad. It argues that jihad as armed action is the heart of Islam, and that the neglect of this type of action by Muslims has caused the current depressed condition of Islam in the world. EIJ attempts to communicate a sense of urgency to Muslims, who are being victimized and whose territory is being divided and controlled by non-Muslim powers. The document also seeks to justify jihad against other Muslims who, because they are ignorant of this situation, actively cooperate with the unbelievers in the name of “modernization” and are worse than rebels—they are Muslim traitors and apostates. Furthermore, fighting such unbelievers without the limits imposed if they were rebellious Muslims is justified, since they are worse than other unbelievers.²⁰

“The Neglected Duty” defines the current rulers of the Muslim world (as Sadat was defined) as the primary enemies of Islam and apostates, despite their profession of Islam and obedience to some of its laws, and advocates their execution. This document is explicitly messianic, asserting that Muslims must “exert every conceivable effort” to bring about the establishment of truly Islamic government, a restoration of the caliphate, and the expansion of the Dar al-Islam, and that the success of these endeavors is inevitable.²¹ “The Neglected Duty” cites a different historical analogy for this struggle than does Hamas’ Charter, however: more appropriate than the threat posed by the European Crusaders was the struggle of Muslims against the Mongol invaders.

EIJ is raising an important issue connected with irregular war: the group is advocating mass resistance against an established government, and such revolution can be justified in Islam only where the ruler becomes an unbeliever through public displays of unbelief. The most significant of such acts

is introduction of an innovation (*bid’ab*), which is a policy, teaching, or action that violates precedents in the Qur’an or hadith. The leadership thus loses its divinely given authority when it commits apostasy, and Muslims not only must no longer obey such a ruler, but are required to revolt and depose him.

This reference to the obligation to God for the creation and maintenance of an Islamic state and the responsibilities of Muslims serves to answer the question of authorization for militant Islamic forces.²² “The Neglected Duty” provides further justification for armed action by arguing that Egypt, like most of its neighbors, is not an Islamic state because its constitution and laws are a mix of traditional Islamic judgments and European law codes. Imposition of such a mixed legal system (non-Islamic laws that are an “innovation”) by Egypt’s leaders on their subjects thus means that the nation is not part of the territory of Islam, but part of the territory of war or unbelief.²³

Shi’a radicals have a similar perspective to their Sunni extremist “brothers in arms.” Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902-1989) contended that Islamic jurists, “by means of jihad and enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, must expose and overthrow tyrannical rulers and rouse the people so the universal movement of all alert Muslims can establish Islamic government in the place of tyrannical regimes.” The proper teaching of Islam will cause “the entire population to become *mujahids* [literally “strugglers for God].” Ayatollah Murtaza Mutahhari (1920-1979), a top ideologue of the Iranian Revolution, considered jihad a necessary consequence of Islam’s content: by having political aims, Islam must sanction armed force and provide laws for its use. Mutahhari deemed jihad to be defensive, but his definition includes defense against oppression and may require what international law would consider a war of aggression. For example, he endorses an attack on a country of polytheists (some Muslims see Christians as polytheists due to Christianity’s belief in a God who can exist in three manifestations) with the goal simply to eliminate polytheism’s evils, not to impose Islam.²⁴

Another radical Shi’a perspective on the justification for jihad can be found in the words of Shaykh Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, spiritual leader of

Lebanese Hizballah. In a 1986 interview, he stated that although violence is justified only for defensive purposes and as a last resort, the contemporary situation of the people of the Middle East, in particular of Muslims, creates a scenario that breeds violence. The establishment of Israel, the dislocation of the Palestinians, and the interference of a great oppressive power (in other words, the United States) in Arab-Islamic political, economic, and social affairs leads some Muslims (e.g., militant groups) to consider themselves justified in using force to achieve their goals, and this can even sometimes lead to extreme behavior.²⁵ Fadlallah does clarify that terrorism (*hudna*, or violence in Arabic) is not legitimate or justified in Islam, to include the destruction of life, kidnapping, or the hijacking of airliners or ships, and suggests that militants have gone too far in the conduct of their struggle when they employ such means. Nevertheless, he concludes by informing the American people that it is up to them to improve the situation by pressing for reforms in the policies of their government.²⁶

How should the West respond to Islamic militant groups? Shaykh Fadlallah suggests that the West should listen to the anger expressed by such groups. While stressing that the way to peace is through dialogue, Fadlallah said that the West must first recognize that Muslims who act in ways that are harmful to Western interests are responding to pain of their own. Islam, he added, should not be thought of as uncompromisingly hostile to the West, since militant groups do not speak for all of the community. Fadlallah adds that if the West does listen to these groups, however, it will understand that the concerns these groups have (for justice, human rights, and self-determination) are legitimate, even if their methods are excessive.²⁷

Al-Qaeda and Transnational Jihad: A New Twist on Old Complaints. Before his emergence as the prime suspect in the 9/11 attacks, Osama bin Laden had described his goals and grievances and the tactics of his transnational al-Qaeda network in great detail in a series of statements and interviews. Taken together, these statements provide insight into an ideology that may seem abhorrent or crazy to Americans but has been carefully crafted to appeal to the disgruntled and dispossessed of the

Islamic world.²⁸ Bin Laden's ideology, however, is really more political than religious.

At the heart of bin Laden's philosophy are two declarations of war—jihad—against the United States. The first, his *Bayan* (statement) issued on 26 August 1996, was directed specifically at “Americans occupying the land of the two holy places,” as bin Laden refers to the cities of Mecca and Medina that are located in his native Saudi Arabia. Here he calls upon Muslims all over the world to fight to “expel the infidels . . . from the Arab Peninsula.”²⁹ In his fatwa of 23 February 1998, titled “Declaration of the World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders,” which he issued along with the leaders of extremist groups in Egypt, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, bin Laden broadened his earlier edict. In the fatwa, he specifies that the radicals' war is a defensive struggle against Americans and their allies who have declared war “on God, his Messenger, and Muslims.” The “crimes and sins” perpetrated by the United States are threefold: first, it “stormed” the Arabian peninsula during the Gulf War and has continued “occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places”; second, it continues a war of annihilation against Iraq; and third, the United States supports the state of Israel and its continued occupation of Jerusalem. The only appropriate Muslim response, according to the fatwa, is a defensive jihad to repulse the aggressor; therefore, borrowing from classical and modern Islamic scholars (because it is defensive), such a war is a moral obligation incumbent upon all true Muslims.³⁰

Bin Laden's anger at the “American crusader forces” who are “occupying” his homeland stems from an injunction from the Prophet that there “not be two religions in Arabia”; the presence of foreign forces on holy soil is thus an intolerable affront to 1,400 years of Islamic tradition. In his 1996 statement of jihad, bin Laden blamed the serious economic crisis then gripping Saudi Arabia (due to falling oil prices and widespread corruption) on the presence of these Western “crusader forces.” Two years later, in his 1998 fatwa, bin Laden charged that the United States was not only occupying and plundering Arabia, but was “using its bases in the peninsula as a spearhead to fight against the neighboring Islamic peoples.” In bin Laden's war, the

goal of expelling the “Judeo-Christian enemy” from Islamic holy lands should occur first on the Arabian peninsula, then in Iraq (which for 500 years was the seat of the Islamic caliphate), and third in Palestine, site of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (which is sacred to Muslims as the place from where Muhammad ascended to heaven).³¹

Although the initial attacks associated with bin Laden occurred in Saudi Arabia, Somalia, East Africa, and Yemen, he increasingly made clear that he would bring the war to the American homeland. Al Qaeda is believed to have aided the first attack against the World Trade Center in 1993, and bin Laden told an ABC News reporter in May 1998 that the battle will “inevitably move . . . to American soil.”³² Although he appears to be fired by the religious zeal of Saudi Arabia’s puritanical Wahhabi movement, bin Laden’s targets have not been offending religious and cultural institutions, but political, military, and economic targets. Additionally, though he quotes selective (but incomplete) passages from the Qur’an to establish the basis for the jihad, bin Laden’s motivations are really not that different from the anti-imperialistic doctrines that sustain religious and nonreligious extremist groups all over the world.³³

In return for joining the jihad against America, bin Laden has promised his followers an honored place in paradise, in accordance with a statement in the Qur’an that “a martyr’s privileges are guaranteed by Allah.” Bin Laden and many of the other Islamic militant groups in the Middle East are able to draw on large numbers of enthusiastic and waiting recruits for their war against the United States—impoverished youths who are ready to die simply for the idea of jihad.

“Jihad Factories”: An Enduring Legacy of Hatred. It is estimated that more than 1 million young men from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and the Muslim parts of China are attending *madrassas*, or private Islamic religious schools, every year in Pakistan. Madrassa students spend most of their day in rote memorization of the Qur’an in Arabic (this is not their native language, so few understand what they are reading) and interpreting the hadith. Only theology is taught; there is no math, science, computer training, or secular history.³⁴ The young men at these schools

are drawn from the dire poor of the societies they come from, kept in self-contained worlds that are isolated from outside influences, and indoctrinated with a powerful, not-so-academic radical message: their highest honor and duty is to wage jihad to defend Islam from its attackers, and the United States is the chief enemy of Islam.³⁵

Madrassas, which have a tradition in Pakistan that dates from colonial days of promoting political independence along with their religious teaching, fill a significant gap in the underfunded public school system by offering free tuition, room, and board. Madrassas received state funding during the Afghan War when they were used to groom the mujahedin who were being sent to fight the Soviet invaders.³⁶ Many of these schools were emptied in the 1990s when the Taliban needed assistance in military campaigns against its Northern Alliance foes, and many students sent to the front did not return. The graduates of these madrassas have also turned up in places like Bosnia, Chechnya, and the Kashmir, and the survivors of those conflicts have taken their battlefield experience back to their home countries where it is being put to use in jihads against their own not-Islamic enough governments and societies.

The readiness of millions of young men trained in these schools to sacrifice their lives for Islam—and their unquestioning acceptance of anti-American and pro-Islamic extremist propaganda—will continue to be a powerful and enduring weapon against the U.S.-led global war on terrorism, and one that bin Laden and other militants who are bent on attacking the United States and its allies can call on in the years ahead.

Acceptance of Militants’ Ideas and Methods Is Limited

The thrust of the entire jihad tradition which Islamic radicals have “hijacked” makes it clear that not everything is permissible. Although the language in the Qur’an and hadith and in other classical Muslim sources is overwhelmingly militant in many places, this is a reflection of the Muslims’ world in the seventh century, which consisted initially of resistance to a variety of more powerful non-Islamic tribes and then successful military cam-

paigns to spread the faith.

Besides containing exhortations to fight, however, Islamic sacred texts have also laid out the rules of engagement for war, which (as mentioned earlier) included prohibitions against the killing of non-combatants such as women, children, the aged, and disabled. These texts also require notice to the adversary before an attack, require that a Muslim army must seek peace if its opponent does, and forbid committing aggression against others and suicide.³⁷ Those who are unfamiliar with the Qur'an and hadith can miss these points when confronted with the propagandistic calls to jihad of militant Islamic groups.

The actions of rebels in the classical period of Islam encountered widespread resentment and condemnation, and this strong sentiment against rebellion remains in modern Islamic thought. Most Muslims agree with the presumption in Islamic teachings on war that individuals are innocent and therefore not subject to harm unless they demonstrate by their actions that they are a threat to the safety or survival of Muslims. On this basis, the overwhelming majority of Islamic scholars have for centuries rejected indiscriminate killing and the terrorizing of civilian populations as a legitimate form of jihad.³⁸ Also, at no point do Islamic sacred texts even consider the horrific and random slaughter of uninvolved bystanders that is represented by the 9/11 airliner attacks; most Muslims throughout the world were as shocked by those attacks as Americans were.

The radical message in works such as Hamas's Charter, "The Neglected Duty," and the writings of Khomeini and his fellow revolutionary Iranian Shi'a clerics nevertheless finds a lot of acceptance with contemporary Muslims. The reason is simply because of the poor socioeconomic circumstances and lack of human dignity that many Muslim peoples find themselves subject to, brought about by secular failures to attend to their problems.³⁹ Militant Islamic groups, exemplified by Hamas and the Palestinian branch of Islamic Jihad, have been able to use such poor conditions to their advantage. They provide social services (such as operating free or low-cost schools, medical clinics, sports clubs, and women's support groups), many of which the Palestinian Authority itself often cannot provide, to build public support and attract recruits

in the occupied territories.⁴⁰

Public statements over the last several months by some moderate Muslim religious authorities and commentators that Islamic extremists are corrupting a peaceful religious faith for their own twisted ends are encouraging. Equally positive is the growing recognition in the Muslim world both of bin Laden's lack of proper religious qualifications to issue any religious edicts that promote jihad, and his lack of success, on a strategic level, in forcing the United States to withdraw its military forces completely from Saudi Arabia or to give up its campaign against Islamic terrorism. A few prominent Muslim scholars have not only condemned the terrorist attacks upon the United States, but have declared the perpetrators of these attacks to be "suicides," not martyrs. This is significant, since Islam forbids suicide and teaches that its practitioners are sent not to paradise but to hell, where they are condemned to keep repeating their suicidal act for eternity.⁴¹

Conclusion

As described herein, jihad in Islamic thought and practice possesses a range of meanings, with Muslim radicals focusing on the physical, violent form of struggle to resist what they see as cultural, economic, military, and political assaults from outside the ummah and oppression and injustice within. So long as societal conditions within many Muslim states remain poor, with unrepresentative governments (which are seen to be propped up by the United States) that are unwilling or unable to undertake meaningful but difficult reforms, then militant Islamic groups will continue to attract recruits and financial support. In spite of logical fallacies and inconsistencies in the doctrine of jihad of radical Islamic groups, and the fact that most of the broad constituency they are attempting to appeal to does not buy into their ideology or methods, such groups nevertheless remain as significant threats to U.S. interests everywhere in the world.

The challenge for the U.S. government over the next several years will be to encourage and support lasting reform by Muslim states who are our allies in the Middle East while maintaining a more balanced and fair-minded foreign policy toward all key regional players. We must also do a better job

of countering the Islamic extremists' widely disseminated version of jihad, while being more persuasive that our own government—and our society—are truly not anti-Islamic. Such actions will do much to deny a supportive environment to our radical Muslim foes. For its part, the U.S. military needs to better understand the religious and cultural aspects of our adversaries' asymmetric mindset—in this case, how Islamic militants conceive of and use jihad—to be successful and survivable in its global campaign against terrorism.

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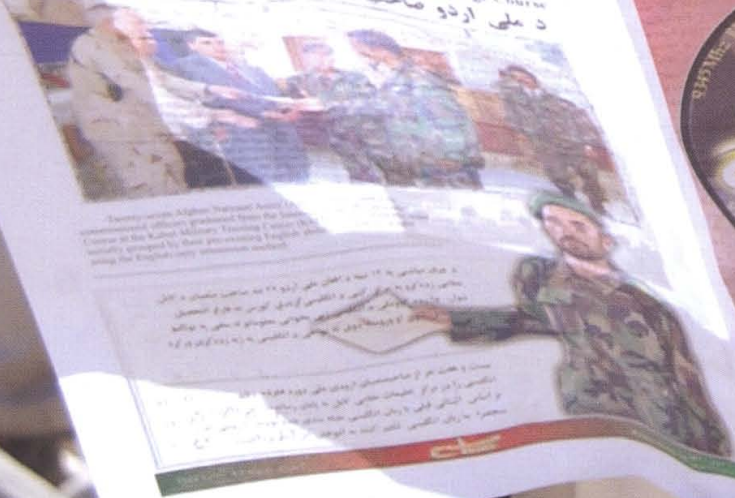
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Part IX
Afghanistan



پاڼان دوره زمان انگلیسی افسران اردوکی ملی
Afghan National Army Officers Graduate from English Language Course
د ملی اردو صاحب منصانو فرانت و انگلیسی کورس نه



پهلی
د ښار



Understanding the Taliban and Insurgency in Afghanistan

by *Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason*

Orbis, Winter 2007

Afghanistan is in danger of capsizing in a perfect storm of insurgency that mimics operations and tactics witnessed in Iraq. This article assesses this insurgency and the re-emergent Taliban. The common view of the Taliban as simply a radical Afghan Islamist movement is overly simple, for that organization has been able to build on tribal kinship networks and a charismatic mullah phenomenon to mobilize a critical and dynamic rural base of support. This support, buttressed by Taliban reinforcements from Pakistan's border areas, is enough to frustrate the U.S.-led Coalition's counterinsurgency strategy. At the operational level, the Taliban is fighting a classic "war of the flea," while the Coalition continues to fight the war largely according to the Taliban "game plan." This is resulting in its losing the war in Afghanistan one Pashtun village at a time.

After nearly 30 years of continuous war in Afghanistan, the country's American-backed, post-Taliban government is now struggling. President Hamid Karzai's government is encountering extreme difficulty extending control and mandate outside Kabul into the country's hinterland regions. Undermining President Karzai's efforts to build a truly national government with national control is a resurgent Taliban backed by al-Qaeda, which together are mounting an increasingly virulent insurgency, especially in

the east and south, near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. While then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld suggested in May 2003 that the war in Afghanistan was in a “cleanup” phase,¹ now, nearly five years since the conclusion of major Operation Enduring Freedom combat operations, it is clear that Afghanistan is anything but a stable country. The twin insurgencies of the revitalized Taliban and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar’s faction of Hizb-i-Islami (HiG) are growing steadily in strength and influence, while Kabul’s control and influence in a broad swath of the country are rapidly diminishing. As demonstrated by the deadly anti-American riots in the capital in May 2006, political volatility is even starting to reach urban areas.

The chief purpose of the resurged Taliban/al-Qaeda/HiG insurgency appears to be to force the U.S. military to fight the war according to the “Taliban game plan.” The priority of U.S. effort seems to be on the “kill/capture mission,” just as the Taliban desires, with the U.S. and NATO forces concentrating on battalion-sized sweep operations which are consistently failing, just as they failed in Vietnam. With the U.S. military focused on countering the Taliban game plan, every uphill battle is a losing one and will continue to be until a new strategy is implemented. Currently, the best strategy would be focused coordination of a dramatically increased Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) presence and massive economic development. The Afghan population has to see tangible results from the Karzai government’s efforts in order for it to gain legitimacy with them. That is the best way of winning against the Taliban, which for now has good chances of returning.

We attempt here to shed new light on the *idea* of the Taliban. Behind all actions lie ideas, and the current Western perception of the Taliban, both in academia and in policy circles, centers on the belief that the Taliban are primarily an obtuse, radical Islamist organization. The Islamist element of the Taliban may be simply that—an element of the complex historical and tribal phenomenon of the Pashtuns—but this article assesses other aspects of the Taliban, such as its tribal dynamics and charisma. We

then analyze the effects of the current insurgency from the strategic and operational levels and examine its implications for U.S. and Coalition forces’ strategy and tactics. We assume that the insurgency stems from three fundamental problems: (1) the lack of state formation and the inability of the national government to establish a significant presence throughout the country, (2) the failure to make the rural areas secure so that development and reconstruction can proceed, and (3) the lack of any meaningful improvement in the lives of the great majority of the people in the southern half of the country.

Making Sense of the Taliban

“A host of wandering Talib-ul-ilums, who correspond with the theological students in Turkey and live free at the expense of the people. . . .”—Winston Churchill, 1898²

Popular Western perceptions of the Taliban movement have been driven by images of robed, bearded men toting Qur’ans and guns and instituting draconian social policies while harboring global jihadists. While these images are accurate to a degree, understanding the Taliban requires more subtle analysis of Afghanistan’s Soviet occupation and post-occupation experience, its Islamic traditions, Afghan ethno-linguistic and tribal phenomena, interlopers of the frontier border areas with Pakistan, and the context in which the Taliban rose.

Following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, Afghanistan deteriorated into a brutal civil war between rival mujahideen groups, many of which had spent much of their energy fighting each other even during the height of the anti-Soviet jihad. This civil war claimed thousands of lives and decimated the country’s infrastructure. The civil war intensified after a mujahideen group took Kabul in April 1992. Shortly afterwards, Beirut-style street fighting erupted in the city, especially between the Pashtun HiG and the Tajik Jamaat-i-Islam. This civil war, fought with the vast surplus ordnance of the covert anti-Soviet military aid program and huge stockpiles of abandoned Soviet weapons, eventually wreaked as much if not more damage and

destruction on the country than the Soviet invasion and occupation. Kabul, which was left virtually untouched under Soviet occupation, was savagely bombarded with rockets, mortars, and artillery by Hekmatyar. In Kandahar, fighting between Islamists and traditionalist mujahideen parties resulted in the destruction of much of the traditional power structures. In the rural areas, warlords, drug lords, and bandits ran amok in a state of anarchy created by the unraveling of the traditional tribal leadership system.

As the mujahideen factions and warlords were fighting each other for power, Saudi Arabia invested heavily in the region, most notably funding madrassas (religious boarding schools) in Pakistan that sought to spread the conservative Wahhabi version of Islam practiced in the Saudi kingdom. Pakistan's Jamiat-i-Ulema Islami (JUI) party built a network of its own to extend the influence of the indigenous Deobandi School of Islamic thought. These madrassas would come to serve as an important educational alternative for the numerous displaced refugees from the anti-Soviet jihad and Afghan civil war as well as for poor families along the frontier who could not afford the secular schools. With the oversight of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISID), which had grown weary of their favorite Afghan mujahideen leader, Hekmatyar, the Taliban emerged from the madrassas of Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and the federally administered tribal area (FATA), not to mention kinship networks inside the remaining Afghan refugee camps. In Afghanistan, the Taliban recruited primarily from madrassas near Ghazni and Kandahar. It arrived on the Afghan scene in 1994 with little warning and vowed to install a traditional Islamic government and end the fighting among the mujahideen. With massive covert assistance from Pakistan's ISID, army, and air force, it overthrew the largely Tajik (and northern) mujahideen regime in Kabul, capturing the capital in September 1996. The Taliban considered this regime responsible for a continuing civil war and the deterioration of security in country, as well as discrimination against Pashtuns. Afghanistan soon became a training ground for Islamic activists and other

radicals from the Middle East and around Asia.

War-weary Afghans initially welcomed the Taliban, which promoted itself as a new force for honesty and unity and was seen as the desperately needed balm of peace and stability by many Afghans, particularly fellow Pashtuns. The Taliban immediately targeted warlords who were deemed responsible for much of the destruction, instability, and chaos that plagued the country since the outbreak of the civil war. But it also instituted a religious police force, the Amr Bil Marof Wa Nai An Munkir (Promotion of Virtue and Suppression of Vice) to brutally uphold its extreme and often unorthodox interpretations of Islam, which were not previously known in Afghanistan. Taliban philosophy, Ahmed Rashid notes,

. . . fitted nowhere in the Islamic spectrum of ideas and movements that had emerged in Afghanistan between 1979 and 1994. . . . The Taliban represented nobody but themselves and they recognized no Islam except their own. . . . Before the Taliban, Islamic extremism had never flourished in Afghanistan.³

The people's optimism soon turned to fear as the Taliban introduced a stringent interpretation of sharia, banned women from work, and introduced punishments such as death by stoning and amputations.

While Tajik resistance to the Taliban in the form of the Northern Alliance held out throughout the Taliban period and retained Afghanistan's seat in the UN, the Taliban eventually conquered 80 percent of the country.⁴ By September 2001, it was poised to perhaps wipe out the Northern Alliance. But the 9/11 attacks led to U.S. intervention on October 7, 2001, aimed at destroying al-Qaeda as well as removing the Taliban from Afghanistan.

Characteristics of the Taliban

The Taliban primarily consists of rural Pashtuns from the Ghilzai confederation with some support from the Kakar tribe of the Ghurghusht confederation. Mullah Mohammed

Omar Akhund and most of the senior members of the Taliban are from the Hotaki tribe of the Ghilzai. Their movement represents an ultraconservative Islamic front with an ideology derived from the Deobandi School (discussed below). The Taliban, however, took Deobandism to extremes the school's founders would not have recognized. The roots of the Taliban are found in the mujahideen effort against the Soviets. From the hundreds of resistance groups that sprang up, the ISID recognized seven and established offices for them through which to channel covert support. Although most had a strong religious ethos, the groups were organized primarily along ethnic and tribal lines. Significantly, three of the seven were led by Ghilzais and none by their rivals, the Durrani, who were deliberately marginalized by the ISID.⁵ The importance of these ethnic roots of the Taliban in the mujahideen movement cannot be overstated. Yet its tribal heritage is only a partial explanation of what the Taliban represents.

The Taliban's Islamic Component

The Taliban initially represented a rise to power of the mullahs at the expense of both tribal leaders and mujahideen commanders. Many mujahideen commanders, especially those from Hizb-i-Islami (Maulvi Khalis) and Harakati-Inqilab-i-Islami-Islamic Unity Movement (Nabi Muhammadi), were later absorbed by the Taliban.⁶ And, as noted, the Taliban was influenced by the teachings of Deobandi Islam in Pakistani seminars and madrassas, especially the Jaamia Haqqania at Akora Khattack.⁷ The Pakistani version of the Deobandi schools in Afghan refugee camps were for the most part run by inexperienced, semiliterate mullahs associated with Pakistan's JUI. Saudi funds in combination with a lack of appreciation on the part of the mullahs of the reformist Deobandi agenda brought the schools' curricula closer to ultraconservative Wahhabism.⁸

Deobandi Islam, a conservative Islamic orthodoxy, follows a Salafist egalitarian model that seeks to emulate the life and times of the

Prophet Muhammad.⁹ The Deobandi philosophy founded at the Dar ul-Ulum (Abode of Islamic Learning) madrassa in Deoband, India, in 1867 eventually became the primary producer of Ulama, or legal scholars, in India. While Deobandi madrassas have flourished across South Asia, they were not officially supported or sanctioned in Pakistan until President Zia ul Haq assumed control of the Pakistani government in 1977. The Deobandi interpretation of Islamic teachings is now widely practiced in Pakistan, with the JUI being its primary political proponent.

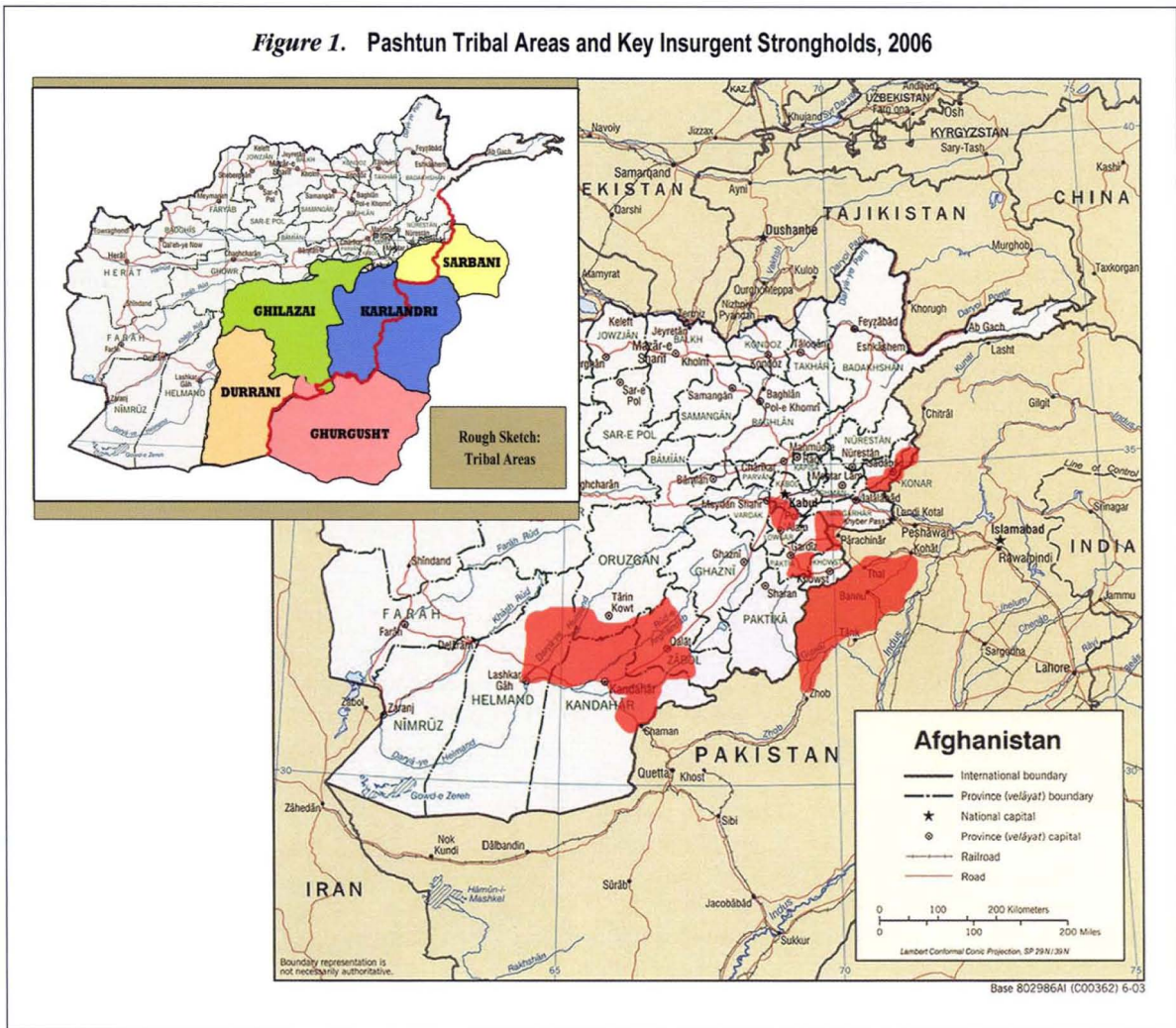
The Deobandi interpretation holds that a Muslim's primary obligation and loyalty is to his religion. The Deobandis oppose any kind of social caste system within Islam, to include, naturally, any monarchy. Loyalty to country is always secondary. Deobandis also believe they have a sacred right and obligation to wage jihad to protect the Muslims of any country. This obligation alone may explain some of Mullah Omar's affinity for bin Laden and his global jihadist ambitions. Many analysts believe that had the Taliban remained in power, it was only a matter of time before they moved against "apostate" neighbors such as Uzbekistan. The Taliban had already embraced the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the Uzbek regime's primary jihadist opposition.

Deobandi militants share the Taliban's restrictive view of women and regard Shia as non-Muslim. While in power, the Taliban had a deliberate anti-Shia program against Afghanistan's ethnic Hazara, who are predominantly Shia, and led numerous massacres against them, killing tens of thousands.¹⁰

The Taliban as a Tribal Movement

While the Taliban's rise challenged many traditional tribal institutions, especially those of Afghanistan's eastern mountains, the eventual leadership of the movement consisted almost exclusively of Ghilzai Pashtuns. The Ghilzai have historically been at odds with the smaller Durrani confederation of tribes, which is cur-

Figure 1. Pashtun Tribal Areas and Key Insurgent Strongholds, 2006



rently represented to some extent in the central Afghan government. Ghilzai Pashtuns are concentrated in the southeast—in Oruzgan, Zabol, Dai Kundi and Gardez provinces, and in the Katawaz region of Paktika province—but they also have communities in the center and north of the country as a result of resettlement, both forcible and encouraged, under Durrani rule in the early twentieth century.

The importance of the Ghilzai to the Taliban and insurgency is illustrated by Figure 1. The shaded section of the map shows those areas where the insurgency is the strongest—primarily areas controlled by the Taliban. These areas include the northern districts of Kandahar Province, the northeastern districts of the

Helmand Province, the southern districts of Oruzgan Province, the western districts of Zabol Province, and districts in Paktika, Paktya, Gardez, Wardak, and Logar Provinces. The inset map is a rough sketch of the Pashtun tribal areas of the Durrani, Ghilzai, Ghurgusht, Karlandri, and Sarbani—the five large confederations of Pashtuns, each of which traces its roots to a single ancestor. (Each of these five confederations contains scores of major tribes, or Qawms, which are perhaps analogous to Native American tribes such as the Apache or the Navajo.) Comparing the two maps, it is evident that the most intense area of the insurgency is the area dominated by the various Ghilzai tribes.

Tribalism in Afghanistan can be seen as a sub-

set of ethno-linguistic groups, giving primacy to ties of kinship and patrilineal descent. The tribe is a kind of union of mutual assistance, with members cooperating on defense and maintaining order.¹¹ The Pashtun in particular are highly segmentary, with precise patrilineal descents first written down by the Moghuls in the 15th century. To truly understand the Taliban, we must thus go behind the mask of Islamism (the Taliban's opponents in the Northern Alliance were also conservative Muslims) and examine the movement as a tribal phenomenon. On closer inspection, the Taliban is neither simply a Pashtun movement nor even a pan-Ghilzai movement, although its area of influence coincides closely with Ghilzai lands. It is largely led by a single tribe. Most of the senior leadership of the Taliban—with a few exceptions of Kakar tribesmen of the Ghurghusht confederation, who are close to Mullah Omar—was and is drawn specifically from Mullah Omar's own Hotaki tribe (see Table 1).

There is historical precedent for this. The Ghilzai have traditionally been hostile towards the Durrani, who have held power in Kabul for most of the last 300 years and provided all of Afghanistan's kings. Only three times have the Ghilzai seized national power from the Durrani: in 1721, when Mir Wais took power; in 1978, after a coup against Mohammed Daoud by Marxist military officers, who immediately handed over power to the Marxist People's

Democratic Party of Afghanistan leader Nur Mohammed Taraki,¹² and again in 1996, when Mullah Omar came to power. Both Mir Wais and Mullah Omar are of the Hotaki tribe. Afghans have an immediate and intimate relationship to historical events: the events of 1721 are not forgotten to the Ghilzai, and the anti-monarchist Deobandi Taliban movement was at some level also a re-creation of the triumph of the Hotakis over the hated Durrani monarchs. Significantly, when the Taliban first became powerful, its instinct was not to march immediately on the capital, but to subdue, coopt, and subjugate the Durrani of Kandahar and Helmand Provinces. When the Taliban seized control of Kabul, the exiled King Zahir Shah, a Durrani, was not invited to return from Italy. This dynamic is still at work today: the priority of the resurgent Taliban in 2006 is not driving northeast towards Kabul and bringing down the Karzai government, but rather focusing on first establishing political dominance over Durrani lands in Kandahar and Helmand Provinces. Clearly more is at work here than a simple radical Islamist movement bent on seizing national power.

The Sociological Basis of the Taliban

Tribal politics and Pakistani support do not fully explain how the Taliban was able to seize

Table 1. Senior Taliban Leaders

Name	Position	Tribal Affiliation
Mullah Muhammad Omar	Movement Leader	Hotakia Ghilzai
Mullah Berader	Deputy Movement Leader	Ghilzai
Mullah Dadullah Kakar	Senior Military Commander	Kakar Ghurghusht
Mullah Mohammad Hassen	Foreign Minister after 1997	Hotaki Ghilzai
Nuruddin Turabi	Minister of Justice	Hotaki Ghilzai
Alla Dad Akhund	Minister of Communications	Hotaki Ghilzai
Mohamed Essa	Minister of Water and Power	Hotaki Ghilzai
Wakil Ahmed	Personal Secretary to Mullah Omar	Kakar Ghurghusht
Sadeq Akhond	Minister of Commerce	Hotaki Ghilzai
Mohammed Rabbani	Chairman of Kabul Shura	Kakar Ghurghusht
Mullah Obaidullah	Minister of Defense	Hotaki Ghilzai

control so effectively. To gain power, it drew unconsciously on a universally understood cultural phenomenon among the frontier Pashtun,¹³ one that the British and later the Pakistanis encountered over and over again: the charismatic mullah movement. Mullah Omar is the archetype of this phenomenon, a cyclical pattern of insurrection which manifests itself about every 30 years in the Pashtun belt. Indeed, such leaders have often gained powers on the frontier during times of social distress.¹⁴ These charismatic uprisings were so common, in fact, that the British dubbed them “mad mullah movements.”

There have been many. A similar figure to Mullah Omar, Mirza Ali Khan—a Tori Khel Waziri who was known to the West as the Fakir of Ipi—led first British and then Pakistani security forces on a frustrating chase around the frontier for 30 years.¹⁵ Protected by his Pashtun tribal supporters in the hills, much as Mullah Omar is today, he was never caught. The Mullah of Hadda, as noted by David Edwards, provoked the Great Pashtun Revolt of 1897 through mysticism, parlor tricks, and promises to turn British bullets to water.¹⁶ Akbar Ahmed has studied the emergence of a charismatic mullah in Waziristan who, like Mullah Omar, challenged state legitimacy.¹⁷ Ahmed argues that the mullah of Waziristan also used mysticism to gain legitimacy, much like Mullah Omar did 30 years later, and challenged Pakistan’s attempt to modernize the FATA.

Omar joined this rogues’ gallery of politicized insurgent mullahs by means of a politico-religious stunt that is of enormous importance to the Taliban movement. In so doing, he became the epitome of Max Weber’s definition of the charismatic leader, who has:

... a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual

concerned is treated as a leader. . . .¹⁸

The event was Omar’s removal in 1994 of a sacred garment believed by many Afghans to be the original cloak worn by the Prophet Muhammad from its sanctuary in Kandahar, and his wearing it while standing atop a mosque in the city. Whereas Omar had been a nonentity before this piece of religious theater, the audacious stunt catapulted him to a level of mystical power (at least among the 90 percent of Pashtuns who are illiterate) and resulted in his being locally proclaimed *Amir-ul Momineen* (the Leader of the Faithful).¹⁹

What is known of the Taliban subsequent to this event conforms exactly to the “mad mullah” pattern of social mobilization. Furthermore, once in power, Taliban power was (and is) concentrated exclusively in the person of Mullah Omar, another characteristic of the phenomenon—and contrary to traditional Pashtun *shura* (consensus) politics. As Rashid has observed, Omar ultimately made all the decisions within the Taliban, and no one dared act without his orders.²⁰ Today, Mullah Omar issues statements of encouragement to his field commanders, rather than operational orders, exactly as did the Mullah of Hadda.²¹ Thus, unlike most insurgencies, which are not centered in the personality of a single leader, the Taliban’s center of gravity, in Clausewitzian terms, is not Taliban foot soldiers or field commanders or even the senior clerics around Omar, but Omar himself. Because it is a charismatic movement socially, if Mullah Omar dies, the Taliban, at least in its current incarnation, will wither and die. The mystical charismatic power that came from wearing the Cloak of the Prophet is not something transferable to a second-in-command. Unfortunately, because this phenomenon is so alien to Western thinking, U.S. analysts instead generally interpret the Taliban in terms more compatible with Western logic.

Labeling the Taliban an Islamist movement, a drug gang, or any of the other revolving-door euphemisms often used, including lately “anti-government militia,” is misguided. Understanding the Taliban more precisely could enable better U.S. military Information and Psychological

Operations, for example, or insights into the human terrain by U.S. and NATO forces, and would suggest a realignment of reconstruction priorities to isolate the movement and prevent further mobilization.

A Deteriorating Situation in Afghanistan

More than 340 American soldiers and Marines have been killed in action in Afghanistan.²² While the overall level of conflict in Afghanistan has not yet approached that experienced in Iraq, the last few years have witnessed an acceleration of increasingly deadly attacks that have begun to graft insurgent tactics in Iraq onto classic mujahideen-style guerrilla warfare.²³ In the first five months of 2006, there was a 200 percent increase in insurgent attacks compared to the first five months of 2005. Indeed, late May 2006 saw the deadliest week in the country in five years. Lutfullah Mashal, the former Afghan Interior Ministry spokesman, observed in May 2006 that “Taliban fighters no longer rely solely on hit-and-run tactics by small groups of guerrillas. Instead, the Taliban have been concentrating into groups of more than 100 fighters to carry out frontal assaults on government security posts.”²⁴ The Taliban is thought to have at least 12,000 fighters controlling areas in the provinces of Oruzgan, Helmand, Zabol and Kandahar.²⁵

Troubling indicators such as the relatively free movement of insurgent groups reveal that increasingly large areas of the east and south of the country are falling under the control of the Taliban. Said Jawad, Afghanistan’s ambassador to the United States, recently stated, “We have lost a lot of the ground that we may have gained in the country, especially in the south. . . . The fact that U.S. military resources have been ‘diverted’ to the war in Iraq is of course hurting Afghanistan.”²⁶

Taliban insurgents and their al-Qaeda allies are gaining strength. There have been numerous attacks in 2006 in areas other than the south and east, suggesting that the Taliban has expanded the scope of its operations and is taking the war

to the north. Cross-border operations from Pakistan are commonplace. NATO, which assumed operational control of the war in 2006, requested more troops to fight the insurgency in September; U.S. troop levels are expected to at least remain at their current level.²⁷

Another source of concern is that recent insurgent attacks include the use of suicide bombings, a tactic previously unknown in Afghanistan and rare because of a cultural aversion to suicide,²⁸ and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which demonstrate a significant level of coordination with Iraqi insurgents and growing technological sophistication. The great majority of the recent suicide attacks appear to have been “outsourced” to non-Afghans, most often to Punjabis from the south of Pakistan and young foreign Islamists.

The wild and largely unregulated tribal areas on Pakistan’s northern border play an extremely important role in the insurgency, as they do in Kashmir and in the rising unrest that challenges Pakistani security forces and governmental authority all along the frontier. They provide a steady source of recruits, a safe haven for senior leadership, and a base of operations and training for the Taliban, Al Qaeda affiliates, and, to a lesser degree, HiG.²⁹

The Afghanistan-Pakistan Border Problem

For decades, Afghanistan’s neighboring states have produced disenchanted groups such as Uyghurs, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and other Islamists who have used the country for guerrilla training and an operating base. The most important foreign actors in Afghanistan’s affairs have come from Pakistan’s western border provinces, especially the NWFP, Baluchistan, and the FATA. Pakistan has long sought to exert influence in Afghanistan in order to achieve “strategic depth” on its northern border in the event of any conflict with India.³⁰ Successive Pakistani governments have promoted Islamic radicalism to subvert Pashtun and Baluch nationalist movements and further their ambitions in Afghanistan and Kashmir. Also important is the fact that

Afghanistan's Pashtun population spills over into Pakistan's FATA as well as NWFP. Jihad, drugs, and gunrunning have long been the main sources of livelihood for many of the Pashtuns living in the FATA.³¹ Afghan refugee camps and thousands of madrassas opened by the JUI provide a steady flow of recruits for the Taliban and other radical groups.

The minimal U.S. troop presence in the south means that the rugged, porous, and often ill-defined 2,450-kilometer border between Pakistan and Afghanistan does not even constitute a speed bump to groups such as the Taliban and al-Qaeda seeking to increase their influence among the Pashtun tribesmen in the region. By mid-2005, in the strategically vital border province of Paktika, for example, which has a population of some 700,000 people and shares a 400 kilometer border with Pakistan, the United States had only two companies of light infantry and no engineers or aviation assets. In the summer of 2005, the fledgling PRT in Paktika was dismembered due to personnel shortages. A vestigial civil affairs remnant, its Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC), was co-located with a maneuver company.

President Karzai and Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta recently blamed the ISID for Taliban attacks in Afghanistan. Kabul claims that Pakistani security forces chase al-Qaeda terrorists within Pakistan but make little effort to arrest Taliban fighters or stop them from crossing the border into Afghanistan.³² This lack of cooperation has similarly frustrated the United States. As Henry A. Crumpton, the U.S. Department of State coordinator for counterterrorism, asserts:

The Americans are finding the Pakistanis much more reluctant to face down the Taliban—who are brethren from the Pashtun ethnic group that dominates in Afghanistan—than they have been to confront al-Qaeda, who are largely outsiders. Has Pakistan done enough? I think the answer is no. . . . Not only al-Qaeda, but Taliban leadership are primarily in Pakistan, and the Pakistanis know that.³³

In 2004, after negotiating with tribal spokes-

men, Pakistan responded to rising FATA Islamic militancy with an unprecedented deployment of a reported 70,000 troops to the border area. In Baluchistan, this force is led by the Pakistani paramilitary Frontier Corps and regular army elements from Pakistan's 12th Corps. The Pakistani campaign in the FATA, especially in the North and South Waziristan Agencies, is being conducted by a battalion-plus Special Operations Task Force and elements of the Pakistani Army's 11th Corps, aided by the paramilitary Scouts units of the Frontier Corps indigenous to those agencies. While such troop levels greatly exceed the total number of U.S. and Coalition forces in Afghanistan, the actual relationship between Pakistan's campaign and the U.S. war on terror is controversial and unclear, as suggested by Pakistan's General Tariq Majid, the army's chief of general staff: "We are not fighting America's war in the FATA. It is in our own interest. We're fighting this war because, unfortunately, there have been fallout effects in Pakistan from the instability in Afghanistan."³⁴ Recently, Islamabad signed the Miranshah "peace agreement" in North Waziristan, seemingly in an attempt to control militants and their "guest fighters," who have been operating against NATO forces in Afghanistan as well as Pakistani forces in the FATA; similar agreements in 2004 and 2005 did virtually nothing to stop cross-border movements of the Taliban and other insurgents. This most recent "peace agreement" basically represents a formal Pakistani surrender to the Waziris and their humiliating retreat from Waziristan, which is now for all intents and purposes an independent country with an independent foreign policy. The *Telegraph* and other sources report that Mullah Omar played a "key" role in brokering this deal. Indeed, Lateef Afridi, a tribal elder and former Pakistan national assembly member, suggests that the Waziri would not have signed the agreement if they had not asked been by Mullah Omar. "This is no peace agreement, it is accepting Taliban rule in Pakistan's territory."³⁵ This agreement will likely embolden the Taliban to launch even more lethal attacks in Afghanistan.

The border areas are not the only driver of Pakistan's strategic view of Afghanistan. Its per-

ception of an ongoing threat from India has helped shape its Afghanistan policy. Having a friendly and controllable neighbor on Pakistan's western border is critical, allowing Pakistan to focus on its eastern border with India. Afghanistan has also been influenced by Pakistan's strategy towards India-controlled Kashmir. One veteran Pakistani observer suggests that "the Kashmir issue became the prime mover behind Pakistan's Afghan policy and its support to the Taliban."³⁶ Camps in Afghanistan created during the anti-Soviet jihad have been used to train Kashmiri guerrilla forces. Pakistan has used these jihadist forces as a bargaining chip with India in an attempt to gain more autonomy and even independence from India for Kashmir.

Post Conflict Reconstruction and the Rise of the Taliban Phoenix³⁷

Afghanistan today is in danger of capsizing in a perfect storm of insurgency, terrorism, narcotics,³⁸ and warlords. Benign neglect by the United States since Spring 2003 has brought Afghanistan back to the brink of state failure. Washington has shortchanged Afghanistan in both personnel and resources. The deployment of U.S. troops and NATO International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) dedicated to the stabilization of the countryside represented the lowest per capita commitment of peacekeeping personnel to any post-conflict environment since the end of World War II. The ratios of peacekeepers to citizens in the missions in Bosnia and Kosovo, for example, were 1:48 and 1:58, respectively. For the first three years in Afghanistan, the comparable figure hovered near 1:2,000. Today, with an increase in U.S. force levels and a major reinforcement of the ISAF mission, it is roughly one peacekeeper to every 1,000 Afghans (1:1,000).

The number of ISAF personnel deployed after the December 2001 Bonn Agreement on rebuilding Afghanistan was completely inadequate to fill the security vacuum left by the retreating Taliban, which gap was quickly filled by warlords and drug lords, many of whom have since

donned national police uniforms to facilitate narco-trafficking.³⁹ As bad as they are, however, the numbers alone do not tell the whole story. Most of the U.S. Special Forces soldiers who best understand counterinsurgency were soon pulled out of Afghanistan to serve in Iraq and elsewhere. Aviation assets have also been drawn down to minimal levels. Because of the lack of helicopter assets, quick reaction forces throughout much of the south are forced to respond to the scene of minor Taliban attacks in Humvees. With an average overland speed of 5–10 miles an hour (over rocky trails that have not improved), Taliban guerrillas are usually long gone from their "roadblock-and-run" attacks before U.S. forces arrive, which emboldens the insurgents, demonstrates to the locals our inability to protect them, and demoralizes the police, few of whom are willing to try to hold off hardened and heavily armed Taliban veterans for several hours with poor-quality weapons and the standard 30 rounds of issued ammunition.

Even more damaging to the effort to stabilize Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban was the shockingly low level of committed funding to rebuild a country laid waste by 25 years of war. The Karzai government was well into its third year in office before cumulative U.S. expenditures on reconstruction and development passed the \$1 billion mark. The aid budget for Afghanistan for 2006 was less than \$700 million. After subtracting the one major reconstruction project undertaken, the repaving of the Kabul to Kandahar road, annual U.S. aid to Afghanistan over the last five years has averaged just \$13 per Afghan. The United States is spending more money every 72 hours on the war in Iraq than it is spending on Afghan reconstruction this year.

Frequent turnovers of personnel, lack of local funds, a cumbersome approval process for projects implemented by U.S. headquarters in Bagram, the absence of construction oversight and quality control, inadequate vetting of contractors, and endemic corruption have combined to waste much of what was spent. The PRT effort has provided a laboratory for U.S. Army Civil Affairs experimentation, but their numbers are absurdly inadequate. With an approximate overall troop-to-task ratio of one PRT in Pashtun

areas for every 1 million Pashtuns, the strategic impact is negligible. In 2005, in the lawless Paktika province, where no international organizations will operate, eight American civil affairs enlisted reservists and two mid-career transfer civil affairs majors were responsible for all rural development and reconstruction in an area the size of Vermont and New Hampshire combined with a population of 700,000 people whose living conditions are largely unchanged since biblical times.

With a miniscule Commander's Emergency Response Program budget, what any 10 soldiers can accomplish amounts at best to a few grains of sand on the beach. In 2005, the entire province of Paktika had only a handful of buildings not made of adobe, fewer than a dozen high school graduates, and no telephones or paved roads. There were two antiquated clinics and two doctors. Officially, the province has 352 elementary schools for boys, but only 40 actual school buildings. The rest of the "schools" were simply patches of open ground in the village where the sixth graders taught what they knew to the first graders. Few if any girls went to school. Ten civil affairs personnel with three Humvees and a few hundred thousand dollars could change little. In fact, in the first four years of the Karzai government, the U.S. government had not built a single school or clinic anywhere in the province. To make matters worse, due to manpower shortages, the PRT in Paktika and seven others have now been effectively disbanded, with their support elements redeployed to other duties, and the handful of civil affairs soldiers of the CMOC rolled together with combat maneuver elements onto shared firebases, where they are generally the lowest priority for missions and assets. In these cases, the PRTs, originally designed as independent, free-standing civil-military affairs institutions, no longer exist. The stated mission of the PRT, to "extend the reach of the Afghan national government to the rural areas," is itself a case of Kafkaesque spin because specific Afghan PRT involvement is extremely rare. Hence, their missions, for the most part, lack any Afghan government component. The inevitable failure of this low level of peacekeeping and reconstruction to effect any

meaningful improvement in the lives of the people in the rural south has created an angry environment of unfulfilled expectations. As much or more than the Karzai government's inability to extend its writ beyond Kabul, this gap between expectation and reality is what has opened the door to the resurgence of the Taliban.

Assessing the Afghan Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

The Taliban, unlike Kabul, intuitively understood that the center of gravity was satisfying the rural Pashtun. They knew there was a window of opportunity for Karzai to gain rural Pashtun support, and they were quick to capitalize on the U.S. Department of Defense's failure to understand this. Indeed, the DoD saw the aftermath of the Taliban's withdrawal south of the border as a simple matter of subtractive math: "Kill the existing insurgents and terrorists until the number reaches zero and the war is over." But an attempted war of attrition in this context is a nonstarter. For its part, the Taliban today is conducting a brilliant defensive insurgency. They have deployed enough low-level fighters to intimidate the NGOs and international organizations into withdrawing their personnel from the south. By night, Taliban mullahs travel in the rural areas, speaking to village elders. They are fond of saying, "The Americans have the wristwatches, but we have the time." The simple message they deliver in person or by "night letter" is one of intimidation: "The Americans may stay for five years, they may stay for 10, but eventually they will leave, and when they do, we will come back to this village and kill every family that has collaborated with the Americans or the Karzai government." Such a message is devastatingly effective in these areas, where transgenerational feuds and revenge are a fabric of the society. The insurgency has recently regained major footholds across the southern region of the country in areas ranging from Helmand to Ghazni.

Combined with the lack of any tangible reason to support either the Americans or Karzai,

the villagers either remain neutral or provide assistance to the guerrillas. U.S. forces have often accelerated this process through culturally obtuse behavior, unnecessarily invasive and violent tactics, and a series of tragic incidents of “collateral damage” which are inevitable in wartime. U.S. forces deploying to Afghanistan still receive only minimal cultural awareness briefings, if any, and this training is usually the lowest priority on the checklist of requirements to be crossed off before deployment. Few if any can speak a word of the Pashto language. They primarily rely on trilingual young Tajik interpreters to communicate with Pashtun elders, a major source of miscommunication.

At the strategic level, the Taliban is fighting a classic “war of the flea,”⁴⁰ largely along the same lines used by the mujahideen 20 years ago against the Soviets, including fighting in villages to deliberately provoke air strikes and collateral damage. They gladly trade the lives of a few dozen guerrilla fighters in order to cost the American forces the permanent loyalty of that village, under the code of Pashtun social behavior called *Pashtunwali* and its obligation for revenge (*Badal*), which the U.S. Army does not even begin to understand. The advent of suicide attacks is particularly alarming. The Taliban is getting American forces to do exactly what they want them to do: chase illiterate teenage boys with guns around the countryside like the dog chasing its tail and gnawing at each flea bite until it drops from exhaustion. The Taliban, however, has a virtually infinite number of guerrilla recruits pouring out of the Deobandi madrassas and growing up in the Pashtun Afghan refugee camps in northern Pakistan. It could sustain casualties of 10,000 or more guerrillas a year for 20 years without any operational impact. Indeed, the Pashtun, who make up 100 percent of the Taliban, have a saying: “Kill one enemy, make 10.” Thus, the death in battle of a Pashtun guerrilla invokes an obligation of revenge among all his male relatives, making the killing of a Taliban guerrilla an act of insurgent multiplication, not subtraction. The Soviets learned this lesson as they killed nearly a million Pashtuns but only increased the number of Pashtun guerrillas by the end of the war. The

Taliban center of gravity is Mullah Omar, the charismatic cult leader, not teenage boys or mid-level commanders, and no amount of killing them will shut the insurgency down.

The priority of U.S. effort is still what the Taliban desires, on the so-called “kill/capture mission,” and the U.S. Army spends much of its time on battalion-sized sweep operations (e.g., Operations Mountain Thrust, Medusa, Red Wings, and Pil). Although few if any insurgencies have ever been won by killing insurgents, this remains the primary strategy. Indeed, media reporting of the conflict in 2006 indicates an increasing U.S. return to the success metric of body counts, a haunting and disturbing echo of the same failure in Vietnam. In short, the United States is losing the war in Afghanistan one Pashtun village at a time, bursting into schoolyards full of children with guns bristling, kicking in village doors, searching women, speeding down city streets, and putting out cross-cultural gibberish in totally ineffectual InfoOps and Psy-Ops campaigns—all of which are anathema to the Afghans.

Conclusion

Without a major change in counterinsurgency strategy and a major increase in manpower, equipment (particularly aviation assets), and especially reconstruction funding, the United States may lose this war. Today, the momentum—particularly in the counterinsurgency and the counternarcotics efforts—is running the wrong way. It is still possible to win—to create a slowly developing yet stable, conservative Islamic democracy in Afghanistan, one generally free of terrorism—but not with the current resources and tactics. The Taliban has numerous advantages, including comprehensive knowledge of the local culture, language, and tribal hierarchies of which U.S. forces are ignorant; a virtually inexhaustible supply of recruits and money; mountainous terrain that favors the insurgent; centuries of successful experience in guerrilla warfare against Western powers; patience; domination to the point of supremacy in Information Warfare, and perhaps most importantly, ready sanctuary in

much of northern Pakistan.

Major changes in the way the United States is doing business are needed immediately, but even with them, the United States cannot do it alone. It needs not just the energetic support of NATO, but a sustained commitment from NATO to the hard business of counterinsurgency, a type of warfare in which NATO has had little training and almost no experience. The UN, NGOs, and the donor nations must do more as well. And Afghanistan's northern and western neighbors must continue to avoid the urge to excessively meddle in Afghan affairs or risk a future of Islamist terrorism exported from Afghanistan.

But the key to success or failure in Afghanistan lies below its southern border, in northern Pakistan. As long as insurgents are virtually free to cross the border at will and Pakistani Frontier Corps elements aid and abet their movements, the insurgency cannot be shut down in Afghanistan. As the Soviets learned, the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan cannot be easily closed. Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf must stop trying to appear to be the ally of the United States in the war on terror while seeking to curry political favor with its worst proponents in the NWFP, Baluchistan, and the FATA. Thanks to ill-conceived Pakistani policies of encouragement and appeasement, fundamentalist Islam in the border region may now be too powerful to stop, but it's not too late to try. President Musharraf must assert national control there and act boldly to shut down the major insurgent movements across the border before the situation spirals completely out of control.

For its part, the United States must begin to fight smarter and stop following the Taliban playbook. A complete change in counterinsurgency strategy is required, and all U.S. soldiers must become cultural and language warriors with months, not minutes, of training in both language and culture before deployment. Quantum improvement is required in this area; already in 2004, Human Rights Watch had released a scathing report on the conduct of American military personnel and the Afghan National Police,⁴¹ which are an almost unmiti-

gated disaster of corruption, warlord cronyism, and incompetence.

Despite extreme poverty, a landmine-littered landscape, massive corruption, a fledgling government whose authority outside of Kabul is very limited, an ongoing insurgency, a shattered economy, booming opium production, and a host of other daunting problems, Afghanistan remains geostrategically vital. The United States cannot repeat its post-Soviet withdrawal abandonment of the country or fob the mission off on NATO, or the results will be disastrous once again. By abandoning Afghanistan once, the United States allowed the country to become a refuge for terrorist groups to recruit, train, and wage war against the West. The effect on Afghanistan, the region, and the rest of the world was dramatic and terrifying. This time, if we leave—or lose—the results will be even worse.

Notes

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3. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001), 85, 93.
4. Only three countries provided diplomatic recognition to the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan: Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the UAE.
5. Rashid, *Taliban*, 18–19; Michael Griffin, *Reaping the Whirlwind: Afghanistan, Al Qaeda and the Holy War* (London: Pluto Press, 2003), 70.
6. International Crisis Group, "Afghanistan: The Problem of Pashtun Alienation," *ICG Asia Report*, No. 62, Kabul/Brussels, Aug. 5, 2003, 17.
7. Other seminaries outside the border areas that were important foundations for the Taliban included ones in Karachi (Binori Town and Jamia Farooqia) and in Lahore (Jamia Ashrafia). Similarly, there were important seminaries in Peshawar, Akora Khattack, and Quetta, which all played a pivotal role in building up the Taliban movement. See Syed Saleem Shahzad, "How the Taliban Builds its Army," *Asia Times*, Aug. 27, 2003.
8. Ahmed Rashid, "The Taliban: Exporting Extremism," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 1999.

9. See Owen Bennett Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002); Barbara Metcalf, "The Madrassa at Deoband: A Model for Religious Education in Modern India," *Modern Asian Studies*, February 1978; and Usha Sanyal, "Generational Changes in the Leadership of the Ahl-e Sunnat Movement in North India during the Twentieth Century," *Modern Asian Studies*, July 1998.
10. Rashid, *Taliban*, 77, 83, 139.
11. See Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Oxford University Press, 1980, 2nd ed).
12. The competition and distrust between the Ghilzai and the Durrani played a major role in the split of the PDPA between the *Khalq* (People) faction, led by Taraki and representing Ghilzai Pashtuns and the *Parcham* (Banner) faction, led by Babrak Karmal and representing the Durrani Pashtun. See Henry S. Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985, 2nd ed.).
13. See Vanni Cappelli, "The Alienated Frontier: Why the United States Can't Get Osama bin Laden," *Orbis*, Fall 2005.
14. For a seminal treatment of the subject of charismatic leadership and political organizations, see Alfred de Grazia, *Political Behavior* (New York: Free Press, 1965), also published at www.grazian-archive.com.
15. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 480, 487, 491–2.
16. David B. Edwards, *Heroes of the Age: Moral Fault Lines on the Afghan Frontier* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).
17. Akbar S. Ahmed, *Resistance and Control in Pakistan* (London: Routledge, 1991). Also see Akbar S. Ahmed, *Religion and Politics in Muslim Society: Order and Conflict in Pakistan* (Cambridge University Press, 1983).
18. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*, translated by A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 358–59, 362.
19. The cloak of the Prophet Muhammad was folded and padlocked in a series of chests in a crypt in the royal mausoleum at Kandahar; "myth had it that the padlocks to the crypt could be opened only when touched by a true *Amir-ul Momineen*." Joseph A. Raelin, "The Myth of Charismatic Leaders," *T&D*, March 2003.
20. Rashid, *Taliban*.
21. Edwards, *Heroes of the Age*.
22. For current figures, see www.icasualties.org.
23. Griff Witte, "Afghans Confront Surge In Violence: Foreign Support Seen Behind Attacks That Mimic Those in Iraq," *Christian Science Monitor*, Nov. 28, 2005.
24. Ron Synovitz, "Afghanistan: Upsurge of Violence Reflects New Taliban Tactics," *Eurasia Insight*, May 26, 2006.
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27. Anne Gearan, "NATO adding troops in Afghanistan," AP, Sept. 21, 2006.
28. Griff Witte, "Suicide Bombers Kill Dozens in Afghanistan, Violence in South Is Seen as Message to NATO," *Washington Post Foreign Service*, Jan. 17, 2006. For a chronology of suicide bombings in Afghanistan, see www.rferl.org.
29. On Feb. 19, 2003, the U.S. government formally designated Hekmatyar as a "specially designated global terrorist," under which designation terrorists and terrorist-related institutions are subject to financial and other sanctions. See Kenneth Katzman, "Afghanistan: Post-Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy," CRS Report for Congress, Dec. 28, 2004.
30. See Vanni Cappelli, "Containing Pakistan: Engaging the *Raja-Mandala* in South-Central Asia," *Orbis*, Winter 2007.
31. See James D. Medler, "Afghan Heroin: Terrain, Tradition, and Turmoil," *Orbis*, Spring 2005.
32. Synovitz, "Afghanistan: Upsurge of Violence."
33. Eric Schmitt, "Springtime for Killing in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, May 28, 2006.
34. Rober Karniol, "Plugging the Gaps," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, Mar. 22, 2006.
35. Massoud Ansari and Colin Freeman, "Omar role in truce reinforces fears that Pakistan 'caved in' to Taliban," *Telegraph*, Sept. 9, 2006. Also see Tarique Niazi, "Pakistan's Peace Deal with Taliban Militants," *Terrorism Monitor*, Oct. 5, 2006.
36. Rashid, *Taliban*, 186.
37. Much of the analysis presented here is based on the authors' observations while in Afghanistan periodically over the years 2002–05. During 2005, Chris Mason served as the political officer for the PRT in Paktika.
38. The UN estimates the annual income of Afghanistan's opium industry at \$2.5 billion. The opium industry represents the largest source of income in Afghanistan. And the country produces 85 to 90 percent of the world's heroin. Quite simply, Afghanistan is a narco-state. See UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the Government of Afghanistan's Counter Narcotics Directorate, "Afghanistan Opium Survey, 2005," November 2005.
39. In November 2005, CBS News quoted a "senior U.S. drug enforcement official" at the U.S. Embassy in

Kabul as saying that he believed “90 percent of the district police chiefs in Afghanistan are either involved in the production of opium or protecting the trade in some way.”

40. See Robert Taber, *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac, 2002).

41. See HRW, “Enduring Freedom Abuses by U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, March 2004.

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Afghanistan Four Years On: An Assessment

by Sean M. Maloney

Parameters, Autumn 2005

The transformation of a traditional society could only be achieved extremely slowly, and certainly not by wrecking its existing structure and relationships. Even in the Soviet Union there had been the “great mistakes” of the 1920s and 1930s. As a Soviet official in Moscow was also reported as saying [in 1981], “If there is one country in the world where we would not like to try scientific socialism at this point in time, it is Afghanistan.”

—Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan* (2001)

In Spring 2004, *Parameters* published “Afghanistan: From Here to Eternity?” which explored the situation in Afghanistan in early 2003, or a little over one year after the Taliban regime was removed from power. The tone of the piece was guardedly pessimistic and in effect reminded readers that though there had been progress, the possibility remained that overenthusiastic and emotional responses by the international community in the follow-on phase of the campaign could scuttle that success. That article also laid out a number of challenges that would have to be addressed to avoid what the critics increasingly referred to as “another Vietnam.”

In 2005, the situation in Afghanistan has progressed to the point where guarded optimism is justified. Unfortunately, the perception of the situation on the ground has become distorted through the prism of American partisan politics, particularly during the run-up to the 2004 election. The focus of this rhetoric was and remains issues related to narcotics production and a number of spin-off arguments related to it. Afghanistan is apparently no longer looked at as

“another Vietnam”; now it is perhaps “another Colombia.”¹ Though the narcotics issue is critical to the future of Afghanistan, public discussion of it in American fora has overridden acknowledgment of other areas of success, areas which are in fact more important than any single issue and which will, in the long run, have a positive effect on counternarcotics operations in the region anyway. This article examines how the situation in Afghanistan has dramatically changed since 2003, and why. It will also suggest that there are new areas for concern which policymakers may wish to focus on beyond the currently salient narcotics problem.

Where Did We Stand in 2003?

Combined Forces Command Afghanistan or “CFC Alpha” (CFC-A) is the American-led Coalition headquarters for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Established in late 2003 to rationalize a convoluted command structure, CFC-A is now the focal point of the Coalition military effort. The situation in-country in July 2003, according to CFC-A, was characterized by these elements: a Coalition force with a counterterrorist focus; an enemy which had sanctuary in Afghanistan conducting operations against Coalition forces; a neutral population; an Afghan National Army that was in training; only four Provincial Reconstruction Teams; and minimal support from Pakistan. There was no constitution, no political process, and minimal sovereignty was exercised by Afghanistan.²

With the exception of the overly simplified portrayal of the enemy forces, these points were generally accurate,³ but they require some elaboration. In 2003, the primary problem was the embryonic nature of the interim and transitional Afghan governments and the possibility that fragile structure could be destabilized and toppled before it could get to work. Connected to this was the questionable legitimacy of the government’s leader, President Hamid Karzai. On the ground, Karzai was variously portrayed as a pawn of the United States or in the pocket of southern anti-Taliban fighters of Pashtun ethnicity, or implicitly controlled by the Northern Alliance. The Northern Alliance exerted explicit

control over Kabul and the associated political processes by dint of its 27,000-man military contingent based in the city and its environs. There was no countervailing federal governmental coercive power in Kabul, let alone throughout the rest of the country. This power was in the hands of local leaders, anti-Taliban chieftains which the media pejoratively labeled “warlords.” Remnants of the Taliban, supported by the remnants of al-Qaeda’s military forces, were by this time in the process of transitioning from a conventional guerrilla war to a low-level terrorist campaign, and the possibility of a return to the destructive post-Soviet era infighting between the chieftains existed in numerous locations, including Kabul. The Afghan population outside of the Pashtun areas was, in the main, not openly hostile toward the international forces, but it generally was not overtly supportive either except in certain cases.⁴

International forces in Afghanistan at that time included the 18,000 members of the American-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and the 4,500-strong European-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). OEF was evolving into a mature counterinsurgency force, operating mostly in the southeast and eastern parts of Afghanistan, while ISAF was confined to Kabul. ISAF had a muddled mandate and, without the resources to carry it out, functioned as a nearly symbolic European presence in Kabul, a green-uniformed island in a tan-uniformed sea. A pilot program intended to coordinate OEF efforts with those of the provincial chieftains and the embryonic Afghan National Army, called the Joint Regional Teams, was established in Gardez by mid-2003 (in time, the Joint Regional Teams were renamed Provincial Reconstruction Teams, or PRTs).

The Afghan National Army program was, at the time, convoluted, and little progress had been made because of the inability of ISAF to support the task effectively and the reticence of OEF to take it over completely pending clarification of the responsibilities of both forces vis-à-vis the emerging transitional government. Infrastructure damage after 25 years of war was another impediment to extending federal government control over the provinces. Nongovern-

mental organizations (NGOs) were intimidated in insurgency areas, which had a spill-over effect in secured areas: the insurgents targeted NGOs in the southeast knowing that the organizations would pull out of the whole country if enough casualties were taken by aid workers. OEF operations against the insurgents were complicated by the sensitive matter of Pakistani territorial sovereignty and the volatile political scene in that country.⁵

In sum, the Afghan transitional government had questionable legitimacy among the people (though not necessarily on the international scene), it was subject to coercion by better-armed entities, and it was dependent on international forces in every way. Without security, there can be no reconstruction, and with no reconstruction, there would be no nation-building, thus leaving Afghanistan susceptible to continued instability and penetration by international terrorism. On the plus side, the insurgency was forced by OEF operations to alter its methodology, which in turn made insurgent operations less effective. There were clear indicators that the Afghan population did not and would not support the continuation of Taliban influence (and consequently al-Qaeda) in the country.

The Situation in 2004–05

There are, essentially, three enemy forces operating against the Afghan government and its Coalition partners. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizbi Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) organization, still seeking to influence the brokerage of power in Kabul, operates from areas east of the city and still mounts usually ineffective attacks on ISAF, OEF, and Afghan National Army forces in the capital. Taliban military formations have been completely reduced by OEF operating methods and appear to have shifted from guerrilla warfare to pinprick terrorist attacks, usually in ethnically Pashtun areas in the southeast. Al-Qaeda provides training and equipment to both HIG and the Taliban. Additionally, al-Qaeda mounts its own limited raids on Coalition forces located on the border with Pakistan. These raids appear to employ the well-equipped remnants of al-Qaeda's "conventional" formations which

worked with the Taliban prior to 2001. Unlike HIG and al-Qaeda, the Taliban are still trying to create a parallel government to garner popular support in Pashtun areas with the aim of retaking the country. At this point, the synergy of HIG, the Taliban, and al-Qaeda has been unable to significantly influence the direction that the Afghan people are taking under the Karzai government.⁶

The importance of Karzai's election in this milieu cannot be underestimated. It is a truism that government legitimacy and the support of the population are absolutely critical in the fight against guerrilla and terrorist organizations. By most indications, this has been achieved for the time being in Afghanistan. The elections were fair and carefully monitored: the voter turnout, more than 80 percent, should put the citizens of the United States and Canada to shame with regard to their respective voter turnouts during elections in 2004. Attempts by enemy forces to use terrorism to interfere with the Afghan election process were crushed before they could bear fruit, particularly in Kabul, where ISAF and OEF forces operated together with Afghan police and military forces in a coordinated fashion.⁷

The success in containing the insurgency and suppressing other elements posing challenges to the Afghan reconstruction effort is attributable to several "moving parts," all of which are interdependent. First, the American-led Coalition, OEF, is the repository of mobile striking power in Afghanistan. In the past, OEF special operations forces used direct action against high-value targets and worked closely with various chieftains' militia forces while airmobile light infantry was brought in to hit concentrations of enemy fighters and sweep support areas. Most OEF operations were conducted in the eastern part of the country. This approach has, in some ways, changed. A prototype regional team concept, established in 2003, deployed a small coordination cell to Gardez to assist with information collection, limited civic action, and NGO coordination in conjunction with the local militia force commanders. These regional teams were originally in support of the sweep and raid operations conducted by the airmobile and special operations forces, and were renamed Joint Regional

Teams. Each was expanded in numbers and capability to encompass broader reconstruction coordination and security tasks, and they were then again renamed as Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). By late 2004, the emphasis on mobile sweep and raid operations in the east shifted to supporting the 18 PRTs, which were located in every significant populated area in the country. In addition, each concentration of PRTs required a Forward Support Base with helicopters, medical resources, and reaction forces. The effects of establishing a PRT and Forward Support Base network throughout Afghanistan, however rudimentary in the early days, provided a firm basis to extend Afghan government influence once the nature of that influence could be determined.⁸

The main cog here was the development and expansion of the Afghan National Army (ANA), the second “moving part.” By late 2003, the ANA support process from the international community had become much more rational. ISAF (pre-2003) had dropped the ball in the training scheme and it was picked up by OEF, but the direction taken in the design of the Afghan National Army was initially haphazard and impeded by the chieftains in Kabul and their militia forces. In time, high-quality instruction provided by American, Canadian, and British Embedded Training Teams established a significant confidence level in the fledgling Afghan Ministry of Defence and, most important, in its fighting units. The Afghan National Army expanded from three experimental “kandaks” (battalion-equivalents) toward a goal of 26. With an expanded ANA, the Afghan government has forged a power-projection tool to take advantage of the expanded Coalition presence throughout the country. ANA garrisons now exist in most urban areas. The development of the ANA, however, is still very much a work in progress.⁹

The third “moving part” was the ISAF in Kabul. ISAF in its pre-NATO configuration had a vague but potentially competing mandate with OEF and possessed virtually no resources or firepower to provide significant influence in the city of Kabul, its designated area of operations.¹⁰ The NATO summit in Istanbul in 2003 and the acceptance by NATO of ISAF command dramatically

altered this state of affairs.¹¹ Under Canadian influence, the vague ISAF mandate evolved to a statement specifically supporting the interim government and establishing security in Kabul. This depended on an improved ANA capability to offset the military capabilities of at least two heavily armed chieftains who controlled the city and its security forces, which in turn had a countervailing influence on the Afghan political process. ISAF's area of operations was expanded to encompass the entire province of Kabul, not just the city, and coordination between ISAF and OEF was improved, particularly in the special operations realm. ISAF was able to keep an eye on potential problem factions, assist in the hunt for HIG and al-Qaeda-trained infiltrations, and facilitate a wide variety of local projects which synergistically assisted the security efforts by building trust with the population.¹²

Yet another “moving part” is the institution-building and coordination efforts between OEF, ISAF, the Afghan Ministry of Defence, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), and police forces in Kabul. Proceeding simultaneously with the OEF effort in the field, ISAF in Kabul, and the ANA training activities, experienced Afghan military and security leaders were asked to provide their leadership to the central government. This was no easy task, as some had fought each other in previous years. Consensus-building, however, has had some success, and the mentoring programs provided by private military corporations like MPRI have professionalized in some respects the bureaucratic mechanisms needed to handle national army and security forces and have assisted in their coordination with OEF and ISAF. All of this had to be done without generating the perception that the result was being imposed from the outside by foreign entities.

OEF takes on the organized insurgents, while ISAF assists with security of the capital. PRT expansion provides bases for the extension of central government power into the outlying areas. These ambitious programs did not proceed without challenges. Clearly, the primary antagonists, all supported by al-Qaeda, continued in their efforts to disrupt and derail in a broad sense the direction being taken by the

Karzai government. The real nub, however, are the chieftains and their militia forces. How, exactly, can a central government be established and its power expanded without a return to the bad old days of 1993-1996? Can a civil war be prevented?

A simplistic analysis would have us believe that the main encumbrances to stability and peace in Afghanistan are “the drug-fueled warlords” and that there aren’t enough American troops on the ground in Afghanistan to confront them because of operations in Iraq.¹³ Such politically motivated critiques ignore the historical realities of Afghanistan, however, specifically that a large infusion of outside forces would place us in the same position that the Soviets found themselves in during the 1980s. They also are a slap in the face to those Afghan commanders and soldiers loyal to the Afghan government who have engaged in combat against those seeking to topple it. A large infusion of Western soldiery is not necessary; indeed, less is more, when handled adeptly. Having limited resources demands that subtlety and thought be employed rather than brute force. Brute-force solutions will not work in Afghanistan.¹⁴

The necessary subtlety is currently employed through the “chess game,” a coordinated effort using a variety of tools to incrementally lessen the power that regional chieftains have and supplant it with central government influence while at the same time avoiding fighting.¹⁵ Essentially, these are influence tools of differing coerciveness. The “chess game” would be impossible without the high-end coercive resources that OEF and ISAF bring to bear, but that factor is in the background and builds on the psychology of OEF’s four-year firepower demonstration against the Taliban, plus the overall goodwill engendered by the special operations forces, civil affairs teams in the provinces, and ISAF operations in Kabul. Other mechanisms wielded in the “chess game” include the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program; the Heavy Weapons Cantonment (HWC) program; “soft entry” deployments of the Afghan National Army; the proliferation of a variety of police forces to a region; and the “lateral promotion” of recalcitrant militia leaders.

Broadly speaking, the DDR program is used to demobilize personnel, while HWC cantons heavy weapons from machine guns to tanks and artillery. They are separately funded programs with different lines of control.¹⁶ DDR is now used as a verb: to “DDR” a militia formation is to incrementally demobilize it and canton the weapons. DDR may be employed bluntly as a threat, while at the same time DDR is an ongoing process throughout the country.

On the police front, militia forces under chieftain command previously provided security of all types in an unsystematic fashion. Now, border police, highway patrol police, and municipal police, all trained in Kabul, are incrementally introduced to professionalize and systematize the application of law at the local level. To a certain extent, law and order remains relative, but the concept behind an incremental transfer of power applies. The method of establishing a small Afghan National Army garrison, building it up slowly, and having its personnel develop relationships with militia forces provides yet another mechanism for progress.¹⁷

Militia forces are leadership-dependent. The main issue in this regard is one of “face.” The outright removal of an uncooperative chieftain is too abrupt and, in any event, if he no longer has a stake in the reconstruction process because he is out of power, then why should he and his remaining followers not take to the hills? Instead, chieftains have been brought into the central government in all manner of portfolios and assigned staffs to mentor them in governance. Second-tier militia leaders are promoted to become police commanders—but in another province, with other forces funded by Kabul. Rather than taking a moralistic Western stance and labeling them all drug dealers and war criminals and then demanding Nuremberg-like trials, it has proven to be far better to assume everybody is “dirty” after 25 years of war and to start anew. Yes, some militia leaders will remain dirty, and mechanisms will have to be found to deal with that. However, the avoidance of civil war and a resurgence of Taliban influence is the objective, not show trials using Western laws or our version of international law.

It is critical to emphasize that this “chess

game” is not something imposed from the outside: it is a coordinated effort between the Karzai government and the international entities operating in Afghanistan. Indeed, the United Nations, NATO, Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the prolific number of American agencies working there are cooperating in various degrees in this direction and with varying levels of effectiveness. It would be easy to label this a “CIA plot” if it were not so transparent and multifaceted. It is clear to objective observers that President Karzai is not a pawn in the game.¹⁸

It would be foolish to argue that this “chess game” works perfectly. Indeed, the modeling of third- and fourth-order effects is not up to speed, and there can be unintended consequences when the relationships between certain key personalities are not taken into account.

The situation in Herat in the summer and fall of 2004 was a test case for the “chess game.” Ismail Kahn was a popular but recalcitrant chieftain who had in fact employed substantial revenues generated by cross-border trade with Iran to beautify Herat and its environs, but his militia commanders were not really interested in going along with the central government’s plans for power-sharing. Over time, the militia forces were incrementally “DDR’d” to the point that they were unable to offer serious resistance when Kabul ordered two Afghan National Army battalions into the area. Despite a small firefight, the national army forces were able to convince local militia forces to back off. Factions in Ismail Khan’s forces then attacked each other. Khan was “laterally promoted” to a post in Kabul. The confidence level built up after the Herat affair permitted the Karzai government to conduct a similar action with Fahim Khan’s militia forces in Kabul, which in turn neutralized a significant coercive force in the capital. As a consequence of such effective actions, the fall elections of 2004 were conducted in an atmosphere nearly devoid of Taliban, HIG, or militia coercion.¹⁹

New Challenges

The main supporting effort of the “chess game” mechanism will be police and judicial reform. In time, the incremental deployments of

central government people to the outer reaches of Afghanistan will have to be backed up with a functioning legal system. Italy is in charge of assisting the Afghan government in this area. Though Italy brings to bear substantial experience in combating organized crime, the reform process has been slow and cultural differences are significant. The same can be said of police training. Germany is the lead nation in this regard, and for reasons most likely related to the Afghan budget, progress is slower than anticipated. At some point, it will no longer be desirable for the Afghan government and Coalition entities to continue to use military force to police the country.

This takes us to the narcotics problem. The assumption among some international entities operating in support of the Afghan government in 2004 suggests that the removal of chieftains engaged in narcotics cultivation and trafficking via the “chess game” may have two effects. It may result, in the worst case, in better networking under the guise of legitimate government activity. Second, the removal of the prominent leadership will devolve power to second-, third-, and even fourth-tier local personnel engaged in narcotics production, trafficking, and protection. By no means are all of these personnel former militia force personnel, which complicates attempts to identify and deal with them. Though this works to the advantage of the Afghan government in that the traffickers’ ability to organize a “narco-insurgency” is severely reduced, the lack of police and judicial capacity means that Kabul cannot yet target these dispersed, low-level groups. Similarly, an anti-corruption force will have to be formed to police the chieftains and others in the government to ensure that they remain uninvolved in narcotics production and distribution. In effect, Afghanistan will become like every other nation trying to take on organized crime (and not a Colombia-like narco-insurgency), but only if the right tools are forged and brought to bear.

Two other extremely important aspects of extending government influence to the provinces are sometimes overlooked in military assessments. These are the lack of roads and other infrastructure, coupled with the extremely high

illiteracy rate. How does one provide anti-narcotics information to a nearly illiterate population? How does one deploy police and a legal system when the roads do not facilitate vehicular traffic? The deployment of PRTs, be they NATO or OEF, will assist in collecting information as much as they will assist in the local and provincial coordination effort, but how will Afghanistan “balance its books” in the reconstruction effort? And what priorities will be assigned? Politically motivated criticism in the Western media can interfere with the assessment and establishment of priorities. Demands by Western politicians and their mouthpieces for a huge and expensive counternarcotics force could divert the Afghan leadership’s attention from what they rightly view as their own established reconstruction priorities.

The seemingly constant demand by critics that more and more international troops need to be deployed to Afghanistan was addressed earlier. However, the PRT expansion program, whereby NATO members have in principle agreed to accept lead-nation status for several former American OEF-run PRTs, has stalled out because of a lack of contributors.²⁰ The PRTs and their associated Forward Support Bases are supposed to be manned by approximately 5,000 personnel (100 per PRT, and 400 to 500 per FSB), yet NATO member nations can’t seem to come up with the additional personnel to meet this requirement. The reason is principally attributable to the stultifying eurobureaucracy, but there also are serious problems in how ISAF is commanded as it expands to the provinces.

In 2004, the Eurocorps took command of ISAF, while the Franco-German Brigade was placed in command of ISAF’s Kabul Multinational Brigade. The relationship between the two French-led or dominated NATO headquarters with Combined Forces Command Afghanistan and certain American, British, and Canadian nations contributing forces to ISAF can be described in polite terms only as dysfunctional. The infighting, kept to a minimum under Canadian command last year but now detrimental to ISAF’s effectiveness, has reached the point where a new command concept should be considered. Steps were taken to conceptualize a

NATO “Afghanistan Force” that would command both CFC-A and ISAF, but the lasting problem over the international command of American forces will prevent significant and effective movement in this direction for the time being.²¹ As usual, the demand by the French to command the planned NATO force grates on the sensitivities of other NATO members. The only entities to benefit from these fractures are France and al-Qaeda.

An Afghanistan Force option was rejected by NATO in spring 2005. As it stands, the phased replacement of OEF PRTs with NATO PRTs will result in the transfer of some American-led PRTs to NATO command. Special operations forces engaged in the hunt for high-value targets will continue to operate in the region. The command relationship between those forces and the new, expanded ISAF is currently under discussion. In effect, ISAF will absorb elements of OEF, not replace them. SHAPE planners are, as of summer 2005, developing a campaign plan for the entire country. The problem of who will conduct the “robust” portions of that plan and what national restrictions will be placed on those forces will remain the main issues.

Another emerging challenge is the demands by international legal personalities for Balkans-style war crimes trials in Afghanistan.²² These demands appear to be rooted in simplistic notions that one size fits all when it comes to international law (other motives, like personal ambition and job security, cannot be ruled out). Afghanistan is not Bosnia, nor is it Kosovo. The Balkan wars were comparatively short in duration and had identifiable protagonists who could be singled out as instigators of mass crimes against humanity. Afghanistan, on the other hand, has had 25 years of war. The existing polity includes people who fought on both sides during the Soviet era but against the Taliban in more recent years. Milosevic-style indictments will not work in Afghanistan, where almost everybody may be guilty of violating some Western-based law. Indeed, if we are to have war crimes trials for Afghanistan, one should first call to the dock Soviet military and political leaders for acts of genocide, followed by every Soviet soldier who fought there, before moving on to

any current Afghan leader or American soldier. A South African-style Truth and Reconciliation Commission would be the better tool. Afghanistan needs reconciliation, not a reprise of Nuremberg.

A disturbing trend is the belief among some in OEF that the Coalition is barely breaking even in the information war. Recent events in Jalalabad, where 15 people were killed during rioting over the alleged mistreatment of the Koran at Camp Delta in Cuba, coupled with the persistent ongoing hunt for another Abu Ghraib by media outlets, will require deft handling. We can assume the Jalalabad riots were externally stimulated, but if it can happen in Jalalabad, it could happen elsewhere. The best response is an effective and integrated Afghan response, not the imposition of OEF or ISAF troops to put down these information-warfare events. The Coalition, working closely with Afghan authorities, must become better at countering the more salacious allegations by media sources rather than remaining mute in an effort to ride them out.

Similarly, concerns within the intelligence community of the "migration" of tactics used in Iraq to Afghanistan are very real: in May 2005, a mosque in Kandahar was attacked with a significant death toll. In July, captured Afghan police were beheaded by insurgents, while a car bomb was used against the PRT in Kandahar. This new emphasis on mass civilian targets and gruesome terrorism against police indicate that while there has been success in countering the insurgency, there are still those who seek political change through violence. The best response, however, is an Afghan response.

Conclusion

There are grounds for optimism vis-à-vis the future of Afghanistan. As with any complex mechanism, however, the finer components may be damaged with wear and tear, not all the gears will mesh when we want them to, and the casing will be dropped from a great height time and again. There is an argument to be made in the age of information operations that the simplistic metrics applied by the media and those seeking to make political fodder out of Afghanistan will

always leave us with a perception that the country is on the brink of failure. The lack of historical context to these arguments, the ignorance of the effects of the high level of damage caused by 25 years of war, an underestimation of what the Afghan people are capable of, and the ruthless hunt for apparent failure will obscure the realities and complexities of reconstruction in this vast and diverse country.

Operation Enduring Freedom and the International Security Assistance Force continue to be critical instruments in buying the Afghan government time for security sector reform. NATO members, however, must live up to the high expectations they established in Istanbul.

Thus far, the path to reconstruction, though rocky, has been navigable, but not every hairpin turn can be anticipated, and there are still bandits on the road. The country we are dealing with is not Vietnam, not Colombia, nor is it Bosnia. It is Afghanistan, and it needs to be seen in its own light.

Notes

1. See for example T. Christian Miller, "Post-Invasion Chaos Blamed for Drug Surge," *Los Angeles Times*, 4 October 2004; Robert Novak, "Lost in Afghanistan," 31 May 2004, <http://www.townhall.com/columnists/robertnovak/rn20040531.shtml>; Seymour Hersh, "The Other War," *The New Yorker*, 12 April 2004, http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040412fa_fact;JohnKerry.com, "Afghanistan," http://www.johnkerry.com/issues/national_security/asia.htm; Barnett R. Rubin, "Road to Ruin: Afghanistan's Booming Opium Industry," Center for American Progress, 7 October 2004.
2. Combined Forces Command Afghanistan briefing to the author, Kabul, Afghanistan, 1 December 2004. Hereinafter "CFC-A briefing."
3. The OEF operations conducted in 2003 were not strictly counterterrorist in nature. The enemy employed a variety of structures and methods which included terrorism, and OEF forces responded with a full range of synchronized activities to go after al-Qaeda international terrorist remnants, al-Qaeda light infantry formation remnants, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's organization, and Taliban insurgents who used terrorism, ambushes, and rocket attacks. From 2003 to 2005, enemy forces have operated from both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

4. These were the author's observations on a research visit to Afghanistan in 2003.

5. OEF briefing to the author, 5 March 2003, Bagram, Afghanistan.

6. CFC-A briefing.

7. Confidential interviews.

8. CFC-A briefing.

9. Interview with General Zahir Azemi, Kabul, Afghanistan, 9 December 2004; Embedded Training Team briefing to the author, Kabul, Afghanistan, 12 December 2004.

10. "The International Security Assistance Force: The Origins," *Canadian Military Journal*, 4 (Summer 2003).

11. NATO, "Istanbul Summit Communiqué, 28 June 2004, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-096e.htm>; NATO, "NATO Update: NATO Expands Presence in Afghanistan," 29 June 2004, <http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2004/06-June/e0629a.htm>.

12. ISAF Headquarters briefing to the author, Kabul, Afghanistan, 28 November 2004. Hereinafter "ISAF HQ briefing."

13. One example among many is Hersh, "The Other War," and the sort of "Monday morning quarterbacking" that Richard Clarke engages in.

14. Which was, of course, one of the lessons of Vietnam. It is truly bizarre to see those critical of today's American effort in Afghanistan demand that

more troops and more force be used in Afghanistan when some are the same ones who criticized the high levels of American force used in Vietnam.

15. My assessment of the "chess game" is based on personal observations and a wide variety of interviews conducted while on a research visit to Afghanistan in 2004.

16. ISAF HQ briefing.

17. I observed this process in Konduz province courtesy of the German ISAF contingent during November-December 2004.

18. Confidential interviews with personnel with access to the ambassadorial level of activity in Kabul.

19. Azemi interview; confidential interviews.

20. ISAF HQ briefing.

21. CFC-A briefing; confidential interviews.

22. BBC News, "Afghan Report Demands War Justice." 29 January 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4218775.stm.

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Part X
Iraq





Assessing Iraq's Sunni Arab Insurgency

by Michael Eisenstadt and Jeffrey White

Military Review, May-June 2006

Three years after the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the fall of Saddam Hussein, confusion and controversy still surround the insurgency in Iraq's Sunni Triangle. Part of this is due to the nontraditional character of the Sunni Arab insurgency, which is being waged by amorphous, locally and regionally based groups and networks lacking a unifying ideology, central leadership, or clear hierarchical organization.¹

The ambiguities inherent in insurgent warfare also make insurgencies difficult to assess. In conventional military conflicts, we can compare opposing orders of battle, evaluate capabilities, and assess the fortunes of belligerents using traditional measures: destruction of enemy forces, capture of key terrain, or seizure of the enemy's capital city.

Insurgents are often not organized into regular formations, making it difficult (even for their own leaders) to assess their numerical strength accurately. Usually, there are no front lines whose location could offer insight into the war's progress, and, at any rate, military factors are usually less important than political and psychological considerations in deciding the outcome of such conflicts. As a result, we need different analytic measures to assess the insurgency's nature, scope, intensity, and effectiveness.²

The Insurgency's Origins and Nature

Assumptions about the roots and origins of the Sunni Arab insurgency color assessments of its nature and character. Analysts and officials who believe that Saddam Hussein anticipated

his defeat and planned the insurgency before the invasion of Iraq tend to downplay the complex array of factors that influenced its origin and development. No evidence exists that Saddam planned to lead a postwar resistance movement or that he played a significant role in the insurgency's emergence. However, prewar preparations for waging a popular war against invading Coalition forces in southern Iraq, or for dealing with a coup or uprising, almost certainly abetted the insurgency's emergence following the regime's fall. The first insurgents were also able to draw on relationships, networks, and structures inherited from the old regime, which helps account for the rather rapid onset of the insurgency in the summer of 2003.³

U.S. officials have also differed over the nature of the violence in post-Saddam Iraq, with some seeing it largely as the work of former regime "dead enders," and others seeing it as a multifaceted insurgency against the emerging Iraqi political order.⁴ Part of the confusion stems from the fact that Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) face a composite insurgency whose elements act on diverse motives. These elements include former regime members and Iraqi Islamists, angry or aggrieved Iraqis, foreign jihadists, tribal groups, and criminal elements, each of which draws considerable strength from political and religious ideologies, tribal notions of honor and revenge, and shared solidarities deeply ingrained in the population of the Sunni Triangle.

Among the factors driving the insurgency are—

- ◆ The humiliation engendered by the Coalition military victory and occupation.

- ◆ The sense of entitlement felt by many Sunni Arabs who consider themselves the rightful rulers of Iraq.

- ◆ Anxiety over the growing power of Shiite and Kurdish parties and militias.

- ◆ The fear that Sunni Arabs (some 20 percent of Iraq's population) will be politically and economically marginalized in a democratic Iraq.

- ◆ A potent brand of Iraqi-Arab nationalism that is deeply ingrained in many Sunni Arabs.

- ◆ The popularity of political Islam among

sectors of the Sunni population.

- ◆ A desire to gain power—as individuals, as members of a dispossessed elite, or as a community.

Some senior civilian and military officials, at least early on, failed to grasp the protracted nature of insurgency and counterinsurgency warfare. On several occasions (after the December 2003 capture of Saddam, the June 2004 transfer of authority, and the January 2005 elections), a number of officials expressed confidence that these events presaged an early end to the insurgency. In each case, their hopes were dashed by subsequent events. Such expectations were unrealistic and ran counter to the weight of historical experience.

Insurgencies are often bloody, drawn-out affairs that last for years, frequently for a decade or more.⁵ This occurs for several reasons:

- ◆ Insurgents must act with great caution to avoid being killed or captured by government forces. Even basic tasks take longer to accomplish than they would in a permissive environment.

- ◆ It takes time to win over civilians (who tend to remain neutral until one side clearly has the upper hand) and to create new institutions of governance in areas under insurgent control.

- ◆ The insurgent and counterinsurgent are locked in a struggle to disrupt and undermine the other's activities; progress, for both sides, frequently suffers setbacks and reverses.

- ◆ Insurgents often see time as an ally in their efforts to clandestinely mobilize and organize the population and to build up their military strength; they consider patience a virtue.

- ◆ Insurgents often start off militarily weak and generally avoid engaging government forces decisively until they feel confident of success.

The Sunni Arab insurgency in post-Saddam Iraq, however, has departed from the typical pattern in at least four important ways:

- ◆ The insurgents were able to "fall in" on existing structures in Iraqi society—the tribe, religious institutions, and the underground Baath Party—to quickly organize and begin operations.

- ◆ Because of insufficient Coalition intelli-

gence and forces, the insurgents were relatively unfettered from the outset, allowing the insurgency to gather momentum quickly.

- ◆ The insurgents were well armed because the former regime armed its supporters before the war, many soldiers took their weapons with them when the army went home, and postwar looters cleaned out the regime's weapons stores.

- ◆ The insurgents were well financed from the start, using former regime funds and looted monies.

These factors put Coalition forces and the new Iraqi Government at an initial disadvantage, making it more than likely that the struggle in Iraq would be prolonged and difficult.

The Scope of the Insurgency

Because insurgencies are complex, dynamic, adaptive systems, an assessment of the Sunni Arab insurgency should employ both quantitative and qualitative measures and must examine multiple dimensions over time, including the insurgency's operational environment; its structures, processes, and functions; and the degree to which it has penetrated public and private institutions in the Sunni Triangle and won over Sunni hearts and minds.

The insurgency is occurring in a complex and evolving human and geographic "landscape" which it influences and to which it responds. Demographic, social, geographic, religious, and economic factors are key elements of this operational environment.

Demography and insurgent strength. Although numbers might not indicate the insurgents' prospects for success, they might suggest the amount of popular support the insurgents enjoy, the effectiveness of their recruitment and mobilization efforts, their capacity for action, and the efficacy of Coalition and Iraqi Government countermeasures. Estimates of insurgent strength should include combatants (guerrillas and terrorists who are currently active or available for future operations) and members of the insurgent underground involved in recruiting, training, financing, propagandizing, and conducting political activities in support of the insurgency.⁶

We can assess the insurgency's mobilization potential by looking at Iraq's male Sunni Arab population.

In a total population of about 27 million, 5.4 million are Sunni Arab, with 1.35 million Sunni men of military age (for our purposes, 15 to 49). This is the theoretical mobilization potential of the Sunni Arab community.⁷

Central Command General John Abizaid has stated that the number of Iraqis participating in the insurgency amounts to less than 0.1 percent of the country's population, and most likely does not exceed 20,000 (fighters plus members of the underground).⁸ Historically, insurgent movements have generally mobilized some 0.5 percent to 2 percent of the population.⁹ If insurgents make up less than 0.1 percent of the total population (and given the scope and intensity of the insurgency, this figure might be low), the Sunni Arab insurgency would be among the smallest, percentage wise, in modern times.

Even doubling or tripling this estimate would yield a relatively small insurgency by historical standards, which probably explains why Sunni Arab insurgent groups seem never to lack for manpower or to have problems recouping their losses.¹⁰ Employing only a small fraction of their potential mobilization base means the insurgents have no difficulty recruiting or impressing new members to replace combat losses. Because these groups are organized into compartmentalized cells and networks that recruit locally by drawing on various social solidarities, they are well adapted to replacing losses, though not to the generation of large field forces. Large forces might not be necessary, however, if the insurgents hope to prevail by winning over or intimidating the civilian population, disrupting ISF recruitment, and undermining the U.S. will to fight, rather than by defeating U.S. forces in combat—as seems to be the case in Iraq.

There are probably hundreds of thousands of Sunni Arab males with intelligence and security, military, or paramilitary training who are prime candidates for recruitment by the insurgency. Furthermore, the number of Sunni Arab males with a strong sense of grievance (the result of losing a family member or being humiliated,

mistreated, or wrongly detained by Coalition or Iraqi Government forces) is probably in the high tens of thousands, at the least. This group of “angry Iraqis” provides another source of potential recruits.

Sunni Arab insurgents swim in a largely sympathetic sea, with opinion polls suggesting that broad sectors of the Sunni Arab population support insurgent attacks on Coalition forces. Still, many Sunnis are skeptical of the insurgency’s prospects and oppose the use of force for political ends.¹¹ Terrorist-type attacks on Sunni targets are also creating disenchantment with the insurgency’s extremist elements, such as al-Qaeda in Iraq, and Sunni Arab participation in the October 2005 constitutional referendum and the December 2005 elections indicates that many Sunnis see some positive potential in the political process.

Overall, Sunnis have not stopped supporting the insurgency, especially that part engaged in what is widely considered in Iraq as resistance to occupation. Thus, it is likely that armed Sunni insurgents number in the thousands, that unarmed members of the insurgent underground number in the tens of thousands, and that the insurgents can draw on a large pool of sympathizers, as well as associates, friends, family members, and fellow clan members and tribesmen. The minimum number of Sunni Arabs “involved” with the insurgency in one way or another likely approaches 100,000 (and might be much higher), although the number might fluctuate in response to changing political, military, economic, and social conditions.¹²

The insurgency has probably mobilized only a fraction of the Sunni population that supports attacks on Coalition forces or has some kind of military or paramilitary training. Should insurgent groups exploit this untapped demographic potential more effectively, insurgent violence could further intensify.

Social solidarities. The Sunni insurgency draws on personal and kinship ties, shared military experiences, membership in former regime organizations, attendance at insurgent-associated mosques, business relationships, and other connections. These relationships bind insurgents and their supporters in complex ways.

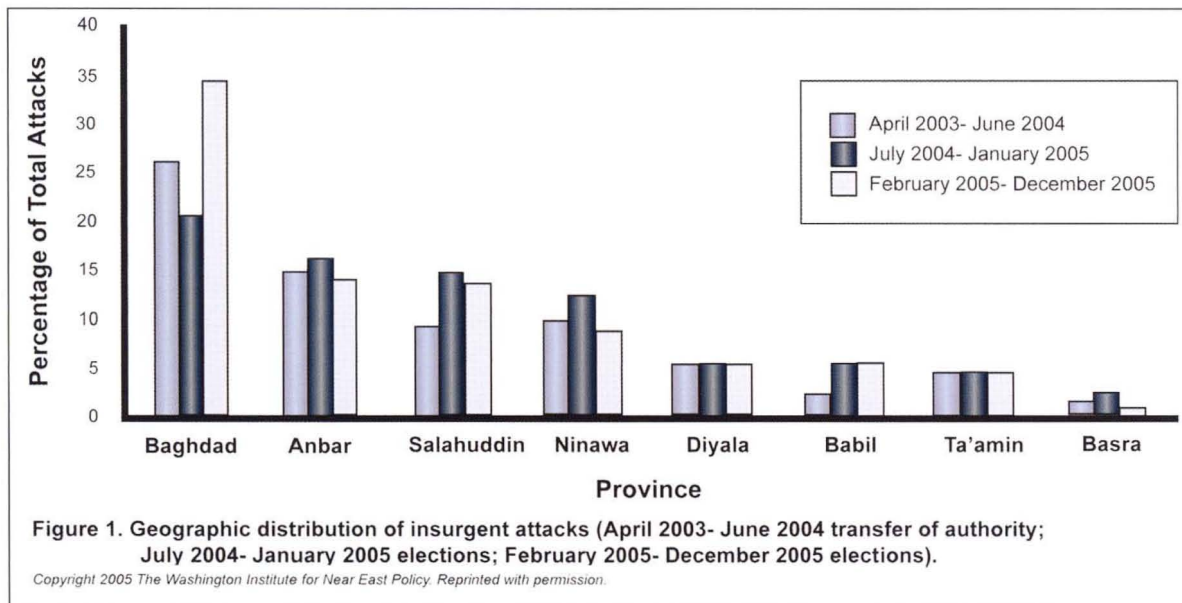
They overlap and reinforce one another, producing cells and networks founded on multiple associations, and they contribute to the flexibility and resilience of insurgent organizations. They also provide the basis for recruiting, establishing bonds of trust, and fostering cooperation among widely dispersed and ideologically disparate groups.

Geography. Insurgent activity is closely tied to Iraq’s human and physical geography and follows the dominant pattern of urban settlement along those segments of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers that run through the Sunni triangle. There are also multiple corridors or zones of resistance: Baghdad-Fallujah-Ramadi; Tikrit-Baquba; North-ern Babil province (the so-called Triangle of Death); and the Euphrates River Valley from Husbaya on the Syrian border to Ramadi.¹³

Insurgent cells and networks tend to be concentrated in neighborhoods, villages, and towns that are home to large numbers of ex-Baathists and former regime military and security personnel; in areas where unemployment is rampant; in neighborhoods, villages, and towns associated with certain tribes; and in the vicinity of certain mosques used by insurgents as weapons depots, recruiting centers, and meeting places.

Insurgent armed action in Iraq has been persistent and pervasive. Areas that experienced insurgent activity in 2003 generally continue to do so today, albeit at reduced levels in some important places (such as Fallujah, Mosul, Tal Afar). Some 75 percent of insurgent violence occurs in the four governorates comprising the Sunni triangle (al-Anbar, Salahuddin, Ninawa, and Baghdad), although significant insurgent activity also occurs in Diyala, Babil, and Ta’amim governorates.¹⁴ By these measures, the insurgency remains widespread in Sunni areas and in areas where Sunnis are a significant presence (figure 1).¹⁵

Although a plurality of reported incidents—between 20 and 35 percent—occur in Baghdad, most U.S. troops killed in action (KIA) have fallen in Anbar province (figure 2). This likely reflects the intensity of engagements there, especially Fallujah I and II during April and November 2004, the prolonged struggle in

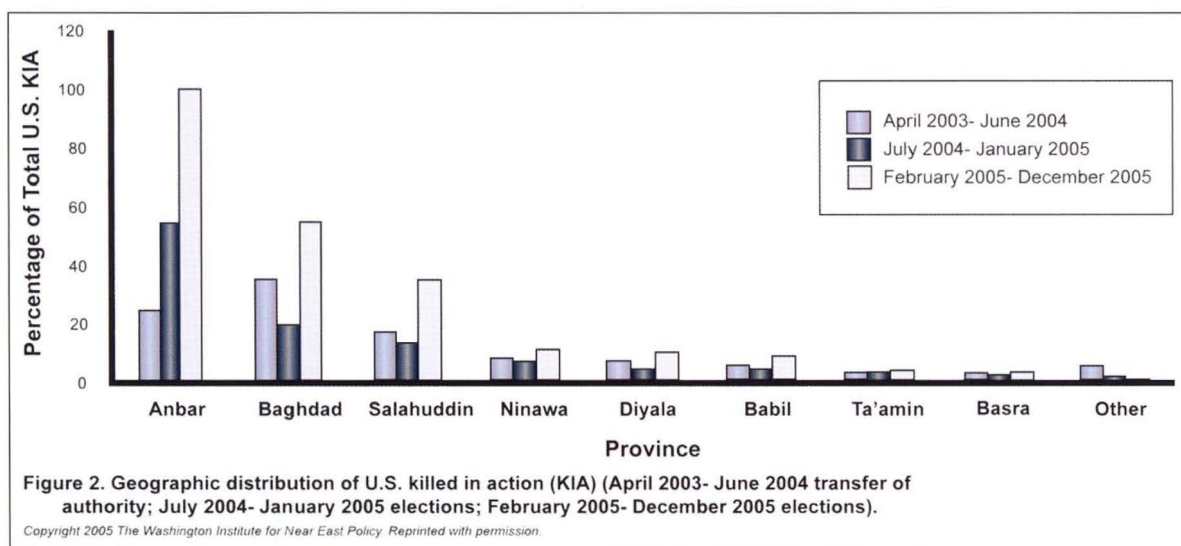


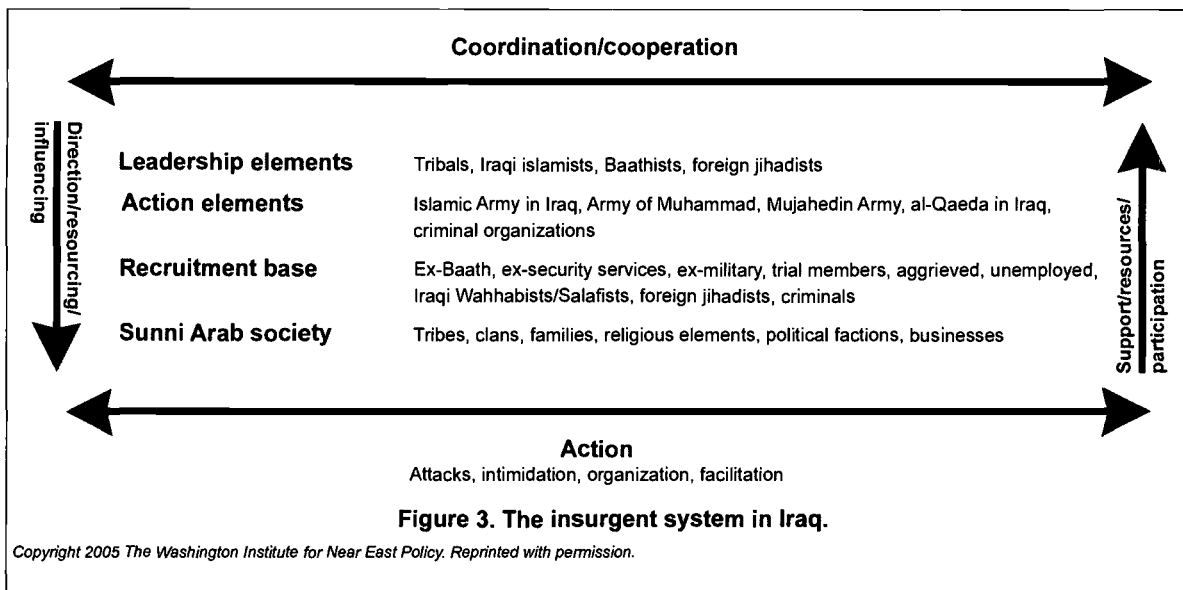
Ramadi, and U.S.-ISF operations in the Western Euphrates River Valley during the second half of 2005. In Anbar, both U.S. forces and the insurgents have evinced a willingness to incur significant casualties to achieve their objectives.

Religion. In Sunni areas, religion offered solace to those who suffered under Saddam's regime, comfort to those harmed by the post-Saddam order (which brought the humiliation of occupation, de-Baathification, and the dismantling of the Iraqi army), and inspiration for those now fighting Coalition forces. Not surprisingly,

Iraqi insurgents, even those who are probably not true believers or Islamists, make extensive use of religious language, symbols, and imagery. About half of all Sunni insurgent organizations mentioned in the media bear Islamic names. Examples include some of the most prominent insurgent organizations, such as the army of Muhammad, the Islamic army in Iraq, the Iraqi National Islamic Resistance, the Mujahidin Army, and Ansar al-Sunna.¹⁶

Economy and reconstruction. Many Iraqis consider security and the economy to be the





two most urgent issues facing the country.¹⁷ War, sanctions, years of neglecting the country's infrastructure, Coalition policies, and insurgent violence have created an economic environment favorable to the insurgents. Economic conditions have fueled anger against the Coalition and the Iraqi Government and created a large pool of unemployed (25 to 50 percent of the general labor force, and up to 70 percent of the labor force in Sunni areas hit hardest by insurgent violence, some of whom are apparently willing to attack Coalition forces or emplace improvised explosive devices [IEDs] for money).¹⁸ Nearly three years after Saddam's fall, electricity and oil production are below prewar levels (although oil revenues have soared thanks to high oil prices). Both industries are frequently the targets of sabotage, resulting in the disruption of basic services, a decline in the standard of living, and lost government revenues.¹⁹

Structures, Processes, and Functions

Although attention tends to center on the most visible insurgent activities (daily violent incidents and mass-casualty attacks) these are but a fraction of the insurgency's range of activ-

ities, and they leave in the shadows the structures, processes, and functions that sustain the war.

Organization. The Sunni insurgency is not organized in a strict hierarchy (like the communist insurgencies in Malaya and Vietnam) and, in this sense, is not a classic insurgency. It is a hybrid with some elements of hierarchy combining with a looser cell structure. It has an informal leadership with elements, entities, and organizations grouped into cells linked by personal, tribal, or organizational ties (figure 3).

According to some reports, the insurgency's senior leadership consists of 8 to 12 individuals who meet occasionally inside or outside of Iraq to discuss organization and tactics. The group includes members of the former regime's intelligence and security services, former Baathists, Iraqi and foreign jihadists, and tribal figures. These leaders reportedly provide resources and direction to many insurgent groups. Personal, family, tribal, and religious ties are believed to facilitate cooperation and coordination.²⁰ Insurgent groups have also created mujahidin shura councils or other collaborative mechanisms to coordinate operations in localities like Fallujah or to synchronize the activities of like-minded groups operating in the Sunni Triangle, such as the Mujahidin shura Council currently associated with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.²¹

Action elements include insurgent groups and criminal organizations (for example, the Islamic Army in Iraq, the Army of Muhammad, the Mujahidin army, al-Qaeda in Iraq, and so on), each with its own leaders and decisionmaking process. These make up a web of networks linked by personal, tribal, or organizational ties that communicate by various means, such as cell phones, the Internet, and couriers. Each group is believed to be involved in a range of activities, including recruitment, training, financing, propaganda, political activities, guerrilla, and (sometimes) terrorist attacks. Terrorist attacks appear to be largely the province of jihadist organizations like al-Qaeda in Iraq and Ansar al-Sunna, although former regime elements might also be involved, at least in a supporting role.²²

While the jihadists have garnered the most attention because of their emphasis on mass-casualty attacks and because they take credit for almost every major attack that occurs, the “national resistance” is probably responsible for most attacks on Coalition forces and Iraqis associated with the government. The organizational boundaries between these groups, however, are probably not well defined. While al-Zarqawi did not “hijack the insurgency,” his organization appears to have cooperated at least with Baathist elements of the insurgency to carry out actions and achieve shared tactical and operational objectives.²³

The influence of the jihadists, however, goes beyond the immediate impact of their operations. By striking fear into the hearts of their enemies and drawing the ire of Coalition military officials, they are undoubtedly influencing some Iraqis and inspiring others to join their ranks (as demonstrated by the involvement of four Iraqis in the 9 November 2005 bombing of three hotels in Amman, Jordan, by al-Qaeda in Iraq). To ensure their long-term viability in Iraq, foreign jihadist groups like al-Qaeda in Iraq are engaged in a process of “Iraqification,” the recruiting of local members in order to sink roots into Iraqi society.²⁴

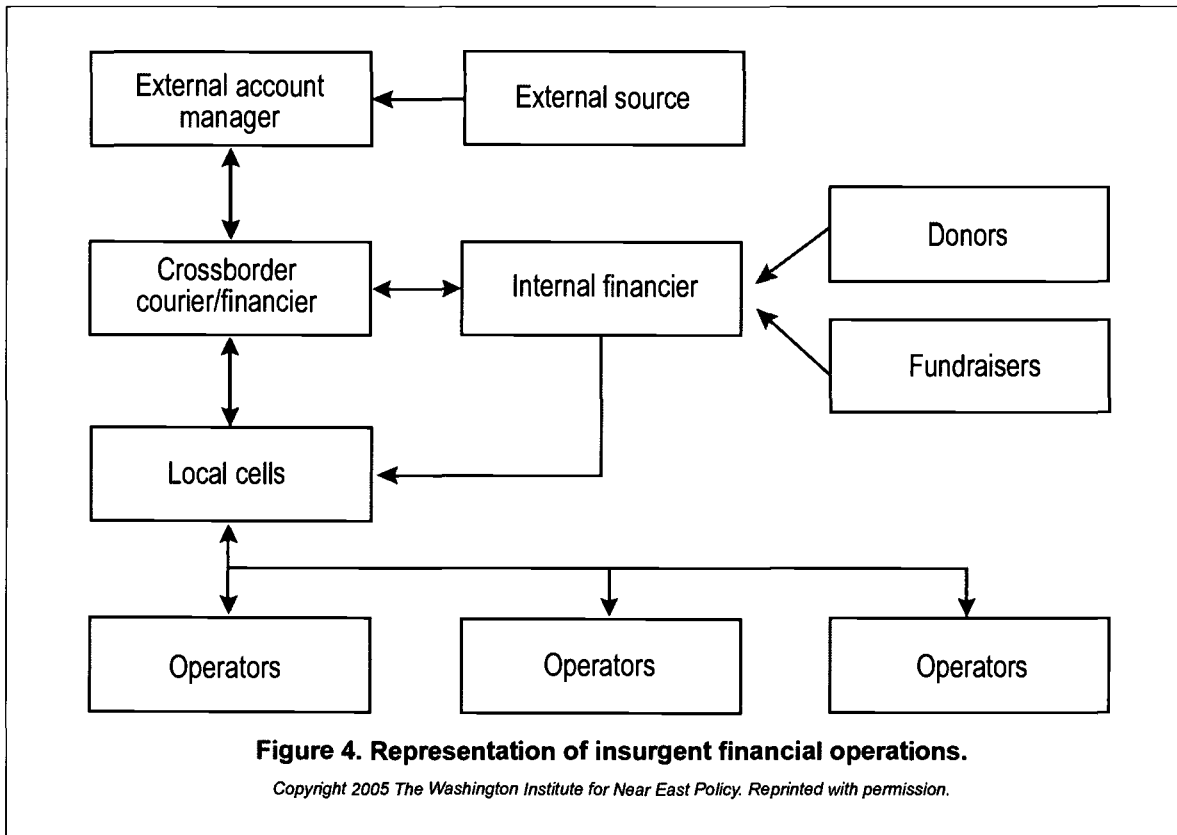
Nevertheless, jihadist operations are apparently producing strains within the insurgency, and between jihadist insurgent groups and the

Sunni population, particularly the more tribal elements. This strain has been most pronounced in Anbar province, but it has also been noted in Samarra, in Salahuddin province. While disputes and clashes between nationalist and jihadist insurgent groups, and between tribal elements and jihadists, have been reported for some time, these have clearly worsened since summer 2005. However, the extent of any split within the ranks of the insurgents remains unclear, and major insurgent groups, including the Islamic Army in Iraq, the 1920 Revolution Brigades, and the Army of the Mujahideen in Iraq have issued statements denying any such split.²⁵

For both the national resistance and jihadists, cells seem to be the dominant form of organization, although some kind of limited hierarchy exists, with cells controlling the activities of sub-cells. Some cells appear to be multifunctional, carrying out attacks using small arms, light weapons (such as rocket-propelled grenades), and IEDs. Other cells are specialized and might be involved in preparing forged documents or propaganda materials, or in planning and executing attacks with mortars, rockets, IEDs, or vehicle-borne IEDs (VBIEDs).²⁶

Financing. The insurgency’s varied activities require a steady income stream with extensive and sophisticated financing operations. Although open-source information on this topic is scarce, the insurgents do not appear to lack for financial resources, despite Coalition and Iraqi Government efforts to disrupt their funding.²⁷

The insurgency receives financial support from inside and outside Iraq. Internal sources include donations from sympathizers, charities, and mosques, and income generated by legitimate businesses and criminal activities (robbery, extortion, smuggling, counterfeiting, narcotics trafficking, and kidnapping for ransom). At least some funds have been siphoned off from Iraq’s oil industry. External sources include donations from wealthy private donors in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iran, Europe, and the Gulf states (especially Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates); expatriate former regime elements; and members of transnational charities. The government of Iran might also be providing



some funding for Sunni insurgent activity.²⁸

Insurgents are believed to use at least three types of networks to collect, move, and disburse money: former regime financial networks, traditional informal Hawala networks, and clerical networks/charitable religious endowments. Couriers are the preferred means of transport.²⁹ These networks extend across Iraq's borders and are probably interconnected. Until recently, the Syria-Iraqi border was the most important route for such activity, although improvements in security on both sides of the border might be affecting this path (figure 4).³⁰ As with other insurgent activities, their financial operations have evolved and adjusted to changing conditions and Coalition and Iraqi Government countermeasures, which has allowed the insurgency to weather the seizure of large amounts of cash, the detention or death of financiers, and the 2003 exchange of Saddam-era currency for redesigned notes.

Political activity. The destruction of

Saddam's regime left the Sunnis temporarily leaderless and in disarray. Moreover, because the insurgents violently opposed the January 2005 elections and largely succeeded in preventing meaningful Sunni involvement, Sunni Arabs were left without an effective voice in the Iraqi Transitional Government, although the insurgency provided them with a degree of influence over the political process that they would not have had otherwise.³¹ Nevertheless, virtually from its onset, the insurgency had a political face. The clearest manifestation of this was the rise of the Muslim Clerics Association as a political advocate of the Sunnis and as an overt voice articulating political positions similar to those of the insurgents: opposition to the occupation, the illegitimacy of the occupation-imposed political process, and the right of legitimate resistance.

In addition to overt political groups voicing positions supportive of the insurgents, the insurgents themselves developed political organs.³²

These political bureaus or political wings have been used to articulate the political positions of the insurgent groups and to establish that these groups are more than just violently nihilistic with nothing to offer for the future of Iraq. They have also served to keep the insurgency and its Sunni audience informed of changes in the political situation and the significance of these changes. Thus, both the October referendum and the December election generated insurgent political commentary.³³

A critical issue is the relationship between the insurgency and the overt and legitimate Sunni political parties that have emerged as a result of the political process. While some Sunni parties emerged rapidly after the fall of the regime (especially those such as the Iraqi Islamic Party, which maintained an underground presence in Iraq under the Baath), this process accelerated after the January 2005 elections and is still continuing. Sunnis now have significant political parties and a significant presence in the parliament (with more than 50 of 275 seats).³⁴

The election of large numbers of Sunnis to the parliament and their aggressive advocacy of Sunni interests have created a political arena with both potential risks and rewards for the insurgents. The insurgents must play in this arena or risk isolation from the Sunni community. While resistance rhetoric (especially that emanating from jihadist elements such as the Mujahidin Shura Council) regarding the legitimacy of the political process remains largely negative, insurgent supporters and insurgents alike are likely involved with and active in the new parties and will almost certainly attempt to use their positions in government to influence governmental activities and policy in ways favorable to the insurgency.³⁵

“Military” operations. The insurgents conduct purposeful activity; they do not attack randomly, as is sometimes suggested. They act along several broad lines of operation:

- ◆ Counter-Coalition—attacks against Coalition personnel and infrastructure (excluding convoys and air transport).

- ◆ Counter-collaboration—attacks against the ISF, Iraqi Government personnel and facilities,

Iraqi translators working for Coalition forces, tipsters, and virtually anyone working for or with the Iraqi Government or Coalition forces.

- ◆ Counter-mobility—attacks against convoys; road, rail, and air transport; and bridges.

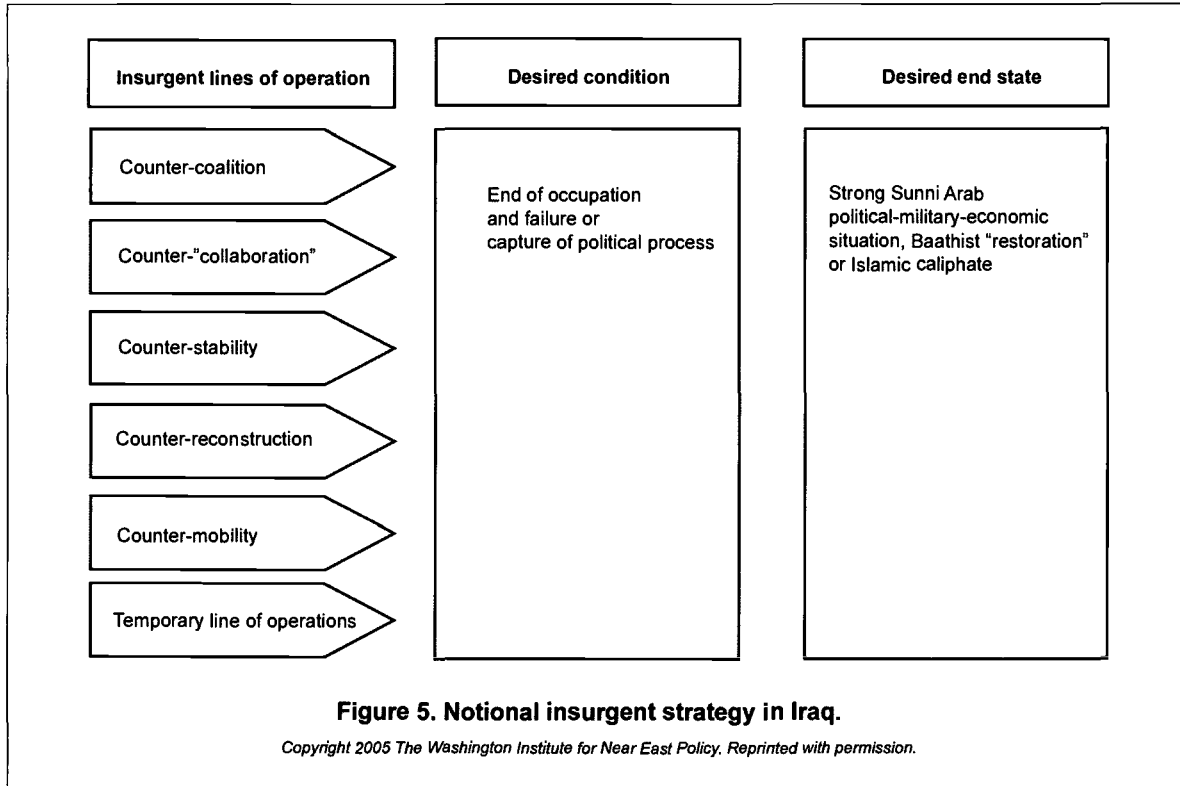
- ◆ Counter-reconstruction—attacks on contractors, oil and power infrastructure, foreign companies and international aid organizations, banks, and medical infrastructure.

- ◆ Counter-stability—attacks against civilians; religious sites; tribal, community, and political leaders; foreign (non-Coalition) diplomats; and international and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

A sixth, temporary line of operation—counter-election—was implemented before the January 2005 elections and consisted of attacks against voters, polling centers, election officials, and candidates. No similar line of operation preceded the 15 October 2005 constitutional referendum or the 15 December 2005 general elections, although in both cases local boycotts, acts of intimidation, and a small number of attacks occurred in a few places.

Taken together, the insurgent lines of operation represent the operational expression of the insurgent strategy to achieve consensus objectives: ending the occupation and undermining or taking control of the Iraqi Government. Here, individual incidents and short-term variations are less important than cumulative effects and long-term trends.

To date, the most important insurgent lines of operation have been counter-Coalition, counter-collaboration, and counter-stability (figure 5). Counter-Coalition attacks have taken a significant physical and psychological toll and reduced the Coalition’s operational freedom of action by creating a nonpermissive environment. Routine movements by U.S. troops are treated as combat patrols, and in areas where the insurgency is well established, road movements are constrained. Just keeping open the road from Baghdad International Airport to the International Zone in Baghdad requires a substantial commitment of U.S. and Iraqi forces.³⁶ The insurgent campaign against collaborators, including ISF recruits and members, has succeeded in killing large numbers of Iraqis work-



ing for the government or connected to the reconstruction effort, and it has intimidated many more; but it has not stopped Iraqis from lining up in large numbers to join the ISF or seek government jobs.

Counter-stability attacks have achieved important successes, leading to a significant reduction in UN and NGO operations, and rising sectarian tensions. In particular, the destruction of the Shiite Askariyya Shrine in Samara in February was a highly successful "shock and awe" operation that greatly increased sectarian violence in Iraq.

Thus far, insurgent operations do not appear to be a form of strategic bargaining, in which the scope or nature of insurgent actions is tied to concessions from the Coalition and Iraqi Government. Rather, insurgent operations have aimed to weaken or frustrate the Coalition, the Iraqi Government, and the political transformation process. Strategic bargaining might come into play, however, as the political face of the insurgency develops.

Shifts in emphasis between lines of operation

suggest changes in insurgent effort or strategy. Thus, since the January 2005 elections, counter-collaboration and especially counter-stability attacks appear to have become more important. This likely reflects an insurgent assessment that the Iraqi Government and the ISF are greater long-term threats and easier targets than Coalition forces and, in the case of the jihadists, that civilians are legitimate, vulnerable, and useful targets.

Rhythms and cycles. Highs and lows in insurgent activity might be associated with the religious calendar (for example, Ramadan, Ashura), seasonal weather patterns, political events (such as elections), or anniversaries (figure 6).³⁷ In Iraq, Ramadan 2003 saw an increase in activity, but any such increase in 2004 was obscured by the large spike in incidents associated with the second battle of Fallujah. Ramadan 2005 coincided with the constitutional referendum in October, so it was again difficult to discern its effect. Jihadist groups apparently seeking to foment civil war have also launched major attacks during the Shiite commemoration of Ashura.

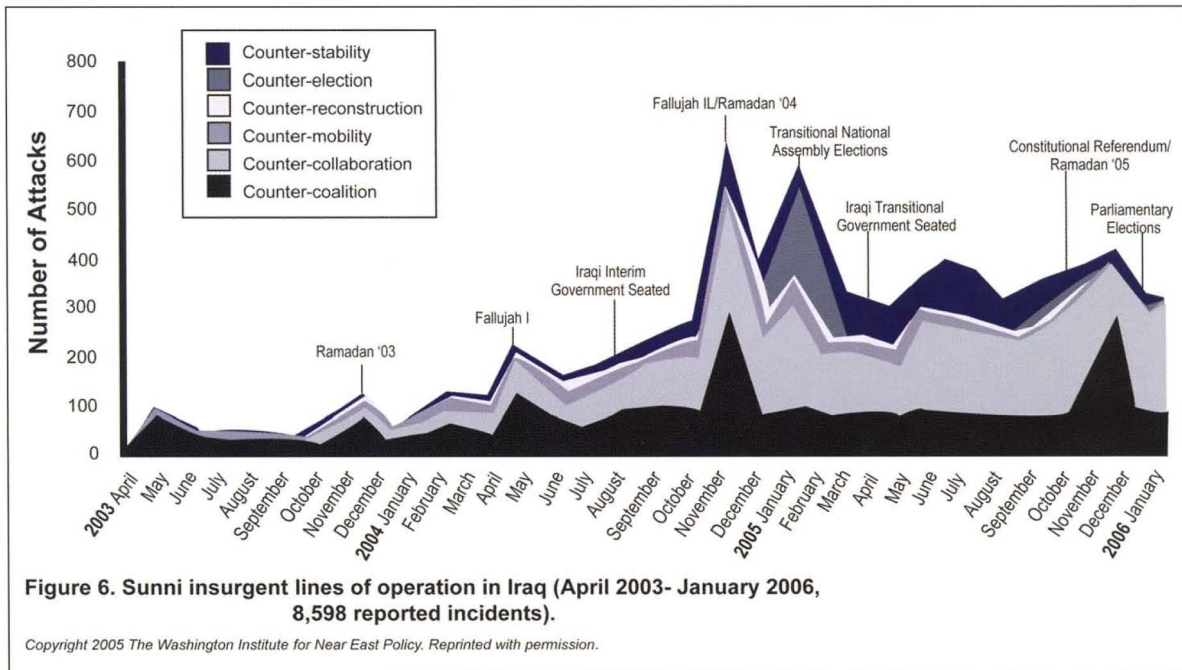


Figure 6. Sunni insurgent lines of operation in Iraq (April 2003- January 2006, 8,598 reported incidents).

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Weather might likewise be a factor in the insurgency in Iraq, although the evidence is ambiguous.³⁸ Thus, February and early March 2004 saw relatively low levels of insurgent activity, as did February and March of 2005. In both cases, insurgent activity increased after these winter lulls, which might have been caused by inhospitable (cold and/or rainy) weather conditions. This pattern appears to be repeating itself in 2006.

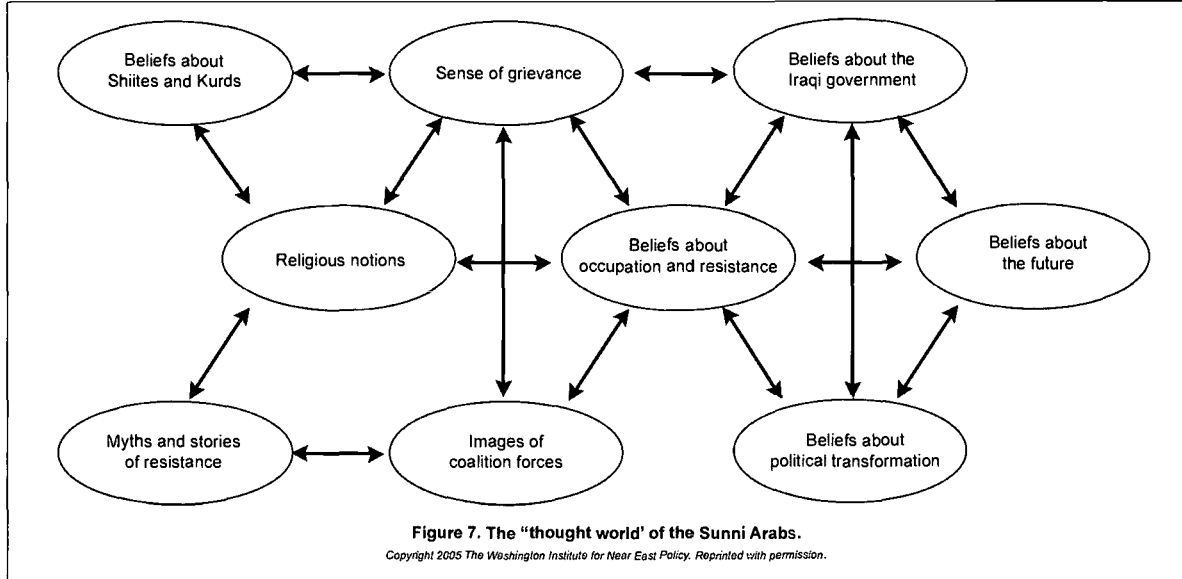
Insurgent activity also declined sharply after the two battles of Fallujah. The insurgents might have needed time to rest and recover, assess their options, and replace their losses following surges in activity during Fallujah I and II (April and November 2004, respectively), and before the January 2005 elections.

The period of intensified insurgent activity preceding the January 2005 elections suggests that the insurgents can temporarily more than double the number of attacks undertaken in support of their strategy. By contrast, insurgent strategy for the October 2005 constitutional referendum and the December 2005 general elections was largely political, with Iraqi insurgent elements by and large supporting “get out the vote” campaigns during October and December.

Resiliency. Arrayed against the U.S. military, the insurgents have fought a ruthless, relentless war. Although thousands of insurgents have been killed and tens of thousands of Iraqis detained, incident and casualty data reinforce the judgment that the insurgency remains robust and lethal.³⁹

The insurgents have made good on their losses by drawing on their large manpower reserves, augmented by recruits from outside Iraq, although the flow of foreign volunteers has apparently been reduced in recent months, thanks to efforts to seal the border with Syria and to interdict insurgent “ratlines.” Insurgent cells have likewise demonstrated that when they incur losses they can recruit new members or merge with other insurgent cells, while leaders detained or killed by Coalition forces have been replaced without fundamental disruptions to insurgent operations.⁴⁰

Individuals might also be recruited on a “cash” basis to attack Coalition forces (for example, by emplacing IEDs). As long as cash reserves are plentiful and unemployment rates in Sunni areas remain high, the insurgency will be able to hire freelancers to mitigate attrition and enhance its lethal punch.⁴¹



The insurgency's loosely organized cells and networks contribute to its resilience and effectiveness. Successes against one group are not fatal for others or to the larger cause. Smaller groups are more likely to innovate, and their propensity for sharing expertise and experience (either through face-to-face meetings or via the Internet) ensures that innovations are passed on, allowing groups to achieve broader tactical and operational effects than they could on their own.⁴²

Penetration of Sunni Arab Society

Insurgencies center on the struggle to control or win over the hearts and minds of a society's civilian population. In Iraq, the status of the insurgency can be measured by the degree to which it has penetrated public and private institutions of the Sunni Arab community and its "thought world" (figure 7).

The insurgency has established a significant presence in broad sectors of Sunni Arab society, including the social, economic, religious, political, and criminal spheres. While the depth of penetration is uncertain, a strategy of combined persuasion and intimidation has enabled the insurgents to largely succeed in undermining efforts to extend government institutions, such as village and town councils, into Sunni Arab areas.

The failure of Sunnis to participate in significant numbers in the January 2005 elections reflected the powerful influence of the insurgents in the Sunni Arab community. The rallying of the Sunnis against the draft constitution during the October 2005 referendum also showed how Sunni Arab attitudes can mesh with insurgent objectives.

The insurgents have also managed to penetrate the Sunni Arabs' thought world, which consists of at least the following nine elements:

1. Beliefs about the occupation and resistance.
2. Images of Coalition forces.
3. Images, myths, and stories of the resistance.
4. Beliefs about political transformation.
5. Beliefs about the Iraqi Government.
6. Beliefs about Shiites and Kurds.
7. A sense of entitlement and grievance.
8. Religious notions and sensibilities.
9. Beliefs about the future.⁴³

These interconnected components represent a belief structure shaping Sunni Arab attitudes and actions that determine, to a significant extent, where Sunni Arabs will likely fall on the resistance-"collaboration" spectrum.

Polling data, media commentary, and anecdotal

dotal reporting indicate that, among Sunni Arabs in Iraq, ideas and beliefs sympathetic to the insurgency have become widespread, including views of the occupation, Coalition forces, and the Iraqi Government. These findings permit a number of cautious assertions to be made about the beliefs that embody the thought world of many Sunni Arabs:

- ◆ The country is headed in the wrong direction.⁴⁴

- ◆ The occupation is the proximate cause for the Sunnis' loss of power and privilege, and for this reason it should come to an end as soon as is practically possible.⁴⁵

- ◆ The Coalition came to despoil Iraq's oil wealth—a view also shared by many Shiite Iraqis.⁴⁶

- ◆ The Shiite-dominated Iraqi Government is controlled by Iran (with the connivance of the United States) and is making war on the Sunni Arabs.⁴⁷

- ◆ Violent “resistance” against the Coalition is legitimate; attacks on Iraqi civilians, especially Sunnis and security forces, are not.⁴⁸

- ◆ The Sunni community is deeply divided over whether its future lies with the insurgency, the political process, or both.⁴⁹

- ◆ The insurgent “narrative” runs counter to that of the Coalition and Iraqi Government; it is a blend of fact and (mostly) fiction, and contains vivid images and mythic stories of a heroic, pure resistance.⁵⁰

Sunni Arab political behavior reflects the complexity of this thought world, which varies from place to place in Iraq, and has evolved over time. Attempts to influence the Sunni Arab community that are not based on a sophisticated understanding of this thought world are apt to fail and liable to produce unintended consequences.

Insurgent Effectiveness

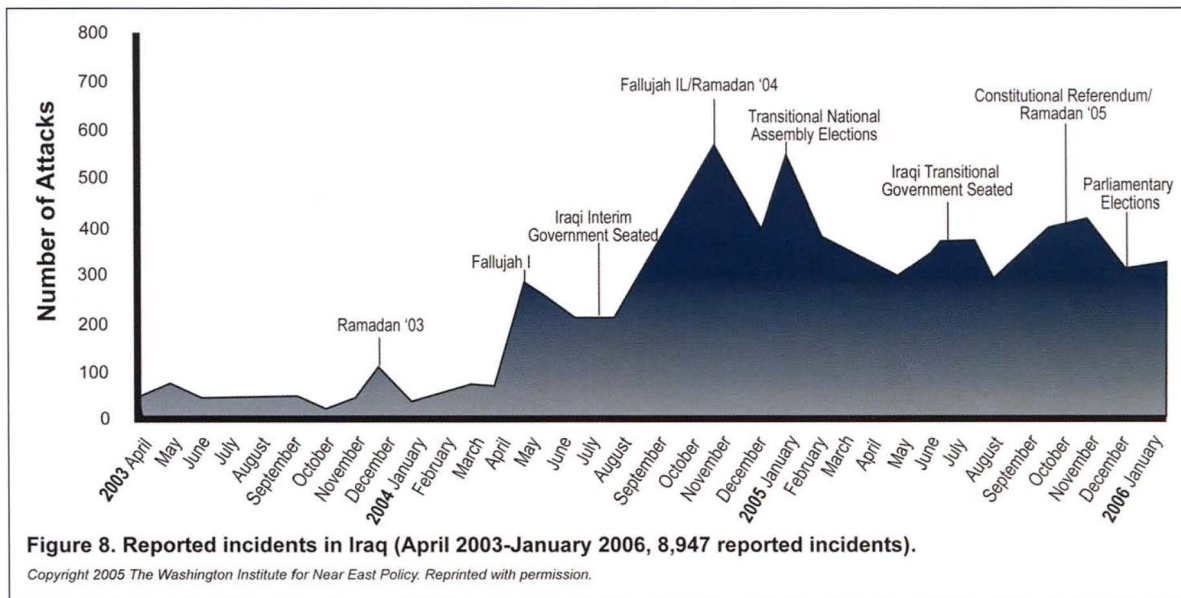
An assessment of insurgent effectiveness on the tactical or operational levels must track and assess trends in insurgent strength, number of attacks, and Coalition and ISF casualties. Assessing insurgent effectiveness on the strate-

gic level requires a different set of analytical measures and might, therefore, yield different answers. And because political and psychological factors play critical roles in determining the outcome of insurgencies, analysts must develop measures of success that tap into these dimensions of the conflict. What matters most in insurgencies, however, is the political outcome of the struggle, which is the ultimate measure of insurgent effectiveness.

Measures of tactical and operational effectiveness. At the tactical and operational levels, there is a tendency to rely on quantitative measures—metrics—to assess insurgent effectiveness. But a number of factors might limit the utility of metrics often used to analyze the tactical and operational dimensions of insurgencies: data might be flawed or subject to multiple, conflicting interpretations, and proper interpretation might require a degree of insight into insurgents' thought and practice that cannot be readily attained.⁵¹

A more fundamental limitation of quantitative measures is that a lack of measurable success on the battlefield might not necessarily prevent the guerrilla or insurgent from attaining key political objectives. Thus, guerrillas or insurgents might lose nearly every battle and still win the war, as did the Algerian National Liberation Front against the French (1954-1962), the Viet Cong against the United States (1961-1972), and Hizbullah against Israel in Lebanon (1982-2000). Nevertheless, tactical or operational metrics might be useful as indicators of strategic success and might provide insight into factors that can influence the strategic direction of the war. (For example, the volume of tips regarding insurgent activity might indicate the degree of popular support for insurgents in Sunni Arab areas.) Other measures (for example, changes in the number or tempo of insurgent attacks) might signal shifts in insurgent strength, capabilities, or strategy, or popular support for their cause. Thus, tactical and operational metrics, if properly understood, can shed light on key trends and developments in the insurgency.

One measure of insurgent activity is incident rates, usually measured as incidents per day, week, or month. Because incidents might differ



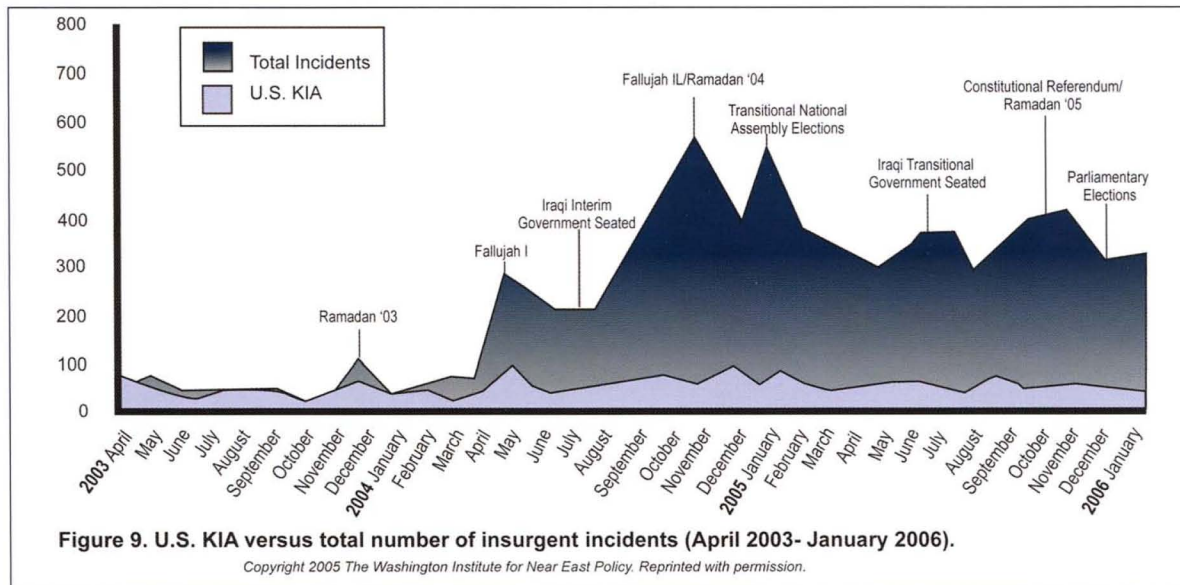
dramatically in terms of effort invested and effects produced, incident rates represent a relatively crude measure. (For example, a brief sniping incident and a complex attack involving scores of insurgents might both be counted as a single incident.) Incident rates are nonetheless an important indicator of the status of the insurgency (figure 8).

The gradual but generally steady increase in the rate of attacks during the first 30 months of the occupation (ranging from 10 to 35 attacks/day in 2003, to 25 to 80 attacks/day in 2004, to 65 to 90 attacks/day through most of 2005, according to U.S. Department of Defense [DOD] figures), strongly suggests that the insurgency has grown in strength and/or capability, despite losses, Coalition countermeasures, the rapid growth of the ISF, and the unfolding political process.⁵² As for the dip in attacks since November 2005 (attacks averaged 75/day during this period, according to DOD figures), it is too soon to tell whether the dip is caused by operational rhythms or seasonal cycles, the impact of recent Coalition operations in the Western Euphrates River Valley, or a decision by insurgents to reduce their tempo of operations in order to facilitate the December 2005 elections and subsequent negotiations to form a government.

Iraqi and Coalition casualty rates (and, when

available, insurgent casualty rates) provide a measure of the intensity of violence and combat in Iraq. Combining incident and casualty rates can help gauge trends in the lethality of the insurgency. American KIA rates have been fairly steady during the insurgency, averaging 49/month in 2003 and 71/month in both 2004 and 2005, for an average of 65 KIA/month since the fall of Baghdad. ISF KIA rates ranged between 100 to 300/month in 2005. The rate at which Iraqi civilians are being killed in violent incidents increased from 750/month in early 2004 to 1,800/month in late 2005.⁵³

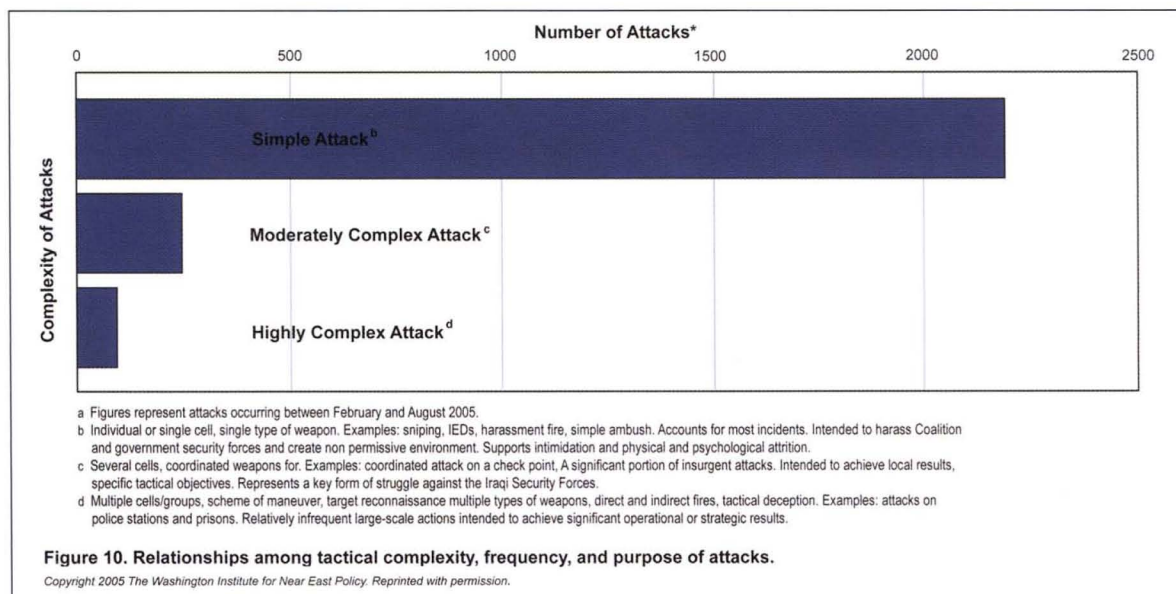
Attrition imposed by the insurgents has been steady rather than dramatic, with a few exceptions (for example, April and November 2004). But the costs have added up, and now the insurgency is a major factor affecting domestic support for U.S. Iraq policy (figure 9). According to U.S. Government reporting, from the end of major combat operations (1 May 2003) to 1 February 2006, 1,665 U.S. troops had been killed in action, and 16,111 wounded in action in Iraq, for a total of 17,776 combat casualties, which represents nearly 50 killed and 500 wounded per month.⁵⁴ For the insurgents, a small but steady stream of U.S. casualties might be more advantageous politically than large numbers of casualties produced in infrequent, intense clashes.



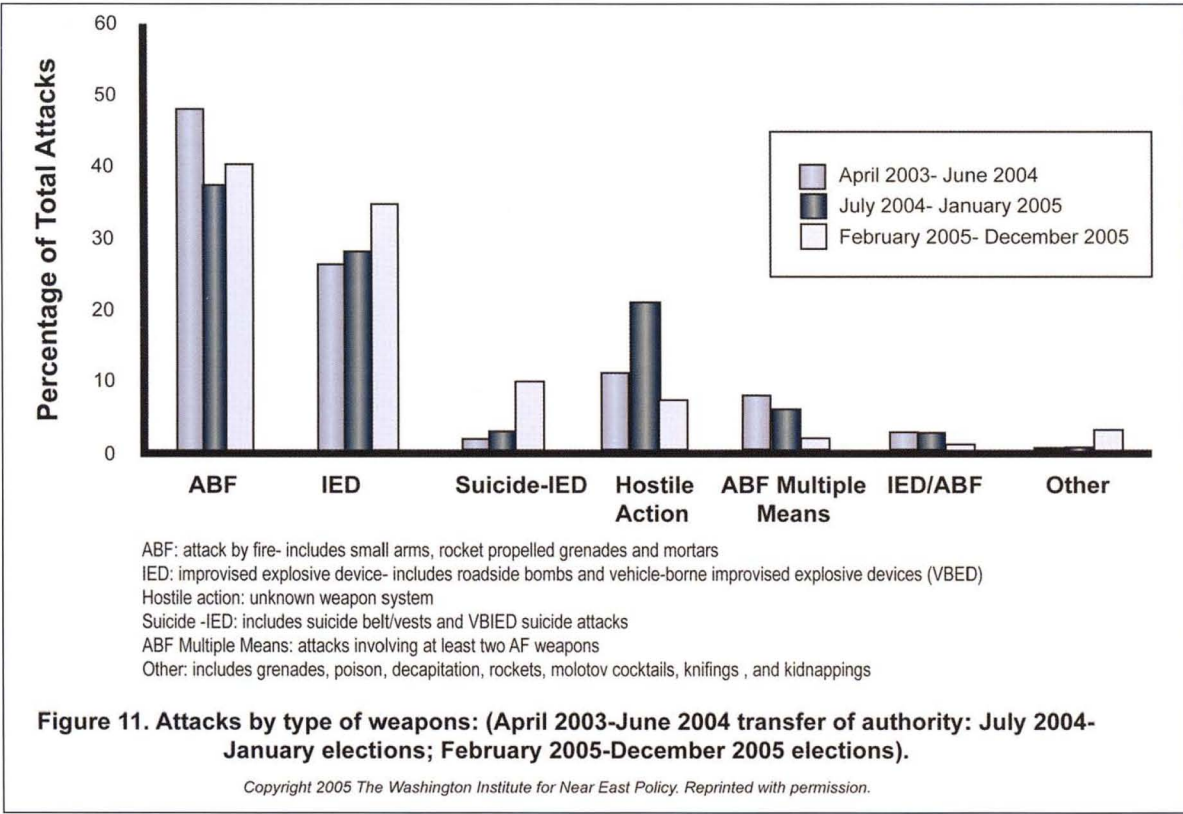
A key measure of insurgency capability is the complexity and tactical sophistication of its attacks. Elements of complexity include the number of insurgents or insurgent elements involved, scheme of maneuver, numbers and types of weapons used, numbers and types of targets engaged or objectives assaulted, and use of denial and deception measures.

A review of reported incidents between February and August 2005 indicates that most

attacks are relatively simple.⁵⁵ Moderately complex actions are less frequent and generally target the ISF. Highly complex attacks are initiated to achieve important operational or strategic objectives, but they are infrequent (figure 10). A key reason for this is that, generally speaking, the insurgents carefully manage risk, to minimize losses by avoiding large clashes, especially with U.S. forces. However, an emerging trend is an increase in moderately complex attacks



a Figures represent attacks occurring between February and August 2005.
 b Individual or single cell, single type of weapon. Examples: sniping, IEDs, harassment fire, simple ambush. Accounts for most incidents. Intended to harass Coalition and government security forces and create non permissive environment. Supports intimidation and physical and psychological attrition.
 c Several cells, coordinated weapons for. Examples: coordinated attack on a check point, A significant portion of insurgent attacks. Intended to achieve local results, specific tactical objectives. Represents a key form of struggle against the Iraq Security Forces.
 d Multiple cells/groups, scheme of maneuver, target reconnaissance multiple types of weapons, direct and indirect fires, tactical deception. Examples: attacks on police stations and prisons. Relatively infrequent large-scale actions intended to achieve significant operational or strategic results.



against ISF elements, especially the police.

While attacks by fire (ABF) represent the largest category of insurgent attacks, the use of IEDs has increased dramatically over time. They now represent nearly 50 percent of all attacks on Coalition forces and account for more than 60 percent of U.S. KIA.⁵⁶ Suicide bombings, involving either an individual with an explosive vest (SIED) or a suicide car bomb (SVBIED), and VBIEDs, became major categories of attack in 2004 and 2005 (figure 11). The number of IED attacks during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) has been staggering and, according to DOD figures, includes more than 75 suicide vest bombings, 550 suicide car bombings, 1,300 car bombings, and more than 16,500 roadside bombings in nearly three years of combat.⁵⁷ The one-day high for major types of IED attacks included 8 VBIEDs, 9 SIEDs, and 15 SVBIEDs (figure 12).⁵⁸

Suicide attacks generally focus on high value targets: Coalition and ISF convoys, ISF recruiting centers and installations, and concentrations of

Iraqi civilians (such as at Shiite religious celebrations). Such attacks often result in heavy casualties and are intended to produce instability and a climate of fear and sectarian tension, and to discredit the Iraqi Government and the ISF. The dramatic increase in suicide attacks in fall 2004 and spring 2005 likely reflected changes in insurgent targeting priorities, organizational dynamics, and capabilities. Suicide bombings have been a major tactical and operational success for the insurgents and have driven international and aid organizations from Iraq, dramatically increased sectarian and ethnic tensions, demonstrated the inability of the Coalition and the Iraqi Government to protect the population, and forced the Coalition to devote significant resources to countering the threat.

Insurgent operations and corresponding incident data reveal some important aspects of insurgent effectiveness at the tactical and operational levels. The insurgents—

- ◆ Have employed violence effectively to

achieve important military and political goals.

- ◆ Have, over the course of the insurgency, sustained operations at progressively higher levels and shown that they can more than double the number of attacks during surge periods.

- ◆ Continue to exact a growing toll on Iraqi civilians, the ISF, and to a lesser extent, Coalition forces.

- ◆ Have managed to enhance their operational capability by employing more sophisticated IEDs and demonstrated an ability to mount complex operations against important targets.

- ◆ Retain the initiative and the ability, within limits, to conduct operations at a time and place of their choosing, particularly against Iraqi civilians and the ISF.

On the other hand, what did not happen during the past year is also noteworthy. During 2005, not a single Iraqi police station was overrun-although the insurgents have had substantial success in engagements with ISF, especially police elements. Not one U.S. military adviser was captured by insurgents (although it is not clear that this has been an objective of the insurgents), and not one U.S. base was penetrated by insurgents, despite attempts to do so. Not a sin-

gle city or town fell to the insurgents, although the insurgents exercised control over a number of towns and neighborhoods during the year, especially in the west, and exercised partial control in others, such as Ramadi.

In sum, the insurgents have scored important tactical and operational successes, particularly against the ISF and the Iraqi Government. They have been able to translate these “battlefield” successes into a number of important short-term political gains, but still face the challenge of using these “military” capabilities to achieve long-term political objectives.

Measures of strategic success. What are the insurgents’ goals in the current phase of the struggle for Iraq? For some, it might be to strengthen their hand in current negotiations to form a government and in future negotiations to amend the constitution. For others, it might be to derail the political transition and seize power. For the jihadists (such as al-Qaeda in Iraq and Ansar al-Sunna), it might be establishing an Islamic caliphate in Iraq.⁵⁹

The insurgents are pursuing a number of common objectives that each group believes will help them achieve their own particular goals. These common objectives include—

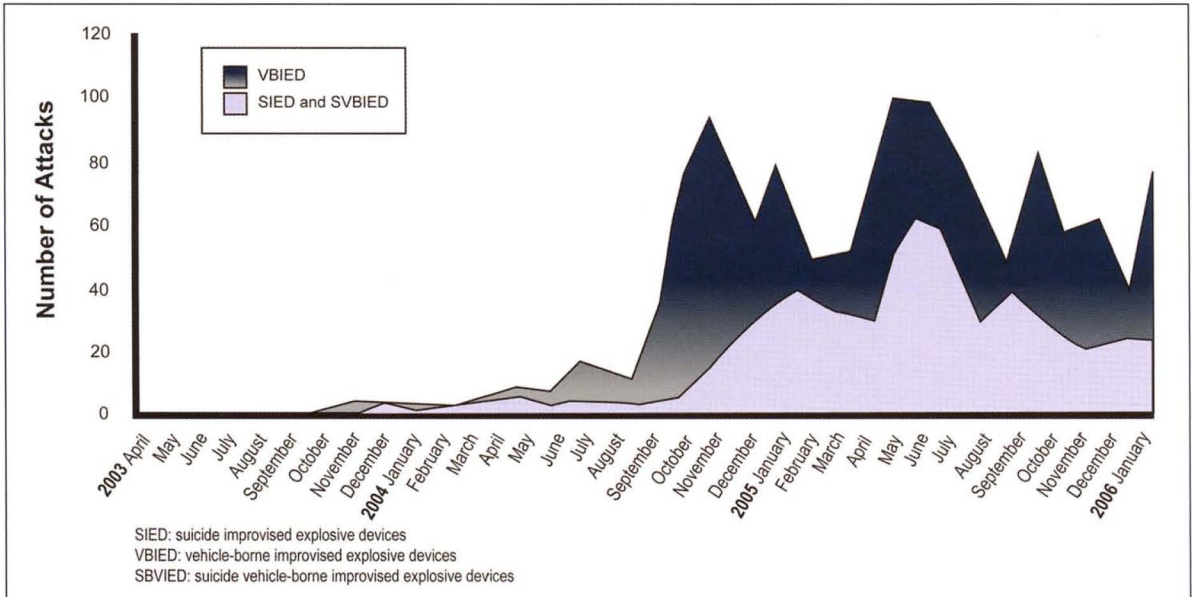


Figure 12. SIED, VBIED, and SVBIED (April 2003-January 2006).

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◆ Bringing an end to the occupation by inflicting a constant toll of casualties on U.S. forces, to turn the American public against the war effort.

◆ Undermining government institutions and establishing control over predominantly Sunni Arab areas of Iraq.

◆ Attacking and subverting the ISF, to prevent it from becoming a serious threat to the insurgents.

◆ Fostering a climate of fear and insecurity to intimidate the population, cripple the economy, and undermine the legitimacy of the government.

◆ Restoring Sunni Arab pride and honor in order to fan the fires of resistance and bolster the popular standing of the insurgency.

◆ Bending the political process to support Sunni and insurgent interests.

◆ Reestablishing the Sunnis as an important, if not dominant, presence in Iraq.

Finally, the jihadists hope to foment a civil war between Sunnis and Shiites in order to prevent the emergence of a predominantly Shiite government in Baghdad, and to inflict a major defeat on the United States.

After nearly three years of fighting, what progress can the insurgents claim toward achieving their objectives? They have—

◆ Succeeded, through assent or intimidation, in establishing themselves as a major, if not the dominant, social and political force in the Sunni Triangle.

◆ Won the support of large portions of the Sunni Arab population for attacks on Coalition forces and at least tacit support for attacks on the ISF and the Iraqi Government.

◆ Deterred many residents of the Sunni Triangle from working for or joining the new government and coerced others to quit.

◆ Made the security situation a major issue of concern for many Iraqis, giving the Sunnis a strong (if largely negative) voice in determining Iraq's future.

◆ Complicated the political transition by engineering a successful boycott of the January 2005 elections in the Sunni Triangle, and supporting Sunni opposition to the draft constitution in October 2005.

◆ Slowed the pace and raised the cost of reconstruction, reduced government revenues, degraded the quality of life, maintained high unemployment, and generally undermined confidence in the Iraqi Government and its institutions.

◆ Contributed to popular dissatisfaction in the U.S. with the war and its handling and to Washington's decision to start drawing down its forces in Iraq in 2006.⁶⁰

The insurgents have, however, experienced a number of setbacks during this period. They have—

◆ Not succeeded in derailing the political process, which continues to move forward, and many Sunni Arabs now seem committed to influencing the process from within.

◆ Been unable to deter large numbers of Iraqi youths from joining the ISF.

◆ Lost (at least temporarily) important sanctuaries in several major towns in the Sunni Triangle to joint Coalition-ISF operations, including Fallujah and Tal Afar.

◆ Not succeeded in building substantial support among either the Iraqi or the American public for a rapid and total U.S. withdrawal from Iraq.

Moreover, they have alienated many Sunni Arabs because of attacks that have killed numerous innocent civilians and because of the extreme version of Islam some groups imposed on areas temporarily under their sway.⁶¹

While experiencing some setbacks, the insurgents have scored a number of important successes. Most important of all, they have made the Sunni Arabs a force to be reckoned with. The main Shiite and Kurdish parties and the United States have had to recognize the need for substantial, credible Sunni Arab participation in the political process and to accommodate at least some of the key demands of Sunni Arab representatives in the new government. Sunni politicians will participate in the new government at the ministerial level, and some may be able to alter the dynamics of Coalition and Iraqi Government counterinsurgency decisionmaking, perhaps in ways that will benefit the insurgents. The insurgency's future will depend to a

significant degree on its ability to craft a political-military strategy that can guarantee its survival and its relevance while advancing the interests of the broader Sunni Arab community.

Challenges

The Sunni Arab insurgency poses major analytical and operational challenges. It is pervasive in Sunni Arab areas, yet because it lacks a clear ideology, leadership, or organizational center, it defies easy categorization. It is not dependent on external resupply or internal or external sanctuaries, and while the manpower, materiel, and funds that come from external sources are not insignificant, they are not necessary to the insurgency's survival.

The insurgency has access to all the weapons, explosives, and trained manpower it needs in amounts sufficient to sustain current activity levels indefinitely, assuming continued Sunni political support; and its networked nature makes it a resilient and adaptive foe. The insurgency also has at least the beginnings of a political face and enjoys support from overt Sunni political organizations. The insurgents also know that Coalition forces are constrained in how they use force to deal with them. These are among the reasons that combating the insurgency has proven so difficult.

The insurgents' tactical repertoire, however, still consists mainly of IED, hit-and-run, and terrorist-type attacks, and the insurgency has a number of weaknesses that could limit its potential, if properly exploited by the Coalition and the Iraqi Government:

- ◆ The insurgency has little appeal beyond the Sunni Arab community; thus, the Coalition must avoid pushing the insurgents into tactical alliances with aggrieved members of other communities.⁶²

- ◆ Many Sunni Arabs are ambivalent toward the insurgency and divided over whether their future lies with the insurgents, the political process, or both; they must be convinced that legitimate grievances can be addressed through the political process.

- ◆ Some insurgent attacks are done by free-

lance insurgents on a commission basis; therefore, improving the economy and cutting unemployment might reduce the pool of paid freelancers.⁶³

- ◆ The political transition is making it more difficult to preserve unity of purpose among insurgent groups and could help identify those insurgent groups with whom compromise and reconciliation are impossible.

- ◆ The extreme beliefs and brutal tactics of the jihadists have alienated erstwhile allies in the insurgency and at least some Iraqi Sunnis, making the jihadists vulnerable to attempts to isolate them from local and external bases of support.⁶⁴

Given their limited military capabilities and the substantial Coalition presence, the insurgents are unlikely to stage a successful coup or to attempt a march on Baghdad. Moreover, U.S. forces are likely to remain in Iraq for as long as they are tolerated and needed, in part to prevent such an outcome. The resulting stalemate might provide an opportunity for the evolving political process to produce a settlement that all parties can live with.

Thus, the war might yet yield an acceptable outcome—a relatively stable, democratic Iraq—provided that the political process is not undermined from within, derailed by escalating civil violence, or scuttled by a premature U.S. withdrawal. The path to an acceptable outcome is likely to be protracted, costly, and punctuated by additional setbacks. For the U.S., Iraq will be a major test of its national will, its political leadership, and its military's ability to prevail over a new type of enemy, one that it is likely to confront again elsewhere in the future.

Notes

1. For convenience, we refer to the Sunni Arab insurgency in the singular, although it actually consists of a number of locally and regionally based insurgencies waged by various groups pursuing diverse objectives.

2. On the challenges of assessing insurgencies, see Thomas C. Thayer, *War Without Fronts: The American Experience in Vietnam* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985). On the importance of select-

ing proper analytical measures, see James G. Roche and Barry D. Watts, "Choosing Analytic Measures," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 14, 2 (June 1991): 165-209.

3. For reports that suggest the insurgency was pre-planned, see Thom Shanker, "Hussein's Agents Behind Attacks, Pentagon Finds," *New York Times*, 29 April 2004, A1, and Edward T. Pound, "Seeds of Chaos," *U.S. New & World Report*, 20 December 2004, 20-22, 24-26. For a report that suggests Saddam Hussein was the catalyst behind the postwar insurgency, see Joe Klein, "Saddam's Revenge," *Time*, 26 September 2005. For an explanation of why the insurgency was likely not preplanned, see Michael Eisenstadt, "Understanding Saddam," *National Interest* (Fall 2005): 117-21. The regime likewise had long-standing contingency plans to deal with the possibility that it might be ousted by domestic rivals and would once again have to go underground, reorganize, and seize power, as it did between 1963 and 1968. Such planning probably also facilitated the emergence of the Sunni Arab insurgency following the conclusion of "major combat operations" in May 2003.

4. See for example the comments by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld at a Press Stakeout Following Close Briefing for Senators on Iraq, 27 June 2003, on-line at <www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030627-secdef0303.html>, accessed 12 April 2006, and the comments by U.S. Central Command Gen John Abizaid, "DOD News Briefing—Mr. Di Rita and General Abizaid," 16 July 2003, on-line at <www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030716-0401.html>, accessed 12 April 2006.

5. For a more detailed discussion of the history of insurgencies, see Michael Eisenstadt and Jeffrey White, "Assessing Iraq's Sunni Arab Insurgency," *Washington Institute Policy Focus #50*, December 2005, 5, on line at <www.washingtoninstitute.org/download.php?file=PolicyFocus50.pdf>, accessed 12 April 2006.

6. For more on the insurgent underground, see Andrew R. Molnar and others, *Undergrounds in Insurgent, Revolutionary, and Resistance Warfare* (Washington, DC: Special Operations Research Office, American University, 1963), 47-124.

7. Even in the socially conservative Sunni Triangle region, women likely participate in the insurgency on some level—although probably in small numbers. (Thus far, only a handful of the more than 600 suicide bombers in Iraq have been women.) For our purposes, to simplify matters, we will count only men in the recruitment pool. The population data

cited here are drawn from the U.N. Development Program (UNDP), *Iraq Living Conditions Survey 2004*, vol. I, 15-19, on-line at <www.iq.undp.org/ILCS/overview.htm>, accessed 12 April 2006. The estimate of men of military age was arrived at by multiplying the UNDP estimates of the number of Iraqi males in the 15- to 49-year-old cohorts by 0.20. It therefore assumes that the age distribution among adult Sunni Arab males mirrors that of the general Iraqi population (UNDP, *Iraq Living Conditions Survey*, 18).

8. Abizaid interview on *Face the Nation*, 26 June 2005, on-line at <www.cbsnews.com/htdocs/face/face_062605.pdf>, accessed 12 April 2006. One-tenth of one percent of the population would be 27,000 people.

9. Molnar and others, 13-16. These data are not doctrinal norms of any sort, but reflect the simple fact that to survive, insurgent movements generally mobilize only a small fraction of their potential recruitment base in the early phases of their struggle to avoid being detected and crushed by government forces.

10. See Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: Praeger, 1966), 41, for a similar explanation for insurgent resilience in Malaya and Vietnam.

11. See, for instance, Nancy Mendrala and Sarah Hornbach, *Iraqis Do Not Fear Civil War Despite Widespread Security Concerns* (Washington, D.C.: 8 August 2005), U.S. Department of State (DOS), Office of Research and Opinion Analysis, 2-4; Mendrala and Christopher Cole, *Iraqis Sense Improved Security*, DOS, Office of Research Opinion Analysis (Washington, D.C.: 18 April 2005), 2, 8; and Dina Smeltz and Mendrala, *Fear a Key Factor on Iraqi Political Outlook*, DOS, Office of Research Opinion Analysis (Washington, D.C.: 18 January 2005), 4, 9.

12. In trying to assess the strength of any insurgency, one should keep in mind the observation of T.E. Lawrence regarding the Arab guerrilla forces he led during the Arab Revolt in World War I: "No spies could count us . . . since even ourselves had not the smallest idea of our strength at any given moment" (*Seven Pillars of Wisdom* [New York: Doubleday, 1991], 381).

13. U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), Regular Briefing with Pentagon Spokesman Lawrence Di Rita and Chief of Operations, J3, LTG James Conway, 10 May 2005, on-line at <www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2005/tr20050510-2721.html>, accessed 12 April 2006.

14. The Washington Institute, *Iraq Incident Data Base*. By comparison, according to the DOD, 85 per-

cent of incidents occur in the four major provinces ("Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," Report to Congress, DOD, October 2005, 21, on-line at <www.defenselink.mil/news/Oct2005/d20051013iraq.pdf>, accessed 12 April 2006). The insurgency is the overwhelming fact of life in parts of Iraq, and it has made many Iraqis virtual prisoners of their homes when they are not working, shopping, or going to school. It has curtailed nightlife in parts of Baghdad and greatly influenced public life in large parts of the Sunni Triangle. On the other hand, many areas of the country are virtually untouched by insurgent violence. In those regions, the residents' dominant concern includes inadequate electricity (available only a few hours a day throughout much of the country), ethnic and religious tensions, the presence of Coalition forces, lack of adequate housing, high prices, corruption, unemployment, and crime. For instance, see a recent poll by the International Republican Institute, "Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion," 6-12 September 2005, 13, on-line at <www.iri.org/pdfs/09-27-05-Iraq%20poll%20presentation.ppt>, accessed 12 April 2006. See also Mendrala and Hornbach, 1-2, 6-7, and Ellen Knickmeyer, "Where Charter is Least of Worries: Local Issues Top List in Town in S. Iraq," *Washington Post*, 7 October 2005, A12.

15. Incident data used for the charts in this paper are derived from the Washington Institute for Near East Policy Iraq incident database. This project was initiated in May 2003 under the direction of Jeffrey White, with data search and entry conducted by Washington Institute research assistants. The unclassified database now contains over 8,000 incidents, reaching back to April 2003. Each incident is tracked for a number of variables, including date, location (city/province), forces involved, types of weapons, type of attack, casualties (including Iraqi casualties), and other factors. Data are drawn from open-source reporting and represent a sample of perhaps 15 percent of the incidents reported by the Coalition. The data are used to analyze operational and tactical trends in the insurgency, the effectiveness of insurgent forces, and shifts in operational and tactical activity. Data generally track with broad trends revealed in official data.

16. David Baran and Mathieu Guidre, "Iraq: A Message from the Insurgents," *Le Monde Diplomatique* (May 2005), on-line at <mondediplo.com/2005/05/01iraq>, accessed 12 April 2006. How many insurgent groups are actually operating in Iraq is unclear. Some organizations might use more than one name, and new names

appear with some frequency. Moreover, some of the names used by insurgent groups such as the Al-Qa'qa' Brigades and the Salah Al-Din Brigades, have both nationalistic and religious connotations. This makes it difficult to discern the group's motives and identity, which at any rate might be mixed. (Al-Qa'qa' bin 'Amr al-Tamimi, was a warrior-poet and hero of the battles of Yarmuk in 636 C.E. and Qadisiya in 637 C.E. Salah Al-Din was a great military leader who led a Muslim army to victory over the Crusaders at the battle of Hittin and in the subsequent reconquest of Jerusalem, both in 1187 C.E.)

17. Mendrala and Cole, 5.

18. T. Christian Miller, "U.S. Criticized on Iraq Rebuilding," *Los Angeles Times*, 19 July 2005, A5. Economic conditions in Iraq are such that some Shiites are alleged to have taken money from the Zarqawi group to attack their co-religionists (Akeel Hussein and Colin Freeman, "Shia Iraqi Hitmen Admit they were Paid to Join Sunni Insurgency," *The Telegraph*, 24 April 2005, on-line at <www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/04/24/wirq24.xml&Sheet=/news/2005/04/24/ixworld.html>, accessed 12 April 2006.)

19. Michael E. O'Hanlon, Nina Kamp, "Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq," 13 February 2006, 28, 30, on-line at <www.brook.edu/fp/saban/iraq/index.pdf>, accessed 14 April 2006.

20. Thanassis Cambanis, "Hussein's Outlawed Former Party Gaining Influence in Iraq," *Boston Globe*, 15 May 2005; "U.S. Knows of About 10 Leaders of Iraq's Insurgency," AFP, 26 July 2005, on-line at <www.spacewar.com/reports/U.S._Knows_Of_About_10_Leaders_Of_Iraqs_Insurgency_Pentagon.html>, accessed 13 April 2006.

21. See for example "The Mujahideen Shura Council Claims responsibility for a Suicide Bombing Targeting Iraqi Police in al-Sayediya"; "Detonation of Several IEDs on 'Crusader' and Iraqi Forces in Baghdad, Diyala, and Samarra," and "Assassinating a Captain of the Iraqi Federal Police in Baquba"; SITE Institute, 2 February 2006, on-line at <<http://siteinstitute.org/bin/articles.cgi?ID=publications144606&Category=publications&Subcategory=0>>, accessed 13 April 2006; Jackie Spinner and Karl Vick, "Fallujah Talks and Battle Planning Continue," *Washington Post*, 28 October 2004, A21; "Iraqi insurgents unite against al-Qa'ida," Reuters, 26 January 2006.

22. See, for instance, Aparisim Ghosh, "Professor of Death," *Time*, 17 October 2005, which describes the role of Abu Qa'qa' al-Tamimi, an entrepreneurial former Republican Guard officer and "born-again

Muslim" who facilitates and coordinates suicide bombing attacks for various jihadist and nationalist insurgent groups.

23. Bradley Graham, "Zarqawi 'Hijacked' Insurgency: U.S. General Says Foreign Fighters Now Seen as Main Threat," *Washington Post*, 28 September 2005, A17; Ghosh.

24. Greg Miller and Tyler Marshall, "More Iraqis Joining Zarqawi's Cause," *Los Angeles Times*, 15 September 2005, 1.

25. See for example Anthony Loyd, "Murder of Sheikh Provokes Sunnis to Turn on al-Qaeda," *London Times*, 10 February 2006; Rick Jervis, "General Sees Rift in Iraq Enemy," *USA Today*, 25 January 2006; 1; Louise Roug and Richard Boudreaux, "Deadly Rift Grows Among Insurgents," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 January 2006; Iraqi Resistance Report, "Resistance Refutes Puppet Regime Claims of Divisions within Resistance Ranks," for events of 6 February 2006, on-line at <www.freearabvoice.org/Iraq/Report/report422.htm>, accessed 13 April 2006.

26. James Janega, "Obscure Figures Hunted in Iraq," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 April 2005, 3. See for example Greg Grant, "Inside Iraqi Insurgent Cells," *Defense News*, 1 August 2005, 1, 8, 12, for a description of improvised explosive devices (IED) cells. See also Montgomery McFate, "Iraq: The Social Context of IEDs," *Military Review* (May-June 2005): 37-40.

27. Testimony of Acting Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Daniel Glaser and Caleb Temple, Director (Operations), Joint Intelligence Task Force for Combating Terrorism, Defense Intelligence Agency, before the House Armed Services Committee Hearing on the Financing of the Iraqi Insurgency, 28 July 2005, on-line at <www.dod.gov/dodgc/olc/docs/test05-07-28temple.doc>, accessed 14 April 2006. See also Michael Knights and Zack Snyder, "The Role Played by Funding in the Iraqi Insurgency," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (August 2005): 8-15.

28. Glaser, 1-2. See also David Enders, "The Business of Jihad," *The Nation*, 7 March 2005; Robert F. Worth and James Glanz, "Oil Graft Fuels the Insurgency, Iraq and U.S. Say," *New York Times*, 5 February 2006, 1; Glaser, 1-2.

29. Glaser, 2-4, 5-6; Temple, 2, 3; *Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD*, vol. II, "Regime Finance and Procurement," 30 September 2004, 1-299; Douglas Jehl, "U.S. Aides Say Kin of Hussein Aid Insurgency," *New York Times*, 5 July 2005, A1; Agence France Presse, "U.S. Fears Iraq's Cash Economy Offers Easy Money to Insurgents," 12 May 2005.

30. Ann Scott Tyson, "Tighter Borders Take a Toll in Iraq," *Washington Post*, 11 February 2006, A12.

31. Sunni Arabs stayed away from the polls in large numbers. In Anbar province, perhaps less than 5 percent of the population voted. Anecdotal accounts from other areas (Samarra and Bayji, for example) also suggest the Sunni turnout was small—less than 10 percent. In mixed provinces, voting was higher, but this reflected the nationwide surge to the polls by Shiites and Kurds. In the four provinces most closely identified with the insurgency (Anbar, Salahuddin, Ninawa, and Baghdad) voting averaged 24 percent, but all except Anbar have significant Kurdish or Shiite populations. On balance, 10 to 15 percent is probably a reasonable estimate for the Sunni Arab vote.

32. The Baath Party has as its political organ the Political Information and Publication Bureau.

33. See for example Maamoun Youssef, "Militant Groups Denounce Iraqi Elections," *Associated Press*, 12 December 2005, on-line at <www.breitbart.com/news/2005/12/12/D8EEROI00.html>, accessed 14 April 2006.

34. The Iraqi Accord Front gained 44 seats, and the National Dialogue Front gained 11. See Yahoo News, "Iraqi Election Results Certified," 10 February 2006, on-line at <www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2006-02-10-iraq-elections_x.htm>, accessed 14 April 2006.

35. International Crisis Group, "In Their Own Words: Reading the Iraqi Insurgency," Middle East Report No. 50, 15 February 2006, 17-19, on-line at <www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?l=1&id=3953>, accessed 14 April 2006. That both insurgent supporters and insurgents are likely involved with the new parties is strongly suggested by the case of Mishan al-Jibouri who, despite links to the former regime, established himself as a legitimate politician. He won election to the parliament but was later implicated in the transfer of oil revenues to the insurgents. See Robert F. Worth and James Glanz, "Oil Graft Fuels the Insurgency, Iraq and U.S. Say," *New York Times*, 5 February 2006, 1.

36. Spinner, "Easy Sailing Along Once-Perilous Road To Baghdad Airport: Army Steps Up Presence to Quell Attacks," *Washington Post*, 4 November 2005, A15.

37. During the Algerian civil war (early to mid-1990s), the onset of the holy month of Ramadan was often marked by an increase in attacks by the Islamic opposition. See Avi Jorisch, "U.S. Military Operations and the Question of Ramadan," Washington Institute Policy Watch #581, 2 November 2001, 2, on-line at

<www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=1459>, accessed 14 April 2006.

38. During the Vietnam War, the tempo of Communist military activity followed seasonal weather patterns. For instance, the onset of the rainy season (September through January) generally saw a significant slowdown in combat operations (Thayer, 11-13).

39. See Baran and Guidere, 20.

40. Prior to the effort to seal the border, 100 to 150 foreign fighters reportedly crossed from Syria into Iraq each month, one or two at a time. See Bradley Graham, "Forces Bolstered in Western Iraq," *Washington Post*, 21 September 2005, A18. More recent articles give the impression that few if any foreign fighters are now entering Iraq from Syria. See Jonathan Finer, "Among Insurgents in Iraq, Few Foreigners are Found," *Washington Post*, 17 November 2005, A1; Ann Scott Tyson, "Tighter Borders Take a Toll in Iraq," *Washington Post*, 11 February 2006, A12. Whether the foreign insurgents can adapt to tightened border security remains to be seen. See also Grant, 8.

41. According to one source, some 70 to 75 percent of attacks in Iraq are done on a commission basis by freelancers. This figure, however, seems improbably high, and it is questionable whether reliable data on this phenomenon exist. See David Kilcullen, "Countering Global Insurgency," *Small Wars Journal*, 8, 35, on-line at <www.smallwarsjournal.com/documents/kilcullen.pdf>, accessed 14 April 2006.

42. Jervis, "Militants Sharing Bomb Expertise," *USA Today*, 24 October 2005.

43. Thought worlds represent the beliefs on which people, individuals and groups act. They are culturally dependent and can create different perceptions of reality, proper behavior, and truth. For a discussion of the concept of foreign thought worlds, see J. W. Barnett, "Insight Into Foreign Thoughtworlds for National Security Decision Makers," Institute for Defense Analysis, January 2004, on-line at <www.fas.org/irp/eprint/thoughtworlds.pdf>, accessed 14 April 2006; Baran and Guidere.

44. International Republican Institute, *Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion*, 6 September–12 September 2005, 5, on-line at <www.iri.org/09-27-05-IraqPoll.asp>, accessed 14 April 2006. See also, "What the Iraqi Public Wants: A WorldOpinionPoll.org Poll," 31 January 2006, 8.

45. Mendrala and Cole, 3, 9.

46. *Ibid.*, 9.

47. See Sameer N. Yacoub, "Shiite Forces Blamed for Sunnis' Deaths," *Associated Press*, 29 August 2005.

48. The distinction between legitimate and illegiti-

mate resistance is evident in the reaction of Sunnis to terrorist-type actions by the Zarqawi group. Both Sunni Arab political leaders and resistance organizations have condemned specific actions by Zarqawi and his declaration of war against the Shiites. See for example the 1 October 2005 statement by the Iraqi Islamic Party condemning the terrorist attacks in Balad on 29 September 2005 in Spinner, "U.S. Troops Target Rebels in Far Western Iraq," *Washington Post*, 2 October 2005, A21. Narrow to broad majorities of Sunni Arabs surveyed in a June 2005 poll characterized those who attacked Coalition forces as patriots or freedom fighters, while in most Sunni areas polled, large majorities characterized those who attacked Iraqi civilians or soldiers as criminals or terrorists. (Mendrala and Hornbach, 4, 12.) See also, "What the Iraqi Public Wants: A WorldOpinionPoll.org Poll," January 31, 2006, p.5.

49. Mendrala and Hornbach, 2-3, 9-11.

50. Various myths and stories of resistance have come out of Iraq. These include the myth of Allah's sniper, the wily Sunni Arab who kills U.S. soldiers from afar with impunity; virgin fighters, young boys who are killed resisting U.S. forces; and woundless death, the notion that the bodies of martyred resistance fighters do not bear the horrific wounds normally inflicted by modern weapons. How deeply these stories affect Sunni Arabs is impossible to say, but they present powerful images of pure, noble resistance. See, for instance, Halah Jaber, "The Chilling Toll of Allah's Sniper," *London Times*, 20 February 2005.

51. A drop in the number of incidents in certain areas might indicate that the insurgents are either on the run or that they effectively control the area in question (Thompson, 169).

52. U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO-06-428T), *Rebuilding Iraq: Stabilization, Reconstruction, and Financing Challenges* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 8 February 2006), 6, on-line at <www.gao.gov/new.items/d06428t.pdf>, accessed 14 April 2006. The steady increase in attacks generally mirrors data in the Washington Institute Iraq Incident Database.

53. The exact number of Iraqis killed by the insurgents is unknown, but is clearly in the thousands. According to DOD data, the trend in daily Iraqi casualties has been rising since January 2004, with an average of 25/day from January-March, 30/day from April-June, 40/day from June-November, 50 per day during the election period from late November 2004 to early February 2005, slightly below 50/day from February-August, and 60/day from September-October 2005. See "More than 26,000 Iraqis Killed,

Injured Since 2004: Estimate,” AFP, 30 October 2005, on-line at <http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20051030/pl_afp/iraqusunresttoll>, (this item no longer available). Since January 2005, ISF losses have fluctuated between 100 to 300 killed in action monthly, according to the Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, on-line at <www.icasualties.org/oif/IraqiDeaths.aspx>, accessed 14 April 2006.

54. DOD, “Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) U.S. Casualty Status,” 13 February 2006, on-line at <www.defenselink.mil/news/casualty.pdf>, accessed 14 April 2006. It should be noted that the tally of killed and wounded includes casualties incurred during the two Muqtada al-Sadr uprisings of 2004. By way of comparison, in 1968, at the peak of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, U.S. casualties amounted to 14,594 troops killed and 87,388 wounded in combat, which equates to an average of more than 1,200 killed and 7,250 wounded a month (more than the average annual rate for Iraq). During the month-long Battle of Iwo Jima, one of the most intense battles of World War II, U.S. casualties amounted to 7,000 killed and 19,000 wounded. See on-line at <www.swt.usace.army.mil/library/tdr/1998/tdr0398.pdf>, accessed 14 April 2006, and <www.vietnamwall.org/pdf/casualty.pdf>, (this item no longer available).

55. The chart in figure 8 reflects the period since the January 2005 elections, which was a reasonably representative period of insurgent activity. By contrast, the preceding period, lasting from November 2004 to the end of January 2005, was characterized by significant fighting between U.S. and insurgent forces in Fallujah. Because many simple attacks that occur in Iraq are never reported, and are therefore not reflected in the database, the chart at figure 10 probably overstates the percentage of moderately complex and highly complex attacks.

56. John Ward Anderson, Steve Fainaru, and Jonathan Finer, “Bigger, Stronger Homemade Bombs Now to Blame for Half of U.S. Deaths,” *Washington Post*, 26 October 2005, A1.

57. Jervis, “Attacks in Iraq Jumped in 2005,” *USA Today*, 23 January 2006, 1. During the second Palestinian intifada (uprising) which lasted from 2000-2004, Palestinian groups launched nearly 150 suicide bomb attacks on Israel.

58. Washington Institute Iraq Incident Database.

59. For more on al-Qaeda’s strategy in Iraq, see Abu Musab al-Zarqawi letter to the leadership of al-Qaeda, February 2004, on-line at <www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/31694.htm>, accessed 25 April 2006; Reuven Paz, “Zarqawi’s Strategy in Iraq—Is there a ‘New Al-Qaeda?’” PRISM Occasional Paper, 3:5, August 2005,

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60. For U.S. public opinion toward the war, see Dana Milbank and Claudia Deane, “Poll Finds Dimmer View of Iraq War,” *Washington Post*, 8 June 2005, A1. Regarding the decision to draw down U.S. forces in Iraq, see David Ignatius, “A Shift on Iraq: The Generals Plan a Slow Exit,” *Washington Post*, 26 September 2005, A23.

61. See for instance Knickmeyer and Finer, “Insurgents Assert Control Over Town Near Syrian Border,” *Washington Post*, 6 September 2005, A20.

62. The fact that the insurgency in Malaya (1948-1960) was rooted mainly in the country’s ethnic Chinese minority and that the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya (1952-1956) involved only the Kikuyu tribe are key factors explaining the failure of those insurgencies. See David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice (Science 101)* (New York: Praeger, 1964), 20. Ensuring that the insurgency did not spread beyond these minority communities was a key element of British counterinsurgency strategy in Malaya and Kenya.

63. For an assessment showing that improved social services and employment opportunities for the mainly Shiite slum-dwellers of Sadr City in Baghdad led to a sharp decrease in recruitment to and attacks by Muqtada al-Sadr’s Mahdi Army, see Peter W. Chiarelli and Patrick R. Michaelis, “Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full-Spectrum Operations,” *Military Review* (July-August 2005): 4-17. Whether such an achievement can be replicated in the largely Sunni Arab areas of Iraq remains to be seen.

64. For an example of how tensions and factionalism in the insurgency were exploited by Coalition forces in the run-up to and during the second battle of Fallujah, see John F. Sattler and Daniel H. Wilson, “Operation Al Fajr: The Battle of Fallujah—Part II,” *Marine Corps Gazette* (July 2005): 12-24. For more on the tensions between foreign Jihadists and Iraqis, see Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, “The New Sunni Jihad: ‘A Time for Politics,’” *Washington Post*, 27 October 2005, A1. For the vulnerability of Jihadists to strategies of isolation and “disaggregation,” see Kilcullen, 39-47.

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Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq

by Steven Metz

The Washington Quarterly, Winter 2003–2004

An insurgency is born long before the government it seeks to overthrow knows of its existence. Rebels, guerrillas, and terrorists, far from prying eyes, gather in dark buildings, foreign sanctuaries, or—in today's day and age—online. At least initially, survival depends on cloaking intent and strength with ambiguity, deception, and subterfuge. Even after attacks begin in earnest, the intended targets tend to underestimate the problem, believing it to be controllable, unorganized, and isolated rather than a symptom of a deeper pathology.

Understanding the factors leading to such a miscalculation is easy. Gone are the Cold War days when regimes could rely on a superpower patron for increased support against a rebellion. Although the most benevolent and stable government may face isolated violence, an organized insurgency reveals deep flaws in rule or administration. Today, even an unsuccessful insurrection can weaken or undercut a government, hinder economic development and access to global capital, or at least force national leaders to alter key policies. The tendency then is to deny or underestimate the threat, to believe that killing or capturing only a few of the most obvious rebel leaders will solve the problem when in fact the problem—the heart of the insurgency—lies deeper.

Like cancers, insurgencies are seldom accorded the seriousness they deserve at precisely the time they are most vulnerable, early in their development. Such is the situation that the United States and Coalition forces face in Iraq today. Although U.S. strategists

and political leaders may disagree about who is behind the violence in Iraq, the preconditions for a serious and sustained insurgency clearly exist.

The stakes in Iraq are immense. The conflict there will help determine whether the world continues its difficult and uneven movement toward a global system based on open governments and economies or fractures into a new bipolarity. The Arab world is the region most resistant to the U.S. vision of open economies and governments. If it can work there, it can work anywhere. Iraq is the beachhead, the test case, the laboratory.

Given these stakes and the price already paid, the United States must continue to pursue its strategic objective in Iraq but must do so in a way that limits the long-term damage to the United States itself and to the fragile, new Iraqi society. Calls for a speedy U.S. withdrawal will increase as the conflict drags on. Even Ambassador Paul Bremer, head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, has hinted that the United States may leave Iraq by the summer of 2004. Leaving too soon, however, would be disastrous. After all, Osama bin Laden's rise was in part a result of abandoning Afghanistan too soon after foreign occupation in 1979. Departing early would guarantee that strategic objectives are not met and, in all likelihood, force re-intervention to deal with future security problems. Only a carefully designed and cautious counterinsurgency strategy can forestall this.

Accepting the existence of an organized insurgency in Iraq has immense political costs as it requires admitting flaws in preconflict planning and will impede the expansion of the multinational coalition attempting to stabilize Iraq. Although a number of states were willing to volunteer for peacekeeping (at least if the price is right), few are willing to accept the casualties and other long-term costs associated with counterinsurgency. As in Vietnam, the United States is likely to stand nearly alone, with only its closest allies. Even so, history is clear on one point: the sooner that serious problems are acknowledged and a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy

is implemented, the better the chances that the threat can be managed.

The Emerging Insurgency

An insurgency is born when a governing power fails to address social or regional polarization, sectarianism, endemic corruption, crime, various forms of radicalism, or rising expectations. The margin of error is narrower for an outside occupying power than for an inept or repressive national regime as people tend to find the mistakes or bad behavior by one of their own more tolerable than that of outsiders. Because imperialism was delegitimized in the second half of the 20th century, minor errors of judgment or practice have provoked armed opposition against rule by outsiders.

By no stretch of the imagination has the U.S. occupation of Iraq been brutal or repressive, but it has had its miscalculations. The first was a serious underestimation of the work needed to secure, stabilize, and reconstruct Iraq after Saddam Hussein's regime had been toppled. Security in Iraq is labor intensive because of the country's long borders and extensive territory, and the coalition did not deploy adequate forces to prevent the infiltration of foreign radicals and criminals. Coalition planners believed that a significant portion of the Iraqi security forces—military and police—would sit out the war in their barracks and then reemerge to form the core of the post-Saddam military and police with new leaders at their fore. None returned, however, leaving a massive security vacuum that the coalition was unprepared to fill. The expectation that international peacekeepers would plug the gaps was also misguided because only a modest number of states proved willing to contribute to what was seen as a U.S.-dominated effort. Coalition planners also underestimated the dilapidated state of Iraqi infrastructure and thus were not able to restore basic services during the first few crucial months following the collapse of Saddam's regime when Iraqis were forming first and lasting impressions.

U.S. strategists also overestimated the ability of Iraqis to govern themselves and underestimated the rapid spread of crime and anomie. This particular shortcoming highlights the tendency to mirror image¹—to assume that others perceive, understand, and act in the way that Americans do—and a deep misunderstanding of the psychology of totalitarianism. Survival in a totalitarian society is dependent on slavish devotion to those with power and on passivity when neither personal power nor the power of a patron provides protection. Fear is pervasive and paralyzing. Fairness and justice have little meaning, and individuals have difficulty distinguishing truth from propaganda or rumor because the regime controls information. Moving from the psychology of totalitarianism to the psychology of an open society, with its foundation in political initiative, consensus building, and compromise, is a long and torturous journey. Against this backdrop, hopes that a functioning Iraqi civil administration could be constructed quickly proved misguided.

U.S. strategists and political leaders also underestimated how long it would take before resentment of the occupation would spark violence. They assumed that, as long as they provided basic services and evidence of economic and political progress, the Iraqis would tolerate coalition forces. This has not proven true. Even in areas where services have been restored to prewar levels, resentment at outside occupation is escalating to the point of violence. The honeymoon period of universal welcome for coalition forces lasted only a few weeks after the overthrow of Saddam's regime.

In Iraq, U.S. strategists correctly gauged the powerful appeal of liberation but misunderstood how it would be interpreted. For most Iraqis, liberation means removing Saddam's regime and any outside presence. The Arab world has little tolerance for outside occupation, particularly by non-Muslims, and a tradition of violent opposition to occupiers. Long, bloody wars were waged against the French occupation of Morocco and Algeria, the British occupation of Iraq, and the Israeli

occupation of the West Bank and southern Lebanon. This tradition, combined with the current appeal of radical jihad, is incendiary, yielding recruits driven by ideology and contributions from those unwilling to fight themselves but willing to provide money to hire and equip additional guerrillas. Islamic radicalism will doubtless increasingly provide the motivation, legitimacy, and global network of support for insurgents in Iraq. This mixture is even more volatile than the one that existed in Vietnam, where the insurgency took decades to mount because of the isolation and illiteracy of the peasantry. In today's age of interconnectedness, transparency, and pervasive information technology, the process can be compressed into months or even weeks.

Still, even when the raw material for insurgency—anger, resentment, alienation, frustration, a unifying ideology—exists, other factors must be present. Clearly, the insurgents require access to resources, particularly arms and money. In Iraq, neither is in short supply, at least for the time being. Although coalition forces have seized huge amounts of weapons and explosives, many remain under the control of former regime loyalists, other radicals, or criminals who seized them during the chaotic period between the fall of Saddam's regime and the establishment of control by the coalition. In addition, Iraq's porous borders make importing additional arms easy. Similarly, the Ba'th regime had massive amounts of cash, much of which has also been seized, but enough still remains in insurgents' hands to fuel daily violence.

The final ingredients of insurgency, however, fortunately remain outstanding: no clear leadership, strategy, and ideology have emerged to unite the disparate opponents of the United States and the Coalition. At this point, the insurgency's core seems to be remnants of the old regime, particularly members of the special security and intelligence services. Although they are fanatical and well schooled at using violence for maximum psychological impact, their ability to expand their support is constrained. However much the

Iraqi people are dissatisfied with the coalition's occupation, very few want a return of the old regime. The remaining Ba'thists can thus build anger and resentment toward the Coalition, but they are unable to translate these into active support for their own agenda.

The only way, then, that the Ba'thist core can expand its insurgency is through alliances. Any individual, group, or organization willing to use violence against the occupation is seen as a potential ally. Some of the insurgents appear motivated at least as much by pay as by ideology. With most Iraqis unemployed, the prospect of a significant payment for an assassination is appealing even to those not deeply sympathetic to the Ba'thists. In many ways, one of the trademarks of modern insurgencies from Colombia to Sierra Leone is that cash has proven a much more useful recruitment tool than ideological fervor.

A second expansion of the insurgency comes with the infiltration of foreign Islamic radicals. Ansar al-Islam, an extremist movement with ties to al-Qaeda, seems to be serving as the foundation of this process, linking infiltrators to the Ba'thists. Reportedly, such foreigners were behind the deadly August 2003 bombing of the United Nations compound. At the same time, Iraqi border police have warned that Arab radicals are being smuggled across the Iranian border along with Shi'ite pilgrims. The call is out throughout the global Islamic radical community to turn Iraq into "another Afghanistan." As trained jihadists from around the world stream toward Iraq, the insurgency there is likely to become more professional and proficient.

Finally, now facing a common enemy, the Ba'thist insurgents may be forming common cause with increasingly angry Shi'ite radicals centered around firebrands such as the young and popular cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, son of Grand Ayatollah Muhammad al-Sadr (killed by Saddam's agents) and one of the most adamant opponents of the U.S. occupation of Iraq. Although the objective of Shi'ite radi-

cals—theocracy—is at odds with the more secular perspective of the Ba'thists, they share an interest in ridding Iraq of Americans. Historically, this is not unusual: many successful insurgencies from China in the 1920s and 1930s to Zimbabwe during the war against white minority rule in the 1970s began with what China's Mao Zedong called a "national united front" and only saw a single group emerge to dominate local politics at a later date.

Optimists contend that the diversity of the Iraqi opposition and the absence of a single clear leadership and ideology are proof that the movement does not pose a serious threat. Unifying the various strands of the Iraqi insurgency behind any one strategy or objective, at least in the short term, will certainly be difficult if not impossible. Yet, this same complexity means that quashing the insurgency will be just as difficult or impossible. Actions that prove effective against one part of it might very well inflame another part. For example, an increased and heavy-handed U.S. presence might eradicate the Ba'thist remnants and at the same time inflame Shi'ite radicals and foreign jihadists. The insurgency is like a multi-headed snake, unable to decide on a single course of action but difficult to kill.

The Iraqi insurgency is following another common early pattern as it focuses more on weakening the existing governing regime or occupying power than on offering a clear political alternative. What began a few weeks after the fall of Saddam's regime as sporadic and disorganized attacks against U.S. troops by small arms has now grown into a sophisticated campaign using remotely triggered explosives and complex combinations of weapons as well as shoulder-held anti-aircraft missiles. The target list has also expanded. Attacks on U.S. soldiers continue, but new targets include other Coalition forces; U.S. civilians; Iraqis working with the coalition, such as policemen or the mayor; and infrastructure such as oil and water pipelines or electrical pylons, the Jordanian embassy, the Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf, and the UN headquarters. The product reflects the old Russian

revolutionary slogan, “the worse, the better.” In other words, anything that prevents the Coalition from stabilizing Iraq and improving the lives of Iraqis is thought to weaken the coalition, to erode tolerance of the occupation, to provoke greater violence, and eventually to undercut the U.S. public’s and the world community’s support for the occupation.

What Makes Iraq Different

As much as the insurgency taking shape in Iraq reflects its historical predecessors, however, it is very much a modern phenomenon. Every U.S. military officer and strategic thinker is familiar with insurgency, but their base of knowledge is a rural “people’s war” as developed in China, refined in Vietnam, and later adapted in Latin America and Africa. It is based on parallel political and military efforts: the former designed to mobilize supporters and provide an alternative government to the existing one, the latter designed to weaken the state through low-intensity and eventually mid-intensity conflict.

On the military side, the insurgents traditionally begin with small terrorist or hit-and-run attacks but eventually build their military strength until they match up to and defeat the government. This pattern will not apply in Iraq. The movement there more clearly reflects the Palestinian strategy for insurgency, which targets an external occupier whose primary weaknesses are a potential lack of will for sustained casualties and sensitivity to public opinion or pressure. The insurgents have no hope of matching the military might of the occupiers, but because the governing force is not indigenous and has the option of simply leaving, the war becomes a contest of wills, with battles fought in the psychological, perceptual, and political realms. Because of the ingrained military weakness of the insurgents in the Palestinian formulation, the insurgents do not seek to control territory and create an alternative government, as in the Maoist model, but rely instead on internal and international psychological operations

fueled by terrorism, riots, guerrilla raids, sabotage, civilian casualties, and uprisings. The intermediate goal is increased tension between the population and the occupiers intended to provoke the occupiers into using force against the civilians, further alienating themselves and building outside political pressure for withdrawal.

Still, the Iraqi insurgency differs from the Palestinian one in one important sense. Because the Palestinians had some degree of international legitimacy, support, and sanctuary, their movement could develop a discernible leadership and hierarchy. The global reach of the United States is likely to preclude any nation, even Iran or Syria, from providing overt sanctuary to Iraqi insurgents, causing the movement to remain more inchoate than the Palestinian insurgency, with Iraqi leadership shadowy and its form a loose amalgamation of diverse groups unified only by a shared dislike of U.S. occupation. For the United States, this news is both good and bad as this form will limit the strength of the insurgency but will also make it headless, without a clear center of gravity, and thus difficult to kill.

Because the Iraqi insurgency remains inchoate, it has not yet shown that it can progress to its next logical steps: to use global information technology, interconnectedness, and émigré communities to develop networks of political support, financing, and recruitment and potentially to launch terrorist operations in the United States. It has not yet solidified linkages with the global Islamic radical movement; global organized crime; or other radical, anti-U.S. movements. It has not developed and may never develop a clear counter ideology, instead intentionally choosing to remain vague to be as inclusive as possible. As it exists now, the mounting Iraqi insurgency is explicit about what it stands against—U.S. occupation of Iraq—but not on what it stands for. Yet, those steps may come. The Iraqi insurgency is at a fork in the road. It may move rapidly toward maturation and development, becoming a very dangerous opponent for the United States, or it may be

controlled or even quashed. The U.S. response in the next few months to the developments currently underway will determine to a large extent which of these scenarios comes to pass.

The Keys to Defeating Nascent Insurgency

U.S. strategists have treated the Iraqi insurgency as the death throes of the old regime. Their rationale is that most Iraqis do not support it and thus, if the Ba'thist remnants can be killed or captured, the problem will be solved. Although this analysis is true in part—most Iraqis do not support the insurgency at present—some successful insurgencies, including the Chinese, Algerian, Vietnamese, and American struggles for independence, never had active majority support. A successful insurgency requires only the active support of a small cadre and acquiescence from the rest. Such acquiescence is likely in Iraq. Decades of brutal totalitarianism have taught Iraqis that the best way to survive is to stay out of conflicts between the powerful. Moreover, although few Iraqis want to see the return of the old regime, many also resent the U.S. presence enough to make them unlikely to oppose the insurgents actively.

The insurgency's foundation does not rest on the ambition of former regime loyalists to return an unpopular government to power but rather is based on a broader resentment of foreign occupation by a people promised liberation. Only a comprehensive and coherent counterinsurgency strategy that weaves together the collective resources of the U.S. government can effectively stifle this threat. History suggests some of the keys to success, but U.S. strategists must also understand that the Iraqi insurgency is a new variant of an old problem, both similar to and different from Vietnam and its other predecessors. It is vital to discern the similarities from the differences and use this to build coherent policy. At a minimum, such a strategy would entail the following:

◆ **Admit the extent of the problem frankly.** During the early years of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, U.S. strategists tended to focus on killing active insurgents rather than on identifying and rectifying the structural problems that spawned them. The United States is close to replicating this situation in Iraq. Occupation, although vital to attain U.S. objectives, breeds opposition. In an era when national liberation has been deified, even successful control of street crime and revival of the Iraqi economy will not fully obviate the anger and resentment felt by Iraqis toward their U.S. occupiers. Only the full withdrawal of U.S. forces would, but this should not happen until Iraq has undergone several years of tutelage and developed the capacity for self-rule. The persistence of the insurgency in the interim is therefore inevitable.

◆ **Integrate the strategy within the U.S. bureaucracy and with its Coalition partners.** The United States and its close Coalition partners must assure unity of effort across all of the governmental agencies involved. Counter-insurgency is not an exclusively or even predominantly military function but demands the seamless integration of informational, political, social, cultural, law enforcement, economic, military, and intelligence activities. Military strategists consider the successful British counterinsurgency campaign in Malaya that began in the late 1940s the model to replicate. At every level, from the local to the national, the British military, police, and intelligence services and government agencies concerned with economic development were seamlessly integrated. Military operations were low-key and limited, undertaken with specific, narrow objectives and not used to intimidate insurgents or their potential supporters.

In Malaya, the British also found that carrots—political and economic development—were more important tools of counterinsurgency than sticks. These lessons were applied toward the end of U.S. involvement in Vietnam and had local success, but by then, it was too late to shift the course of the conflict.

Yet, it is still early in the Iraqi insurgency. The United States and its coalition partners should follow the pattern of success from Malaya and implement full integration across all governmental agencies, stressing political and economic development.

◆ **Focus on two key battlespaces: intelligence and Iraqi perception.** Because the main tactics of Palestinian-style insurgency are to wear down the occupier and alienate the public, reliable and timely intelligence is the lifeblood of counterinsurgency. Every insurgent attack that occurs, even if the attackers lose more lives than the defenders, is a victory for the insurgents because it fuels fear among the public and dissatisfaction with the governing power, both within the beleaguered country and internationally. To the extent that the United States is able to obtain, analyze, and act on information about insurgent attacks in Iraq, it can control the psychological dimension of the conflict. Phrased differently, intelligence specialists are keys to victory in counterinsurgency. Success will require human and technical sources of information as well as effective methods to analyze and share information across agencies and among coalition partners.

The more difficult battlespace may be perception. After decades of totalitarianism, Iraqis are ill equipped to evaluate the credibility of information. As a result, wild, often surreal rumors spread rapidly and are widely believed. An exploding array of domestic Iraqi newspapers and electronic media, Iranian government sources, and other Arabic news media such as Al Jazeera bombard Iraqis with information, much of it unconstrained by objectivity or often truth. This manipulates existing prejudices, fears, and beliefs. Despite great efforts, the United States does not appear to be winning the psychological war in Iraq, at least not yet.

It is always difficult to counter misinformation in an environment where people are unprepared to distinguish truth from fiction. The best the United States and its coalition partners can do is to promulgate the truth

persistently in a culturally sensitive way, working whenever possible with Iraqis trained in responsible journalism.

◆ **Break the linkages between Iraqi insurgents and affiliated or allied groups.**

The two most likely allies for the Iraqi insurgents are the global Islamic radical movement, particularly the remnants of al-Qaeda or its offshoots, and global organized crime. Although U.S. strategists have made great efforts to curb the former, less attention has been given to the latter. Iraq is already suffering from a massive growth in organized crime, some built on the remnants of the Ba'th movement, which moved extensively into organized crime during the past decade, and some on Iranian criminal gangs looking to expand their territory. The nascent Iraqi police that the coalition is helping to organize cannot control street crime, much less confront organized crime and insurgents.

As a result, organized crime is burrowing deeper into Iraqi society. Should this continue at such a rapid rate, bringing it under control will take decades. Therefore, a U.S. counterinsurgency strategy should include steps to thwart organized crime now. This specific area is one where an integrated counterinsurgency strategy is vital: law enforcement is as important as military activity and must be an equal partner in planning and distributing resources. If Iraq is left cleared of political radicals but under the control of organized crime, the United States will not have attained its strategic objectives.

◆ **Design a larger regional and strategic context.**

Solutions to broader national and regional problems are necessary to end the insurgency. Iraq was and is very much part of the Arab and Islamic worlds. Attempts to reconstruct the country politically cannot be fully separated from the larger issues that trouble the Arab world, particularly Palestine, closed political systems, the lack of economic growth, overpopulation, and a general inability to compete in the globalized economy. The notion that a post-insurgency Iraq can serve as a beacon for the region has merit,

but more than a vision is necessary.

For the new Iraq to remain stable and prosperous, the region must become stable and prosperous. This is a massive undertaking with at least three very complex components for the United States: solving the Palestinian problem, which appears to require some sort of international intervention; explicitly committing to open government in the region, which will destabilize closed regimes in states such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt at least in the short term and will invariably lead to an increased role for religious parties; and committing to regional economic development that could draw off capital currently flowing to other fragile regions such as South Asia, eastern Europe, or South America. If the United States does not undertake these three steps, a democratic Iraq will remain a beleaguered island in an unstable region.

◆ **Remind the American public vigorously and continuously of what is at stake in Iraq.** Like all insurgencies, the one in Iraq will test whose will can be sustained longer, the insurgents' or the counterinsurgents'. If U.S. involvement in Iraq becomes a major point of contention in the 2004 election and the Democrats advocate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, sustaining American public support for U.S. operations in Iraq could prove very difficult. U.S. politicians who seek to criticize the administration for ongoing operations in Iraq should be challenged to explain their vision of the future of Iraq without a near-term U.S. presence.

No Easy Way Out

The United States faces an intractable dilemma in Iraq: in effect, it is damned if it does, damned if it doesn't. By staying, the United States will face a protracted insurgency, but by withdrawing before the new Iraq is able to stand on its own, the ultimate strategic objective—a unified, stable Iraq that does not threaten its neighbors and does not support international terrorism—will not be

met. After three decades of totalitarianism, Iraqis will not be ready for several years to run a stable nation on their own. Stability requires an interim period of oversight, occupation, and tutelage. Yet Iraqis cannot admit this, and so the occupation generates opposition and violence.

A comprehensive and coherent U.S. counterinsurgency strategy is the only feasible solution to confront the strategic dilemma the United States now faces in Iraq. Comprehensive counterinsurgency, focusing on the key nodes for success outlined here, is unlikely to eradicate the violent opposition to the coalition fully but should at least sufficiently weaken the insurgent opposition and ensure that the new Iraqi regime is not born—as the South Vietnamese government was—with a massive internal security threat on its hands.

The idea that open government is a universal model has long served as the essence of U.S. foreign policy strategy. For better or worse, Iraq has been chosen as the place to prove this point. Thus, failure in Iraq would undercut the very foundation of U.S. global strategy. Given these immense stakes, U.S. policymakers are dangerously close to underestimating the nature of the challenge in Iraq. Overoptimistic assumptions about the ease of the transition to stable, open government led to the current situation. It is now time to grapple with the depth and complexity of the opposition. By implementing a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy now, the United States can forestall the growth of the opposition and hopefully allow a new Iraq to serve as a beacon for change in the region.

Notes

1. Frank Watanabe, "How to Succeed in the DI: Fifteen Axioms for Intelligence Analysis," *Studies in Intelligence* 1, no. 1 (1997), www.cia.gov/csi/studies/97unclass/axioms.html (accessed October 1, 2003).

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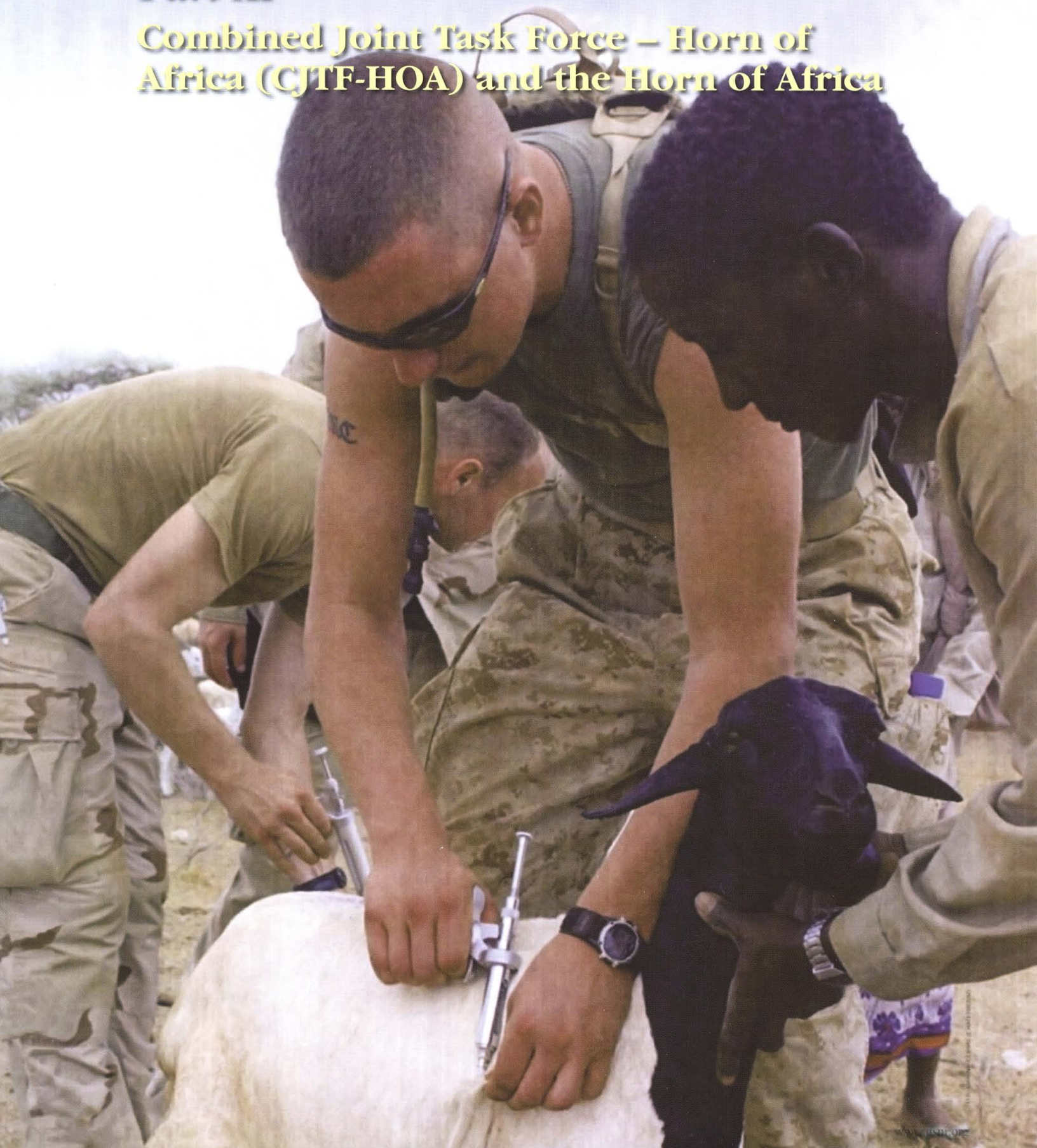
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American Strategy (2007; online at <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB752.pdf>) and *Iraq and the Evolution of American Strategy* (2008).

Part XI

Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) and the Horn of Africa



Around the Horn

by David J. Danelo

U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, June 2006

On a C-130 flight bound for Mombasa, Kenya, the pilot suddenly banks low. “There’s going to be a little bit of turbulence,” he announces, “but look out the windows. You might see some animals and stuff.” Flying low over the African savannah, herds of gazelles and wildebeests graze on acacia trees amidst brown rivers along the southern Kenyan coast.

“Is there a SAM threat in Kenya?” asks a reporter, referring to surface-to-air missiles. He was accustomed to the jostling maneuver from C-130 flights in Iraq.

The dozen other passengers stare. Colonel Tirmet, a garrulous 28-year veteran of the Kenyan army with a paternal manner, puts down his novel and laughs at the question. “There is no war here.” The pilot was cruising below the radar just to enjoy the impromptu safari.

In one sense, Colonel Tirmet is right. Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are not exploding on the Horn, nor are suicide bombers plying their vile trade. However, the area still remains, in the view of the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), dangerous enough to classify as one of three combat zones within the combatant command’s realm (the others are Iraq and Afghanistan). Although American forces have never been fired on in the region, the sense of urgency prevalent in a wartime mission applies to what has become primarily a civil-affairs operation.

The Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa, or CJTF-HOA, as the task force is known, entered the Horn in 2002 with a mandate to detect and defeat transnational terrorism. Over the past four years, the mission has evolved into a two-pronged effort: humanitarian operations and military instruction. Although Soldiers, Marines, and Sailors teach military skills, and civilian diplomats are valuable in building foreign government partnerships, CJTF-HOA’s pri-

mary frontline troops are doctors, nurses, veterinarians, civil engineers, and Seabees engaged in humanitarian projects.

The underlying philosophy behind the task force’s strategy is that nations with stable, secure environments where people have opportunities for education and good jobs are less likely to harbor terrorists. “We want to dry up the al-Qaeda recruiting pool,” said Major General Timothy Ghormley, USMC, who commanded CJTF-HOA until April 2006, when Rear Admiral Richard Hunt, USN, assumed the helm. Admiral Hunt’s tenure marks one of the U.S. Navy’s first shore-based joint commands.

The task force has had four commanding generals in four years. All were Marines, and all built the foundations of strategy from *Small Wars Manual*, the classic treatise on counterinsurgency warfare that was written in 1940 by veterans of the Banana Wars and dusted off again for the hearts-and-minds campaign in Iraq. Since 2002, CJTF-HOA has built 52 schools, 6 hospitals, and 21 medical clinics; dug 23 village wells; and vaccinated thousands of people—and the animals that support their livelihood—against disease. In January 2006, when a decrepit, inhabited four-story building collapsed in Nairobi, Kenya, the task force assisted with the recovery efforts.

In countries that have stable governments, CJTF-HOA also provides training for local military forces in skills that will enhance their abilities to prevent terror attacks. Over the past four years, military forces in four HOA nations—Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Yemen—have been trained in skills including map reading, maritime security, motor-transport maintenance, and martial arts. Not bad for a crew numbering just over 1,500 personnel.

“Fortunately, we’re not getting shot at or blown up here,” General Ghormley said. “That’s because somebody saw the wisdom in getting (to the Horn) for Phase Zero,” which is jargon for a war that has not yet happened, but potentially could. In other words, the general sees the opportunity to prevent the need for combat by

We Build, We Fight

On a sunny spring morning, 20 African soldiers stood in a half-circle on a base in Arta, Djibouti. They were quiet and respectful as Construction Mechanic Third Class Ival McClanahan, a Seabee with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 7, held a spark plug. He pointed to an engine on a decrepit Soviet-era truck. "These guys know what works, but not why," Petty Officer McClanahan muttered to a reporter standing next to him, impressed by his pupils. "If we can teach them the equipment, they can troubleshoot their own problems."

On liberty, the Djiboutian soldiers chew *khat*, a leafy-green narcotic popular in east Africa, and wear *sarongs*, the bright, feminine-looking wraparound garment that Americans call a "manshirt." But on the job and in uniform, they see themselves as the equivalent of U.S. Army Rangers or Green Berets (enthusiasm notwithstanding, they are not at that level). "We exercised for one and one half hours this morning," Sergeant Mohammad Miad, a tall, taut man of Somali descent, says through a translator. "If we aren't careful, we will become like civilians." As Petty Officer McClanahan taught, the Djiboutians attended to his lesson as though their livelihoods depended on it.

Like Marines, Seabees live by their own official motto of *Construimus, Batiumus*—We Build, We Fight. Wherever CJTF-HOA goes, Seabees are the vanguard infantrymen—the grunts of the hearts and minds campaign on the Horn of Africa. Doctors and veterinarians can vaccinate, but they are there and gone in a day. Soldiers or special boat units can teach tactics, but if they live on a local base, they also live in their own private compounds, which separate them from the local military. For many Africans, Seabees are the face of America.

Like squads and platoons, NMCB-7 operates in small detachments, maintaining their own self-sustaining camps inside villages for weeks

or months. Being uniformed construction workers, they refer to their base of operations as a "job site." They coordinate their own security, run internal logistics, and plan independent schedules. Seabees from the unit—a few lost homes during Hurricane Katrina—take pride in their saltiness; their construction crusades have taken them on disaster relief (Sri Lanka, New Orleans), humanitarian operations (HOA, Sao Tome), peacekeeping support (Guantanamo Bay, Bahrain), as well as combat operations in Iraq. Outside of Special Forces, few units have been deployed so frequently throughout the war on terrorism as the Seabees. Their travels have given them an appreciation for each culture they encounter. "The people out here are smart," said Utilitiesman First Class James Penney, of Bushkill, Pennsylvania, echoing comments made throughout NMCB-7. After a radio blew a fuse, and the Seabee electrician had given up on it, a resident of Tadjoura, Djibouti, took the appliance home and returned it, fixed, the next day.

That appreciation has made the Seabees better operators. "We realized that the Class IV supplies we brought in were made to American, not local specs," said Petty Officer Penney, referring to materials they used in building a school in Tadjoura. "So before we started, we reordered everything to metric standards." This meant converting all electrical and plumbing equipment, which had not been purchased using local metric measurements.

The Seabees now check on the local requirements for each system before they order their supplies. "We'll never put American parts in here again," Petty Officer Penney said. "If we do, they won't be able to maintain it after we leave."

Commanders such as Major General Gormley and Rear Admiral Hunt get their money's worth from the Seabees. The mechanics, equipment operators, builders, steelworkers, plumbers, and electricians com-

prise about two platoons of personnel. The squad can be split into a water well team or four construction teams, which are task organized for specific missions. When the tempo of humanitarian operations ebbed, one detachment of Seabees built a coffee bar and Internet café at Camp Lemonier to bolster troop welfare. Small groups of two to three instructors, such as Petty Officer McClanahan, are sent out as the need

Back at the motor transport maintenance class in Arta, the Djiboutian soldiers removed the hood of the truck so everyone could see

Petty Officer McClanahan's instructions. "Before we came here, they thought the only way to get it started was to run and pop the clutch," he said. As two soldiers pushed on the distributor cap, another pointed at the spark plug and traced his fingers around the engine, completing an imaginary circuit. He hollered in Somali at his classmates. Suddenly, they all cheered.

"We got it!" Petty Officer McClanahan clapped as well, and pointed with them at the engine. He grinned at his Djiboutian charges. "These guys are locked on!"

continuing the process of, as he put it, "waging peace as aggressively as I can."

"Terrorists will want to come to Africa because there is so much ungoverned space," General Ghormley warned. "Those areas are perfect for al-Qaeda. They can operate with impunity, train, and get their recruits." The terrorists will not become operational, however, if the hearts and minds of potential recruits are not open to extremism. Efforts on the Horn are centered on winning over the vulnerable elements of the populace.

A Quiet Campaign

CJTF-HOA's quiet campaign has been underway for almost four years. Although the idea for a presence on the Horn was conceived soon after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the unit did not take shape for another year. In October 2002, with the world's attention focused on the threat of war in Iraq, the HOA task force was established at Camp Lejeune, with then-Major General John F. Sattler commanding. According to a February 2006 interview with General Sattler, General Tommy Franks wanted him to establish a small joint task force that could address threats to American interests on the Horn. General Franks thought American forces might be flushing members of al-Qaeda from Afghanistan into safe havens in Africa. CJTF-HOA's job was to prevent that from happening. So far, they have succeeded.

Lacking a camp to move into on shore, in December 2002 the nascent CJTF-HOA planted its flag on the USS *Mount Whitney* (LCC-20), which was docked at the port of Djibouti.¹ CJTF-HOA's area of responsibility and interest would grow to include the humid African littorals of Djibouti and Eritrea, the bazaars of Yemen, the deserts of Sudan and Somalia, and the highlands and plains of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda.² All together, the Horn, which juts out from east Africa like a rhinoceros tusk, comprises seven nations and Somalia—a homogenous, chaotic ethnic region. The area is more than five times the size of Iraq and Afghanistan combined. Approximately half of the 167 million inhabitants are Muslim.

As Saddam's statue was being toppled in Iraq, final plans were completed to move CJTF-HOA ashore. The detachment was located adjacent to the French Foreign Legion outpost of Camp Lemonier. At the same time that the French government was opposing U.S.-led military action in Iraq, it committed to a partnership on the Horn. "There may have been some tension in high places, but not in CJTF-HOA," Sattler said. "It was a collegial relationship on our part."

Formerly known as French Somaliland, Djibouti blends the humidity of South Carolina with the rugged coastal beauty of southern California. The terrain alternates between mountain and desert; much of the ground is as sandy as Baghdad. High temperatures in the summertime are a sticky 130°.

The Rock Star

As CJTF-HOA moved from ship to shore, Sattler leaned heavily on then-Colonel Richard Lake to develop a plan of attack. A Marine intelligence and foreign area officer who had tours with the State Department and CIA, Colonel Lake's fluency with both French and diplomatic courtesies became invaluable as CJTF-HOA worked to build bilateral relationships among the region's leaders. "We sort of had to make our own way," Lake said, meaning that it was up to the CJTF-HOA staff to determine how to implement America's counterterrorism strategy in the region. With a vague mandate from their higher headquarters and a paucity of resources, Lake began leveraging Sattler's gregarious personality to CJTF-HOA's operational advantage. "We decided to make him a rock star," Lake said, referring to his boss.

The strategic decision to use what Colonel Lake called the general's "relentless optimism" for diplomatic gain forced the French linguist into the role of stage manager for General Sattler's Horn of Africa Tour. Lake flew from embassy to embassy, making house calls on skeptical foreign governments and surprised American ambassadors. The general's follow-on appearance as the main event at dinners and diplomatic events made an impression throughout the region, said Lake. "General Sattler has a very outgoing personality. He is relentlessly positive. Many of the leaders in the region respected a man with military experience. My job was to set the stage with U.S. embassies and country teams."

According to Don Yamamoto, who was then the ambassador to Djibouti, much of the groundwork for the task force's future success resulted from General Sattler's charisma and his trusted subordinate's facility with French and diplomacy. Brigadier General Richard Lake now serves as the Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps. "General Lake served as a liaison between the Djiboutians and the French. He knew how to handle political issues very well," Mr. Yamamoto said. "Every general who has commanded CJTF-HOA has been a diplomat-warrior, but that all started with Sattler."

The United States is not new to the Horn of Africa. A plateau in Eritrea possesses extraordinary reception properties for sending and receiving radio signals. Beginning in April 1943, the U.S. Army had maintained a signaling and communications site near the 7,600-foot high Eritrean capital of Asmara. The listening post had proved vital to Allied success in World War II. Axis radio transmissions were intercepted and decoded on the plateau. The post became known as Kagnev Station, and was maintained throughout most of the Cold War. In 1977, satellite technology, a coup in Ethiopia, and an ongoing civil war removed the need for the Eritrean base. Kagnev Station was closed and all American forces moved out of the region.³

Other than famine relief during the 1984-85 drought that devastated Ethiopia, American involvement on the Horn was virtually nonexistent throughout the next two decades, reemerging in 1992 with Operation Restore Hope in Somalia. After the collapse of Mogadishu, American forces again withdrew from the Horn. al-Qaeda, who claimed that their attacks caused the withdrawal, established terrorist training camps in and around Sudan. Forces from these camps used car bombs to attack the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. Four years later, the surface-to-air missile that was shot at an Israeli airliner in Mombasa was transported from Somalia on a dhow, a single-sailed vessel commonly used for both trading and piracy on the Horn.⁴

A Small Team

As a land-based command, CJTF-HOA is not responsible for American anti-piracy operations in the waters and shoals of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean—that duty falls to the U.S. Navy, Central Command (NAVCENT). What commanders and staff in CJTF-HOA are focused on is addressing the poverty and lack of education in areas most likely to be seized by Islamic fundamentalists. With such a small team of soldiers, sailors, Marines, airmen, and civilians, General Gormley had to be efficient with his resources.

This efficiency, say CJTF-HOA staff officers, is being touted as the future model for the Global

War on Terrorism. General Ghormley implemented a concept called “distributed operations,” a decentralized approach to combat that has been widely discussed by Marine officers in relation to the Iraq War. Although the staff of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command has had a series of conferences about this concept in Quantico, the idea in CJTF-HOA has evolved well beyond a PowerPoint presentation. “I have units that are 400 miles away. It’s two hours, from launch to land, to bring them any type of relief. It’s four and a half hours to the only medical facility in the area,” General Ghormley said, describing CJTF-HOA’s implementation of distributed operations. “This isn’t something that we’re experimenting with. I don’t have a lab to work this thing out. I’m doing it.”

Challenges remain. For CJTF-HOA to carry out its strategy in the Horn, it must be permitted access to a country by the national government and the State Department. Eritrea does not allow Coalition forces, and the Yemeni government restricts humanitarian assistance and military training to a lower level than CJTF-HOA would like. The government of Sudan also has not granted access to the American military.

And significantly, CJTF-HOA is not allowed into Somalia. With no central government and no borders—the eastern boundary in Ethiopia’s Ogaden Desert is called a Provisional Administrative Line—the lawless land is, according to CJTF-HOA, ripe for the spread of fundamentalism. However, the State Department, which is the lead organization on developing Somalia policy, restricts CJTFHOA from officially operating in the region.⁵ “Somehow or another,” General Ghormley said, “I have to affect what’s going on in there. Because I am not allowed into Somalia, the best I can do is to surround it with U.S. forces.”

The difference is that General Ghormley is flanking and enveloping with the combat power of veterinarians, host nation military partnerships, and new village wells. And they’ve made gains. CJTF-HOA’s original vaccination program treated 50 people and 250 animals; the last effort involved 3,400 people and 24,000 animals. The increase in numbers also reflected different livestock. “We knew we were progressing when

they brought us camels instead of goats,” General Ghormley said. Nomadic Somalis view their camels as their most valuable property; giving permission for CJTF-HOA’s veterinarians to handle these animals was like trusting a financial planner with a full asset portfolio.

Women and Children

When CJTF-HOA takes a project into a village, it makes a conscious effort to focus on the women and children. “Women are the heart of the village,” said General Ghormley. “They do all the work and understand the politics. They can steer much of what we’re doing in the right direction.” Their children, he said, represent the hope and the future—the subjects of CJTF-HOA’s long-term efforts. “We have to improve that child’s future prospects so that 25 years from now they don’t think we’re the Great Satan,” the general said. “The longer we are here, the deeper the impression becomes.”

And remember they do. “I know the Marines,” said Isaac, 19, a skinny Kenyan living in the village of Githurai, a ghetto on the outskirts of Nairobi. “They eat nyama choma and drink beer.”⁶ No uniformed American had ever set foot in the slum. The teenager had encountered a pair of Marines who were guards at the Nairobi embassy. They were playing basketball on liberty at a park, and invited the boy to join them. Afterwards, they all ate Kenyan food and drank a few pints of Tusker, the local brew. The actions of friendly lance corporals on liberty can be as effective in deterring fundamentalism in some parts of the Horn as new wells or animal vaccinations in others.

In addition to humanitarian operations and liberty calls, CJTF-HOA also has naval forces in a partnership with the Kenyan government. At Camp Simba, an American camp inside a Kenyan military base located near Manda Bay on the northern coast, an American special boat unit has trained a core group of Kenyan sailors in special operations tactics. U.S. Navy Lieutenant Freeman, who asked that his first name not be used for security reasons, said, “we are giving the Kenyans tools for securing their littoral regions.” With the camp located just south of the Somali

border, the most likely threat to the Kenyan coastline comes from Somali pirates.

Which is what the Sailors at Manda Bay are training the Kenyans to deal with. The tactics, techniques, and procedures involve the Rigid-hull Inflatable Boat (RIB), the standard U.S. Navy platform for small boat special operations. Although the specifics remain classified, a reporter observed Kenyan sailors learning detainee-handling procedures, small boat handling, and conducting heavy special forces-style physical training.

“(Kenyan sailors) are already capable mariners,” says Freeman, “not to mention that they can run like the wind. But now, they are more capable at certain missions.” Since most of the American Sailors at Manda Bay have at least two tours in Iraq or Afghanistan under their belt—one was on his fourth combat deployment in as many years—they say that training the Kenyans for these missions has been a satisfying break from their work in more violent locales.

Plan Working

The plan in the Horn appears to be working. As of April 2006, no American military unit has been attacked in the field while conducting humanitarian assistance. Not only that, but Somalis, according to Ghormley, have heard about the services CJTF-HOA provides. “We’re getting phone calls. We’ve met with government officials. They’re all asking us to come in there, provide wells, build schools, and treat (their) people.”

“The task force is still evolving,” said former Ambassador Yamamoto, who is now the assistant secretary of state for African affairs. “With the Navy in command, it will take on a different character, although Admiral Hunt will continue the work others have begun.” That includes the State Department. “CJTF-HOA has changed how we look at foreign relations and also relations

among U.S. agencies,” says Secretary Yamamoto. “In the past, embassies focused on bilateral issues. CJTF-HOA brought our ambassadors together to discuss regional issues and broadened our perspective.”⁷

“If we think we’ll be in here for three years, build some wells, and then leave, we have lost sight of what it is we are trying to do,” General Ghormley said, summarizing his thoughts on the command. “This is a generational war. If we are patient and slow, with the right resources, we can provide hope.” And perhaps prevent the ideology of terror from infecting the Horn’s inhabitants.

Notes

1. Dubai Ports International, the same conglomerate that caused a stir over its intention to acquire American assets, owns the Port of Djibouti.
2. Information according to “Fast Facts: CJTF-HOA” distributed by the Public Affairs Office, March 2006. According to conversations with staff officers, both Uganda and the Seychelles were classified as CJTF-HOA’s Area of Interest.
3. Michela Wrong, *I Didn’t Do It For You: How the World Betrayed a Small African Nation* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 276.
4. A *Washington Post* reporter and a freelance writer living in Africa reported this anecdote.
5. Special forces and other government agencies are rumored to be working in Somalia, but those reports could not be confirmed.
6. *Nyama choma* is a traditional Kenyan method of preparing chicken, mutton, or beef.
7. For more on the significance of this level of coordination for counterterrorism, see Matthew F. Bogdanos, “Article Title,” Interagency Operations: The Marine Specialty of the Century,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, March 2006, 60-65.

About the Author

David J. Danelo is a security consultant and freelance writer. He is a former Marine officer and a combat veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. His first book was *Blood Stripes: The Grunt’s View of the War in Iraq* (2006).

Recommended Reading

Headed to Camp Lemonier and already seen *Blackhawk Down*? These seven books offer valuable insights into the Horn of Africa.

Surrender or Starve: Travels in Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, and Eritrea, Robert D. Kaplan. New York: Random House, 1988, 2003. Originally published in 1988, Kaplan's first book was based on his travels in the Horn from 1984-1987. His reporting from two decades ago stands the test of time, particularly his dissection of the Ethiopian famine that Western aid tried to address (communist agricultural policies played a significant role), and his analysis of the despotic regime in power. Kaplan's December 2002 postscript from Eritrea complements other works with his insight into the mind of President Isaias Afewerki.

I Didn't Do It For You: How the World Betrayed a Small African Nation, Michela Wrong. New York: Harper Collins, 2005. Based on a series of trips into Eritrea, an Africa correspondent for the London-based *Financial Times* looks at how a series of colonial occupations—Italian, British, and Ethiopian—precipitated the Eritrean war for independence. She also examines how betrayals from both Cold War superpowers created a psyche of national isolation. In a fascinating, lewd chapter, Wrong interviews veterans of the U.S. Army's Kagnew Station, a Cold War listening post in Eritrea. Her narrative of the "Gross Guys" antics on liberty might even make veterans of Thailand's Pattaya Beach blush.

The Law of the Somalis: A Stable Foundation for Economic Development in the Horn of Africa, Michael van Notten. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, 2005. The most important book about Somalia that you've never heard of. Van Notten, a Dutch attorney and libertarian who was fluent in eight languages (including two Somali dialects), married into the Samaron clan and lived in Awdal, near Hargesia, for ten years. After van Notten died of heart failure in 2002, a colleague edited his notes into this book. His most controversial and compelling claim is that the clan-based system of justice, what he calls "kritarchy," is both unsuitable for

democracy and perfect for the modern free-market economy.

Battling Terrorism in the Horn of Africa, edited by Robert L. Rotberg. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2005. Rotberg's collection of seven essays on the regions and nation-states that comprise the Horn outlines the foundation for much of CJTF-HOA's current strategic vision. For speed-readers, the four best are on Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Sudan. Of least significance is the essay on Eritrea, where the works previously cited provide stronger background and insight.

The Life of My Choice, Wilfred Thesiger. Glasgow: William Collins, 1987. Two decades after T. E. Lawrence, Wilfred Thesiger captured the imaginations of a new generation of Britons with his writings and photojournalism from Arabia, and elsewhere in Asia, and Africa. Thesiger's works blend essay, travelogue, and memoir with some of the best photography of 20th-century Africa that exists. His books are out of print and hard to find, making his firsthand observations of life and travels on the Horn from pre-World War I to 1960 all the more enticing.

The Fate of Africa: From the Hopes of Freedom to the Heart of Despair, Martin Meredith. New York: Perseus, 2005. Meredith's magnum opus chronicles the movement of the African continent from post-World War II to the present day. The author takes readers from Algeria to Pretoria and everywhere in between. Lucid and readable, this book tells the story of the Horn, particularly Kenya, in the context of Africa's development over the past 50 years.

Where Soldiers Fear to Tread: A Relief Worker's Tale of Survival, John Burnett. New York: Bantam, 2005. The next time someone chides you about the U.S. military's cultural ignorance, hand them a copy of this book. Burnett exposes the dark side of the aid industry in this searing memoir of U.N. incompetence when heavy rains flooded the Horn in 1997-1998. This book demonstrates why the U.S. military must remain prepared for humanitarian missions for decades to come. Young Sailors and Marines emerge, comparatively, as Ph.D.-level anthropologists.





The War on Terrorism in the Horn of Africa

by Tom Duhs

Marine Corps Gazette, April 2004

Readers are offered an analysis of U.S. efforts to conduct counterterrorism operations in the Horn of Africa.

When President George W. Bush decided America would be engaged in a global war on terrorism (GWOT), the Commander, U.S. Central Command (ComUSCentCom) directed that a task force be created to cover the Horn of Africa (HOA). During November 2002, the USS *Mount Whitney* (LCC 20) embarked a staff of officers and enlisted personnel and sailed to a location off the coast of Djibouti in east Africa. The organization, called the Combined Joint Task Force HOA (CJTF-HOA), had a specific purpose. CJTF-HOA was sent on a mission to conduct the war on terrorism in the HOA countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. The prevailing notion at the time was that with the war in Iraq imminent, terrorist organizations would flee to the HOA. Since the end of 2002, events have shown that the HOA countries are the residences for terrorist organizations and individuals. During May 2003, the CJTF-HOA staff transitioned ashore to Camp Lemonier in Djibouti. Since May, the CJTF-HOA staff, along with detachments of a civil affairs company and two detachments of engineers, has worked humanitarian operations in the area of operations (AO). There are also plans awaiting approval for direct actions against terrorist organizations.

The time has come to seriously consider taking decisive action against terrorist groups and organizations that until now have been left virtually alone. CJTF-HOA has reached the point where a change in the situation is warranted.

Either the United States is serious about fighting terrorism in the HOA or it isn't. One way or the other, serious decisions about how to proceed must be made.

Strategic goal (paraphrased from multiple sources). The CJTF-HOA mission in this region will be complete when regional states assume full responsibility for security against international terrorists within their region.

Commander's intent (stated in part). Deny terrorist organizations and their supporters the use of the HOA countries as a safe haven for terrorist activities while supporting efforts that create a stable and secure region to prevent the reemergence of transnational terrorism in the region.

End state. Transnational terrorist groups will be denied the use of HOA countries as a safe haven for terrorist activities.

There are several assumptions that must be analyzed and addressed when considering the nature of transnational terrorism and the position CJTF-HOA takes as it relates to terrorism in the strategic and operational levels of war. The assumptions presented below are offered after eight months of close observation. The reason for making serious decisions in the very near term is that the strategic goal, as commonly understood, is unattainable under the current circumstances. Therefore, one of four choices must be made in order for CJTF-HOA to contribute to the GWOT:

(1) Maintain the status quo as a forward presence focused on conducting humanitarian assistance in the region.

(2) Change the paradigm to support military operations where the Department of Defense (DoD) has the lead and is the supported department rather than the Department of State (DoS).

(3) Change the relationships between the various relevant departments and organizations.

(4) Stand down the mission and send the troops home.

The restated mission for CJTF-HOA contains four elements. The four elements are detect, disrupt, defeat, and deny terrorist organizations in the HOA. After eight months it is time to ask, is the "4D" mission of detect, disrupt, defeat, and deny adequate, feasible, relevant and achievable?

Detect, disrupt, defeat, deny—the concept is

clear and understandable, yet without some evidence that transnational terrorists are *defeated*, the other three elements are elusive, impossible to measure, or irrelevant. Conditions prevalent in the HOA that foster the existence of terrorist organizations have long been present and will continue, with or without U.S. military involvement, into the future. Therefore, the questions of success criteria and achievability are legitimate.

Assumptions Affecting Operational Objectives

Several regional conditions affect CJTF-HOA's operational environment. The existence of CJTF-HOA cannot significantly change these conditions in the near term. The commander, CJTF-HOA (ComCJTF-HOA), and the highest levels of civilian and military leadership must therefore understand these conditions or operational objectives will not be realistic or achievable.

◆ State governments in the region have limited sovereignty within their borders to counter terrorist groups. They are heavily influenced by tribal/clan authority structures that limit the central government's ability to exert its own authority within its borders. Existing terrorist cells also adversely affect both the internal governance and sovereignty of the central government.

◆ Regional disputes limit the ability of states to counter terrorist organizations. Conflict over territorial disputes taxes regional state resources that could otherwise be directed toward long-term economic and political stability and regional security. Mistrust from unresolved territorial disputes will make it difficult to achieve security cooperation between states.

◆ Economic depression in the region will remain a cause of political turmoil limiting near-term effectiveness of regional state governments against terrorists. Humanitarian assistance can provide only limited measures at best. Worse, humanitarian assistance can be counterproductive to near-term security goals if not efficiently directed toward well-defined operational objectives and if the administration of such assistance is not carefully supervised.

◆ Terrorist groups cannot be appeased or

deterred, so they must be eliminated. This assumption comes from statements espoused by the current Secretary of Defense (SecDef). Terrorist groups cannot be deterred because they are either willing to die for their cause or are able to escape being held accountable. They are able to escape because they have no national identity or homeland. Consequently, they are able to hide in HOA countries without too much fear of capture or elimination. The United States recognized this was the case and decided to go on the offensive militarily, find them, and kill or capture them.

◆ Terrorist groups or representatives from larger transnational groups reside in the African countries that make up the CJTF-HOA AO. The detection and disruption of those groups' activities cause major headaches, discomfort, and problems for the current governments. Consequently, American Ambassadors to the HOA countries do not want host-nation prime ministers, presidents, ministers of defense, generals, and other high national figures pestering them about U.S. military action inside HOA countries. It is far easier, safer, convenient, and less taxing to allow, facilitate, and coordinate the U.S. military "engagement activities" in AO countries than to allow, facilitate, and coordinate efforts for direct action missions. Military actions that defeat, neutralize, or destroy terrorist networks or their support networks and structures require much more oversight, coordination, and "buy in."

◆ Therefore, it would be more simple for CJTF-HOA to focus exclusively on detection and disruption. Skip over defeat, declare victory, and let the host nations worry about denying safe havens to terrorist organizations. But, without the defeat part of the plan—the part where host-nation militaries deny terrorists the ability to enter their territory—all other endeavors are in vain. Denial can never really happen because corrupt national security and/or police forces facilitate the existence of terrorist groups; therefore, terrorists will be able to maintain their safe havens with the facilitation of the local authorities.

The HOA countries are rift with so many problems already that economic prosperity or

free market economies will never be able to thrive enough to make these countries attractive to large business.

◆ Tribal and clan considerations dominate the political landscape. Political movements rely heavily on tribal groupings for a base of support. Political ideologies may differ, but the basis for political support is bound along tribal lines. The individual African's association with the tribe as the basis of political affiliation and social interaction is essential for understanding. This means that based on clan affiliation one can hold power, money, and position regardless of ability, drive, determination, brains, or skill. If the dominant tribe calls the shot, their man is placed into positions of power with little concern for the welfare of the state or community. The clan can protect terrorist members within the territory they control. This means the sovereignty of the state is irrelevant.

◆ The position the Bush administration has taken is that nations cannot support terrorists in any way. If a government fails to prohibit terrorist organizations to exist in its territory, it forfeits some of the normal advantages of sovereignty, including the right to be left alone inside its own territory. If military action is taken inside clan-controlled territory, local sovereignty is challenged, so national leaders become vulnerable to reprisals. Reprisals on governmental officials affect the relationship between the host nations and U.S. Ambassadors.

◆ Some regional states have a shortage of resources such as water, energy, and cultivated land and cannot sustain current population levels at a reasonable subsistence level.

◆ Political turmoil, graft, greed, corruption, and lack of individual security prevent maximum utilization of existing resources.

◆ Significant economic contributions to the region in the form of humanitarian assistance can provide only limited measures at best. Even the most historically significant contributions have only occurred when conditions become severe enough to trigger frequent publicity in benevolent countries. When publicity subsides, the public will probably shift away from support of significant humanitarian intervention.

◆ Humanitarian assistance can be counterpro-

ductive to near-term security goals if it is not efficiently directed toward well-defined operational objectives and the administration of assistance supervised in subtle—but important—details. Cultural sensitivities and rival political interests can quickly subvert loosely controlled civil-military operations/humanitarian assistance efforts. A so-called “goodwill gesture” without a quid pro quo simply delivers resources to regional political interests to use for their own goals, not those of the United States.

◆ Any humanitarian assistance effort that is not directed toward well-defined security goals is an extraneous employment of CJTF-HOA assets. Coalition governments may utilize CJTF-HOA assets in good will efforts for a public policy purpose. However, those efforts do not necessarily advance regional operational objectives unless dedicated planning by CJTF-HOA identifies ways to direct the effort toward operational objectives.

CJTF-HOA as the Center of Gravity in HOA for the GWOT

Based on the articulation of policies from the SecDef, these assumptions, if valid, place the CJTF-HOA into an untenable situation. The situation is untenable because the strategic and operational centers of gravity (COGs) are not focused in the same direction or aimed at accomplishing the strategic goal—*regional states assume full responsibility for security against international terrorists within their region.*

Clausewitz labels “the hub of all power and movement” as the COG. Dr. Joe Strange, Marine Corps War College, elaborates by saying that the COGs are “agents and/or sources of moral or physical strength, power, and resistance.” The COG in the HOA region at the military/operational level can be the CJTF-HOA, as long as it retains the operational initiative against terrorism. Initiative is the exercise of inherent critical capabilities a COG must possess.

The strategic COG in the HOA region resides, at the political level, with the seven U.S. ambassadors (or their equivalents) to the individual countries. This revelation establishes what will be done militarily throughout the region and sig-

nificantly impacts the reason why “we can’t get there from here.” The obvious disconnect between the strategic and operational COG causes CJTF-HOA to lose the operational initiative against terrorist organizations. There are examples below that give credence to the suggestion that the American ambassadors or their equivalents are the strategic COG. Because the direction for both COGs is not aligned, there is no coordinated effort. Thus, the strategic goal cannot be achieved.

CJTF-HOA acts only under the closest scrutiny of the ambassador or their surrogates—other governmental agencies (OGAs)—and with the complete total concurrence of foreign service officials in Washington, DC. Before any operational decision is made or action takes place, coordination between U.S. ambassadors, host-nation heads of states, and host-nation military generals must be considered, and concurrence must be obtained. The American ambassadors set the tone and conditions within each of the HOA countries. The ambassadors’ penchant for resolving issues within the sphere of their authority is understandable; therefore, OGAs are the first force of choice, and CJTF-HOA is relegated to somewhere in the “unlikely to be employed category.” Even though the ambassadors prefer to use their own immediately available assets, the CJTF-HOA, in fact, exists and is ready to act with force to prosecute the GWOT. CJTF-HOA represents a rival authority in the region, thereby complicating the regional situation. This rivalry between DoD and DoS causes the strategic vision for the HOA to be unclear, extremely cloudy, murky, undecided, disjointed, and lacking consensus. In other areas of the USCentCom theater, DoD has had the unchallenged, unquestioned lead in decisionmaking (i.e., Afghanistan and Iraq); therefore, there is no question about the strategic direction. There is no debate about who is in charge. The situation in Afghanistan and Iraq is crystal clear as to which governmental department is in charge.

Each of the seven countries in HOA is unique. Each has different terrorist situations to deal with. For instance, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Eritrea have little or no terrorist threat, while Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen have proven terrorist organ-

izations inside their borders. Kenya, as a neighbor to Somalia and the recipient of documented terrorists attacks, has its own circumstances to deal with. Currently, the situation only allows CJTF-HOA to develop military solutions to the terrorist problem in Kenya. For all practical purposes, Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen are forbidden territories for CJTF-HOA direct actions, yet that is where the known terrorists and their organizations reside.

CJTF-HOA was established on the Afghanistan model. ComUSCentCom established a JTF in Afghanistan to focus on a specific situation. ComUSCentCom and SecDef established CJTFs in the HOA and Iraq for specific purposes. However, the similarities between the JTFs stop there. Afghanistan is one country, as is Iraq, not seven. Afghanistan and Iraq have achievable “end states” whereas CJTF-HOA does not. At the operational level, the operations order establishing CJTF-HOA and providing guidance offers little in the way of mission essential tasks that can be distinct as “defining the end state or the criteria for success.” There is no one who can or who has defined “success” for CJTF-HOA. Several of the senior officers at USCentCom have been unable to answer the question. Additionally, there is no one who can define the criteria for standing down the CJTF. When asked, “what is the criteria for success or conversely, what is the criteria for standing down CJTF-HOA,” answers ran the gambit, as in “things are beginning to open up.” No elaboration on what that meant was offered. Another said the countries in the region “were happy to have CJTF-HOA there as a presence.” The most honest answer was, “we are still sorting that out.”

The most revealing of what the expectations are for CJTF-HOA is contained in a humorous briefing slide created by some motivated, young planner stating the mission statement: “Some guys are going to do some stuff over there, soon, and it is going to take awhile.” Although a funny parody, the slide somewhat sums up a locally perceived general lack of strategic direction. The current CJTF-HOA philosophy, vis-a-vis the regional ambassadors, makes the situation even more dreary because long ago the staff adopted a position as articulated below:

Our non-negotiable standard will remain that CJTF HOA will NOT/NOT do anything in any country without the knowledge and approval of the AmEmbassy.

This position provides strong evidence that the seven U.S. ambassadors (or their equivalents) to the individual countries are the strategic COG. Additional evidence that the strategic level and operational goals and initiatives are out of synch is a comment out of one of the embassies regarding placing a country coordination element “liaison” officer (LNO) from CJTF-HOA into the American Embassy.

A minor set back on the LNO position. Although we have not received a formal reply from state, [Chief of Mission] received informal feedback that state does not think it is a good time right now to establish the LNO position. State didn’t say no to it, but merely wants to look at it a month from now.

The country coordination element is an LNO from CJTF-HOA to the embassies in the HOA countries. In this case, the senior embassy official was in favor of CJTF-HOA placing an LNO in the embassy, but “main state” objected in some way.

These two anecdotes make the point that CJTF-HOA cannot act on its own initiative but must obtain permission through the “mother may I” route even before the ComUSCentCom gets a vote. These examples also show where the strategic COG resides.

DoS/DoD/OGAs Fighting the GWOT in the HOA

Any casual observer knows that there is a certain amount of friction that exists between DoS and DoD and that there is constant “push and pull.” One must also realize that the preeminent, most sacrosanct position regarding use of military force in the United States is the concept of “civilian control of the military.” This concept is engrained into all U.S. military members from an early age and will not and should not be altered. The synchronization, guidance, and direction provided from the president and the SecDef level

should ensure that the strategic goals are understood, feasible, and attainable, and that appropriate resources are available. (See Figure 1.) Civilian control of the military concept does not violate the concept or abrogate the responsibility of civilian authority to set the conditions for military success. The DoS continues to accept a “status quo ante bellum” posture. Their actions prove that they are conducting business as usual and ensuring the maintenance of stability rather than assisting the military with the dispatch of terrorist organizations. It is evident that in the HOA, DoS has not concluded that “we are at war.” Until DoS, DoD, and OGAs come to this realization, the focus will not be centered on the GWOT.

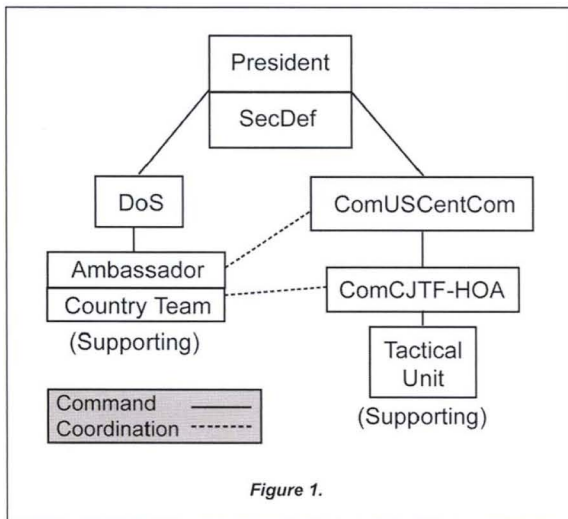
In the HOA region, it is unlikely that there will be a turnaround in attitudes on the part of ambassadors toward outright military action sanctioned and approved so that terrorist organizations can be dispatched, killed, or captured. Under the present circumstances, the United States is not “playing to win against terrorists.” Even in the countries where known terrorist organizations live, train, and prosper, like Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen, the military is not invited or welcome to contribute in the war against terrorism. The ambassadors call all of the shots, and their predilection to eschew military action against terrorists in countries where they are assigned eliminates the possibility of attaining the destroy element in the 4D mission of CJTF-

HOA. If the SecDef’s assumption is correct—“terrorist groups cannot be appeased or deterred, so they must be eliminated”—we must either change the strategic goal or change the paradigm so that CJTF-HOA is the supported organization with the American embassies supporting military efforts to eliminate terrorist organizations.

Now let us assume that the strategic goal does not change, and let us also assume that CJTF-HOA remains in place for the foreseeable future (five years). How does CJTF-HOA facilitate bringing about the elimination of terrorist groups in HOA? Or specifically, how does CJTF-HOA kill or capture individual terrorists and their organizations? There must be some central authority for execution that is free to take immediate action when actionable intelligence is obtained and can be decisively acted upon. Actionable intelligence is extremely perishable and once obtained must be used or lost. By necessity, then, actionable intelligence must be acted on immediately. Under the current configuration, clearances for action must be approved at the strategic level and rules of engagement must be specifically approved for any action at the unified command level prior to execution.

Relationships

Two possible solutions may be considered to get around this insoluble problem. First, the ComCJTF-HOA could be vested with the authority by the chain of command to execute missions to capture or kill terrorists. This authority would, in effect, authorize the use of deadly force in a direct action mission. The advantages of this proposal would be that the initiative would reside in the hands of the ComCJTF-HOA. It also allows the immediate execution in response to actionable intelligence. The disadvantage of this proposal is that oversight into any immediate action from the highest authority would be absent. Only if the scenario exactly matched a previously approved course of action would the president or SecDef grant “carte blanche” authority to a local commander. In effect, this proposal advocates the foreign service in a supporting role to the military who would be the supported agency.

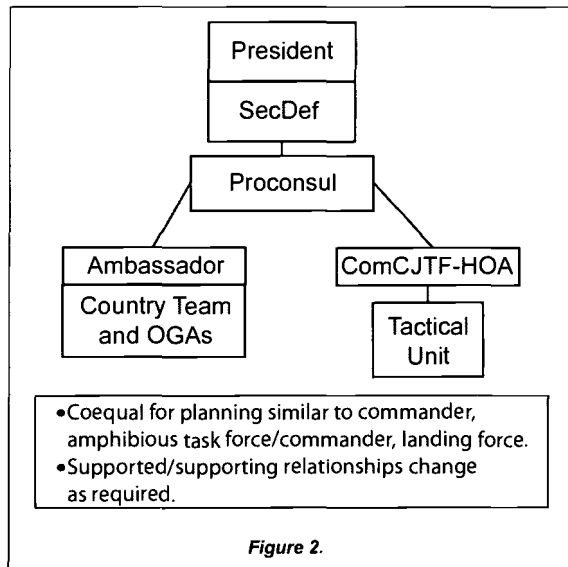


The second possible solution offered is for the President or SecDef to appoint a “proconsul” for the HOA. (See Figure 2.) The proconsul would have authority over the military, the regional ambassadors, and the OGAs. The proconsul would have the trust, confidence, credibility, reliability, and standing within each of the departments to act in America’s best interests and take the war to the terrorists. The proconsul would have to have credibility in the region and vast experience with low-intensity conflicts. Most importantly, he would have to have the respect of the Secretary of State, SecDef, and OGAs. The proconsul might be one of the former unified combatant commanders. Or someone with the necessary qualifications like Ambassador L. Paul Bremer, who has the experience and background for the task at hand, could be assigned as proconsul.

The advantages of this proposal are that a central authority for execution would be in place with all elements responsible to a single individual. The COG would reside with a single entity for the strategic and operational level. Under this proposal, the focus for operations could be directed, and the synergy from intelligence, diplomacy, and military actions would be substantial. The disadvantages to this proposal are that there are few individuals having these qualifications, and it would require another staff to pull all of the strings of power together into the hands of a single individual.

If the evidence that terrorist organizations and individuals are migrating to HOA countries is believable, and if the initiative is to be grasped by CJTF-HOA—or for that matter the United States—a different approach should be taken. Many believe that the focus on terrorism should be balanced between Afghanistan, Iraq, and the HOA countries. It is time to establish a new paradigm for fighting the GWOT. Placing a central authority for execution who has a coherent view of the region into the decision loop is the answer.

The ambassadors, the OGAs, and the military



must be on the same sheet of paper to be effective and efficient in fighting the GWOT. The way we are now prevents any unity of effort in the fight against terrorism. Under the current situation, immediate action is stymied and cannot be conducted when actionable intelligence is available. Each of the organizations mentioned has its own agenda and cooperates together only at the margins. In order to ensure unity of effort, one agency—or better yet, an individual—should assume responsibility for the total fight in the HOA. Political infighting probably negates the possibility of giving the military authority over DoS officials, so a “czar,” proconsul, or some equivalent needs to be created. It won’t make any difference what title is given to the individual. The authority is what will be important. Either America is at war with terrorism or it isn’t. If it is worth going to war over, it is worth investing in the resources and giving the United States the best chance for success in the GWOT.

About the Author

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ETHIOPIA

SOMAL MUDUG

DJIBOUTI

YEMEN

AWDAL

WOQOYI
GALBEED

TOGDHEER

SANAAG

SOOL

Provisional Administrative Line

GALGUDUUD

ERITREA

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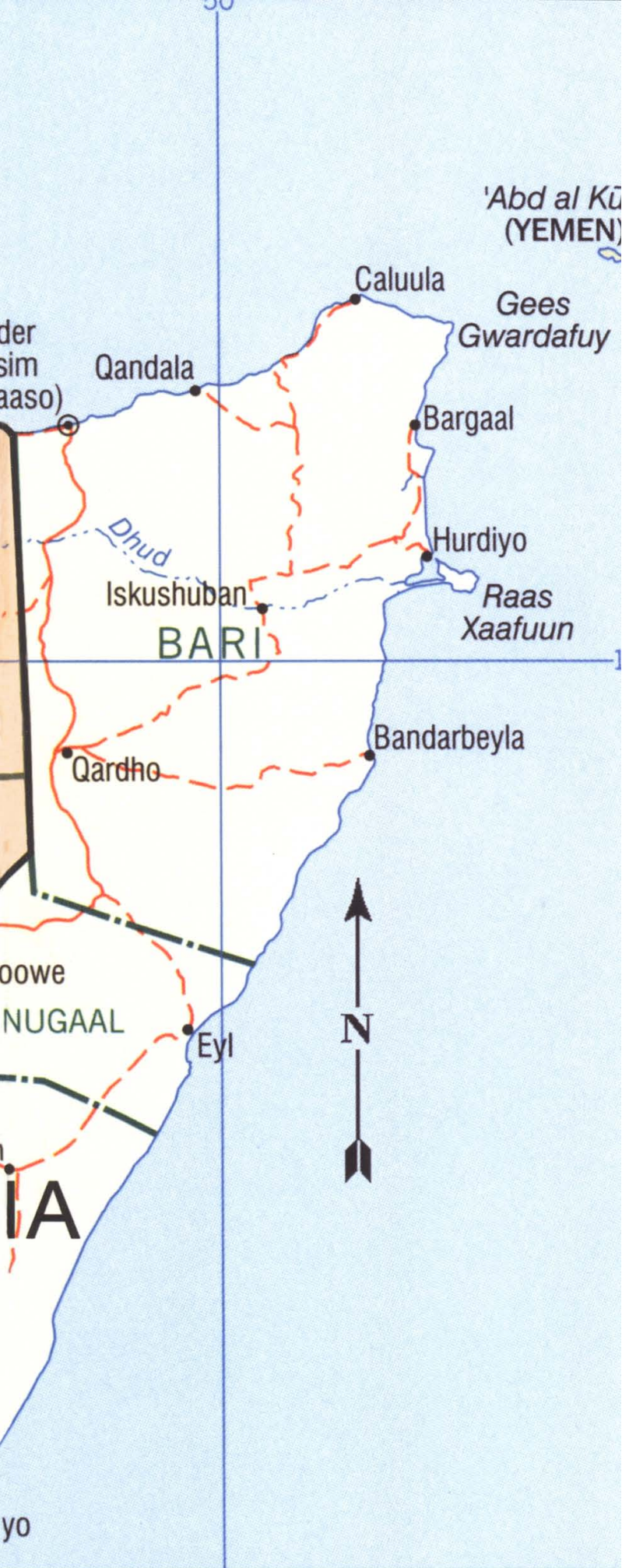
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Recognizing Somaliland: Forward Step in Countering Terrorism

by Kurt Shillinger

Royal United Services Institute Journal, April 2005

For the 14th time in as many years, the international community is attempting to restore central government to Somalia, which descended, into clan-based fragmentation, statelessness, and violence following the ousting of the Siad Barre military regime in 1991 and has yet to re-emerge. The new administration of President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed is the product of more than two years of complex negotiations among rival groups hosted by neighbouring Kenya. Although the African Union (AU) has pledged thousands of regional peacekeepers to help the new government settle, prospects for its success are slim. Conceived and constituted in exile, the Ahmed government was met with varying degrees of praise and violent protest during its first foray into Somalia in early March 2005. This followed the killing of BBC producer Kate Peyton, who traveled to Mogadishu in February to prepare stories on the new government's arrival. Those with vested interests in the status quo, including neighbouring Ethiopia, remain powerful and exercised. Tellingly, Ahmed and his prime minister did not venture into the strife-torn capital.

At the same time, with much less fanfare, the secessionist province of Somaliland in the northwest was preparing for bicameral parliamentary elections to be held on 29 March 2005. While the south has festered, Somaliland has quietly and persistently demobilized its rival militias and erected the structures of statehood without external assistance. It has an elected president and a constitution that survived the death and succession of a head of state, and has drawn substan-

tial inflows of aid and remittances to help rebuild its infrastructure devastated by a decade of civil war with the Siad Barre government prior to 1991. It now boasts reconstructed airports, ports, hotels, power plants and universities—but it remains unrecognized by the international community. Recognition, as the varying fortunes of both Somalia and Somaliland demonstrate, is not a prerequisite for statehood but, in the case of the latter, may well consolidate the process of nation-building at a crucial time both for Somaliland and a world fighting global terrorism.

As the preeminent British anthropologist I M Lewis noted in 2004, “the overall achievement so far is truly remarkable, and all the more so in that it has been accomplished by the people of Somaliland themselves with very little external help or intervention. The contrast with the fate of southern Somalia hardly needs to be underlined.”¹

Prior to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, diplomatic attempts to restore order in Somalia were driven by desires to limit the potential for drug trafficking and regional destabilization caused by outflows of arms, banditry, and refugees into neighbouring states. The events of 9/11 added a new, more urgent dimension to international engagement in a region that had already experienced the devastation of terrorism. The key question since then, set against the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, was whether the absence of state security structures would enable terrorist organizations to set up bases inside Somalia. For reasons that will be explored below, it has not quite worked out that way, but the 2002 hotel bombing in Mombassa on the Kenya coast illustrated Somalia’s potential as a staging ground for terrorist activity and punctuated the region’s overall vulnerability.

Given Somalia’s location at the crossroads of Africa and the Middle East, its susceptibility to conflicting destabilizing interests from Ethiopia and the Arab Peninsula, and the Muslim identity of its people, it is time to rethink how to solve the country’s enduring crisis in the context of global terrorism. Despite exhaustive debate, the Kenya peace talks on Somalia failed to convincingly resolve the key question of whether to pur-

sue a federal or unitarian solution in a patch-quilt political landscape of rival clan-based factions.

A better solution is partition. Although it runs contrary to the AU commitment to territorial integrity, recognizing Somaliland is consistent with the imperatives driving global counterterrorism. Emotively, the international community would be supporting the democratic aspirations of a Muslim state—a central pillar of the Bush antiterror “Liberty Doctrine.” Strategically, recognition would give the West expanded influence over 900 additional kilometres of coastline in a key transit zone off the Arab Peninsula and enable the international community to bolster regional security at a time when, according to the accumulated evidence of the different risks posed by failed and weak states, Somaliland is arguably becoming more vulnerable to exploitation by radical Islamist organizations the more it develops.

Bush Doctrine, Failed States, and Global Security

Recasting his central foreign policy doctrine for an age of terror in his second inaugural address in January 2005, President George W. Bush stated that

it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world. . . . America will not impose our own style of government on the unwilling. Our goal instead is to help others find their own voice, attain their own freedom, and make their own way.

Two immediate and correlative assumptions are implicit in this approach: that state repression promotes social radicalization, which in the current international security context poses threats to prosperous and peaceful nations; and that democracy is a universal and thus universally adaptable aspiration that, when realized, is the ultimate antidote to forms of ideological discontent that underpin transnational terrorism.

From these assumptions, three critical ques-

tions arise. First, how are states or regimes determined to pose risks to global security serious enough to prompt foreign intervention? To put it differently, the selective application of force or coercion since 9/11 suggests that not all tyrants are regarded as the same, and some may even be acceptable. Saddam Hussein was overthrown on the premise—a false one, it turned out—that he was stockpiling weapons of mass destruction; Kim Jong II is known to have nuclear weapons but is still in power. So is Robert Mugabe, who has neither long-range weaponry nor the desire to acquire them, but has dismantled the democratic edifice of Zimbabwe and suppressed popular aspirations through violence.

Second, how are 'democratic movements' identified and legitimated? The history of foreign meddling in the domestic affairs of far-off nations is troubled and inconsistent. Both Hussein and Osama bin Laden, the world's top terrorist, were once clients of Washington. Post-9/11, what interests—and whose—shape the process of helping "others find their own voice" and indeed determine which voices emerge?

Third, what forms of external "soft" engagement are implied by Bush's pledge, and how should they be weighed against the prevailing "rules" of regional politics? The war on terrorism has many fronts—Central Asia, Indonesia, North Africa, and the Horn as well as the Middle East. Effecting "regime change" through force as in Afghanistan and Iraq is neither logistically possible nor internationally justifiable. It follows, then, that "preemption" can utilize and, indeed, requires many means. These questions are most relevant and problematic with regard to dysfunctional states, where poverty and poor or repressive governance can give rise to radicalization. Before 9/11, such states were regarded primarily as regional problems, incubating threats such as disease, refugee flows, environmental destruction, drugs and arms trafficking, and so on. But the 2001 attacks convulsed thinking about the intersection between faltering states and security in the context of global terror, and it has taken a few years for both analysis and policy to unpack the question—indeed, to differentiate the relationship between terrorism and collapsed, failed, and weak states, respectively.

Two studies in 2002 illustrate the importance of clarifying those distinctions. John J. Hamre and Gordon R. Sullivan argued that "[o]ne of the principal lessons of the events of September 11 is that failed states matter—not just for humanitarian reasons, but for national security reasons as well. If left unattended, such states can become "sanctuaries for terrorist networks with global reach."² The Bush administration, meanwhile, concluded that "the events of September 11, 2001, taught U.S. that weak states, like Afghanistan, can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states.... [P]overty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders."³

More time has shown that the distinction between collapsed states, of which Somalia is the most glaring example, and weak states—such as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Kenya, Tanzania and Pakistan—matters deeply and has important implications for policy. As Ken Menkhaus shows in his excellent analysis of Somalia and terrorism, failed states lack the physical and financial infrastructure that terrorist organizations need to operate and are therefore unsuitable as havens, whereas weak states provide both the tools and the cover in a relaxed security environment:

Terrorists, like mafias, prefer weak and corrupt government rather than no government at all. In the Horn of Africa, weak states such as Kenya and Tanzania are much more likely bases of operations for al-Qaeda. They feature sprawling, multi-ethnic urban areas where foreign operatives can go unremarked; corrupt law enforcement agencies which can be bought off; and a rich array of Western targets.... [A] collapsed state such as Somalia is more likely to serve a niche role as a transit zone, through which men, money, or materiel are quickly moved into the country and then across the borders of neighbouring states.⁴

Similarly, Greg Mills concludes that the weakening of

state functions manifests in a number of

interrelated ways, including the alienation of sectors of society and the emergence of an alternative, anarchic counter-culture; the related inability to provide basic security functions and extend other state functions to the majority of its citizens; and the state's vulnerability to external influences, both state and non-state. . . . The weak nature of the African state and the corruptibility of the African political class have, over time, made it a soft target for terrorist groups.⁵

Thus, determining which states pose the greatest risk to international security in relation to terrorism and defining measures of effective intervention requires more than simply identifying tyrants, mobilizing coalitions of force, and orchestrating elections. Fledgling, faltering, and nominal democracies present equal or greater threats in terms of the exploitable advantages they provide to terrorist organizations. And while geography matters, it is not a limiting factor—a point underscored by Libya's ongoing material support for Mugabe. In this regard, countering terrorism by strengthening democracy must involve addressing the structural and causal elements of weak governance, risk to investment, and social radicalization: corruption, constitutional imbalance, political exclusion, social exclusion (health and education), economic exclusion (trade), monetary mismanagement, and resource depletion.

Somalia and Somaliland

Prior to colonialization, Somalis organized themselves on the basis of a singular national identity. One of the largest ethnic groups in Africa, divided into a matrix of clans and sub-clans spread across some 400,000 square miles of the Horn, they speak just two common and intertwined languages—Somali and Arabic—and are almost all of them Muslim. In the latter half of the 19th century, they were partitioned by the French, British, Italians, and Ethiopians, a process that introduced a political element to Somali identity and over time created a tension of definitions of nationhood that endure today.

The modern state of Somalia—at least geo-

graphically—is an experiment in joining two distinct historical entities: Italian Somalia in the south and British Somaliland in the North. In 1940, the Italians captured the north and combined the country, but the merger lasted only seven months before the British recaptured their protectorate. Five years later, the Italians lost much of their grip, and British control extended deep into the south. The to-ing and fro-ing continued until 1950, when Italian control was formally reestablished and the original boundaries reaffirmed under a 10-year plan overseen by the United Nations. Over the course of the next decade, a series of local elections and drafting of a constitution paved the way for independence in 1960—first for Somaliland on 26 June and then, five days later, for Somalia. Each side was recognized separately by the UN, including each of the five permanent members of the Security Council, according to their colonial boundaries.

Unification became both a preoccupation and a source of enduring division. Although the two entities joined within the year, it was a tense marriage marked by deep-seated clan rivalries. During the next three decades, northern dissent was repeatedly crushed by the military regime of Mohamed Siad Barre in Mogadishu. When that government was finally overthrown in 1991, the south descended into factional fighting—and the north “seceded.” Since then, the two parts have followed dramatically different paths. While the international community launched one peace process after another to try to restore central government in Mogadishu, factional fighting—much of it foreign-backed—carved deep ethnopolitical furrows across the south. In the north, meanwhile, stakeholders engaged in the lengthy process of demobilization, reconstruction, and nation-building. In the course of three national congresses, an interim national charter was drafted, a bicameral parliament was established, comprising an elected house of representatives and a nominated house of clan elders, and a president and vice president were voted in by congress delegates.

In 2001, the people of Somaliland ratified the new constitution in a nationwide referendum with impressive unanimity. Foreign-observed local elections followed in 2002, and when

President Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal died during a trip to South Africa, peaceful succession followed through the ballot box, in line with the constitution, in which the victor emerged with a razor-thin 280-vote margin. The 29 March parliamentary elections marked the last step in creating a fully popularly elected government.

How does that position affect the two Somali entities vis-à-vis terrorism? Immediately following the 9/11 attacks, Washington listed Somalia as a potential target in its war against terrorism and froze an estimated \$500 million in foreign assets held by Somalia's al-Barakat bank and money transferring company.

But as Menkhaus observes, "Somalia is less than ideal as a safe haven for al-Qaeda for several reasons": one, the mono-ethnic nature of Somali society makes it harder for foreigners to blend in unobserved; two, there is an absence of Western targets; three, the south lacks the financial, physical, and communications infrastructure required by modern terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda; four, the prevailing lawlessness poses a threat to terrorists as much as to anyone else; and fifth, the lack of state control over security would enable U.S. special forces based in neighbouring Djibouti to mobilize within Somali territory faster and with fewer legal restraints.

Rather, two points are of greater and more realistic concern: one, the rise of al-Ittihad and al-Islah, respectively radical and progressive Somali Islamist movements that either espouse anti-Western violence or are prone to manipulation by those who do; and two, evidence that terrorist cells are using Somalia as a staging point for operations elsewhere in the region. According to UN Security Council assessments, those behind the December 2002 bombing of a hotel in Mombassa and attempt to bring down an Israeli airliner in the Kenyan port transferred materiel through and acquired missiles in Somalia.

No such activity has yet been evidenced in Somaliland, but it is arguable that the territory is becoming more attractive to foreign terrorist organizations the more developed it becomes. Somaliland's political progress has attracted a steady inflow of funds. The U.S. Congress allocated \$9 million in 1997 for government and military salaries. The same year, the regional

Intergovernmental Authority on Development launched an \$18 million project to improve communications links between the port of Berbera and other regional ports. The EU has funded road construction, the Italians water works, and the International Development Bank education. The British company Digital Exchange Projects, meanwhile, was contracted to rebuild Somaliland's telecommunications systems. The list goes on. In 2001, for example, the Great Wall Chinese Oil Company announced plans to sink offshore oil wells and the Somali Diaspora sent an estimated \$250 million annually to Somaliland to offset low forex reserves. Currently, the Bank of Somaliland is pursuing ties with more established regional and German financial institutions.⁶

As the earlier discussion about failed and weak states indicated, Somaliland's development trend is also putting in place the very tools—banking systems, telecommunications, and transport links—that foreign terrorist organizations require in a tenuous security environment.

Notions of Territorial Integrity

Article Four of the Constitutive Act of the African Union states that "the Union shall function in accordance with the following principles: (b) respect of borders existing on achievement of independence." This rule, carried over from the AU's predecessor, the Organization of African States, has and remains the fundamental stumbling block in Somaliland's quest for statehood.

In January 2004, a delegation from the British Parliament's Select Committee on International Development conducted a visit to Somaliland. Upon their return, MP Tony Worthington questioned in a parliamentary debate British and international resistance to breaking from the sovereignty principle. He said:

There is an understandable paranoia about changing old colonial borders in Africa because of the fear that the habit may spread to other countries. Somaliland is a rare exception, however; it wants to return to its old colonial boundaries at the time of independence. . . . The longer the world

ignores the achievement of Somaliland in creating stability and democratic institutions, the greater the risk that wilder elements will take over. Although the country has been governed by a moderate form of Islam since it declared independence, there is always the possibility that it will give way to a form of Islam that plays into the hands of those trying to stimulate terrorism, and there is tension in the country as a result.⁷

There is broad international sympathy for this argument, but there is also a kind of stasis akin to penguins on an ice bluff: no one wants to jump first. Washington, according to U.S. diplomats in the region, wants one of the African heavyweights—South Africa, Nigeria, Ethiopia, or Senegal—to nod first. But Ethiopia, for one, has also stated that it would follow but won't lead an international movement for recognition.

The impasse is curious, and time will tell whether it may also be costly. Three points weaken the argument that recognition risks setting a precedent in Africa. First, as Foreign Minister Edna Adan Ismail argues, echoing the comment by Worthington, in the 44 years since it gained independence from Britain, Somaliland “neither resigned from our membership in the UN, nor given away our sovereignty to anyone, we still claim ownership of our independence and that of our membership in the UN.”⁸ Recognizing Somaliland, then, is more a case of affirming postcolonial boundaries rather than redrawing them.

Second, seen as an international rather than exclusively African issue, the principle of separation is already well entrenched. Recent examples include the peaceful and internationally recognized “Velvet Divorce” of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993.⁹ Third, Africa already has the precedent for partition set by Ethiopia and Eritrea, which was based on almost identical issues as those between Somalia and Somaliland.¹⁰ As part of a comprehensive peace settlement between those two countries, a UN boundary commission determined the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2002 based on historical and colonial maps. The European Union immediately endorsed the decision.

From legal, technical, and diplomatic perspectives, therefore, recognition of Somaliland is neither as problematic nor precedent-setting as claimed, nor is international resistance as strong as suggested by the unanimous failure so far to do so.

Strengthening Somaliland, Countering Terrorism

In Somalia today, the mild narcotic shrub khat is as common as AK-47s. Once chewed primarily by men for occasional recreation, the drug is now consumed daily by broad segments of the population, including women and, ominously, the heavily armed young boys and youths aligned to various factional leaders. At the peak, 150 flights ferried the drug into Somaliland from neighbouring states every day. Shortly after his election in 2002, President Dahir Rayale Kahin called for a decrease in inbound khat flights and banned all overland shipments. As Mills observes:

If enforced, this would likely provoke a political backlash in a nation where unemployment is high and a fragile—if impressively nurtured—peace has drawn into government warring militias and clans. . . . Like the global drug problem, dealing with khat requires breaking a pattern of helplessness and addiction through offering better economic prospects.¹¹

Somaliland is a fragile entity in a fragile region with large Islamic populations—all demonstrably susceptible to radicalization. Despite the various developmental initiatives, a relatively strong livestock export sector, and the generous inflow of annual remittances, unemployment hovers at destabilizing highs. The eastern border, meanwhile, although clearly defined and recognized at independence in 1960, has been the subject of increasing dispute with the adjacent Somali region of Puntland, which makes ethnic-based claims to the two easternmost Somaliland provinces of Sanaag and Sool.

Steven Simon has observed that in the current atmosphere of militancy and antipathy in much

of the Muslim world, “Islam’s warm embrace of the West is too stark a reversal to expect in the foreseeable future. However, it is feasible to lay the foundation for a lasting accommodation by deploying the considerable economic and political advantages of the United States and its allies.”¹²

In Somaliland, the West has an opportunity to broaden the terms of global counterterrorism strategy—to balance with carrots a policy meted thus far with sticks. British Prime Minister Tony Blair has dedicated himself to tackling Africa’s developmental challenges in 2005. He holds the chair of the G8 in the first half of the year and the EU in the second. Both groupings will debate initiatives to double aid, cut debt, boost investment, combat disease, and improve governance on the world’s poorest continent. Emerging from these discussions should also be clearly defined recommendations for recognizing Somaliland through the UN. Politically, recognition would send a powerful signal to the Muslim world that internally driven aspirations toward secular democracy will be acknowledged and supported.

Economically, strengthening Somaliland’s nascent democratic institutions and underwriting its path toward viability will go some measure toward depriving radicalized elements of a potential recruiting ground, just as a stronger state and improved governance will assist in reducing the volatile cocktail of endemic poverty, social alienation, radicalization, and terrorism.

Withholding recognition from Somaliland runs contrary to the West’s rhetoric about standing shoulder to shoulder with aspiring democracies. But the question is more urgent than that. Given what has been learned after 9/11 about broader security ramifications of weak states in an age of terror, it may be dangerous. If the West fails to assist a Muslim people striving to build their own safe, prosperous and, critically, demo-

cratic state, they may well end up looking for—and finding—other patrons.

Notes

1. I. M. Lewis, “As the Kenyan Somali ‘Peace’ Conference Falls Apart in Confusion, Recognition of Somaliland’s Independence is Overdue,” London School of Economics, 20 March 2004.
2. John J. Hamre and Gordon R. Sullivan, “Toward Postconflict Reconstruction,” *Washington Quarterly* 25 (Autumn 2002).
3. National Security Strategy document dated 19 September 2002.
4. Ken Menkhaus, “Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism,” Adelphi Paper 364, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2004.
5. Greg Mills, *The Security Intersection: The Paradox of Power in an Age of Terror* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2005), 237-9.
6. See the chapter on Somali in *Africa South of the Sahara 2005* (London: Europa Publications, 2005), for a fuller digest of assistance inflows into Somaliland in recent years.
7. For the full debate on 4 February 2004 in the House of Commons, see www.publications.parliament.uk.
8. Taken from comments presented at the South African Institute of International Affairs in Johannesburg on 3 February 2005.
9. The author is grateful to Dr. Chris Alden of the London School of Economics for discussions on this point.
10. See the final report of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission for detailed historical background.
11. Mills, 81.
12. Steven Simon, “The New Terrorism,” in Henry J. Aaron, James M. Lindsay, and Pietro S. Nivola, eds., *Agenda for the Nation* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 425.

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Fighting Terrorism in East Africa and the Horn

by David H. Shinn

Foreign Service Journal, September 2004

Six years after the bombings of our embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, U.S. counterterrorism efforts in the region do not yet measure up to the threat.

Before September 11, 2001, most Americans paid little attention to terrorism, particularly in the Third World. Since then, though the Middle East and Central Asia have figured most prominently in the war on terrorism, Africa is increasingly coming into focus as an important battleground.

This is especially true of East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania) and the Horn of Africa (Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia), where the practice of targeting Americans for political violence has deep roots. The Black September organization assassinated the American ambassador to Sudan, Cleo A. Noel Jr., and his deputy chief of mission, George Curtis Moore, in 1973. And following the U.S. air attack against Libya in 1986, Libyan terrorists retaliated by severely wounding an American embassy communications technician, William Caldwell, also in Khartoum. There have been a number of other terrorist attacks dating back more than two decades against Western and Israeli interests in this dangerous region.

But it took the coordinated bombings by al-Qaida in 1998 of the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam to make clear the full scope of the organization's menace. While the attacks killed far more Kenyans and Tanzanians than Americans, 12 Americans perished in Nairobi and many were injured in both capitals. (American and Ugandan authorities foiled another attack planned against the U.S. embassy in Kampala.)

Those bombings were, in many respects, even more of a seminal event than the 9/11 attacks for the American war on terrorism in East Africa and the Horn. The State Department responded by building new fortified embassies in both capitals, and in Kampala, with considerably more setback from the street. Other embassies in the region enhanced their physical security as well.

There were also policy ramifications. Prior to the embassy bombings, the U.S. had a cool relationship with Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi as a result of concerns over corruption and the pace of democratization. When senior American officials visited Africa, they rarely went to Kenya. In sympathy for Kenyans killed in the bombing and in appreciation for Kenya's close counterterrorism cooperation with the U.S. following the attack, significant numbers of senior American officials traveled to Nairobi. President Moi even received a long-desired invitation to the White House before he stepped down at the end of 2002. Tanzania also experienced an increase in high-level American attention.

A Focal Point of Terrorism

Unfortunately, however, U.S. counterterrorism policy perspectives and programs in the region do not yet measure up to the threat Islamic fundamentalism and al-Qaeda activity jointly pose. There are several reasons for this. Most of the countries have experienced severe internal conflict, which is frequently supported by neighbors, either directly or via dissident groups—which tends to lead to tit-for-tat support of an opposition group in the offending state. Examples of this phenomenon range from the long-standing civil war in Sudan and the collapse of any central authority in Somalia to Tanzanian support for the overthrow of the Idi Amin regime in Uganda, Somalia's invasion of Ethiopia in the late 1970s, Eritrea's war of independence, and the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict.

Such instability prevents most governments in the region from exercising full control over their territory, providing terrorists easy access to weapons. Somalia remains a vacuum and is prey to any terrorist with money and a plan.

Although Sudan appears to be nearing the end of a civil war that dates back to 1983, it now faces a new and worsening conflict in the Darfur region, along the border with Chad. Uganda has been unable to eliminate the Lord's Resistance Army in the northern part of the country. The Somali-inhabited Ogaden in south-eastern Ethiopia experiences regular security incidents. And the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement seems to have refocused attention against Eritrea, operating out of Sudan.

Although the groups behind these attacks are not normally considered international terrorists, they engage in terrorist tactics, and some, such as the EIJM, are believed to have links with al-Qaeda. Recent actions by these groups illustrate conclusively that the security and intelligence services in all of the countries are underfunded and ill-equipped to counter terrorist tactics by local organizations or international terrorists.

Geography also plays an important role. Most of these states are located near, and have long-standing ties to, the Arabian Peninsula, the source of many of today's Islamic militants. It is easy to move between the Persian Gulf states and this region by air and sea. The governments are virtually incapable of monitoring the lengthy coastline from Eritrea to Tanzania. The land borders between all of the states are unusually porous as well.

Further, the region sits on a religious fault line of Christianity, Islam, and traditional African beliefs. All eight of the countries are either predominantly Muslim or have important Muslim minorities. Sudan, Djibouti, and Somalia, including self-declared independent Somaliland, are heavily Muslim. Ethiopia and Eritrea are about half Islamic. Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania contain significant Muslim minorities, some of whose members have become radicalized in recent years. It is true that Sufism, which tends to resist the ideas of Islamic fundamentalists, remains strong throughout the region. This traditionally moderate form of Islam has not always been sufficient, however, to overcome the appeal of fundamentalism, especially when it is backed with funds from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. As a result, nearly all of the international terrorism in the

region, as opposed to local groups that use terrorist tactics, has ties to extremist Islamic elements.

Poverty, Social Injustice and Political Alienation

Finally, the region's endemic corruption is another factor that attracts terrorists, allowing them to buy off immigration and local security officials. Transparency International surveyed 133 countries in 2003 as part of its corruption perceptions index. Five of the eight countries located in the region ranked poorly. Ethiopia and Tanzania received the best ranking of the five, tied with several other countries at the 92d position. Sudan tied with a number of countries for position 106, while Uganda tied with others for 113. Kenya, although its standing improved from past years, tied with Indonesia at 122. (Transparency International did not rank Eritrea, Djibouti or Somalia.)

The fact that East Africa and the Horn are home to some of the poorest countries in the world, with high levels of social injustice and political alienation, is frequently cited as a reason why the region has become a breeding ground for terrorism. But not everyone agrees that poverty is closely linked to international terrorism. State Department Coordinator for Counterterrorism Cofer Black, during a May digital videoconference with journalists and government officials in Dar es Salaam and Addis Ababa, downplayed the link between terrorism and poverty. He cited the Saudis who took part in the 9/11 attacks on the U.S., pointing out that they tended to come from middle-class families and had access to a university education. He concluded that they "turned into terrorists because they fell under the influence of the wrong people and became seriously misguided."

Yet while this may be true, it misses the point, at least as far as East Africa and the Horn are concerned. The environment created by poverty, social injustice and political alienation enhances the ability of religious extremists to export their philosophy and of terrorists to find

local support for their nefarious acts. Black went on to say that instead of blaming economic conditions, "we need to encourage moderation" and follow guidelines "our mothers and fathers taught us." Good luck!

To be sure, poverty may not be a direct cause of terrorism. To dismiss its role, however, is misguided. Together with abysmally low wages for immigration and security personnel, poverty significantly increases the prospect of widespread corruption that, in turn, creates a climate amenable to terrorism. Even the president's National Security Strategy issued in September 2002 commented that although poverty does not make poor people into terrorists, "poverty, weak institutions and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders." In a recent issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Senator Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.) argued that terrorism finds sanctuary in "the misery of endemic poverty and despair." He added that "although poverty and despair do not 'cause' terrorism, they provide a fertile environment for it to prosper." In East Africa and the Horn, and probably much of the rest of the world, it is time to accept the important role that poverty plays and put in place long-term measures to deal with it.

Financing Terrorism

Charities sponsored by Saudi Arabia and several other Persian Gulf states have probably financed most of the international terrorist activity in the region, with funds coming both from private individuals and governments. In the case of Saudi Arabia, and to a lesser extent Qatar, the charities are closely linked to efforts to promote the fundamentalist Sunni Islamic creed known popularly as Wahhabism. Toward that end, in 1962 Saudi Arabia created the state-financed Muslim World League to underwrite mosques, schools, libraries, hospitals, and clinics around the world. Saudi Arabia's grand mufti, its highest religious authority, serves as the organization's president.

The league encompasses a wide range of entities, including the al-Haramain Islamic Foundation and the International Islamic Relief

Organization. These charities have been active in East Africa and the Horn for years, building mosques and implementing useful social programs. But some of their branches have also funneled money to al-Qaeda and associated terrorist organizations, and the U.S. has accused the former director of al-Haramain in Tanzania of planning the 1998 attacks on the embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi.

After the 9/11 attacks, Washington stepped up pressure on Saudi Arabia to control these charities. In 2002, the two countries jointly designated the Somali branch of al-Haramain as an organization that had supported terrorist groups such as al-Qaida and the Somali-based al-Ittihad al-Islamiya. Early in 2004, both countries notified the U.N. Sanctions Committee that the branches of al-Haramain in Kenya and Tanzania provide financial, material, and logistical support to al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. They asked Kenya and Tanzania to seize the assets of both branches. At the request of the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, the government of Tanzania recently deported the two top al-Haramain officials and closed the office. In mid-2004, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. designated the al-Haramain branch in Ethiopia as a financier of terrorism. At the same time, under pressure from the U.S., Saudi Arabia outlined plans to dismantle its network of international charities and place their assets under a new Saudi National Commission for Relief and Charity. It remains to be seen if this crackdown by Saudi Arabia will put an end to the diversion of charitable donations to terrorists.

A Major Change in Policy toward Sudan

U.S. relations with Sudan began a downward spiral after an Islamic government entrenched itself in power in the early 1990s and stepped up the war against southerners. Sudan opened the door slightly in 1996, however, when it responded positively to a U.S. request to expel Osama bin Laden, who had lived in Khartoum since 1991. This offered the possibility for improved relations, but there was no follow-

through by the Clinton administration. The nadir in the relationship then occurred in 1998 following the bombing of the embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, when the U.S. launched cruise missiles against a pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum. The U.S. linked the factory to the production of chemical weapons based on a soil sample containing a precursor for the production of weapons found outside the factory. The U.S. also alleged there were ties between the factory owner and al-Qaeda. Sudan strongly denied any link, and a number of experts who studied the case have raised serious questions about the rationale for the attack. The Clinton administration, which had been under pressure from domestic groups to take a hard line toward Sudan, nevertheless made overtures in 2000 to Khartoum concerning possible cooperation on counterterrorism. Sudan responded positively; by the time the Bush administration took power, the scene was set for improved ties.

Following the 9/11 attacks, Khartoum quickly concluded it was in its interest to increase cooperation with the U.S. on counterterrorism. This provided the Bush administration an opportunity to advance the war on terrorism and make progress on ending the long-standing civil war in Sudan. President Bush named former Missouri Senator John Danforth as his special envoy for Sudan in an effort to end the civil war. This appointment and policy not only neutralized the American domestic constituency that wanted strong action against Sudan, but turned Sudan into an important ally in the war against terrorism.

By all accounts, the regime's cooperation on counterterrorism has been excellent. In addition, it and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, under pressure from the U.S. and others, have also made enormous progress in ending the civil war. Consequently, Secretary Powell announced in May that the U.S. had removed Sudan from a blacklist of countries deemed not to be cooperating fully on counterterrorism. There is still in place a maze of American sanctions, including the listing of Sudan as a "state sponsor" of terrorism, but this was the first step in unraveling U.S. sanctions

against Sudan. The policy change probably would not have occurred except for the traumatic events of 9/11. However, a new crisis in the Darfur region in western Sudan threatens to set back significantly the improvement in relations.

Quandary over Somalia

American and allied forces intervened massively in Somalia late in 1992 to end a famine. They stopped the famine, and all U.S. troops left Somalia by March 1994 following the “Blackhawk Down” episode in Mogadishu. The U.S. and international community effectively abandoned the failed state, though 9/11 and the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan briefly brought Somalia back into prominence in 2002, due to fears that the vacuum there would provide a safe haven for al-Qaeda supporters being chased from Afghanistan. Some of the ideas being discussed in the government for dealing with the country were wildly off the mark, however—no surprise given the loss of expertise that occurred during the post-1994 interregnum. Fortunately, calmer minds prevailed and Washington did not do anything really stupid in Somalia.

That said, the country is still a failed state where terrorist elements can move with impunity. Somalia has been home to al-Ittihad al-Islamiya, a fundamentalist organization that has carried out terrorist attacks against Ethiopia and is believed to have connections with al-Qaeda. The U.S. added al-Ittihad in 2001 to its Comprehensive List of Terrorists and Groups. It also included the Somali money transfer organization, al-Barakat, on the list. There is evidence that an al-Qaida cell based in Mogadishu took part in the 2002 attack on an Israeli-owned hotel outside Mombasa and a simultaneous but unsuccessful attempt to shoot down an Israeli charter aircraft. At the same time, Somalis generally are not predisposed toward Islamic fundamentalism or entreaties by international terrorists. The situation in Somalia is worrisome and merits close monitoring, but it is not even close to the threat once posed by Taliban-governed Afghanistan. There appears, however, to

be no agreed-upon U.S. policy for dealing with Somalia. It is long past time to adopt one.

A Base in Djibouti

The U.S. embassy in Djibouti has traditionally been small and sleepy. But that changed after 9/11. The country now hosts the only U.S. military base in Africa and welcomes coalition forces from France, Germany, Spain, and Italy. Some 1,800 American military and civilian personnel currently occupy a former French Foreign Legion facility at Camp Lemonier outside the capital city. Established in October 2002 and known as the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, it is responsible for fighting terrorism in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, and Yemen, and in the coastal waters of the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean. CJTF-HOA’s stated mission is to detect, disrupt, and defeat transnational terrorist groups, to counter the reemergence of transnational terrorism, and to enhance long-term stability in the region. The establishment of the base represents a dramatic change for U.S. security policy in Africa since the closure many years ago of the Wheelus Air Force Base in Libya and Kagnev Communications Station in Ethiopia.

CJTF-HOA has devoted most of its effort so far to training with allied forces and the armies of Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya. It has conducted an impressive number of civic action programs that refurbish schools and clinics and provide medical services in the same three countries. CJTF-HOA established a temporary training facility for the Ethiopian military outside Dire Dawa in the southeastern part of the country. Training has begun for the first of three Ethiopian antiterrorism battalions. It is less clear how much terrorist interdiction CJTF-HOA has accomplished. Without providing details, the departing commander stated in May that they have captured “dozens of terrorists” and averted at least five terrorist attacks.

Although a good effort, the operation is not free of problems. Relations with Sudan, especially after disagreements over the new conflict in Darfur, have not improved sufficiently to

engage in military cooperation. Somalia remains in too much disarray to think in terms of projects in country except for the more peaceful and self-declared independent Republic of Somaliland. The U.S. has so far been unwilling to undertake activities in Somaliland that might suggest it recognizes the country. Eritrea claims to seek cooperation with the U.S. on counterterrorism, but there have been problems translating this intention into action. There are also some operational issues. Turnover of CJTF-HOA personnel is too frequent, and area and indigenous language expertise are in short supply. American ambassadors in the region, most of whom have only dealt with a military attaché on their own staff, are still learning how to interact with an independent military commander.

The East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative

After 9/11 the State Department's Office of Counterterrorism identified East Africa and the Horn, especially Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, and Tanzania, to be at particular risk. In response, in 2003 the U.S. created a \$100 million East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative. This encompasses military training for border and coastal security, programs to strengthen control of the movement of people and goods across borders, aviation security, assistance for regional programs to curb terrorist financing, police training, and an education program to counter extremist influence. There are separate programs to combat money laundering.

The major beneficiary so far of this funding has been Kenya. The U.S. is working with Kenyan officials to develop a comprehensive anti-money laundering/counterterrorist financing regime. The State Department's Terrorist Interdiction Program has established a computer system that is now operational at select airports in Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia and is scheduled to go online this year in Djibouti and Uganda. The TIP system provides nations with a state-of-the-art computer network that enables immigration and border control officials to iden-

tify suspects attempting to enter or leave the country. The U.S. is also funding a police development program in Tanzania, Uganda, and Ethiopia, developing a training and equipment program for Kenya's law enforcement agencies, and setting up forensic laboratories in Tanzania and Uganda.

As welcome as this new assistance is, it has not stemmed complaints from countries in the region. Uganda claims it is being shortchanged because it has dealt successfully with international terrorist threats on its own. In addition, Kampala's priority is dealing with local terrorist groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army and Allied Democratic Front, while Washington is focused on international terrorists like al-Qaeda. Eritrea offered the U.S. access to its port facilities and, together with Ethiopia, joined the "coalition of the willing" against Iraq. But it now finds itself frozen out of counterterrorist assistance because of U.S. concerns over the continued detention of two Eritreans employed by the American embassy and other human rights issues. Both Eritrean and Ethiopian cooperation on counterterrorism are also linked to the two countries' desire to gain favor with the U.S. on their festering border demarcation disagreement.

Looking Ahead

The resources and attention devoted to counterterrorism in East Africa and the Horn are impressive but inadequate. At a House subcommittee hearing on terrorism in April, Chairman Ed Royce (R-Calif.) emphasized that the U.S. needs to devote more resources for counterterrorism in Africa. He is correct. President Bush's FY 2005 international affairs budget request has as its top priority the winning of the war on terrorism. Exclusive of Iraq and Afghanistan, it requests \$5.7 billion for assistance to countries around the world that have joined the war on terrorism and another \$3.5 billion that indirectly supports the war by strengthening the U.S. ability to respond to emergencies and conflict situations. The \$100 million East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative and several other modest programs just don't measure up to the threat.

The components of the counterterrorism program for East Africa and the Horn are good as far as they go. But the focus is primarily short- and medium-term: catching bad guys, providing training and, to a limited extent, building up counterterrorism infrastructure. What is missing is a major, new, long-term program to reduce poverty and social alienation.

U.S. foreign assistance worldwide in constant dollars has declined about 44 percent since 1985 and another 18 percent since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Until the U.S. and the international community generally are prepared to put far more resources into improving the environment that encourages terrorism—namely poverty—it is difficult to see lasting progress against this enemy. If only the U.S. had had the foresight years ago to devote to counterterrorism and economic development the equivalent cost of overthrowing the Taliban and rebuilding a destroyed Afghanistan!

Assuming adequate financial assistance from outside, countries in the region must bear the primary responsibility for curbing terrorism. They know the different cultures, speak the local languages, and control the security forces. Foreigners will never be able to function as

effectively in the native environment as local nationals. Accordingly, action on the recent recommendation by the Africa Policy Advisory Panel (organized by the Center for Strategic and International Studies) for an annual \$200 million Muslim outreach initiative in Africa is long overdue.

Finally, the U.S. has allowed its language and area expertise among foreign affairs personnel to degrade to dangerous levels. The time has come to rebuild this expertise. In the case of East Africa and the Horn, there should be adequate numbers of Arabic, Somali, Swahili, and Amharic speakers from State, the CIA, USAID, and the military assigned to appropriate countries. Only then will the U.S. be able to engage in reliable information-gathering and increase the public affairs outreach to communities where Islamic fundamentalism and sympathy for terrorists are taking hold.

About the Author

David H. Shinn was a Foreign Service officer from 1964 to 2000, serving as ambassador to Burkina Faso and Ethiopia, among many other postings, including deputy chief of mission in Sudan and Cameroun. He was also State Department coordinator for Somalia during the American intervention there. Since 2001 he has been adjunct professor in the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University.

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Selected Bibliography

The following list of further readings constitutes merely an initial point of departure from which readers might embark on their own, longer journeys to explore any of the many topics that have been presented in this work. Like the articles presented in the anthology itself, most of the readings found in the following selected references are introductory in nature and should prove useful to a broad range of readers. The bibliographic entries are presented in separate sections that correspond directly with the chapter headings found in this book (with the exception of the “General Historical and Multiple-Topic Works” in the initial section found immediately below).

The reading list is not meant to be definitive in scope, but acts instead as a preliminary guide for readers, introducing them to a wide range of materials from a variety of highly divergent sources, running the academic gamut from traditional military, government, and university studies and publications to those produced by newer “think-tank” and nongovernmental organizations. In addition, almost all of the works found on the following pages possess their own, often extensive, bibliographies that should be of interest to many of the readers of this volume. The corpus of entries found here—representing only a small fraction of the enormous body of works that have been written on these subjects—was selected to illustrate the complexity involved in conducting counterinsurgency and irregular war efforts, both historically and in the contemporary Global War on Terrorism (“Long War”), as well as the elements of national power that can be employed to achieve the nation’s policy objectives in these types of conflicts.

Finally, several things should be noted in regard to what was considered for inclusion in the bibliography and what was not. First, like the anthology, the bibliographic entries deal with topics pertaining to counterinsurgency and irregular warfare involving only the United States—

the great expanse of works addressing the experiences of European nations, the Soviet Union, and others are left largely unexplored. Beyond this, the entries referenced comprise English-language sources only; works written in foreign languages are found more appropriately in specialized works. In addition, primary sources have been excluded for the same reason, and the analysis provided in many of the secondary sources is better suited for mention in an introductory work in any event. Lastly, it should be evident that the following works have a distinct emphasis on one (or more) of several broad subjects: on higher-end operational/strategic level of war considerations, on geopolitical context, and on an array of related topics—political theory, historical case studies, failed states, cultural studies and analysis, and others—that all provide context or play a role in conducting a counterinsurgency and achieving success in the realm of irregular warfare.

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