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Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, AC

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## EDITORIAL

This edition of the *Australian Army Journal* marks a departure from established practice in that it is a thematic edition dedicated exclusively to the issue of counterinsurgency warfare. Since the end of the Cold War military professionals, scholars and policy-makers alike have pondered the changing character of war. Consensus has proved elusive.

Some have purported to identify the emergence of 'Fourth Generation Warfare'. Others have determined that war henceforth will be 'amongst the people'. This, in turn, has led others to warn that the nature of war does not change and that it would be folly to conclude that conventional state on state conflict is in permanent demise.

We accept that the nature of war as a violent contest of wills in pursuit of policy objectives remains constant. Moreover, as the relatively small army of a medium power, the Australian Army has never enjoyed the luxury of following strategic fads and fashions. Our core business has always been and remains professional mastery of conventional warfighting.

Nonetheless, the span of our combat experience over time has been vast: from higher formation level conventional warfighting in the global conflagrations of last century, through to the amalgam of warfighting, nation-building and stabilisation operations of recent years.

Since the al-Qaeda attacks on the United States in 2001 the Australian Defence Force, particularly the Army, has been required to operate against lethal, highly motivated non-state actors in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The enemy in each of these conflicts is conducting an insurgency, seeking to wear down our more sophisticated conventional forces by protracted low-level guerrilla warfare.

This has forced our allies, especially the United States and the United Kingdom, to adopt counterinsurgency techniques in order to defeat these insurgencies. Although the Australian Regular Army's experience of war has predominantly consisted of counterinsurgency warfare since its inception in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, it has become evident that we need to revise our doctrine in this vital area of operations.

Although we had developed considerable proficiency in operating against classical Maoist guerrilla movements in the jungles of South-East Asia, the character of insurgency has undergone significant change since the end of the Cold War. This point is emphasised by Major General Jim Molan in his article in this special edition. He dismisses the hoary myth that our army—or any army—is naturally adept at counterinsurgency. And he stresses the importance of fully grasping the lethality and motivation of the modern jihadist insurgent.

Nor is past success a guarantee of current competence. The *Australian Army Journal* has consistently advocated the careful study of military history by members of the profession of arms. But, as Professor Jeffrey Grey reminds us, every war is *sui generis*, and caution must be exercised in seeking to glean lessons from past campaigns.

The pressing importance of understanding counterinsurgency led the Chief of Army to direct the urgent rewriting of Australian Army doctrine for counterinsurgency. In February this year he convened a two-day seminar to frame an authors' brief to inform the doctrine writing team. This task is now being undertaken against a tight schedule. That is the reason that this edition of the *Australian Army Journal* is a thematic special edition. It also explains why we have expedited its production, in an effort to stimulate thinking across the Army about this important issue.

Accordingly, a number of qualifications need to be expressed. This issue is built around a significant number of articles expressly reprinted from foreign military journals. This does not reflect a want of confidence in the calibre of our own officers and soldiers. Nor will it become the standard practice of the *Australian Army Journal*, which is committed to maintaining its authentic Australian voice. We hope that Australian readers will read these articles with a critical attitude and ponder their validity in the light of their own experiences of current operations, before writing their own opinions for this *Journal*.

It would, however, be parochial in the extreme not to acknowledge the vast experience that our allies have accumulated over the past few years. For that reason we have sought the views of some of the leading experts in this field from other nations. We are honoured to publish the views of General David Petraeus and Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszley, whose contributions in this area are without peer. Likewise, the expertise of Ian Beckett and Stephen Metz—highly esteemed scholars both—are valuable additions to this *Journal*.

Furthermore, there is a distinct land bias in this edition. As Major General Molan emphasises, successful counterinsurgency demands seamless orchestration of joint effects. And the Chief of Army stresses that the multi-agency, comprehensive approach is vital to counterinsurgency, which requires more intimate coordination of political effects than other forms of warfare. The absence of RAN, RAAF, AFP or NGO perspectives from this edition does not imply a lack of recognition of their fundamental importance to effective counterinsurgency operations. However, this

edition has been compiled within the serious time constraints applicable to the doctrine writers. In the interests of publishing this contribution in time to be of any relevance to the Army, we necessarily focused on our primary audience.

We are most grateful to the professional and academic journals which generously permitted us to use the articles republished in this special counterinsurgency edition. While we appropriately acknowledge each of these at the commencement of each article, it is fitting to thank *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, *Parameters* and *Military Review* for their significant support to this edition.

We commend this special edition to our readers and hope that it provides intellectual stimulation as well as practical professional assistance to our readers. We ultimately hope to be of service to our men and women who are fighting the current insurgencies. In that regard we note that since the last edition of this *Journal* appeared, another Australian soldier was killed on operations in Afghanistan. To the family and loved ones of Lance Corporal Jason Marks, we extend our respectful condolences.





# INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION BY THE CHIEF OF ARMY

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL PETER LEAHY AC

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I can think of no more appropriate way to bid farewell to the Australian Army after thirty-seven years of service than to introduce this special edition of the *Australian Army Journal* devoted exclusively to the subject of counterinsurgency (COIN). The Australian Army has a distinguished record of service in wars against insurgents and irregular enemies. Indeed, since the Korean War this has been the staple of our service.

In 1971 I joined the Australian Army as our commitment to the Vietnam War was being wound back. From the end of the Second World War until the withdrawal from Vietnam, the Australian Regular Army was almost continuously on operations. Although we fought a conventional enemy in Korea, the Malayan Emergency, Confrontation and most of our operations in Vietnam were against irregular enemies.

Indeed, the period following the Second World War could be viewed as the era of insurgency, as nationalist and revolutionary movements emerged in much of the Third World. Many of these movements drew both philosophical and doctrinal inspiration from the Maoist model of People's War, which Mao Tse-tung developed in China in the 1930s and 1940s. There were variants on this Marxist/Communist model, most notably developed by Che Guevara in Latin America and Vo Nguyen Giap in Vietnam.

As an army we developed a high level of proficiency in fighting these types of insurgencies. The Communist brand of revolutionary war proliferated during the

Cold War where conventional wars were restrained due to the threat of mutually assured destruction. The prospect of nuclear war made the nuclear armed powers very cautious about direct confrontation with one another. This led to their fighting through surrogates in Asia and Africa, while both China and the Soviet Union sought to infiltrate nationalist movements that were fighting against Western powers.

Such insurgencies exhibited two particular characteristics. First, they tended to be based in rural areas, as in the case of Malaya and Vietnam where they used the jungle and complex terrain for refuge and concealment. In this way they largely neutralised the conventional military power of Western Armies. The Latin American model of insurgency often featured urban guerrilla warfare and terrorism of the type pioneered by the theorist Carlos Marighella. Throughout this period the Australian Army operated exclusively against the rural-based insurgents pursuing the Communist version of revolutionary warfare.

The Vietnam War was ultimately decided by a major conventional offensive, which was very much in accordance with Mao's doctrine as applied by Vo Nguyen Giap. The guerrilla and irregular phase of operations was designed to weaken and discredit the established government before the main force emerged to launch a final offensive.

Second, these insurgencies tended to have a specific national focus. Regardless of whether a particular movement was acting as a surrogate of China or the Soviet Union, or merely accepted military aid from them to pursue a nationalist agenda, the insurgents' primary aim was to wrest power and control from the incumbent government.

These two characteristics gave this model of insurgency certain strengths and weaknesses. In Malaya we and our British and Malayan allies were successful, while in Vietnam we were defeated. Of course many here and in the United States have sought comfort in arguments to the effect that 'We never lost a battle in Vietnam' or 'If the media and the public had not believed the enemy's propaganda we would have ultimately won the war.'

This misses the entire point. It also tells us a good deal about insurgency as a form of war. The nature of the war to be fought will be defined by the side that is weaker in terms of conventional military power. For that reason the insurgent will try to avoid decisive military engagements and wage a low level protracted campaign, which in turn will test the long term resolve of the stronger military power. They will use every form of persuasion and psychological operation to

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The guerrilla and irregular phase of operations was designed to weaken and discredit the established government before the main force emerged to launch a final offensive.

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undermine us, while enlisting the allegiance of the population. Today we call this asymmetric warfare.

For an insurgent the objective is to win the allegiance of the population. From our point of view we must reinforce the political legitimacy of the current government. This is more important than destroying the insurgent through fire and manoeuvre. This of course is easier said than done. As the influential French theorist of counter-insurgency David Galula once observed, 80 per cent of the response to an insurgency is political while a mere 20 per cent is military. Galula was of course writing of his experiences in Algeria, but the primacy of a political strategy in defeating an insurgency is one common thread that links the nationalist revolutionary insurgencies of the Cold War to the modern insurgencies we are fighting today.

Despite the defeat in Vietnam, I do not resile from my earlier comment that the Australian Army had achieved a high level of proficiency in fighting the Communist/Nationalist rural insurgencies of the second half of the twentieth century. We had developed excellent training and doctrine for jungle warfare by the end of the New Guinea campaigns of the Second World War. As an aside this perpetrated a dangerous myth that Australians were ‘natural jungle fighters’. This is nonsense. Soldiers need robust training and doctrine to perform well in any terrain or climate. Indeed, we have been blessed with innovative, resilient soldiers throughout our history. But the early disasters in New Guinea demonstrated the importance of the thorough preparation of our troops for any form of combat.

What the New Guinea campaign did bequeath to the embryonic Australian Regular Army was proficiency in small unit operations in close terrain and an understanding of the importance of individual soldier skills. We have never lost these, although for a period in the 1980s and 1990s our emphasis on conventional operations on Australian soil saw these vital skills weakened. They were preserved, almost as tribal lore among our soldiers and NCOs by institutions such as the Land Battle School at Tully and Battle Wing at Canungra.

Against the insurgents known at the time as Communist terrorists in Malaya, and the Viet Cong and even main force enemies in Vietnam, our excellence at patrolling, ambushing and the decency and initiative of our soldiers enabled us to master counterinsurgency operations. By the time we withdrew from Vietnam, we possessed an excellent individual and collective training system for this type of warfare. Our doctrine for Counter Revolutionary Warfare was the distilled wisdom of our experiences and it was well suited to the type of enemy and type of terrain we were likely to encounter in our primary area of national interest.

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our experiences ...

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Indeed, it provided the basis for our operations in Somalia, Timor Leste and Solomon Islands. In each case our soldiers were able to rapidly isolate armed, politically motivated groups from the population, undertake aggressive patrolling, and create conditions for civilians to take the lead in governance and the provision of security. But we need to be realistic about these achievements. We did not encounter highly motivated enemies with access to the most lethal individual weaponry currently available to irregular forces. Nor were they backed by a state sponsor or wealthy criminal or terrorist networks.

This distinguishes them from the most capable jihadist insurgents that our soldiers are facing in Iraq and Afghanistan today. Warfare has changed in significant ways since the end of the Cold War. This should not surprise us as professionals. We all know that war is an innately social and political activity. It reflects the characteristics of its time. Clausewitz was correct in pointing out that war is the continuation of policy by other means. He also correctly defined war as a violent clash of wills.

That is why I intentionally argue that war has changed in *significant* ways rather than *fundamental* ways since the end of the Cold War. I do not subscribe to the view that digitisation, precision and stealth have changed war in any fundamental way. Nor, however, do I believe that we can dust off our counterinsurgency doctrine from Malaya and Vietnam and expect to succeed against the current enemy in the highly lethal environment we face. As Sir John Kiszely argues in his excellent article in this edition of the *Journal*, every insurgency is unique.

Rather, I would argue that the character of war, not its nature, is changing. So is the character of insurgency changing. Moreover, the dividing line between Cold War and post-Cold War insurgencies is quite clear. The era of decolonisation has given way to the era of globalisation. Whereas most revolutionary warfare last century was aimed at seizing control of a particular nation, globalisation has unleashed forces of ethnic and religious fragmentation on a global level.

We are now grappling with the consequences of globalisation. It has given its own distinctive character to wars we are involved in today. These characteristics include:

- the rapid diffusion of information
- a borderless world
- a movement to cities
- a shift in the balance of power between the nation state and non-state actors
- a hunger for certainty and reassurance in assertive ethnic and religious groups as a global mono-culture threatens their traditional societies
- the empowerment of individuals through technology, and
- the proliferation of lethality.

Whereas some of these trends were suppressed by the bi-polar stand-off of the Cold War, in the period since 1991 they have now been unleashed through civil wars, ethnic cleansing and separatist movements.

While there are nationalist elements in both Iraq and Afghanistan motivated purely by resentment at the presence of foreigners, there are also jihadist elements whose motivation is the establishment of a global caliphate. These elements are highly motivated, diffuse and able to communicate instantaneously via the Internet. This is qualitatively different in scale and complexity to anything we faced in Malaya. While we are not facing an enemy as capable as either the NVA or the best elements of the Viet Cong—in the sense that the jihadists do not mount company and battalion level operations with any regularity—the current enemy does possess other advantages.

First, the era of globalisation has been characterised by an exponential enhancement to individual lethality. Today the rocket propelled grenade and the sophisticated improvised explosive device, rather than the AK-47, are the symbol of the insurgent fighter. The proliferation of easily accessible, powerful, individual weapons is one of the darker aspects of the post-Cold War security environment. One of the effects of this is to require any credible counterinsurgent force to be capable of sustained close combat using well protected combined arms teams. We should not be seduced into thinking that just because we need to operate sensitively, to avoid alienating the population whose allegiance we must secure to achieve our aims, that we must rely only on ‘soft power’. The modern insurgent can hit hard and is willing to stand and fight in complex urban terrain where he not only hopes to neutralise our firepower and sensors but to also channel us into deadly improvised explosive device ambushes. This presents real dilemmas for the counterinsurgent force. We must be able to defeat highly lethal, motivated enemies who are hugging population centres, yet somehow avoid killing innocent people and destroying infrastructure. Again Sir John Kiszley provides brilliant insights into the challenge these apparently irreconcilable objectives present to modern armies.

Complex urban terrain, in conjunction with the enhanced lethality of our foes, provides another distinctive ingredient to contemporary insurgencies. We are living through an unprecedented period of urbanisation. Climate change, reductions in arable land and exploding birth rates in the developing world are combining to create mega-cities on a scale unimaginable even thirty years ago. Whether we are considering conventional or irregular warfare, the empty battlefield dreamt of by the champions of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), where the enemy can be reduced to a set of targets and we enjoy pervasive information superiority, simply does not and will not exist.

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As the British General Sir Rupert Smith has so eloquently put it, wars will be ‘amongst the people’ for the simple and enduring reason that war is political. We will need to operate in proximity to people because that is how we protect them, reassure them, support them and attempt to separate them from our enemies. This is especially the case against a non-state, insurgent enemy, who will seek anonymity among the people.

It is not prudent to rule out rural-based insurgencies. Had Alfredo Reinado, for example, been more successful at garnering popular support from the people in the Western Districts of Timor Leste, it is conceivable that we may have needed to support the police and legitimate authorities there, in operations reminiscent of Malaya. But the prevalence of urban warfare and the borderless aspirations of the most credible of the jihadist enemies has rendered our doctrine—so effective against the Communist rural insurgent—obsolete.

In that regard, I urge you to consider carefully the article by Marshall Ecklund, which examines the tactics and doctrine employed by Task Force Ranger in Mogadishu in 1993. The battle, popularised in the book and film *Black Hawk Down*, was the harbinger of the small wars of globalisation. The prescient US Marine Corps General Charles Krulak was inspired to create his seminal concept of the ‘Three Block War’ by this action. That paradigm, which we have adapted to our Land Operating Concept ‘Complex Warfighting’ captures the complexity, simultaneity, lethality and ambiguity of the modern battlespace.

We need to ensure that our soldiers have the protection to survive in this environment. That is why Army has hardened and networked. We need to match the lethality of the current crop of non-state actors. Moreover, the networking of the force will permit us to operate in small flexible teams to match the agility of our enemies. But we also need the intellectual and thinking skills to exploit these technological and organisational changes.

This is why I convened a joint, multi-agency seminar on COIN at Puckapunyal in February of this year. The aim of the seminar was to re-evaluate what we think we know about counterinsurgency, about the current enemy and the evolving character of warfare. The seminar was the prelude to a thorough rewrite of COIN doctrine. Another step in this renewal of our COIN approach is this special Winter 2008 edition of the *Australian Army Journal* dedicated to COIN.

To expedite this process of renewal I have directed that Army’s intellectual resources be focused on COIN. I was most appreciative of the enthusiastic support we received from our sister services, the Australian Federal Police, other government

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departments—notably Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Prime Minister & Cabinet—and the non-governmental organisation community in this endeavour. Their participation reminds us of the primacy of the civil power in counterinsurgency and the imperative of military effects being directed to support a whole of government solution to the insurgency.

The seminar developed lines of operation towards an author brief, which has been provided to the Command and Staff College for work to commence on writing our doctrine. Development of up-to-date, relevant COIN doctrine is essential to equip our soldiers with the intellectual and cultural disposition to operate effectively ‘amongst the people’ in the complex, lethal insurgencies of the twenty-first century.

Likewise, this special edition of the *Australian Army Journal* is designed to stimulate thinking about COIN at all levels of the Army and to promote discussion and debate. The collected articles in this edition capture the thinking and experience of some of the leading practitioners and scholars of counterinsurgency warfare among the Western alliance today. They cover a spectrum of topics from the theories about the changing character of insurgency to up-to-date case studies from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Take note of the important themes that emerge:

- It is vital that kinetic effects be used with great discrimination and always to support a clearly defined political purpose
- That soldiers at every level must be culturally aware and able to win the trust and respect of the indigenous population that they are supporting
- That strong language and cultural engagement skills are required, and
- That the political and military leadership of the counterinsurgency campaign must be fused at the highest level.

All of the authors in this edition are grappling with a dynamic problem created by an adaptive enemy. All of us as professionals must ensure that we continue to apply our intellects to this problem. Professional reading and debate are vital sources of strength in this regard. Judicious reading of history is a start—but I emphasise ‘judicious’—the slavish application of apparent lessons from Malaya or Algeria or Northern Ireland will be doomed to failure. Every insurgency is unique.

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Nonetheless, there are broad characteristics shared by insurgencies across time and geographical regions that warrant close examination. For this reason I have also directed the Land Warfare Studies Centre to prepare an annotated guide to the classic works of leading counterinsurgency thinkers, such as Galula, Paget, Kitson Fall and Trinquier. This will be released later this year.



It is fitting that my final remarks addressed to the Army concern counterinsurgency. My career has gone full circle since 1971. I joined an army deeply imbued with the ethos of counterinsurgency warfare against irregular enemies. During the middle of my career, we focused more on continental defence and conventional warfare, and I taught counterinsurgency warfare at the United States Army Command and General Staff College. Now as I leave the Army our soldiers are deployed in Timor Leste, Solomon Islands, Afghanistan and Iraq on complex stabilisation and counterinsurgency operations.

I leave the Army feeling very proud of its place in our society as a trusted national institution. My life has been enriched by serving in the Australian Army. Words cannot do justice to the sense of pride I have in all of the men and women I have served with over the past thirty-seven years. I have learned something from each one of you. You have taught me so much about courage, initiative, teamwork, duty, mateship, sacrifice and love of country. This has been a source of great pride but it is also humbling.

Some may say that such a long military career represents a contribution to the nation. I hope that is true. But as every one of you knows, the Australian Army gives us much more than it takes. It is one of our oldest national institutions and I say with some confidence that it remains one of the most revered across our society. Soldiers of our Army have written large tracts of the history of this nation. You and your forebears, under the Rising Sun Badge, have kindled the flame of decency and humanity in some of the darkest hours of our nation's history. I take this opportunity to thank you for your service during my time as Chief of Army, to thank you for your camaraderie and good humour every day of my career, and to wish you good luck and good soldiering for the future. I bid you a very affectionate farewell.



## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

# AUSTRALIA'S COUNTERINSURGENCIES

## A BRIEF HISTORY

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JEFF GREY

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The pages of the major professional military journals in Britain and the United States are once again full of articles and commentary on counterinsurgency (and terrorism). An American publisher, Praeger Security International, has launched an entire series—*Classics of the Counterinsurgency Era*—to bring well known texts such as Roger Trinquier's *Modern Warfare* (1961), and largely unknown studies such as David Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare* (1964) and Napoleon Valeriano's *Counter-Guerrilla Operations* (1962), before a new reading public. Amazon.com is awash with studies of insurgency, counterinsurgency and guerrilla warfare across several centuries and all quarters of the globe, while in universities doctoral dissertations and research papers are being fashioned along similar lines. For the first time in a generation, the US Army and the Marine Corps have brought out a joint field manual on counterinsurgency—Field Manual 3-24: *Counterinsurgency*—accorded the peculiar distinction of being published in an unclassified edition by the University of Chicago Press.<sup>1</sup> As part of the process of getting American officers to think their way back into the subject, the manual concludes with an excellent, five-page annotated bibliography of the key texts in the field (or at least those available in English). The British Army has also produced a successor to Colonel CE Callwell's justly famous *Small Wars: Their Principles and*

*Practice* (first published in 1896 and is currently still in print in a paperback edition) and C G Gwynn's equally influential *Imperial Policing* (1934),<sup>2</sup> entitled *Countering Insurgency: A Guide for Commanders*. In both cases, insurgency and its countering have once again appeared in the curricula of professional military education institutions, fuelled by the extensive recent experience acquired by many of the course members and the military faculty.

The Australian Army has a respectable pedigree when it comes to counterinsurgency, with no small amount of experience in the irregular and guerrilla conflicts of the 1950s and 1960s in our region. In keeping with our national habits of mind, we have been less ready to re-examine this, perhaps on the assumption that having done this before we can readily reacquire the techniques needed. Perhaps we can. But as a number of commentators have pointed out, much has changed since the last time we confronted the problem of insurgency. Colonel Alexander Alderson, head of the British Army's Warfare Development Group, has noted recently:

What is feasible today is different from that which was feasible for El Salvador, Vietnam, Algeria, Northern Ireland or Malaya. The inter-departmental and international gearing, a key feature of some past campaigns, is rusty and the organisational understanding across and between governments is a work in progress.<sup>3</sup> The *nature* of insurgency as a highly political form of warfare has not changed, but its *character* avowedly has.

The Australian Regular Army matured institutionally while immersed in guerrilla insurgencies in Malaya, Malaysia and the Republic of Vietnam—a fact attested by many of the battle honours of Australian regular units. Doctrine, training, force structure and Staff College curricula in the 1950s and 1960s reflected the Army's preoccupation with this form of warfare. At the tactical level the Australian Army was very good at what it did, not least, it should be remembered, because it did very little else. There is very little institutional reflection of this anymore. Hew Strachan's criticism of the British Army applies at least as well to ourselves: 'we ... lack a body of strategy which rests on small wars.'<sup>4</sup> We have probably also largely forgotten the body of knowledge concerning tactics and techniques amassed slowly and sometimes painfully across twenty years of campaigning. Publication of a pamphlet, 'Infantry Battalion Lessons from Vietnam, 1965–71', was proposed soon after the withdrawal of 1 ATF in 1971, and successfully opposed on the grounds that 'it wasn't doctrine' (no one had suggested that it was). It circulated unofficially in roneoed form, and was finally sanctioned as a Training

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Information Bulletin in 1988, by which time, of course, Army was supposed to be mopping up 'thugs in thongs' lucky enough to have made it across the air-sea gap to our immediate north.<sup>5</sup>

Much effort has been, and doubtless is being, expended trying to fashion a general model of insurgencies. In Alderson's view, one of the successful features of the US manual is that it 'is *not* general enough to allow fully for future insurgencies ... The issue is the more pressing one of winning the campaigns of today' [author emphasis].<sup>6</sup> The differences and distinctions between insurgencies and the efforts to counter and defeat them are at least as important as the broad similarities that may exist (and these can be overstated). All Maoist-derived insurgencies may have important elements in common, but not all insurgencies derive their inspiration and validation from the Chinese model of People's War. Equally, our own 'tradition' of counterinsurgency derives to a considerable extent from British practice and theory, and as many American commentators are (perhaps too) acutely aware, this differs considerably from that of the United States.<sup>7</sup>

There is a tendency to believe that the British (and by extension the Commonwealth and hence ourselves), possess some rare insight into the conduct of counterinsurgency that largely eludes others, such as the Americans or the French. Many Americans certainly believe this, and have done so since at least the early 1960s before they became heavily involved in Vietnam, as a survey of the service professional journals of the time quickly makes clear. Lieutenant Colonel John Nagl, who was involved in the completion of FM3-24, has published an influential book based on his Oxford doctoral dissertation that contrasts the British Army in Malaya as a 'learning institution' with the US Army in Vietnam, which he presents as being anything but. Sir Robert Thompson, full of insights and advice from his service as Secretary of Defence for Malaya in the 1950s, was the guru of choice for both the Americans and the Diem regime in Saigon during the disastrous 'strategic hamlets' program in the early 1960s, and remained a highly valued commentator throughout the American phases of the war. Whilst this assumption, and the depiction of Commonwealth counterinsurgency practices as subtle, nuanced and successful where the American equivalent is crude, kinetic and generally a failure, is flattering, it is overdrawn.

This article has three functions: first, to make some observations about the general course and nature of the postwar counterinsurgency campaigns in which Australian forces were involved; second, to sketch briefly the nature of that involvement and draw attention to its inherent limitations; and finally, to consider the process by which we evolved doctrine in our own context to fit the nature of the wars we were fighting, at least to the extent that we did so.

The British record in counterinsurgency is decidedly mixed when looked at across the course of the twentieth century, and provides only scattered evidence to support the notion of inherent British capability in this form of warfare. The British certainly

enjoyed some advantages, especially when they conducted operations in various parts of the empire, but this was neither consistent nor uniform, and nor did successful campaigns necessarily conform to the subsequent popular notions of the ‘British way in counter-insurgent warfare’. Much is made of the emphasis on ‘hearts and minds’ in British practice, characterised by strong affirmation of the application of the rule of law and the subordination of the military to the civil power as represented by the police. This is true, as far as it goes. But it was not always applied, and it did not invariably succeed when it was. Nor did British success, when it was achieved, necessarily rest on an approach based on the application of ‘minimum force’.

The protracted guerrilla phase of the South African War of 1899–1902 was met with a scorched earth policy, the enforced depopulating of rural areas and the subsequent incarceration of Boer civilians in concentration camps, and the application of ‘the hard hand of war’ (the phrase is originally William Tecumseh Sherman’s) by a British empire army of up to 450 000 men facing an enemy that never exceeded 50 000. There was nothing ‘soft’ about the application of British power on the veldt, as subsequent generations of Afrikaners have had drummed into them. Likewise, in both Ireland between 1916–18 and in the mandate of Palestine between 1946–48, the British Army operated in support of the Royal Irish Constabulary and the Palestine Police—ineffectually in Palestine, and ineffectually and increasingly brutally in Ireland. British policy and British power were frustrated and defeated in both instances.<sup>8</sup>

In the postwar era of wars of decolonisation and national liberation, the conduct of the Malayan Emergency is usually extolled as the copybook example of successful counterinsurgency, though less often by the British, who conducted it, than by others subsequently. The unique and particular features of the *insurgency* that contributed to its defeat are generally well known: the overwhelmingly Chinese character of the Malayan Communist Party, the divisions within the ethnic Chinese community in Malaya and the failure to appeal to the Malay masses; the lack of border sanctuaries and the peninsular nature of Malaya that rendered outside supply and support impossible; flawed strategy on the part of the MCP leadership; and the fatal decision early on to move the insurgency into the rural areas, away from the main areas of Chinese population (and hence support) in the towns. The key features of the *counterinsurgency* effort are perhaps less fully appreciated in all their facets. Much is made of Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer’s emphasis on ‘hearts and minds’ programs, but these had a strongly coercive element that has perhaps been lost sight of. Thousands of Chinese were detained without trial, 226 Communists were executed and hundreds were forcibly deported back to China. Some 400 000 squatters were removed from

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the areas they occupied and concentrated under the 'New Villages' program, and subjected to reprisals, food control programs, and extensive curfews and other forms of population control that would provoke howls of outrage today, and indeed prompted some comment at the time. If, to use Mao's analogy, the insurgent fighters were the fish swimming in the sea of the people, then under the Briggs Plan the British authorities very effectively and ruthlessly drained the sea.<sup>9</sup>

Templer himself famously combined both the civil and military functions of government in one role—acting as both civil governor and commander-in-chief—in what Hew Strachan has noted was a very nineteenth century exercise of civil and military power in a colonial environment.<sup>10</sup> The experiment was not repeated, even in Kenya later in the same decade, suggesting again that the British did not automatically regard Malaya as a template for colonial counterinsurgency. Kenya, too, suggests that successful British counterinsurgency frequently eschewed soft options. Over 1000 Mau Mau insurgents were executed by the British while 77 000 Kikuyu were detained without trial in what recent historians have characterised as British 'gulags'. A million more were forcibly resettled, and some estimates place the death toll among the Kikuyu as high as 50 000, although official figures concede 11 000. The death toll among the British amounted to twelve soldiers and a similar number of white settlers.<sup>11</sup>

Crucially, as Strachan again has noted, British success in these campaigns was 'predicated on the presumption of Britain's military defeat.'

Put simply, Britain was getting out. Therefore to an extent, the other side had won. The political solution to these problems and the need to have a clear political aim provided the framework for Malaya as a model counterinsurgency operation. But the model was more selective than the reality, and has increasingly tended to overlook some of the campaign's more unpalatable features—or cherry-picked those that are compatible with today's operational concepts and their legal and moral norms.<sup>12</sup>

In those cases, such as Malaya and Kenya, where British withdrawal was the ultimate given, it proved possible for the British Government to fashion a clear and attractive political strategy in which to fit military activity against the insurgents through, for example, the extension of responsible self-government to Malaya in 1955, followed by independence in 1957, which effectively neutralised whatever nationalist appeal the MCP had outside its own cadres. In cases such as Ireland between 1916–22, in which British withdrawal was simply inconceivable even after it became a fact, no such clear and successful strategies suggested themselves or, if they did, were regarded as politically impossible. Much the same might be said to characterise French conduct of counterinsurgency in both Indo-China and Algeria in the 1940s and 1950s.

What then of Australia's part in the campaigns of the post-war era? The three major campaigns to which Australian forces were committed were the Malayan Emergency (from 1950 in the air but only from 1955 on the ground); Konfrontasi

with Indonesia (effectively from the second half of 1964 until peace was negotiated in August 1966); and the Vietnam War, especially in Phuoc Tuy and surrounding provinces from 1966 but beginning in 1962 when the first advisors were committed, until 1971 when the 1st Australian Task Force was withdrawn.

In all three cases, the Australian force contributions were relatively small, and in all three Australians operated as a component of a larger, allied force commanded by either the British or the Americans. In all three cases, Australian operations can be characterised as interventionary counterinsurgency, given that there was no formal internal political role or status for the Australian forces concerned; this was equally true of the Americans and other 'Free World Military Assistance Forces' in South Vietnam, but not of the British in Malaya, at least until independence in 1957. If we accept the characterisations of David Galula, Frank Kitson and a host of others to the effect that counterinsurgency is not primarily a military activity, with the proportions involved being along the lines of '20 per cent military action and 80 per cent political',<sup>13</sup> then it is clear that the Australian role in the counterinsurgent campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s actually only dealt with a small proportion of the problem posed by insurgency itself. In addition, by the time Australian ground units were committed to operations in the Emergency from late 1955, the campaign had been won politically and, to an extent militarily as well: the intensity of operations did not come close to matching that of the period 1950–52 when, arguably, the result had hung in the balance.

In short, however competently and successfully Australian forces performed in those areas assigned to them for operations, they functioned at the local and the tactical level almost exclusively. The point is best exemplified in South Vietnam. Although the Army made an important contribution to the instructional advisory role in support of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), the Australian Government explicitly declined the advisory role in Phuoc Tuy itself, leaving the system of parallel advice and support to the South Vietnamese civil governmental structure in the hands of the Americans. Eschewing operations in the province's towns and urban centres as well, the 1st Australian Task Force largely confined itself to operating in the '20 per cent' zone of military action, with some localised efforts at reconstruction and population control through small and fairly rudimentary civil affairs and psychological operations programs. To label Phuoc Tuy an 'Australian province', as is common in the Australian literature of the war, seems to be at best a half truth. Viewed this way, however, two things become apparent: the notion that we fielded an excellent *tactical-level* army from the Great War until the end

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of the Cold War is further reinforced, while any claims to wide familiarity with counterinsurgency historically within the Army need to be qualified.

What then can be said of the formulation and application of doctrine within the Army, especially as it applied to the 'first generation' of Australian counterinsurgencies? It is worth briefly rehearsing the evolution of Australian Army doctrine in order to provide a context into which to place such conclusions as can be drawn.

The first thing to note is that until the mid-point of the Second World War, Australian military doctrine consisted pretty much of whatever was prescribed from London. This was true of all the Dominion armed forces within the Empire; in 1937, just before the outbreak of war, the latest doctrinal pamphlets issued to the Australian Military Forces consisted of the *Field Service Regulations, Part II* complete with original War Office title page. In the Mediterranean theatre the 2nd AIF used British desert warfare doctrine, as that evolved painfully through the period of allied reverses in 1941–42. Only after the fall of Singapore from mid-1942 did the Army begin to write its

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own doctrine, reflecting its own needs and shaped by the conditions that it faced directly in our region against the Japanese. The *Army Training Memorandums* and the establishment of the Jungle Training Centre at Canungra in November 1942 are important, and largely forgotten, milestones in the maturation process of the Army.

This development was almost entirely undone over the next twenty years in any case, with a reversion to conventional warfare doctrine driven by experience in the Korean War, expectations of a third expeditionary force to the Middle East in the event of a general or world war with the Soviets, and the dead end of the Pentropic Division experiment and the perceived demands of a dispersed atomic battle space.<sup>14</sup> Alongside this, of course, Australian battalions serving as part of the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve (BCFESR) in Malaya were reacquainted with the demands of jungle warfare and small unit tactics, and indeed Australian instructors had been specifically requested in 1952 when the Far East Land Forces jungle warfare school had been re-established at Kota Tinggi. But the doctrine the Australian units used on operations against the 'Communist Terrorists' was codified in the ATOM pamphlet (*Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya*) produced by FARELF (Far Eastern Land Forces (British Army)), and this was never used within Australia itself as official doctrine.<sup>15</sup> It is also worth noting in passing that the primary role of the Australian battalions deployed to Malaya was for out-of-area SEATO tasks of a mid-intensity and conventional nature.

The doctrinal basis for the Army's operations in Vietnam was pamphlet number 11 in the series *The Division in Battle*, entitled *Counter Revolutionary Warfare* and first published in 1965. The series of which it formed a part had been promulgated to help govern the conduct of operations in the Pentropic divisional environment. This had tried to reflect the variety of circumstances that Australian battle groups might face, from conventional to guerrilla and including jungle operations, and in this it reflected the tension within the Army organisationally: a small force intended to be both conventional and counter-revolutionary and to fight both on the atomic battlefield and in the jungle. Pamphlet 11 had its genesis within Malaya as well, specifically at the hands of Brigadier FG Hassett during his time commanding 28th Commonwealth Brigade between 1961–63. His draft *Tactical Doctrine in South East Asia* was a transitional document, reflecting and incorporating both British and Australian practices and assumptions, which fed directly into the new doctrinal publications that appeared with the abandonment of Pentropic and the reconfiguration of the Army for jungle warfare and counter-revolutionary and counterinsurgent campaigning.<sup>16</sup> In the course of a long commitment in South Vietnam tactics and techniques naturally evolved, and were captured and disseminated through mechanisms such as the *Training Information Bulletins* and *Training Information Letters* by Army Headquarters and reflecting the work of the Army HQ Battle Analysis Team.<sup>17</sup> The *Division in Battle* pamphlets were not revised in the course of the Vietnam commitment, but then as Bushby notes they hardly needed to be.<sup>18</sup> The basic tenets remained useful well beyond the Australian commitment: when deployed to Somalia, 1 RAR's practices and procedures reflected the teachings contained therein, which had been internalised by Lieutenant Colonel David Hurley and many of his soldiers in the training cycle.

Writing to the Chief of General Staff, Lieutenant General Sir Reginald Pollard, from Saigon in October 1962 Colonel Ted Serong suggested that 'to have me as the only authority on counterinsurgency for the Australian Army is quite intolerable. By the time I've done another couple of years here, I'll still be all we have.'<sup>19</sup> It would have been alarming had it been true, but fortunately it was not. Hassett's interim manual had been fuelled by serious consideration of the growing instability in South-East Asia and by careful study of the recent French defeat at the hands of the Viet Minh. The influential writings of Bernard Fall and Roger Trinquier, among others, were widely disseminated through the Staff College and other courses, and the Army also possessed a core of officers with recent experience in Malaya to which would soon be added, before the commitment to the war in Vietnam, subsequent veterans of the fighting in Borneo.

As the introductory pages of pamphlet 11 show the authors, and by extension the Army, were well aware of the need to align political aims with military operations in countering insurgency successfully, and an earlier pamphlet in the series dealing with *The Enemy* went into rather more detail about the nature and aims of



revolutionary warfare, at least in its Maoist-inspired, South-East Asian form. But the Army's doctrine very quickly descended to operational and tactical considerations thereafter, in keeping with the Army's understanding of its role: 'to assist the national government to defeat insurgency and to re-establish full control of the country'.<sup>20</sup> The political task, consistent with the Army's experience and expectations, would be left entirely to the national government and security forces of the host country.

In seeking to acculturate a new generation of US officers into thinking about counterinsurgency, the authors of FM 3-24 have consciously invoked the historical record. In fashioning an Australian doctrine for the same or similar purposes we can and should do the same; it is important to remember, however, that the historical record is best used as a guide to thinking rather than directly as a guide to action.

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## ENDNOTES

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- 1 *The US Army Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2007.
- 2 Colonel CE Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1896; Major General Sir Charles Gwynn, *Imperial Policing*, Macmillan, London, 1934, <<http://www.geocities.com/pentomicarmyagain/imperialpolicing.htm>> accessed 10 April 2008.
- 3 Alexander Alderson, 'Learning, Adapting, Applying: US Counter-Insurgency Doctrine and Practice', *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 152, No. 6, December 2007, p. 12.
- 4 Hew Strachan, 'British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq', *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 152, No. 6, December 2007, p. 11.
- 5 Australian Army, *Training Information Bulletin 69: Infantry Battalion Lessons from Vietnam 1965-71*, 1988.
- 6 Alderson, 'Learning, Adapting, Applying', p. 18.
- 7 A good example of the contrast is provided by John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2005.
- 8 It is worth noting in passing that a proportion of former Palestine Police officers transferred to the Royal Malay Police, and that some observers thought that early shortcomings in the British conduct of Emergency operations in Malaya reflected the use of techniques that had already proven to be flawed in Palestine a few years earlier.

- 9 The literature of the Malayan Emergency is not as extensive as one might think. Key texts include: Anthony Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya 1948–1960*, Frederick Muller Ltd, London, 1975; John Cloake, *Templer: Tiger of Malaya*, Harrap, London, 1985; Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency 1948–1960*, Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1989; John Coates, *Suppressing Insurgency: An Analysis of the Malayan Emergency, 1948–1960*, Westview, Boulder, 1992; John D Leary, *Violence and the Dream People: The Orang Asli in the Malayan Emergency, 1948–1960*, Ohio University Press, Athens OH, 1995. The best general survey of British counterinsurgency in a twentieth century colonial context remains Thomas R Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency, 1919–1960*, Macmillan, London, 1990.
- 10 Strachan, ‘British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq’, pp. 8–9.
- 11 The recent history of Mau Mau, reflecting the opening of British official records to public access, has proved contentious. Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain’s Gulag in Kenya*, Owl Books, London, 2005; and David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire*, W W Norton, New York, 2005, are representative of the new wave of historiography.
- 12 Strachan, ‘British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq’, p. 10.
- 13 David Galula, *Counter-Insurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, Praeger, Westport, 2006, p. 63.
- 14 For discussion of these issues see MCJ Welburn, *The Development of Australian Army Doctrine 1945–1964*, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1994, pp. 5–59.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- 16 *Ibid.*, pp. 60–67. See as well RN Bushby, ‘Educating an Army’: *Australian Army Doctrinal Development and the Operational Experience in South Vietnam, 1965–1972*, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1998, pp. 5–22.
- 17 Perhaps predictably, there appears to be no complete listing, much less a complete set, of these publications extant.
- 18 Bushby, ‘Educating an Army’, p. 91.
- 19 Letter, Serong to CGS, 19 October 1962, AWM101/19.
- 20 Galula, *Counter Revolutionary Warfare*, p. 35.

## THE AUTHOR

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## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

# NEW CHALLENGES AND OLD CONCEPTS

## UNDERSTANDING 21ST CENTURY INSURGENCY\*

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STEVEN METZ

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From the 1960s to the 1980s stopping Communist-backed insurgents was an important part of American strategy, so counterinsurgency was an important mission for the US military, particularly the Army. Even when most of the Army turned its attention to large-scale warfighting and the operational art following Vietnam, special operation forces preserved some degree of capability. In the 1980s American involvement in El Salvador and a spate of insurgencies around the world linked to the Soviets and Chinese sparked renewed interest in counterinsurgency operations (as a component of low-intensity conflict). By 1990 what could be called the El Salvador model of counterinsurgency, based on a limited US military footprint in conjunction with the strengthening of local security forces, became codified in strategy and doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

Interest then faded. Policymakers, military leaders, and defense experts assumed that insurgency was a relic of the Cold War, posing little challenge in the “new world order.” With the demise of the Soviet Union and the mellowing of China, insurgency—even though it persisted in the far corners of the world—was not viewed as a strategic

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challenge to the world's sole superpower. With American involvement in Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Haiti, multinational peacekeeping—a previously unimportant role for the military—moved to the fore. In a burst of energy, the military revamped its peacekeeping doctrine and concepts. Professional military education and training shifted to accommodate these missions. Wargames, conferences, and seminars proliferated. Counterinsurgency was forgotten by all but a tiny handful of scholars.

Then, one clear September morning, the world turned. Al Qaeda and its affiliates adopted a strategy relying heavily on the methods of insurgency—both national insurgency and a transnational one.<sup>2</sup> Insurgency was again viewed as a strategic threat and the fear grew that insurgent success would create regimes willing to support and protect organizations like al Qaeda. The global campaign against violent Islamic extremists forced the United States military to undertake counterinsurgency missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Once again, the Department of Defense was required to respond to a major strategic shift. The military services scrambled to develop new concepts and doctrine.<sup>3</sup> Counterinsurgency reentered the curriculum of the professional military educational system in a big way. It became a centerpiece for Army and Marine Corps training. Classic assessments of the conflicts in Vietnam and Algeria became required reading for military leaders. Like the mythical phoenix, counterinsurgency had emerged from the ashes of its earlier death to become not just a concern of the US military but the central focus.

This is all to the good. Augmenting capabilities to respond to new strategic threats is exactly what the Department of Defense is supposed to do. There is a problem, however: As the American military relearned counterinsurgency strategy and doctrine, it may not have gotten them right. During the 1970s America's national security strategy was shaped by what became known as the "Vietnam syndrome"—a reluctance to intervene in internal conflicts based on the assumption that some disaster would ensue. Ironically, while the United States eventually overcame the Vietnam syndrome, a new one emerged. Vietnam has been treated as a universal model, the Viet Cong as the archetypical foe. Defense experts even concluded that insurgents who did not use the Vietnamese approach (derived from the teaching of Mao Zedong) stood little chance of success.<sup>4</sup>

This tendency to look back to the classic insurgencies of the twentieth century was pervasive. For instance, as the Army sought to understand the conflict in Iraq, the books most recommended for its officers were John Nagl's *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* (which dealt with the British involvement in Malaya and the American experience in Vietnam) and David Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare* (drawn from the

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French campaigns in Indochina and Algeria).<sup>5</sup> Both were excellent choices. But both deal with wars of imperial maintenance or nationalistic transition, not with complex communal conflicts where armed militias and organized crime play a key role.

In a sense, the United States has once again derived new strategies from old conflicts, while again preparing to fight the last war. Rather than rigorously examining twenty-first century insurgencies, America simply assumed that their logic, grammar, organization, and dynamics were the same as the classic insurgencies of the twentieth century. Such assumptions may be dangerously misguided. In many ways contemporary insurgencies are more like their immediate forebears—the complex internal conflicts of the 1990s—rather than twentieth century insurgencies. Somalia, Bosnia, Sierra Leone, Congo, Colombia, and Kosovo are possibly better models than Vietnam or Algeria. If that is true, the military and the defense analytical community need to rethink the insurgency challenge once again, this time seeking to distinguish its persisting elements from its evolving ones.

### THE DYNAMICS OF CONTEMPORARY INSURGENCIES

Normally a twentieth century insurgency was the only game in town (or at least the most important one). Nations facing serious insurgencies such as South Vietnam or, later, El Salvador, certainly had other security problems, but they paled in comparison to the insurgent threat. Insurgencies were organizationally simple. They involved the insurgents, the regime, and, sometimes, outside supporters of one side or the other. When the United States finally engaged in counterinsurgency operations, many government agencies played a supporting role, but it was primarily a military effort. After all, Americans now viewed counterinsurgency as a variant of war. In war, the military dominates and the objective is the decisive defeat of the enemy. Why should counterinsurgency operations be any different?

This perception was always problematic, leading the United States to pursue military solutions to threats that could only be solved politically. This disconnect is even more dangerous today, largely because twenty-first century insurgencies have diverged significantly from their forebears. Rather than being discrete conflicts between insurgents and an established regime, they are nested in complex, multidimensional clashes having political, social, cultural, and economic components. In an even broader sense, contemporary insurgencies flow from systemic failures in the political, economic, and social realms. They arise not only from the failure or weakness of the state, but from more general flaws in cultural, social, and economic systems. Such complex conflicts involve a wide range of participants, all struggling to fill the voids created by failed or weak states and systemic collapse. In addition to what might be labeled “first forces” (the insurgent and the regime) and “second forces” (outside sponsors of the insurgents or the regime), there are “third forces”

(armed groups such as militias, criminal gangs, or private military corporations) and “fourth forces” (the international media and nongovernmental organizations) all with the capability to impact the outcome.<sup>6</sup> The implications are stark; in the face of systemic failure, simply crushing insurgents and augmenting local security forces may not be enough to stem instability.

Contemporary insurgencies are less like traditional war where the combatants seek strategic victory, they are more like a violent, fluid, and competitive market. This circumstance is the result of globalization, the decline of overt state sponsorship of insurgency, the continuing importance of informal outside sponsorship, and the nesting of insurgency within complex conflicts associated with state weakness or failure. In economic markets, participants might dream of strategic victory—outright control of the market such as that exercised by Standard Oil prior to 1911—but seldom attained it. The best most can hope for is market domination. Even these trends tend to be transitory. Most businesses have more limited objectives—survival and some degree of profitability. This phenomenon of limited objectives also describes many insurgencies, particularly those of the twenty-first century. Competition and the absence of state sponsors mitigate against outright conquest of states in the mode of Fidel Castro or Ho Chi Minh. It is nearly impossible for a single entity, whether the state or a non state player, to monopolize power. Market domination and share are constantly shifting.

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In contemporary complex conflicts, profitability often is literal rather than metaphorical. There is an extensive body of analytical literature that chronicles the evolution of violent movements such as insurgencies from “grievance” to “greed.”<sup>7</sup> The idea is that political grievances may instigate an insurgency but, as a conflict progresses, economic motives may begin to play a greater role. While combatants “have continued to mobilize around political, communal, and security objectives,” as Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman write, “increasingly these objectives have become obscured and sometimes contradicted by their more businesslike activities.”<sup>8</sup> Conflict gives insurgents access to money and resources out of proportion to what they would have in peacetime. As Paul Collier, one of the pioneers of this idea, explains:

Conflicts are far more likely to be caused by economic opportunities than by grievance. If economic agendas are driving conflict, then it is likely that some groups are benefiting from the conflict and these groups, therefore, have some interest in initiating and sustaining it.<sup>9</sup>

The counterinsurgents—the regime or its supporters—also develop vested political and economic interests in sustaining a controllable conflict. A regime facing an armed insurgency is normally under somewhat less outside pressure for economic and political reform. It can justifiably demand more of its citizens and, conversely, postpone meeting their demands. Insurgency often brings outside financial support and provides opportunities for corrupt members of the regime to tap into black markets. Even though internal conflict may diminish economic activity overall, it may increase profit margins by constraining competition. This too can work to the advantage of elites, including those in the government or security services. Collier continues:

Various identifiable groups will “do well out of the war.” They are opportunistic businessmen, criminals, traders, and the rebel organizations themselves. The rebels will do well through predation on primary commodity exports, traders will do well through the widened margins on the goods they sell to consumers, criminals will do well through theft, and opportunistic businessmen will do well at the expense of those businesses that are constrained to honest conduct.<sup>10</sup>

Internal wars “frequently involve the emergence of another alternative system of profit, power, and protection in which conflict serves the political and economic interests of a variety of groups.”<sup>11</sup> Hence the insurgents, criminals, militias, or even the regime have a greater interest in sustaining a controlled conflict than in attaining victory.

The merging of armed violence and economics amplifies the degree to which complex conflicts emulate the characteristics and dynamics of volatile, hypercompetitive markets. For instance, like all markets, complex conflicts operate according

to rules (albeit informal, unwritten ones). In the most basic sense, these rules dictate what is and is not acceptable as participants compete for market domination or share. Participants may violate the rules, but doing so entails risk and cost. The more risk averse a participant the less likely it is to challenge the rules—and governments are normally more risk averse than nongovernment participants, and participants satisfied with their market position and with a positive expectation about the future are more risk averse than those who are unsatisfied and pessimistic. These rules are conflict- and time-specific; they periodically evolve and shift. This year’s rule or “road map” might not be next year’s.

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As in commercial markets, participants in a complex conflict may enter as small, personalistic companies. Some may resemble family businesses built on kinship or ethnicity. As in a commercial market, the more successful participants evolve into more complex, variegated corporate structures. Insurgencies then undertake a number of the same practices as corporations:

- Acquisitions and mergers (insurgent factions may join in partnerships, or a powerful one may integrate a less powerful one).
- Shedding or closing unproductive divisions (insurgencies may pull out of geographic regions or jettison a faction of the movement).
- Forming strategic partnerships (insurgencies may arrange relationships with internal or external groups—political, criminal, etc.—which share their objectives).
- Reorganizing for greater effectiveness and efficiency.
- Developing, refining, and at times abandoning products or product lines (insurgencies develop political, psychological, economic, and military techniques, operational methods, or themes. They refine these over time, sometimes dropping those which prove ineffective or too costly).
- Advertising and creating brand identity (insurgent psychological activities are akin to advertising. Their “brands” include political and psychological themes, and particular methods and techniques).
- Accumulating and expending capital (insurgents accumulate both financial and political capital, using it as required).
- Subcontracting or contracting out functions (contemporary insurgents may contract out tasks they are ineffective at or which they wish to disassociate themselves from).
- Bringing in outside consultants (this can be done by physical presence of outside advisers or, in the contemporary environment, by “virtual” consultation).
- Entering and leaving market niches.
- Creating new markets and market niches.
- Creating and altering organizational culture.
- Professional development and establishing patterns of career progression.

As in commercial markets, a conflict market is affected by what happens in other markets. Just as the automobile market is affected by the petroleum market, or the American national market by the European market, the Iraq conflict market is affected by the Afghan conflict market or by the market of political ideas in the United States and other parts of the Arab world.

That contemporary insurgents emulate corporations in a hyper, competitive (violent) market shapes their operational methods. Specifically, insurgents gravitate toward operational methods which maximize desired effects while minimizing cost and risk. This, in conjunction with a profusion of information, the absence of state



sponsors providing conventional military materiel, and the transparency of the operating environment, increases the value that terrorism provides the insurgent. Insurgents have always used terrorism. But one of the characteristics of this quintessentially psychological method of violence is that its effect is limited to those who know of or are impacted by the act. When, for instance, the Viet Cong killed a local political leader, it may have had the desired psychological effect on people in the region, but the act itself did little to shape the beliefs, perceptions, or morale of those living far away. Today, information technology amplifies the psychological effects of a terrorist incident by publicizing it to a much wider audience. This technology includes satellite, 24-hour media coverage, and, more importantly, the Internet which, Gordon McCormick and Frank Giordano believe, “has made symbolic violence a more powerful instrument of insurgent mobilization than at any time in the past.”<sup>12</sup>

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So terrorism is effective. It is easier and cheaper to undertake than conventional military operations. It is less costly and risky to the insurgent organization as a whole (since terrorist operations require only a very small number of personnel and a limited investment in training and materiel). It is efficient when psychological effects are compared to the resource investment. It allows insurgents to conjure an illusion of strength even when they are weak. Terrorism is less likely to lead to outright victory, but for an insurgency which does not seek victory, but only domination or survival, terrorism is the tool of choice.

As the second decade of the twenty-first century approaches, there are still a few old-fashioned insurgencies trying to militarily defeat established governments, triumphantly enter the capital city, and form their own regime. The more common pattern, though, is insurgencies satisfied with domination of all or part of the power market in their particular environment. The insurgents in Iraq, Colombia, India, Sri Lanka, Uganda, and even Afghanistan have little hope of or even interest in becoming an established regime—whether for their entire country or some breakaway segment. To continue conceptualizing contemporary insurgency as a variant of traditional, Clausewitzian warfare, where two antagonists each seek to impose their will and vanquish the opponent in pursuit of political objectives, does not capture the reality of today’s geostrategic environment. Clausewitz may have been correct that war is always fought for political purposes, but not all armed conflict is war.

**RETHINKING COUNTERINSURGENCY**

In today's world it is less the chance of an insurgent victory which creates a friendly environment for transnational terrorism than persistent internal conflict shattering any semblance of control and restraint in the state. During an insurgency, both the insurgents and the government focus on each other, often leaving parts of the country with minimal security and control. Transnational terrorists exploit this phenomenon. Protracted insurgency tends to create a general disregard for law and order. Organized crime and corruption often blossom. A significant portion of the population also tends to lose its natural aversion to violence. A society brutalized and wounded by a protracted insurgency is more likely to spawn a variety of evils, dispersing violent individuals around the world long after a particular conflict ends.

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A society brutalized and wounded by a protracted insurgency is more likely to spawn a variety of evils ...

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Such actions suggest that the US military and broader defense community need a very different way of thinking about and undertaking counterinsurgency strategies and operations. At the strategic level, the risk to the United States is not that insurgents will “win” in the traditional sense, gain control of their country, or change it from an American ally to an enemy. The greater likelihood is that complex internal conflicts, especially ones involving an insurgency, will generate other adverse effects: the destabilization of regions; reduced access to resources and markets; the blossoming of transnational crime; humanitarian disasters; and transnational terrorism. Given these possibilities, the US goal should not automatically be the direct defeat of the insurgents by the established regime (which often is impossible, particularly when a partner regime is only half-heartedly committed), but, rather, the rapid resolution of the conflict. A quick and sustainable outcome which integrates most of the insurgents into the national power structure is less damaging to US national interests than a protracted conflict that may lead to the total destruction of the insurgent base. Protracted conflict, not insurgent victory, is the threat.

Because Americans consider insurgency a form of warfare, US strategy and doctrine are based on the same beliefs that are associated with a general approach to warfare: War is a pathological action which evil people impose on an otherwise peace-loving society. It is a disease which sometimes infects an otherwise healthy body politic. This metaphor is a useful one. Today, Americans consider a body without parasites and pathogens “normal.” When parasites or pathogens invade, medical treatment is required to eradicate them and restore the body

to its “normal” condition. Throughout human history, persistent parasites and pathogens were, in fact, normal. Societies and their members simply tolerated them. Today, this analogy characterizes conflict in many parts of the world. Rather than an abnormal and episodic condition which should be eradicated, it is viewed as normal and tolerated.

Because Americans see insurgency as a form of war and, following Clausewitz, view war as quintessentially political, they focus on the political causes and dimensions of insurgency. Certainly insurgency does have an important political component. But that is only part of the picture. Insurgency also fulfills the economic and psychological needs of the insurgent. It provides a source of income out of proportion to what the insurgent could otherwise earn, particularly for the lower ranks. It provides a source of identity and empowerment for those members with few sources for such things. Without a gun, most insurgent soldiers are simply poor, uneducated, disempowered people with no prospects and little hope. Insurgency changes all that. It makes the insurgent important and powerful and provides a livelihood. Again, the economic metaphor is useful; so long as demand exists, supply and a market to link supply and demand will appear. So long as there are unmet human needs that can be addressed by violence, markets of violence will be created.

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The tendency of insurgencies to evolve into criminal organizations suggests that counterinsurgency strategy itself needs to undergo a significant shift during the course of any conflict. If an insurgency has reached the point that it is motivated more by greed than grievance, addressing the political causes of the conflict will not prove effective. The counterinsurgency campaign needs to assume the characteristics of a program to defeat organized crime or gangs. Law enforcement should replace the military as the primary manager of a mature counterinsurgency campaign. This evolving cycle of insurgency also implies that there may be a window of opportunity early in the insurgency before its psychological, political, and economic dynamics are set. For the outsiders undertaking counterinsurgency operations, a rapid, large-scale security, political, law enforcement, intelligence, or economic effort in the nascent stages of an insurgency has the potential for providing greater results than any incremental increase in assistance following the commencement of conflict. Timing does matter.

Because Americans view insurgency as political, American counterinsurgency strategy and doctrine stress the need for political reform in those societies threatened by the insurgency. This is in fact necessary but not always sufficient. A

comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy requires the simultaneous raising of the economic and psychological costs and risks for those participating in the insurgency (or other forms of conflict) while providing alternatives. David Keen explains:

In order to move toward more lasting solution to the problem of mass violence, we need to understand and acknowledge that for significant groups this violence represents not a problem but a solution. We need to think of modifying the structure of incentives that are encouraging people to orchestrate, fund, or perpetuate acts of violence.<sup>13</sup>

Economic assistance and job training are as important to counterinsurgency as political reform. Businesses started and jobs created are as much “indicators of success” as insurgents killed or intelligence provided. Because the margins for economic activity tend to widen during conflict, counterinsurgency should attempt to make markets as competitive as possible.<sup>14</sup> Because economies dependent on exports of a single commodity or a few commodities are particularly vulnerable to protracted conflict, counterinsurgency operations need to include a plan for economic diversification.<sup>15</sup> A comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy should offer alternative sources of identity and empowerment for the bored, disillusioned, and disempowered. Simply providing low-paying, low-status jobs or the opportunity to attend school is not enough. Counterinsurgents—including the United States when it provides counterinsurgency support—need to recognize that becoming an insurgent gives the disenfranchised a sense of belonging, identity, and importance. Counterinsurgency cannot succeed unless it finds alternative sources of power and worth. It is in this environment where the military and other government agencies involved with counterinsurgency support need to look beyond their normal sources of inspiration and motivation. For starters, counterinsurgent planners should consult law enforcement personnel associated with antigang units, inner-city community leaders, social psychologists, and cultural anthropologists.

Women’s empowerment—a brake on the aggression of disillusioned young males—should also be a central component of a successful counterinsurgency strategy. This illustrates one of the enduring problems and paradoxes of any counterinsurgency: What are foreign or external counterinsurgency supporters to do when some element of a nation’s culture directly supports the conflict? Evidence suggests that cultures based on the repression of women, a warrior ethos, or some

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Evidence suggests that cultures based on the repression of women, a warrior ethos, or some other social structure or factor are more prone to violence.

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other social structure or factor are more prone to violence. Should counterinsurgency operations try to alter the culture or simply accept the fact that even once the insurgency is quelled, it may reappear?

The core dilemma, then, is that truly resolving an insurgency requires extensive social reengineering. Yet this may prove to be extremely difficult and expensive. This problem has many manifestations. In some cases, it may be impossible to provide forms of employment and sources of identity that are more lucrative than those offered by the insurgency. Regimes and national elites—the very partners the United States seeks to empower in counterinsurgency operations—often view actions necessary to stem the insurgency as a threat to their own power. They may view the conflict itself as a lesser evil. For many regimes, the insurgents pose less of a threat than a unified and effective security force. It is a basic fact that more regimes have been overthrown by coups than by insurgencies. Hence threatened governments will deliberately keep their security forces weak and divided. Alas, those with the greatest personal interest in resolving the conflict—the people—have the least ability to create peace.<sup>16</sup> Yet American strategy and doctrine are based on the assumption that our partners seek the same objective we do: the quickest possible resolution of the conflict. The United States assumes its partners will wholeheartedly pursue political reform and security force improvement.

We are then often perplexed when insurgencies like the ongoing one in Colombia fester for decades; we are unable to grasp the dissonance between our objectives and those of our allies.

The implications of this are profound. If, in fact, insurgency is not simply a variant of war, if the real threat is the deleterious effects of sustained conflict, and if such actions are part of a systemic failure and pathology where key elites and organizations

develop a vested interest in the sustainment of the conflict, the objective of counterinsurgency support should be systemic reengineering rather than simply strengthening the government so that it can impose its will more effectively on the insurgents. The most effective posture for outsiders is not to be viewed as an ally of the government and thus a sustainer of the flawed sociopolitical-economic system, but rather to be seen as a neutral mediator and peacekeeper, even when the outsiders may have a greater ideological affinity for the existing regime than the insurgent.<sup>17</sup> If this is true, the United States should only undertake support of counterinsurgency operations in the most pressing instances.

When considering such support, we cannot assume that the regime of a particular nation views the conflict as we do. We need to remember that our allies often consider the reforms which the United States defines as key to long-term success as more of a

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that the regime of a  
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threat than the insurgency itself. Elites in states faced with an insurgency do not want a pyrrhic victory in which they defeat the insurgents only to lose their own grip on power. The cure may be worse than the disease. America has to understand that many of its friends and allies view their own security forces with as much apprehension as they do the insurgents. So while the United States may press for strengthening of local security forces political leaders may resist. Ultimately, this dissonance may be irresolvable. Where the United States, viewing insurgency as a variant of war, seeks “victory” over the enemy, our allies often find that a contained insurgency which does not threaten the existence of a particular nation or regime is perfectly acceptable.

## CONCLUSION

What, then, does all this mean? Outside of America’s historic geographic area of concern (the Caribbean basin), the United States should only consider undertaking counterinsurgency operations as part of an equitable, legitimate, and broad-based multinational coalition. Unless the world community is willing to form a neo-trusteeship such as those in Bosnia, Eastern Slavonia, Kosovo, or East Timor in order to reestablish a legitimate administration, security system, or stable society, the best that can be done is ameliorating the human suffering associated with the violence.<sup>18</sup> In most cases, American strategic resources are better spent in the prevention of the insurgency or its containment. Clearly, systemic reengineering is not a task for the United States acting unilaterally. Nor is it a task for the US military. When America is part of a coalition, the primary role for the US military should be the protection of noncombatants until other security forces, preferably local ones, can assume that mission.

Rather than a “one size fits all” American strategy for counterinsurgencies, the United States should recognize three distinct insurgency environments, each demanding a different response:

- A functioning and responsible government with some degree of legitimacy in a nation with significant US national interests or traditional ties can be rescued by foreign internal defense (El Salvador model).
- There is no functioning or legitimate government but there is a broad international and regional consensus favoring the creation of a neo-trusteeship until systemic reengineering is complete. In such instances, the United States should provide military, economic, and political support as part of a multinational force operating under the auspices of the United Nations.
- There is no functioning and legitimate government and no international or regional consensus for the formation of a neo-trusteeship. In such cases, the United States should pursue containment of the conflict through the support of regional states and, in cooperation with friendly states and allies, creating humanitarian “safe zones” within the region of the conflict.

In the long term, counterinsurgency operations may or may not remain a mission for the US military. It is possible that Iraq and Afghanistan were unique events caused by a combination of political factors not likely to be repeated. It is possible that future political leaders will decide that the control of ungoverned spaces or support to fragile regimes will not constitute a central pillar in American foreign policy or military strategy.

Counterinsurgency may, in fact, remain a key mission. If it does, continued analysis of insurgencies by the US military and—perhaps even more importantly, other agencies of the government—is essential. We cannot assume that twenty-first century insurgency is so like its twentieth century predecessor and that old solutions can simply be dusted off and applied. Perhaps we need to transcend the idea that insurgency is simply a variant of conventional war and amenable to the same strategic concepts. Such a conceptual and strategic readjustment will not come easily. It will be hard to simply contain an insurgency and possibly witness the ensuing humanitarian costs when no salvageable government or multinational consensus exists that is capable of reengineering the failed social, political, or economic system. It will be particularly difficult to conform to the notion of serving as mediators or honest-brokers rather than as active allies or supporters of a regime. But to not do so—to confront new security problems with old ideas and strategies—is a recipe for disaster.

## ENDNOTES

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- 1 Field Manual 100-20/Air Force Pamphlet 3-2, *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict* (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army and Department of the Air Force, 1990).
- 2 The most important treatment of this is David Kilcullen, “Countering Global Insurgency,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 28 (August 2005), 597-617.
- 3 Field Manual 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army and Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, December 2006). Joint counterinsurgency doctrine is under development.
- 4 For instance, see Gary Anderson, “The Baathists’ Blundering Guerrilla War,” *The Washington Post*, 26 June 2003, A29.
- 5 John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002), reprinted in paperback by the Univ. of Chicago Press, 2005; and David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1964), reprinted 2006. Also popular is Galula’s *Pacification in Algeria 1956-1958* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1963), reprinted 2006. Nagl is a US Army officer who served multiple tours in Iraq after writing the book (which was derived from his Ph.D. dissertation). Galula was a French Army officer who based his analysis on his experience in Indochina and Algeria.



- 6 I explain this idea of “third” and “fourth” forces in *Rethinking Insurgency* (Carlisle, Pa.: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, June 2007), 15-42.
- 7 Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War,” *Policy Research Working Paper* No. 2355 (Washington: The World Bank, 2000).
- 8 Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman, “Introduction,” in Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman, eds., *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2003), 3.
- 9 Paul Collier, “Doing Well Out of War: An Economic Perspective,” in Mats Berdal and David M. Malone, eds., *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2000), 91.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 103-104.
- 11 Mats Berdal and David Keen, “Violence and Economic Agendas in Civil Wars: Some Policy Implications,” *Millennium*, 26 (No. 3, 1997), 797.
- 12 Gordon H. McCormick and Frank Giordano, “Things Come Together: Symbolic Violence and Guerrilla Mobilisation,” *Third World Quarterly*, 28 (No. 2, 2007), 312.
- 13 David Keen, “Incentives and Disincentives for Violence,” in Berdal and Malone, 25.
- 14 Collier, 107.
- 15 Ballentine and Sherman, 3.
- 16 Collier, 105.
- 17 James Fearon described and advocated such an approach in “Iraq’s Civil War,” *Foreign Affairs*, 86 (March/April 2007), 2-15.
- 18 On “neo-trusteeships,” see James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, “Neotrusteeship and the Problem of Weak States,” *International Security*, 28 (Spring 2004), 4-43; and Richard Caplan, “From Collapsing States to Neo-Trusteeships: The Limits of Solving the Problem of ‘Precarious Statehood’ in the 21st Century,” *Third World Quarterly*, 28 (No. 2, 2007), 231-44.

## THE AUTHOR

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# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

## BACK TO THE FUTURE

### THE ENDURING CHARACTERISTICS OF INSURGENCY AND COUNTERINSURGENCY

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL MARK O'NEILL

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*These problems (of guerrilla warfare) are of a very long standing, yet manifestly far from understood—especially in those countries where everything that can be called 'guerrilla warfare' has become a new military fashion or craze.*

BH Liddell Hart<sup>1</sup>

#### INTRODUCTION

Liddell Hart's words seem as relevant today as when first published in his book *Strategy*. Since the terrorist attacks on the United States of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, a tsunami of ideas about the future has swept over the study and practice of military and strategic affairs from an ever-growing sea of terrorism and insurgency experts. Nearly two centuries ago Carl von Clausewitz suggested that the most important and far-reaching judgment that a statesman or commander could make is to establish the kind of war on which they are embarking. There is no shortage of advice for those engaged in that task today. In a short time they have been subjected to theories of global insurgency<sup>2</sup> and generational war,<sup>3</sup> seen the Pentagon sold a new map,<sup>4</sup>

been informed about counterinsurgency redux,<sup>5</sup> and witnessed the development of a form of international neo-McCarthyism with states containing Islamic insurgents supplanting communists as objects of fear and loathing.

A problem arises for much of this new wave of theory: many of its ideas do not float when it comes to satisfactorily explaining conditions on the ground in the contemporary environment. Proving the aphorism that 'nothing is impossible for the man who does not have to do it,'<sup>6</sup> theories that appear so convincing from the conference stage or the pages of a strategic affairs journal, when tested against the realities and critical requirements of counterinsurgency in the field are found to have little or no utility. This may account for the alacrity with which many of them have arrived and then departed from the stage. A maxim offered by the strategist and academic Colin S Gray sums this up: 'The future is not foreseeable: Nothing dates so rapidly as today's tomorrow.'<sup>7</sup> This article asserts that despite the superficial attraction of the novel, enduring characteristics of insurgency and counterinsurgency warfare evident in contemporary conflict, they can provide a useful framework from which to develop understanding. A paper suggesting a framework for understanding should provide background information for the establishment of context. Accordingly, explanation of the identification and development of the characteristics, definition of the key terms used, and the case for history will precede their description.

## **IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHARACTERISTICS**

The eight enduring characteristics of insurgency and nine of counterinsurgency identified in this paper were developed to assist in explaining the operational environment to members of the Multi-National Force Iraq (MNF-I).<sup>8</sup> The characteristics originated from consideration of a range of inputs. These included a literature review of the author's study of counterinsurgency and a range of interviews and discussions with former insurgents, counterinsurgents, theorists and historians over the last decade. The literature review highlighted that historical texts appeared to provide better insight into what is seen in Iraq today than that afforded by recent efforts at analysis. The author's experiences and insights gained working in the Iraq Theatre of Operations at the MNF-I Counterinsurgency Center for Excellence (COIN CFE) also influenced the selection and discussion of the characteristics chosen.

The characteristics presented in this paper are not from any other discrete work or list. It aims to express the characteristics in such a manner that they might be considered on their own merits, free of the intellectual baggage and possible prejudices that they may carry if they are too readily associated with previous works or doctrine. The list is brief; a criterion applied to the selection of a characteristic

for inclusion was that it must be universal. Many did not meet this criterion and subsequently were not included. There are parallels between the enduring characteristics of insurgency and counterinsurgency suggested here and ideas expressed elsewhere.

Originality is not claimed regarding the ideas behind any particular characteristic identified other than in the manner of their selection, presentation and explanation. Counterinsurgency is not alchemy; no amount of new theories will turn lead into gold, so this paper will work with the lead.<sup>9</sup> Some of the characteristics may appear as statements of the obvious; however, there is not an instance in military or strategic affairs where cleverness, complexity or obscurity is useful in explaining already complex phenomena.

There is no hierarchical order to the characteristics. This article does not imply the relative importance of any one characteristic over another—the impact of each of these inter-related characteristics will vary dependent upon the specific circumstances of the conflict. What it does warrant is that each of these characteristics will be present, in some fashion, in all insurgency-related conflict.

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‘The future is not foreseeable: Nothing dates so rapidly as today’s tomorrow.’

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## DEFINING INSURGENCY AND COUNTERINSURGENCY

Adequate definition is critical to consideration of the characteristics of particular phenomena. Meanings matter, not least because the lexicon we choose informs and shapes our understanding of the problem. This in turn defines the boundaries of our understanding and any solutions. Contemporary military doctrine and insurgency literature offers a bewildering number of often contradictory definitions of insurgency and counterinsurgency. For the sake of simplicity, this paper uses the emerging Australian Army doctrinal definitions of the terms insurgency and counterinsurgency.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, the definition of insurgency is:

... an organised, violent and politically motivated activity conducted by non-state actors and sustained over a period of time that typically utilises a number of methods in an attempt to achieve change within a state.

Whilst the term counterinsurgency will be taken to mean:

Those actions undertaken by a state (and others) to defeat an insurgency.

The term 'terrorism' is often substituted for 'insurgency'. It is useful to put the relationship between insurgency and terrorism into perspective. Whilst there is an association between the two terms (terrorism is frequently one of the tactics used with success by insurgents), the two are not interchangeable. Examination of the historical record of the twentieth century also reveals that whilst a symbiotic relationship exists, insurgency and terrorism are not interdependent. This historical cue leads into examination of the utility of history in identifying the characteristics of a conflict.

### THE CASE FOR HISTORY

*History can be misused to 'Prove' anything, but it is all that we have as a guide to the future.*<sup>11</sup>

Liddell Hart introduced the first chapter of his seminal work *Strategy* with a quote attributed to Bismarck: 'Fools say that they learn by experience. I prefer to profit by others' experience.'<sup>12</sup> Liddell Hart goes on to say that "History is universal experience"—the experience not of another, but of many others under manifold conditions.'<sup>13</sup> We do not start with a blank sheet when confronting modern problems of insurgency. Millennia of universal experience in dealing with such issues are available to counterinsurgents that turn to history to understand the nature of the fight confronting them. Critics of history argue that because each new conflict is unique, history is of little use. Such criticism is partially correct with regard to the singularity of each insurgent conflict, but incorrect with regard to the application of history to understanding them. Only fools and the soon to be defeated would slavishly apply the exact lessons of past insurgencies to new ones, as each insurgency is indeed *sui generis*.<sup>14</sup> However, study of the 'universal experience' of past insurgencies does suggest the existence of some enduring characteristics of insurgency warfare that a thinking counter-insurgent can use to develop an understanding of the current environment.

The nature of our current set of insurgency problems, when viewed against the historical record, is neither incredible nor unique. The works of Charles Callwell and Charles Gwynn<sup>15</sup> provide little doubt that if they could visit the Iraqi Theatre of Operations today, they would be comfortably familiar with the majority of what they would see. Identification of the characteristics of historical insurgency campaigns and contrasting them to the field evidence present in places

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We do not start with a blank sheet when confronting modern problems of insurgency.

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such as Iraq leads to the realisation that linear evolution, rather than revolution, is evident in the development of insurgency-related conflict. Apparent ignorance of the broad scope and applicability of the history of insurgency is problematic to many of those asserting claims of modern novelty. The conflation of the use of ‘new’ means by insurgents and counterinsurgents to equal ‘new’ insurgency and counterinsurgency simply does not add up. Objective, broad analysis of the current situation, informed by history, reveals that the old ways and ends of insurgency are in fact enduring.

## THE ENDURING CHARACTERISTICS OF INSURGENCY

### IT IS CONDUCTED BY NON-STATE ACTORS

Insurgents do not own a ‘state’—although this is often what they might be seeking. This creates some immediate and practical difficulties for the counterinsurgent. In ‘conventional’ or ‘state on state’ warfare a range of sanctions (beyond that of military forces fighting each other) are available to the protagonists. This is a function of the nature of statehood in the post–Westphalian era.<sup>16</sup> Such sanctions can range from diplomatic and trade sanctions to the use of force to destroy a state’s infrastructure or population. Because insurgents lack the traditional apparatus of a state, they possess a unique advantage over state protagonists. Put simply, they have less that is vulnerable to direct attack or sanction, and hence exertion of influence upon them. Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) does not have a capital city that can be the subject of attack or destruction. This compels counterinsurgents to think quite differently about achieving strategic effects in comparison to conventional warfare. Targeting will invariably need to move from the physical realm into a cognitive one in order to be effective.

Confusion can sometimes arise about this characteristic because state actors frequently support insurgents. An important point of distinction arises here. If other state actors are involved in the fight, they are not insurgents. Technically they are participating in what might be termed ‘good old-fashioned’ state on state war. The fact that they may do so covertly, or that it might not suit the counterinsurgent state to acknowledge their role or pursue the matter, does not change the fact that these state actors are not insurgents. These actors have the vulnerabilities routinely associated with statehood that are available for exploitation if the political will or diplomatic, trade and military means exist in the counterinsurgent state.

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Insurgencies are wars waged within societies, in contrast to conventional wars, which are wars between societies.

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**IT HAS A POPULAR OBJECTIVE AND SUPPORTING NARRATIVE**

Insurgencies are wars waged within societies, in contrast to conventional wars, which are wars between societies. People make up societies and, as long as their basic needs are satisfied, it normally requires strong ideas to motivate people to action against their own society. These ideas (or indeed, often the idea that basic needs are not being met) drive the formation of the popular objective of an insurgency. In successful insurgencies the popular objective, rather than any one individual, group or military asset, effectively becomes the centre of gravity in attracting support. Moreover, because it is human nature to respond to a good story, insurgents will fashion a suitable narrative to support and propagate the popular objective. An inextricable link joins the success of the popular objective and the supporting narrative. An idea not transmitted to others via a suitable narrative does not become a popular objective—it remains stillborn as a thought, and does not motivate people to the struggle. Similarly, a suitable narrative without a popular objective at the heart of it will ultimately lead to rejection of the insurgent aspirations. The Sunni 'Awakening'<sup>17</sup> within Iraq's Al Anbar province is a topical example. Whilst by no means the sole reason for the Awakening, evidence suggests that the tribes of Al Anbar generally found the AQI narrative attractive at a certain level but eventually rejected the AQI objective. This was because the objective became associated with intolerable violence to which the population was subjected and the unacceptably extreme form of religious control it imposed upon them.

**IT IS CRIMINAL**

The criminality of insurgent actions is an important distinction between insurgent activity and legitimate political or social dissent. States normally have some form of political opposition to the group in power. Only when opposition and dissent from the 'ruling' view crosses outside the accepted, legal bounds of political behaviour does insurgency arise. All else is legitimate politics. The line between legitimacy and criminality is sometimes confusing and often in the eye of the beholder, particularly when otherwise seemingly unitary movements within a society have a number of branches. In the United Kingdom, the Sinn Fein Party and the Provisional Irish Republican Army is an example of this. In contemporary Iraq, such confusion might be seen in the relationships, real or perceived, between the Office of the Martyr Sadr (OMS), Jaish al Mahdi (JAM) and the Shia 'Special Groups'. The criminality of insurgent activity is one reason why counterinsurgency theorists such as Robert Thompson were strong advocates of the primacy of police forces,<sup>18</sup> recognising that it remained a police issue, and one not easily transferred to the military, with all of the political ramifications that brings.

**IT IS VIOLENT**

All insurgencies are violent. Even the most ‘noble’ of insurgent causes will find it virtually impossible to eschew violence at some level—this is often at least partially a factor behind the criminality of insurgent activity previously outlined. Violence within an insurgency can and frequently does range from low-level thuggery up to and including genocide, as Iraq demonstrates all too clearly. Insurgents will use violence to achieve effects that go beyond merely attaining legitimate military objectives. Many acts of terrorism perpetrated by insurgents are of negligible military value but enormous political, cultural or psychological value to the shape and conduct of their operations. The bombings of the al-Askari Mosque in Samarra, Iraq during 2006 and 2007, precipitating bloody civil war, provide a pertinent example.

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Even the most ‘noble’ of insurgent causes will find it virtually impossible to eschew violence at some level ...

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**IT IS PERSISTENT (MAINTAINING WILL AND PATIENCE)**

When people are motivated by a popular objective such that they are willing to risk literally everything (status, life and family) for it by becoming insurgent, one can reasonably expect that it is not a decision they have taken lightly. The act of making such decisions has a powerful effect on people. Their resolve increases. Having made both the mental adjustment and sacrifices necessary to become an insurgent, people are more likely to endure whatever it takes to succeed. There is also an obvious association between this idea and the capacity for insurgent violence previously discussed. Often after taking part in a particularly violent or bloody act, individual insurgents may feel that they have crossed some imaginary line that precludes them from ever rejoining normal society. They begin to think that since they cannot ‘go back’ the only option remaining is to win, no matter how long it takes. This characteristic highlights the issue of reconciliation between insurgents and their society as a way of reducing a factor that contributes to persistence. The engagement of many former Sunni insurgents within the ‘Sons of Iraq’ (SOI) organisation since late 2007 is one example of a practical reconciliation measure that has reduced the persistence of the Sunni insurgency in many parts of Iraq.

**IT IS ORGANISED**

Every insurgency is organised in some fashion. The insurgencies currently operating in Iraq and Afghanistan are no exception. A bunch of people intuitively rebelling in unison without coordination is not an insurgency but a mob.



The protracted struggle that is true insurgency requires a degree of organisation that, whilst not necessarily readily apparent or conventional in appearance, will always exist. If it is invisible to counterinsurgents, it is simply that their search is either unsophisticated, not looking hard enough or not looking in the right places. Organisation can be a strength and a vulnerability of an insurgency. Good organisation that retains operational security can hide insurgent design and plans whilst advancing the popular objective. A poor or security compromised organisational structure seriously retards the insurgent cause.

#### IT ADAPTS

All successful insurgencies have adapted. There is a form of Darwinism involved here. The insurgent invariably starts from a position of weakness—if they were not weak, they would just seize power or their objective immediately. Weakness brings with it the need to be agile in order to meet the many obstacles that their circumstance creates. Insurgency invariably is not a tactic of choice, but a compulsion of relative weakness. Since at some point they were not insurgents but average law abiding citizens, the path to successful insurgency necessarily involves a lot of adaptation and learning. Those insurgents that do not manage this tend to perish. This means that the survivors have had demonstrated and reinforced to them, from a very early stage of their insurgency, the benefit of being adaptive. This leads to institutionalisation of adaptive behaviour in their organisational performance. The obvious deduction arising from this characteristic is that counterinsurgents need to dedicate assets to counter or disrupt this adaptation cycle.

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#### IT IS SUPPORTED

Support is vital to insurgent activity, without it their struggle is even more difficult. Support takes many forms, from personnel support such as that demonstrated by the presence of foreign jihadists in Iraq; financial support from the Diaspora; or the provision of material support such as the arms and explosives that are currently smuggled into Iraq from Iran. Whilst being supported is a strength for an insurgency, it also is something that an efficient and determined counterinsurgent can target. Simple initiatives such as asserting positive border control, tracking and regulating capital flows into the country, and instituting effective public diplomacy campaigns in target populations can all serve to reduce insurgent support.

Table 1. The enduring characteristics of insurgency.

The Enduring Characteristics of Insurgency
It is conducted by non-state actors
It has a popular objective and supporting narrative
It is criminal
It is violent
It is persistent (maintaining will and patience)
It is organised
It adapts
It is supported

#### SUMMARY OF THE ENDURING CHARACTERISTICS OF INSURGENCY

The eight characteristics of insurgency are summarised in Table 1. The relative importance of each as a signature element of any given insurgency will vary, but each will be present in some form in every insurgency.

### THE ENDURING CHARACTERISTICS OF COUNTERINSURGENCY

#### IT REQUIRES A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

Counterinsurgency activity in the Iraq Theatre of Operations has lines of operation other than the security one typified by direct military action and development of indigenous security forces. An example of this has been the implementation of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) since November 2005. These are multi-disciplinary organisations that work to address lines of operation involving the economy, development, civil capacity building and governance. Acknowledgment of the need for a holistic approach to successful counterinsurgency activity is virtually universal.<sup>19</sup> The term ‘comprehensive’ has been deliberately selected to describe this characteristic rather than the ‘whole-of-government’ or ‘inter-agency’ labels used in Australia and the United States respectively. These terms have been used with such rhetorical abandon that they have become clichéd and thus effectively meaningless. They also unnecessarily restrict the counterinsurgent’s thinking to action relating to the instruments of the state. It is noted that the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence has developed doctrine for a Comprehensive Approach.<sup>20</sup> Since insurgency is essentially societal warfare, counterinsurgency requires a ‘whole of society’ approach. Use of the word ‘comprehensive’ embraces this idea. It allows

for diverse approaches that incorporate, for example, commercial entities, religious elements and other non-governmental organisations as well as the instruments of state in any considered response to insurgency.

#### IT REQUIRES A CONSISTENT AND EFFECTIVE NARRATIVE

A consistent and effective narrative arguably provides the counterinsurgent state with its most effective weapon against an insurgency. This goes to the point previously made that it is an idea or ideas—the ‘popular objective’—that motivates and mobilises insurgents. Ideas cannot be shot, imprisoned or exiled. The imprisonment of Nelson Mandela and the incarceration or banning of the rest of the African National Congress leadership by the apartheid era white minority government in South Africa failed to suppress the idea of democracy in that state. This is an example of the resilience of insurgent ideas to direct physical measures. The most effective way to counter an idea is to replace it with another. By creating a narrative that offers an effective ‘alternative idea’ to that being used by an insurgency, the counterinsurgent is able to directly address the root cause of the problem rather than merely addressing the outward manifestation of it through other direct actions, such as violence.

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The most effective way to counter an idea is to replace it with another.

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The aspect of consistency is critical because it goes to the heart of the issue of trust. Narratives can and should evolve as the situation changes, but the core internal logic of the narrative must remain consistent. If the state’s narrative is inconsistent, it will raise difficult questions in the population’s minds as to whether its position was honest or trustworthy to begin with. This characteristic draws attention to the criticality of an effective information operations campaign when engaged in counterinsurgency.

#### IT EXERCISES CONTROL

The successful counterinsurgent practises control in the widest possible sense of the word. This encapsulates control of the population, borders, information and narrative about the war. History is full of examples of control aiding counterinsurgent success. The British use of ‘protected villages’ during the Malayan Emergency reflected the success they experienced with the concentration camps they had employed during the Second Boer War to control the Boer civilian population. Of all the counterinsurgency characteristics identified, this one is perhaps the most problematic to modern democracies. However, its difficulty does not diminish its importance. Examples of control within the Iraqi Theatre include using concrete ‘T’ walls to segregate elements of Baghdad’s population to information and identity control, and through the use

of biometric data to identify and track rogue elements of the population. Ideally, counterinsurgents achieve control with the cooperation of the target population, but with or without the acceptance of the population, it must occur.

#### IT IS PERSISTENT

Persistence was previously identified as a characteristic of insurgency. It is also an enduring characteristic of counterinsurgency. It has been described how insurgents are radicalised and thus motivated to endure the necessary cost. If the wider population of the counterinsurgent state is diffident or opposed to the cause the polity will find it increasingly difficult to justify and continue in its actions. This obviously links to the need for a consistent and effective narrative that has already been discussed. Similarly, the violent characteristics of insurgency can have a severely negative impact upon the will of those not committed to the course of action that the state is embarked upon. Successful counterinsurgents must practice time tolerance and persistence in all their endeavours. David Galula suggests a reason why this is important:

As the war lasts, the war itself becomes the central issue and the ideological advantage of the insurgent decreases considerably. The population's attitude is dictated not by the intrinsic merits of the contending causes, but by the answer to these two simple questions: Which side is going to win? Which side threatens the most, and which offers the most protection?<sup>21</sup>

State persistence is an effective tool against insurgency because it creates doubt in the minds of the uncommitted elements of the population and any wavering insurgents about the rebellion's likelihood of success.

#### IT IS CULTURALLY AND SOCIALLY APPROPRIATE

Since insurgencies are wars within societies, it is logical that the best methods to use in fighting them are ones that have a cultural and social fit. This characteristic, whilst seemingly straightforward, is often misapplied. The emphasis is frequently simplistic, and often ridiculous when viewed in the context of the wider actions the counterinsurgent is taking. Coalition forces attempts at this in Iraq provide an example. During pre-deployment training soldiers receive advice of the 'do not use your left hand/point the soles of your feet in Arab culture' variety. Not offending Iraqi Arabs through such cultural transgressions becomes a moot point when compared to the offence that actions such as forcefully entering homes in the middle of the night and searching

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The counterinsurgent must use approaches and methods that resonate appropriately in the target culture and society.

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may cause. The counterinsurgent must use approaches and methods that resonate appropriately in the target culture and society. This is the area where suitable anthropological and sociological advice can come into its own for the 'foreigner' undertaking counterinsurgency support to a host nation. For example, within deployed units of MNF-I this function is now fulfilled by 'Human Terrain Teams' (HTT).

#### IT ADAPTS

The successful counterinsurgent is able to identify changes occurring in the theatre and is agile enough to adjust their campaign accordingly by taking necessary measures. Three elements identified as key to adaptation by counterinsurgents: a deliberate system of critical review and analysis that reports to a leadership that will listen and act as and where necessary; an education system to pass the necessary adaptive measures onto the full range of counterinsurgency actors; and a sound doctrinal basis against which to evaluate what is happening. The improvement in the situation in Iraq since the surge of 2007 is arguably the result of successful counterinsurgent adaptation, incorporating the three key elements outlined above.

#### IT COMPROMISES

At one level there might be a case to question the wisdom of the Iraqi Government's acceptance of the Sunni 'awakening' and reconciliation with former insurgent fighters. The ancient Roman philosopher Cicero suggested over two thousand years ago that 'an unjust peace is better than a just war,' raising the idea of compromise as an adjunct to war. History confirms that ideas cannot be bludgeoned out of people—and even if it were possible, it would be inappropriate for modern democratic liberal states to pursue such an option. Adjustment of ideas occurs through the process of dialogue and engagement with other ideas. A form of reconciliation between the opposing elements of society is necessary if the counterinsurgent is to begin to address adequately the grievances that lie at the heart of an insurgency.<sup>22</sup>

#### IT IS COSTLY

Counterinsurgency is a costly business and the costs are not always obvious. Beyond the cost of so called 'blood and treasure'<sup>23</sup> there is an opportunity cost that is not always as apparent but is perhaps more important. Societies preoccupied with insurgency will not attend to other matters as well as they might otherwise. These include development, social justice, education and health. Violence, fear and exertion in a society scar and potentially sow the seeds of future discontent and trouble. Measures taken to pre-empt the development of the conditions that are ripe for insurgency to occur are often a wise investment. Successful counterinsurgents are able and prepared to bear the wide range of costs associated with the conflict. There is no such thing as a 'cheap' counterinsurgency.

## IT REQUIRES RECTITUDE

Successful counterinsurgencies have a moral ‘good’ that can be identified somewhere near the core of its objective. This point is not stating that ‘moral rightness’ can only exist on the counterinsurgent’s side, nor is it not trying to assert moral relativism, or judgment that insurgency equals bad and counterinsurgency equals good. Use of the problematic term ‘legitimacy’ is deliberately avoided. The fact is that participants in an insurgency make decisions as much by what is in their hearts as by what is in their heads. Protagonists lacking rectitude will have profound difficulties in getting people to accept the morally ambivalent or inappropriate things that might be implicit in their position. The apartheid era South African Government is an example of failure associated with a lack of rectitude. The state had a well developed and comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy supported by capable and highly effective military and security forces that were rarely beaten in direct action. Despite this apparently overwhelming advantage the state lacked rectitude—the extreme iniquity of its apartheid policy meant that the population was never going to accept anything less than its removal.

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## SUMMARY OF THE ENDURING CHARACTERISTICS OF COUNTERINSURGENCY

Table 2 summarises the nine characteristics of counterinsurgency that have been identified and discussed.

## CONCLUSION

Enduring characteristics of insurgency and counterinsurgency warfare are evident, and while these characteristics are enduring they are not static. They change gradually by evolution and not revolution. Rapid development of the technological ‘means’ available to prosecute an insurgency strategy should not be confused with ‘new’ insurgency as history reveals that ‘ways’ and ‘ends’ continue to demonstrate a stable and linear association with the past. Counterinsurgents should identify an appropriate balance between the demonstrably enduring features of counterinsurgency warfare and the fashion of contemporary interpretations and opinion in approaching their task. The simple but enduring characteristics of insurgency and counterinsurgency identified and discussed here are evident in current theatres of operations such as Iraq. Having an understanding of them helps make sense of

Table 2. The Enduring Characteristics of Counterinsurgency

The Enduring Characteristics of Counterinsurgency
It requires a comprehensive approach
It requires a consistent and effective narrative
It is controlling
It is persistent
It is culturally and socially appropriate
It adapts
It makes compromises
It is costly
It requires rectitude

the operational environment. The same cannot be said for many insurgency and counterinsurgency theories promulgated since 11 September 2001.

If the contemporary record and that of the previous century is any reliable guide, it is unlikely that Charles Callwell's advice that '... guerrilla warfare is a form of operations above all things to be avoided'<sup>24</sup> can be followed. The majority of the conflicts that will occur in the future are likely to involve insurgency. The characteristics of insurgency and of counterinsurgency outlined in this paper will be present in such conflicts. The enduring characteristics identified cannot provide specific answers to the unique challenges that each individual conflict will generate—no theory or list can. They will, however, greatly assist to establish the necessary understanding that Clausewitz urged regarding the nature of war. Knowledge of the enduring characteristics of insurgency and counterinsurgency can be the first step to developing the understanding of the operational environment that is required for success.

**ENDNOTES**

- 1 BH Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 2nd revised ed, Meridian, New York, 1991, p. xv.
- 2 DJ Kilcullen, 'Countering global insurgency', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 2005, pp. 597–617; David W Barno, 'Challenges in fighting a global insurgency', *Parameters*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 2, 2006, pp. 15–29; Thomas Donnelly and Vance Serchuk, *Fighting a Global Counterinsurgency*, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 2003, <[www.aei.org/publications/pubID.19546/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.19546/pub_detail.asp)>.



- 3 Thomas X Hammes, *Insurgency: Modern Warfare Evolves into a Fourth Generation*, Strategic Forum Series No. 214, National Defense University, January 2005, <[www.ndu.edu/inss/press/nduphp.html](http://www.ndu.edu/inss/press/nduphp.html)>.
- 4 Thomas P M Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-First Century*, G P Putnam's Sons, New York, 2004.
- 5 D J Kilcullen, 'Counter-insurgency redux', *Survival*, Vol. 48, No. 4, 2006, pp. 111–30.
- 6 Colin S Gray, 'Why strategy is difficult', *Joint Forces Quarterly*, No. 22, Summer 1999, p. 7.
- 7 Colin S Gray, *Fighting Talk: Forty Maxims on Peace, War and Strategy*, Praeger Security International, Westport CT, 2007.
- 8 This idea arose during a discussion between the author and Dr Daniel Marston at the Multi-National Force Iraq Counterinsurgency Center for Excellence in January 2008. We were finding that doctrine lacked clarity for the task of explaining in a simple fashion the operational environment to coalition soldiers. See Headquarters Department of the Army, *FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency*, United States Government, Washington DC, 2006; and, British Army, *Army Field Manual, Volume 1, Combined Arms Operations, Part 10, Counter Insurgency Operations (Strategic and Operational Guidelines)*, revised and updated version, March 2007. The Australian Army does not have a current counterinsurgency doctrine manual.
- 9 This is adapted from an observation made by Colonel Alex Alderson, British Army and HQ MNF-I. The author gratefully acknowledges Colonel Alderson's assistance and comments in reviewing the draft version of this paper.
- 10 Australian Army, *Author's Brief, Land Warfare Doctrine 3-0-1, Counterinsurgency*, Land Warfare Development Centre, Puckapunyal, March 2008.
- 11 Gray, *Fighting Talk: Forty Maxims on Peace, War and Strategy*.
- 12 Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, p. 3.
- 13 Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, p. 4.
- 14 A description suggested by a British officer, see John Kiszely, *Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Creating a Comprehensive Approach. A British View*, paper presented at 'Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Creating a National Framework', Washington DC, 2006.
- 15 Callwell and Gwynn are two British officers from the late nineteenth/ early twentieth century who developed a considerable body of thought on the conduct and countering of small wars, insurrections and guerrilla campaigns. See C E Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 3rd ed, Bison Books—the University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1996; and Charles W Gwynn, *Imperial Policing*, 2nd ed, Macmillan and Co, London, 1939.
- 16 The Treaty of Westphalia, signed in Europe in 1648 at the end of the Thirty Years War, is widely recognised as signalling the start of the modern era of international relations amongst states.

- 17 The 'Awakening' is a term used to describe the rejection of AQI and its particular brand of *wahabiism*, combined with a form of reconciliation with the Iraqi Government by the Sunni Tribes. This phenomenon began in the western parts of Al Anbar province in very late 2005 and has now spread to most Sunni areas of Iraq.
- 18 Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, Hailer Publishing, St Petersburg, FL, 2005.
- 19 There are a few exceptions to this, such as the US retired military officer and commentator Ralph Peters. See Ralph Peters, 'In praise of attrition', *Parameters*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 2, Summer 2004.
- 20 The UK Cabinet Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for International Development (DfID) all acknowledge the need for a Comprehensive Approach (strategy, leadership/ direction) but current legislation does not currently require anything further than cooperation. Also see United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, *Joint Discussion Note 4/05 – The Comprehensive Approach*, Chiefs of Staff, UK Ministry of Defence, Swindon, January 2006.
- 21 David Galula, *Pacification in Algeria 1956–1958*, RAND Monographs, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, 2006, p. 246.
- 22 The idea of compromise is further examined in the introduction to: Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian, eds, *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, 2008.
- 23 There is also the potential for damage to reputations domestically and internationally, such as we have seen in some quarters for member states of the 'Coalition of the Willing'.
- 24 Callwell, *Small Wars*, p. 125.

## THE AUTHOR

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Lieutenant Colonel Mark O'Neill graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon, into the Royal Australian Engineers in June 1988. In January 2006 he was the inaugural Chief of Army Fellow at the Lowy Institute for International Policy in Sydney, where he conducted research on counterinsurgency. Lieutenant Colonel O'Neill has operational experience in Somalia (OP SOLACE, 1993), Mozambique (OP CORACLE, 1999) and Iraq (OP CATALYST, 2007–08). He is currently serving as Senior Advisor at Multinational Force–Iraq's Counterinsurgency Centre for Excellence.

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## CURRENT OPERATIONS

# LEARNING COUNTERINSURGENCY

## OBSERVATIONS FROM SOLDIERING IN IRAQ\*

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAVID H PETRAEUS

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The Army has learned a great deal in Iraq and Afghanistan about the conduct of counterinsurgency operations, and we must continue to learn all that we can from our experiences in those countries. The insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan were not, in truth, the wars for which we were best prepared in 2001; however, they are the wars we are fighting and they clearly are the kind of wars we must master. America's overwhelming conventional military superiority makes it unlikely that future enemies will confront us head on. Rather, they will attack us asymmetrically, avoiding our strengths—firepower, maneuver, technology—and come at us and our partners the way the insurgents do in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is imperative, therefore, that we continue to learn from our experiences in those countries, both to succeed in those endeavors and to prepare for the future.

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## SOLDIERS AND OBSERVATIONS

Writing down observations and lessons learned is a time-honored tradition of Soldiers. Most of us have done this to varying degrees, and we then reflect on and share what we've jotted down after returning from the latest training exercise, mission, or deployment. Such activities are of obvious importance in helping us learn from our own experiences and from those of others.

In an effort to foster learning as an organization, the Army institutionalized the process of collection, evaluation, and dissemination of observations, insights, and lessons some 20 years ago with the formation of the Center for Army Lessons Learned.<sup>1</sup> In subsequent years, the other military services and the Joint Forces Command followed suit, forming their own lessons learned centers. More recently, the Internet and other knowledge-management tools have sped the processes of collection, evaluation, and dissemination enormously. Numerous products have already been issued since the beginning of our operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and most of us have found these products of considerable value as we've prepared for deployments and reviewed how different units grappled with challenges our elements were about to face.

For all their considerable worth, the institutional structures for capturing lessons are still dependent on Soldiers' thoughts and reflections. And Soldiers have continued to record their own observations, particularly in recent years as we have

### OBSERVATIONS FROM SOLDIERING IN IRAQ

1. "Do not try to do too much with your own hands."
2. Act quickly, because every Army of liberation has a half-life.
3. Money is ammunition.
4. Increasing the number of stakeholders is critical to success.
5. Analyze "costs and benefits" before each operation.
6. Intelligence is the key to success.
7. Everyone must do nation-building.
8. Help build institutions, not just units.
9. Cultural awareness is a force multiplier.
10. Success in a counterinsurgency requires more than just military operations.
11. Ultimate success depends on local leaders.
12. Remember the strategic corporals and strategic lieutenants.
13. There is no substitute for flexible, adaptable leaders.
14. A leader's most important task is to set the right tone.

engaged in so many important operations. Indeed, my own pen and notebook were always handy while soldiering in Iraq, where I commanded the 101st Airborne Division during our first year there (during the fight to Baghdad and the division's subsequent operations in Iraq's four northern provinces), and where, during most of the subsequent year-and-a-half, I helped with the so-called "train and equip" mission, conducting an assessment in the spring of 2004 of the Iraqi Security Forces after their poor performance in early April 2004, and then serving as the first commander of the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq and the NATO Training Mission-Iraq.

What follows is the distillation of a number of observations jotted down during that time. Some of these observations are specific to soldiering in Iraq, but the rest speak to the broader challenge of conducting counterinsurgency operations in a vastly different culture than our own. I offer 14 of those observations here in the hope that others will find them of assistance as they prepare to serve in Iraq or Afghanistan or in similar missions in the years ahead.

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... the institutional structures for capturing lessons are still dependent on Soldiers' thoughts and reflections.

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#### FOURTEEN OBSERVATIONS

**Observation Number 1** is "Do not try to do too much with your own hands." T.E. Lawrence offered this wise counsel in an article published in *The Arab Bulletin* in August 1917. Continuing, he wrote: "Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not win it for them. Actually, also, under the very odd conditions of Arabia, your practical work will not be as good as, perhaps, you think it is. It may take them longer and it may not be as good as you think, but if it is theirs, it will be better."<sup>2</sup>

Lawrence's guidance is as relevant in the 21st century as it was in his own time in the Middle East during World War I. Like much good advice, however, it is sometimes easier to put forward than it is to follow. Our Army is blessed with highly motivated Soldiers who pride themselves on being action oriented. We celebrate a "can do" spirit, believe in taking the initiative, and want to get on with business. Yet, despite the discomfort in trying to follow Lawrence's advice by not doing too much with our own hands, such an approach is absolutely critical to success in a situation like that in Iraq. Indeed, many of our units recognized early on that it was important that we not just perform tasks for the Iraqis, but that we help our Iraqi partners, over time enabling them to accomplish tasks on their own with less and less assistance from us.

Empowering Iraqis to do the job themselves has, in fact, become the essence of our strategy—and such an approach is particularly applicable in Iraq. Despite suffering for decades under Saddam, Iraq still has considerable human capital, with the remnants of an educated middle class, a number of budding entrepreneurs, and many talented leaders. Moreover, the Iraqis, of course, know the situation and people far better than we ever can, and unleashing their productivity is essential to rebuilding infrastructure and institutions. Our experience, for example, in helping the Iraqi military reestablish its staff colleges and branch-specific schools has been that, once a good Iraqi leader is established as the head of the school, he can take it from there, albeit with some degree of continued Coalition assistance. The same has been true in many other areas, including in helping establish certain Army units (such as the Iraqi Army's 9th Division (Mechanized), based north of Baghdad at Taji, and the 8th Division, which has units in 5 provinces south of Baghdad) and police academies (such as the one in Hillah, run completely by Iraqis for well over 6 months). Indeed, our ability to assist rather than do has evolved considerably since the transition of sovereignty at the end of late June 2004 and even more so since the elections of 30 January 2005. I do not, to be sure, want to downplay in the least the amount of work still to be done or the daunting challenges that lie ahead; rather, I simply want to emphasize the importance of empowering, enabling, and assisting the Iraqis, an approach that figures prominently in our strategy in that country.

**Observation Number 2** is that, in a situation like Iraq, the liberating force must act quickly, because every Army of liberation has a half-life beyond which it turns into an Army of occupation. The length of this half-life is tied to the perceptions of the populace about the impact of the liberating force's activities. From the moment a force enters a country, its leaders must keep this in mind, striving to meet the expectations of the liberated in what becomes a race against the clock.

This race against the clock in Iraq has been complicated by the extremely high expectations of the Iraqi people, their pride in their own abilities, and their reluctant admission that they needed help from Americans, in particular.<sup>3</sup> Recognizing this, those of us on the ground at the outset did all that we could with the resources available early on to help the people, to repair the damage done by military operations and looting, to rebuild infrastructure, and to restore basic services as quickly as possible—in effect, helping extend the half-life of the Army of liberation. Even while carrying out such activities, however, we were keenly aware that sooner or later, the people would begin to view us as an Army of occupation. Over time, the local

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[O]ur ability to assist  
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citizenry would feel that we were not doing enough or were not moving as quickly as desired, would see us damage property and hurt innocent civilians in the course of operations, and would resent the inconveniences and intrusion of checkpoints, low helicopter flights, and other military activities. The accumulation of these perceptions, coupled with the natural pride of Iraqis and resentment that their country, so blessed in natural resources, had to rely on outsiders, would eventually result in us being seen less as liberators and more as occupiers. That has, of course, been the case to varying degrees in much of Iraq.

The obvious implication of this is that such endeavors—especially in situations like those in Iraq—are a race against the clock to achieve as quickly as possible the expectations of those liberated. And, again, those expectations, in the case of Iraqi citizens, have always been very high indeed.<sup>4</sup>

**Observation Number 3** is that, in an endeavor like that in Iraq, money is ammunition. In fact, depending on the situation, money can be more important than real ammunition—and that has often been the case in Iraq since early April 2003 when Saddam’s regime collapsed and the focus rapidly shifted to reconstruction, economic revival, and restoration of basic services. Once money is available, the challenge is to spend it effectively and quickly to rapidly achieve measurable results. This leads to a related observation that the money needs to be provided as soon as possible to the organizations that have the capability and capacity to spend it in such a manner.

So-called “CERP” (Commander’s Emergency Reconstruction Program) funds—funds created by the Coalition Provisional Authority with captured Iraqi money in response to requests from units for funds that could be put to use quickly and with minimal red tape—proved very important in Iraq in the late spring and summer of 2003. These funds enabled units on the ground to complete thousands of small projects that were, despite their low cost, of enormous importance to local citizens.<sup>5</sup> Village schools, for example, could be repaired and refurbished by less than \$10,000 at that time, and units like the 101st Airborne Division carried out hundreds of school repairs alone. Other projects funded by CERP in our area included refurbishment of Mosul University, repairs to the Justice Center, numerous road projects, countless water projects, refurbishment of cement and asphalt factories, repair of a massive irrigation system, support for local elections, digging of dozens of wells, repair of police stations, repair of an oil refinery, purchase of uniforms and equipment for Iraqi forces, construction of small Iraqi Army training and operating bases, repairs to parks and swimming pools, support for youth

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soccer teams, creation of employment programs, refurbishment of medical facilities, creation of a central Iraqi detention facility, establishment of a small business loan program, and countless other small initiatives that made big differences in the lives of the Iraqis we were trying to help.

The success of the CERP concept led Congress to appropriate additional CERP dollars in the fall of 2003, and additional appropriations have continued ever since. Most commanders would agree, in fact, that CERP dollars have been of enormous value to the effort in Iraq (and in Afghanistan, to which the concept migrated in 2003 as well).

Beyond being provided money, those organizations with the capacity and capability to put it to use must also be given reasonable flexibility in how they spend at least a portion of the money, so that it can be used to address emerging needs—which are inevitable. This is particularly important in the case of appropriated funds. The recognition of this need guided our requests for resources for the Iraqi Security Forces “train and equip” mission, and the result was a substantial amount of flexibility in the 2005 supplemental funding measure that has served that mission very well, especially as our new organization achieved the capability and capacity needed to rapidly put to use the resources allocated to it.<sup>6</sup>

**Observation Number 4** reminds us that *increasing the number of stakeholders is critical to success*. This insight emerged several months into our time in Iraq as we began to realize that more important than our winning Iraqi hearts and minds was doing all that we could to ensure that as many Iraqis as possible felt a stake in the success of the new Iraq. Now, I do not want to downplay the importance of winning hearts and minds for the Coalition, as that extends the half-life I described earlier, something that is of obvious desirability. But more important was the idea of Iraqis wanting the new Iraq to succeed. Over time, in fact, we began asking, when considering new initiatives, projects, or programs, whether they would help increase the number of Iraqis who felt they had a stake in the country’s success. This guided us well during the time that the 101st Airborne Division was in northern Iraq and again during a variety of initiatives pursued as part of the effort to help Iraq reestablish its security forces. And it is this concept, of course, that undoubtedly is behind the reported efforts of the U.S. Ambassador in Iraq to encourage Shi’ia and Kurdish political leaders in Iraq to reach out to Sunni Arab leaders and to encourage them to help the new Iraq succeed.

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Not only must it subdue an armed adversary while attempting to provide security to the civilian population, it must also avoid furthering the insurgents’ cause.

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The essence of **Observation Number 5**—that we should *analyze costs and benefits of operations before each operation*—is captured in a question we developed over time and used to ask before the conduct of operations: “Will this operation,” we asked, “take more bad guys off the street than it creates by the way it is conducted?” If the answer to that question was, “No,” then we took a very hard look at the operation before proceeding.

In 1986, General John Galvin, then Commander in Chief of the U.S. Southern Command (which was supporting the counterinsurgency effort in El Salvador), described the challenge captured in this observation very effectively: “The... burden on the military institution is large. Not only must it subdue an armed adversary while attempting to provide security to the civilian population, it must also avoid furthering the insurgents’ cause. If, for example, the military’s actions in killing 50 guerrillas cause 200 previously uncommitted citizens to join the insurgent cause, the use of force will have been counterproductive.”<sup>7</sup>

To be sure, there are occasions when one should be willing to take more risk relative to this question. One example was the 101st Airborne Division operation to capture or kill Uday and Qusay. In that case, we ended up firing well over a dozen antitank missiles into the house they were occupying (knowing that all the family members were safely out of it) after Uday and Qusay refused our call to surrender and wounded three of our soldiers during two attempts to capture them.<sup>8</sup>

In the main, however, we sought to carry out operations in a way that minimized the chances of creating more enemies than we captured or killed. The idea was to try to end each day with fewer enemies than we had when it started. Thus we preferred targeted operations rather than sweeps, and as soon as possible after completion of an operation, we explained to the citizens in the affected areas what we’d done and why we did it.

This should not be taken to indicate that we were the least bit reluctant about going after the Saddamists, terrorists, or insurgents; in fact, the opposite was the case. In one night in Mosul alone, for example, we hit 35 targets simultaneously, getting 23 of those we were after, with only one or two shots fired and most of the operations requiring only a knock on a door, vice blowing it down. Such operations obviously depended on a sophisticated intelligence structure, one largely based on human intelligence sources and very similar to the Joint Interagency Task Forces for Counter-Terrorism that were established in various locations after 9/11.

That, logically, leads to **Observation Number 6**, which holds that *intelligence is the key to success*. It is, after all, detailed, actionable intelligence that enables “cordon and knock” operations and precludes large sweeps that often prove counterproductive. Developing such intelligence, however, is not easy. Substantial assets at the local (i.e., division or brigade) level are required to develop human intelligence networks and gather sufficiently precise information to allow targeted operations. For us,

precise information generally meant a 10-digit grid for the target's location, a photo of the entry point, a reasonable description of the target, and directions to the target's location, as well as other information on the neighborhood, the target site, and the target himself. Gathering this information is hard; considerable intelligence and operational assets are required, all of which must be pulled together to focus (and deconflict) the collection, analytical, and operational efforts. But it is precisely this type of approach that is essential to preventing terrorists and insurgents from putting down roots in an area and starting the process of intimidation and disruption that can result in a catastrophic downward spiral.

**Observation Number 7**, which springs from the fact that Civil Affairs are not enough when undertaking huge reconstruction and nation-building efforts, is that *everyone must do nation-building*.

This should not be taken to indicate that I have anything but the greatest of respect for our Civil Affairs personnel—because I hold them in very high regard. I have personally watched them work wonders in Central America, Haiti, the Balkans, and, of course, Iraq. Rather, my point is that when undertaking industrial-strength reconstruction on the scale of that in Iraq, Civil Affairs forces alone will not suffice; every unit must be involved.

Reopening the University of Mosul brought this home to those of us in the 101st Airborne Division in the spring of 2003. A symbol of considerable national pride, the University had graduated well over a hundred thousand students since its establishment in 1967. Shortly after the seating of the interim Governor and Province Council in Nineveh Province in early May 2003, the Council's members established completion of the school year at the University as among their top priorities. We thus took a quick trip through the University to assess the extent of the damage and to discuss reopening with the Chancellor. We then huddled with our Civil Affairs Battalion Commander to chart a way ahead, but we quickly found that, although the talent inherent in the Battalion's education team was impressive, its members were relatively junior in rank and its size (numbering less than an infantry squad) was simply not enough to help the Iraqis repair and reopen a heavily-looted institution of over 75 buildings some 4,500 staff and faculty, and approximately 30–35,000 students. The mission, and the education team, therefore, went to one of the two aviation brigades of the 101st Airborne Division, a brigade that clearly did not have "Rebuild Foreign Academic Institutions" in its mission essential task list. What the brigade did have, however, was a senior commander and staff, as well as numerous subordinate units with commanders and staffs, who collectively added up to considerable organizational capacity and capability.

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... everyone must do  
nation-building.

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Seeing this approach work with Mosul University, we quickly adopted the same approach in virtually every area—assigning a unit or element the responsibility for assisting each of the Iraqi Ministries’ activities in northern Iraq and also for linking with key Iraqi leaders. For example, our Signal Battalion incorporated the Civil Affairs Battalion’s communications team and worked with the Ministry of Telecommunications element in northern Iraq, helping reestablish the local telecommunications structure, including assisting with a deal that brought a satellite downlink to the central switch and linked Mosul with the international phone system, producing a profit for the province (subscribers bore all the costs). Our Chaplain and his team linked with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Engineer Battalion with the Ministry of Public Works, the Division Support Command with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Corps Support Group with the Ministry of Education, the Military Police Battalion with the Ministry of Interior (Police), our Surgeon and his team with the Ministry of Health, our Staff Judge Advocate with Ministry of Justice officials, our Fire Support Element with the Ministry of Oil, and so on. In fact, we lined up a unit or staff section with every ministry element and with all the key leaders and officials in our AOR, and our subordinate units did the same in their areas of responsibility. By the time we were done, everyone and every element, not just Civil Affairs units, was engaged in nation-building.

**Observation Number 8**, recognition of the need to *help build institutions, not just units*, came from the Coalition mission of helping Iraq reestablish its security forces. We initially focused primarily on developing combat units—Army and Police battalions and brigade headquarters—as well as individual police. While those are what Iraq desperately needed to help in the achievement of security, for the long term there was also a critical need to help rebuild the institutions that support the units and police in the field—the ministries, the admin and logistical support units, the professional military education systems, admin policies and procedures, and the training organizations. In fact, lack of ministry capability and capacity can undermine the development of the battalions, brigades, and divisions, if the ministries, for example, don’t pay the soldiers or police on time, use political rather than professional criteria in picking leaders, or fail to pay contractors as required for services provided. This lesson underscored for us the importance of providing sufficient advisors and mentors to assist with the development of the security ministries and their elements, just as we provided advisor teams with each battalion and each brigade and division headquarters.<sup>9</sup>

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[T]here was also a critical need to help rebuild the institutions that support the units and police in the field ...

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**Observation Number 9**, *cultural awareness is a force multiplier*, reflects our recognition that knowledge of the cultural “terrain” can be as important as, and sometimes even more important than, knowledge of the geographic terrain. This observation acknowledges that the people are, in many respects, the decisive terrain, and that we must study that terrain in the same way that we have always studied the geographic terrain.

Working in another culture is enormously difficult if one doesn’t understand the ethnic groups, tribes, religious elements, political parties, and other social groupings—and their respective viewpoints; the relationships among the various groups; governmental structures and processes; local and regional history; and, of course, local and national leaders. Understanding of such cultural aspects is essential if one is to help the people build stable political, social, and economic institutions. Indeed, this is as much a matter of common sense as operational necessity. Beyond the intellectual need for the specific knowledge about the environment in which one is working, it is also clear that people, in general, are more likely to cooperate if those who have power over them respect the culture that gives them a sense of identity and self-worth.

In truth, many of us did a lot of “discovery learning” about such features of Iraq in the early months of our time there. And those who learned the quickest—and who also mastered some “survival Arabic”—were, not surprisingly, the most effective in developing productive relationships with local leaders and citizens and achieved the most progress in helping establish security, local governance, economic activity, and basic services. The importance of cultural awareness has, in fact, been widely recognized in the U.S. Army and the other services, and it is critical that we continue the progress that has been made in this area in our exercises, military schools, doctrine, and so on.<sup>10</sup>

**Observation Number 10** is a statement of the obvious, fully recognized by those operating in Iraq, but it is one worth recalling nonetheless. It is that *success in a counterinsurgency requires more than just military operations*. Counterinsurgency strategies must also include, above all, efforts to establish a political environment that helps reduce support for the insurgents and undermines the attraction of whatever ideology they may espouse.<sup>11</sup> In certain Sunni Arab regions of Iraq, establishing such a political environment is likely of greater importance than military operations, since the right political initiatives might undermine the sanctuary and assistance provided to the insurgents. Beyond the political arena, other important factors are economic recovery (which reduces unemployment, a serious challenge in Iraq that leads some out-of-work Iraqis to be guns for hire), education (which opens up employment

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[U]ltimate success depends  
on local leaders ...

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possibilities and access to information from outside one's normal circles), diplomatic initiatives (in particular, working with neighboring states through which foreign fighters transit), improvement in the provision of basic services, and so on. In fact, the campaign plan developed in 2005 by the Multinational Force-Iraq and the U.S. Embassy with Iraqi and Coalition leaders addresses each of these issues.

**Observation Number 11**—*ultimate success depends on local leaders*—is a natural reflection of Iraqi sovereignty and acknowledges that success in Iraq is, as time passes, increasingly dependent on Iraqi leaders—at four levels:

- Leaders at the national level working together, reaching across party and sectarian lines to keep the country unified, rejecting short-term expedient solutions such as the use of militias, and pursuing initiatives to give more of a stake in the success of the new Iraq to those who feel left out;
- Leaders in the ministries building the capability and capacity necessary to use the tremendous resources Iraq has efficiently, transparently, honestly, and effectively;
- Leaders at the province level resisting temptations to pursue winner-take-all politics and resisting the urge to politicize the local police and other security forces, and;
- Leaders in the Security Forces staying out of politics, providing courageous, competent leadership to their units, implementing policies that are fair to all members of their forces, and fostering loyalty to their Army or Police band of brothers rather than to specific tribes, ethnic groups, political parties, or local militias.

Iraqi leaders are, in short, the real key to the new Iraq, and we thus need to continue to do all that we can to enable them.

**Observation Number 12** is the admonition to *remember the strategic corporals and strategic lieutenants*, the relatively junior commissioned or noncommissioned officers who often have to make huge decisions, sometimes with life-or-death as well as strategic consequences, in the blink of an eye.

Commanders have two major obligations to these junior leaders: first, to do everything possible to train them before deployment for the various situations they will face, particularly for the most challenging and ambiguous ones; and, second, once deployed, to try to shape situations to minimize the cases in which they have to make those hugely important decisions extremely quickly.

The best example of the latter is what we do to help ensure that, when establishing hasty checkpoints, our strategic corporals are provided sufficient training and adequate means to stop a vehicle speeding toward them without having to put a bullet through

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... there is no substitute for flexible, adaptable leaders.

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the windshield. This is, in truth, easier said than it is done in the often chaotic situations that arise during a fast-moving operation in such a challenging security environment. But there are some actions we can take to try to ensure that our young leaders have adequate time to make the toughest of calls—decisions that, if not right, again, can have strategic consequences.

My next-to-last observation, **Number 13**, is that *there is no substitute for flexible, adaptable leaders*. The key to many of our successes in Iraq, in fact, has been leaders—especially young leaders—who have risen to the occasion and taken on tasks for which they'd had little or no training,<sup>12</sup> and who have demonstrated enormous initiative, innovativeness, determination, and courage.<sup>13</sup> Such leaders have repeatedly been the essential ingredient in many of the achievements in Iraq. And fostering the development of others like them clearly is critical to the further development of our Army and our military.<sup>14</sup>

My final observation, **Number 14**, underscores that, especially in counterinsurgency operations, *a leader's most important task is to set the right tone*. This is, admittedly, another statement of the obvious, but one that nonetheless needs to be highlighted given its tremendous importance. Setting the right tone and communicating that tone to his subordinate leaders and troopers are absolutely critical for every leader at every level, especially in an endeavor like that in Iraq.

If, for example, a commander clearly emphasizes so-called kinetic operations over non-kinetic operations, his subordinates will do likewise. As a result, they may thus be less inclined to seize opportunities for the nation-building aspects of the campaign. In fact, even in the 101st Airborne Division, which prided itself on its attention to nation-building, there were a few mid-level commanders early on whose hearts really weren't into performing civil affairs tasks, assisting with reconstruction, developing relationships with local citizens, or helping establish local governance. To use the jargon of Iraq at that time, they didn't "get it." In such cases, the commanders above them quickly established that nation-building activities were not optional and would be pursued with equal enthusiasm to raids and other offensive operations.

Setting the right tone ethically is another hugely important task. If leaders fail to get this right, winking at the mistreatment of detainees or at manhandling of citizens, for example, the result can be a sense in the unit that "anything goes." Nothing can be more destructive in an element than such a sense.

In truth, regardless of the leader's tone, most units in Iraq have had to deal with cases in which mistakes have been made in these areas, where young leaders in very frustrating situations, often after having suffered very tough casualties, took missteps. The key in these situations is for leaders to ensure that appropriate action is taken in the wake of such incidents, that standards are clearly articulated and reinforced, that remedial training is conducted, and that supervision is exercised to try to preclude recurrences.



It is hard to imagine a tougher environment than that in some of the areas in Iraq. Frustrations, anger, and resentment can run high in such situations. That recognition underscores, again, the importance of commanders at every level working hard to get the tone right and to communicate it throughout their units.

## IMPLICATIONS

These are, again, 14 observations from soldiering in Iraq for most of the first 2-1/2 years of our involvement there. Although I presented them as discrete lessons, many are inextricably related. These observations carry with them a number of implications for our effort in Iraq (and for our Army as well, as I have noted in some of the footnotes).<sup>15</sup>

It goes without saying that success in Iraq—which clearly is important not just for Iraq, but for the entire Middle East region and for our own country—will require continued military operations and support for the ongoing development of Iraqi Security Forces.

Success will also require continued assistance and resources for the development of the emerging political, economic, and social institutions in Iraq—efforts in which Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad and General George Casey and their teams have been engaged with their Iraqi counterparts and have been working very hard.

Lastly, success will require time, determination, and resilience, keeping in mind that following the elections held in mid-December 2005, several months will likely be required for the new government—the fourth in an 18-month period—to be established and functional. The insurgents and extremists did all that they could to derail the preparations for the constitutional referendum in mid-October and the elections in mid-December. Although they were ineffective in each case, they undoubtedly will try to disrupt the establishment of the new government—and the upcoming provincial elections—as well. As Generals John Abizaid and George Casey made clear in their testimony on Capitol Hill in September 2005, however, there is a strategy—developed in close coordination with those in the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and with our inter-agency, Coalition, and Iraqi partners—that addresses the insurgency, Iraqi Security Forces, and the other relevant areas. And there has been substantial progress in a number of areas. Nonetheless, nothing is ever easy in Iraq and a great deal of hard work and many challenges clearly lie ahead.<sup>16</sup>

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Success will also require continued assistance and resources for the development of the emerging political, economic, and social institutions in Iraq ...

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The first 6 months of 2006 thus will be of enormous importance, with the efforts of Iraqi leaders being especially significant during this period as a new government is seated and the new constitution enters into force. It will be essential that we do all that we can to support Iraq's leaders as they endeavor to make the most of the opportunity our Soldiers have given them.

## CONCLUSION

In a 1986 article titled “Uncomfortable Wars: Toward a New Paradigm,” General John R. Galvin observed that “[a]n officer’s effectiveness and chance for success, now and in the future, depend not only on his character, knowledge, and skills, but also, and more than ever before, on his ability to understand the changing environment of conflict.<sup>17</sup> General Galvin’s words were relevant then, but they are even more applicable today. Conducting counterinsurgency operations in a vastly different culture is exceedingly complex.

Later, in the same article, noting that we in the military typically have our noses to the grindstone and that we often live a somewhat cloistered existence, General Galvin counseled: “Let us get our young leaders away from the grindstone now and then, and encourage them to reflect on developments outside the fortress-cloister. Only then will they develop into leaders capable of adapting to the changed environment of warfare and able to fashion a new paradigm that addresses all the dimensions of the conflicts that may lie ahead.”<sup>18</sup>

Given the current situation, General Galvin’s advice again appears very wise indeed. And it is my hope that, as we all take time to lift our noses from the grindstone and look beyond the confines of our current assignments, the observations provided here will help foster useful discussion on our ongoing endeavors and on how we should approach similar conflicts in the future—conflicts that are likely to be the norm, rather than the exception, in the 21st century.

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## ENDNOTES

- 1 The Center for Army Lessons Learned website can be found at <<http://call.Army.mil>>.
- 2 T.E. Lawrence, “Twenty-Seven Articles,” Arab Bulletin (20 August 1917). Known popularly as “Lawrence of Arabia,” T.E. Lawrence developed an incomparable degree of what we now call “cultural awareness” during his time working with Arab tribes and armies, and many of his 27 articles ring as true today as they did in his

day. A website with the articles can be found at <[www.pbs.org/lawrenceofarabia/revolt/warfare4.html](http://www.pbs.org/lawrenceofarabia/revolt/warfare4.html)>. A good overview of Lawrence's thinking, including his six fundamental principles of insurgency, can be found in "T.E. Lawrence end the Mind of an Insurgent," *Army* (July 2005): 31-37.

- 3 I should note that this has been much less the case in Afghanistan where, because the expectations of the people were so low and the abhorrence of the Taliban and further civil war was so great, the Afghan people remain grateful to Coalition forces and other organizations for all that is done for them. Needless to say, the relative permissiveness of the security situation in Afghanistan has also helped a great deal and made it possible for nongovernmental organizations to operate on a much wider and freer basis than is possible in Iraq. In short, the different context in Afghanistan has meant that the half-life of the Army of liberation there has been considerably longer than that in Iraq.
- 4 In fact, we often contended with what came to be known as the "Man on the Moon Challenge"—i.e., the expectation of ordinary Iraqis that soldiers from a country that could put a man on the moon and overthrow Saddam in a matter of weeks should also be able, with considerable ease, to provide each Iraqi a job, 24-hour electrical service, and so on.
- 5 The military units on the ground in Iraq have generally had considerable capability to carry out reconstruction and nation-building tasks. During its time in northern Iraq, for example, the 101st Airborne Division had 4 engineer battalions (including, for a period, even a well-drilling detachment), an engineer group headquarters (which is designed to carry out assessment, design, contracting, and quality assurance tasks), 2 civil affairs battalions, 9 infantry battalions, 4 artillery battalions (most of which were "out of battery" and performed reconstruction tasks), a sizable logistical support command (generally about 6 battalions, including transportation, fuel storage, supply, maintenance, food service, movement control, warehousing, and even water purification units), a military police battalion (with attached police and corrections training detachments), a signal battalion, an air defense battalion (which helped train Iraqi forces), a field hospital, a number of contracting officers and officers authorized to carry large sums of money, an air traffic control element, some 9 aviation battalions (with approximately 250 helicopters), a number of chaplain teams, and more than 25 military lawyers (who can be of enormous assistance in resolving a host of problems when conducting nation-building). Except in the area of aviation assets, the 4th Infantry Division and the 1st Armored Division, the two other major Army units in Iraq in the summer of 2003, had even more assets than the 101st.
- 6 The FY 2005 Defense Budget and Supplemental Funding Measures approved by Congress provided some \$5.2 billion for the Iraqi Security Force's train, equip, advise, and rebuild effort. Just as significant, it was appropriated in just three categories—Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, and Quick Reaction Funds—thereby minimizing substantially the need for reprogramming actions.

- 7 General John R. Galvin, “Uncomfortable Wars: Toward a New Paradigm,” *Parameters*, 16, no. 4 (Winter 1986): 6.
- 8 As soon as the “kinetic” part of that operation was complete, we moved into the neighborhood with engineers, civil affairs teams, lawyers, officers with money, and security elements. We subsequently repaired any damage that might conceivably have been caused by the operation, and completely removed all traces of the house in which Uday and Quasy were located, as the missiles had rendered it structurally unsound and we didn’t want any reminders left of the two brothers.
- 9 Over time, and as the effort to train and equip Iraqi combat units gathered momentum, the Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq placed greater and greater emphasis on helping with the development of the Ministries of Defense and Interior, especially after the mission to advise the Ministries’ leaders was shifted to the Command from the Embassy’s Iraq Reconstruction Management Office in the Fall of 2005. It is now one of the Commands top priorities.
- 10 The Army, for example, has incorporated scenarios that place a premium on cultural awareness into its major exercises at the National Training Center and Joint Readiness Training Center. It has stressed the importance of cultural awareness throughout the process of preparing units for deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan and in a comprehensive approach adopted by the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. As part of this effort, language tools have been developed; e.g., the Rosetta Stone program available through Army Knowledge Online, and language training will be required; e.g., of Command and General Staff Collage students during their 2d and 3d semesters. Doctrinal manuals are being modified to recognize the importance of cultural awareness, and instruction in various commissioned and noncommissioned officer courses has been added as well. The Center for Army Lessons Learned has published a number of documents to assist as well. The U.S. Marine Corps has pursued similar initiatives and is, in fact, partnering with the Army in the development of a new Counterinsurgency Field Manual.
- 11 David Galula’s classic work, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (St. Petersburg, FL: Hailer Publishing, 2005) is particularly instructive on this point. See, for example, his discussion on pages 88-89.
- 12 As I noted in a previous footnote, preparation of leaders and units for deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan now typically includes extensive preparation for the kind of “non-kinetic” operations our leaders are called on to perform, with the preparation period culminating in a brigade combat team mission rehearsal exercise at either the National Training Center or the Joint Readiness Training Center. At each Center, units conduct missions similar to those they’ll perform when deployed and do so in an environment that includes villages, Iraqi-American role players, “suicide bomber,” “insurgents,” the need to work with local leaders and local security forces, etc. At the next higher level, the preparation of division and corps headquarters culminates in

- the conduct of a mission rehearsal exercise conducted jointly by the Battle Command Training Program and Joint Warfighting Center. This exercise also strives to replicate—in a command post exercise format driven by a computer simulation--the missions, challenges, and context the unit will find once deployed.
- 13 A great piece that highlights the work being done by young leaders in Iraq is Robert Kaplan's "The Future of America—in Iraq," *latimes.com*, 24 December 2005. Another is the video presentation used by Army Chief of Staff General Peter J. Schoomaker, "Pentathlete Leader: 1LT Tad Wiley," which recounts Lieutenant Wiley's fascinating experience in the first Stryker unit to operate in Iraq as they fought and conducted nation-building operations throughout much of the country, often transitioning from one to the other very rapidly, changing missions end reorganizing while on the move, and covering considerable distances in short periods of time.
  - 14 In fact, the U.S. Army is currently in the final stages of an important study of the education and training of leaders, one objective of which is to identify additional programs and initiatives that can help produce the kind of flexible, adaptable leaders who have done well in Iraq and Afghanistan. Among the issues being examined is how to provide experiences for our leaders that take them out of their "comfort zone." For many of us, attending a civilian graduate school provided such an experience, and the Army's recent decision to expand graduate school opportunities for officers is thus a great initiative. For a provocative assessment of the challenges the U.S. Army faces, see the article by U.K. Brigadier Nigel Aylwin-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," *Military Review* (November-December 2005): 2-15.
  - 15 The Department of Defense (DOD) formally recognized the implications of current operations as well, issuing DOD Directive 3000.05 on 28 November 2005, "Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations," which establishes DOD policy and assigns responsibilities within DOD for planning, training, and preparing to conduct and support stability operations. This is a significant action that is already spurring action in a host of different areas. A copy can be found at <[www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/html/300005.htm](http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/html/300005.htm)>.
  - 16 A brief assessment of the current situation and the strategy for the way ahead is in Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad's "The Challenge Before Us," *Wall Street Journal*, 9 January 2006, 12.
  - 17 Gaivin, 7. One of the Army's true soldier-statesman-scholars, General Galvin was serving as the Commander in Chief of U.S. Southern Command at the time he wrote this article. In that position, he oversaw the conduct of a number of operations in El Salvador and elsewhere in Central and South America, and it was in that context that he wrote this enduring piece. He subsequently served as the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, and following retirement, was the Dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts.
  - 18 Ibid.

## THE AUTHOR

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Lieutenant General David H. Petraeus, U.S. Army, took command of the Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in October 2005. He also serves as the Commandant of the Command and General Staff College and as Deputy Commander for Combined Arms of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. LTG Petraeus commanded the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in Iraq during the first year of Operation Iraqi Freedom, returning to the United States with the Division in mid-February 2004. He returned to Iraq for several weeks in April and May 2004 to assess the Iraqi Security Forces, and he subsequently returned in early June 2004 to serve as the first commander of the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, the position he held until September 2005. In late 2004, he also became the first commander of the NATO Training Mission-Iraq. Prior to his tour with the 101st, he served for a year as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations of the NATO Stabilization Force in Bosnia. A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, LTG Petraeus earned M.P.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

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# CURRENT OPERATIONS

## ANBAR AWAKENS

### THE TIPPING POINT\*

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MAJOR NIEL SMITH AND COLONEL SEAN MACFARLAND

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*Hard is not hopeless.*

General David Petraeus, testimony to Congress, September 2007

The stunning security improvements in Al Anbar province during 2007 fundamentally changed the military and political landscape of Iraq. Many, both in and outside the military (and as late as November 2006), had assessed the situation in Anbar as a lost cause. The “Anbar Awakening” of Sunni tribal leaders and their supporters that began in September 2006 near Ramadi seemed to come out of nowhere. But the change that led to the defeat of Al-Qaeda in Ramadi—what some have called the “Gettysburg of Iraq”—was not a random event.<sup>1</sup> It was the result of a concerted plan executed by U.S. forces in Ramadi. Tactical victory became a strategic turning point when farsighted senior leaders, both Iraqi and American, replicated the Ramadi model throughout Anbar province, in Baghdad, and other parts of the country, dramatically changing the Iraq security situation in the process.

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\* This article first appeared in *Military Review*, March-April 2008. Reprinted by permission.

## THE “READY FIRST COMBAT TEAM”

The 1st Brigade of the 1st Armored Division, the “Ready First Combat Team,” was at the center of the Anbar Awakening. When we arrived in Ramadi in June 2006, few of us thought our campaign would change the entire complexion of the war and push Al-Qaeda to the brink of defeat in Iraq. The Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, and Airmen who served in or with our brigade combat team (BCT) enabled the Anbar Awakening through a deliberate, often difficult campaign that combined traditional counterinsurgency (COIN) principles with precise, lethal operations. The skilled application of the same principles and exploitation of success by other great units in Anbar and other parts of Iraq spread the success in Ramadi far beyond our area of operations (AO) at a pace no one could have predicted.

The Ready First enabled the Anbar Awakening by—

- Employing carefully focused lethal operations.
- Securing the populace through forward presence.
- Co-opting local leaders.
- Developing competent host-nation security forces.
- Creating a public belief in rising success.
- Developing human and physical infrastructure.

The execution of this approach enabled the brigade to set conditions, recognize opportunity, and exploit success when it came, to create a remarkable turnaround.

## RAMADI ON THE BRINK

In the summer of 2006, Ramadi by any measure was among the most dangerous cities in Iraq.<sup>2</sup> The area of operations averaged over three times more attacks per capita than any other area in the country. With the exception of the embattled government center and nearby buildings held by a company of Marines, Al-Qaeda-related insurgents had almost complete freedom of movement throughout the city. They dominated nearly all of the city’s key structures, including the city hospital, the largest in Anbar province. Their freedom of movement allowed them to emplace complex subsurface IED belts, which rendered much of the city no-go terrain for U.S. and Iraqi Army (IA) forces.

The situation in Ramadi at this point was markedly different from that in Tal Afar, where the Ready First began its tour of duty. Although Ramadi was free of the sectarian divisions that bedeviled Tal Afar, it was the provincial capital, it was

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at least four times more populous, and it occupied a choke point along the key transit routes west of Baghdad. Perhaps recognizing these same factors, Al-Qaeda had declared the future capital of its “caliphate” in Iraq. Local Iraqi security was essentially nonexistent. Less than a hundred Iraqi police reported for duty in June, and they remained in their stations, too intimidated to patrol. Additionally, the fledgling IA brigade nearest Ramadi had little operational experience.

In late 2005, the Sunni tribes around Ramadi attempted to expel Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQIZ) after growing weary of the terrorist group’s heavy-handed, indiscriminate murder and intimidation campaign.<sup>3</sup> A group calling itself the Al Anbar People’s Council formed from a coalition of local Sunni sheiks and Sunni nationalist groups. The council intended to conduct an organized resistance against both coalition forces and Al-Qaeda elements, but, undermanned and hamstrung by tribal vendettas, it lacked strength and cohesion. A series of tribal leader assassinations ultimately brought down the group, which ceased to exist by February 2006. This collapse set the conditions that the brigade found when it arrived in late May. The assassinations had created a leadership vacuum in Ramadi and, by cutting tribal ties to outside tribal centers, had isolated the city. For their part, the tribes had adopted a passive posture, not wishing to antagonize a powerful Al-Qaeda presence in and around Ramadi. In short, as the Ready First prepared to move from Tal Afar, their new AO was essentially in enemy hands.

## ACTIONS IN SUMMER AND AUTUMN, 2006

The situation in Ramadi clearly required a change in coalition tactics. We had to introduce Iraqi security forces (ISF) into the city and the rural areas controlled by the enemy. But, even with a total of five Marine and Army maneuver battalion task forces, the Ready First did not have enough combat power to secure such a large city by itself. The Iraqi Army and at some point, the Iraqi Police (IP), had to be brought into play. They would help, but we understood that without the support of the local leaders and populace, any security gains achieved solely through lethal operations would be temporary at best. In particular, we had to overcome the fallout from the unsuccessful tribal uprising of 2005. We had to convince tribal leaders to rejoin the fight against Al-Qaeda.

**Developing the plan.** We reckoned the brigade had to isolate the insurgents, deny them sanctuary, and build Iraqi security forces, especially police forces, to succeed. The staff developed a plan that centered on attacking Al-Qaeda’s safe havens and establishing a lasting presence there to directly challenge the insurgents’ dominance

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The situation in Ramadi clearly required a change in coalition tactics.

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of the city, disrupting their operations, attriting their numbers, and gaining the confidence of the people. We intended to take the city and its environs back one neighborhood at a time by establishing combat outposts and developing a police force in the secured neighborhoods. The plan called for simultaneously engaging local leaders in an attempt to find those who had influence, or “wasta,” and to get their support. We recognized this as a critical part of the plan, because without their help, we would not be able to recruit enough police to take back the entire city.

We also realized that in the plan’s initial stages, our efforts at fostering local cooperation were highly vulnerable. A concerted AQIZ attack on the supportive sheiks could quickly derail the process, as it had in 2005-2006. We therefore took some extraordinary measures to ensure the survival of tribal leaders who “flipped” to our side. We established neighborhood watches that involved deputizing screened members of internal tribal militias as “Provincial Auxiliary Iraqi Police,” authorizing them to wear uniforms, carry weapons, and provide security within the defined tribal area. In the more important tribal areas, combat outposts manned by U.S. or IA forces would protect major routes and markets. In a few cases, we also planned to provide direct security to key leaders’ residences, to include placing armored vehicles at checkpoints along the major access roads to their neighborhoods.

We designed our information operations (IO) efforts to alienate the people from the insurgents while increasing the prestige of supportive tribal leaders. We also made friendly sheiks the conduits for humanitarian aid efforts, such as free fuel disbursements. Wherever we established improved security, we established civil military operations centers (CMOCs) and began the process of restoring services to the area. After securing Ramadi General Hospital, we began an extensive effort to improve its services and to advertise it throughout the city. Prior to our operation there in early July 2006, the hospital’s primary function had been treating wounded insurgents, with most citizens afraid to enter the facility. We also took a different IO tack with the sheiks. Instead of telling them that we would leave soon and they must assume responsibility for their own security, we told them that we would stay as long as necessary to defeat the terrorists. That was the message they had been waiting to hear. As long as they perceived us as mere interlopers, they dared not throw in their lot with ours. When they began to think of us as reliable partners, their attitudes began to change. Still, we had to prove that we meant what we were saying.

Experience in Tal Afar taught us that competent local police forces were vital for long-term success. An AQIZ intimidation campaign had all but eliminated the previous police force, and a suicide bomber killed dozens of potential recruits during

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a recruiting drive in January 2006, an event that caused recruitment to shut down for six months. In June 2006, the Ramadi IP force claimed approximately 420 police officers out of 3386 authorized, and only about 140 of these officers ever showed up to work, with less than 100 present for duty on any given day. We realized that new recruiting was the key to building an effective police force.

**Recruiting local security forces.** Our desire to recruit local Iraqis into the IP was the catalyst for the Awakening movement's birth in September 2006. The way we went about it helped to prove that we were reliable partners, that we could deliver security to the sheiks in a way that broke the cycle of Al-Qaeda murder and intimidation. In the bargain, the Government of Iraq would assume the burden of paying their tribesmen to provide their security. The situation was a winner any way you looked at it. The tribes soon saw that instead of being the hunted, they could become the hunters, with well trained, paid, and equipped security forces backed up by locally positioned coalition forces.

We began the process by shifting our recruiting center to a more secure location, at one of our forward operating bases (FOBs) located closer to the tribes that had indicated a willingness to join the ISF. This shift helped to deter attacks and other forms of intimidation that had undermined previous recruiting drives. We maintained secrecy by communicating information about the recruiting drive only to sympathetic sheiks who wanted to protect tribesmen sent to join the IP. This technique resulted in a steadily growing influx of new recruits. Over the six-month period from June to December 2006, nearly 4,000 police joined without incident.

This influx taxed the brigade security forces cell, composed of the deputy commander and a small staff of highly capable officers and NCOs. The majority of the population in Al Anbar had either forged ID papers or none at all, so the recruiters had to determine the true identify and reliability of the potential recruits. Insurgent infiltration of the police force was (and still is) a problem in Iraq, and is inevitable; however, the Ready First made use of several methods and technologies to mitigate this risk.

Biometric automated tool sets (BATS) proved extremely useful in screening recruits and preventing previously caught insurgents from joining. Convincing supportive sheiks to vouch for their tribal members was a second filter in the screening process. From June to December, more than 90 percent of police recruits came from tribes supporting the Awakening, and the sheiks knew whom to trust.

Our ISF cell understood the importance of paying the new police to prove that they were respected and their service was valued. As a collateral benefit, the growing

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Insurgent infiltration of the police force was (and still is) a problem in Iraq ...

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IP force also created a small engine for economic development by providing jobs in addition to security for the local community. Each recruit received a bonus if accepted for training. Officers also received a bonus if they served as active police members for 90 days. These boosts injected more vitality into the economy.

New Iraqi Army recruits also received incentives to join. One obstacle to recruitment was that locals were hesitant to join the IA because of the possibility of receiving an assignment far from home. To mitigate this, IA Division G-1s assigned the *jundi* (junior Soldiers) to an Iraqi battalion close to their homes. This “station of choice” option helped eliminate a major constraint of recruitment possibilities for the IA.

Both Iraqi Police and IA *jundi* assigned to Ramadi were required to attend a one-week urban combat training course run by the Ready First’s field artillery unit to ensure that they could fight and survive once they joined their units. This focused training improved their confidence and discipline in urban combat, and significantly enhanced effectiveness in small-unit actions. In time, the local IA brigade took responsibility for conducting the IA and IP courses with a cadre of drill sergeants, which helped forge closer bonds between the two services and instilled an increased sense of confidence in the Iraqi security forces.

The Ready First made every effort to help unqualified Iraqi recruits become police officers or soldiers. The most frequent disqualifier of recruits was the literacy requirement. The brigade commenced adult literacy classes, on a trial basis, for the illiterate recruits. These classes also had a positive, albeit unintended, collateral benefit. As security improved, hundreds of women enrolled in the classes—about five times more than we expected. The fact that women eventually felt safe enough to seek education reinforced the impression of improved security while directly attacking Al-Qaeda’s ability to influence the population.

As the benefits of cooperation with our recruiting efforts became obvious to the various local sheiks, more and more of them expressed an interest in cooperating with us. This interest eventually resulted in an Al-Qaeda reprisal that, although tragic, was instrumental in bringing the sheiks together in the Awakening movement.

**Securing the populace.** Past coalition operations in Ramadi had originated from large FOBs on the outskirts of town, with most forces conducting “drive-by COIN” (or combat)—they exited the FOB, drove to an objective or patrolled, were attacked, exchanged fire, and returned to base. Because the physical geography and road network in Ramadi enabled the enemy to observe and predict coalition movements, nearly every movement into the center of the city was attacked multiple times by improvised explosive devices, RPGs, or small arms, often with deadly results. Moreover, the patrols played into the insurgents’ information operations campaign: Al-Qaeda exploited any collateral damage by depicting coalition Soldiers as aloof occupiers and random dispensers of violence against the populace.

It was clear that to win over the sheiks and their people, our BCT would have to move into the city and its contested areas. Thus, we decided to employ a tactic we had borrowed from the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment and used successfully in Tal Afar: the combat outpost, or COP. Our COPs normally consisted of a tank or infantry company team based in a defensible local structure in a disputed area. Eventually, the COPs included an Iraqi Army company wherever possible as they became emboldened by our presence. Later, we began to establish Iraqi Police substations at or near the COPs as well. At this early stage, the outposts provided “lily pads” for mechanized quick-reaction forces, safe houses for special operations units, and security for civil-military operations centers. In rural areas, the COPs sometimes doubled as firebases with mortars and counterfire radars.

Because we now maintained a constant presence in disputed neighborhoods, the insurgents could no longer accurately trace and predict our actions. Frequent

and random patrols out of the COPs prevented AQIZ from effectively moving and operating within the local populace. At the same time, the COPs enhanced our ability to conduct civil-military operations; intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance (ISR); and IO.

These outposts also acted as “fly bait,” especially in the period immediately after a new COP was established. Experience in Tal Afar taught us that insurgents would attack a newly established outpost using all systems at their disposal, including suicide car bombs. These attacks usually did not end well for the insurgents, who often suffered heavy casualties. During the establishment of the first outpost, in July 2006, the enemy mounted multiple-platoon assaults. The frenzy of attacks on the new outposts culminated in a citywide battle on 24 July 2006 in which AQIZ forces were severely beaten and sustained heavy casualties. By October, attacks were far less fierce, with elements consisting of a handful of men conducting hit-and-run type operations. These noticeable decreases in enemy strength indicated our plan to decimate their ranks was clearly working. Constant coalition presence, insurgent attrition, and loss of insurgent mobility freed the people from intimidation and sapped any support for AQIZ.

The COPs also allowed us to control the infrastructure in Ramadi and use it to once again support the populace. This was the case with the Ramadi General Hospital. We established a COP just outside the hospital’s walls while an IA unit secured the premises. Within days, the hospital was providing quality medical attention for the first time in a year, and the IA was detaining wounded insurgents who had come seeking treatment.

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We continued to build new outposts in the city and surrounding areas until our redeployment transition began in February 2007. The strategy was not unlike the island-hopping campaign in the Pacific during World War II. With new outposts established in an ever-tightening circle around the inner city, we wrested control of areas away from the insurgents. As areas became manageable, we handed them over to newly trained Iraqi police forces (whom we kept a watchful eye on), and used the relieved forces elsewhere to continue tightening the noose. All these developments in securing the populace required an accompanying development of key alliances with tribal leaders, the history of which is inseparable from the operational story of the Anbar Awakening.

**Courting local leaders.** Convincing the local sheiks to join us and undertake another uprising was an immense challenge, but obtaining their support was the lynchpin of the second part of our strategy. We knew it would be pivotal when we arrived in Ramadi in June. The sheiks' memory of their first, failed attempt at establishing the Al Anbar People's Council (late 2005–early 2006) was the main obstacle to our plan in this regard. The Sunni tribal alliance was fragmented and weak compared to the growing Al-Qaeda forces that controlled Ramadi in those days.

At the same time, area tribal sheiks had no great love for U.S. forces or the Iraqi Army. Early in the insurgency, they had directly and indirectly supported former-regime nationalist insurgents against U.S. forces, and as a result they had temporarily established an alliance of convenience with AQIZ. Many tribal members were killed or captured combating coalition forces, which diminished the sheiks' ability to provide income for their tribes. These conditions in turn enabled AQIZ to recruit from those families in need of money. Another aggravating factor was that IA forces initially stationed in Anbar consisted largely of southern Iraqi Shi'ites. Ramadi area inhabitants regarded them as agents of the Sadr militia or Badr Corps, with a covert agenda to kill off Sunni tribes and enable a Shi'ite takeover of Anbar.

Nevertheless, the tribal leaders were still fed up with Al Qaeda's violence and frustrated by their own loss of prestige and influence in their traditional heartlands. The brigade staff believed that by offering convincing incentives, we could create a tribal alliance that could produce lasting security in Ramadi. To persuade the tribes to cooperate, we first needed to understand the human terrain in our AO, and that task fell to an outstanding and talented junior officer, Captain Travis Patriquin.

An Arabic-speaking former Special Forces Soldier and an infantry officer assigned as the Ready First's S-9/engagements officer, Patriquin coordinated brigade-level local

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Convincing the local sheiks to join us and undertake another uprising was an immense challenge ...

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meetings and discussions. He quickly gained the sheiks' confidence through his language and interpersonal skills and developed strong personal bonds with their families. He strengthened these bonds during meetings between the brigade commander or deputy commanding officer and the sheiks. Battalion and company commanders also worked on improving relations with the townspeople on a daily basis. Thus, the sheiks' growing trust of the brigade's officers led them to support our efforts to reinvigorate police recruiting.

The combined effects of the engagement efforts were eventually hugely successful. However, some staff officers outside the brigade became concerned that we were arming a tribal militia that would fight against Iraqi security forces in the future. To allay those concerns and to pass on the "best practices" we had developed in Ramadi, Captain Patriquin created his now-famous PowerPoint stick-figure presentation "How to Win in Al Anbar."<sup>4</sup> This slideshow perfectly captured the Ready First's concept for winning the tribes over to our side.

We deliberately placed our first IP stations manned with newly recruited Sunni tribesmen where they could protect the tribes that were supplying us with additional recruits. This tactic gave the IPs added incentive to stand and fight and effectively ended Al-Qaeda's murder and intimidation campaign against the men serving in the ISF. In a significant change of circumstance, the newly minted IPs quickly became the hunters, arresting a number of insurgents and uncovering tremendous weapons caches. By the end of July 2006, AQIZ was definitely feeling the pinch.

In reacting to the pressure, Al-Qaeda inadvertently aided our efforts by overplaying its hand. The group launched a series of attacks against the new IP stations. On 21 August, the insurgents attacked a newly established station in a tribal stronghold with an immense suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (SVBIED). The IPs, however, refused to be scared away. Despite offers of safe haven at a nearby coalition base, the survivors remained at their posts, ran their tattered flag back up the flagpole, and even began to conduct patrols again that same day.

Hours later, Al-Qaeda attempted to intimidate future recruits by murdering and desecrating the body of a leading local sheik who had been instrumental in our early push at recruiting tribe members into the ISF. The attack inflamed tribal sentiment against AQIZ and drove several fence-sitting tribes to support our police recruitment.

A significant leader for the burgeoning movement emerged in Sittar albu-Risha, a younger sheik who resided on the west side of town and who was reputed to have smuggling and business connections throughout Anbar. In addition to having

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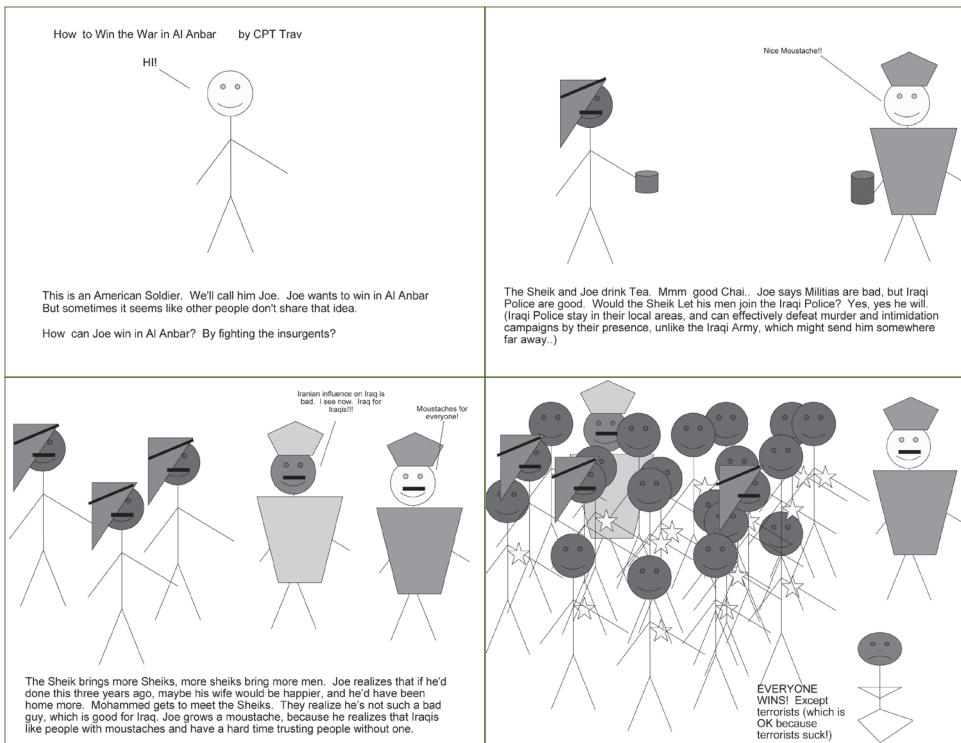
... the newly minted IPs quickly became the hunters, arresting a number of insurgents and uncovering tremendous weapons caches.

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questions about Sittar’s true motives, some were concerned that we would be placing too much stock in a relatively junior sheik and undercutting ongoing negotiations with Anbar tribal leaders who had fled to Jordan. However, with each successful negotiation and demonstration of trustworthiness by Sittar, we were able to whittle away at these reservations.

**THE TIPPING POINT**

Sheik Sittar was a dynamic figure willing to stand up to Al Qaeda. Other, more cautious, sheiks were happy to let him walk point for the anti-AQIZ tribes in the early days, when victory was far from certain and memories of earlier failed attempts were still fresh. In *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell writes that three types of individuals are necessary for a radical change, or a “tipping point,” to occur: mavens, salespersons, and connectors. In brief, mavens have the goods, salespersons spread the word, and connectors distribute the goods far and wide.<sup>5</sup> In Ramadi, the Soldiers



Selected slides from the PowerPoint presentation created by Captain Travis Patriquin. On 6 December 2006, Captain Patriquin was killed in action in Ramadi by an IED. Numerous sheiks attended his memorial service.



of the Ready First were the mavens who had the goods—in this case, the ability to form, train, and equip ISF and new leaders. The brigade and battalion commanders acted as salesmen. We identified Sittar as a connector who could get the people to buy into the Awakening. All the elements were in place for transformation; we only had to decide if we trusted Sittar. When our salesmen decided to take a risk with this connector, the effect was amazing in its speed and reach.

On 9 September 2006 Sittar organized a tribal council, attended by over 50 sheiks and the brigade commander, at which he declared the “Anbar Awakening” officially underway. The Awakening Council that emerged from the meeting agreed to first drive AQIZ from Ramadi and then reestablish rule of law and a local government to support the people. The creation of the Awakening Council, combined with the ongoing recruitment of local security forces, began a snowball effect that resulted in a growing number of tribes either openly supporting the Awakening or withdrawing their support from AQIZ.

Although recruiting and establishing the neighborhood watch units was an important and necessary step to securing Ramadi, it was not sufficient to remove AQIZ influence in the city completely. We needed more police officers who would join us inside the city, which our Soldiers called “the heart of darkness.” A critical agreement emerging from the council resulted in commitments to provide more recruits from local tribes to fill out requirements for police forces.

Soon after the council ended, tribes began an independent campaign of eradication and retaliation against AQIZ members living among them. Al-Qaeda’s influence in the city began to wane quickly. U.S. and Iraqi units operating from COPs killed or captured AQIZ’s most effective elements while resurgent IP and tribal forces raided their caches and safe houses. By late October, nearly every tribe in the northern and western outskirts of Ramadi had publically declared support for the Awakening, and tribes in the dangerous eastern outskirts of the city were sending out feelers about doing the same. The stage was set for a major change in Ramadi.

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*Al-Qaeda’s influence in the city began to wane quickly.*

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## THE BATTLE OF SUFIA

AQIZ did not sit idly as it slowly lost its dominance of both the terrain and the populace. Attacks remained high through October 2006 (Ramadan) inside the city limits while SVBIED attacks against and harassment of new COPs and IP stations located outside the city occurred regularly. These attacks often inflicted casualties on the nascent security forces. Casualties were not enough to slow the Awakening, however, and support continued to expand for the movement.

AQIZ long counted on a secure support base on the east outskirts of town in the Sufia and Julaybah areas. These rural tribal areas were some of the most dangerous in the Ramadi AO, and intelligence indicated they harbored a large support network for the insurgents operating inside the city. AQIZ learned that one of the major sheiks of the Sufia area was considering supporting the Awakening and that he had erected checkpoints to keep out insurgents. Facing a threat to its vital support areas outside of town, AQIZ acted quickly to maintain its grip there.

On 25 November, 30 to 40 gunmen in cars drove into the Albu Soda tribal area and began murdering members of the tribe. AQIZ forces took the tribal militiamen attempting to defend their homes by surprise, killing many while looting and burning their homes. A group of civilians fled in boats across the Euphrates River and reached an Iraqi Army outpost where they breathlessly described what was happening. The IA battalion relayed the information to our brigade TOC, where the operations staff reallocated ISR platforms and immediately called for Captain Patriquin to provide an Iraqi account of the situation.

Within an hour, Patriquin had gained an understanding of the situation through phone calls to the local sheiks. The brigade headquarters quickly made a crucial decision—we would support the Albu Soda tribe in defending itself. The BCT commanders and staff cancelled a planned battalion-sized combined operation in east Ramadi that was just hours from execution. The battalion commander who was responsible for that area, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Ferry of 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry (Manchus), quickly diverted his force away from the planned operations to assist the Soda tribe in defending its homes. The decision was immediate and the response rapid, underscoring the brigade's flexibility in recognizing and adapting quickly to take advantage of opportunities, rather than following plans in lockstep.

U.S. Marine Corps aircraft arrived overhead to perform “show of force” sorties designed to intimidate the insurgents and convince them that air attack was imminent. Next, a ground reaction force from Task Force 1-9 Infantry began preparations to move to the area and establish defenses for the Albu Soda tribe. Because we were viewing the area using aerial sensors, our vision of the fight was indistinct, and we were unable to separate insurgents from the friendly tribesmen. We did not want to attack the friendly tribe by mistake, so we undertook actions to intimidate the insurgents by firing “terrain denial” missions. Explosions in empty nearby fields raised the possibility of suppressive artillery fire in the minds of the enemy. Complemented by the roar of fighter jets, the startled AQIZ forces became

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U.S. Marine Corps aircraft  
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“show of force” sorties designed  
to intimidate the insurgents ...

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convinced that massive firepower was bearing down on them. They started to withdraw, separating themselves from their victims.

As AQIZ gunmen began fleeing the area, they loaded into several cars, three of which our sensors identified. Our UAV observed a body dragging behind one of the cars, evidently an Albu Soda tribesman. The insurgents obviously meant to terrorize and insult the tribe through this act of mutilation, but they also triggered a boomerang reaction by clearly identifying themselves. The Ready First TOC coordinated F-18 attacks that overtook and destroyed the fleeing vehicles in a blazing fury as M1A1 tanks maneuvered to engage. Armed Predator UAVs and M1A1 tanks in ambush positions finished off others attempting to escape. In the end, the Al Qaeda forces suffered far more casualties than the Albu Soda tribe. By nightfall, several companies of infantry and some M1A1 tanks had reinforced tribal defenders, further demonstrating coalition commitment.

Once again, AQIZ's intimidation attempt spectacularly backfired: tribes joined the Awakening movement at a rate that proved difficult to keep up with, even expanding into the neighboring Fallujah and Hit AOs. Within two months, every tribe in Sufia and Julaybah had declared support for the Awakening, and four new combat outposts had been constructed to secure the populations. An area previously deemed high threat and used as a staging ground for AQIZ mortar attacks became almost completely secure. Tribal members inside Ramadi began supporting the Awakening as well, and security rapidly improved. Once a tribal area joined the Awakening, enemy contact in those areas typically dropped to near zero, as IP, IA, and U.S. forces provided security. Bases once under daily mortar and small arms attacks became secure areas and transitioned to IP control, freeing U.S. forces to pursue AQIZ elsewhere.

Overall, by February 2007, contacts with insurgents dropped almost 70 percent compared to the numbers in June 2006, and they had dramatically decreased in complexity and effect. The combination of tribal engagement and combat outposts had proved toxic to AQIZ's efforts to dominate Ramadi.

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In Ramadi there was no local governance when we arrived.

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## REBUILDING

Clearing and holding are the bloody but relatively straightforward part of any counterinsurgency effort; building the infrastructure to sustain military success is the complicated part. In Ramadi, it was essential to begin building at the beginning of a clearing operation, so there would not be a gap between establishing security and implementing projects.

While civil affairs projects are obviously vital to the success of a clear, hold, build campaign, building human infrastructure, which includes installing government officials and agency directors, is just as vital. One of the keys to success in Tal Afar was the establishment of a credible local government with a mayor respected by the populace. In Ramadi there was no local governance when we arrived. We prevailed upon the provincial council to appoint a mayor—one acceptable to the tribes—to coordinate development for the city. This appointment was important because it relieved the governor of municipal level duties and allowed him to focus on issues elsewhere in the province. We then worked with the mayor to ensure that schools, hospitals, sewers, power stations, and other infrastructure all returned to pre-war normalcy as soon as possible. In fact, the western part of Ramadi was undergoing redevelopment even while combat operations in east Ramadi continued during autumn. The rebuilding effort demonstrated that normal services could function again and helped convince the people of Ramadi that local security improvements were permanent.

We wanted to encourage people living in still-embattled neighborhoods that joining the Awakening was both possible and in their best interest. To that end, we held the first “Ramadi Reconstruction Conference” in January 2007 at Sheik Sittar’s home. Sheik Sittar invited all of the local sheiks, any government officials we could find, and local contractors. Following a brief on all ongoing projects, we explained the different ways coalition forces could be of assistance in reconstruction. The participants broke down into geographically based small groups, led by our five maneuver task force commanders and their local partners, to design and refine plans for reconstruction. The commanders discussed local needs and, just as importantly, local reconstruction capabilities. Everyone was asked to return in March to brief plans. Accordingly, we were able to begin reconstruction in cleared parts of Ramadi before the fighting was over elsewhere. Maintaining the initiative in this way was the single most important thing we did throughout the campaign.

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The most enduring lessons of Ramadi are ones that are most easily lost in technical and tactical discussions ...

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## WHY WE SUCCEEDED

Clearly, a combination of factors, some of which we may not yet fully understand, contributed to this pivotal success. As mentioned before, the enemy overplayed its hand and the people were tired of Al-Qaeda. A series of assassinations had elevated younger, more aggressive tribal leaders to positions of influence. A growing concern

that the U.S. would leave Iraq and leave the Sunnis defenseless against Al-Qaeda and Iranian-supported militias made these younger leaders open to our overtures. Our willingness to adapt our plans based on the advice of the sheiks, our staunch and timely support for them in times of danger and need, and our ability to deliver on our promises convinced them that they could do business with us. Our forward presence kept them reassured. We operated aggressively across all lines of operation, kinetic and non-kinetic, to bring every weapon and asset at our disposal to bear against the enemy. We conducted detailed intelligence fusion and targeting meetings and operated seamlessly with special operations forces, aviation, close air support, and riverine units. We have now seen this model followed by other BCTs in other parts of Iraq, and it has proved effective. Indeed, the level of sophistication has only improved since the Ready First departed in February 2007. Although, perhaps groundbreaking at the time, most of our tactics, techniques, and procedures are now familiar to any unit operating in Iraq today.

The most enduring lessons of Ramadi are ones that are most easily lost in technical and tactical discussions, the least tangible ones. The most important lessons we learned were—

- Accept risk in order to achieve results.
- Once you gain the initiative, never give the enemy respite or refuge.
- Never stop looking for another way to attack the enemy.
- The tribes represent the people of Iraq, and the populace represents the “key terrain” of the conflict. The force that supports the population by taking the moral high ground has as sure an advantage in COIN as a maneuver commander who occupies dominant terrain in a conventional battle.

No matter how imperfect the tribal system appeared to us, it was capable of providing social order and control through culturally appropriate means where governmental control was weak.

## CONCLUSION

The men assigned and attached to the Ready First paid a terrible price for securing Ramadi. In nine months, 85 of our Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines were killed, and over 500 wounded in some of the toughest fighting of the war. Only the remarkable results they achieved, and the liberated citizens of Ramadi who can now walk the streets without fear, temper the grief caused by their sacrifice. It is gratifying to see our model adapted and used elsewhere in the War on Terror. It proves once again that America’s Army is truly a learning organization. In the end, probably the most important lesson we learned in Ramadi was that, as General Petraeus said, “Hard is not hopeless.”

## ENDNOTES

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- 1 Frederick W. Kagan, “The Gettysburg of This War,” *National Review*, 3 Sep 2007.
- 2 Megan K. Stack and Louise Roug, “Fear of Big Battle Panics Iraqi City,” *Los Angeles Times*, 11 June 2006.
- 3 For the purposes of this essay, the multiple insurgent groups are broken into two main categories: former regime elements (FRE), consisting of former Baathists and other nationalists, and Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQIZ), consisting of Islamic fundamentalist insurgent groups.
- 4 The “How to Win in Al Anbar” presentation became famous quickly, even gaining mention on several news talk shows. It can be downloaded at <[http://abcnews.go.com/images/us/how\\_to\\_win\\_in\\_anbar\\_v4.pdf](http://abcnews.go.com/images/us/how_to_win_in_anbar_v4.pdf)>.
- 5 Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2000).

## THE AUTHORS

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This article is dedicated to the members of the Ready First Combat Team who lost their lives to make Iraq a better place and to the tens of thousands of other Soldiers and Marines who are still in the fight.

Special thanks to Major Eric Remoy, Lieutenant Colonel Philip Mayberry, and Captain Michael Murphy who contributed to this article.

# CURRENT OPERATIONS

## COMBATING A MODERN INSURGENCY

### COMBINED TASK FORCE DEVIL IN AFGHANISTAN\*

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COLONEL PATRICK DONAHUE AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL MICHAEL FENZEL

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*Whatever else you do, keep the initiative. In counterinsurgency, the initiative is everything. If the enemy is reacting to you, you control the environment. Provided you mobilize the population, you will win. If you are reacting to the enemy, even if you are killing or capturing him in large numbers, then he is controlling the environment and you will eventually lose ... Focus on the population, further your game plan, and fight the enemy only when he gets in the way. This gains and keeps the initiative.*

Lieutenant Colonel David Kilcullen, Australian Army<sup>1</sup>

In early summer of 2005, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) was in the midst of its sixth rotation of forces in Afghanistan since late 2001. On 1 June 2005, the 1st Brigade of the 82d Airborne Division became the core of Combined Task Force (CTF) Devil and assumed command of Regional Command East (RC East).

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Its area of responsibility included 10 provinces and covered a mountainous region roughly the size of North Carolina. Attached to CTF Devil were 8 provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs), 5 maneuver task forces, a forward support battalion, 2 batteries of artillery, and 9 separate companies for a total of over 5,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines. Special Operations Forces, to include a Special Forces battalion, and other government agencies cooperated closely with the task force, while two brigades of the Afghan National Army (ANA) served as primary partners in addressing security within the borders of RC East (see figure 1).

CTF Devil received a classic counterinsurgency (COIN) mission:

- Conduct stability operations to defeat insurgents and separate them from the people.
- Protect the people in RC East and interdict infiltrators out of Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).
- Transform the environment by building the Afghans’ capacity to secure and govern themselves.

In these operations, CTF Devil fought four different enemies:

- The insurgents themselves—the Taliban, the Hizb-i Islami (Islamic Party) Gulbaddin (led by Gulbaddin Hekmatyar), and Al-Qaeda. Each had differing techniques, tribal affiliations, and goals.

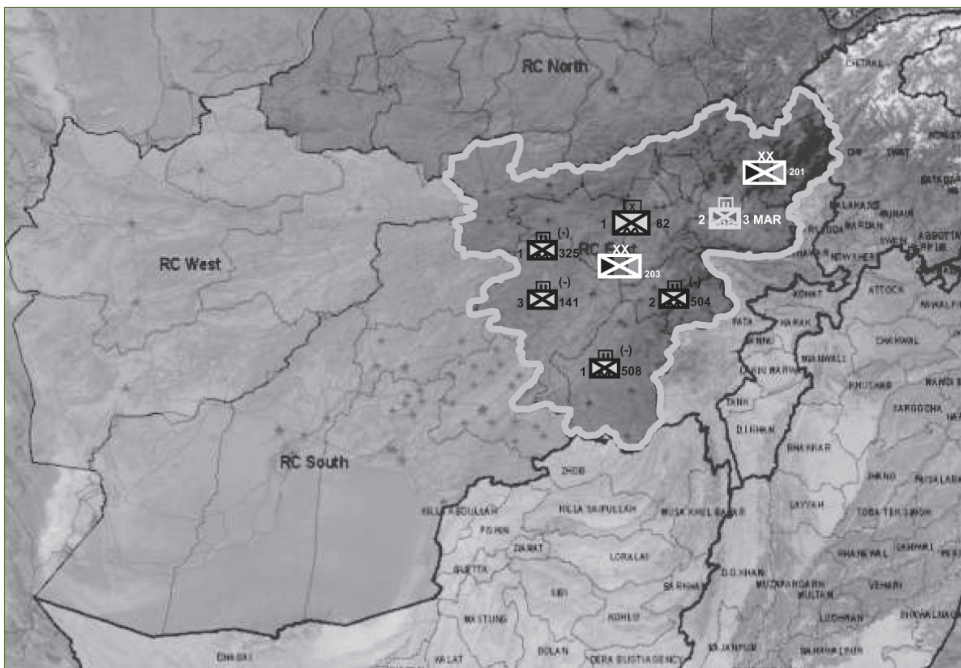


Figure 1. Regional Command East and CTF Devil disposition, August–December 2005



- Afghanistan's own weak-state threats: the corruption, smuggling, drugs, and refugee problems associated with 25 years of near-constant war.
- A challenging climate: rains in the spring brought powerful floods, the summer heat limited aircraft loads, and extreme cold and snow in the winter cut off cities and even entire provinces from the rest of the country.
- Very difficult terrain varying from high plains 7,000 feet above sea level, to densely forested mountains over 10,000 feet high (with only camel trail access), to deep valleys with raging rivers.

The AO's strategic significance lay in the 1,500 kilometers of border shared with Pakistan, including the Khyber Pass, the main entry point into Afghanistan for commerce. To manage this sprawling battlespace, CTF Devil executed a pragmatic strategy that balanced kinetic, nonkinetic, and political actions.

### OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN RC EAST

At the provincial and district levels, the government in Afghanistan was so weak in 2005 as to be nearly nonexistent, especially in the border areas where only tribal authorities were recognized. The people ignored district and governmental boundaries, and a gamut of unofficial actors filled gaps in the power base. Internal councils (shuras) governed the primarily Pashtun tribes, and

carefully selected leaders and elders represented them externally. These tribal structures and shuras were de facto governments in areas where no institutional functions existed. They also represented a challenge to the emerging provincial governments because they resisted ceding their traditional authority. Mullahs gained political clout during CTF Devil's tenure because they increasingly saw politics as their inherent sphere of influence. Surprisingly, they were relatively anti-Taliban and supported a moderate version of Islam. CTF Devil routinely worked with the mullah shuras to dispel rumors, counter extremist propaganda, and address security issues directly.

While the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (IRoA) and coalition forces represented a progressive alternative to Taliban authority, strongmen, warlords, and militia leaders were still influential, particularly in border districts. In certain cases, former warlords had become the local chiefs of the Afghan Border Police or Afghan National Police (ANP) to mask their criminal operations behind official duties.

In theory, the Afghan government is a strongly centralized system, with power mostly flowing from Kabul. In practice, the central government has limited influence in much of the country outside of Kabul. During Operation Enduring Freedom VI,

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CTF Devil executed a pragmatic strategy that balanced kinetic, nonkinetic, and political actions.

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this limited influence was due to a lack of financial and human resources, destroyed institutions and infrastructure, corruption and inefficiency, and the inherent difficulties of governing the fiercely independent people in the border regions.

Task force provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) and maneuver battalion commanders had contact with the provincial governor who served as the coalition's principal interlocutor with the ministries and national government. At the lowest level, a sub-governor appointed by the provincial governor administered each district and maintained close contact with company-level leadership.

The task force determined at the start that reconstruction could only move forward if coalition and Afghan army and police forces maintained an offensive posture; therefore, it made a concerted effort to synchronize capabilities. To keep the initiative, CTF Devil implemented a campaign plan that focused on four goals:

- Building Afghan capacity.
- Extending the reach of the central government.
- Blocking infiltration.
- Ensuring good governance.

A key task involved promoting and protecting the nation's first-ever parliamentary elections. These goals drove many of the CTF's actions during its first six months in country. Measures of effectiveness focused on positive indicators such as changes in infrastructure and institutional capacity (numbers of businesses opening, police manning their posts, children in school, homes with electricity, etc.) and the degree to which the people supported their local and national government (number of IEDs turned in to the police by civilians, voters registering, former Taliban reconciling, etc.).

During planning in May 2005, the CTF determined its main effort would focus on building Afghan security with three supporting lines of operation: good governance and justice, economic and strategic reconstruction, and security cooperation with Pakistan along the shared border. The task force used this focus to shape its campaign.

Killing or capturing insurgents was important when required, but this was not an essential task. The CTF's decisive operations would focus on the people, the center of gravity. For operations to succeed, coalition forces realized the people needed to believe they were secure. The task force found itself in competition with the Taliban for the will of the people. Though both sides were trying to win over fence sitters who were waiting to see which side would bring them the most benefits, the CTF possessed two very effective means to rally support: a substantial development

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A key task involved promoting and protecting the nation's first-ever parliamentary elections.

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effort, and alignment with the popular Afghan president, Hamid Karzai. By 2005, these two factors had substantially eroded support for Taliban theocratic ideology in eastern Afghanistan. As a result, the Taliban had to resort to coercion, intimidation, and terrorism.

The preferred manner of engaging Taliban insurgents was not through search-and-attack missions between mountaintops and ridgelines. Instead, the task force asked PRT and maneuver commanders to identify the most effective methods of separating the insurgents from the population. CTF Devil believed it had to give the people quick, tangible reasons to support their government. To obtain this support, perception of Afghan institutional autonomy had to improve. Expansion of U.S. cooperation with the Afghan National Security Forces helped initially.<sup>2</sup> Task force leadership understood that conditions for long-term security had to be set first. Improved security had the potential to set the conditions for a wave of sustainable development that would both improve perceptions of government autonomy and undercut insurgent aspirations.

In pursuing security, U.S.-only operations aimed at eliminating insurgents did not lead to favourable outcomes. CTF leaders quickly discerned that unilateral operations were culturally unacceptable to Afghans, encouraging conditions that would perpetuate the insurgency. For instance, a paratrooper entering an Afghan building for any reason without accompanying Afghan forces brought shame to the owner of the dwelling. In addition, according to the Afghan Pashtunwali code, for every zealot-militant U.S. forces killed, no less than three relatives were honor-bound to avenge his death.

CTF Devil's goal in this regard involved developing Afghan security capacity to a point where ANSFs could conduct and, ultimately, lead clearing operations. Just putting an Afghan "face" on missions (i.e., having token Afghans along on U.S. operations) was not sufficient. There were challenges to overcome first, though. The Afghan National Police knew their communities and the insurgents operating in them, but they feared taking action because they were often outgunned and out-manned. Furthermore, the nascent Afghan legal system was still weak, and police were reluctant to arrest insurgents because corrupt judges often released them quickly. But by working closely with the police, building trust through combined training, and showing the willingness to backup the ANP, the task force emboldened its allies. After CTF Devil established this partnership, the often ill-equipped and poorly trained ANP suddenly began discovering IEDs and willingly moved against insurgent cells in their districts.

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Still, U.S.-led kinetic operations were necessary, particularly in Kunar province's Korengal Valley in the north and the border districts of Lwara and Bermel in Paktika province. In areas like these, the insurgents proved to be well trained, well equipped, and able to operate in groups as large as 100. Their rocket threat against forward operating bases and a resurgence of IED cells in the interior districts presented concerns only U.S. forces were ready to address effectively. In such situations, the CTF tried to function as a shield, the idea being that the Afghan police and army could form behind U.S. forces and, eventually, take over the fight.

During CTF Devil's tenure, transitioning Afghans to the lead proved to be an evolutionary process, not a series of revolutionary events. The task force conducted frequent combined operations with an increasing focus on cooperative security development. It did so from company to brigade level, and it included provincial security forces. In time, these efforts brought Afghan and coalition forces closer and closer together.

## COMBAT OPERATIONS

U.S. commanders learned what every maneuver battalion has to understand when fighting a counterinsurgency: protecting the people, motivating them to support their government, and building the host-nation's capacity are all primary objectives. In pursuing these priorities, the CTF's maneuver battalion commanders pioneered efforts to share intelligence with their counterpart ANA brigades and police commanders. The efforts yielded immediate tactical and eventual strategic results.<sup>3</sup> They cultivated the enduring trust and confidence sorely needed to protect and support the people.

While the main effort in the AO was building Afghan security capacity, the task force also conducted many deliberate combat operations that garnered meaningful results. These maneuvers ranged from air assault raids against insurgent leaders along the border with Pakistan to brigade operations in partnership with ANSF in the Afghan interior. In every case, maneuver generated intelligence, and that intelligence drove further operations, allowing the CTF to maintain the initiative and keep the militants and their insurgent leaders on the run.

## PRINCIPLES GUIDING CTF OPERATIONS

These principles, elaborated below, governed CTF operations:

- *Commit to making every operation a combined operation.* Including the ANSF in coalition operations enabled them to gain experience and improve their skills. They participated in planning and rehearsal processes, and the CTF collocated key leaders to assist them during execution phases. CTF Devil pre-cleared all targets and operations with the provincial governors and ANA brigade

commanders. Although “how” and “when” were not revealed, normally the ANA would wholeheartedly endorse the task force’s target selection and provide additional Afghan resources to help achieve U.S. objectives. CTF Devil never had an operational security leak from sharing this information with Afghan leaders, although commanders had feared such occurrences.

Combined operations provided the task force with reciprocal benefits. The regular presence of Afghan counterparts enhanced coalition combat power by increasing the number of intelligence collectors, linguists, and cultural experts working together to solve

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Combined operations provided the task force with reciprocal benefits.

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the same problems. As aforementioned, CTF Devil discovered having Afghans search a compound was much more culturally acceptable and effective than doing U.S.-only searches. Not only did the Afghan search avoid the issue of perceived sovereignty violations, but also the Afghans knew where to look, and the professionalism of their searches impressed the people. ANA soldiers or local police officers also conveyed key messages to village elders much more effectively than could U.S. Soldiers using interpreters. U.S. forces thus learned to embrace their roles as advisors in a counterinsurgency.

- *Always seek to mass effects.* CTF Devil did this, for instance, by cross-attaching rifle companies from one battalion to the next to give them the combat power needed for an operation. In massing, the task force worked with governors and ANA brigade commanders to get the most Afghan support possible. CTF Devil could not task the ANA to participate in operations, but it “partnered” with them to identify missions of mutual interest. The combined force positioned itself to mass fires by emplacing artillery, mortars, radars, and observers throughout its battlespace and by creating numerous autonomous fire and counter-fire teams. The teams paired fire direction centers and counter-fire radar with two to four howitzers commanded by an experienced lieutenant. In employing these teams, CTF Devil fired over 6,800 artillery rounds during its OEF rotation.

Artillery proved useful for defeating the ever-present rocket threat and for handling ambush situations by covering a company movement through a valley where enemy squads occupied dominating ridgelines. The task force also massed electronic warfare assets; information operations; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; Army aviation; and close air support (CAS) to assist operations. When it had troops in contact or when actionable intelligence breakthroughs occurred, the CTF also re-tasked these assets on the fly.<sup>4</sup> Just as importantly, the task force massed joint nonlethal effects, seeking to exploit every possible advantage over the Taliban insurgents.

- *Make an understanding of how local traditions influenced the battlespace and the Afghan people a significant part of operations planning.* Identifying the effects of tribes, ethnicity, religion, and weak-state threats enabled CTF Devil to better understand and respond to what was happening. Local Afghans, security forces, and government leaders contributed to our targeting processes and provided insights needed to gain operational advantages. Understanding how these cultural idiosyncrasies affected the conditions proved invaluable.

For example, an area like Lwara was constantly in dispute for a host of reasons: the Zadran tribal territory extends across the border there, and the insurgent leader Haqqani is a Zadran elder; Lwara is a traditional crossing point from Pakistan's Miram Shah within the federally administered tribal area into Afghanistan, and the border there has been contested for centuries; a trafficable river valley leads from Miram Shah to the nearby Lwara Dashta plains just inside Afghanistan; and the Lwara foothills contain rich deposits of chromite ore, which smugglers move across the border for resale in Pakistan. Such knowledge can be a tremendous help to U.S. planners, but it is hard to gain without involving Afghans in the targeting process.

- *Seek operational interoperability with the Pakistan military forces (PAKMIL).* Such interoperability was essential when operating along the border. CTF Devil therefore developed relationships with its PAKMIL counterparts by conducting numerous flag meetings at all levels, from company to brigade and higher. The task force sought to have Afghan commanders join these meetings too, in order to reduce border friction between the wary neighbors. Eventually, CTF Devil developed reliable communications with PAKMIL battalions and brigades across the border and began to coordinate actions to prevent insurgent forces from using the border region as a sanctuary. For example, when CTF Devil reported an ambush, PAKMIL counterparts maneuvered forces to block the insurgents' egress across the border. Once U.S. and Pakistani leaders acknowledged they were fighting the same enemy, the task force began to share intelligence with the Pakistanis and integrate operations along the border. Cooperation did not come easily; it required a consistent effort to build trust, but it was critical to success. On one occasion, after U.S. forces had fired counter-battery artillery on a target that was close to a PAKMIL ground commander's border checkpoint, the brigade headquarters received an angry phone call from the commander. The task force explained to him that a rocket fired from that location had destroyed a hangar

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Cooperation did not come easily; it required a consistent effort to build trust ...

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the PAKMIL commander had himself visited just a week earlier. This information was sobering. He was mollified when officers explained they had certain knowledge of an insurgent rocket's point of origin before they began to return artillery fire.

- *Treat Afghans with respect and display discipline at all times.* U.S. restraint and professionalism contrasted with coarse Taliban cruelty and capriciousness, reinforcing the CTF's legitimacy. Mentoring, training, and supervising Afghan forces, in conjunction with embedded training teams (ETTs), cemented that legitimacy. With the police particularly, values reform represented welcome progress in the eyes of the people; it gained the Afghan government much-needed public support. When people's confidence in their local police grew and they saw ANA soldiers comporting themselves professionally, they began to develop a nationalistic pride in their new security forces and became more willing to turn against the insurgency. As they did so, intelligence reporting from local sources increased, leading to even more successful combined operations.
- *Apply combat power, civil-military expertise, and IO simultaneously—not sequentially.* For example, if CTF Devil were executing a cordon-and-search of a village to locate an IED cell, it did not wait until after completing the mission to explain its rationale. Additionally, if it searched one end of the village, it also conducted a medical civil affairs program on the other end, often treating hundreds of local villagers. This type of operation created goodwill and established excellent new sources of intelligence. Just as combat operations had an Afghan lead, so, too, did these concurrent civil-military operations. The ANA distributed humanitarian relief supplies to refugees, and its medics treated patients. In some cases, CTF Devil asked the provincial governor to broadcast a radio message to explain its mission and ask for people's support. When the task force met with tribal elders to explain the purpose of an operation, it brought Afghan counterparts to explain their roles and their view of the threat. The CTF followed up with a PRT project for those tribes that helped solidify and consolidate the gains our maneuver battalions made. These actions enabled us to maintain good relations with the public and led to much better actionable intelligence and early warning.

## OPERATIONS IN KUNAR PROVINCE

The most contested region in RC East during OEF VI was the Wahabbiist stronghold in the Korengal River Valley, in the center of Kunar province. All three battalions from the 3d Marine Regiment from Hawaii that rotated through RC East during our tenure had responsibility for this area. In the aftermath of the shoot-down of an MmH-47 in this area during Operation Red Wings in July 2005, it became clear that moving tactically in the dangerous high ground surrounding



the valley required detailed preparation and logistical planning. Movement through the precipitous hills and across the craggy cliffs had to be slow and deliberate. Sometimes it would take an entire day to traverse a single kilometer of the mountainous terrain.

Securing a landing zone (LZ), for instance, took hours in the mountains. Marines and paratroopers had to secure all terrain that dominated the LZ—not just the LZ’s four corners. Similarly, resupply in the mountains had to be painstakingly plotted, then carefully executed using varied means, including containerized parachute delivery systems, guided donkey caravans, hired pick-up trucks, and contracted porters from local villages.

Fully planned and coordinated artillery support was also vital to the success of missions in Korengal. Artillery was so overwhelmingly important that CTF Devil required follow-on battalions to train and certify on relevant artillery-related tasks upon arrival in country. Adjusting fires in the mountains required different approaches from those used at Fort Bragg or Grafenwoer, Germany. CTF Devil rediscovered the art of employing indirect fires for operational advantage in mountainous terrain.

In every engagement its maneuver battalions fought in Kunar province, CTF Devil had to show the Afghans it was worth the risk to support their government. Commanders learned to appreciate the provincial governor’s role and the targeting of reconstruction to contested areas as a technique for cementing security gains won in a fight. Although personalities and commitments varied, the coalition found that the Afghan authorities were uniformly dedicated to improving conditions and helping their people achieve a higher standard of living.

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Sometimes it would take an entire day to traverse a single kilometer of the mountainous terrain.

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## **BUILDING AFGHAN SECURITY CAPACITY AND PARTNERSHIP**

In fostering Afghanistan’s nascent security apparatus, CTF Devil forged partnerships with U.S. government agencies, international organizations, and the Afghan government. Whereas TF Phoenix’s embedded training teams mentored their ANA counterparts, CTF Devil’s battalions actually teamed with them. Teaming up meant providing infantry, artillery, engineer, combat service support, and planning opportunities the ETTs could not. After coordinating with Afghan corps and brigade commanders and their U.S. advisors, the task force aligned or “partnered” CTF Devil units with Afghan units and established habitual training and operational relationships. Rifle squads and military police platoons teamed with the ANA and

routinely conducted sustained five-to-seven day training modules with ANP in the district police headquarters to reinforce training the Afghans had received at their academies.

Training in this team-oriented relationship routinely ended with an Afghan-planned and led combined operation. During these operations, the coalition strengthened trust between it and the ANSF by providing close air support, artillery support, army aviation, MEDEVAC, and infantry reinforcements. For its part, the CTF learned to be more sensitive to cultural concerns, such as evacuating soldiers killed in action ahead of the wounded, which was important to the ANSF for religious reasons. In the process of developing this relationship, coalition forces and ANA soldiers shared experiences, hardships, and operational intelligence with one another. In sum, these team-oriented interactions went far in developing autonomous capacity in the ANSF.

Partnered teamwork also engendered greater unity of effort in the AO. CTF Devil conducted frequent combined planning and strategy sessions with Afghan leaders, including targeting meetings with the ANSF and intelligence-fusion meetings with the ANSF National Defense Service (the Afghan domestic intelligence agency, similar to the FBI). These efforts all helped build a unified approach to security and reconstruction. They also prevented zealot militants and insurgents from exploiting seams between organizations. Most important, as CTF Devil successfully fostered Afghan security planning capacity, its leadership role gradually diminished. Afghan counterparts assumed greater responsibility for guiding these efforts. This shift came about as CTF Devil incrementally empowered indigenous leaders.

Along these lines, the commander of the 1-508th Airborne created the first provincial coordination center (PCC), in Paktika province, to focus the various Afghan security forces on addressing common threats. This PCC experiment proved a great success, and so CTF Devil replicated the effort by establishing PCCs in every province prior to the 2005 National Assembly and parliamentary elections. It resourced the PCCs with teams of talented coalition and ANSF officers and NCOs. Functioning like battalion command posts, the PCCs became a key link between coalition forces, ANSF, and often elusive district sub-governors. During the elections and later during day-to-day operations, the PCCs were a key enabler of intelligence-sharing and joint-security-related problem-solving by ANSF units, the task force, and provincial governors. Initially, CTF Devil led all the efforts and conducted all the shift updates, overcoming intelligence classification issues by describing only

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the “who” or “what” of the intelligence without disclosing the source. Within a few months the PCCs became nerve centers, and Afghans ran the briefs. CTF Devil then replicated the effort across the AO. Every provincial capital put a PCC into operation to coordinate security for the elections, and they eventually provided a longer-term solution to synchronizing security responses.

Because of the trust built with their ANA allies, U.S. forces continued operations during Ramadan, maintaining support from the ANA throughout the Muslim holy month. Afghan authorities even granted religious exemptions to their soldiers for Ramadan. These dispensations were important because Taliban leaders had already granted exemptions from fasting, and were maintaining a high operational tempo during those holy days. Task force maneuver battalions learned hard lessons about this period early in their tenure, but they figured out what the enemy was doing and why he was doing it. They consistently passed on maneuver-battalion best practices that addressed coping with religious complexities to units in other sectors that were grappling with similar issues.

### **PRT THREAT-BASED RECONSTRUCTION**

At our transfer of authority in mid-2005, 25th Infantry Division’s Task Force Thunder had established provincial reconstruction teams and initiated reconstruction and development efforts across RC East. In January 2005 Task Force Thunder had shifted the PRTs’ focus from emergency support to more sophisticated development and had met Afghan necessities for food, water, and shelter, although these were primitive by first-world standards.

However, CTF Devil had to address other problems:

- An antiquated medical system.
- Limited road networks.
- An insufficient power grid.
- Access to education.
- A judicial system tribal leaders ignored.

In addition, the economy, while improving, languished during the early phases of OEF VI, and high unemployment persisted. Since the Taliban and Al-Qaeda were unable to provide any form of reconstruction, development, or aid to the people, the situation was ripe for improvement. CTF Devil saw an opportunity to use intensified reconstruction operations as a nonlethal mechanism to improve security, governance, and overall economic development. The CTF, however, also realized it had to use this mechanism in a way that did not create unrealistic expectations.

CTF Devil began by re-focusing the efforts of its eight PRTs and five battalions to speed reconstruction, especially of infrastructure and roads—the high-impact and high-visibility projects. Close coordination between task force staff and higher

headquarters (CJTF-76) brought increased Commanders Emergency Relief Program (CERP) funding. CTF Devil then tasked each PRT and battalion commander to develop plans with representatives of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and State Department to invigorate “unity” in reconstruction efforts. This focus of reconstruction activity threw the insurgents back on their heels. Taliban forces simply could not compete with a well-designed reconstruction strategy. Because cleric-militants focused on otherworldly authority, they never developed anything tangibly positive to offer the population; they could not counter a community-supported project with real-world benefits. Instead, the insurgents had to turn to religious propaganda, terrorism, and violence, the only tactics they possessed to realize their strategy of protracting the conflict.

Because of these tactics, seeking projects in contested areas became CTF Devil’s first priority. Doing so required developing community support and backing from Kabul for the initiatives. Provincial government legitimacy soared when tangible completed

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[T]he insurgents had to turn to religious propaganda, terrorism, and violence ...

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projects trumped insurgent exhortations and attacks. This community-investment approach, discussed below in more detail, became integral to the CTF campaign plan. However, while concentrating CERP projects in contested areas (see the high threat areas on figure 2), CTF Devil had to eschew large, unwieldy projects that had no chance of being completed, or were not sustainable, after the departure of U.S. troops, depletion of CERP funds, or loss of community support.

Ill-conceived, poorly placed, or failed projects would constitute victories for the insurgent IO campaign. When CTF Devil failed to meet public expectations, the people thought the Afghan government and the Americans were incompetent, creating openings for insurgents to wield their influence. For instance, when CTF Devil provided a power-generation capability for Sharana, the capital of Paktika province, without getting buy-in from the mayor, it created an embarrassing situation. After a single tank of U.S.-provided diesel fuel ran dry, the lights went out in Sharana. They eventually came back on, but in the interim the well-meaning PRT created frustration and resentment among the Afghans they set out to assist.

Achieving consistent success meant concentrating on sustainable projects and avoiding embarrassment for the coalition. Thus, CTF Devil avoided going against the grain and focused on contracting projects that took advantage of Afghan talents and the country’s natural resources. To illustrate, after learning that Afghans had little experience with using concrete and cement in construction,

but were deft at employing stone, a raw material abundant in Afghanistan, the task force contracted to build stone bridges, rock-foundation flood control walls, and cobblestone roads.

As CTF Devil developed its pragmatic approach to reconstruction, it used weekly PRT staff calls to broaden the development discussion. During these meetings, the task force emphasized projects provincial governors and district leaders would fully support so that development efforts would reinforce their ability to govern. Setting out simply to build and improve the environment in areas of perceived need (i.e., the “red” areas on the map in figure 2), was too haphazard. Tribal leaders had to be involved with informal certification. They had to approve all projects to avoid building a project on disputed land, for instance, and to ensure realistic timetables and community relevance. CTF Devil focused initial efforts on projects that units could complete within a reasonable amount of time (three to nine months) so the populace would quickly see results. Using techniques learned from successful

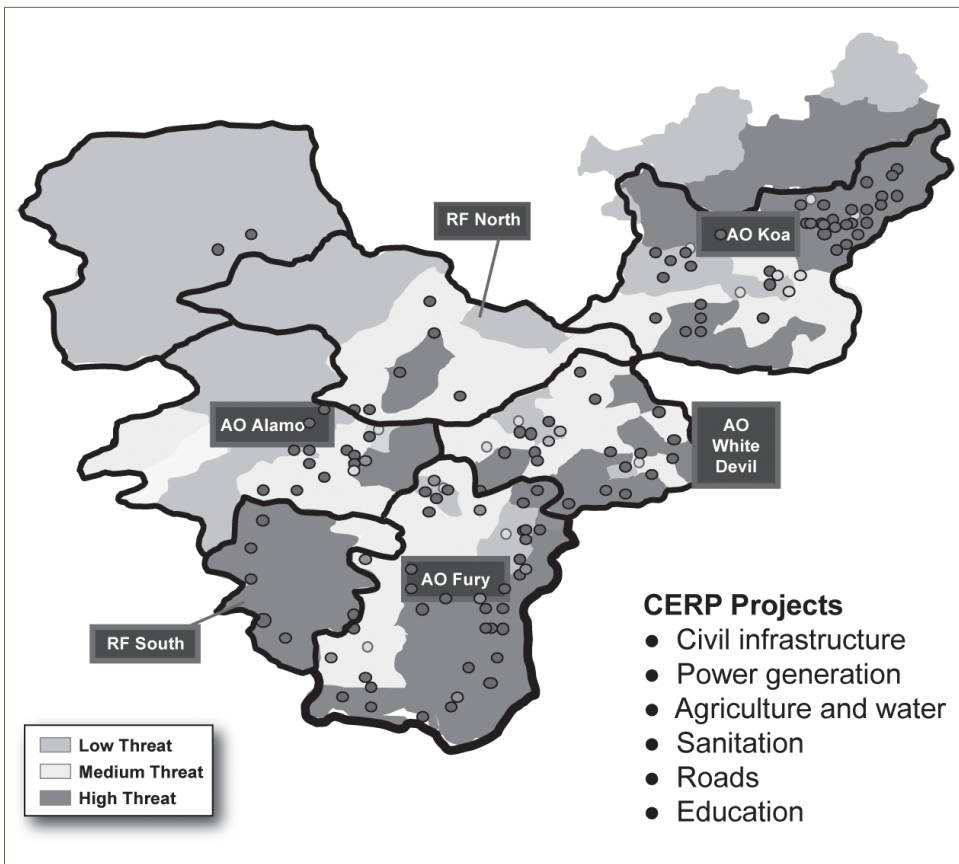


Figure 2. CTF Devil reconstruction projects and threat assessments, January 2006.

non-governmental organizations (NGOs), CTF Devil also sought “sweat equity” from the community in the form of resources or labor. The CTF asked villages and tribes to contribute whatever they could afford. The resulting buy-in generated lasting community support for these projects.

As part of this process, the CTF decided to put a maximum number of Afghans to work. Major General Jason Kamiya, the CJTF-76 commander, pioneered this approach, calling it “Temporary Work for Afghans.” If CTF Devil had a choice between hiring one contractor with four bulldozers, 30 men from India, or a local contractor with 100 Afghans wielding picks and shovels, it chose the latter. Smart Afghan general contractors adopted practical methods to exploit this situation. Not only did they hire Afghans, but also they did so from the local community, which enabled their projects to progress without attacks. Contractors who didn’t, especially foreigners, were often attacked and had their work sites destroyed. Their projects were delayed indefinitely or abandoned altogether.

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abandoned altogether.

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CTF Devil also tasked its maneuver battalions and PRTs to work with provincial governors and IRoA ministry representatives to solicit support in planning and oversight of significant projects.

The intent was to encourage Afghans to build their own capacity for development planning. At the same time, the task force sought to incrementally design a longer-range vision. Its overall objective was to make each provincial government more self-sufficient, community-invested, and competent.

As noted, the enemy tried to slow the CTF’s new reconstruction effort. Setbacks typically took place in areas where the Taliban still maintained some form of influence, for example, in the Zormat district of Logar province where they attacked a recently constructed police checkpoint, and in the Puli Lam district, where they burned down a school under construction. In response, CTF Devil authorized Afghan contractors to hire local security in high-threat areas. It also sought local project protection by establishing security agreements with tribal leaders, making the latter responsible for protecting projects in their areas. So, in addition to the “sweat equity” mentioned, the populace had to commit to the projects by securing them. Completing these reconstruction endeavors marked real, tangible gains the local population could feel, but progress came only after they made a commitment. Completed projects with community buy-in weakened the Taliban and undermined any pretenses of its legitimacy.

In following through with these developments, CTF Devil also recognized the need to foster relations with international and nonprofit organizations in country. As the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) and

development-focused NGOs saw CTF reconstruction successes, they found more ways to communicate with the coalition, and when security improved in different areas, the international community's organizations increased their presence. A mutual willingness to work together began to build. This cooperation was usually informal because the NGOs, fiercely independent anyway, had to preserve the perception that they were impartial. Thus, they were quick to criticize the coalition if it did something they believed adversely affected them. In its cooperation with these organizations, CTF Devil worked to make "unity of effort" more a working reality than a mere concept or discussion point.

### SYSTEMS APPROACH TO RECONSTRUCTION

A well-designed reconstruction effort took more than just selecting projects that villages, districts, or provinces fervently wanted. The coalition had to consider initiatives in a larger context, as a system of complementary projects. CTF Devil initially did not take this approach and, as a result, stand-alone projects in our AO did not substantially improve the economy or security or address compelling community needs. Eventually, CTF Devil moved to a systems approach to reconstruction. It required projects to be well planned and sustainable, and to complement other development efforts. For instance, road networks became favored projects because they often paved the way for a broader system of development.

In one example, CTF Devil created numerous farm-to-market systems in "red" districts and border provinces. Figure 3 illustrates the complexity of a farm-to-market system in Jalalabad that used CERP projects to complement or leverage existing NGO- or USAID-generated projects. This particular system included projects to improve productivity such as USDA classes on low-cost, modern planting techniques. It also included projects to build irrigation channels, flood control walls, and roads connecting district farms with their principal markets. Whether constructing a grain storage facility just off a new road or building a secondary road to a bazaar where the farmer could sell his product more conveniently, the task force aimed to create mutually reinforcing effects.

CTF Devil sometimes had to win over key persons or populations to this systems approach. It avoided building projects in response to requests from government officials if the endeavors would not add to existing development systems. There were exceptions, but they required the CTF commander's approval, and he granted such exceptions only if the coalition could gain some significant operational advantage as a result.

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... the task force aimed to create mutually reinforcing effects.

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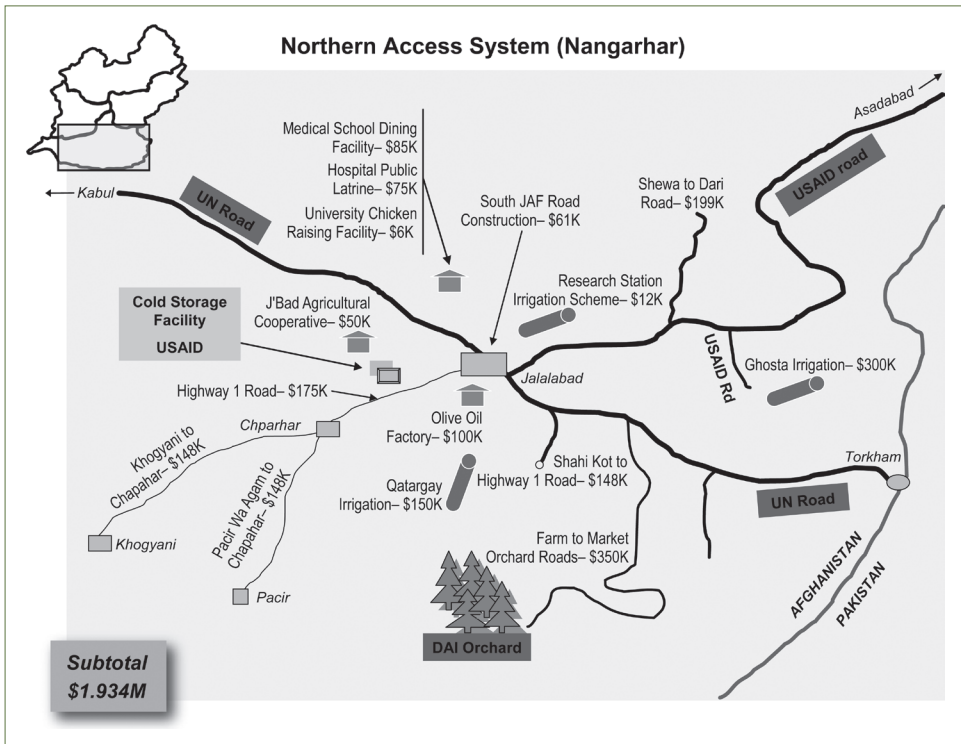


Figure 3. “Farm to Market System” briefed to CJTF-76 commander, Fall 2005.

As CTF Devil executed this intensified, systems-oriented plan, the working relationship with USAID and other agencies began to improve. The task force assessed the effects it delivered and analyzed the issues it faced in areas where traditional development was failing or simply not occurring. It realized that, in some cases, it was better to complement or set the conditions for NGO and international community development rather than try to initiate projects itself. It also found it could work with these organizations directly or indirectly. CTF Devil’s USAID representative served as a bridge between coalition forces and other U.S. aid and reconstruction organizations. Through the intercession of our representative, the task force was able to capitalize on opportunities to reinforce existing initiatives.

For instance, CTF Devil benefited from a UNAMA-brokered agreement, the Zadrán Arc Initiative (named for the tribe inhabiting the region), to promote development in areas of discontent in Khowst, Paktiya, and Paktika provinces. It built on the goodwill created by this agreement, started a major road project, and then began building police stations, clinics, and schools. The area had been a safe haven for Jalaluddin Haqqani elements and Taliban forces, but no longer is, thanks to the broadly supported agreement.

In most cases, once the coalition created a more secure environment, non-governmental and international organizations soon followed. The task force encouraged the PRTs to make the most of their presence by seeking the organizations' input to their reconstruction programs. Combined Task Force Devil tasked the PRTs to work with UNAMA and the NGOs in their sector to start up or encourage the expansion of provincial development councils. The purpose of these development councils was to set development priorities and bring order to otherwise haphazard reconstruction efforts.

Sequencing and synchronization of reconstruction projects became a major priority. Schools, roads, administrative buildings, police checkpoints, mosques, medical clinics, and courthouses built out of sequence with, or without links to, other projects usually had little positive impact and could even be counterproductive. In one case a police checkpoint built far away from an existing road actually became a liability because its isolation made it vulnerable to attack. A few months into this heightened reconstruction effort, CTF Devil tasked the PRTs and maneuver battalions to review the timing of current and future projects, so the task force could spend subsequent reconstruction dollars more wisely.

The CTF Devil staff started this review process by conducting a seminar on the systems approach to development. The staff illustrated what a synchronized approach should look like and how it should have links to other projects in time and location.

CTF Devil asked each unit to re-assess, re-evaluate, and refine reconstruction plans to reflect a systems approach. In the final planning step, unit commanders briefed the CTF commander, who approved a project only if it met one or more of four criteria:

- The project was in a red area.
- It linked directly to another system.
- The specific endeavor had buy-in from key government and tribal leaders.
- The project was sustainable.

CTF Devil denied many proposed projects because the PRTs and maneuver commands tended to invest in stand-alone projects, an outgrowth of attempts to placate local and tribal leaders with whom units engaged.

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The purpose of these development councils was to set development priorities and bring order to otherwise haphazard reconstruction efforts.

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## U.S. INTERAGENCY TEAMWORK

A wide array of U.S. agencies converged on Afghanistan after November 2001. Understanding what their roles were and where they operated was important to CTF Devil's becoming an effective interagency team member. The State Department assigned political officers (POLADs) to the eight U.S. PRTs and to CTF Headquarters in Khost province. The POLADs had four primary tasks:

- Advising and mentoring Afghan leaders to govern more effectively.
- Acting as reporting officers, tasked with providing information on political, military, economic, and social trends to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul.
- Serving as conduits of information about the border fight in Pakistan to help define U.S. government policies in Afghanistan at the national level.
- Promoting U.S. government policies within the provincial governments.

The POLADs accompanied CTF commanders to meetings with Afghan political and military leaders. They helped commanders prepare for bilateral meetings and carry out reviews after negotiations or engagements were complete.<sup>5</sup> POLADs developed the social, tribal, political, and economic components of the counterinsurgency, allowing commanders to focus more on military concerns. Maintaining an awareness of these nonmilitary components might have otherwise been more elusive.

USAID assigned officers, designated as field program officers, to all the PRTs and to the coalition headquarters staff. These officers—

- Administered USAID projects at the provincial level.
- Advised military officers on development issues.
- Advised IRA ministers and governors on long-term reconstruction and development strategy.
- Reported to USAID headquarters in Kabul.
- Worked with NGOs and international organizations to find ways to complement their projects with the development efforts of USAID and CTF Devil. In short, they coordinated development strategy at the provincial level.

The USAID officer in charge worked at CTF headquarters and from there managed representatives at the PRTs. Unlike the POLADs, all USAID representatives were contractors, not career employees. Successfully integrating these contractors into PRT operations depended upon a PRT commander's ability to integrate military development efforts with those of the interagency and international community. The USAID representatives taught PRTs how to gain support for projects from tribal and government stakeholders, and encouraged the task force to seek ways to link CERP reconstruction efforts to USAID and international organization development projects.

Agricultural development in most of RC East proved necessary for long-term economic viability. United States Department of Agriculture officers provided development advice to the IRoA, the CTF, and, to a lesser extent, cooperatives and individual farmers. Although not present in most RC East PRTs, USDA officers worked on the staffs of three key posts (task force headquarters and the Ghazni and Jalalabad PRTs) for much of CTF Devil's tenure. These officers breathed life into USAID's alternative livelihood programs. They provided advice on which crops to substitute for the opium poppy and focused on implementing agricultural programs like micro-credit for farmers. They also helped devise high-impact but simple projects that enhanced the value of crops grown by desperately poor farmers. That said, the relatively limited USDA presence in RC East prevented the task force from making the most of its agricultural development programs.

The UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan in RC East, with hub offices at Gardez and Jalalabad, worked closely with U.S. government political and military officers. UNAMA had a wide mandate, ranging from conflict resolution to human rights monitoring.

It played a substantial role in organizing the National Assembly and provincial council elections. Harnessing UNAMA's energy was imperative if CTF Devil was to reach the population effectively. Because UNAMA officers typically had been in Afghanistan for three or more years, had established trust with Afghan officials, and had developed keen insights into the motivations of district and provincial governors, they often served as the continuity in the provinces as military units rotated in and out of the battlespace.

Military CERP and USAID FY 2005 budgets for development in RC East highlighted the importance of interagency teamwork. CTF Devil had \$29 million budgeted for development; USAID had 10 times that amount for the same area. Seeing the vast potential for COIN progress if CTF Devil and USAID collaborated, the task force commander directed that development planning involve a concerted effort to bring our two organizations closer together.

From early on, however, CTF Devil encountered staggering gaps in communication, cooperation, and collaboration among representatives of the various agencies. USAID bureaucratic practices also obstructed teamwork and collaboration. Part of the challenge lay in the fact that over 90 percent of in-country USAID representatives were contractors serving under the agency's aegis and their contracts had no explicit provisions for cooperation. The larger problem, however, was the restrictive nature of USAID's development-fund distribution rules. Given USAID's

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relatively abundant resources, and the direct link between development progress and security, the agency's bureaucratic necessities proved universally frustrating. Nevertheless CTF Devil redoubled efforts, beginning at the brigade headquarters, to forge stronger interagency bonds and increase collaboration with representatives at the PRTs.

These efforts increased interagency integration throughout the command. The CTF overcame philosophical differences and, gradually, set new standards for interagency teamwork. When the CTF's deputy commander began including interagency representatives in PRT meetings and the executive officer started integrating them into the staff estimate process, partnership dynamics improved steadily. As CTF staff emphasized each success in their areas of responsibility, the PRTs and their interagency representatives began to develop into a stronger team. USAID, State Department, and USDA representatives increased their presence and influence in each PRT's area of operation. In the end, these representatives became valued PRT staff members and, along with UNAMA representatives, effective partners within the task force.

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## INTEGRATING IO

CTF Devil found information operations most effective when Afghans employed them without the appearance of U.S. influence. Information operations messages designed and released solely by U.S. forces often came out too late or were ill suited for the Afghan region or tribe they targeted. Messages were much more effective when Afghan leaders cooperated and spoke directly to the people.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, CTF Devil chose to promote Programme Takhm-e Sohl ("Strengthening the Peace," or PTS), the Afghan government's reconciliation program. Given the success achieved by those governors who actively supported PTS, the task force commander believed that this Afghan-implemented program could become a "war winner." The task force therefore encouraged local governors to support and manage this initiative. It yielded significant results when insurgents came down from the mountains and left Pakistan to swear allegiance to the Afghan government.<sup>7</sup> One governor, Hakim Taniwal in Paktia province, experienced noteworthy success with this program. He reached out to insurgents and engaged local tribal leaders to ensure no vendettas or revenge killings would ensue after the insurgents returned. Taniwal then brought in the insurgents, ran them through a vetting process in Kabul, and

returned them to the provincial seat of Gardez. There he cycled them through a carefully orchestrated, elaborate allegiance ceremony in which tribal elders swore responsibility for the reconciled insurgents' future actions. Taniwal broadcast these ceremonies on the radio and kept track of the reconciled fighters to ensure they were not simply using the program to infiltrate the province. These reconciled insurgents typically encouraged other Taliban members to lay down their arms through the PTS program. Taniwal even employed a reconciled member of the Taliban as the director for his provincial support office of reconciliation.

Another governor, Shah Mahmood Safi in Lagman province, convinced tribal leaders to declare insurgents outside the protection of the Pashtun tradition of sanctuary, thus denying them a base from which to operate and forcing many to become part of the legitimate process. Still another governor, Assadullah Wafa in Kunar province, used PTS with IO reinforcement, often calling provincial shuras to gain the support of key tribal leaders. To make a case for peace, he regularly sent emissaries from the shuras to engage tribes that supported the Taliban and HiG (a fundamentalist faction of the mujahedeen) in the Korengal and Matin valleys. He also used radio addresses to tell the people of Kunar that specific tribes were "rebellious against the government" and that he was considering "turning loose" the coalition to defeat them if they did not reconcile.

Each provincial governor only needed a simple prod and minimal support to make his IO program work for PTS. Provinces where governors offered only token support to PTS did not yield results no matter how hard the task force worked. As a lesson learned, a successful reconciliation program like PTS should be the host nation's program, run by a regional or provincial authority with national oversight.

Of course, the PTS program came with some risks. In addition to the possibility of revenge killings, infiltrators might have used the PTS program as a shield. Experience suggested, however, that the power of one reconciled insurgent on the radio had the potential to effect more progress and influence more people than an infantry battalion on the attack.<sup>8</sup>

## MEASURING SUCCESS AND THE WAY AHEAD

While "metrics" of success in COIN are difficult to identify and even more challenging to track, they are nonetheless important. They serve as indicators to identify and monitor progress effectively, and they can suggest the need to modify plans. CTF Devil tracked negative indicators such as numbers of IED and rocket attacks, but it did not overemphasize them. The task force focused more on indicators of success. For instance, CTF Devil carefully cataloged when NGOs returned to a province. Their return implied security had reached the point where they felt



safe enough to operate. When Afghan development ministries became involved in quality control for reconstruction projects, the CTF staff interpreted this as an indicator of growth in Afghan autonomous capacity. Similarly, unilateral operations by the Afghan army, from company to brigade level, suggested progress in military self-sufficiency. Another positive area was the number of IEDs found, reported, and turned in by Afghans. The coalition also noted that despite concerted efforts by the Taliban to disrupt national and provincial elections, over 50 percent of registered voters voted anyway.

The combined efforts of CTF Devil units, U.S. interagency representatives, Afghan government leaders, and international and non-governmental organizations were the driving force in achieving significant progress during OEF VI. Overall, the economy expanded, the government increased its reach, a successful election occurred, and the Taliban did not make appreciable gains in eastern Afghanistan.

As aforementioned, the Afghan people were and are the center of gravity in the COIN fight in eastern Afghanistan. Where the people see a tangible reason to take risk and side with their government, the Taliban will lose. The CTF's job was to help the Afghan government enhance security and win the people's trust. As in most countries, Afghans will vote their pocketbooks, and if they do not perceive tangible economic benefits implying a hopeful future, they may throw out the Karzai government and side with the fundamentalists.

Education metrics will be telling as well. Democracy is unlikely to flourish in the long term if Afghanistan does not advance beyond its current, woefully low level of education, one that primarily serves religious dogma. Opportunities for a liberal arts education will have to be made available to help give the people the intellectual wherewithal to resist the Taliban's otherworldly propaganda and scare tactics. Countering the Taliban with logic and reason may seem too obvious to suggest, but it truly is the answer for encouraging a more moderate religious influence.

Numerous problems remain, including endemic corruption, unhealthy rivalries between tribes, poor infrastructure, a growing drug trade, instability in Pakistan and attendant cross-border attacks, low government revenues, a weak economy, and, as noted, a dark-ages educational framework. Decades of work remain to rebuild Afghanistan. Strong personal relationships and a focus on building Afghan security capacity are the keys to achieving unity of effort and, by extension, longer-term success in the Afghan COIN effort.

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[D]espite concerted efforts by the Taliban to disrupt national and provincial elections, over 50 percent of registered voters voted anyway.

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An important take-away from CTF Devil's year-long struggle to achieve and maintain unity of effort is that where the military endeavor is concerned, there can only be one chief within a regional command. U.S. forces should always place reconstruction and kinetic operations under the direction of one commander to prevent a constant shifting of priorities. This was the case for CTF Devil during OEF VI. With eight PRTs and five maneuver battalions all under the operational control of CTF Devil, the span of control at the brigade level was larger than some division-sized organizations, but it worked.

Experience has been the best source of practical knowledge in this regard. CTF Devil benefited greatly from lessons passed on to us by our predecessors from CTF Thunder in OEF V. In OEF VII, CTF Spartan built on the successes CTF Devil achieved but refined their plans based on changing threats and challenges. Such is the nature of coalition-forces progress in Afghanistan, where each successive CTF stands on the shoulders of those that came before. Each task force, with its varied commands (Airborne, Marine Corps, Army National Guard, and PRTs), in cooperation with the myriad of U.S. and international aid agencies, develops experience and perspective that successive OEF iterations draw upon. Each of these contributions to evolving the COIN fight has helped to place us on the road to winning.

## ENDNOTES

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1. LTC David Kilcullen, Australian Army, *Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency*, Joint Information Operations Center (IO Sphere Publication), 35.
2. 1st Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, had been deployed to Afghanistan as part of OEF III (2003-2004) under the same brigade commander as OEF VI. In OEF III, it routinely conducted coalition-only operations, mainly with attached Italian, Romanian, and French forces.
3. LtCol Jim Donnellan's 2/3 Marines worked in the northern sector of RC East; LTC Tom Donovan's 2-504th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) and LTC Tim McGuire's 1-508 PIR in the CTF's central sector; and LTC Orlando Salinas' 3-141 IN (TXARNG) and LTC Dave Anders 1-325 Airborne Infantry Regiment in the west.
4. LtCol Pete Donnelly, a veteran of Operation Anaconda from OEF I, commanded the 13th Air Support Operations Squadron, and deployed with the CTF. He was instrumental in forming an exceptional joint team for combat operations by certifying joint tactical air controllers (JTACs), training units without JTACs (such as PRTs) to call in close air support, personally calling in airstrikes, and finding the best way for the Air Force to mass effects on the ground. Support from USAF A-10s, B-1Bs, B-52s, HH-60s and USN EA6Bs as well as intelligence platforms such as U2s, JSTARS, and Predator-Bs, was phenomenal.

5. Political officers like Rob Kemp, Liam Walsley, Harold Ingram, and numerous other brave Americans often accompanied commanders on patrol and air assaults to get a first-hand read of the battlefield.
6. Combined operations proved especially effective at producing IO messages and engagements that showed the Afghan people the strength and reach of their government in ways that fit culturally. Often the U.S.-produced products failed because the writers in Bagram did not understand the cultural context.
7. Twenty-four additional Taliban leaders were pending acceptance into the Afghan-run program at CTF Devil's transfer of authority.
8. One incident during CTF Devil's tenure perfectly illustrates the power of Afghan-delivered IO. In November 2005 (during Ramadan), a backpack bomb exploded inside Tani Mosque in Khost province, killing a popular pro-government imam and three other civilians. The imam's killing sent shock waves throughout the country, but produced the opposite effect from the one the Taliban sought. President Karzai condemned the attack and called for a full investigation of the murder. Initially, the provincial governor, Merajudin Pathan, insisted he would not attend the funeral because he was not a family member, but with some prompting from the PRT commander in Khost (LTC Chuck Miller), the governor changed his mind and handled the situation very differently: in addition to attending the funeral, he went to the hospital to visit those injured in the bombing, closed schools to ensure the community was fully mobilized, called for mass demonstrations in the streets, invited the press to follow him around the entire day, and held a 20-minute press interview with *Al Jazeera*. The city of Khost united in anger against the Taliban. With just minimal support, the governor took charge of the situation, organized thousands of people to march through the streets and condemn the Taliban, and set a classic leadership example for other Afghan governors to follow.

## THE AUTHORS

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Lieutenant Colonel Mike Fenzel, U.S. Army, is the commander of Task Force Eagle (1-503d Airborne), now deployed to Eastern Paktika province, in Afghanistan, as part of Combined Task Force Fury. He holds a B.A. from Johns Hopkins University and two masters degrees in international security and strategic studies from Harvard University and the U.S. Naval War College. His deployments include operations Desert Shield/Storm (1990-91), Joint Endeavor to Bosnia (1995-96), Assured Response to Liberia (1996), OIF I in Iraq (2003-04), and OEF VI (2005-06) and OEF VIII (2007-08) in Afghanistan. He was deputy commander of CTF Devil through OEF VI.

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The authors would like to thank: COL Steve Tableman (former Gardez PRT CDR); LTC(P) Tim McGuire (former CDR, 1-508th Airborne); LTC Michele Bredenkamp (former CTF Devil S2); LtCol Robert Scott (former Executive Officer, 2/3 Marines); CPT Westley Moore (former CTF Devil IO Chief); and Mr. Robert Kemp (former POLAD for RC East) for their cogent contributions to this article.

## JOINT/COMBINED ARMS

# NOT QUITE COUNTERINSURGENCY

### A CAUTIONARY TALE FOR US FORCES BASED ON ISRAEL'S OPERATION CHANGE OF DIRECTION\*

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CAPTAIN DANIEL HELMER

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On 12 July 2006, Hezbollah fighters, possibly led or directed by Imad Mughniyeh, once the world's most wanted terrorist, began a diversionary rocket attack on military targets in Northern Israel before launching a lightning attack across the border against Israeli soldiers in armored HMMWVs. The attack resulted in killing three soldiers, wounding two others, and capturing two prisoners. Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) dispatched a quick-reaction force, led by one of the world's most advanced tanks, the Merkava. Hezbollah militants, armed with a proficiency they would demonstrate throughout the war, ambushed the quick-reaction force, blowing up the lead tank with a several-hundred pound pitchcharge-type improvised explosive device (IED). All four crew members in the tank were killed instantly (the tank reportedly was blown more than 10 feet into the air). One soldier was killed by Hezbollah sniper fire as an armored force with infantry support attempted to extricate the quick-reaction force.<sup>1</sup>

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\* This article first appeared in *Armor*, January-February 2007. Reprinted by permission.

These were the opening volleys in a month-long war in which Hezbollah demonstrated that the spectrum of warfare for which regular forces must be prepared is larger than the two poles of counterinsurgency and maneuver warfare. It is vital that we not regard Hezbollah's 30-day performance as a fluke unlikely to be encountered by the U.S. military. Indeed, while elements of the war are unique to the Israel-Lebanon conflict, such as Hezbollah's positioning on a border adjacent to Israel and its capability to terrorize the Israeli population with rockets and missiles, at the tactical and operational levels, other enemies of the United States can learn much from the Hezbollah experience. The fact of the matter is that Hezbollah leaders, an avowed if not active enemy of the United States, who likely have agents working in our country, believe they have arrived on an exportable model of Islamist insurgency, and other terrorist organizations are already openly seeking to gain lessons learned from the conflict.<sup>2</sup> Given that there are real limitations on garnering a full understanding of what happened in Lebanon so soon after the 14 August 2006 ceasefire, this article, using interviews with a number of key observers and open-source reporting on the war, seeks to explain the possible lessons and implications for the mounted maneuver warrior of what Israel came to call "Operation Change of Direction."

## A NEW MODEL

Six years after Israel's ignominious withdrawal from south Lebanon and six years after the beginning of the Second Palestinian Intifadah (the al Aqsa Intifadah), IDF forces remained woefully unprepared for a new fight in Lebanon. In the final 15 years of the occupation, only a small cadre of IDF soldiers experienced the terrible uncertainty of asymmetric war in Lebanon's south. The rest of the IDF, according to two-time IDF Lebanon veteran and respected historian, Michael Oren, trained to win the conventional surprise encountered during the 1973 Yom Kippur War.<sup>3</sup>

Subsequent to the outbreak of the Palestinian Intifadah in 2000, the IDF leadership realized that it was ill-prepared for the fighting against Hamas, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and other extremist forces that held the hearts and minds of much of the populations of Gaza and the West Bank. "When the Intifadah broke out, the IDF went on a massive retooling [effort]... we went to be an urban anti-terrorism force, like a large SWAT team... and became the most advanced large scale anti-terrorism

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... only a small cadre of IDF soldiers experienced the terrible uncertainty of asymmetric war in Lebanon's south.

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force in the world,” explains Oren.<sup>4</sup> From 2000 through 2006, although skirmishes occurred from time to time on the Northern Border, including kidnapping and attempted kidnapping of several IDF soldiers, as well as shelling and sniper fire in the disputed Shebaa farms area, the Hezbollah threat went largely ignored. Responses to Hezbollah provocations were extremely limited, and similar to the United States’ focus on conventional war against the USSR after Vietnam, the IDF was determined to focus on a different enemy than the one to which it had just ceded an 18-year struggle.<sup>5</sup>

The core combat competencies required for the urban fight in the occupied territories were significantly different from those required for the fight in which the IDF would find itself in Lebanon. By 2006, the IDF excelled at conducting cordon and search operations, door-to-door searches, hasty raids, and identifying and capturing or killing suspected Palestinian terrorists and guerrillas. Through a network of collaborators exploited since the 1970s, the IDF gained extensive intelligence information on Palestinian terror organizations. Israeli control of the borders of Gaza and the West Bank meant that Palestinian fighters often possessed inferior weapons and were forced to fight in a virtually untenable situation. Israeli information dominance made training difficult for Palestinian forces. Meanwhile factionalization prevented a unitary military effort against the Israelis. In effect, the IDF, like the U.S. military, was a seemingly militarily superior counter-terrorist/insurgent force fighting a militarily inferior terrorist/insurgent enemy.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah, flush with their 2000 victory, did not rest on its laurels. Believing that another showdown with the Israelis was looming, it began the arduous task of exploring lessons learned from its 17-year open war with Israel, while simultaneously supplying inspiration, technical help, and weaponry to the Palestinians.<sup>6</sup> According to a senior analyst with Defense News, understanding that a future conflict would likely be a defensive action against an Israeli incursion seeking to destroy them, Hezbollah leaders studied the historical model of the Viet Cong as inspiration for establishing an advanced tunnel network, extending through the main avenues of approach into southern Lebanon.<sup>7</sup>

Working secretly, Hezbollah built up weapons stockpiles, particularly short- and medium-range rockets and antitank guided missiles (ATGM), and developed reinforced, highly camouflaged bunkers throughout their area of operations—all in spite of extensive monitoring by UN observers and Israeli intelligence. Confronted after the war with the location of a football-field-sized bunker complex, with meter-thick, steel-reinforced concrete on an open hillside in Labboune, one UN observer remarked that Hezbollah must have brought in cement by the spoonfuls. The bunker complex was situated only two-hundred meters north of the Israeli border and only several kilometers from UN headquarters in an-Naquurah; neither the UN nor IDF realized the extent and sophistication of the bunkers, and the IDF was unable to

destroy them or force the fighters to evacuate them during fighting.<sup>8</sup> Unlike in the occupied territories, neither signal intelligence nor human intelligence could successfully penetrate Hezbollah before or during the war.

Throughout the six years of relative quiet, Hezbollah focused on extensive intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB), monitoring IDF units to its south by eavesdropping on IDF soldiers' cell phone calls; using criminal networks of mostly Bedouin drug dealers, other criminals, and malcontents to provide information on IDF movements and plans; and by inconspicuously taking extensive notes on Israeli movements for months at a time. As Timur Goksel, the former chief spokesperson for UNIFIL (the title of the UN observers), describes Hezbollah, "What was really significant is the amount or quality of staff work that goes into their activities that renders them different from any other guerrilla outfit."<sup>9</sup>

Although Hezbollah launched the surprise raid on 12 July and "was itching for a fight and got a fight," it did not anticipate the tremendous Israeli response to the kidnapping of two soldiers.<sup>10</sup> As a result, the IDF possessed the initiative in the first hours and even days of the war when it focused excessively on the use of its air force. When the IDF launched its ground incursions, they anticipated (just as the U.S. anticipates in Iraq and Afghanistan) that when confronted with a regular force on the offensive, Hezbollah would essentially melt into the countryside. In fact, previous to 2000, this had been the doctrine of Hezbollah.<sup>11</sup> Yet, Hezbollah doctrine had evolved, and Hezbollah prepared to encounter the IDF unlike any guerrilla force in history. In the words of Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah, "The resistance withstood the attack and fought back. It did not wage a guerrilla war either... it [Hezbollah] was not a regular army but was not a guerrilla in the traditional sense either. It was something in between." "This," he said, "is the new model."<sup>12</sup>

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... neither signal intelligence  
nor human intelligence could  
successfully penetrate Hezbollah  
before or during the war.

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**"WE WERE CAUGHT UNPREPARED."**<sup>13</sup>

The IDF encountered innumerable problems with Hezbollah's "new model." In a city that became a showcase for the IDF's tactical failures during the war, despite repeated incursions and air attacks aimed at the Lebanese Shiite city of Bint Jbail throughout the war, the IDF was unable to take the city, allowing Nasrallah to claim it as Hezbollah's Stalingrad. As Goksel puts it, "in one day in 1982 they [the IDF] reached Beirut; here, in six or seven days, they couldn't go more than a few miles."<sup>14</sup>



Among the most disturbing concerns to U.S. Army armor and mechanized infantry forces should be the large losses taken by the IDF's much vaunted armor corps. During operations in Lebanon, approximately 10 percent of the IDF's 400 Merkavas were damaged by an enemy without a single armor or helicopter platform. Thirty tank crewmen, comprising 25 percent of the IDF's total dead, were killed during the war. Of the 40 tanks damaged, half were actually penetrated by ATGMs or rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) with tandem charges, resulting in the deaths of 24 of the 30 tank crewmen killed.<sup>15</sup>

While the exact details of Hezbollah's arsenal are difficult to determine, due to conflicting battlefield reports and the fact that both the IDF and Hezbollah held their cards close, various reports indicate that Hezbollah possessed either originals or Iranian versions of the AT-3 Sagger, the AT-4 Spigot, the AT-5 Spandrel, the AT-13 METIS-M, and the AT-14 Kornet-E, as well as the RPG-29. In addition, Hezbollah expertly employed various mortar and other antipersonnel systems, as well as command-detonated IEDs. Many of the weapons were provided or purchased from Iran or Syria, although a substantial cache of small arms and explosives were stolen from the IDF over the years.

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... a substantial cache of small arms and explosives were stolen from the IDF over the years.

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Throughout the war, the toll taken on readiness by occupation duty in the West Bank and Gaza was evident. Infantry, artillery, and armor coordination, once the focal point of Israeli doctrine, was significantly degraded.

Tactical expertise and innovation were almost entirely absent—all along the border, where Hezbollah had spent six years preparing for a defense in depth, IDF forces launched frontal attacks.<sup>16</sup> The IDF reserves, on which the IDF relies heavily, had not received maneuver training since the inception of the Intifadah in 2000—they were too busy with occupation duty. Even the active duty forces had not completed a major maneuver training operation in more than a year.<sup>17</sup> During mobilization, reserve forces received three to five days of training. It should have been no surprise that the IDF performed poorly at the tactical level against its formidable enemy: its soldiers were, on average, 10 years younger than enemy forces, they had little experience or training, and faced an enemy who was extensively prepared for this moment.

Hezbollah demonstrated surprising tactical innovation. Knowing that the AT-3 was incapable of doing damage to Israeli armor, they used it effectively as an anti-infantry weapon. From distances well outside the engagement range of IDF infantry, Hezbollah would use indirect fire, including ATGMs, to scatter the infantry. As the infantry moved closer to the towns where Hezbollah fighters were

fighting, IDF infantrymen would often take cover in barns and other buildings on the outskirts of the city. Hezbollah would then hit houses with the AT-3s; on 9 August 2006, nine IDF infantrymen were killed in Bint Jbail in a single attack using this technique.<sup>18</sup> In addition, Hezbollah regularly employed snipers, a tactic they had not used prior to 2000. Artillery, which the IDF used to suppress Hezbollah fighters as infantry moved in, was ineffective against the bunkers and tunnels in which Hezbollah was fighting. In fact, undisciplined use of artillery and close air support (CAS) in built-up areas, not only failed to achieve tactical results against Hezbollah, but also earned the approbation of much of the international community for the IDF's destruction of civilian areas.<sup>19</sup> When artillery fire lifted, Hezbollah fighters took it as a signal that the infantry was about to move in and would commence firing on them.<sup>20</sup>

Hezbollah units worked almost exclusively in their hometowns, thus allowing effective coded communications over unencrypted radios. A typical Hezbollah transmission might be no more than, "let's go meet by the house of the girl who broke your heart 20 years ago." The IDF, while able to hear and understand the communication, could gain no actionable intelligence from it.<sup>21</sup> Hezbollah, while possessing some night-vision equipment, accepted Israeli dominance of the night. To overcome this, they went to ground at night while the Israelis shot at designated targets; they would resurface at or after dawn (BMNT) with full knowledge of the composition of the IDF forces in the area.

On the morning of 10 August, Hezbollah fighters disabled two tanks withdrawing from al-Khiyam ridge with ATGMs just after dawn, killing one crew member. Hezbollah fighters then mortared the two tank crews and were sending an infantry squad toward the soldiers when the soldiers were rescued, almost an hour after their tanks were disabled. Evidencing the problems the IDF had during the war with training and coordination, the tank crews, which included a company commander who had operational radios, failed to call for suppressive fire on the ridge, despite knowing it was the source of the mortars.<sup>22</sup>

The battle of Wadi Saluki from 11 to 13 August illustrates the tactical and operational problems faced by the IDF throughout the war. Eleven of the twenty-four Merkava IVs employed by the 401st Armor Brigade during the battle were hit by ATGMs or RPGs; eight tank crewmen were killed, as were four infantrymen of the Nahal infantry brigade, jointly accounting for 10 percent of all IDF killed in the war. The battle took place as a result of the IDF's desire to control

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... they would resurface at or after dawn with full knowledge of the composition of the IDF forces in the area.

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the Litani River, the former high-water mark of their occupation zone.<sup>23</sup> Division 162 was ordered to take the town of Ghandouriyeh, a village at the intersection of a major east-west road, and a road leading to a bridge north over the Litani. The village also provided significant overwatch of the Litani, making it a key location for controlling south Lebanon.

Positioned in the vicinity of the northern Israeli city of Metulla, Division 162 had known for a week that it was to take Ghandouriyeh; however, its orders were canceled several times. The main axis from Metulla to Ghandouriyeh is on a major road that first runs through the village of Qantara; to move from Qantara to Ghandouriyeh, an invading force must cross Wadi Saluki. The area of the Wadi is covered with dense undergrowth, consisting of juniper bushes, scrub oak, and other thornbushes, confining vehicles to the partially built road that runs through the Wadi. The Saluki, a tributary of the Litani, runs through the Wadi and provides a natural obstacle for both tracked and wheeled vehicles. A couple of bridges run across the Saluki on the road between Qantara and Ghandouriyeh; the terrain does not allow for the bridges to be bypassed, except with great difficulty. The Wadi is surrounded by high ground consisting of limestone rock with many natural caves, and surrounding hills, which provide excellent fields of fire onto the Wadi.

Hezbollah believed for a long time that the road between Qantara and Ghandouriyeh presented a likely avenue of approach for invading forces. Knowing that Wadi Saluki, and particularly the bridges that ran over the Saluki, provided a good choke point for an ambush on invading forces, they established permanent defensive positions overlooking the Wadi, including one west of Beni Hayan.

Any element of surprise about the location of the IDF's advance on the Litani was eliminated by Division 162's week in waiting. When paratroopers of the Nahal Infantry Brigade performed an uncontested air assault outside the cities of Ghandouriyeh and Farun on the evening of 11 August, any remaining uncertainty in the minds of Hezbollah fighters as to the timing and direction of the attack was eliminated. They soon established a hasty defense of the Wadi using mines, ATGMs, and possibly some previously built-up positions.

Using the same methods as those used in the occupied territories, Nahal infantry soldiers claimed to have control of the high ground over Wadi Saluki after they had seized key buildings on the outskirts of the two cities in the early hours of 12 August. The 401st Armor Brigade sent a column of 24 tanks toward the town to link up with paratroopers and give the IDF control of key roads. As the tanks maneuvered on the partially built road in the Wadi, Hezbollah fighters detonated a mine just north of the bridge on the road between Qantara and Ghandouriyeh, killing the entire crew of the lead tank, including the company commander. Hezbollah then launched swarms of rockets of all different types onto the Israeli tanks. As one crew member described it, "You should understand that the first missile which hits is not the really

dangerous missile. The ones which come afterwards are the dangerous ones—and there always follow four or five after the first.”<sup>24</sup> Hezbollah fighters used ATGMs, small-arms fire, and mortars to suppress the Nahal Brigade, preventing them from providing effective infantry support for the armor forces. Not a single tank crewman in all 24 tanks thought to deploy the tanks’ smoke grenades while they were being ambushed, further evidence of failing to train with their weapons.

Lack of coordination between armor, infantry, close air support, and artillery meant that initial calls for fire were denied because of the potential for fratricide. Only after all forces gained situational awareness on 12 August was the IDF able to synchronize its overwhelming firepower and take the high ground in Ghandouriyeh by the morning of 13 August. The IDF claims to have killed more than 80 Hezbollah fighters in the course of fighting; yet this claim seems based on battle damage assessments from close air support that dropped countless cluster munitions on 12 August. This time, as in much of the war, Hezbollah’s dead proved as elusive as its living fighters. Hezbollah, which in the past has celebrated its “martyrs,” including the son of Hassan Nasrallah, still claims that only 150 members were killed during the entire war. Israel claims it killed closer to 600 fighters.<sup>25</sup>

When fighting ended on 14 August, fighters from Division 162 were ordered to withdraw from Ghandouriyeh, due to the ceasefire. Guy Zur, commander of Division 162, walked away “astonished” and told the press that Hezbollah was the world’s best guerrilla group.<sup>26</sup> Goksel says of the terrain at Wadi Saluki, which he visited innumerable times during his duty in south Lebanon, that “anyone dumb enough to push a tank column through Wadi Saluki should not be an armored brigade commander but a cook.”<sup>27</sup> The 401st Armor Brigade could have bypassed the Wadi to the south or on the more northern road leading to Farun; its failure to do so allowed Hezbollah to win another propaganda victory in the last day of fighting.

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“You should understand  
that the first missile  
which hits is not the really  
dangerous missile.”

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## LESSONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

A number of issues for U.S. forces emerge from the IDF’s experience in Lebanon. Obviously, the effectiveness of “swarming” ATGMs and RPGs against the Merkava is a tactic that should be of concern; using the AT-3 as an anti-infantry weapon is a tactic of which all cavalry and mechanized units should be aware.

While it is important that U.S. forces continue to dominate the night, Hezbollah has demonstrated the need to make certain U.S. forces do not cede control of the day. Also, if Hezbollah exports its sophisticated ambushes and combined-arms attacks, it could pose new challenges in the Global War on Terrorism. The possibility must not be discounted; Hezbollah's leaders have provided arms and training to the Palestinians and publicly expressed a desire to export their "model" elsewhere. It is not impossible to imagine that in certain areas, such as Anbar Province, variants of Hezbollah's tactics may be developed by local insurgents as they await the reinforcement of the relatively small number of U.S. forces now in the area.

While the combined arms battalion (CAB) structure may naturally alleviate some of the coordination issues experienced by the IDF, it is vital that CABs train as such. Perhaps most importantly, the IDF's experience demonstrates the need to retain core combat skills, even as the United States takes on anti-terrorist missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. Army must carefully consider whether the training it undergoes to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan would result in tactical success against a determined enemy such as Hezbollah—an enemy that exists in the gray area between insurgents and the regular armies that U.S. forces traditionally train to fight.

## ENDNOTES

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- 1 Unless otherwise noted, all foreign media reports were accessed through OpenSource.gov (formerly the Foreign Broadcasting Information Service). All documents cited in this article are open source, available to the general public, not listed as for official use only, and unclassified. Reports on the Hezbollah kidnapping garnered from numerous sources, including "Hezbollah terrorist attack on Israeli's northern border: eight IDF soldiers killed and two abducted," Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies, Tel Aviv, Israel. Although all reports on Imad Mughniyeh are instantly suspect, he is as much of a boogeyman as exists in the world today, the report on his involvement comes from Ronen Bergman, "The Executor," *Yedi'ot Aharonot* (original in Hebrew), Tel Aviv, Israel, 16 July 2006.
- 2 Maryam al-Bassam, "Interview with Lebanese Hizballah leader Hasan Nasrallah." Beirut New TV Channel in Arabic, date of interview unknown, aired 27 August 2006. On agents in our country and anti-American nature of Hezbollah, see Matthew Levitt, "Hezbollah Financing Terror through Criminal Enterprise," Testimony to the U.S. Senate committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, 25 May 2005.

- On groups seeking lessons learned from the conflict, see Ibrahim Humaydi, “Abu Marzuq to ‘Al-Haya’: ‘HAMAS’ Discussing Cloning ‘Hizballah’s’ [sic] Experience, Denied There Is ‘Anything New’ in Israeli Soldier Deal,” *Al-Haya*, (original in Arabic), London, United Kingdom, 30 August 2006.
- 3 Author interview with Michael Oren, September 2006.
  - 4 Ibid.
  - 5 For a discussion on willful blindness to the lessons of Vietnam, see T.X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century*, Zenith Press, St. Paul, MN, 2006.
  - 6 Hezbollah really only arrived on the scene in 1983, although Israel’s war against the Palestinians in Lebanon began in 1982. Although helping the Sunni Palestinians might seem an odd task for Shiite Hezbollah. It is worth noting that Imad Mughniyeh, a Shiite Lebanese, began his long terrorist career working for the Palestinian al-Fatah, rather than for any of the Lebanese militant groups, and is believed by numerous sources to have had contacts with Osama bin Laden or other agents of al-Qaeda.
  - 7 Author interview with Riad Kahwaji, September 2006.
  - 8 Author interview and e-mail exchanges between author and Nick Blanford, September 2006.
  - 9 Author interview and e-mail exchange with Timur Goksel, September 2006.
  - 10 Interview with Hassan Fattah, senior Middle East correspondent for the *New York Times*, September 2006.
  - 11 Reported by Ehud Ya’ari based on a translation of the doctrines transmitted by Haj Hallil, Hezbollah’s 1996 director of operations. “Hizballah: 13 Principles of Warfare,” *The Jerusalem Report*, 21 March 1996.
  - 12 Maryam al-Bassam.
  - 13 An anonymous soldier from the 401st Armor Brigade on the fighting at Wadi Saluki, as reported by Nava Tzurriel and Eitan Glickman, “The Canyon of Death,” *Yediot Aharonot*, Adam Keller (trans), published variously, including online at <http://www.kibush.co.il/>.
  - 14 Interview with Goksel.
  - 15 Information on casualties from author interview with Yaakov Katz, September 2006; and Yaakov Katz, “Wadi Saluki battle—microcosm of war’s mistakes,” *Jerusalem Post Online Edition*, 29 August 2006, online at <http://www.jpost.com>.
  - 16 Interview with Oren.
  - 17 Interview with Katz.
  - 18 Interviews with Blanford, Kahwaji, and Katz; and “IDF Report Card,” *Jerusalem Post Online Edition*, 24 August 2006, online at <http://www.jpost.com>.
  - 19 Interview and e-mail exchange with Goksel, September 2006.
  - 20 Interview with Kahwaji.
  - 21 Interview with Blanford.

- 22 Jonathan Spyer. "On the El-Khiam Ridge," *The Times*, 30 August 2006.
- 23 The purpose of the push to the Litani is an interesting question. Many in Israel see the battle for Ghandouriyeh as having had little strategic value, especially as the bridge crossing the Litani had been destroyed by the IDF earlier in the war. A number of soldiers have demonstrated against IDF leaders for what they believe was a wanton sacrifice of life for little strategic advantage; however, judgment on the strategic ramifications of the battle remain outside the purview of this article.
- 24 Tzuriel and Glickman, "The Canyon of Death."
- 25 Information on the battle remains unreliable. This narrative is based on a compilation of interviews and e-mails with Goksel, Oren, Blanford, Katz, and Kahwaji, September 2006; Tzuriel and Glickman; Katz, "Wadi Saluki battle—microcosm of war's mistakes;" and Amos Harel and Yair Ettinger, "Why did these soldiers die?" *Haaretz*, 23 August 2006, online at <http://www.haaretz.com>.
- 26 Interview with Katz.
- 27 Interview with Goksel.

## THE AUTHOR

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## JOINT/COMBINED ARMS

# CANADIAN ARMOUR IN AFGHANISTAN\*

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MAJOR TREVOR CADIEU, CD

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**B**y deploying tanks and armoured engineers to Afghanistan in October 2006 and supporting the acquisition of the Leopard 2, the leadership of the Canadian Forces (CF) has acknowledged the importance of maintaining heavy armour in a balanced force. While the continued development of sensors and technology will be extremely important to achieving improved situational awareness (SA) on the battlefield, the hard-earned experiences of the Canadian Army and our allies in sustained combat in Afghanistan and Iraq have proven we must be prepared to get our hands dirty and come into physical contact with the enemy if we wish to define their strength, composition and intentions, and subsequently kill them. Canadian tanks and armoured engineers have better protected our dismounted infantry soldiers in Southern Afghanistan, allowing them to close with and destroy a fanatical and determined enemy in extremely complex terrain.

This article will review tactical lessons learned of Canadian armour in Afghanistan since October 2006, provide a candid assessment of the challenges faced by tankers in this counter-insurgency (COIN) environment, and consider the

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introduction of the Leopard 2. Nowhere in this editorial is it implied that Canadian armour is the predominate arm, or that it should be reinvigorated at the expense of other battlefield enablers. On the contrary, our recent experience in combat has provided irrefutable evidence that all elements of the combined arms team remain fundamental to the delivery of decisive combat power in the contemporary operating environment (COE), and that our efforts in training and operations should reinforce this grouping.

## BACKGROUND

After fighting a protracted counter-insurgency battle across Southern Afghanistan, 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Battle Group (1 PPCLI BG) was confronted in the spring of 2006 with a significant increase in insurgent activity in the Panjwayi and Zhari Districts of Kandahar Province. Although the Canadian BG working closely with the Afghan National Army (ANA) was able to disrupt the enemy in a series of BG-level operations culminating in Operation ZAHAR (as part of Operation MOUNTAIN THRUST), Taliban forces quickly re-asserted their presence in the region once hostilities had ended. The International Stabilization Assistance Force (ISAF) could not ignore the threat posed by this massing of insurgents on the doorstep of Kandahar City, the coalition centre of gravity in the south of Afghanistan. A significant information operations (Info Ops) victory would be awarded to the Taliban if they could not be dislodged from these areas, and the ability of the International Stabilization Assistance Force (ISAF) to achieve its stated mission of reconstruction would be virtually impossible to achieve without the confidence and support of the local populace. Within weeks of arriving in theatre in August 2006, the 1st Battalion The Royal Canadian Regiment (1 RCR) BG was tasked to clear the Taliban from Panjwayi and Zhari Districts in Operation MEDUSA, the largest combat action undertaken to date by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Rather than adhering to small unit attacks and ambushes, and retreating in the face of direct confrontation with NATO forces, the Taliban chose to make a conventional stand at Pashmul. They occupied well dug-in defensive positions amongst densely packed grape and poppy fields and they covered with direct fire and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) all ingress routes suitable for wheeled vehicles. The BG Commanding Officer (CO), Lieutenant-Colonel Omer Lavoie, realized quickly that restoring tactical battlefield

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... restoring tactical battlefield mobility would be essential to dislodging the enemy from this complex terrain.

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mobility would be essential to dislodging the enemy from this complex terrain. Without armour at his disposal, he introduced civilian-pattern tracked dozers to the fight in order to slice through grape fields and allow dismounted infantry soldiers to get “up close and personal” with the insurgents. The tactic was extremely effective. Advancing under the cover of heavy artillery and aerial bombardment, the dozers allowed the BG to seize key terrain and facilitate the systematic clearance by dismounted soldiers of all compounds and infrastructure. By 13 September 2006, Taliban forces operating in Pashmul and Zhari had capitulated. Hundreds of insurgents had been killed and many others were forced to flee to the west.

While two successive infantry-heavy Canadian BGs conducted successful counterinsurgency operations for nearly nine months without integral armour, the lessons of Operation MEDUSA reinforced the importance of retaining all combat enablers in full spectrum operations. According to Lieutenant-Colonel Lavoie, “If you’d asked me five months ago, ‘do you need tanks to fight insurgents?’ I would have said, ‘No, you’re nuts.’ He added, “Because [the Taliban] are acting conventionally, then conventional assets like tanks, armoured engineering vehicles, and armoured bridge-laying vehicles certainly have their place here.”<sup>1</sup> The leadership of the CF and the Government of Canada agreed with Lieutenant-Colonel Lavoie’s assessment. At the request of Commander RC(S), Canadian Brigadier-General David Fraser, the Government announced on 15 September 2006 the imminent deployment of an enhancement package to better facilitate “reconstruction and stabilization efforts in Afghanistan.” In addition to an infantry company designated to serve as close protection for the provincial reconstruction team (PRT), the enhancement package was to include a squadron of Leopard C2 tanks from Lord Strathcona’s Horse (Royal Canadians) [LdSH(RC)] and an armoured engineer troop from 1 Combat Engineer Regiment (1 CER).<sup>2</sup>

The Army generated, trained and deployed a 15-tank squadron and armoured engineer troop across the globe within six weeks of receiving a warning order. Within days of the first Leopard C2 arriving at the Kandahar Airfield (KAF) on 3 October 2006, the B Squadron Advance Party had arrived to receive equipment and parts, and establish with the leadership of the BG the tactical employment and sustainment concepts for armour in Afghanistan. The Squadron took advantage of every moment at KAF to prepare equipment for battle, and conduct training and rehearsals based on the hard-learned experiences of the 1 RCR BG in combat.

## CANADIAN ARMOUR IN COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATIONS

After deploying forward on 2 December 2006, the tank squadron and armoured engineers featured prominently in all major combat operations undertaken by the Canadian BG. B Squadron was tasked initially to establish attack-by-fire positions

in support of infantry companies and form the nucleus of a BG counter-moves force capable of responding throughout the entire Canadian area of operations (AO). Many Taliban insurgents learned the hard way the capabilities of the Leopard's main gun during this period when attacking Canadian strong points with rocket propelled grenades (RPG) and indirect fires. Leopard tank crews fired 105 mm rounds that destroyed enemy ambush parties and mortar groups that had infiltrated the Zhari District. On 19 December 2006, the Canadian BG recommenced offensive operations as part of Operation BAAZ TSUKA, a mission intended to deny the enemy sanctuary in Kandahar Province and reduce their capacity to mass for a spring offensive. Grouped with an infantry company and armoured engineer troop to form a square combat team, the tank squadron was tasked to disrupt insurgents in Howz-e-Madad and the Maywand District.

Throughout January and February 2007, B Squadron worked closely with A Company 2 PPCLI and the ANA in a series of offensive operations aimed at expanding the BG's security zone. Conducting several complex deliberate breaching and cordon and search operations in Zhari District, the ANA and Canadians demonstrated clearly their capacity and resolve to go after the Taliban at a time and place of their choosing. After securing the Siah Choy area with the ANA, the tank squadron united with American Special Operations Forces (SOF) and the Canadian Reconnaissance Squadron to dominate the Dowrey-Arghandab peninsula, keeping the enemy off balance in the region. Following the transition of command authority to 2 RCR, B Squadron remained in theatre for nearly a month conducting disruption operations along the Helmand-Kandahar provincial border and reinforcing Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in contact with insurgents in Howz-e-Madad and Sangsar. While sub-unit integrity was maintained for specific missions, B Squadron was tasked as a steady state to support two different operations concurrently: the squadron minus (two troops of four tanks and the squadron headquarters) usually formed a combat team with A Company, while the third tank troop was detached to another sub-unit elsewhere in the AO. Tanks never worked independently and the value of the combined arms team was evident. The tank squadron commander led routinely during the advance and break-in phases of operations, while infantry company commanders naturally retained control of the fight through/clearance and consolidation phases. By the end of the deployment, all operations were conducted with Canadian infantry, the ANA and Afghan National Police (ANP).

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[T]he ANA and Canadians demonstrated clearly their capacity and resolve to go after the Taliban ...

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A Squadron LdSH(RC) relieved B Squadron in early March 2007, in time to join Hotel Company 2 RCR BG for Operation ACHILLES, another effort on the part of ISAF to blunt the Taliban's ability to wage a spring offensive. While the bulk of fighting during this mission was left to TF Helmand and SOF, the tank squadron proved its ability to conduct sustained combat operations at great distances from the re-supply nodes at each of the forward operating bases (FOBs). In fact, the tank squadron A1 echelon, under the command of the Squadron Sergeant-Major (SSM), was called on to re-supply multiple sub-units concurrently. In spite of initial reluctance on the part of sustainment planners to commit to the tank squadron a dedicated echelon, this organization has now become the model for integral support in the Canadian BG. Elements of the ISAF Reserve Battalion were certainly relieved to see the tanks during Operation ACHILLES, especially when the Leopard mine ploughs were used to extract several of their utility vehicles and crews that had found the hard way an old Soviet minefield.

Since May 2007, the tank squadron has fought almost constantly alongside Canadian and Afghan infantry in close combat with the Taliban. Supported by the artillery, combat engineers, attack aviation and fast air, mechanized combat teams from the 2 RCR BG have achieved decisive victories against insurgents in the Howz-e-Madad, Nalgham and Sangsar areas of Zhari District, where vineyards and imposing compounds render wheeled vehicle movement particularly difficult. Leopard tank crews have used extensively the 105 mm High Explosive Squash Head (HESH) round to eliminate insurgents attempting to attack dismounted soldiers. More importantly, tank rollers and ploughs have continued to mitigate risk to coalition soldiers by clearing routes of pressure-plate detonated IEDs, while providing intimate support and a breaching capability to dismounted infantry companies. A testament to the tremendous contribution tanks are making to counter-insurgency operations and their high demand throughout the Canadian AO, A Squadron has routinely been split into troop-sized elements or less and attached to each of the infantry companies. This decentralized employment of armour and extremely high temperatures has strained the sustainment concept and serviceability of the tanks, while dispersing the breaching assets integral to the sub-unit. The impact of this squadron has been felt as far west as the Helmand border, and north towards Ghorak and Shah Wali Kot.

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[T]he 2 RCR BG have  
achieved decisive victories  
against insurgents ...

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## THE “LIMITATIONS” OF ARMOUR

Soon after the Government of Canada announced the deployment of Leopard tanks to Afghanistan, military experts rushed to criticize the decision. One such pundit, Mr. Michael D. Wallace, a political science professor at the University of British Columbia, argued in his article *Leopard Tanks and the Deadly Dilemmas of the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan* that the “...risks of putting our 1960s-designed Leopard 1 C2 tanks in harm’s way surely outweighs any additional protection they can supply to Canadian Forces in Afghanistan.”<sup>3</sup> He continued that the deployment of Canadian armour was misguided as tanks are vulnerable to a variety of weapons employed by insurgents, such as anti-tank guided munitions (ATGM) and IEDs, and their quickly evolving tactics. Although Wallace was correct to say, “...even the most modern and capable tanks are vulnerable to a variety of attacks,”<sup>4</sup> he evaded the obvious fact that there is not, nor has there ever been, a system on the battlefield that is immune to enemy assault. The Leopard tank is arguably the best-protected vehicle currently employed by coalition forces in Afghanistan. It has been sent there to shield our dismounted soldiers. Recoilless rifles, ATGMs and IEDs are capable of tearing much more easily through human flesh than rolled homogenous steel, and these systems feature prominently in the arsenal of Taliban weaponry in Afghanistan. When we possess the advantage of heavy armour, it would be reckless to purposely eliminate from our inventory this key enabler and confront symmetrically an insurgency that is accustomed to fighting in the harsh terrain and conditions of Afghanistan. Specialized weapons or concentrated attack may be capable of destroying tanks, but the survival rate of their crews is high and the protection they offer to dismounted infantry from fragmentation and blast weapons is unquestionable.

Mr. Wallace and others have also charged that collateral damage caused by Canadian tanks could turn locals against foreigners and isolate soldiers from the civilians they were sent to help. While it is true that the loss of innocent civilians and excessive damage to infrastructure from NATO military operations would impair our ability to achieve a mandate of reconstruction in Afghanistan, suggestions that the use of tanks has alienated the local populace more than other weapon systems have proven completely unfounded. Since commencing combat operations nine months ago, Canadian tanks have killed dozens of insurgents in battles throughout Kandahar Province, yet there has been no suggestion of civilian deaths attributed to tank fire during this entire period. Equipped with a fire control system that allows our soldiers to acquire and engage targets with

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Canadian tanks have actually reduced collateral damage in the Canadian AO.

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precision and discrimination, by day and by night, the Leopard tank has in many instances reduced the requirement for aerial bombardment and indirect fire, which have proven to be blunt instruments. The deployment of armour to Afghanistan has also reinforced with the local populace the resolve of Canada and NATO to bring stability to the region, and it has sent to the Taliban a clear message that we have the tools and determination to pursue them at a time and place of our choosing. A strong case can be made that Canadian tanks have actually reduced collateral damage in the Canadian AO. We know through experience that the more combat power we commit to a mission, the less kinetic that operation is likely to become.

While every effort must be made to minimize damage to local infrastructure, there have been and will continue to be occasions when we must be prepared to use the destructive capabilities of our armoured forces to dislodge insurgents from complex terrain. While we would want nothing more than to meet the enemy in the middle of an open desert, the Taliban find sanctuary amongst dense vineyards and urban compounds. They frequently use women and children to shield themselves from coalition attack, rendering the use of close air support, aerial bombardment and artillery fire risky. To mitigate collateral damage, the tank squadron leadership includes in all operational planning a collateral damage estimate and satellite imagery is relied upon heavily by break-in forces to avoid habitable structures. Rules of engagement (ROE) that protect our soldiers and innocent civilians are reviewed in orders, as is the open fire policy that delineates clearly the types of weapons to be used to engage enemy in urban terrain where a normal pattern of life has been observed. Manoeuvre damage caused by armoured vehicles to irrigation systems and croplands is repaired whenever possible by armoured engineers on exfiltration. Elements of the Kandahar PRT travel routinely with mechanized combat teams to determine the long-term needs of locals, and facilitate if required the funding and reconstruction of damaged fields and infrastructure.

The ability of the Army to generate, train and deploy a 15-tank squadron and armoured engineer troop across the globe within six weeks of receiving a warning order does not support the notion that armour cannot be rapidly deployed. Prior to acquiring the C-17 Globemaster the CF did not possess a strategic airlift capability, and all fleets of vehicles were impacted congruently. The LAV III, for example, is not strategically deployable by C-130 Hercules. This airframe can transport one LAV III for a short distance, but certainly not from Canada to Afghanistan. Accordingly, a Canadian LAV-equipped force is moved in the same manner as a tank fleet: either by sea or leased strategic airlift. Canada's Leopard tanks were deployed to Afghanistan in October 2006 by a combination of leased Russian AN-124 Antonov and United States Air Force (USAF) C-17 Globemaster aircraft. The recent acquisition by the CF of four C-17 aircraft will enhance our ability to deploy tanks (and LAV IIIs for that matter), while reducing our current reliance on allies for heavy lift.

## DOCTRINAL AND TACTICAL LESSONS LEARNED (AND RE-LEARNED)

Although tanks provide increased firepower, protection and mobility to the BG, they are extremely vulnerable when operating independently in a COIN environment. Lacking the ability to dismount soldiers without rendering turrets inoperable, tank crews without close infantry support cannot ensure security or force protection at the scene of an IED strike, casualty evacuation, enemy ambush or even a simple vehicle accident. What might normally be routine friction can become incapacitating or deadly when armoured forces are not capable of creating stand off between friendly and hostile forces. As important as infantry are to ensuring the security of armoured forces, so too are tanks vital to the protection of our dismounted troops. We should never plunge our dismounted soldiers into confrontation with the enemy without first taking every precaution to ensure their protection. The enemy in direct confrontation on the objective has killed very few Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan. It is on the way to the fight that our troops have been more regularly maimed and killed by mines, IEDs and fanatical suicide bombers. Tanks, with their superior armoured protection and mobility, have led as a default during all moves in both open and close terrain. We should rarely be in such a rush so as to prevent our engineers from conducting vulnerable point searches at defiles and choke-points. The notion of grouping the different arms to benefit from their collective strengths is not new, but it has again been validated in combat.

While few commanders today will argue the importance of armour in the COE, there is considerable debate on how best to group and employ tanks. Should the integrity of the tank squadron be maintained to allow the BG CO to mass his direct fires and breaching assets while ensuring their sustainability, or should armoured assets be decentralized and attached to infantry platoons to ensure more vulnerable, dismounted soldiers can benefit from the capabilities of the tank in complex and urban terrain? The answer to this question lies somewhere in between the two extremes. Gone are the days we must consider the smallest tactical grouping of armour to be the squadron. Fighting through urban areas and the dense vineyards of Afghanistan requires the decentralization of forces that are difficult to control at even the lowest tactical level. Exposed routinely to intense hostile fire from unknown sources, dismounted infantry troops often lack sufficient firepower to destroy well-protected and camouflaged enemy positions. Tanks provide the punch required for breaching structures and they were deployed specifically to increase the protection of our dismounted soldiers, even if that means the division of resources.

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We should never plunge  
our dismounted soldiers  
into confrontation with  
the enemy ...

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An individual tank might provide intimate support to infantry and engineer sections while advancing in canalizing terrain, but it would be a grave error to consider this grouping a miniature-combined arms team that is sufficiently led, equipped and sustained to achieve independently the destruction of a determined and experienced insurgency. There are obvious and unassailable logistical and tactical constraints that dictate the requirement to preserve at a minimum the integrity of the tank troop. The only guarantee when employing armour in the harsh environment of Afghanistan is that tanks will break. Their timely recovery from the battlefield is dependent on the immediate availability of other armoured assets mounted on the Leopard chassis. The extraction of a tank is a troop task: one tank, or one of the two armoured recovery vehicles (ARVs) in theatre, is required to tow the downed vehicle, while the remaining two tanks in the troop are required for mutual support and command and control. The tactical decisiveness of the combined arms team also diminishes when operating with anything less than a tank troop. The combat team commander is precluded from massing direct fires, and he will not have a credible breaching force if required to break into complex terrain (each tank troop is equipped with a dozer blade, plough and roller set). The division of the squadron into more than two elements creates other problems. With only two each of the Leopard-qualified technicians—vehicle, weapons, fire control systems (FCS) and land communications information systems (LCIS)—in the tank squadron echelon, serviceability rates deteriorate notably when tanks are employed on multiple operations concurrently.

These observations are not hypothetical. B Squadron 1 RCR BG and A Squadron 2 RCR BG maintenance deficiencies skyrocketed when the sub-unit operated in more than two locations at once. Without qualified technicians available to provide timely and responsive support to all deployed elements, proactive maintenance was neglected and vehicle serviceability suffered as a result. Of greater concern was that tanks actually became a liability to infantry soldiers when this valuable resource was too thinly spread across the BG. Tasked to support multiple operations concurrently, and struggling to maintain the serviceability of the Leopard fleet of vehicles in the heat of the Afghan summer, A Squadron was challenged throughout June 2007 to generate sufficient armour for Quick Reaction Force (QRF) tasks. In one instance, A Squadron was tasked to detach to an infantry company two tanks for the reinforcement of an ANP checkpoint that had been ambushed by Taliban forces. With all mine ploughs and rollers deployed elsewhere in the AO, tank crews were forced to clear high threat routes that ANP refused to traverse by simply driving

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The division of the squadron into more than two elements creates other problems.

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over them. The importance of maintaining troop integrity was reinforced further when one of the tanks became trapped in a deep wadi system. While attempting to extract the jammed Leopard, the second tank became incapacitated, requiring the infantry company to wait as last light approached for the deployment from a forward operating base (FOB) of additional recovery assets. Although the combat team was able to chalk this experience up as a near miss, the incident demonstrated clearly the risks of splitting armour.

Proponents of the piecemeal employment of armour might also be inclined to relegate tank squadron commanders to the role of support arms advisor to the CO, as they would not have troops to command. This would be a mistake. Since tanks first joined the Canadian BG in combat in December 2006, infantry company commanders acting in the capacity of combat team commander have left routinely the advance and break-in phases of combat operations under the control of the tank squadron commander. It is imperative that a leader who understands the intricacies of the tank implements and breaching in complex terrain control that part of the fight. Combat arms officers understand manoeuvre and are trained early in their careers to appreciate the collective strengths of the combined arms team. While either the tank squadron commander or infantry company commander will lead the combat team, assigned tasks or terrain might dictate that tactical control rotate several times in the execution of an operation.

Tanks, regardless of their vintage, are extremely maintenance-intensive and they possess an insatiable appetite for combat supplies and commodities. Recognizing the sustainment demands of the Leopard fleet of vehicles, the National Support Element (NSE) deployed to Afghanistan has allocated to the tank squadron a dedicated echelon. Commanded by the SSM, the tank squadron echelon is equipped with fuel, ammunition and commodities trucks, mobile recovery teams, recovery vehicles and a wheeled ambulance. 105 mm ammunition is frequently transported from KAF to manoeuvre elements via medium lift aviation, while other combat supplies are moved by road with combat logistics patrols. The tank SSM assumes responsibility for all combat supplies at the FOBs and deploys forward with Leopard qualified technicians as required to conduct routine and emergency replenishment of the squadron. Recovery and medical vehicles always travel with the combat team to ensure their immediate responsiveness to the needs of the soldiers. The echelon system has worked extremely well for the armoured corps for decades and it continues to be effective in combat today.

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Tanks, regardless of their vintage, are extremely maintenance-intensive ...

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None of the other arms have been allocated a dedicated echelon in Afghanistan. Without integral maintenance resources, infantry companies have been incapable of conducting proactive repairs requiring technical support to the LAV fleet of vehicles. Cognizant of the sustainment challenges confronting each of the infantry companies and other elements of the combined arms team, both the TF 3-06 and TF 1-07 tank squadrons sustained multiple sub-units over a continuum (up to four concurrently) without an increase in resources or qualified technicians. In the interests of training as we fight, building cohesive teams and addressing the intense sustainment demands of combat operations, the Chief of the Land Staff (CLS) has directed that integral echelons should be allocated to every sub unit in the BG, including the artillery battery and composite engineer squadron. It does not matter who technically owns the resources, whether it is the NSE or the sub-unit being supported. Sub units just need to know they will have continuous and uninterrupted integral support, without exception.

While armoured crewmen have traditionally filled driving and leadership positions in the tank squadron echelon, the NSE has directed they be replaced by truckers. The rationale for employing tankers in the echelon has only been reinforced in combat. As Leopard-qualified soldiers, the crewmen serving in the echelon are the only redundancy integral to the tank squadron deployed. Tankers are trained to work in an armoured squadron and they understand implicitly the support demands and tactical employment of this organization. While conducting emergency re-supply operations in December 2006, armoured crewmen in the echelon were able to break down and distribute different natures of 105 mm ammunition quickly. They assisted in emergency tank maintenance and were able to forecast the specific petroleum, oil and lubricants (POL) requirements of the Leopard fleet of vehicles. While the truckers serve an extremely important role in the sustainment concept of the BG, they simply do not have a congruent understanding of tank-specific requirements.

While coalition soldiers will as a default confront traditional hit and run insurgency tactics in Afghanistan, it is not inconceivable that the enemy might again mass and take a conventional stand against ISAF, as they did in Pashmul in September 2006. Pre-deployment training must therefore be progressive and prepare the BG to conduct both COIN and conventional combat operations, from the troop-platoon to the BG level. Individual training should focus on the perfection of basic soldiering skills to include physical fitness, marksmanship, combat casualty care and trade specific duties, such as driving, gunnery and the handling of implements in the case of armoured crewmen. Collective training must hone the ability of sub-unit commanders to synchronize battlefield enablers inclusive of the combined arms team. Training should start with a re-familiarization of tank-infantry cooperation to include a review of the capabilities and safety precautions of the Leopard tank, marry-up drills, tactical movement, communications and target designation.

Collective training scenarios should validate the proficiency of the BG in conventional war fighting operations (offence including the attack in complex terrain, defence including counter-moves, advance to contact, deception operations), while getting troops accustomed to the friction of the COIN battle space (vehicle breakdown/recovery, mine and IED strikes, suicide attack, ambush, casualty evacuation). Deploying soldiers and leaders should be familiar with combined arms operations from the troop-platoon level to BG, by both day and night.

Theatre mission specific training (TMST) and battle procedure should provide the training audience an appreciation of the complexities of the Afghan culture. In addition to the cultural awareness and language familiarization lectures that are routinely incorporated in the TMST package, subject matter experts should be employed to indoctrinate our soldiers on the dynamics and relationship between the three main threat groups in Southern Afghanistan: Taliban/Opposing Military Forces (OMF), narcotics leaders/fighters, and tribal factions. Training scenarios should include both simulated or real ANSF (ANA/ANP) play and civilians in the battle space (women/children, media and private security firms), as well as an introduction to operations with SOF and other coalition partners (who may or may not have specific national caveats that affect their ability to support Canadian ground operations). Training scenarios should be replete with the same friction soldiers will face while deployed to include the unavailability of enabler support and a routinely ambiguous intelligence picture augmented at times with questionable yet important human and signals intelligence (HUMINT and SIGINT) feeds.

While the ability of the Leopard tank fleet to restore tactical mobility in different types of complex terrain is the bread-and-butter of tank squadron operations in Afghanistan, pre-deployment collective training has included limited opportunities to plan for and perfect the use of the tank implements. Before unleashing the tanks to breach complex terrain in Afghanistan, all levels of command plan carefully with satellite imagery. Wargaming is conducted to maintain the element of surprise, remove the enemy's terrain advantage and minimize collateral damage. It is imperative that we institutionalize in training the same planning and battle procedure considerations that will be essential to mission success in operations and that the first time a dozer tank crew commander is seeing a deliberate grape field breach is not while conducting it under contact with the enemy. The complex terrain of Afghanistan should be replicated as much as possible in training at Canadian

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Collective training scenarios should validate the proficiency of the BG in conventional war fighting operations ...

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Manoeuvre Training Centre (CMTC), and combat teams should be afforded opportunities during force-on-force and live-fire training to conduct deliberate breaching operations with tank implements, while testing the effects of main gun ammunition on structures similar in composition to grape-drying huts and walled compounds. The replication of Afghan terrain and structures will cost money, but will save the lives of Canadian and coalition soldiers.

Immediately following the completion of pre-deployment training, all tanks and engineer vehicles were cleaned, brought to serviceable condition and suspensions were replaced. Following the application of MEXAS add-on-armour and completion of required maintenance, tanks were quarantined at 1 Service Battalion for shipment to theatre. Vehicles deployed from the Edmonton International Airport to an Intermediate Staging Base (ISB) at Manas, Kyrgyzstan via civilian AN 124 Antonov, where they were cross-loaded on to USAF C-17 Globemaster aircraft for the move to KAF. Leopard qualified drivers accompanied each chalk into theatre, while an armoured Master Warrant Officer (MWO) served in the capacity of Liaison Officer (LO) at Manas to facilitate the cross-loading and timely onward movement of vehicles. An ARV was positioned at the ISB, while the second recovery vehicle proceeded to Afghanistan on an early chalk. An advance party from the tank squadron and a tank

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The tank squadron leadership took advantage of this time to influence the sustainment concept ...

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activation team (TAT) met the 17 tanks and four AEVs at KAF. The TAT consisted of an EME MWO with previous experience in Afghanistan, one each of vehicle weapons and FCS Leopard-qualified technicians, and a handful of Leopard-qualified armoured crewmen. In the three weeks that followed the arrival of the first tank in Afghanistan, the advance party and TAT worked diligently to identify and establish a tank maintenance facility at KAF, receive and account for all vehicles, and prepare the tanks for combat operations. The tank squadron leadership took advantage of this time to influence the sustainment concept and collaborate with the 3 Close Support Group technical assist visit (TAV) to source sufficient spare parts, major assemblies and tooling holdings, while implementing an aggressive in-theatre training package and rehearsals for the remainder of the squadron.

The successful deployment of the tank squadron in extremely compressed timelines was a testament to the competence and determination of countless soldiers, leaders and staff officers at all levels in the CF, both at home and abroad. The generation and early deployment of a LO to the ISB and a TAT into theatre to receive and kit tanks was vital to the timely introduction of this capability into combat. This TAT/TAV concept should be sustained and implemented again in



the future; however, there are other considerations that should be assessed more carefully the next time we send armour into combat. Most important of these factors is the need to address early in the planning process the consolidated sustainment requirements of the Leopard fleet of vehicles over a continuum in operations. While installing MEXAS add-on armour and effecting vehicle repairs in Canada, a great deal of tooling, crew and safety equipment went missing prior to the quarantine of vehicles. As spare parts, tooling and POL products were not scaled for properly in Canada, these critical supplies were late in arriving at KAF and the serviceability of the Leopard fleet of vehicles suffered early on as a result. It was not until late November 2006 that a complete upload of 105 mm ammunition had arrived at KAF, precluding the timely deployment of the entire squadron forward.

While the image of a Leopard tank rolling off the back of a C-17 is perhaps more appealing to the media, the first chucks into theatre should be filled with the armoured recovery assets, mobile repair team vehicles, specialty tooling and POLs, and sufficient spare parts for 30 days of operations. Without these critical parts and combat supplies identified, received and organized at KAF, the tanks are useless. In addition to generating a LO for the ISB, escorts for the vehicles and a TAT for reception of the vehicles, the generating formation should deploy a LO team to Ottawa to inform Canadian Expeditionary Force Command (CEFCOM) and Canadian Support Command (CANOSCOM) planning and battle procedure. The LO team should consist of an armoured officer and senior maintenance technician, ideally with previous experience in the deployment of armour on operations.

All moves outside the relative security of KAF or a FOB in Afghanistan are considered combat operations. Accordingly, orders are issued for all operations, using the standardized NATO orders format. When time was particularly constrained or when it was important leadership at all levels understood clearly the sub unit commander's intent and concept of operations, the A Company/B Squadron 1 RCR BG Combat Team Commander frequently issued orders to the crew and section commander level. Given the complexity of COIN operations and the need to minimize collateral damage during breaching operations, rehearsals were always conducted to include a rehearsal of concept (ROC) drill, review of actions-on and war game of potential "what-if" scenarios. Satellite imagery was used extensively to plan breaching routes through vineyards and dense terrain, while Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) data provided current situational awareness on *known* minefields and historical IED locations. The battle captain submitted intelligence and terrain analysis requests, and products were normally pushed forward to the squadron within 24-48 hours of receipt of the request. The ANA with Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT) personnel attended routinely orders groups and were invited to participate early in the planning process. Representatives of higher-level enablers (tactical unmanned aerial vehicles [TUAV]),

close air support [CAS], aviation) were rarely available for orders, but unit and brigade operational staffs conducted extensive liaison to coordinate resource requirements when necessary. Immediately following the completion of a mission, either the officer commanding or battle captain consolidated feedback from each of the troops and platoons on areas to improve and sustain for future operations. These points were discussed at the squadron level, changes were institutionalized if pertinent, and reports were forwarded to the Army Lessons Learned Officer at KAF.

Since deploying to Afghanistan in October 2006, Leopard tank crews have fought alongside Canadian, American, British, Dutch and Afghan soldiers, and have relied extensively on critical enabler support provided by a multitude of other troop contributing nations. The issue of national caveats has received extensive media play in recent months, and there has even been speculation the initial deployment of the tank squadron forward to link up with the BG in contact was delayed in part by the pending Dutch general election in November 2006. While it is important to be cognizant of these caveats and sensitivities, troops at the tactical level only need to know what support they can rely on in a fight with insurgents. Sub-units were normally required to submit to BG operations staff 48-72 hours in advance of requests for dedicated TUAV, aviation and intelligence support, while the CAS line-up was pushed on a daily basis. While TUAV support was generally accessible to the sub unit as required, attack aviation and CAS were normally held in reserve, responsive on short notice to the declaration of Troops in Contact (TIC). The sub unit forward observation officer (FOO)/ joint terminal attack controller (JTAC) team normally controlled the allocation of indirect fires, CAS and attack aviation; however, calls for gun and close combat attack (Apache) fire were routinely conducted by troops on the ground.

The risk of fratricide in a coalition environment requires commanders at all levels to plan operations carefully. Language barriers, tactical differences, battle fatigue and the fog of war all conspire to obscure the situational awareness of troops in close combat with the enemy. To mitigate the threat of 'blue-on-blue' fire, the Canadian BG has standardized vehicle and personal identification friendly force (IFF) markings and standard operating procedures (SOPs). IFF marking schemes are communicated to coalition partners during orders and rehearsals, and direction related to the open fire policy and authorized ROE is also reviewed to minimize the potential of collateral damage. It is imperative that communications information be exchanged during orders, and that radio checks are conducted during battle

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All moves outside the relative security of KAF or a FOB in Afghanistan are considered combat operations.

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procedure prior to crossing the line of departure. American SOF and OMLT, for example, routinely reported as outstations on the tank squadron combat net when working with armour.

The Leopard C2 tank allows us to reach out and touch the enemy with precision direct fires to ranges of 4000 meters, nearly twice the effective range of the M242 25 mm chain gun mounted on our LAV fleet. The Taliban choose not to fight us in the open desert for obvious reasons. Rather, our enemy finds sanctuary in grape-drying huts and compounds with concrete-like walls measuring over a meter in thickness. Prior to the deployment of the Leopard tank, massive volumes of 25 mm fire from the LAVs achieved limited results against these structures, often requiring the BG to resort to the use of aerial bombardment or risk the deployment of dismounted soldiers forward to affect a breach with anti-tank weapons or demolitions. One 105 mm HESH round from the Leopard C2 can punch a hole in excess of five by five meters through a grape-drying hut or compound wall, penetrating structures with reduced collateral damage to surrounding infrastructure and less risk to our dismounted soldiers. While the importance of infantry in the fight-through and deliberate clearance of objective areas is irrefutable, it makes little sense to send dismounted soldiers onto an enemy objective without first

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[T]he importance of infantry  
in the fight-through and  
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eliminating known resistance from a distance with 105 mm HESH. The tank squadrons attached to the TF 3-06 and TF 1-07 BGs have been able to kill numerous insurgents at ranges of 150-3800 meters while mitigating the exposure of our dismounted infantry soldiers to enemy direct fire. Both the coaxially mounted and anti-aircraft configured 7.62 mm C6 General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMGs) mounted on the Leopard C2 have been used to engage and suppress dismounted insurgents at close range. The wooden stock assembly on all anti-aircraft MGs has been replaced with a spade grip assembly to allow crews to bring the weapon to bear more quickly, while maintaining a lower profile in the turret.

A common misconception is that the tank is primarily an anti-armour platform. This is false, especially in the environment in which we currently find ourselves fighting. The Taliban seek tactical advantage in terrain impassable to wheeled vehicles and when able to predict ISAF avenues of approach, they have used, effectively, hit and run tactics that include the use of small arms/RPG ambush, suicide attacks and IEDs. Equipped with a dozer blade, mine roller and mine plough in each troop of four tanks, the Leopard fleet of vehicles has restored tactical mobility to the combined arms team in Afghanistan through its ability to penetrate

grape and marijuana fields, clear mine and IED belts and breach mud walls and compounds that were previously impassable to the LAV III. The mobility options created by the tanks and armoured engineers afford the combat team commander additional ingress routes, making it more difficult for the enemy to sight defensive positions, while decreasing the risks to less protected coalition soldiers. Combat teams grouped with armour have created on numerous occasions throughout the past year improvised roads suitable for wheeled vehicle movement during cordon and search and offensive operations. The enemy was kept off-balance, constantly guessing from where the combat team would advance, and the tanks were able to form a “ring of steel” around the infantry as they conducted deliberate clearance operations in urban areas. Both tank squadrons have used the dozer blades and ploughs extensively to conduct hasty and deliberate minefield breaches and break into complex terrain in order to destroy the enemy and extract personnel and vehicle casualties.

The experience in Afghanistan has demonstrated that existing Canadian breaching doctrine works. By default, mechanized combat teams move in column, with tanks leading, unless extremely confident of the absence of mines and IEDs. When required to slice through complex terrain to close with and destroy insurgents or extract coalition casualties, combat teams always attempted two lanes to ensure freedom of movement. A breaching team consisting of a command and control element, tank troop, (armoured engineering vehicle) AEV Badger, field engineer section, infantry platoon and recovery and medical assets was assigned to each lane. Dozer tanks or AEVs led in close terrain in order to slice through vineyards and irrigation systems, and plough tanks were pushed forward in open/flat terrain to confirm routes for the presence of mines/IEDs. Run-up positions were dozed away from the lane every 50 meters, ensuring the route remained clear for recovery and medical vehicles to effect extraction, and to ensure the all-around protection of the combat team as it advanced in complex terrain. The field engineer section with dismounted close protection conducted vulnerable point searches at all choke points and suspicious areas to confirm the presence of mines/IEDs. Unless the combat team could maintain observation on the entire lane throughout the duration of the operation, it would exfiltrate the area on another route or would confirm lanes with the plough tank leading. The tank squadron commanders controlled the move to and break into enemy objectives, while the infantry company commander naturally retained responsibility for the fight through and consolidation phases.

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There are limitations to the tank implements. As discussed already in this paper, the collateral damage caused by tanks and the aggressive use of their implements can impair our ability to achieve mission success in Afghanistan, where reconstruction is the focus of our efforts. Equally important, there is no system on the battlefield that has the capacity to neutralize without exception all mine/IED threats. While tank ploughs have pushed countless anti-tank mines into their spoil, saving coalition soldiers' lives, IEDs have occasionally detonated on impact with the implement, rendering it ineffective. A Squadron 2 RCR BG has used effectively the tank rollers as an improvised route clearance package (RCP) to *mitigate* the impact of pressure plate detonated IEDs (PPIED); however, we should not gain a false sense of confidence that this implement can protect our soldiers from command detonated and remote-control detonated IEDs. Further, the rollers take considerable time to mount, they require a larger turning radius and they keep us on the tight, canalizing roads of Afghanistan—exactly where the Taliban prefer to plant mines and IEDs.

Leopard C2 tanks have saved Canadian and Afghan lives. While no vehicle on the battlefield is invincible, the Leopard C2 is equipped with add-on MEXAS composite armour panels and spall liner to increase crew protection from direct fire attacks. The Leopard 2A6M will also be prepared with additional turret protection and an improved belly blast protection package to reduce the threat of mines and IEDs. Leopard tanks and their crews deployed to Afghanistan have survived numerous IED and anti-tank mine strikes and recently recoilless rifle, RPG 7 and suicide attacks that may have been catastrophic to other fleets of vehicles. More important than the protection the Leopard offers to its crewmembers, however, is our ability to put 55 tonnes of steel between our dismounted soldiers and the enemy. The tank squadron in Afghanistan is routinely called upon to establish a cordon around objective areas and provide tanks in intimate support to dismounted infantry soldiers as they conduct fight-through and clearance operations in close combat.

The psychological value of the tank is well recognized. Knowledge of the increased firepower and protection offered by the Leopard tanks raised the morale and offensive spirit of the 1 RCR BG, a battle-tested unit that had sustained near continuous combat with the enemy for two months prior to the arrival of B Squadron. The enemy has been less enthusiastic with the capabilities of the tank and the synergies developed by the combined arms team. Numerous signals and HUMINT reports confirm that low-level Taliban fighters are terrified of the tanks and their ability to manoeuvre, and they are often reluctant to attack coalition forces equipped with integral armoured assets. While the tanks have clearly had a significant psychological impact on the insurgency, armoured leaders serving in combat are not so naïve to think the enemy will not work aggressively to find a way to kill Canadian tanks.

2 RCR BG tank operations have been impacted significantly by the heat of the Afghan summer, and a lack of air conditioning and the hydraulic turret drive systems on the Leopard C2 has exacerbated the situation. With external temperatures routinely approaching 50 degrees Celsius in the sun, armoured crews have endured temperatures in excess of 65 degrees Celsius inside the Leopard tank. Tank squadron leadership at all levels has been called upon to develop innovative solutions to minimize the impact of the heat on the health of our soldiers and the serviceability of the tank fleet. Combat operations are routinely conducted at night or early in the morning to take advantage of cooler periods of the day, and leaders have been mandated to institutionalize in their battle rhythm forced hydration. Cooling suits have recently been introduced into theatre and feedback from the soldiers using them has been tremendous. These water-cooled vests have reduced significantly the core body temperatures of armoured crewmen, allowing them to sustain combat operations for longer periods. B Squadron 1 RCR soldiers also developed for each of the tanks improvised dust skirts to reduce the intake of dirt and debris into the tank exhausts. These modifications have increased several times over the operating range of the Leopard before it over-heats.

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[A]rmoured crews have endured temperatures in excess of 65 degrees Celsius inside the Leopard tank.

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### THE NEXT ROUND: RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE WAY AHEAD

While the Leopard C2 has performed in combat exceptionally well, this platform is 30 years old and is starting to show its age. B Squadron 1 RCR BG soldiers submitted to the chain of command in November 2006 a summary of recommended modifications to make the Leopard C2 more suitable for COIN operations in the harsh environment of Afghanistan. Indicative of the tremendous support provided to our soldiers by both military and civilian leadership, the Government of Canada announced in April 2007 that it would not only address Leopard C2 deficiencies in the interim, but that it would authorize the lease for immediate combat operations of 20 Leopard 2A6M from the German Army and a subsequent purchase of 100 Leopard 2A4 and 2A6 from the Dutch. While this tank has not yet been tested in combat, many countries revere the Leopard 2 as one of the best in the world. Weighing in at over 60 tonnes, the Leopard 2 boasts an impressive 1500 horsepower engine (compared to the 830 horsepower of the Leopard C2), and it is equipped with the L55 120 mm smooth bore gun. An electric drive turret allows the gun to be traversed much more quickly, while



reducing significantly the heat inside the vehicle. Most importantly, the Leopard 2A6M will provide to our soldiers unprecedented protection from the mine and IED threat in Afghanistan.

Unfortunately, the Leopard 2 is not yet equipped with the tank implements that have saved many lives in operations. An armoured engineer vehicle on a Leopard 2 chassis (Kodiak) is employed by the Swiss Army; however, it is unarmed and not yet employed by other countries. In order to ensure our tactical battlefield mobility and protection is not impaired with the introduction of the Leopard 2, technical staff should seek to design and apply immediately a modification to the Leopard 2 that will allow implements to be mounted. Tests will need to be conducted on the impact of mounting implements on to this chassis, which is already 15 tonnes heavier than the Leopard C2. Consideration should be given to retaining a mixed fleet of Leopard C2 and Leopard 2 vehicles in theatre until this technical issue can be resolved. While the deployment of the Expedient Route Opening Capability (EROC)—Canada's version of the RCP—will reduce the risk to our soldiers while forced to move on routes and through canalizing terrain, this system does not have ploughs capable of conducting hasty minefield extractions, nor is it equipped with dozer blades to slice through complex terrain when required. Many of the protective advantages of the Leopard 2 will be negated with the absence of implements.

The 105 mm HESH round is the bread-and-butter munition for the tank squadron in theatre: each round knocks five-by-five meter holes into grape-drying huts and we have found it highly effective against dismounts at ranges of 150 to 3800 meters. Although the Swedish Army has apparently fielded a 120 mm high explosive round and experimentation in the United States is ongoing with a 120 mm Insensitive Munitions High Explosive—Tracer (IMHE-T) munition, Canadian Leopard 2A6M tanks will deploy initially without this capability. Until we are able to introduce to combat a tested 120 mm HE round, we should assess immediately the accuracy and breaching capability of different variants of 120 mm High Explosive Armour Piercing (HEAT) and practice ammunition, and we should consider the acquisition of a canister round for the anti-personnel role in close combat. Armoured Piercing Fin Stabilized Discarding Sabot (APFSDS or Sabot) will continue to have limited value in Afghanistan. This munition is most effective against other armoured vehicles, with which the Taliban are not equipped. The Sabot round offers minimal breaching capability, and it actually threatens increased collateral damage because it does not explode on contact with its intended target. Tests conducted by the Danish Army on

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The 105 mm HESH round  
is the bread-and-butter  
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squadron in theatre ...

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the DM 12 HEAT round have shown positive breaching effects, and modifications to the DM 33 APFSDS round have also increased the fragmentation of the round on impact with the target.

Canada's role in Afghanistan is changing, and it will continue to evolve until the end of our current mandate in February 2009. Cognizant that our ticket out of that country will be the creation of a credible and effective military and police force, the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), General Rick Hillier, announced recently his priority now is to devote more energy to the capacity building of the ANSF.<sup>5</sup> Effective with the immediate deployment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Royal 22<sup>e</sup> Régiment (3 R22<sup>e</sup>R) BG, one of the three infantry companies previously committed to combat operations in Kandahar Province will be tasked to assume the responsibilities of an OMLT. The OMLT, embedded with three Kandaks (battalions) will train and mentor Afghan soldiers and will maintain liaison with ISAF forces in order to facilitate enabling support for ANA operations. Two mechanized infantry companies, a tank squadron, a reconnaissance squadron, an artillery battery and a composite engineer squadron have been retained in the Canadian BG for continued security operations.

The Canadian BG will continue to buy time for the advancement of ANSF capacity building and reconstruction initiatives by keeping the Taliban off balance through aggressive security operations. With fewer than 1000 soldiers available for kinetic operations, we will be challenged to find an appropriate balance between holding key terrain in areas where the Taliban are most likely to undermine support for the Government of Afghanistan while being able to project devastating combat power throughout the entire AO. Assuming other countries will not in the near term contribute additional ground forces for operations in Kandahar Province, the Canadian BG will likely have to task as a steady state one infantry company, augmented with key battlefield enablers, to seize and hold ground of strategic importance to ISAF. This company could retain two to three FOBs within the designated Canadian AO, in which steady state operations would be synchronized closely with ANSF and the PRT initiatives, while disrupting insurgents attempting to infiltrate the area.

The tank squadron and the remaining mechanized infantry company should form the basis of a mobile strike force, capable of surging rapidly and violently throughout Kandahar Province to locate and hammer Taliban cells. In order to promote the credibility of the ANA, all operations should be, or at least perceived to be, Afghan led. The mechanized combat team would serve as a very visible indicator of the combat power at the disposal of the ANA, and it could facilitate the transition and evolution of our commitment to Afghanistan. As conventional forces thin out in favour of bolstering the OMLT and PRT, the mechanized strike force could be retained as the Joint Task Force Afghanistan Reserve. We should avoid the temptation to re-deploy to Canada first the Task Force Afghanistan

Enhancement Package simply because it was last on the ground and perceived to be of least importance to the continued success to our mission. By the time we are ready to declare the ANA capable of ensuring the security of Southern Afghanistan, this force will have sufficient dismounted soldiers in its ranks. It will not, however, have its own integral enablers provided currently by the coalition.

A reinforced Canadian mechanized combat team organized with a tank squadron, infantry company, armoured engineer troop, reconnaissance/Intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) troop, artillery battery (with FOO/JTAC team), integral echelon and PRT/civil-military cooperation(CIMIC)/psychological operations (PSYOPS) detachments should remain on the ground until another coalition partner is prepared to assume our responsibilities in Kandahar, or until the ANA is able to truly stand on its own. Although a combat team is normally commanded by a major, a lieutenant-colonel should command this tactical grouping as it would be stacked with multiple enablers and to ensure the ability of this organization to influence JTF-AFG battle procedure.

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The mechanized combat team would serve as a very visible indicator of the combat power at the disposal of the ANA ...

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## CONCLUSION

Sustained combat in Afghanistan for the past 18 months has confirmed the effectiveness and professionalism of the Canadian Army; however, many of our observations from battle are not new. Perhaps most obvious of the lessons we have relearned is the importance of the combined arms team in full spectrum operations, and the continued significance of the tank and armoured engineers in the COE. While our understanding of the threat and the complexity of operations in the modern battle space is sound, we have been excessively optimistic about our ability to find the enemy and determine his intentions without having to fight for information. We will strive to achieve knowledge-based and sensor-led operations, but we are not there yet. Until we can deny the enemy a vote, it will be necessary to form and deploy flexible combined arms teams capable of advancing to contact, and crushing opposing forces with overwhelming combat power and manoeuvre in extremely complex terrain, by day and by night.

Many of the force developers and critics of armour that informed recent Army Transformation initiatives argued that tanks had become increasingly irrelevant in the COE for a multitude of reasons: they are expensive to maintain, they are not

easily deployable and they can be vulnerable in complex and urban terrain. These observations are true, but they are self-evident and apply to most other elements of the combined arms team, all of which have their own weaknesses and deficiencies when operating independent of the other enablers. Providing increased firepower, protection, tactical battlefield mobility, and a definitive psychological impact, the tank will remain an invaluable tool in the arsenal of the Canadian Army for the foreseeable future.

## ENDNOTES

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- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Hillier, General Rick. Quoted by Levitz, Stephanie, “Hillier Says Training Afghan Army Now Top Priority”, <http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/Canada/2007/06/17/4268022-cp.html>; Internet, accessed 2 August 2007.

## THE AUTHOR

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## JOINT/COMBINED ARMS

# AIR POWER'S ILLUSION?

## ISRAEL'S 2006 CAMPAIGN IN THE LEBANON\*

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GROUP CAPTAIN NEVILLE PARTON

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*This article is based upon one produced for the Royal Air Force's 'Air Power Review' journal, which was written with the aim of exploring some particular aspects of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) campaign in the Lebanon last year—namely those specifically related to the use of air power. The focus on air power should very definitely not be seen as indicative of a belief that this was the only important area of the campaign—although it is the author's contention that the way in which Israeli air power was used that had a great deal to do with the final outcome.*

The 2006 conflict that took place in the South of Lebanon is one which will be much discussed in years to come, and hopefully be studied by many prescient observers. One of the reasons that the campaign deserves further study has to do with the particular manner in which air power was employed, and the title of this article was chosen to reflect the general understanding within the media of the way in which events in this area had played out. In fact, headlines for articles during the course of the conflict ranged from “Air power won't do it” (*The Washington Post* 25 July 2006), through “Air power assumptions shot down”

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\* This article first appeared in *The British Army Review*, Number 143. Reprinted by permission.

(Reuters 2 August 2006) to “The illusion of air power” (*The Economist* 24 August 2006). Enough, certainly, to make any serious exponent of air power wonder exactly what had happened, and perhaps more importantly, why. If any further justification for study were needed, the resignation of General Halutz earlier on this year, the first-ever airman to be the Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF), due solely to the performance of the IDF during the conflict undoubtedly provides it.

It is highly likely that there will be more and more ‘lessons learned’ that will be drawn out from the conflict as the facts become more widely available.<sup>1</sup> However given the limits of a short article, this particular paper will limit itself to answering one central question, which is, quite simply, did air power indeed fail to deliver in the 2006 Lebanon conflict?

All of these articles centred around the same point—that air power throughout its existence has promised to be a ‘silver bullet’ solution to military problems by producing independent strategic effect, but has consistently failed to do so. Or in other words, it is suggested that there is a fundamental problem with the theory that underpins air power’s ability to produce such effect by itself. This allows a more precise question to be framed, which is: did the Israeli use of air power in the Lebanon illustrate a failure of underpinning air power theory which resulted in the inability to achieve the desired strategic end state? One caveat needs to be raised before proceeding any further, which is that this paper is entirely based upon open-source material, and not on the basis of any privileged information. In terms of organisation it will consider the background to the conflict, provide an overview of the campaign, and analyse the aims and end states before answering the question and drawing some lessons in conclusion.

It is hard to imagine now, but for the first two decades of its existence Israel’s border with Lebanon was one of its most secure. However, all that changed when the Palestine

Liberation Organisation (PLO) began to establish itself in the area, initially in 1967 after the defeat of the Arab forces in the Arab/Israeli war that year, but significantly reinforced in 1970 when the PLO was effectively evicted from Jordan. From this point onwards, cross-border terrorist activity steadily grew—and with it the question as to how Israel was to respond. Initially this took the form of artillery bombardments, air strikes, and raids against likely targets, but as Lebanon fell into civil war and much of it came to be influenced by Syria, Israel felt this was insufficient, and in 1982 it invaded Lebanon, reaching Beirut within a week and establishing a buffer zone south of the Litani River. But instead of being able to impose its will within

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the country that it occupied, it found itself fighting a counter-insurgency campaign that would last for the entire 18 years of its occupation—and it was during this time that the organisation that now known as Hisbollah<sup>2</sup> grew up amongst the Shi'ite communities of Southern Lebanon, gaining support first from Syria, and then latterly from Iran.

However, Israel's experience during its long and bloody occupation of Lebanon convinced it that such an approach was to be avoided again if at all possible. Accordingly a new doctrine was developed by the IDF Institute for Campaign Doctrine Studies<sup>3</sup> (ICDS) after the withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, although the first public version appeared in an academic paper entitled "*The Vulture and The Snake*".<sup>4</sup> Although this is a long and detailed exposition regarding the use of air power in countering guerrilla warfare, the basic concept was that Israel would rely upon its proven air supremacy to build an asymmetric advantage. Under this construct the Israeli Air Force (IAF) would become the predominant offensive element (the vulture) that would operate against the terrorists or guerrillas wherever they were located (the snakes). This would require a combination of elements: unmanned air vehicles (UAV) to provide persistent surveillance, fast jets and precision guided munitions (PGM) for kinetic effect, a robust and rapid C2 system to allow time-sensitive targets (TST) to be dealt with, and helicopters both for strike and air manoeuvre operations.

Ground forces would be expected to operate in defence of Israel's borders, but offensively would only be used in small, rapid operations in enemy territory to handle particular groups of the enemy who could not easily be dealt with from the air or where the aim was to capture individuals or equipment. In other words, such actions would effectively only use Special Forces (SF). The overall concept was heavily reliant upon the fact that 'aerial dominance' would produce battle-winning results, and was politically acceptable because it meant that known weaknesses in the IDF ground forces could be ignored. It also played to a long-standing Israeli preference to use technology as a means of avoiding losses of their own people in ground warfare, especially in urban areas. Whilst not an effects-based approach in its own right, the doctrine came to be associated with the introduction of effects-based methodology and taxonomy into the IDF, again led by the ICDS. This concept appeared to have worked relatively well on the West Bank, when dealing with Hamas, and had also been exercised, at least at command level, against other possible scenarios. Indeed

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an exercise was conducted in June 2006 based, rather presciently, on the kidnapping of an IDF soldier by Hisbollah.<sup>5</sup> In the exercise, the IDF launched a short but intense air and land stand-off campaign against Hisbollah, to which Hisbollah responded with rocket attacks on Israeli towns. The IDF countered with a ground operation whereby three divisions took over Southern Lebanon and during the course of a month, operating closely with aerial support, destroyed Hisbollah's ability to operate in the area.

Hisbollah's doctrine is more difficult to determine, although achievement of their longer-term political objectives certainly shapes all of their activity.<sup>6</sup> But what is clear is that they had studied Israel's doctrine very carefully, as well as looking at their practices as evidenced in the Palestinian territories, and it is probably safe to say that such concepts and doctrine as they did possess were based around enabling the organisation to survive an Israeli attack and continue to operate, and at the same time being able to strike at Israel itself, and to confront Israel in the area where it had traditionally prided itself—the performance of its fighting troops on the ground. The other element that should be made clear at this point is the extent to which Hisbollah had been armed and advised by Syria and Iran during the preceding years. In particular a wide range of missiles had been obtained, with much greater capabilities than the Katyushas which had formed the bulk of their offensive capability in the past. A range of surface-to-surface, surface-to-air, anti-shipping and anti-tank missiles had entered the inventory, including the Fajr 3 and 5, Zelzal 1 and 2, Raad 1 and Khaibar 1 surface to surface missiles.<sup>7</sup> Other weapons believed to have been used by Hizbollah include the C-802 or C-701 Chinese anti-ship missile, and a range of anti-tank systems such as the AT-3 (Sagger), AT-4 (Spigot), AT-5 (Spandrel), AT-13 (Metis-M) and AT-14 (Kornet-E).<sup>8</sup> The ranges of some of the surface-to-surface weapons are shown in figure 1. Although details were obviously sketchy, in 2004 the Head of Israeli Intelligence had suggested that Hisbollah probably possessed around 13,000 missiles, with a small but significant percentage of the longer range weapons in their inventory.

Looking at an overview of the campaign itself, viewed on a week-by-week basis,<sup>9</sup> beginning with the Hizbollah attack on Israeli forces on the Lebanese/Israel border, where in a well-prepared action on 12 July 2006 they abducted two IDF personnel, destroyed an Israeli main battle tank, killed eight soldiers and injured a further six. The Israeli government immediately stated that it held the Lebanese government responsible for the actions of Hisbollah, and even though the Lebanese Prime Minister and Parliament denied any knowledge of the raid and publicly stated that they did not condone it, Israel commenced a massive military operation from the air. The head of the IDF, General Halutz, threatened that unless the prisoners were freed then the IDF would “*turn Lebanon's clock back 20 years*”. The initial approach chosen was to blockade Lebanon, signalled by the attacks upon Beirut's international

airport, and destroying road links to prevent re-supply. At the same time strikes were undertaken to remove Hisbollah's military capability by destroying its leadership and command and control functions, along with its weapons. However whilst Operation 'Change of Direction' (also known as 'Just Desserts' and 'Appropriate Retribution') was being launched, Hisbollah responded with a missile attack against Haifa—the furthest South that it had ever managed to reach into Israel. The following day an Israeli Sa'ar 5-class missile boat, *INS Hanit*, that was blockading the waters 10 nautical miles off of the Lebanese coast was severely damaged after being hit by a C-802 (Yingji-82) anti-ship missile, with four sailors killed.<sup>10</sup>

The first two weeks saw the Israeli forces attempting to put their pre-war doctrine into practice with a considerable concentration of force being applied from the air, averaging over 200 sorties a day, but although air strikes were credited with having destroyed five long-range and ten short-range missile launchers in the first few days, they were unable to prevent Hisbollah from firing over 700 missiles into Israel during the first week of the war. Moreover the rocket strikes did not just pose a random threat to the civilian population; they also caused significant damage to a regional air base within Northern Israel that was involved in directing the campaign, and also forced the move of an IAF logistics and maintenance centre for its Apache and Cobra attack helicopters to the South of the country. Considerable use was made of UAVs to provide round-the-clock surveillance and direct strike activity, but some targets proved particularly difficult. A raid against a single Hisbollah headquarters facility saw 23 tons of ordnance dropped to no apparent effect, and whilst road links to both Beirut and Southern Lebanon were systematically destroyed to prevent the possibility of re-supply, the flow of rockets against Israel continued unabated. Indeed during the course of the conflict over 5,500 Israeli homes were hit, 300,000 civilians displaced, and up to a million were regularly having to move into bomb shelters, effectively paralyzing normal life throughout a third of Israel's territory. Hisbollah's television and radio stations remained on the air, and meanwhile worldwide public opinion began to show evidence of disquiet regarding Israel's attacks against Lebanese civilian infrastructure targets such as water facilities, electrical plant, fuel supplies, hospitals and industrial sites and factories.

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The third week saw the struggle moving into a new phase, as Israel began to move into Lebanon, with two brigades in operation—firstly in the village of Marun Al-Ras, and then in the town of Bint Jbeil—whilst an additional three divisions of reservists

(15,000 troops) were mobilized. An aerial assault was carried out against a hospital in Baalbek, an area described as a “Hisbollah stronghold”, with the intended target of the raid reported to have been a senior member of Hisbollah as well as a Lebanese representative of the Iranian spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, although the IDF denied that this was the case. The deaths of 4 unarmed UN observers after an Israeli air strike hit their observation post added to international pressure regarding the nature of the Israeli air campaign. Although there was no let up in the aerial campaign over Lebanon, Hisbollah continued to launch significant numbers of missiles at Israel, peaking at around 130 in one hour. Even though the majority were the short-range Katyushas, others were landing 50-75 km to the south of Israel’s northern border. There was also by this point a public disagreement between Mossad which stated that it believed that Hisbollah was capable of continuing fighting at the current level for a long time, and military intelligence which believed Hisbollah had been severely damaged. Military academics began to question publicly the Israeli reliance on air power in the current operations.

By the fourth week three IDF divisions were operating in Lebanon, but still struggling against Hisbollah’s first line of defence—the Nasser brigade. The IAF continued to attack Hizbollah targets within Lebanon, as well as more general infrastructure targets, and Hizbollah’s leader vowed to strike Tel Aviv in retaliation for Israel’s bombardment of Beirut. The Israeli Defense Minister announced that he had instructed the IDF to prepare for “*a swift takeover of the entire area south of the Litani [River]*” and to operate in all the areas where rockets had been launched, which would represent an incursion of around 30 km. After bombing the last land routes into Beirut, and effectively cutting off the Lebanese capital from relief supplies, Israel issued a statement saying the attacks were designed to thwart Syrian attempts to re-supply Hisbollah. Almost simultaneously Hisbollah rockets struck Hadera, about 40 kilometers north of Tel Aviv, the southernmost point the Islamic militia reaches with its attacks during the conflict, and fifteen people were killed in a single day by Hisbollah’s deadliest wave of rocket attacks on Israel since fighting began. A UN Security Council vote on a resolution to end the conflict was delayed, and the Arab League accused the UN of doing nothing to solve the crisis, saying that the conflict would sow “the seeds of hatred and extremism across the Middle East”. Israeli military officials announced that the Israeli army was now holding land up to 8km inside Lebanon, and that they were expanding their ground offensive, pushing troops up to 20km over the border—but it was only on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of operations that the Israeli cabinet approved a significant expansion of the ground operations—four days before the ceasefire came into being.

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The final week of the conflict saw intense activity, both military and diplomatic, leading up to the ceasefire. The UN humanitarian relief coordinator criticised both sides for not stopping fighting for long enough to allow aid to reach 120,000 civilians who needed help in southern Lebanon. Meanwhile Israeli forces made their deepest push into Lebanon, with some troops reaching the Litani River, whilst Hisbollah continued to fire considerable numbers of rockets into northern Israel (200 on the last day of the war) and put up fierce resistance to Israeli forces on the ground. On Sunday 13 August the prime ministers of Israel and Lebanon agreed to a cessation of hostilities beginning at 0500 GMT on the following day, whilst the Israeli cabinet approved a UN resolution calling for a halt to the month-old war in Lebanon, and at the same time also asked the US government to speed up delivery of short-range anti-personnel rockets armed with cluster munitions,<sup>11</sup> which it could use to strike Hisbollah missile sites in Lebanon. Some of the fiercest fighting of the month-long conflict took place in the final hours running up to the UN ceasefire coming into effect. At 0500 GMT guns fell silent, although with isolated incidents reported across southern Lebanon.

It is difficult to give an idea of the absolute military overall scale of the campaign in such a short space, but the statistics below, largely based upon data issued by the IDF, should help to fill in the gaps.

Length of conflict	33 days
Overall Casualties	Israeli – 119 military, 41 civilians Lebanon – 500 Hisbollah fighters, 900 civilians (both approximate)
Israeli Air Force	Manned – over 10,000 fighter sorties UAV – over 16 000 flying hrs Discrete targets struck – over 7,000 Aircraft lost – 5 (1 shot down, 4 lost due to accidents)
Israeli Army	Artillery shells fired – over 100,000 MBTs lost – 20 (14 to ATGMs, 6 to mines)
Hisbollah	Rockets fired on Israel – 3,970 Rocket launchers destroyed – 126

In terms of analysis, consideration of the aims of both sides in this conflict is vital as military activity in and of itself is not purposeful, but requires some desired political end state in order to give it rationality. While it may appear to make sense to look at Hisbollah first, as they were the initial aggressor, it is simpler to

begin with the Israelis, since their objective are much easier to ascertain. Two key aims were outlined by the Israeli government to the world at large: first to free its abducted soldiers, and secondly to remove the terrorist threat from its Northern border by destroying Hezbollah. As is often the case of course, public statements and internal policies whilst linked may be slightly different, and it appears three aims were outlined by the Israeli government and handed to the IDF to translate into an operational level plan. The first of these was to create the conditions for the return of the prisoners, the second to damage significantly Hezbollah's military capability, and the third to coerce the Lebanese government into assuming more effective sovereignty over Southern Lebanon. To this the IDF added a fourth aim of its own, which was to strengthen Israel's deterrent image with its Arab neighbours.<sup>12</sup>

Hezbollah's aims are more opaque, but it seems highly likely that they regarded their activity on 12 July as being at a 'normal' level—that is not significantly escalatory—and aimed at securing prisoners who could be used in their own long-standing campaign to gain release for prisoners held in Israeli jails. Certainly comments made after the war by Sheikh Nasrallah indicated that Hezbollah were taken aback by the strength of the Israeli response.<sup>13</sup> Another suggestion is that Hezbollah's principal backers, Syria and Iran—each with their own agenda—were looking to see some return for their significant investment. What is beyond doubt is that even if they did not expect the response that did occur, they were not found wanting in terms of preparation, a point we shall come back to later. In one way Hezbollah's war aims could be seen as simply being defined by those of Israel: if Israel wanted to release the prisoners and destroy Hezbollah, then all Hezbollah needed to do to 'win' was to retain the prisoners and remain in being.

Taken on one level the actual end state is quite straightforward—the prisoners had still not been released,<sup>14</sup> and Hezbollah remains in being, with a considerable portion of its inventory intact. Martin van Creveld suggested, two months after the conflict ended, that the final end state might be more advantageous for Israel than it appeared at first sight, with a neutral force inserted between Israel and Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, and a ceasefire that appeared then to be holding.<sup>15</sup> Hezbollah's leader also implied that they were not content with the outcome for the Lebanese people, stating in a public interview that if they had believed that there was a one percent probability that Israel would have responded in the way they did then they would not have taken the action.<sup>16</sup> And what about Hezbollah themselves—they have not noticeably improved their ability to secure the release of prisoners from Israeli jails, and indeed have conceded a number of

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[T]he final end state might be more advantageous for Israel than it appeared at first sight ...

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further POWs. However, what they have achieved is perhaps a greater gain from their perspective, in that they have made clear the limitations of the IDF in the starkest of forms. Hisbollah has demonstrated that it could survive despite Israel's massive military advantage, could inflict substantial and painful losses on the Israeli army (in relative terms) and above all take the conflict to Israel itself whenever it wished through rocket attacks—in other words, directly undermining the myth of Israeli military invincibility. To some extent whether this is correct or not is immaterial: it is the perception that is important, and the popular perception amongst the Arab world, as well as in a considerable part of the West, and most tellingly in Israel itself, is that in this particular conflict, Hisbollah outperformed the IDF in most areas. In other words the 'battle of narratives', which in modern terms is often as important as the action on the ground, appeared to have been won by Hisbollah; a view certainly evidenced by the *Economist* on its cover for the week beginning the 19 August 2006.

It is possible to discern two distinct threads to the IDF operational activity—the first aimed at directly attacking Hisbollah and thus reducing its military capability, and the second aimed at coercing the Lebanese government into taking responsibility for the sovereignty of its own country, and thereby reducing Hisbollah's ability to operate. So in air power theory terms, the two elements 'on trial' were firstly the ability of air power to deal substantively and decisively with an insurgency or conflict with irregular forces, and secondly the capability to create coercive effect against a state actor.

The IDF's activities were obviously planned from the outset as a predominantly air-led campaign—in accordance with their existing doctrine—and this was particularly evident in the way in which the Israeli army was called up, with decisions being made very late in the

day. From the Hisbollah side, it is evident that not only had considerable preparation been made in terms of the acquisition of weapons systems, but a great deal of work had been carried out in terms of preparing hardened and secure command and control facilities—including television and radio broadcasting services, both vital to convey Hisbollah's views and influence perceptions. Considerable work had also gone into the building of fortified positions along the border with Israel, and in some depth, with much thought given to both strengths and concealment. A high level of training and courage was also evident in their operations against the Israeli army, where despite being out-gunned they used their weapons to good effect—even if the kill to loss ratio stood at approximately 5 to 1 overall in the Israeli's favour.

Taking the question of air power in counter-insurgency first, it has become very clear that the IDF's most overwhelming conclusion is that they failed simply because

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A high level of training and courage was also evident in their operations against the Israeli army ...

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their doctrine was wrong, with this being blamed upon ‘aerial arrogance’ amongst senior officers<sup>17</sup>. Their development of a doctrine of counter-insurgency which effectively ignored the need for ground-based activity meant that when ground forces were eventually introduced, it had (to quote one of their reports) “created confusion in terminology and misunderstanding of basic military principles” which led to confusion at all levels from the operational down to the tactical—van Creveld tellingly states that ‘units continued to receive contradictory, ever-changing orders’,<sup>18</sup> and the team who investigated the General Staff’s performance concluded that ‘General Halutz was unjustifiably locked on the idea of an aerial campaign, postponing time and time again the launch of ground manoeuvres’<sup>19</sup> and when land operations did begin ‘forces were not given specific objectives and time frames to attain them’,<sup>20</sup> which may be a side-swipe at the effects based approach as applied under their extant doctrine. The clearest indication of a change in approach has come in the form of the IDF’s work plan for 2007, which sees ‘a significantly larger investment in ground forces, after years in which the air force was favoured over other services.’<sup>21</sup>

In terms of the coercive nature of the air campaign, putting aside any questions of legality regarding the targeting of significant portions of the civilian infrastructure, the fundamental feasibility of the approach must be considered. Israel was keen throughout the conflict to compare their actions with NATO’s operations with regard to Kosovo,<sup>22</sup> and they themselves made clear that they were attempting to coerce the Lebanese government into undertaking particular courses of action. But the Lebanese parliament is split almost down the middle, with attitudes towards Syria and Hisbollah marking the dividing line. Of the 128 seats in the parliament, the anti-Syrian camp has a small majority (72 seats)—although this is an alliance grouping, and the Prime Minister’s party only has half of these seats. The rest of the seats belong to pro-Syrian and pro-Hisbollah factions, who thus hold a commanding position within the parliament (and indeed hold two government appointments). Without descending too much into the complex and finely-balanced world of Lebanese politics, what is clear is that the Prime Minister’s authority is quite limited—certainly when it comes to any authority over Hisbollah—which makes the situation very different in terms of the likelihood of a successful coercive approach compared with the situation in Kosovo, where effectively one individual had the power to turn on or turn off military action. A dogmatic approach to the application of doctrine appears to have resulted in a considerable amount of effort being expended, as well as a significant loss of life amongst a civilian population and devastation of much of a nation’s economy. All this without any appreciable gain in terms of the desired end-state or potential political advantage.<sup>23</sup>

Returning to our consideration of air power’s role, it is now possible to look at the two aspects in a slightly different light. The IDF doctrine which stressed the primacy of the IAF in the counter-insurgency role without doubt ignored some 80-plus years



of previous experience and doctrine, and appears to have resulted from an over-stated belief in the impact of new technology. Fundamentally it was bad doctrine. On the coercive front however, there appears to have been a dogmatic application of doctrine without an adequate appreciation of environmental factors at the operational level. Overall then neither aspect of air power appears to have failed due to any inherent flaws in theory, but instead due to either poor doctrine or a failure in imagination and understanding in application. And whilst the doctrine writer's get-out clause which states that doctrine is 'authoritative, but requires judgement in application'<sup>24</sup> has become somewhat hackneyed, it is nevertheless fundamentally true—doctrine should not be applied in a checklist-type manner.

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When considering the overall outcome, due precedence must be given to the (unclassified) interim report produced by the highest level examination into Israel's conduct of the war, the Inquiry Commission, which was set up in September 2006 by the government to consider all aspects of the campaign.<sup>25</sup> This very firmly lays the blame for the conduct and outcome of the campaign on a triumvirate of the Prime Minister, Defence Minister and Chief of Staff, with a number of extremely telling observations. Perhaps foremost amongst these is a statement that "*some of the declared goals of the war were not clear and ... were not achievable by the authorized modes of military action.*"<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, the decision to respond to the kidnapping with an immediate, intensive and escalatory response was not based on any detailed analysis of the situation, but instead on an impulsive reaction and a "*weakness in strategic thinking*". This in turn led to military activity which quite simply was unlikely to result in the achievement of a particular end-state.

In other words—it is quite clear that this was not a failure of air power *per se*. Instead it represented a failure at the strategic level to define an end-state that was militarily achievable, or to consider the desired end-state and apply the most appropriate levers of power to achieve it. No form of military power was likely to have resulted in the stated aims being achieved, and in that sense air power, at the theoretical and practical levels cannot be held culpable. However, the development of a doctrine which espoused the use of air power in ways that arguably ignored the lessons of both history and common sense is a different matter. This significantly contributed to the immediate response, which simply applied doctrine and training as expected, but there also appears to have been a dogmatic approach to the use of that doctrine, which in turn led to sterility in thinking at both the strategic and operational levels.

This should be a clear warning to any military organisation, but to air forces in particular. Whilst they have tremendous ability to create strategic effect in the right circumstances, they also have limitations, especially in 'small wars'. In this regard

it is certainly worth paying heed to the cautionary note sounded by retired USMC Colonel ‘TX’ Hammes, when he recently suggested that perhaps we should be concentrating on Mission Sensitive Targeting, as opposed to purely Time Sensitive Targeting. Here the emphasis is on the observe and orientate elements of the OODA loop, together with the need for an appropriate response, rather than a default-setting kinetic response.<sup>27</sup> And indeed there is a significant body of experience about how best to carry out counter-insurgency operations, much of it British—and all of it points towards the need for a genuinely ‘comprehensive approach.’<sup>28</sup> Air power has a tremendous amount to offer in such campaigns, but it needs to see itself as a partner to, rather than a replacement for, surface forces. Its most important contribution will generally be in enabling those surface forces to be far more effective—by providing unparalleled mobility, intelligence, and when required devastating firepower. But unless these elements, together with those of the wider military approach, form part of a broader strategy that addresses (or at least accepts) the underlying causes of the insurgency then success is most unlikely.

Whilst any strategic doctrine has to represent a statement of belief in how war will be fought in the immediate future, and the impact that changes of technology and the environment will have on that manner of fighting, unless

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Air power has a tremendous amount to offer in such campaigns, but it needs to see itself as a partner to, rather than a replacement for, surface forces.

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it is equally grounded in lessons from the past it is unlikely to prove ‘sound.’ Certainly it could be argued that one of the key lessons from the past is that if your doctrine is based on faulty premises, so much time and effort is spent defending it that when it comes to a situation where it is needed, it tends to be applied in a very rigid manner. An intellectually-defensive stance does not encourage the free-thinking and questioning approach necessary to develop genuine strategic thinkers!<sup>29</sup> This latter aspect certainly includes the necessity to understand, not underestimate, your opponent, and Hisbollah’s ability to manipulate the media is perhaps an obvious example of this. Indeed Sheikh Nasrallah has even managed to use the Inquiry Commission report to his advantage, having been quoted as being impressed by Israel’s war report, in that “*it has finally and officially decided the issue of victory and defeat.*”<sup>30</sup>

One of the oft-quoted dictums in military learning is that whilst it is good to learn from your mistakes, it is even better to learn from those of others. The Lebanon campaign of 2006 presents a unique opportunity to consider a set of lessons that have been costly to obtain, and which contain much that is relevant to the type of operations that the RAF is either already engaged in, or may be in the future.

The lessons may make unpleasant or difficult reading, but to ignore them would be foolish in the extreme; if they are not learnt, then the next time round it might indeed be fair to categorise the results as 'a failure in air power'.

## ENDNOTES

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- 1 Other first-pass areas identified by the Israelis as requiring further examination include intelligence, army training, air/land co-operation, media operations, littoral operations, combat logistics support and combating modern anti-tank weapons.
- 2 Various interpretations of the Arabic name *طاللا بزح* (Party of God) are in use, e.g. Hizbullah, Hizbollah, Hezballah, Hizballah, and Hizb Allah, but for the sake of consistency *Hizbollah* is used throughout this paper.
- 3 The Institute was set up in 1994 both to develop doctrine and educate senior commanders (Jane's Defence Weekly, *Debriefing Teams Brand IDF Doctrine 'Completely Wrong'*, 3 January 2007, p. 7)
- 4 Shmuel L Gordon, "The Vulture and The Snake. Counter-Guerilla Air Warfare: The War in Southern Lebanon", *Mideast Security and Policy Studies*, No 39, July 1998.
- 5 Jane's Defence Weekly, *Israel Introspective after Lebanon offensive*, 23 August 2006, p. 18–19.
- 6 Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, "Hizbollah's Outlook in the Current Conflict Part One: Motives, Strategy and Objectives", August 2006, [www.carnegieendowment.org/files/saad\\_ghorayeb\\_final.pdf](http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/saad_ghorayeb_final.pdf)
- 7 An insight into the selection of names for Hizbollah's missiles can be obtained from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/hizballah-rockets.htm>
- 8 Anthony H. Cordesman, 'Preliminary "Lessons" of the Israeli-Hezbollah War', [http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/060817\\_isr\\_hez\\_lessons.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/060817_isr_hez_lessons.pdf)
- 9 A wide range of sources were used to compile the campaign overview, ranging from websites such as the BBC, Israeli Government, Al Jazeera and a range of American commentators, through to publications from Jane's Defence Weekly to the Economist. For the sake of keeping footnotes to a manageable length for this element, specific items are not individually referenced.
- 10 An Egyptian civilian merchant ship was also hit by a Hizbollah missile in the same attack and sank in a matter of minutes, although the casualty figures are still disputed.
- 11 The M-26 rocket, for use with the MLRS weapon system.
- 12 *Israel Introspective after Lebanon offensive*, p. 18.
- 13 Lebanese television interview as reported on [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/5291420.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/5291420.stm) ("We did not think that there was a 1% chance that the kidnapping would lead to a war of this scale and magnitude" Sheikh Nasrallah said.)
- 14 Indeed still have not been – and there has since been a suggestion that both of them were so seriously injured that they might not have survived the day.

- 15 Martin van Creveld, 'Israel's Lebanese War: A Preliminary Assessment', *RUSI Journal*, October 2006, p. 40–43.
- 16 Reported via various sources – see <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost/JPArticle/ShowFull&cid=1154525950456> for an Israeli perspective.
- 17 Jane's Defence Weekly, *Debriefing teams brand IDF doctrine 'completely wrong'*, 3 January 2007, p. 7.
- 18 Israel's Lebanese War: A Preliminary Assessment, p. 42.
- 19 *Debriefing teams brand IDF doctrine 'completely wrong'*, p. 7.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 Jane's Defence Weekly, *IDF shifts focus to ground forces*, 10 January 2007, p. 7.
- 22 In fact Prime Minister Olmert made a direct (if misleading comparison) with the NATO campaign during an interview with *Welt am Sonntag* on 6 Aug 06 (From where do they actually take the right to preach to Israel? The European countries attacked Kosovo and killed ten thousand civilians. Ten thousand civilians! And none of these countries had to suffer before also by only one rocket!) The original interview can be found at [http://www.welt.de/print-wams/article145804/Sie\\_haben\\_Israel\\_sowieso\\_gehasst.html](http://www.welt.de/print-wams/article145804/Sie_haben_Israel_sowieso_gehasst.html)
- 23 Indeed, if the aim of the Israeli government was to encourage the Lebanese government to take more responsibility for security within its own borders, then it appears to have had the opposite effect with Syrian-backed elements now challenging the government at every opportunity. See *Analysis: Lebanon's New Flashpoint* ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/6684337.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/6684337.stm))
- 24 JWP 0–01, *British Defence Doctrine*, p1.2
- 25 "To look into the preparation and conduct of the political and security levels concerning all dimensions of the Northern Campaign which started on July 12<sup>th</sup> 2006". (<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Communiques/2007/Winograd+Inquiry+Commission+submits+Interim+Report+30-Apr-2007.htm>)
- 26 *Ibid*, para 10d.
- 27 Thomas X. Hammes, 'Time Sensitive Targeting: Irrelevant to Today's Fights', *RUSI Defence Systems*, Autumn 2006, p. 119–120.
- 28 Malaya and Oman provide particularly good case studies in this regard.
- 29 An example is the RAF's defence of strategic bombing doctrine during the 1920s and 1930s, which resulted in a very rigid approach to the employment of bombers at the beginning of the Second World War.
- 30 <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/6A735E29-A013-47F3-B40F-62408AFDFD52.htm>

# INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGES

## ON WAR

### LESSONS TO BE LEARNED\*

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COLONEL H R MCMASTER

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# INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGES

## POST-MODERN CHALLENGES FOR MODERN WARRIORS\*

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR JOHN KISZELY

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### INTRODUCTION

As warfare—the practice of war—changes through the ages, so it can be expected to change the demands it places on its practitioners. Where these changes in practice are dramatic—for example, the advent of mechanized warfare—the changing demands will be easy to spot. But where the changes are more evolutionary or gradual, over a period of time, it is less easy to identify the impact on military professionals. It is also possible to be living through a period of such change without being aware of it: from one month to the next—even from one year to the next—change can take place so gradually as to be almost imperceptible.

It is certainly possible, looking back, to perceive changes in features of warfare over the almost-two decades since the end of the Cold War—for example, the increased incidence of civil wars and instability in failed or failing states, and the rise of terrorism and insurgency, national and trans-national—and to identify some of the different demands placed on our armed forces as a result; but some of the demand, particularly those that might be taking place in current operations, may

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be less obvious. It is timely to examine these challenges and their impact on armed forces, and to assess how well placed they are to cope with the operational challenges of the future.

This paper examines the challenges presented to modern warriors by changes in contemporary warfare, and argues that while some of these challenges have been or are being overcome, there are others, particularly those associated with military education and culture, which have yet to be fully recognized, let alone met, and which will require to be so if modern warriors are to be a match for tomorrow's warfare.

### ENDURING AND CHANGING CHALLENGES

In terms of the challenges facing warriors—‘person[s] whose occupation is warfare’<sup>1</sup>—the period of the Cold War was characterized by the quest to keep up with the modernization of the battlefield: for example, the increasing sophistication of weapon systems; the impact of information technology; the increased complexity of command and control, or staff work and tactics. One of the major challenges was that of providing warriors with sufficient training, and this despite—or, cynics might argue, as a result of—the increasing number and sophistication (not to mention cost) of training aids, simulators and operational analysis tools. New command and staff courses, for example in the United States and in several European armed forces, were created to help meet this demand, and many militaries found that training to achieve the necessary skills was a full time occupation. But as a result of responding to this challenge many became better trained and more professional—in the sense of being more focused on achieving expertise in their jobs—arguably, than ever before.

With a few exceptions, the battlefield for which they prepared (and by which they judged their professionalism) was the arena of large-scale, inter-state combat or, as some came to call it—warfighting. Indeed, for many military professionals, warfare—the practice of war, and warfighting—combat, were synonymous, thereby misleading themselves that there was no more to the practice of war than combat.<sup>2</sup> True, some armed forces found themselves involved in other types of operations, for example post-colonial disengagement, anti-communist interventions, United Nations peacekeeping missions, or even internal security roles in their own countries. But these missions were largely considered by many military establishments to be aberrations—Operations Other

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[F]or many military professionals, warfare—the practice of war, and warfighting—combat, were synonymous . . .

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Than War, as they came to be known in British and American doctrine—distractions from the ‘real thing’: large-scale, hi-tech, inter-state conflict, which was perceived axiomatically (and not without hubris) to be ‘modern warfare’ in the sense of being a culmination in evolutionary development. The essence of this type of warfare was a contest, relatively simple in conceptual terms, between two regular armed forces, where war and peace, and victory and defeat, were clearly identifiable states, where the mission was to destroy the enemy’s forces, and the method was the application of overwhelming firepower, facilitated by physical manoeuvre.

With the exception of some nations which chose to specialize in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, the requirement for armed forces to be prepared for ‘the real thing’ did not, of course, end with the Cold War. Encouraged by the zeitgeist of the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs, with its extravagant claims that it ‘challenges the hoary dictums about the fog and friction of war,’<sup>3</sup> and thus the nature of war itself, and amid assertions that this view was vindicated by the one-sided nature and result of the 1991 Gulf War,<sup>4</sup> the development of modern warfare continued, and continues, in linear fashion,<sup>5</sup> driven largely by a technological dynamic: the quest for greater firepower, greater lethality, greater speed, better stealth, better digitization, more efficient logistics, network-centric warfare, and the ability to deliver hi-tech ‘shock and awe.’ Such warfare presents mind-boggling challenges to practitioners—notably those of the coordination and synchronization of what amounts to a huge and perplexingly complex machine—albeit that their solution is, in character, Newtonian—more formulaic and mechanistic than conceptual. The overall challenge for warriors here was and is to keep pace with (and, where possible, to keep ahead of) the development of warfare.<sup>6</sup> It remains a considerable challenge, but by no means the only one, and for some, not even the most testing.

The asymmetric challenges posed to modern armed forces, particularly those of liberal democracies, by opponents who refuse to engage them in modern, conventional warfare, but instead choose a different style of warfare, for example insurgency, are not new,<sup>7</sup> but they are largely of a different sort: post-modern challenges—challenges that are not primarily overcome with the tools of modernity: more advanced technology, firepower, lethality, speed, stealth, digitization, logistics, network-centric warfare or hi-tech ‘shock and awe.’<sup>8</sup> Post-modern warfare does not develop in linear fashion; and unlike modern warfare, many of the major challenges it poses are not so much technological, formulaic or mechanistic as conceptual. For example, war and peace are not easily delineated; ‘defeat’ and ‘victory’ require definition. The enemy is not obvious, nor easily identifiable, literally or figuratively, and

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Post-modern warfare  
does not develop in  
linear fashion ...

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may change on an almost-daily basis; success depends not on destruction of the enemy, but on out-maneuvring opponents—in particular, depriving them of popular support, and winning it oneself. The contest takes place not on a field of battle, but in a complex civilian environment: ‘amongst the people.’<sup>9</sup> Nor is it a primarily military contest; in the case of counter-revolutionary warfare, according to David Galula, ‘twenty per cent military, eighty per cent political is a formula that reflects the truth.’<sup>10</sup> The war, is in large part, a war of ideas, the battle largely one for perception, and the key battleground is in the mind—the minds of the indigenous population, and the minds of regional and world opinion.<sup>11</sup> Much of this ideological struggle is carried out in the virtual domain of cyberspace.<sup>12</sup> Time is a key—sometimes the key—resource, and one which our opponents are likely to hold in far greater quantity than do we. How the war is fought becomes crucially important to the quality and sustainability of the resulting peace. Operations which could previously be clearly and conveniently labelled—for example, combat, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, counter-revolutionary warfare, humanitarian operations—can no longer be so. Now, ‘these reassuringly neat delineations sit uneasily with the reality that campaigns involving counter-insurgency are inherently messy—a kaleidoscope of different types of operation, remarkably resistant to neatness in delineation,’<sup>13</sup> confusing doctrine-writers and warriors alike. Generalizing about these operations is not easy, not least because every one is *sui generis*—of its own kind; but many practitioners who have experienced them might agree that they are characterized by four things in particular: complexity, ambiguity, uncertainty and volatility, and by the fact that they all tend to be ‘wicked problems’—problems that are intractable and circular with complex inter-dependencies, and where solving one part of the problem can create further problems, or make the whole problem greater.<sup>14</sup>

The nature and characteristics of these operations point towards the roles in which military professionals may expect to find themselves, and the competencies they require. Particularly striking is the far greater diversity of roles than is demanded by combat operations alone: for example, state-building, security-sector reform, mentoring and training indigenous security forces, humanitarian assistance, civil administration, law enforcement, exercising political muscle, even social work—roles that might be expected to be the proper responsibility of other organizations, agencies or government departments. These roles point, in turn, towards the far greater breadth and variety of competencies required—for example, the ability to: apply soft power as well as hard, and choose

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How the war is fought becomes crucially important to the quality and sustainability of the resulting peace.

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the right one for the right circumstances; work in a partnership with multinational, multi-agency organizations, civilian as well as military, within a comprehensive approach; master information operations and engage successfully with the media; conduct persuasive dialogue with local leaders and opinion-formers; mentally out-manoeuvre a wily and ruthless enemy; and, perhaps most often overlooked, measure progress appropriately. These competencies require practitioners to have a high level of understanding across a wide range of subjects, including: the political context; the legal, moral and ethical complexities; culture and religion; how societies work; what constitutes good governance; the relationship between one's own armed forces and society; the notion of human security; the concept of legitimacy; the limitations on the utility of force; the psychology of one's opponents and the rest of the population. Compared with large-scale, inter-state combat, therefore, the challenges facing military professionals conducting post-modern warfare such as counter-insurgency may or may not be tougher, but they certainly are very different—not least, considerably broader and more cerebral, requiring far greater contextual understanding; and successful decision-making at all levels (not just senior ones) is likely to depend less on purely military expertise than on the application of wisdom.

### THE CULTURAL CHALLENGE

In addition to a diverse and broad range of competencies and understanding, operations such as counter-insurgency require military professionals to have a different mind-set—a different culture—from that required for modern warfare. The practitioner of modern warfare is schooled to see challenges in a

certain way: the end state that matters is the military one; operational success is achieved by the application of lethal firepower which, in turn, is largely a question of targeting and physical manoeuvre; the effects to be achieved are physical ones; the means to the end are largely attritional: destroying targets until there are none left; technology will disperse or at least penetrate 'the impenetrable fog of war'; given sufficient resources, all campaigns are winnable—and quickly; the world is divided into 'enemy forces' and 'friendly forces'; and the operational picture can be seen in distinct colours: black and white.

The culture and mind-set required for practitioners of post-modern warfare such as counter-insurgency are very different, requiring recognition that: the end-state that matters most is not the military end-state, but the political one;

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The culture and mind-set required for practitioners of post-modern warfare such as counter-insurgency are very different ...

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indeed, ‘the insurgency problem is military only in a secondary sense, and political, ideological and administrative in a primary sense’;<sup>15</sup> operational success is not achieved primarily by the application of lethal firepower and targeting; that out-manoeuving opponents physically is less important than out-manoeuving them mentally; that, in the words of Lawrence Freedman: ‘[I]n irregular warfare, superiority in the physical environment is of little value unless it can be translated into an advantage in the information environment’;<sup>16</sup> that claims that technology will disperse the fog of war are to be expected from technophiles with little understanding of war (and, indeed, from those paid large sums of money to make such claims); that sufficient resources do not lead inexorably to campaign success; that ‘the image of a quick and decisive victory is almost always an illusion’;<sup>17</sup> counter-insurgency campaigns are rarely won quickly—and, indeed, some are quite simply un-winnable and should never be attempted in the first place; that the dramatis personae cannot be divided in Manichaeic fashion into ‘enemy forces’ and ‘friendly forces’; and that very little of the picture is actually painted in black and white—mostly in shades of grey.<sup>18</sup>

Even the approach to problem-solving is different. In conventional warfare the doctrinal approach is essentially Cartesian or reductionist—the first step in problem-solving is to reduce the problem to its essentials and identify a workable solution as quickly as possible—a number of quasi-scientific tools—formulas, templates, ‘norms’<sup>19</sup>—have been developed to assist in the process; the preferred means to the end is the delivery of rapid and decisive effect; a well-known dictum is ‘don’t just sit there, do something!’ Counter-insurgency, by contrast, characterised by ‘wicked problems’ does not lend itself to the reductionist, PowerPoint mind: the first essential step is spending time understanding the nature of the problem and all its many facets; to try and develop formulas, templates and ‘norms’ is to misunderstand the nature of the problem; the delivery of rapid and decisive effect is but one means—in many circumstances it may be not only singularly inappropriate, but actively counter-productive; and the wiser counsel is sometimes ‘don’t do anything, just sit there!’

The degree of cultural challenge is easy to underestimate. Unless educated otherwise, those schooled in conventional warfare are liable to conduct counter-insurgency as conventional warfare. When the enlightened General Creighton Abrams assumed command in Viet Nam in 1968 he was briefed on the campaign plan:

The briefer stated that the mission was to ‘seek out and destroy the enemy’, the mission of MACV [Military Assistance Command Viet Nam] under General Westmoreland for the past four years. Abrams stopped the briefing and wrote out on an easel ‘The mission is not to seek out and destroy the enemy. The mission is to provide protection for the people of Viet Nam.’<sup>20</sup>

And Frank Kitson drew attention in 1971 to British Army commanders in counter-insurgency who ‘present the situation to subordinates in terms of conventional warfare.’<sup>21</sup> Such commanders are, of course, transgressing, amongst other things, Clausewitz’s ‘first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and the commander have to make... [which is] to establish... 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.’<sup>22</sup>

Since all these cultural challenges require the conventional combat warrior to jettison some old, and often deeply held, tenets, it is perhaps worth recalling Basil Liddell Hart’s view that ‘the only thing harder than getting a new idea into the military mind is to get an old one out.’<sup>23</sup> Moreover, rather like modernists and post-modernists in Twentieth Century art, some protagonists of modern warfare have an inherent disdain for those who espouse a post-modern style, have a desire (conscious or sub-conscious) to prove that their style is superior, and therefore reluctant to change.<sup>24</sup>

An important aspect of this different mind-set or culture required by military professionals concerns their warrior ethos—a term that immediately introduces a secondary meaning of the word ‘warrior’: ‘a person...distinguished in fighting... fig [uratively] a hardy, courageous or aggressive person’, or as one contemporary historian suggests of warriors, ‘people with a penchant [‘a strong or habitual liking’<sup>25</sup>] for fighting’.<sup>26</sup> To be effective in combat, an army needs its members to have a self-perception of warriors as fighters; and the army as a whole needs to be imbued with the characteristic spirit, or ethos, of the fighting warrior: the desire to close with the enemy and kill them. A strong warrior ethos is, thus, a precious commodity. But to be effective at counter-insurgency and stabilization operations, an army needs its members to perceive themselves as something other than, or more than, just warriors. Unless they do, they are liable to apply a warrior ethos, approach and methods, for example exercising hard power (in particular, ‘kinetic solutions’) when they should be exercising soft power—in Max Boot’s words, ‘fighting small wars with big war methods.’<sup>27</sup> As the old saying goes, ‘if the only tool you have in your tool box is a hammer, all problems begin to resemble nails.’<sup>28</sup> To be effective at both combat and counter-insurgency, the army needs to have sufficient warrior ethos, but not so much that it cannot adapt, otherwise warrior ethos becomes an obstacle to versatility and success. Combining these two cultures is highly problematic.

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‘[T]he only thing harder  
than getting a new idea into  
the military mind is to get  
an old one out’

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It is ... remarkably difficult for an army to be really good at both combat and counter-insurgency. Notable examples of this dichotomy are the Russian and Israeli armies, highly adept warfighting machines with a warrior ethos so strong that they have found it almost impossible to adapt to the requirements of counter-insurgency. On the other side of this coin are those armed forces which have largely foregone warfighting as their core activity, instead choosing to become specialist peacekeeping forces, and who have found it less easy than they might have wished to regain the warrior ethos needed to meet the challenges of combat operations.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, counter-insurgency possesses features with which the pure warrior ethos is highly uneasy: complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty; the whole concept of soft power; political ‘interference’; media scrutiny; the ‘unfair’ constraints of rules of engagement which can negate the use of the trump card—firepower. And it requires these warriors to acquire some decidedly un-warrior-like attributes,<sup>30</sup> such as emotional intelligence, empathy with one’s opponents, tolerance, patience, subtlety, sophistication, nuance and political adroitness—attributes which, to some warriors, appear to undermine the warrior ethos on which success in combat depends. Warriors can thus be highly uncomfortable with a role as counter-insurgents, and highly resistant to any change of culture. Such warriors might agree with Ralph Peters writing in the US Army journal *Parameters*:

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[C]ounter-insurgency possesses features with which the pure warrior ethos is highly uneasy ...

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‘A soldier’s job is to kill the enemy. All else, however important it may appear at the time, is secondary ... Theories don’t win wars. Well trained, well-led soldiers in well-equipped armies do. And they do so by killing effectively... There is no substitute for shedding the enemy’s blood.’<sup>31</sup>

Proponents of such an approach sometimes enlist Clausewitz in support:

‘Kind-hearted people might of course think that there was some ingenious way to disarm or defeat an enemy without too much bloodshed, and might imagine this is the true goal of the art of war. Pleasant as it sounds, it is a fallacy that must be exposed. If one side uses force without compunction, undeterred by the bloodshed it involves, while the other side refrains, the first will gain the upper hand.’<sup>32</sup>

That may have been true of warfare in Clausewitz’s day, but in counter-insurgency conducted by armed forces of liberal democracies in the Twenty First Century it is simply not true that ‘if one side uses force without compunction, undeterred by the

bloodshed it involves, while the other refrains, the first will gain the upper hand'. In these circumstances, disarming or defeating an enemy without too much bloodshed is not so much kind-hearted as clever.

There is, nevertheless, a dichotomy here. In an era when armed forces can expect to be deployed on counter-insurgency and stabilization operations, there is a difficult balance to be achieved in the strength of their warrior ethos. So is a warrior just a military professional? Or is a warrior essentially a person with a strong habitual liking for fighting, an aggressive person whose job is to 'destroy the enemy'<sup>33</sup> ... to kill the enemy—all else... is secondary'?<sup>34</sup> As Christopher Coker points out, killing is one of the traditional marks of the warrior, and he observes that while Achilles is the archetypal warrior in the Western tradition, today 'for many soldiers the archetypal hero is Rambo... a one dimensional action figure engaged in a compellingly reductive vision of war as pure violence.'<sup>35</sup> And there is a further complicating factor. Some counter-insurgency campaigns, such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan today, contain significant elements of combat, as depicted in the notion of the Three Block War ('the entire spectrum of tactical challenges in the span of a few hours within the space of three contiguous city blocks'<sup>36</sup>). Combat and counter-insurgency are not mutually exclusive.

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Combat and counter-insurgency are not mutually exclusive.

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## TRAINING AND DOCTRINE

A key requirement for an armed force re-orienting from one type of warfare to another is having agile and responsive training and doctrine organizations. For many militaries involved in contemporary operations it is probably true to say that training has adapted faster than doctrine. The amount of pre-deployment training in, for example, the UK and US armed forces is now significantly increased, including not only the specialist tactics and techniques required, but also special-to-country briefings, cultural awareness and language training. There is also increasing recognition that such training needs to widen still further to include, amongst other things, knowledge and understanding of the part that the military line of operation plays in a multi-disciplinary, comprehensive approach, and a more holistic approach to the study of insurgency. This has involved some redefinition of the training requirement. It was often claimed that it was relatively simple for armed forces trained in combat to adjust to what were perceived to be the lesser demands of operations other than combat, such as stability operations and counter-insurgency, but much harder, if not impossible (in a short space of time), for troops trained only for operations other than combat to become combat-capable.<sup>37</sup> True though this is, it was interpreted



by some to imply that counter-insurgency required little extra training for well trained combat troops. This was an error. Frank Kitson commented adversely on this attitude towards operations other than combat, or what he called Low Intensity Operations, in the early 1970s: 'a considerable number of officers... still consider that it is unnecessary to make any great effort to understand what is involved in Low Intensity Operations, and the cry that a fit soldier with a rifle can do all that is required is often heard.'<sup>38</sup> This cry is occasionally still to be heard, albeit infrequently, and rarely from anyone with any understanding of the subject.

The underlying challenge, though, is that armed forces also need to retain their capability to conduct large-scale, conventional warfare, training for which, particularly for land forces, is (as has been pointed out) a potentially full-time occupation in itself; but training time is finite and, for many armed forces, is under pressure from a high rate of operational deployments. Achieving the necessary amount of training time for both combat and for other operations, and for both war and *the* war, is highly problematic.

Turning to doctrine, new doctrine on both sides of the Atlantic recognizes the need for a different approach to counter-insurgency. In June 2006, the US Marine Corps produced a 'tentative manual', '*Countering Irregular Threats. A Comprehensive Approach*', in which its sponsor, Lieutenant General Jim Mattis, argued that,

'Marines will be asked to do many things other than combat operations to beat our adversaries ... Marines need to learn when to fight with weapons and when to fight with information, humanitarian aid, economic advice, and a boost toward good governance for the local people... Winning and preserving the goodwill of the people is the key to victory.'<sup>39</sup>

This approach is continued in the latest US Army and Marine Corps counter-insurgency doctrine, published remarkably quickly in December 2006.<sup>40</sup> In their introduction to the publication—significantly, jointly signed Lieutenant Generals David Petraeus, US Army, and James Amos, US Marine Corps, stress that:

This manual takes a general approach to counterinsurgency operations... It strives to provide those conducting counterinsurgency campaigns with a solid foundation for understanding and addressing specific insurgencies.

And contrary to precepts previously espoused by neo-Cons in the Department of Defense, the generals also stress that:

Soldiers and Marines are expected to be nation builders as well as warriors. They must be prepared to help reestablish institutions and local security forces and assist in rebuilding infrastructure and basic services. They must be able to facilitate establishing local governance and the rule of law.<sup>41</sup>

This is also the British Armed Forces' approach in their emerging joint doctrine<sup>42</sup> on what is termed 'Countering Irregular Activity' which, like its US counterpart, seeks to instruct military personnel about counter-insurgency as a whole and about associated threats, and emphasizes the need for military activity to be part of a comprehensive approach involving all instruments of power. Many other militaries are also updating their doctrine with a similar approach. But there are further challenges for armed forces here. The first arises from the fact that, as pointed out earlier, every insurgency is *sui generis*, making generalizations problematic. Doctrine that does not take this sufficiently into account can be dangerous; but equally, doctrine that is too wary of this pitfall can become so general and anodyne as to be of very limited assistance. Secondly, insurgency is becoming increasingly complex, with the advent, for example, of trans-national, and hybrid insurgencies<sup>43</sup> for which the counter-insurgency doctrine suitable for national insurgencies may be either of limited utility or counter-productive. And thirdly, the nature of complex insurgencies is that they are amoeba-like (mutating in shape and form to take advantages of the circumstances in which they find themselves), dynamic (pro-actively changing their tactics to suit their purpose), and agile (able to make these changes quickly). And insurgents, being thinking enemies, study our doctrine<sup>44</sup> and adjust their methods and tactics accordingly. In consequence of these factors, the likelihood is that some aspects of our doctrine are liable to be out of date almost from the day of publication. Military doctrine and training organizations need, therefore, to be flexible enough to make the necessary and appropriate changes, and agile enough to be able to do so quickly.<sup>45</sup> And armed forces need to be learning organizations, which can learn and adapt—a key tenet of the new US doctrine—and do so even faster than their agile opponents. Particularly in counterinsurgency, it's 'Who Learns Wins'.

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‘Soldiers and Marines  
are expected to be nation  
builders as well as warriors.’

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## EDUCATION

Here there is a further challenge. In conventional warfare, the tools necessary for any conceptual change in a military's approach to warfare are essentially two-fold—doctrine and training. It comes naturally, therefore, to militaries to place their faith in these tools as the means of re-orientating from one type of warfare to another. Such faith is, however, misplaced and misleading. A further essential instrument in this process is education.

It is necessary here to distinguish between training and education. Training is preparing people, individually or collectively, for given tasks in given circumstances; education is developing their mental powers and understanding. Training is thus appropriate preparation for the predictable; but for the unpredictable and for conceptual challenges, education is required. And, as noted earlier, current and likely future operations, particularly those such as counterinsurgency, are characterized by complexity, ambiguity, uncertainty and volatility—all of which add up to unpredictability—and by challenges that are not so much formulaic and mechanistic as conceptual and ‘wicked’. This calls for minds which can not only cope with, but excel in, these circumstances thus, minds that are agile, flexible, enquiring, imaginative, capable of rigorous analysis and objective critical thinking, minds that can conceptualize and innovate, minds at home with sophistication and nuance (‘interpreting shades of grey’), and minds that have developed understanding, intuition, wisdom and good judgement.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, post-modern operations are also characterized by devolved decision-making where relatively junior commanders are making very senior decisions. The requirement for this education is not, therefore, just a requirement for senior officers.

The relationship between training and doctrine, on the one hand, and education, on the other is important. All training and doctrine needs to be founded on education.

If they are not, the practitioner is liable to lack the versatility and flexibility needed to adapt them to changing circumstances or to extemporize. Indeed, doctrine alone ‘may constrain the ability to “think outside the box” [and]... limit the ability to understand novel situations.’<sup>47</sup> This is particularly applicable in the fluid, unpredictable, ‘messy’ operations which characterize post-modern warfare. Here doctrine and training are liable to be only rough guides, requiring the practitioner to possess the ability to spot when and where they are no longer appropriate, and to adapt accordingly. Moreover, adaptability by itself is inadequate; we must also possess the understanding (resulting from education) which will enable us to anticipate change. As Giulio Douhet noted ‘[V]ictory smiles on those who anticipate changes in the character of war not those who wait to adapt themselves after they occur.’<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, without a considerable degree of education, learning is liable to be experiential, often based on the last campaign, with a tendency to transpose inappropriate lessons from one *sui generis* campaign to another; and over-focus on training as opposed to education often results in too much learning time being spent on counter-insurgency—not enough on insurgency: ‘[W]hoever would understand modern counterinsurgency must first understand modern insurgency.’<sup>49</sup> Finally,

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success in post-modern operations requires military leaders at all levels to possess political sophistication and nous – from the junior commander engaging with a local mayor, to more senior ones dealing with regional governors, right up to the most senior commanders interacting with and advising political leaders at national level. Education has a key role to play in developing the necessary political acumen.

It is important to recognize the purpose of this education. Its purpose is not the purist one of the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, but of developing capacity for good judgement. Such education, therefore, has a training dimension in that it is preparing practitioners to exercise good judgement in their profession, but not just in their next job or deployment, but over the duration of their career. Thus, its payback should not be judged by the improvement to an individual's immediate performance, but by the value it adds to performance over the course of a career, and in the value added to the organization as a whole over a similar time-span. Judged in this way, professional military education is a direct and essential contributor to operational capability. The nature of future operations will almost certainly place a greater premium than in the past on this contribution, with the increased intellectual demands it is likely to place on military leaders at all levels. Whether these leaders match up to the operational challenges they will face, whether they succeed or fail, is likely to depend much more than in the past on their intellect. If so, then recruiting officers of the necessary intellect and educating them to a high standard throughout their careers will be even more important in future. To be well prepared, officers will thus need to be both well trained and well educated (that is to say, having well-developed minds and understanding of the nature of the subject). In combat operations it matters less that officers are well trained but poorly educated; it seldom determines the outcome. In operations such as counter-insurgency, it is liable to be the difference between success and failure. The educational requirement is, thus, far more about teaching officers 'how to think', than 'what to think'—the antithesis of what Masland and Radway warned against, fifty years ago, as 'the stockpile approach' to learning: thinking in terms of 'counting, piling and storing'.<sup>50</sup> Developing minds is most decidedly not something that can be achieved as part of pre-deployment training.

Education is important even—perhaps, particularly—for armed forces, such as the British, who have perceived experience of counter-insurgency. The temptation for these armed forces is to believe that their experience relieves them of the requirement for education. This belief is ill-founded. For example, at the outset of the 2003 deployment to Iraq, the British army had considerable and almost universal experience of counter-insurgency, but apart from a small number of people who had briefly served in Afghanistan or Sierra Leone, and a very few individuals seconded to other armies, this experience was confined to one theatre alone, and a very *sui generis* one at that: Northern Ireland<sup>51</sup> (campaigns in the Balkans were not counter-insurgency,

but peacekeeping/peace enforcement). As a result, and with very limited education (as opposed to training) in counter-insurgency, there was a tendency among some to over-draw on the lessons of the Northern Ireland campaign.

Some aspects of the educational requirement for military professionals are more obvious than others, with some subjects being more obvious candidates for study, for example history. Indeed, a lack of understanding of history, and of the importance of its study, is a sure sign of a military leader destined to fail in operations such as counter-insurgency. But focus on one subject can obscure visibility of the wider educational requirement, a requirement well articulated by Samuel P Huntington, also fifty years ago.

Just as law at its borders merges into history, politics, economics, sociology and psychology, so also does the military skill. Even more, military knowledge also has frontiers on the natural sciences of chemistry, physics and biology. To understand his trade properly, the officer must have some idea of its relation to these other fields and the ways in which those other areas of knowledge may contribute to his own purposes. In addition, he cannot really develop his analytical skills, insights, imagination, and judgement if he is trained simply in vocational duties. The abilities and habits of mind which he requires within his professional field can in large part be acquired only through the broader avenues of learning outside his profession. The fact that, like the lawyer and the physician, he is continuously dealing with human beings requires him to have the deeper understanding of human attitudes, motivation and behaviour which a liberal education stimulates. Just as a general education has become the prerequisite for entry into the profession of law and medicine, it is now also almost universally required as a desirable qualification for the professional officer.<sup>52</sup>

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... the nature of current operations suggests that what may have been a desirable qualification fifty years ago is now essential.

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This certainly resonates today, and the nature of current operations suggests that what may have been a desirable qualification fifty years ago is now essential. These complex operations depend for success on a multi-disciplinary, comprehensive approach, combining a number of lines of operation for example, political, diplomatic, security, economic, social—and the military professional requires an understanding across the breadth of these disciplines. There is also a corollary to this for the method and approach to the delivery of professional military education in-service. Such education and training is customarily delivered in most countries in staff colleges or war colleges—military establishments largely restricted to members of the armed services. This may meet the requirement of preparation for

an operating environment which is itself restricted to the armed services, although this has not been without some disadvantages. Huntington referred to these colleges as ‘professional monasteries’.<sup>53</sup> A purely military learning environment, whether or not a ‘professional monastery’, no longer meets the requirement. There is a strong argument for military professionals to undertake at least some of their education and training alongside representatives of those other organizations with which they will be operating in future, not least for better mutual understanding of the very different institutional cultures involved. This is already happening to some extent in colleges where outsiders are invited for short modules, but there is scope for increasing this practice still further. Indeed, some countries host multi-disciplinary establishments such as Ghana’s International Peacekeeping Training Centre, and Paddy Ashdown has proposed a similar establishment—‘a school for conflict prevention, armed intervention and post-conflict resolution’<sup>54</sup>—in the United Kingdom. A further way of avoiding the effect of the ‘professional monastery’ is for some postgraduate officer education to take place away from the essentially military culture of military academies. However good these academies may be, there is likely to be an institutional culture with the attendant risk of stereotypical thinking which may inhibit thinking ‘outside the box’. An officer corps needs some of its members, indeed its brightest and best, to receive the intellectual stimulation that protracted immersion in the very different free-thinking culture that a good civilian university can provide—for example, through masters’ and doctors’ programmes—and to bring that stimulation and fresh approach back into the armed forces. Most armed forces recognize this, but there is wide divergence in the extent to which they create such opportunities and incentivize participants. The British Armed Forces are not currently in the lead in this respect.<sup>55</sup>

There is one aspect of developing minds and understanding to cope with the challenges of counter-insurgency that deserves special mention and that is the need to develop cultural understanding—a key element of the contest both in the physical domain and the ‘severely understudied’ ideological one.<sup>56</sup> There is a tendency, particularly in busy armed forces (and not excluding those who believe that cultural understanding is part of their inheritance)—to short-cut the cultural understanding process by focusing on the training challenge: how to behave in dealing with those of another culture, what basic errors to avoid, a smattering of a few handy phrases. Important

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though this is, we delude ourselves if we believe that a behavioural check-list does any more than scratch the surface of cultural understanding. If, as has been argued, success in operations such as counter-insurgency depends on mentally out-manoeuvring opponents, there is a requirement to get inside their minds; this cannot be done without a proper understanding of their culture. And if the psychological impact of our actions is all-important, we cannot hope to succeed without understanding the psychology and culture of those whose behaviour we are trying to influence. Consistently under-estimated is the requirement for greater linguistic skills than that provided by the equivalent of a tourist phrase-book. Equally important is the requirement for cultural self-awareness: understanding our own culture, in particular our cultural inheritance—what we have inherited in the way of sub-conscious assumptions, perceptions and prejudices which may affect how we relate to people of other cultures. Moreover, Masland and Radway drew attention to the connection between cultural awareness and the development of the political sophistication required by counter-insurgents: ‘for any executive the beginning of political sophistication is the realization that there are men who may not feel as he feels, who may not dream as he dreams, or who may not pray as he prays.’<sup>57</sup> In addition to developing minds, therefore, is the need, where necessary, to broaden them—to make them more open and sensitive to the views of others, and less certain of their own omniscience and rectitude. An important attitude is that advocated by the Scots poet, Robert Burns: ‘O wad some Pow’r the giftie gie us/ To see oursels as others see us.’<sup>58</sup> Understanding both the opponents’ culture and one’s own are essential elements of success. If we do not recognize this, we must expect to lose. In the words of Sun Tzu:

‘Thus it is said that one who knows the enemy and knows himself will not be endangered in a hundred engagements. One who does not know the enemy but knows himself will sometimes be victorious, sometimes meet with defeat. One who knows neither the enemy nor himself will invariably be defeated in every engagement.’<sup>59</sup>

Finding the necessary time for intellectual development in an officer’s career, and in the over-heated syllabi of many military colleges and schools, will be a considerable practical challenge, particularly at the same time as preparing for large-scale combat operations (which, as has been pointed out, is itself a full-time occupation), and particularly at a time when many armed forces find themselves very heavily committed to current operations. The scale of the educational requirement is easy to under-estimate. Viewed as subject areas, there may be no more than half a dozen which, to use Huntington’s phrase, ‘frontier on military knowledge’—although politics, economics, anthropology, sociology, psychology and—perhaps above all—history spring quickly to mind. But these are not subjects that lend themselves to a reductionist approach to learning, to be covered in a few periods of instruction, nor



are they optional for military leaders in counter-insurgency. Taking military history as an example, it should be studied, as Michael Howard famously advised, ‘in width, in depth and in context,’<sup>60</sup> (fast becoming the most quoted and least observed advice on the subject). Nor does the solution lie in over-programming existing courses at the expense of time for reflection, let alone the easy option of cosmetic change—a tick-in-the-box approach which allows those who wish to do so to claim that the necessary change has been made.

There is, of course, an important place in the learning process for self-education, particularly in the study of history. But the temptation for the unwise, or at least the

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un-forewarned, will be to postpone such self-education until it is too late. In many of today’s armed forces (including the British and the American), most senior officers, and a number of middle-ranking ones as well, are in jobs, whether operational or non-operational, which are so demanding that little time is left for any reading that is not job-related, and, indeed, very little time for creative thinking of any sort. A cautionary tale is that of General William Westmoreland who throughout his time as commander in Viet Nam had beside his bed the works of a number of authors, including Mao Zedong and the insightful Bernard Fall, which could have been key to helping him solve the problems that confronted him. But ‘I was usually too tired in late evening to give them more than occasional attention.’<sup>61</sup>

Finally, on the subject of education, is the requirement for it to be researched. To keep at the cutting edge of the subject, particularly in competition with a learning and adaptive enemy, requires a corpus, or body, of academic research experts alongside, and able to interact with, practitioners and students. The risk here is that since research output is difficult, if not impossible, to measure, research departments become highly vulnerable to financial cuts.

## CULTURAL CHANGE

Appropriate doctrine, training and education are, however, only part of the solution. Even more important is acceptance of the required cultural change alluded to earlier. This will be a particular challenge for those military professionals who see themselves purely as combat soldiers. It will also be a particular challenge for those returning from operations in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan whose experience of, or acquaintance with, counter-insurgency has been largely of combat and who, as a result, may have little time for the niceties of ‘hearts and minds’ in comparison to the more obviously heroic, and more obviously rewarded, activity of combat. Those

who are unable to make this cultural transition are unlikely to prove adept counter-insurgents. Selection of those capable of transitioning from modern to post-modern warfare is also problematic. In David Galula's opinion,

There are no easy criteria enabling one to determine in advance whether a man who has not been previously involved in a counterinsurgency will be a good leader. A workable solution is to identify those who readily accept the new concept of counterinsurgency warfare and give them responsibility. Those who prove themselves in action should be pushed upward.<sup>62</sup>

In achieving the necessary cultural change, the single most important factor will be the lead given from the top of the hierarchy. Taking, for example, the United States, the then Chief of Staff of the Army, General Peter Schoomaker, made his position, and his clarity of vision, clear in his introduction to the 2006 *Counterinsurgency* doctrine publication,

Western militaries too often neglect the study of insurgency. They falsely believe that armies trained to win large conventional wars are automatically prepared to win small, unconventional ones. In fact, some capabilities required for conventional success—for example, the ability to execute operational maneuver and employ massive firepower—may be of limited utility or even counter-productive in COIN operations.<sup>63</sup>

And in many other nations, military leaders have given similar support for their own armed forces' new approaches to counter-insurgency.

Important though it is, a lead from the top, by itself, is not enough. Any change-management programme requires buy-in throughout the hierarchy. Addressing the subject generically, and not specifically related to the armed forces of any nation in particular, subordinate leaders are likely to fall into three main groups. At either end of the spectrum are, on the one end, those who agree wholeheartedly with the change and do all in their power to effect it; and, on the other, those who disagree with it wholeheartedly and do all they can to oppose it. The latter are unlikely to prosper if those at the top are unified in their support for the change. But among those in the middle of the spectrum—the third group—will be people who, at heart, oppose the change, but understand that overt opposition is not career-enhancing. Some of them will, therefore, keep their opposition muted, or maybe allow themselves over time to be persuaded to support the change; others, however, will treat the proposed change as yet another piece of political correctness: something that must be espoused in public, but opposed in private. This latter group is probably the greatest threat to

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‘Western militaries too often neglect the study of insurgency.’

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achievement of change. It will be tempting indeed for them to wait for the reformers to move on to other jobs or leave the Service, to be replaced by those with less reformist zeal.

Achieving the right balance in the cultural orientation of an armed force is not easy, nor is it an exact science. At the heart of opposition to moderating the warrior ethos and to orientating a force more towards operations such as counter-insurgency and stability operations is the concern, often unspoken, that such operations are indeed the sideshow, that ‘the real thing’, the ultimate test, may be large-scale, interstate warfighting, possibly against a military superpower—for example, China—and that armed forces need to be fully trained and psychologically prepared for it, and not undermined by what may be a passing phase of a threat which, while serious, is not existential. Nor can this argument be dismissed out of hand, not least because, contrary to the views of those who hold that ‘[W]ar no longer exists... war as cognitively known to most non-combatants, war as a battle in a field between men and machinery, war as a massive deciding event in a dispute in international affairs: such war no longer exists,’<sup>64</sup> such warfare is not extinct, just hibernating. Less respectable but equally passionate arguments can be expected from the military-industrial lobby for whom diversion of the focus and budget away from large-scale, modern warfare represents a most unwelcome threat which for some may, indeed, be existential.

It may be that the cultural challenge of preparing some armed forces to be both adept combat soldiers and adept counter-insurgents is simply unachievable. Where this is judged to be the case, there appear to be three options. The first is the creation of two specialist forces, with the non-combat role confined to a paramilitary force, similar to those in a number of states, such as the Italian Carabinieri which acquitted itself commendably in the NATO Sustainment Force in Bosnia, or given to a specific part of the armed forces, such as reserve forces. This, though, has major disadvantages, foremost of which is the constraint of numbers and lack of flexibility. Even without such specialization, a number of armed forces, such as the United Kingdom’s and the United States’, are highly stretched on current operations. Furthermore, as these current operations demonstrate, troops deployed on counter-insurgency or stabilization operations can quickly find themselves in combat, and vice versa. The second option for a state is role specialization for its armed forces as a whole, either as combat or non-combat forces. But, by the same token, the blurring of neat delineations in modern operations risks troops of one specialization finding themselves in situations for which they are unprepared and unsuited. The third option is to accept that the desirable

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level of versatility is unachievable, but pretend otherwise, accepting that troops will be less good at one role than the other (or mediocre at both), and attempt to manage the risk. This is perhaps the easiest option, but it is probably also the most dangerous, with its potential for misunderstandings with serious consequences. None of these three options, therefore, is attractive.

## CONCLUSIONS

Although many of the challenges facing military professionals in post-modern warfare are similar to those facing them in modern warfare, some of them—in particular the intellectual and cultural challenges—are very different, requiring a different approach and mind-set. Armed forces, especially those whose primary focus is modern warfare, need not only to recognize this and adapt accordingly, but to institutionalize adaptability. Amongst other things, they will need to ensure a balance in their warrior ethos throughout their organization; warrior ethos needs to be sufficient for combat operations, but not so great that it inhibits effective performance in counter-insurgency. The term ‘warrior’ has a number of meanings and is potentially misleading. Controlling warrior ethos and achieving the right balance in the right circumstances is one of the most important responsibilities and duties of any military commander at any level.

Armed forces should note that it is easy to under-estimate the amount of training required in order to perform effectively in post-modern warfare, in particular counter-insurgency—even for those who are highly trained in modern warfare. Indeed, the more focused armed forces are on modern warfare, the harder the transition is likely to be. Finding the necessary training time in competition with that required to keep armed forces well prepared for modern warfare is not easy. Achieving the right balance requires fine judgement from senior military officers and Defence planners.

Many militaries need to take more active steps to ensure that their doctrine remains up-to-date with, and relevant to, an operational environment which changes faster than does that of modern warfare. But accepting that, in practice, this will not always be achievable, they also need to allow commanders in the field sufficient latitude to adjust doctrine in line with evolving circumstances. Furthermore, they need to devote considerable attention to being ‘learning organizations’, and ones that learn, adapt and anticipate faster than the opposition.

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All armed forces need to recognize that reliance on training and doctrine alone as tools for achieving success in post-modern warfare is misplaced, and that an important factor in the process—more important than in modern warfare—is education. Such education needs to focus on the development of minds, and in particular the development of breadth of vision, understanding, wisdom and good judgement. Education is required not just for those new to post-modern operations, but also to ensure that those with some experience in these operations do not over-rely on their experience, for example by translating inappropriate lessons from one *sui generis* campaign to another. Militaries should undertake more of their education and training alongside representatives of those organizations with which they will find themselves operating in future, not least to gain an understanding of the different organizational cultures. And to avoid institutional culture and stereotypical thinking, and to inject fresh ideas into the officer corps, armed forces should ensure that they send a sufficient number of their brightest and best for postgraduate programmes in civilian universities. In general, militaries will need to find more time for professional military education.

All of this is likely to call for a change of institutional culture for some militaries, or within areas of militaries, particularly for those institutions or individuals who see themselves purely as combat warriors. The essence of the change of culture is for these combat warriors to come to judge their professionalism (in which most take such pride) by their performance not just in combat, but in all roles they are required to undertake. For some, this requires a redefinition of professionalism. Any cultural change within any military is problematic, and overcoming resistance to change may be challenging. And there is a paradox here: where change is required, senior military leaders will need to press it home if it is to sustain, but in some organizations it may be that some of the senior leaders are amongst those most resistant to change. There is also a need to ensure that those with an understanding of, and an acumen for, post-modern warfare are not side-lined within military hierarchies. There is a potential comparison here with the art world where, in some institutions, post-modernists found their way barred by an establishment dominated by modernists.

Finally, we should recognize that over-focus on a single type of warfare—large-scale, conventional warfare—inhibited understanding of other types of warfare, and of warfare as a whole. We should, therefore, beware the potential danger of over-focus on post-modern warfare having the same result.

**DISCLAIMER**

The views expressed in this paper are entirely and solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect official thinking or policy either of Her Majesty's Government, or of the Ministry of Defence.

**ENDNOTES**

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- 1 *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Fifth Edition, Oxford UP, 2002. Webster's Dictionary has a similar definition: 'Someone engaged in or experienced in warfare.' *Webster's Online Dictionary*, 2007, [www.websters-online-dictionary.org](http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org).
  - 2 See Colin S Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, London, Phoenix, 2006, p 37.
  - 3 Bill Owens, *Lifting the Fog of War*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins UP, 2000, p 15. As a former Vice Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Owens' views were particularly influential in military and political circles in the US. Much of the hype surrounding the Revolution in Military Affairs is written in language that Edward Luttwak described, several decades earlier, as "brochuremanship" ... where extravagant claims are camouflaged under the pseudo-technical language fashionable in military circles.' Edward Luttwak, *A Dictionary of Modern War*, London, Allen Lane Penguin Press, 1971, p4. Nor were these extravagant claims confined to civilians. General Ronald Fogleman, Chief of the US Air Force, testifying before Congress in 1997, asserted '[I]n the first quarter of the 21st century you will be able to find, fix or track, and target – in near real time – anything of consequence that moves upon or is located on the face of the Earth'. Michael O'Hanlon, *Technological Change and The Future of Warfare*, Washington DC, The Brooking Institute Press, 2000, p 13. Apart from anything else, it would have been interesting to hear General Fogelman's definition of what constituted 'anything of consequence'.
  - 4 Some writers drew conclusions of even more far-reaching consequences, for example: 'The potential ability of the United States to help consolidate a revolution in geostrategic affairs – in which most of the world's major industrial powers are democratic, prosperous, allied with each other, lacking a major strategic foe, and gradually extending their club of membership to other countries – is even more historic, and more important, than its purported ability to again revolutionize warfare.' O'Hanlon, *op cit*, p 197.
  - 5 See Rod Thornton, *Asymmetric Warfare*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2007, pp 178-9.

- 6 This is not just a matter of keeping up with technology, but of keeping up with technics: all aspects of the relationship between equipment and its operators. ‘Weapons development is only one corner of a triangle, of which the other two are a tactical “doctrine” for using the weapon, and the training of the combatants, individually and collectively, to use it.’ Christopher Bellamy, *The Evolution of Modern Warfare: Theory and Practice*, London, Routledge, 1990, p 30.
- 7 They are, of course, as old as war itself, and with plenty of relatively recent experience on which to draw: ‘[I]f we look at the 20th Century alone we are now in Viet-Nam faced with the forty-eighth “small war”’. Bernard Fall, ‘The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency’, *Naval War College Review*, April 1965, reproduced, Winter 1998, Vol LI, No 1, p 46.
- 8 We should not be surprised that a particularly successful style in warfare evokes a response which rejects it in favour of a different one which exploits strengths and weaknesses exposed by changing circumstances. This process has been a constant throughout history with modern (for their time) styles of warfare constantly being challenged or usurped by post-modern styles. Nor does the use of the term ‘post-modern’ imply that those who adopt this style refrain from employing highly advanced technology – as contemporary insurgents are doing so effectively.
- 9 Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force. The Art of War in the Modern World*, London, Penguin, 2005, p 3.
- 10 David Galula, *Counterinsurgency: Theory and Practice*, Westport, Praeger, 2006, p 63.
- 11 Magnus Ranstrop and Graeme P Herd, ‘Approaches to Countering Terrorism and CISI’, in Anne Aldis and Graeme P Herd, *The Ideological war on Terror. Worldwide Strategies for Counter-Terrorism*, London, Routledge, 2007, p 3.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 John Kiszely, ‘Learning About Counter-insurgency’, *RUSI Journal*, Vol 152 No 1, December 2006, p 19.
- 14 Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber, ‘Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning’, in N Cross (ed), *Developments in Design Methodology*, Chichester, Wiley and Son, 1984, pp 135-144. The authors contrast ‘wicked’ problems with the relatively benign or ‘tame’ problems of mathematics, chess, or puzzle-solving.
- 15 Fall, *op cit*, p 47.
- 16 Lawrence Freedman, *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs*, London, IISS Adelphi Paper No. 379, 2006, p 20.
- 17 Anthony Cordesman, *The War After the War. Strategic Lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan*, Significant Issues Series, Volume 26, Number 4, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, 2006, p 71.
- 18 See David Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art. In Pursuit of Deep Battle*, London, Frank Cass, 1991, p 44; and Bellamy, *op cit*, pp 173-176.



- 19 The Russian ‘norme’, mathematically- and scientifically- derived prescribed rates and scales. See Glantz, *ibid*.
- 20 John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup With A Knife*, Chicago UP, 2002, p 175.
- 21 Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, London, Faber and Faber, 1971, p 200.
- 22 Clausewitz, *op cit*, p 88.
- 23 Basil Liddell-Hart, *Thoughts on War*, London, Faber & Faber, 1943, p 115.
- 24 There are obvious parallels with Thomas Kuhn’s paradigm theories.
- 25 *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, *op cit*.
- 26 Max Hastings, *Warriors*, London, HarperCollins, 2005, p xi.
- 27 Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, London, Basic Books, 2002, p 285.
- 28 Quoted in Nagl, *op cit*, p 203.
- 29 Kiszely, *op cit*, p 19.
- 30 Or as Kitson puts it, ‘the qualities required for fighting conventional war are different from those required for dealing with subversion or insurgency.’ Kitson, *op cit*, p 200.
- 31 Ralph Peters, ‘In Praise of Attrition’, *Parameters*, Summer 2004, pp 24-26. Also ‘[C]arrying out civil administration and police functions is simply going to degrade the American capability to do the things America has to do. We don’t need to have the 82nd Airborne escorting kids to kindergarten.’ Condoleeza Rice, *New York Times*, 21 October 2000.
- 32 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, trans & eds, Princeton UP, 1984, p 75.
- 33 This phrase is part of the US Army’s Soldier’s Creed, but excluded from the Warrior Ethos which is part of the Creed. The Warrior Ethos itself is remarkably bereft of any mention of fighting or killing: ‘I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never quit. I will never leave a fallen comrade.’ <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/plo/TNSarchives/September04/092304.htm> accessed 1 Sep 2007.
- 34 Peters, *op cit*, pp 24-26.
- 35 Christopher Coker, *The Warrior Ethos. Military Culture and the War on Terror*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2007, pp 7, 41-2 & 61.
- 36 Charles Krulak, ‘The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War’, *Marine Gazette*, January 1999, p 3.
- 37 See, for example, House of Commons Select Committee on Defence, 1997-98 Eighth Report, paragraph 203, [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmdefence/138](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmdefence/138) accessed 30 September 2007.
- 38 Kitson, *op cit*, p 199.
- 39 *Countering Irregular Threats. A Comprehensive Approach*, USMC, Quantico, June 2006.
- 40 *US Army Manual 3-24* (also *US Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.6*).
- 41 *US Army Manual 3-24*, pp ix-x.

- 42 UK MOD Joint Doctrine Note 2/07, *Countering Irregular Activity Within A Comprehensive Approach*, March 2007.
- 43 For 'complex' insurgencies see John Mackinlay, *Defeating Complex Insurgency. Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan*, RUSI Whitehall Paper No 64, 2005, pp vi-vii.
- 44 'The field manual was widely reviewed, including by several Jihadi websites; copies have been found in Taliban training camps in Pakistan. It was downloaded 1.5 million times in the first month after its posting to the Fort Leavenworth and Marine Corps website.' Sarah Sewall, in the foreword to the Chicago University Press edition of the manual, quoted in John A Nagl, 'An American View of Twenty First Century Counter-Insurgency', *RUSI Journal*, Vol 152, No 4, August 2007, p 15.
- 45 This requirement goes some way beyond Michael Howard's advice about military doctrine that '[W]hat does matter is to get it right when the moment arrives'. 'Military Science in and Age of Peace', *RUSI Journal* No 119, March 1974 - advice better suited to an age of peace.
- 46 This paragraph largely taken from Kiszely, *op cit*, p 24.
- 47 Colin McInnes, 'The British Army's New Way in Warfare: A Doctrinal Misstep?', *Defence and Security Analysis*, 23:2, 127-141, June 2007, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14751790701424697>.
- 48 Giulio Douhet, *The Command of the Air*, trans Dino Ferrari, Washington DC, Office of Air Force History, 1942, reprint 1983, p 30.
- 49 David Kilcullen, 'Counterinsurgency *Redux*', *Survival*, Winter 2006-2007, p 116.
- 50 John Masland and Laurence Radway, *Soldiers and Scholars*, Princeton Up, 1957, pp 382-5.
- 51 The UK referred to the Armed Forces' activity in this campaign as 'Military Aid to the Civil Power'.
- 52 Samuel P Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, Cambridge, Mass, Harvard UP, 1957, p 14.
- 53 Huntington, *op cit*, p 266.
- 54 'There is... a powerful case for the establishment of a school for conflict prevention, armed intervention and post-conflict reconstruction which could act as a kind of high-level staff college to learn lessons, propose changes to government and develop and pass on expertise to senior service officers, civil servants and politicians... This teaching should have an international dimension too, given that one of the tasks is to spread best practice and raise capacity, not just in the developed world, but in other armed forces and government practitioners worldwide.' Paddy Ashdown, *Swords and Ploughshares. Bringing Peace to the Twenty First Century*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2007, p 192.

- 55 In contrast to the United States Armed Forces; and in contrast with the British Army in, for example, the 1970s, when, amongst those officers who elected to undertake mid-career postgraduate programmes to Oxford and Cambridge, subsequently achieved four star rank, and made significant contributions to military thought, were Frank Kitson, Anthony Farrar-Hockley, and Nigel Bagnall.
- 56 Ranstrop and Herd, *op cit*, p3.
- 57 Masland and Radway, *op cit*, p71.
- 58 Robert Burns, 'To A Louse', *The Canongate Burns: The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, Edinburgh, Canongate, 2003, p 132.
- 59 Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans Ralph D Sawyers, Boulder, Colorado, 1994, p 179.
- 60 Michael Howard, 'The Use and Abuse of Military History', in Michael Howard, ed, *The Causes of War and Other Essays*, Cambridge, Mass, Harvard UP, 1983, pp 194-195.
- 61 William Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, New York, Doubleday, 1976, p 364. See also Williamson Murray, 'Thoughts on Military History and the Profession of Arms', in Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich, eds, *The Past as Prologue: The Importance of History to the Military Profession*, New York, Cambridge UP, 2006, p 89.
- 62 Galula, *op cit*, p 67.
- 63 *US Army Manual 3-24*. p ix.
- 64 Smith, *op cit*, p 1.

## THE AUTHOR

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## DOCTRINE

# DEFEATING INSURGENCIES

## ADAPTIVE CAMPAIGNING AND AN AUSTRALIAN WAY OF WAR

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL TRENT SCOTT

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*The past of guerilla warfare and insurgency represents both the shadow of things that have been and of those that will be.*

Ian F W Beckett<sup>1</sup>

Insurgencies will continue to define the character of future war, just as they have defined countless wars throughout history. Today, ‘the global routinisation of violence has spawned entire generations for whom protracted conflict is normal ... youth see violence not as an aberration, but part an [sic] intrinsic aspect of life.’<sup>2</sup> Coupled with the unprecedented availability of highly lethal weapons and explosives, relatively permissive conditions for the international movement of people and information, and the belief that change can be achieved at the end of a gun, it takes little to spark insurgency in such a context. As we can see with events in Iraq and Afghanistan, in today’s globalised world an insurgency ‘can weaken or undercut a government, hinder economic development and access to global capital, or at least force national leaders to alter key policies.’<sup>3</sup> Undoubtedly, inter-state warfare, including great power conflict, is very much alive and well in the twenty-first century and should not be quickly dismissed. However, in the coming decades

the Australian Army is going to be called upon to defeat, or at least contribute to the defeat of, an insurgency more often than it will be called upon to defeat a great power in inter-state warfare.<sup>4</sup>

It makes sound strategic sense then, if we are to maximise the utility of the Land Force across the greatest range of likely tasks, that the Land Force is appropriately postured, equipped, trained and educated, and sufficiently agile to prevent or defeat contemporary and future insurgencies. Army is currently meeting this challenge primarily through implementing *Adaptive Campaigning*.<sup>5</sup> As the Australian Army's capstone future operating concept, *Adaptive Campaigning* not only provides a solid foundation for defeating today's insurgencies through an operational framework that is distinctly Australian, but also positions Army to deal with future insurgencies as the character of insurgencies inevitably change.

### **ADAPTIVE CAMPAIGNING – ARMY'S CAPSTONE OPERATING CONCEPT**

*Adaptive Campaigning* provides conceptual and force modernisation direction to Army to ensure it remains postured to meet the demands of complex operating environments. The concept builds on the already established and widely accepted concepts described in *Complex Warfighting*. It is firmly rooted in the Clausewitzian tradition of understanding war and warfare as a fundamentally human activity, and draws heavily on historical and recent operational lessons learned to form its conclusions. The concept is also heavily influenced by the recognition that war should be understood as '*conflict using both violent and non-violent means, between multiple diverse actors and influences competing for control over the perceptions, behaviour and allegiances of human societies*'.<sup>6</sup> Specifically, influencing populations and their perceptions is the central and decisive activity of war.

With this in mind, *Adaptive Campaigning* is defined as actions taken by the Land Force as part of the military contribution to a whole-of-government approach to resolving conflicts. The concept provides Army with a holistic philosophical framework for conflict resolution, as well as logically deduced design guidance for the future Army.<sup>7</sup> The framework for conflict resolution is based on three fundamental pillars. The first pillar is that actions taken by the Land Force must be part of a whole-of-government approach and not conducted in isolation or without purpose. The second pillar, related directly to the first, is the requirement to adopt a holistic approach that considers tactical actions along multiple, simultaneous

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... influencing populations and their perceptions is the central and decisive activity of war.

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lines of operation to create conditions that achieve operational objectives. The third pillar is the recognition that to be successful the Land Force, and the approach taken by the Land Force, must be inherently adaptive.

Since its endorsement in December 2006, *Adaptive Campaigning* has had a significant impact not only within Army force development circles but also across the wider Defence organisation. The concept has been well received by other Australian government agencies, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Australian Federal Police (AFP), as well as ABCA and NATO defence forces. Most recently, *Adaptive Campaigning* has been used to support the requirements for a modular Engineer Force; the ongoing development of Land 400 Protected Survivability of Ground Forces; the design and development of the Army After Next; the Army Gap Analysis process; an AFP-ADF Interoperability Review; and Army's input into the 2008 Defence White Paper. Importantly, the key themes of *Adaptive Campaigning* are incorporated into doctrine, specifically LWD 1 *Fundamentals of Land Warfare*. These themes are also informing the development of other 'fundamental' level doctrine, such as an updated LWD 3-0 *Operations* and a revised LWD 3-1 *Counterinsurgency Operations*.

Before examining the *Adaptive Campaigning* framework for conflict resolution and its relevance for defeating an insurgency, it is necessary to frame the problem correctly and define the context.

## THE INSURGENT PROBLEM

*The [insurgent] never forgets that its fight is first and foremost 'political' rather than 'military'. It has not forgotten the basic reason for fighting a war, which is to bring the enemy to a point where one can impose one's will upon him—whether by brute force or psychological persuasion.*<sup>8</sup>

The attractiveness of organised armed conflict to non-state actors for the purpose of creating political change within a state has not diminished in the twenty-first century. Regardless of how you define insurgency, the symbiotic relationship between politics and violence remains a constant theme, despite the changing character of insurgencies. All wars are ultimately about the distribution of power.<sup>9</sup> However, in the case of an insurgency the 'interpenetration of war and politics' is much more pervasive compared with high intensity, state versus state conventional conflict. There is now the growing realisation that military operations must be completely integrated with political, diplomatic, economic and cultural actions. The challenge then, more than ever, is to conceive military operations within a political framework.<sup>10</sup>

At first glance, this is not a new concept. In some way, political considerations have always conditioned military operations. Clausewitz makes this a central theme

of his theory of war, repeatedly stressing the subordination of war to politics, asserting that ‘war should never be thought of as something autonomous, but always as an instrument of policy’.<sup>11</sup> The difference between an insurgency and a state versus state conflict, however, is that in the latter, politics is mainly a factor at the strategic level, where statecraft is required to guide the application of military power.<sup>12</sup> In a conventional war, individuals at the tactical level can afford to devote themselves to purely tactical issues. A competent conventional campaign design will ensure the link between tactical actions, operational or campaign goals and strategic goals.

In an insurgency, however, politics will pervade all levels of war: all politics is local. Today, the issue of local politics is as much of an issue for the section commander as it is for the operational level commander or the statesman. Every use of force, or threat of force, sends a

message to the people we are aiming to influence. Each time force is used, even if it is discriminating and apparently justified, it can undermine popular support, change perceptions and alienate the local population. The use of force at the smallest tactical level has direct political consequence. The result is a compression or blurring of the levels of war so that tactical actions by the both the insurgent and the counterinsurgent have much greater potential to have a direct strategic impact. This is compounded further by the pervasive presence of the media on the battlefield, fully capable of instantaneously relaying battlefield actions to a global audience. This is especially so when the application of purely military measures may not, by itself, secure victory because the solution to winning the conflict is likely to lie in the socio-political realm. If tactical actions of the counterinsurgent are negative, the political credibility of the counterinsurgent mission will be eroded.

The aim of the counterinsurgent is simple, even though achieving the aim is complex. The counterinsurgent must convince the population that the political proposition they are offering better meets the needs of the people than does any alternative. In competition, the insurgent will pose alternative propositions that may range from a comprehensive ‘parallel political hierarchy’ to the more modest desire of maintaining ungoverned spaces to allow for freedom of movement for the insurgent, criminal activity and general armed lawlessness. But winning the competition for allegiance and influence is difficult, especially when one considers the complexity of the contemporary operating environment together with the requirement to balance our own strategic goals with the goals of the indigenous government and people. This is complicated by the need to balance effective governance with traditional tribal structures.

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Every use of force, or threat of force, sends a message to the people we are aiming to influence.

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To muddy the waters further, the causes of insurgency are often many and varied, as they are in Iraq today. Related to this, the goals and therefore the tactics of each insurgency will vary from circumstance to circumstance. In fact, the causes of insurgency are rarely static. The insurgent movement can manipulate and even create causes as the insurgency progresses.<sup>13</sup> Initial causes often decline in importance as the struggle escalates, and new causes rise to prominence. Consequently, there tends to be no dogmatic interpretation of methodology on the part of insurgents, and their tactics evolve to suit their particular circumstance.

To be decisive in the highly complex, fluid, politicised and interconnected future battlefield, the aim must be to ensure that the application of force ‘can be modulated and shaped by professional militaries to accommodate rapidly shifting politics and flexible operational and strategic objectives.’<sup>14</sup> Defaulting to the use of lethal force to solve problems—normally the expected course of action in conventional warfare—is likely to be counterproductive in an insurgency, with negative second and third order effects potentially eroding the political legitimacy of the operation.

Paradoxically, it is precisely the use of force, or the threat to use force, that enables both the counterinsurgent and insurgent forces to gain personal contact with the local population. In a war for the people, the ability to influence people and their perceptions and allegiances is the central and decisive activity of warfare and depends on personal contact, proximity and enduring presence. For the counterinsurgent, presence is achieved through the ability to conduct sustained close combat in close proximity to the enemy and the population, while discriminating between the two. This capability to conduct sustained close combat, unique to the Army, enables the Land Force to be persistent, pervasive and proportionate.

The criticality to campaign success of an effective close combat capability that is proportionate and discriminate has historically not been well understood by potential counterinsurgents. The ‘classicists’ of insurgency and counterinsurgency studies, such as Galula, Thompson, Kitson, Paget and more recently authors such as Bard O’Neil, John Nagl and NRF Aylwin-Foster, go to great pains to reinforce the requirement for rectitude and the discriminate use of force on the part of the counterinsurgent.<sup>15</sup> And they are fundamentally correct. However, warnings on the use of force and over-emphasis on the other ‘lines of operation’ such as restoring essential services and providing economic incentives to the local population, can conceal the critical requirement for the counterinsurgent to be able to kill or capture insurgents when and where required. As one US Army battalion commander,

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recently returned from a tour with his battalion in the Sunni Triangle in Iraq, reinforces ‘nothing we did in Iraq had a more significant impact on reducing the level of violence than killing or capturing those who were committing the violent acts.’<sup>16</sup> The trick, for the counterinsurgent at least, is to ensure that whenever lethal force is used, those dreaded ‘second and third order effects’ do not come back to haunt you.

There are and will continue to be insurgents prepared to undertake armed violence to effect political change. The specific causes of the insurgents may wax and wane over time and therefore may be difficult to identify, especially in the early years of an insurgency. The distinction between the levels of war will grow ever more blurred and there will be a continuing politicisation of insurgent conflict down to the lowest tactical level. Wars for the people will continue to be complex in character, not the least simply because of the sheer multitude and diversity of actors of influence within the battlespace. Given all of this, how do we prepare for and be successful in a ‘shifting “mosaic war” that is difficult for counterinsurgents to envision as a coherent whole?’<sup>17</sup>

## AN AUSTRALIAN APPROACH TO DEFEATING INSURGENCIES

*[In February 1967] ... a dispirited LTCOL John Warr, CO 5 RAR, wondered what the hell they were doing in Vietnam, and asked his intelligence officer, Bob O'Neill, to propose an answer: was it to kill Viet Cong, bring the enemy to battle, separate the people from the enemy, offer civic aid, restore Saigon's control, or cut the Viet Cong supply lines.*<sup>18</sup>

Everybody intuitively understands that defeating an insurgency is a difficult and lengthy business. At times, it is difficult to determine exactly what the Land Force's purpose is, let alone which operational and tactical methods will best ensure success. As we are witnessing today, the dynamic nature of the threat, the multitude and diversity of actors, including well armed and organised

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[T]he true nature of the threat ‘lies in the insurgent’s political potential rather than his military power.’

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criminals, as well as the austerity and complexity of the environment itself, all add to the complicated nature of defeating an insurgency. *Adaptive Campaigning* aims to overcome this complexity through a framework for conflict resolution that advocates a holistic operational level campaign emphasising a whole-of-government approach, that aims to defeat the insurgency along multiple lines of operation, and that is inherently adaptive.

The counterinsurgent response to an insurgency should have as a fundamental assumption that the true nature of the threat 'lies in the insurgent's political potential rather than his military power'.<sup>19</sup> *Adaptive Campaigning* recognises that an essential component for defeating an insurgency is creating the conditions for the indigenous government to meet the needs of its people and dislocating the political potential of the insurgents. The solution lies in a whole-of-government approach to the conflict. The Land Force cannot be relied upon to alone provide the vast array of essential services required to restore or support legitimate governance. Restoring, reforming or reconstructing local, regional and national governments, economies, legal, banking and justice institutions is a task well beyond the capacity of even a coalition Land Force. Other government agencies, by default, are going to be required.

In recent years, Australia has refined its inter-agency coordination at the strategic level. At the operational and tactical level the synergies have not been as effective, although some small steps have been taken in places like Solomon Islands and Timor Leste. However, most would agree this falls well short of true whole-of-government cooperation. To generate the effects we want at the tactical level, sections, platoons and combat teams must be prepared to become inter-agency combined arms teams as the norm, not just on an extraordinary basis.

A counterinsurgency joint inter-agency task force must take a comprehensive approach to the conduct of land operations in order to influence and shape the overall environment. Noting that combat is but a means to an end, it is imperative that we consider tactical actions beyond just those designed to deliver lethal effects. In particular, the task force will need access to an appropriate array of lethal and non-lethal weapons and be protected, equipped and structured to operate in a potentially highly lethal and complex environment. It must be fully capable of simultaneously performing diverse concurrent combat, humanitarian, indigenous and peace support tasks. *Adaptive Campaigning* recommends the Land Force consider tactical actions within an operational framework of five interdependent and mutually reinforcing lines of operation. It is important that these lines of operation are not considered as a doctrinal template to be applied in every situation. Rather, they are a filter through which to holistically identify and analyse the total array of tactical tasks the Land Force will be required to undertake to successfully resolve conflict.

The five lines of operation are:

- **Joint Land Combat.** Joint Land Combat includes those actions taken by the Land Force to secure the environment, remove organised resistance and create the conditions for the other lines of operation.
- **Population Protection.** Population protection includes those actions taken to provide protection and security to threatened populations in order to set the conditions for the re-establishment of law and order. Clearly, close cooperation with indigenous police and the AFP International Deployment Group is essential.

- **Population Support.** Population support encompasses those actions taken to establish, restore or temporarily replace the necessary essential services in affected communities. Close cooperation with other government departments, such as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, AusAID and the Department of Immigration, will be vital to achieve the desired effects in the operating environment.
- **Indigenous Capacity Building.** Indigenous capacity building represents our ticket home. It includes actions which nurture the establishment of civilian governance, security, police, legal, financial and administrative systems. Again, close cooperation and unified action with other government departments will be essential.
- **Public Information.** Public information includes those actions taken to inform and shape perceptions, attitudes, behaviour and understanding of target population groups. All participants in a counterinsurgency campaign will have an essential role to play in ensuring a consistent narrative is delivered to the intended audience.

Executing actions along the five lines of operation simultaneously within the overall intent of the campaign will provide adversary forces with multiple dilemmas they will not be able to overcome through violence alone. *Adaptive Campaigning* aims to leverage these multiple dilemmas presented to adversaries by physically and psychologically dislocating the adversary from the population. Operationally, a key to success will lie in the Land Force's ability to effectively orchestrate effort across all lines of operation, as well as effectively transitioning responsibility for taking the lead to other government agencies or indigenous agencies.

The interplay between multiple diverse actors, all competing to influence the allegiances and behaviours of societies, creates a complex adaptive system comprised of many other complex adaptive systems, each in their own way constantly evolving.<sup>20</sup>

The appropriate use of force, or threat of force, in such a context depends on our ability to understand the environment, our own relationships with the multitude of actors in the environment, and their various responses to our actions. The reality of conflict today and in the future is such that competitors within the conflict zone will attempt to continually adapt their tactics, techniques and procedures faster than their opponent in order to exploit weakness and maintain their competitive edge. In order to gain and retain the initiative, our forces must be constantly and rapidly adapting to the emerging situation. This makes warfare both a continuous meeting engagement and a competitive learning environment.

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... it is imperative that we consider tactical actions beyond just those designed to deliver lethal effects.

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The best method of command in such a context is one of decentralised execution where the impact of operational uncertainty is mitigated by reducing the amount of certainty needed to act, and allowing subordinates the freedom to exercise initiative and take action. At the end of the day, success or failure will lie increasingly with junior leaders and their ability to make the right decision at the point of contact. The key prerequisite for an appropriate command climate is mutual trust and understanding between superiors and subordinates that encourages initiative and adaption at every level of command.

But, to ensure adaption becomes natural—an attitude or cultural characteristic—rather than some process-driven checklist, the Land Force must inculcate an iterative process that combines discovery and learning. We act, we learn from our actions and the responses they have generated, and we change our behaviour accordingly. All levels of the Land Force must understand what constitutes success at their level, how to measure success, and how that success correlates to success at the operational and strategic level. Land Force action will therefore be characterised by the Adaption Cycle: Act – the Land Force acts to stimulate a response; Sense – reactions to the Land Force actions need to be observed and interpreted; Decide – the Land Force must understand what the response means and understand what should therefore be done; and, Adapt – the adversary will inevitably adapt, and so should we. These Act, Sense, Decide and Adapt cycles need to occur at every level, and by every force element with an understanding of the overall intent of the campaign. This will ensure we adapt appropriately to a constantly changing environment so that we can be best postured for success.

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We act, we learn from our actions and the responses they have generated, and we change our behaviour accordingly.

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## CONCLUSION

The contemporary insurgencies faced today in Iraq and Afghanistan are different in character when compared with the post-colonial insurgencies of the 1950s and 1960s that classicists such as Galula, Fall, Thompson and Kitson wrote about. This change is due in part to the influences of globalisation, a globalised information network, and a pervasive media presence. As David Kilcullen notes in 'Counterinsurgency *Redux*', Internet-based financial transfers, training and recruitment, clandestine communication, planning, and intelligence capabilities allow insurgents to exploit virtual sanctuary for more than just propaganda.<sup>21</sup> Classical counterinsurgency

theory has little to say about such electronic sanctuary. The insurgencies of tomorrow are likely to be even more complex than those of today. They will be increasingly transnational in character, and most likely will involve many diffuse competing insurgent movements pursuing their own conflicting agendas, which may or may not be readily identifiable by the counterinsurgent. And, insurgencies will not necessarily occur in splendid isolation. We are unlikely to have the luxury of neatly boxing a conflict, labelling it as an insurgency, and treating it as a purely discrete entity.

Designing a successful counterinsurgency strategy in such a context is challenging and complex. *Adaptive Campaigning* provides a solid foundation on which to build a successful counterinsurgency campaign. *Adaptive Campaigning* recognises that war, and by default insurgency, is a form of armed politics with the aim of influencing the behaviour of populations through their perceptions.

*Adaptive Campaigning* acknowledges the increasing politicisation of conflict, the challenges it poses for the application of military force and the consequent requirement for a holistic, comprehensive whole-of-government approach to conflict resolution and the establishment of an enduring secure and stable future. The implementation of *Adaptive Campaigning* will ensure that Army remains postured to meet the demands of the complex operating environment and to defeat or contribute to the defeat of contemporary and future insurgencies.

## ENDNOTES

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- 1 Ian Beckett, 'Forward to the Past: Insurgency in our Mist', *Harvard International Review*, Vol. 23, No. 2, Summer 2001, pp. 59–63.
- 2 Steven Metz, *Counterinsurgency: Strategy and the Phoenix of American Capability*, Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle, PA, 1995, p. 16.
- 3 Steven Metz, 'Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq', *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2003–04, p. 25.
- 4 For an excellent argument on the nature and character of future war, and in particular the highly likely possibility for inter-state warfare in this century, see Colin Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 2005.
- 5 *Adaptive Campaigning – The Land Force Response to Complex Warfighting*, correct as at 24 November 2006, was endorsed by the Chief of Army's Senior Advisory Committee (CASAC) and agreed by the Chiefs of Service Committee (COSC) in December 2006 as Army's response to the 2006 Future Land Operating Concept, *Complex Warfighting*. The method for operationalising *Adaptive Campaigning* to meet the Chief of Army's development intent, and the full range of associated and complementary initiatives supporting *Adaptive Campaigning*, are detailed in a Chief of Army Directive (26/07 – Implementing *Adaptive Campaigning*).



- 6 *Adaptive Campaigning*, p. 1.
- 7 Force modernisation direction for the design and development of Army's future force is given in the Chief of Army's Development Intent (CADI). The CADI is 'to develop an Army that is, if necessary, able to operate simultaneously across all lines of operation, in particular through the conduct of sustained close combat in order to win the land battle'. This principal CADI is supported by fourteen additional design rules which can be found in *Adaptive Campaigning*, p. 25.
- 8 Bernard Fall, *Street Without Joy*, Stackpole, Harrisburg, PA, 1961.
- 9 I am indebted to Brigadier (Ret) Justin Kelly for reinforcing this essentially Clausewitzian point in 'Future War – Future Wars', unpublished paper, 2008.
- 10 Michael Evans, 'Clausewitz's Chameleon: Military Theory and the Future of War', *Quadrant*, Vol. XLVI, No. 11, November 2002, p. 8, <<http://www.quadrant.org.au/php/print.php>>.
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- 13 Robert R Tomes, 'Relearning Counterinsurgency Warfare', *Parameters*, Spring 2004, p. 27.
- 14 Michael Evans, 'From Kadesh to Kandahar: Military Theory and the Nature of War', *Naval War College Review*, Vol. LVI, No. 3, Summer 2003, p. 143.
- 15 For a sampling of the 'classicists' see, amongst others, David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Theory and Practice*, New Edition, Praeger Publishing, New York, 2006; David Galula, *Pacification in Algeria: 1956–1958*, RAND, Santa Monica, CA, 2006; Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1962; Frank Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, Faber and Faber, London, 1977; Julian Paget, *Counter-Insurgency Operations: Techniques of Guerilla Warfare*, Walker and Co, New York, 1967. More recent published works on the (mis)application of force include: Bard E O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare*, Brassey's (US) Inc, Washington DC, 1990; John A Nagle, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2002; and Brigadier N RF Aylwin-Foster, *Operation Iraqi Freedom Phase 4: The Watershed the US Army Still Needs to Recognise?*, Royal College of Defence Studies, Course 2005, <<http://www.da.mod.uk/publications/Alywn-Foster%20SHP%202005.pdf/view>>.
- 16 Lieutenant Colonel Craig A Collier, 'Observations from a Year in the Sunni Triangle', *Small Wars Journal*, <<http://smallwarsjournal.com/mag/docs-temp/48-collier.pdf>>.
- 17 US Department of Defense, Field Manual 3–24, *Counterinsurgency*, GPO, Washington DC, 15 December 2006, pp. 1–8.
- 18 Paul Ham, *Vietnam: The Australian War*, HarperCollins, Australia, 2007.



- 19 Gavin Bulloch, 'Military Doctrine and Counterinsurgency: A British Perspective', *Parameters*, Summer, 1996, p. 7.
- 20 Much of the work on adaption in *Adaptive Campaigning* is founded on Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) theory and the ongoing work of Dr Anne Marie Grisogono and her team at DSTO. For an introduction to CAS theory see <<http://www.trojanmice.com/index.htm>>. Dr Alan Ryan's article, 'About the Bears and the Bees: Adaptive Responses to Asymmetric Warfare', <<http://necsi.org/events/iccs6/papers/d8e20597d9f231241c78e593dd7b.pdf>> is also recommended.
- 21 David Kilcullen, 'Counterinsurgency *Redux*', *Survival*, Spring 2007, <<http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/kilcullen1.pdf>>.

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# DOCTRINE

## THOUGHTS OF A PRACTITIONER

### A CONTRIBUTION TO AUSTRALIA'S COUNTERINSURGENCY DOCTRINE DRAFTERS<sup>1</sup>

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MAJOR GENERAL JIM MOLAN

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The Australian Army's decision to write a new manual for counterinsurgency operations is a welcome one. Doctrine drafters may soon discover that the writing of doctrine, with some degree of 'Australian-ness' about it and deserving of our future commanders, will be a more complex task than initially imagined. This process will include a number of stakeholders, and there will be frequent reference back to the most senior officer responsible. Importantly, in addition to experience, if senior officers can contribute anything to the process it must be *ownership*. If we own it, we will take it seriously and put the time and effort into contributing to it.

However, if ultimate responsibility for counterinsurgency doctrine is to lie with Army, the product may become overly biased towards land doctrine. There is already a strong belief in the ADF that counterinsurgency is something only Army does. If we have learnt anything from Iraq it should be that counterinsurgency is (or should be) not just joint: it is interagency, whole-of-nation and multinational. I suggest that the Australian counterinsurgency capability, including its doctrine, must be 'owned' by the Vice Chief of the Defence Force (VCDF) as the Joint Capability

Manager.<sup>2</sup> To do otherwise is to send a message that we either do not understand counterinsurgency or we are not yet serious about it.

Those drafting our doctrine must consider: will our doctrine be authoritative and align all relevant military and civilian agencies behind a single, well thought out body of ideas, or will it only offer general guidance, a philosophy, that is already available in any undergraduate course in strategic studies? If counterinsurgency doctrine is authoritative and causes change, it will be questioned, debated, revised and possibly even implemented. If it is a collection of assumption-based generalisations that does not reflect the world our future commanders can already see, then our officers will ignore it. A single doctrine publication can never be all things to all people; but whatever it is, it should be authoritative, it should be enforceable,<sup>3</sup> it should be reviewed regularly and seriously, and it should cause change. Thus, to ensure that such important joint doctrine is effective it must be the personal responsibility of an individual—in my view, the VCDF.

Compare our approach to counterinsurgency—which we are fighting today and are likely to fight for many years to come—with our approach to the air combat capability in the ADF. Such is the awareness of air combat as a capability deficiency that even our political leadership can give a passable dissertation on the subject. There have been study centres established, teams formed, papers written, metre-high stacks of requirement documentation produced, and billions of dollars of resources allocated. This should not be a consideration in the development of doctrine; but if we apply the air combat capability approach to the ADF's ability to plan, prepare, execute and sustain a counterinsurgency campaign, we must be able to create actual capability rather than just to write doctrine.

Counterinsurgency is important for the ADF, but we will only have done our job if we produce a true counterinsurgency capability. I watched the US effort to produce a counterinsurgency capability during 2004 and 2005, in the face of defeat in Iraq. It was far more like our approach to the air combat capability than it is to our current approach of just writing doctrine. Nothing focuses the mind like looming defeat. The US effort to create an effective counterinsurgency capability was owned by individuals, was run out of a powerful centre, national leaders took an interest, it was joint, and there was wide interest across the United States in one particular product: the Petraeus/Mattis doctrine.

The proposed Australian counterinsurgency doctrine will be written for Australian commanders—not so much for those who are fighting current conflicts, but for those who will lead counterinsurgencies in the future. Our current

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... we must be able to create actual capability rather than just to write doctrine.

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involvement in the Middle East is at the tactical level and their doctrinal needs appear to be well served by ‘tactics, techniques and procedures’-type publications and by lessons learnt processes related to these specific conflicts. Our units, ships and squadrons in current coalitions are under the control of coalition manoeuvre commanders above the tactical level.

Our allies have produced operational level doctrine<sup>4</sup> for the current campaigns based on their (now) vast experience of current counterinsurgencies. If we Australians have a unique approach to our part in the current counterinsurgencies, because that part is tactical, we should express that approach in tactical doctrine.

I urge that some judgments about the future also be committed to doctrine. We tend to stay away from prediction for fear of being wrong, but in my view we are obliged to do so. At the very least we can say that future stabilisation operations are likely to have as much insurgency in them as current operations, they are likely to be as violent as current operations<sup>5</sup> and to be at least as asymmetric.

These are important judgments about future military operations that I would expect to find in an endorsed Australian military strategy. It is not sufficient for our political or strategic leadership merely to say that the ADF must be capable of conducting counterinsurgency. That would be like saying that the ADF must have an air combat capability, and stopping there. If we are serious about being competent at counterinsurgency, then our strategic level must specify what kind of counterinsurgency, what level of competence, and what resources Defence is prepared to allocate. In the absence of such guidance, doctrine drafters will have to make clear assumptions and emphasise the deficiencies, with the hope of prompting guidance at some later stage. I will bet that Petraeus and Mattis did not lack guidance from the strategic level when they were producing their doctrine in 2005 and 2006.

My observation, stimulated by some Defence writings<sup>6</sup> but more by the ideas of Dr Michael Evans,<sup>7</sup> is that there are two models of future conflict in which the ADF will become involved, and which I suggest our doctrine should address. These two models are conflicts of choice and conflicts of necessity. They are both very important and they are markedly different. They are a manifestation of a distinct Australian middle power approach to military art in general and operational art in particular.

In conflicts of choice, Australia is referred to as a ‘security provider’ and as such provides tactical level forces to alliances across the globe. These are missions of choice because Australia can choose the conflict, the time of involvement, the force level we send, the area of operations within the conflict, the type of operations conducted and, most importantly, choose the time to go home. Missions of choice are not about winning the conflict, they are about showing commitment. In conflicts of choice, Australian forces are commanded by Australians at the tactical and national level, but are likely to be under control of alliance manoeuvre commanders

at the high tactical or operational level. Australian command can normally be exercised directly from the strategic level in Canberra to the tactical level in theatre through national commanders.<sup>8</sup> Lessons learned from our experience are valid at the tactical level, particularly if we have chosen to engage in combat. Unique Australian lessons may be harder to find at the operational level because we are less likely to have first hand knowledge. Lessons derived from conflicts of choice may not be transferable to conflicts of necessity. Australian examples of conflicts of choice are all of our military involvements over the last fifty years, except in Timor Leste.<sup>9</sup>

In conflicts of necessity, Australia is referred to as a 'security leader' and provides forces and leadership to alliances for conflicts in our region. These are conflicts of necessity because we have much less choice in when we go and what we do. Conflicts of necessity are about winning, and the critical factor in winning is leadership. Australian commanders are more likely to command or control Australian and alliance forces from the strategic level through a deployed operational level commander and headquarters (who is also a manoeuvre commander) to the tactical level. A recent example of a conflict of necessity was East Timor. Unlike our historical experience with conflicts of choice, our one recent conflict of necessity was characterised by very little combat. This may be the exception.

While most of the conflicts that Australia participates in are conflicts of choice, and only perhaps once or twice in any generation do we experience a conflict of necessity, doctrine must cover both and must differentiate between the two. Our recent conflicts of choice are going well and have met or exceeded government expectations. Our ability to be successful in conflicts of necessity, especially those against a demanding enemy, is much less sure and the consequences are greater if we fail.

In Iraq, I fought with a military that was in the midst of a conflict of necessity.<sup>10</sup> I replaced a US general as Chief of Operations and I was replaced by a US general. US strategy and tactics, despite the enormous friction and confusion in Iraq, were those of a military that was intent on winning. The United States' tolerance of casualties to itself or to its enemy was appropriate for a military fighting to win. The US approach to creating a full counterinsurgency capability, while in conflict, contains lessons for the ADF.

Australian ground units in Iraq are using tactics appropriate for a conflict of choice, but they are doing so in the midst of a massive army using tactics appropriate for a conflict of necessity. On occasions, this has led to private criticism of

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Missions of choice are not about winning the conflict, they are about showing commitment.

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our great and powerful ally for clumsiness or excessive use of force. This in my opinion is wrong. As an Australian in the midst of the US military, and as someone in control of all coalition operations across all of Iraq at the operational (theatre strategic) level,<sup>11</sup> it is my judgment that if Australia was fighting a war of necessity in a theatre like Iraq, we would act in a similar manner, and it would be legal, moral and appropriate. That is why I believe that the US experience in the Iraq campaign is of such value to the development of this doctrine.

During my time in Iraq, the counterinsurgency was heavily joint. We benefited from joint fires, joint intelligence, joint personnel, and joint and contract logistics. Our campaign should have been much more ‘whole-of-nation’ and interagency, but during this time (and, I understand, still after five years) this was severely deficient. The counterinsurgency in Iraq was multinational in name only. There were twenty-eight nations in the coalition, but the United States and the United Kingdom carried out almost all of the offensive combat operations. Of course it was predominantly a land operation, but it was undeniably a ‘joint land operation’. More importantly, it was not an Army responsibility—I was mentored and prepared for operations by a US joint organisation.

Australian counterinsurgency doctrine must reflect this reality. If we address conflicts of necessity in our doctrine, yet base it on a hope (for example) that interagency participation will be high while knowing that there is no capacity for interagency participation in anything above a small ‘conflict of choice’ commitment, then we invalidate our doctrine immediately. If we speak confidently of time sensitive targeting in our doctrine but we have put no effort into understanding it or indeed creating it, we are building our counterinsurgent future on foundations of sand that will collapse in the face of an enemy. If we acknowledge that counterinsurgency is totally dependent on good intelligence quickly passed to lower commanders, yet our ADF intelligence capacity is stretched by current deployments where combat is low, then what credibility can our doctrine have? If we know that counterinsurgency is ‘war among the people’, which needs specialised capabilities such as detention operations, information operations, human intelligence, military policing, secure logistics, civil affairs and population control (through biometrics), and we know that we are deficient in all of these, our future commanders will not put faith in this doctrine.

Our doctrine must of course provide a historical perspective but should focus more on contemporary counterinsurgency, even at the expense of classical theory. In 2004 I considered myself knowledgeable about classical counterinsurgency theory,

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... the US experience in the Iraq campaign is of such value to the development of this doctrine.

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but I quickly came to appreciate in April 2004 that Iraq was different from anything I envisaged. So different was the counterinsurgency in Iraq that it took us from April 2003 to mid- to late-2004 to come up with a counterinsurgency campaign plan that came close to meeting the requirement. Each conflict is unique and needs to be understood by those who are participating in it.

Of course we will need to adapt to the conflict that faces us, but in my opinion it is not an excuse for overly generalised doctrine. The doctrine should address a specific enemy; both models of conflict—choice and necessity—can have more or less violent enemies. But in conflicts of choice, Australia can decide how much combat it will become involved in. I believe it would be folly to set our doctrine against Timor Leste-like militias that had little capacity for violence against anything but civilians and no access to explosive weaponry. The next generation of commanders might, only once or twice in their careers, have to fight in a violent conflict in which they must win. If their doctrinal base is Timor Leste militias, rather than the Mehdi Militia, their need to adapt might be so large that it could dislocate them before they can effectively fight. If they spend all their training and preparation time addressing the Mehdi Militia, and they are required to confront an Timor Leste-like militia, then they will thank us all.

The impact of the level of violence on the conduct of a counterinsurgency should never be underestimated and must be addressed in this doctrine. Violence is the most common manifestation of asymmetry because it creates casualties which over time impact on the Western counterinsurgent's greatest vulnerability—resolve. To focus our counterinsurgency capability only on a low violence insurgency such as Timor Leste or Solomon Islands, just because they are our most recent experience, is to miss the whole point of asymmetry. It is the insurgent that makes the initial decision on the level of violence, not us.

I recommend that our doctrine concentrate on an enemy whose central idea represents religious totalitarianism.<sup>12</sup> If our doctrine can address this it will cover the range of any threats in any counterinsurgency that the ADF is likely to lead or participate in within the foreseeable future. Having picked a demanding but realistic enemy, we should then ensure that if we master that, we can handle lesser challenges.

The most credible yet challenging physical environment in which to situate our religiously inspired insurgency, for the purposes of developing our counterinsurgency doctrine, is a city. This is because insurgencies are about ideas, and only people have ideas—and people live (mainly and increasingly) in cities. Insurgents will hide from

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The impact of the level of violence on the conduct of a counterinsurgency should never be underestimated ...

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our military capabilities ‘among the people’ and they will attempt to intimidate concentrations of people in cities. War ‘among the people’ (urban) is at least as difficult as war in any other physical location because of restrictions on the use of force.

This doctrine should include real examples to illustrate counterinsurgency concepts, and avoid using rhetoric and myth. Wars are emotional activities, especially sustained violent wars. The people and their elected leaders demand rhetoric and create their own myths. However, if professionals use rhetoric too often and if they begin to believe their own rhetoric and myths, then failure is likely. As a professional soldier that has worked with many Western and non-Western armies, and as a practitioner of counterinsurgency, I am yet to be convinced that an ‘Australian approach to war’ exists that will withstand scrutiny. I am sceptical of any claim involving an ability to do things that have not been resourced, recently practiced or demonstrated. I have heard it claimed that Australians are very good at counterinsurgency because we have a long history of success. Our soldiers, our rhetoric claims, are able to relate to the people better than others based in some way our national traits of mateship and ‘a fair go’.<sup>13</sup> These are dangerous beliefs which belong more in the popular press than they do in military minds.

Our doctrine should be ‘distinctively Australian without being uniquely Australian’. Despite Australia having a presence in Iraq, I do not yet detect a widespread understanding of the wider struggle in Iraq, an insurgency that is likely to set a benchmark for insurgencies for many years to come. The two most dangerous concepts in the Australian military or bureaucratic lexicon at the moment are first, the term ‘warfighting’ unless it is understood, and second, the rhetorical flourish that some aspect or group in the ADF is ‘the best in the world’. Perhaps there is a place for this, but it makes me deeply uncomfortable because it is delusion before a fall. If we are the best in the world at anything then I will be the first to claim it. But my observation over a long time indicates that Australian soldiers have no more natural ability to be soldiers (whether as ‘carers’ or ‘killers’) than individuals from any other similar society. Our soldiers are only as good as the training and equipping that goes into preparing them for conflict, and the leadership that they depend on. And all of that counts for nought if we are in the wrong war for the wrong reasons, or we are not clear about when to use force.

An essential part of our responsibility to our nation in creating a counterinsurgency capability is to draw on the lessons of those who are involved in broader and much more complex operations than we are. We cannot learn from them if we do

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not understand the war they are fighting. I have rarely been able to link the war in which I fought with either an official Australian view of the war in Iraq or the conversational view of the war. I would expect that our doctrine will include lessons from those who are doing the fighting, but these must be the right lessons or the counterinsurgency cause will not be advanced. Doctrine must draw from our own experiences, without rhetoric or myth, and build on the experience of others where we are lacking.<sup>14</sup>

Our doctrine has an obligation to tell future commanders how modern counterinsurgency is conducted, because many of them will not know. I was not ready for the Iraq war, having only a few weeks to prepare, and I took with me all the prejudices of a soldier from a small country at the end of the earth. As I quickly came to understand the complex nature of the war, one of the first tasks I gave myself was to be able to state how we were actually conducting this modern counterinsurgency. It would seem to me to be relevant for our doctrine.

I put it in the following way: modern military ‘manoeuvre’<sup>15</sup> in a complex counterinsurgency consists of framework operations, leadership operations and, surprisingly, ‘conventional’<sup>16</sup> operations. The purpose of this manoeuvre is to create security so that the non-military aspects of national power—diplomatic, political, information, economic and reconstruction—can be applied to stabilise the target nation.<sup>17</sup>

Framework operations are what most troops do most of the time and are essentially ‘three block war’.<sup>18</sup> If there are enough troops, framework operations protect the people, the economy and the processes of government and society from the insurgent, and create conditions for other types of operations, kinetic and non-kinetic. Framework operations need vast logistic support which in turn needs to be protected, and specific ‘war among the people’ skills such as civil affairs, human intelligence, detention, information operations and population control through bio-metrics. Framework operations need to establish an enduring presence among the people.

Leadership operations are aimed at killing or capturing the insurgent leadership so that they are less lethal in their attacks on the population, and the rank and file insurgent can be influenced away from the insurgent idea. Almost all combat forces can perform leadership operations but Special Forces, backed up by surveillance and intelligence capabilities, are particularly effective. Direct action against the insurgent leadership is conducted by raids, and by strikes against time

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sensitive targets.<sup>19</sup> Time sensitive targeting is a complex specialised activity that, in my view, is essential in urban counterinsurgencies. It is so complex, technically, legally and morally, that it does not emerge as an afterthought, but must be purposefully developed over time. Intelligence-led time sensitive targeting is one of the most effective asymmetries that Western countries can apply to an insurgency.

‘Conventional’ operations are required when the insurgency presents an opportunity to eradicate a large number of insurgents by the use of concentrated forces. This was the case in Fallujah, and only slightly less so in Samarra, Kut, Tal Afar, Sadr City, Basrah and Najaf during my time in Iraq. This is a level of combat that is far more intense than the ‘third block’ of the ‘three block war’ but is carried out by the same troops and commanders with the same equipment as were deployed for framework operations, with maybe a day or so to change from one to the other. Because of this, doctrine cannot give the impression that Australia can create a force that might be good only at some misguided concept of counterinsurgency, at the expense of conventional warfighting skills.<sup>20</sup>

My experience in Iraq suggests that a major focus of Australian counterinsurgency doctrine should be generalship or operational art, because that is a necessity in any counterinsurgency and, in my opinion, Australia’s major military deficiency. We define operational art as the skilful employment of military forces to attain strategic goals through the design, organisation, sequencing and direction of campaigns and major operations. It translates strategy into operational and ultimately tactical actions. We also tell ourselves that ‘operational art is at the centre of our thinking on the conduct of war’,<sup>21</sup> but I can find no proof of this beyond the written word.

Operational art is not a concept that is only relevant to big militaries running big wars. It is the objective, not the mass a combat force generates or the level of its command, that determines whether operational art is necessary. Operational art is about the function and effectiveness a given force brings to bear in fulfilling strategic objectives. Operational art is what ‘generalship’ is all about, and in modern conflict, with strategic corporals and tactical political leaders, many civilians exercise a form of generalship, more so in conflicts of necessity where the stakes are high. Anyone who exercises operational art needs and deserves consideration within our doctrine.

Despite much popular criticism, the US forces I observed in Iraq adapted to become competent counterinsurgency forces in very difficult circumstances in only a relatively short period of time.<sup>22</sup> At no stage did I observe that the war was being ‘lost’ by commanders and soldiers at the tactical level.<sup>23</sup> The tactical leaders were highly competent. The soldiers fought exceptionally well and, despite the myths, did non-kinetics<sup>24</sup> as well as possible given the security situation, and often at the expense of their own lives. Where there were problems was at the operational and strategic level—a lack of counterinsurgency operational art or ‘generalship’, both civilian and military.

The need is not at the tactical level as much as it is at the operational level. Soldiers do not lose wars; civilian and military ‘generals’ lose wars. I would suggest that a major focus of Australian counterinsurgency doctrine should be the operational art, because Australian senior officers lack experience at the operational level. If your strategic leadership cannot get the right force in the right place with the right equipment to fight the right war, and your operational leadership cannot orchestrate the campaign, then it is almost irrelevant how good your soldiers can fight at the tactical level.

Operational art is a deficiency across the ADF, not just regarding counterinsurgency. Australian commanders have no recent experience of exercising operational art, and as forces and conflicts increase in complexity, both training and education is needed for senior officers. It would be almost impossible to solve the operational art problem in the ADF without a full review of this issue, and I see no move in that direction at this stage. But to me it seems folly to write doctrine based on an assumption that Australian operational level commanders will be competent in operational art, when we are not positively assisting them to do so. It is a brave decision to rely so heavily on luck, and risk increases exponentially. Our doctrine should at least highlight the importance of operational art in trying to win a counterinsurgency conflict, even if our doctrine cannot solve it. Australian operational commanders (and their political and strategic superiors) have at least as much right to counterinsurgency doctrine as do the soldiers.

Close combat is so ugly that everyone is looking for alternatives—except the modern insurgent. Insurgencies are about violence, the main expression of asymmetry. Violence causes casualties and casualties cause fear. A fearful local population can be intimidated, which enables an insurgency to thrive. But also, insurgents aim to cause fear in intervening nations through combat, violence and casualties because, over time, this affects resolve. The major strategy of an insurgency is to control the population by intimidation and to outlast foreign intervention by attacking resolve.

Central to all of this is violence, and insurgent violence must be met by force, especially in the early stages of a conflict. Of all the desirable traits of a counter-insurgent force that should be reflected in our doctrine, the ability to fight must be paramount. Our doctrine must not create a belief in our future commanders that somehow, combat should be considered a failure.<sup>25</sup>

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Operational art is about the function and effectiveness a given force brings to bear in fulfilling strategic objectives.

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The ugliness of combat causes our societies to search for alternatives to solving conflict, and that is a good thing. But I question some of the popular silver bullet proposals. I have noticed a desire to confront conflict by cultural understanding and an ability to communicate in local languages. In certain circumstances perhaps this will work. It worked many times for me personally on the streets of Jakarta in 1998 and Dili in 1999. But if we are going to subscribe to this in our doctrine, we must see cultural sensitivity and languages as but one tool in the counterinsurgents tool box, and not necessarily as a substitute for traditional tools such as the threat or use of force.

The practicality of creating widespread cultural sensitivity and language skills in any military *in anticipation of a conflict* needs to be questioned. We tried it once in the Australian Army many years ago. It was idealistic and impractical, and was quietly dropped. I have mastered two languages apart from my native English, and I have worked in them for periods of years in foreign countries and in foreign conflicts. I understand the effort required to be a competent linguist. Languages are indeed the key to cultural understanding which is the key to success in foreign countries, but often this cannot occur on a widespread basis *in advance of a conflict*.

I would argue that in the early years in Iraq, we had to fight to establish the security that would then enable us to conduct the clever parts of counterinsurgency—touching hearts and minds through humanitarian operations. I would also argue that in the sixth year of the war, we may still not yet have established sufficient security to influence all of the Iraqi people. The lesson that I draw from this is that the probability of any Australian commander having adequate time or troops to prosecute some form of idealistic counterinsurgency is likely to be very low indeed. Counterinsurgent soldiers and commanders must expect an imperfect environment, and doctrine must convey this.<sup>26</sup> I fully understand the importance of humanitarian operations, but particularly early in an insurgency before an adequate level of security has been established, humanitarian operations cannot be stressed at the expense of combat operations.

Collateral damage is a major issue in counterinsurgencies because it creates enemies. It is always detrimental, but may be unavoidable. If we must confront insurgent violence with force, there *will* be collateral damage. The laws of armed conflict do not prohibit violence in war, they try to minimise it, as should we. Studies of civilian casualties in Iraq reinforce my view that the vast majority are caused by the insurgent as a major element of their tactics; but we also caused some, and our doctrine should give this perspective.

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Languages are indeed  
the key to cultural  
understanding ...

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Putting the human tragedy to one side, we should take some comfort from the fact that collateral damage caused by the enemy hurts the enemy, but it seems to take much longer. This is because he reduces the short term backlash from the local population by simply increasing the violence.

One of our greatest advantages as we confront insurgent violence is our technical intelligence and legally applied targeting (strikes and raids) against the enemy leadership. In Iraq, there were totally different levels of collateral damage due to the actions of different nations, depending on whether they were in Iraq to win or to show commitment. I also noticed that there were different levels of acceptance of collateral damage between Iraq and Afghanistan. Acceptance of collateral damage depends on the circumstances. In a conflict of necessity, higher levels of collateral damage may be more acceptable if you have to win than if you are only in the conflict to show commitment. This is the nature of modern counterinsurgency. And it is at the political level that responsibility for collateral damage must ultimately rest, and this responsibility is expressed through rules of engagement.

As a practitioner, I can state confidently that the theory on how to win a counterinsurgency conflict is not difficult. It is the execution that is problematic because it must address a situation that demands trial and error. Key players in Iraq in the second year of the war had a solid grounding in the classical theory of insurgency. If they were a bit rusty because they had been fighting conventional wars, they easily brought themselves up to speed.

Our doctrine must provide advice to future commanders on how to win. Of course it will be simplistic; commanders (like doctrine) have an obligation to make complex matters simple.

First, you must have a strategy to win, not a strategy to go home. If your strategy is to go home, you are in a war of choice, and you face other difficult decisions. If you have a strategy to win, then you are in a war of necessity. I fought in Iraq with a nation that was confused initially about whether it was in a conflict of necessity or a conflict of choice, and its commanders were receiving mixed signals from the national leadership as to whether they were there to win or there to come home. The rhetoric told them they were there to win but the resource allocation, particularly of time, told them they were not. Another manifestation of this confusion was the lack of troops allocated to the task. The US allocated what it thought it could afford, not what the task needed.

My views concerning conflicts of necessity are that the strategy must be consistent and sustained over time, and it must be to win. However, such clarity of strategic

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vision and strength of resolve normally does not exist at the start of a conflict. Or it may exist initially, it may develop over time, or it may disappear. This is the environment in which our future commanders must operate, not some idealised environment in which we are led to expect consistent and clear strategic guidance.

Regardless of the strategy, the tactics that lie below the strategy should be infinitely flexible. In any specific counterinsurgency, it will be the norm not to know if a tactic will work until it has been tried; however, there is a limit to the number of times that tactics or techniques can be seen to fail. The doctrine should include a comprehensive plan that focuses all aspects of national power against the insurgency's ideas. In Iraq, initial failures were magnified by a failure of non-military bodies in the US to provide capability. Not only did we have insufficient troops, time and money in Iraq, we did not have sufficient numbers of CIA, State Department or Homeland Security officers. In a lot of cases, this was because they just did not exist, and the limitations of the Coalition Provisional Authority were an illustration of this point.

The military, as part of a comprehensive plan, will be required to compensate for what I consider to be the inevitable failure of non-military bodies in our society to meet the need. The military does not conduct counterinsurgency, the nation conducts counterinsurgency. But history shows that the nation will rarely be ready. Doctrine should acknowledge that the military must be prepared to carry the burden of interagency failure, and to provide, at least in the early stages of a conflict,<sup>27</sup> almost everything that will be required.<sup>28</sup> This means that the ADF should be creating a Civil Affairs capability in the US sense, and not just a CIMIC capability.<sup>29</sup>

So the military will be a large part, if not all, of the comprehensive plan, especially at the beginning. But in any insurgency worthy of the name, we will hardly get into the initial stage, much less out of the initial stage, unless we can provide security, because we will be beaten. There are lots of ways of providing security<sup>30</sup> but our doctrine should not downplay the importance of being able to fight, especially during the early stages.

I observed that as we learnt and adapted in Iraq in 2004 and 2005, we sometimes fought unnecessarily, but this did not occur often. It was not a long stage in our learning process, but it was a very important stage. We had learnt the war (as it was at the time), by my estimation towards the end of 2004, and the campaign plan that we produced was appropriate to the time. But again, just having a campaign plan does not guarantee that you can execute it.

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The military does not conduct counterinsurgency, the nation conducts counterinsurgency.

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The role of the military in our comprehensive campaign plan was to provide security behind which counterinsurgency could then be conducted. Within that comprehensive campaign plan, the military had to be able to protect the people and their essential services; protect the political, legal and economic processes; develop the host nation security forces; and attack the extremists. Our ability to do this became as much a function of resource availability as of our operational level generalship—we did not have enough troops and it looked like we were not going to have enough time.

So the third item of advice and possibly the most important in how to win, is that no counterinsurgency campaign will be successful until it is fully resourced in terms of manpower, time, money and national resolve. The manpower aspect is such an important issue that I will address it again later.

Fourth, if the above is applied and we adapt well to the current war and start to see some signs of success against the insurgents, do not be surprised if we are surprised. As soon as we make progress, our enemy will try to find a way to change the war. By the end of 2005, the steps that we took over the previous two years meant that, although we would never claim to be winning, we were certainly not being decisively beaten. Our enemies are living, breathing, thinking opponents, and they did not stand back and admire our progress. It was obvious that if the insurgents had not taken drastic steps after the three successful elections in 2005, we would have continued to make progress going into 2006. So they changed the war through sectarian violence. From 2003 to 2005, we learnt the war that faced us and we adapted. When our enemies changed the war in early 2006<sup>31</sup> and began a slaughter of their own country's people, we had to learn and adapt once again. And the resolve of the major nations in the war was severely tested.

The most visible issue in current counterinsurgency remains troop numbers, because troop numbers are directly related to effectiveness, casualties and cost, and these are directly related to resolve. This is not a marginal issue—it could be the central issue. You cannot be in a counterinsurgency to win, or at least win in a reasonable period, if you do not have enough troops. Despite what we learnt in Iraq, the issue of troop density seems to have been marginalised in Afghanistan, so I would not be confident that 'adequate troops' is a lesson that we have learnt for eternity. In Iraq, the US commander that I worked for<sup>32</sup> handled the problem in two ways: he asked for and was given a significant troop surge to the maximum capability of the US military in

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late 2004 and in the first half of 2005, and he put maximum resources into creating a competent Iraqi force, with full knowledge that this was a long and risky undertaking. Even in the second year of the war, the United States was raising ten new US brigades (40 000 soldiers) and now has moved into a program to increase the US military by 92 000 soldiers. Often, however, adequate numbers of troops will not be available, and in those cases we should anticipate a long fight.

Our doctrine on counterinsurgency must address the issue of adequate numbers or we will repeat the failures of Iraq in every subsequent conflict, as I fear we may be in Afghanistan. Doctrine must offer our future commanders some rules of thumb that encapsulate what we have learned.<sup>33</sup>

Based on studies by the RAND Corporation of historically successful counterinsurgencies, a rule of thumb has been that twenty competent, trustworthy troops (or para-military police) are needed per 1000 of the population. Iraq has a population of twenty-seven million, therefore the troops theoretically needed by historical standards was 540 000.<sup>34</sup> But the number of quality troops available in Iraq has never been more than 170 000, with only about 150 000 able to regularly conduct offensive operations. Just because a future commander is not given the theoretically correct number of troops, it does not mean the campaign will not be conducted. And if the campaign is conducted with less than the optimum number of troops, this does not necessarily mean defeat. In a conflict of necessity, future Australian commanders may have to do their best with the number of troops that they have available. What it meant in Iraq was that the fewer troops we had, the longer the conflict would run and the more vulnerable was our resolve.

As well, historical rules of thumb may not have taken into account the progress over time of high technology surveillance or the increase in quality of US troops. We could take risk and not deploy troops to areas outside cities because we could see from surveillance that no enemy was present in significant numbers. But in war among the people in cities, there is no equivalent to wide area surveillance, and this is exacerbated because language and ethnicity limit the ability to gain intelligence from agents (human intelligence). Urban counterinsurgencies consume troops in very large numbers indeed.

So our historical experience tells us we may need hundreds of thousands of quality troops in Iraq, but we only had 150 000. This proportional deficiency might be the norm for our future commanders and doctrine should address this in an Australian context rather than some ideal. The question then becomes: What should commanders do if they face this situation? We faced that situation—and we continued to fight the war. We knew that the fewer troops we had, the longer the war would go, but if we kept our resolve, we could still win. We had no way of saying how much longer because we had to try this level of troops and see what happened. We knew that the United States was pressed for troops worldwide and responsible

US commanders did what they could with what they had, asked for more when they really needed them, and tried to create an Iraqi force to fight alongside us. We should not be surprised that the war is in its sixth year, but our doctrine must ensure that all those connected with counterinsurgency in the future understand this issue.

Our doctrine must align with higher level concepts that state how the ADF will fight as a joint force in the future. These concepts provide the discipline that doctrine drafters need in relation to the maximum force size that future Australian joint commanders might have access to in an Australian-led regional counterinsurgency or in worldwide military operations in the future. Those who draft doctrine must take account of the leadership's best judgment on how long we will need to deploy, and what will be the pattern of our deployment. They must also address the deficiencies in the future force that our counterinsurgency commanders will be using, with the hope that we start now to remedy those deficiencies. By disciplining our doctrine writers through the guidance of the senior leadership, we align the joint force from top to bottom, and we address Australian issues at an Australian scale.

*Joint Operations in the 21st Century* is an unclassified document set many years into the future. The only issue for doctrine writers is the emphasis that we place in that document on manoeuvrist strategies, given that counterinsurgency is essentially attritional. An unthinking manoeuvrist attitude by a future Australian counterinsurgency commander might be counterproductive.

In summary then, based on my experience in Iraq, I have offered the following observations to the drafters of our counterinsurgency doctrine:

- It will be a more complex task than you imagine.
- Our counterinsurgency doctrine should be 'owned' by the Vice Chief of the Defence Force as the Joint Capability Manager.
- Our doctrine should be authoritative.
- We should really be creating a counterinsurgency capability for the nation, only part of which is doctrine.
- Base our doctrine on lessons from our current conflicts but write it for those Australian commanders who will lead counterinsurgencies in the future.
- Concentrate on the operational level and only stray into lower level tactics when they are very important.
- Commit to some judgments about the future.
- Emphasise the two models of future conflicts—conflicts of choice and conflicts of necessity—and differentiate strongly between them.
- Counterinsurgency is joint, 'whole of nation', inter-agency and multinational—but don't count on it.
- Our doctrine must reflect what is, or what is likely to be, not what we hope will be or what should be.

- Focus more on contemporary counterinsurgency, even at the expense of classical theory.
- Position our doctrine to address a religiously inspired enemy on an urban battlefield.
- Be free of myth and rhetoric.
- Explain how modern counterinsurgency is conducted and how to win.
- Address the biggest problems—operational art.
- Emphasise that a counterinsurgency force must be able to fight, more so in the early stages—if you cannot fight, you will never get to the ‘hearts and minds’ part.
- Address the tactics of counterinsurgency—you must have an adequate number of troops—but don’t count on it.
- Align doctrine with concepts to give realistic guidance on force size, timings and force structure for Australians.

## ENDNOTES

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- 1 This article is based on a presentation given at a seminar called by the Chief of Army in February 2008, the purpose of which was to guide authors drafting counterinsurgency doctrine to capture an Australian approach to this important subject.
- 2 The VCDF has had the responsibility for Joint Capability Management for some years but does not yet have the staff or organisation to effect it.
- 3 Doctrine should be ‘enforceable’ in the general preparation for non-specific conflict. It is not proposed here that this level of doctrine is binding in practice. As arguably the most influential military doctrine ever written, the German Army’s 1933 ‘Truppenführung’ says: war itself is an art, a free and creative activity founded on scientific principles.
- 4 An example is Field Manual 3-24, the Petraeus or Petraeus/Mattis doctrine. *The U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2007.
- 5 The level of violence in current counterinsurgencies is greater than most deployed ADF elements are seeing at the moment.
- 6 Department of Defence, *Australia’s National Security: A Defence Update 2003*, Defence Publishing Service, Canberra, 2003, p.7. Department of Defence, *Australia’s National Security: A Defence Update 2005*, Defence Publishing Service, Canberra, 2005, p. 10. Department of Defence, *Australia’s National Security: A Defence Update 2007*, Defence Publishing Service, Canberra, 2007, pp. 37–9.
- 7 Michael Evans, ‘The Closing of the Australian Military Mind: The ADF and Operational Art’, based on a paper written for the VCDF, which will be published in a forthcoming edition of the Kokoda Foundation Journal *Security Challenges*.

- 8 National commanders are commanders deployed to a theatre with specific responsibility for the national interests of troops that are deployed under control of coalition manoeuvre commanders, but they do not manoeuvre the forces (or command them in battle).
- 9 For example: Korea, Malaya, Confrontation, Vietnam, Somalia, Cambodia, Rwanda, Solomon Islands, Iraq and Afghanistan. It has been argued that the 1914 Australian campaign to seize German possessions in New Guinea and the Pacific, and Blamey's role in the South-West Pacific in 1943–44 were at the operational level.
- 10 I refer here not to the invasion of the Iraq, which clearly involved choice, but to the counterinsurgency that followed.
- 11 My position was referred to as chief of 'Strategic Operations' because it interfaced with the Iraqi Government. It was also referred to as 'theatre strategic'. In a global sense, it was the operational level of war, with the strategic level being run from Washington, and the tactical level of the war being run by the Multinational Corps.
- 12 I take the term from Allan Behm, *Strategic Tides: Positioning Australia's Security Policy to 2050*, Kokoda Paper 6, November 2007, who says that 'religious totalitarianism depends on the idea that all human action is absolutely subject to the will and power of God, who not only knows and directs ... but actually prescribes the course and rules of human action.'
- 13 I heard almost the exact same claim made by the Indonesian Armed Forces about their troops in Cambodia, except that 'mateship' was replaced by principles of Panca Sila.
- 14 I saw on a daily basis that commentators, as the old saying goes, 'did not believe what they saw, but saw what they believed'. No one is immune from this, but the learning cycle of soldiers on the ground can sometimes be measured in minutes as reality imposes itself in terms of violence, casualties and sometimes defeat. For the media, often there was no learning cycle as they quickly moved on to the next issue.
- 15 The term 'manoeuvre' is used in the sense of what militaries do when deployed on operations.
- 16 The term 'conventional' is used to describe a military operation where asymmetry is not as central as it is in counterinsurgency. It describes operations where the enemy stands and fights.
- 17 Often referred to by the acronym 'DIME', Diplomatic, Information, Military and Economic. In Iraq, we added Political and Reconstruction.
- 18 A term coined in the 1990s by the US Marines to describe complex operations that involved simultaneous humanitarian, protection or control, and combat operations occurring in neighbouring city blocks.
- 19 Time sensitive targets are those that only appear for short periods of time. In an urban environment they must be found and dealt with rapidly, but legally and accurately, normally by Special Forces raids or by aerial bombs.

- 20 This should not be a surprise to most Vietnam war veterans—there was an abundance of conventional operations in Vietnam and some on a very large scale. The post-Vietnam generation, however, has not experienced general and consistent support for the fact that a conventional combat capability is always necessary.
- 21 *Joint Operations for the 21st Century*, Future Joint Operating Concept, Department of Defence, June 2007.
- 22 A period still measured in years, but short in comparison to the average length of a counterinsurgency campaign.
- 23 There were individual failures but (arguably) no military institutional failures.
- 24 Such as humanitarian and civil affairs operations.
- 25 Many people see the Petraeus/Mattis doctrine as under-emphasising combat, and over emphasising other activities such as humanitarian operations.
- 26 The Petraeus/Mattis doctrine does this relatively well, especially through some of the writings of David Kilcullen. For example: what if higher headquarters does not get counterinsurgency? What if the theatre shifts under your feet? What if you have no resources?
- 27 The ‘initial stages’ of a counterinsurgency might be measured in years rather than months.
- 28 I am not saying that military doctrine is likely to influence non-military agencies, but doctrine must carry the idea that such agencies may not be able to participate, especially in the early stages.
- 29 In the US sense as practiced in Iraq, a Civil Affairs capability enabled the coalition to ‘run a country’ (with all our errors and clumsiness), as well as do ‘civil military cooperation.’ This might be more appropriate if we are to be ‘security leaders’ in our region.
- 30 ‘Human security’ methods—employment, delivery of humanitarian assistance, the rule of law, human rights, freedom from fear, education, reconstruction, etc., much of which can only be delivered by non-military bodies.
- 31 Marked by the destruction of the Mosque of the Golden Dome in Samarra, of great significance to the Shia.
- 32 General George W Casey, Jr.
- 33 Ultimately the military does not decide the numbers of troops that are committed to a conflict of choice or necessity. Politicians own wars. The military’s role is to advise and then execute the government’s decision. But good advice cannot be given if the facts are not widely known.

- 34 This number is as complex as everything else about the Iraq War. It may need to be lessened significantly because the insurgency was concentrated in the Sunni Triangle, but it may also need to be increased because of the demand of cities. This is the kind of number ('several hundred thousand') used by the US Army in Congressional inquiries into the occupation of Iraq prior to the invasion, but supposedly disregarded by the Administration. James T Quinlivan, 'Burden of Victory: The Painful Arithmetic of Stability Operations', *RAND Review*, Vol. 27, No. 2, Summer 2003, pp. 28-9.

## THE AUTHOR

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Major General Andrew James 'Jim' Molan AO, DSC joined the Army in 1968, graduating from RMC Duntroon into the Royal Australian Infantry Corps in 1971. General Molan has served with a number of Infantry battalions, including service with 6 RAR as CO. He has commanded both 1 Brigade and 1 Division, serving in the latter role until mid 2002 when he assumed command of the Australian Defence College. Major General Molan was despatched overseas to Iraq in 2004 to serve as Chief of Operations, Headquarters Multinational Force, and for this service he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the US Legion of Merit. Major General Molan is currently serving as advisor to the VCDF for Joint Warfighting Lessons and Concepts. He holds Bachelor Degrees in Arts from the University of New South Wales and Economics from the University of Queensland.

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## DOCTRINE

# TASK FORCE RANGER VS. URBAN SOMALI GUERRILLAS IN MOGADISHU

AN ANALYSIS OF GUERRILLA AND COUNTERGUERRILLA  
TACTICS AND TECHNIQUES USED DURING  
OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT\*

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MARSHALL V ECKLUND

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## THE FUTURE

# THE FUTURE OF INSURGENCY\*

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IAN BECKETT

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## MILESTONES

# IN MEMORIAM

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### **THE MOST REVEREND JOHN ALOYSIUS MORGAN, AO, DD, RFD, ED** (1909–2008)

**T**he Most Reverend John Aloysius Morgan, the son of Patrick and Catherine Morgan, was born on 9 October 1909, at Niddrie Homestead in Essendon, Victoria. A man with a love of horse racing, he would often recall that he was born on Caulfield Guineas Race Day. He grew up in a young nation that had seen the horrors of the First World War, the dismay of the survivors and the devastation of the Great Depression. He was ordained into the Catholic Church on 15 July 1934, following his studies at Corpus Christus in Werribee, Victoria.

When Fr Morgan joined the Army on 12 June 1941, Australia had been at war for nearly two years, predominantly supporting Commonwealth allies in Europe and Africa. The twenty-five year old priest was commissioned into the Australian Military Forces in the most junior of clergy appointments: that of Chaplain 4th Class. He was posted as the regimental chaplain to the 58th Battalion when they deployed to New Guinea.

Shortly after the battle for Wau, Fr Graydon was injured and his driver killed when the jeep they were in went over the side of a cliff. Fr Morgan, previously the chaplain with 24th Battalion, and then senior Catholic chaplain to 3rd Division, was flown into Wau. His mission was to take over Fr Graydon's responsibilities in Kanga Force.

The Wau–Salamau campaign began a period of intense activity for Fr Morgan and he became 'one of the best known padres in New Guinea, tramping around the jungle with his Mass kit'. In addition to the divisional troops in the area of Wau and Bulolo, Fr Morgan travelled to the more distant units, accompanied only by his batman driver. This involved trekking over terrain as high and tortuous as the Kokoda Track. One of the units he served was the 2/3rd Independent Commando unit.

The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Warfe, often told of when Fr Morgan arrived one day and declared his intention to visit the men at their various forward outposts. Warfe said, 'we are under observation and I forbid you to go further'. Fr Morgan replied, 'That's alright; I must see them all so I will go at night'. And he did. When Warfe retold the story he would add the remark 'that took guts'.

In June 1944, Fr Morgan was posted as Senior Chaplain (RC) 6 Div. On one occasion in 1944, a battalion chaplain had been hospitalised, and Fr Morgan volunteered to take his place because he knew how important it was to minister to the troops in the field. Fr Morgan noted:

I love the hills and am happiest when I have a pack on my back and moving from camp to camp among the Infanteers. There is a spirit in such camps that cannot be found anywhere else—and an atmosphere that is unique. Any physical hardship is well repaid by the companionship one enjoys among soldiers perched on some hilltop in a jungle camp. And they appreciate the opportunity of Mass and the Sacraments.

Remembering they too were Christians, whenever he could Fr Morgan ministered to the native bearers. They bore much of the danger of scouting in advance of the battalions, and most of the drudgery of carrying supplies behind the battalions, all without receiving anything like the same clothing, food, health care or any of the rewards given to the soldiers. He recalled on one occasion there were about thirty natives at confession and Holy Communion at the various outposts. He said 'it takes time for me to speak the pidgin English with them and for most it was over three years since they had the opportunities of the Sacraments'.

At the completion of the Second World War when most of his colleagues were glad to return to their parish, monastery or college, Fr Morgan continued his service to God and his country by remaining in the Australian Defence Force.

His post war career matched his war time service in his commitment to Service personnel and his Church communion. Highlights of this time included: being Senior Chaplain to 3 Div and having his responsibilities extended to include HQ Southern Command; being promoted chaplain 2nd class and appointed Deputy Chaplain General (RC) Army Headquarters on 8 September 1955 and Chaplain General (Major General) on 27 August 1964; ordained Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Canberra–Goulburn and Titular Bishop of Membressa; appointment as first Military Vicar of Australia in 1969; and later he became a foundation member and first chairman of the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services.

He was awarded the Order of Australia in 1976 and had an audience with the Pope in Rome.

In January 1985 Bishop Morgan retired at the age of 75. In an unprecedented gesture of respect and esteem, his fellow members of the Religious Advisory Committee tabled a notable minute:

His long years of service saw him become in a very real sense the bridge between the old and the new, both within the Australian Defence Force and within his own communion. He has the unique distinction of having participated in three distinct styles of chaplaincy, administration and oversight. His long periods of service, too, has given him an unrivalled knowledge of the development of chaplaincy within the ADF. It has also given him a deep understanding of service life and the heavy demands it places upon dedicated men and women. Bishop Morgan has touched the lives of generations of chaplains, officers, servicemen and service women and their families. He is remembered by many with affection and gratitude for his warm humanity, his pastoral concern and his fatherly advice. His grace and wisdom have enhanced the lives and witness of chaplains beyond his own communion as well as those within it.

Bishop Morgan will be interred in the crypt of St Christopher's Cathedral, Manuka.

### Army History Unit

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#### **MAJOR GENERAL A L MORRISON, AO, DSO, MBE**

(1927–2008)

**M**ajor General Alan Lindsay Morrison, widely and affectionately known as 'Alby', was born in Sydney on 15 August 1927 and educated at Waverly College. He entered RMC Duntroon during the Second World War and graduated, to Infantry, in December 1947. Like many of his own and subsequent classes, he served in Japan during the Allied occupation, in his case with the 66th Battalion, the forebear of 2 RAR. Service in the Korean War was also a shared experience for his generation: with 3 RAR in 1950–51, and again in 1952–53 as a Staff Captain on the Headquarters of the 28th British Commonwealth Brigade, a composite formation with units from Britain, Australia, New Zealand and India commanded by Brigadier TJ (later Lieutenant General Sir Thomas) Daly.

Following the Korean War he held the usual range of regimental and junior staff postings, including a period as an instructor at RMC, before attending Staff College at Camberley in the United Kingdom in 1959. A period instructing at the Australian Staff College in Queenscliff, Victoria between 1965–67 was followed by appointment to raise and command a new battalion, 9 RAR, and lead it on operational service in the Republic of Vietnam in 1968–69, its only tour on active service. Raising, training and deploying a new battalion within a twelve-month period was a demanding task, and Major General Morrison was always proud of the record of the battalion and its members. For his service he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

He then served a term as MA to the Chief of the General Staff, Daly, in keeping with the latter's stipulation that his personal staff officers were to have recent active service in Vietnam. Promoted to major general in 1977 he was appointed Commandant of RMC, and did much to help the further development of the institution as a professional military education establishment, allied to a university, in a difficult period. As commandant he was noted for walking about the college, sometimes accompanied by his dog in the evenings, and chatting to anyone he encountered, thus shrewdly keeping a finger on the pulse of college life. While in the post he also established the Duntroon Society. He retired from the Army in 1981 and became the Services member of the Repatriation Commission, and was made an Officer of the Order of Australia.

In retirement he maintained active links with the Army and with the Royal Australian Regiment in particular, serving as Colonel Commandant between 1986–93 and as National President of the RAR Association. He also established the RAR Foundation, and served as its inaugural chairman.

A man of great personal charm and courtesy and a lively conversationalist, he would recite great quantities of verse by Paterson and 'John O'Brien' with slight encouragement. Alby Morrison is survived by his wife, Margaret, two adult children and their families. His son, David, is currently Deputy Chief of Army.

**Jeff Grey**

# NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The editors of the *Australian Army Journal* welcome submissions from any source. Two prime criteria for publication are an article's standard of written English expression and its relevance to the Australian profession of arms. The journal will accept letters, feature articles, review essays, e-mails and contributions to the *Point Blank* and *Insights* sections. As a general guide on length, letters should not exceed 500 words; articles and review essays should be between 3000 and 6000 words; and contributions to the *Insights* section should be no more than 1500 words. The *Insights* section provides authors with the opportunity to write brief, specific essays relating to their own experiences of service. Readers should note that articles written in service essay format are discouraged, since they are not generally suitable for publication.

Each manuscript should be sent by e-mail to <army.journal@defence.gov.au>, or sent printed in duplicate together with a disk to the editors. Articles should be written in Microsoft Word, be one-and-a-half spaced, use 12-point font in Times New Roman and have a 2.5 cm margin on all sides. Submissions should include the author's full name and title; current posting, position or institutional affiliation; full address and contact information (preferably including an e-mail address); and a brief, one-paragraph biographical description.

The *Australian Army Journal* reserves the right to edit contributions in order to meet space limitations and to conform to the journal's style and format.

## GENERAL STYLE

All sources cited as evidence should be fully and accurately referenced in endnotes (not footnotes). Books cited should contain the author's name, the title, the publisher, the place of publication, the year and the page reference. This issue of the journal contains examples of the appropriate style for referencing.

When using quotations, the punctuation, capitalisation and spelling of the source document should be followed. Single quotation marks should be used, with double quotation marks only for quotations within quotations. Quotations of thirty words or more should be indented as a separate block of text without quotation marks. Quotations should be cited in support of an argument, not as authoritative statements.



## NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Numbers should be spelt out up to ninety-nine, except in the case of percentages, where arabic numerals should be used (and *per cent* should always be spelt out). All manuscripts should be paginated, and the use of abbreviations, acronyms and jargon kept to a minimum.

## BIOGRAPHIES

Authors submitting articles for inclusion in the journal should also attach a current biography. This should be a brief, concise paragraph, whose length should not exceed eight lines. The biography is to include the contributor's full name and title, a brief summary of current or previous service history (if applicable) and details of educational qualifications. Contributors outside the services should identify the institution they represent. Any other information considered relevant—for example, source documentation for those articles reprinted from another publication—should also be included.