

Tentative Manual for Countering Irregular Threats

An Updated Approach to
Counterinsurgency Operations



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**MARINE CORPS COMBAT
DEVELOPMENT COMMAND
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In the early 20th Century the debacle of Gallipoli convinced many military theorists that amphibious operations were impossibly difficult and inherently doomed to failure. Assessing the nature of the anticipated conflict in the Pacific, the Marine Corps concluded that the United States could not afford the luxury of avoiding that which was incredibly difficult. Rather than avoiding the problem, the Navy-Marine Corps team attacked it. The result was a *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* published in 1934. Acknowledging that there was still much to learn, this manual would be refined through numerous exercises and experiences until 1940. This document provided a common framework for further exploration and refinement of the tactics, techniques and procedures that would be creatively—and successfully—applied on a global scale.

Today we face a similar situation in regard to irregular threats. The problems associated with countering irregular threats are complex, dynamic, and daunting. **Their solutions require a long-term, comprehensive approach** in the application of the instruments of national power and influence. While we are naturally predisposed toward quick and decisive conflict resolution, our conventional military preeminence virtually guarantees adversaries will resort to irregular means. The Marine Corps must **attack these problems in partnership** with the joint and interagency communities and our multinational allies. Marines must approach counterinsurgency prepared to combat armed adversaries as well as **influencing the environment through the use of information, humanitarian aid, economic advice and a boost toward good governance.**

As with any concept, this is a proposal of how Marines might operate in the future. It is intended to promote discussion and debate that may eventually lead to ideas for specific combat development

initiatives...innovation that is squarely focused on how we design and execute operations against future threats. Our warfighting philosophy urges us to refine, expand, and improve our profession as the means and methods of war and conflict evolve. If we do not then we risk becoming outdated, stagnant, and irrelevant. So read this concept with an open mind and provide thoughtful contributions to our future warfighting capabilities. Forward any comments or suggestions to the contacts listed in the box at the bottom of this page.



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Executive Summary

The nature of war in the twenty-first century is the same as it has been since ancient times, a violent clash of interests between or among organized groups characterized by the use of military force.¹ War, as an aspect of politics, extends beyond the winning of battles and campaigns. Winning battles is a means to the end but does not solely drive the outcome in war. In war, the achievement of strategic objectives includes military action considered in concert with other elements of power and influence.

The term irregular is used in the broad, inclusive sense to refer to all types of non-conventional methods of violence employed to counter the traditional capabilities of an opponent. Irregular threats include acts of a military, political, psychological, and economic nature, conducted by both indigenous actors and non-state actors for the purpose of eliminating or weakening the authority of a local government or influencing an outside power, and using primarily asymmetric methods. Included in this broad category are the activities of insurgents, guerrillas, terrorists, and similar irregular groups and organizations that operate in and from the numerous weakened and failed states that exist today.

The U.S. military has not yet relinquished its conventional view of war that was based on conceptual thinking that originated immediately following WWII. Today's military forces have mastered the thought process required to design and execute a conventional combat campaign, but have not focused substantial attention on developing the capabilities that contribute to the defeat of

irregular threats. The military usually focuses on the line of operation² it knows best: combat operations. Combat operations are rarely if ever singularly decisive when countering irregular threats. In successful conflict resolution against irregular threats, the combat line of operation is only one line of operation among multiple lines, and there are distinct limitations on the effective use of conventional military force.

The establishment of a secure environment in which a society can make progress and that supports the particular normality of that society is crucial. Security cannot be established solely through combat operations and the training of host nation military and police forces. A secure environment is also dependent on an expanded view of the lines of operation. In order to effectively counter irregular threats at the local, regional and trans-national level, the Marine Corps must expand its lines of operation in terms of campaign design. These “lines of operation” would include the following: **combat operations, training and advising host nation security forces, essential services, economic development, promotion of governance, and information operations.**³ These “lines of operation” require substantially increased coordination with other government agencies.

Part I—The Concept

Countering Irregular Threats: An Updated Approach to Counterinsurgency

Introduction

First and foremost this is a concept about war. As an extension of both policy and politics with the addition of military force, war can take different forms across the spectrum of conflict. Conventional warfare and irregular warfare are subsets of war that exist simultaneously to one extent or another on most battlefields. The purpose of this concept paper is to describe Marine Corps operations to counter irregular threats. This concept is designed with two objectives in mind. First, this concept is intended to influence the force development process by focusing on the challenges of countering irregular threats, and reviewing potential institutional changes that might be in order. Secondly, this concept is written to assist Marine leaders, primarily from the battalion to Marine Expeditionary Force, that are engaged in the execution of policy.

The ideas posited within this work are not new. However, they are different from the perspective that the Marine Corps and Army have, since the conclusion of the Vietnam War, focused combat development on combined arms maneuver of mechanized forces at the expense of operations to counter insurgents, guerrilla forces, and other related irregular threats.

It is the collective duty of all Marines to devote their intellectual energy toward this initiative as was done with amphibious warfare in its early development and *maneuver warfare* when it was introduced as our warfighting philosophy. This process of innovation, that includes conceptual development, as well as live-force experimentation, modeling, wargaming, exercises, reasoned debate, and the incorporation of operational lessons learned, will enable the development of improved warfighting capabilities.

This concept is laid out in two parts. Part One is the concept itself, a broad articulation of the problem and a proposed solution. Part Two is a more detailed description of the solution which contains practical recommendations for planners as well as specific implications for combat development.

The Nature and Theory of War

The nature of war in the twenty-first century is the same as it has been since ancient times, "...a violent clash of interests between or among organized groups characterized by the use of military force."⁴ The terms "organized" and "military force" refer to a group's ability to mobilize support for its own political interests and its "ability to generate violence on a scale sufficient to have significant political consequences."⁵ These terms do not limit the participants in war to regular armies employed by a nation-state.

Clausewitz tells us that war has two natures, the "objective" and the "subjective."⁶ Though this seems confusing, it demonstrates the dynamic nature of war. It is both constant and fluctuating.

The objective represents those elements or qualities that every war has in common. The subjective refers to those qualities that change from war to war.⁷ There is permanence to the objective nature of war that is represented in the enduring elements that all wars, large and small, share. These enduring qualities include friction, uncertainty, fluidity, disorder and danger and produce interactions that are a complex mixture of causes and effect that cannot be individually isolated or dominated by technological solutions. Though these elements of the objective nature of war are always present they vary in degree from war to war based on the situation. Like the weather, certain elements are common--pressure, humidity, wind, etc.--but they vary constantly; it is the same in war.⁸ The subjective nature of war consists of qualities that vary to a greater degree and consist of things like the political purpose of the conflict, the types of armed forces used or the weapons and tactics employed. It is the subjective factors that cause the objective to vary in degree.

War, as an aspect of politics, extends beyond the winning of battles and campaigns. Winning battles is a means to the end but does not solely drive the outcome in war. The achievement of strategic objectives in war includes military action considered in concert with all the other instruments of influence a nation-state or entity possesses. In an ideal sense, the requirements of policy can lead to absolute wars or wars for more limited policy objectives. In reality, the requirements of policy may be almost infinitely various, war can surely be of any kind, not only of two.⁹

The American Approach

History reveals that violent clashes of interests often include irregular forces or factions that exist outside the authority of established states. *War in the Shadows*, by Robert Asprey, documents over two thousand years of conflict between regular and irregular forces. In 1965, Dr. Bernard Fall described the twentieth century as “The Century of Small Wars.” He cited 48 small wars from the first 65 years of the twentieth century that, *in toto*, involved as many people and as many casualties as either one of the two world wars.¹⁰ This is no insignificant point and suggests that conflicts like World War II represent both an aberration as well as a refinement of the actual tradition of war. The traditional form of war is actually more irregular.

In 1964, Bernard Fall warned that “American readers...will find to their surprise that their various seemingly ‘new’ counter-insurgency gambits, from strategic hamlets to large-scale pacification, are mere rehashes of old tactics to which helicopters, weed killers, and rapid firing rifles merely add a new dimension...without changing the character of the struggle.”¹¹ Asprey, Fall, Clausewitz, and other distinguished students of war all echo the sentiment that asymmetric adaptation during war is timeless. Regardless of the actors involved, war is fundamentally a struggle between “...hostile, independent, and irreconcilable wills, each trying to impose itself upon the other.”¹²

The American way of war has predominantly been shaped by conflicts characterized by the use regular armies. Throughout history, states have made war against other states in what most have come to see as conventional warfare. That is, the nation-states normally fought their

peers and near-peers. In this sense, and particularly from the American perspective, the term “conventional” in the context of military operations has come to be synonymous with “regular” or “traditional” combat.

The reality is that war will not always follow convention; actors other than conventional combatants will engage in combat, the weak will attack the strong and the strong will use unconventional methods against the strong. Even American history does not reflect the argument that conventional war is the most common or even most significant, defining type of warfare¹³. However, throughout American history the default setting for military preparedness was based upon the prevailing view of what was considered conventional or regular. Since World War II the American military, has been predominantly organized, structured, and trained to fight an enemy very much like the image it saw in the mirror. This concept will address a broader view of war beyond the microcosm of modern conventional war. It will address what the U.S. military has for some number of years termed “irregular.” In truth, warfare is not truly conventional or unconventional. It is not regular or irregular. Warfare in reality has a certain *hybrid nature* that is a variation in what is “conventional” and what is other than conventional. In fact, in the same conflict, both forms will exist simultaneously.

Irregular Threats and Insurgency

The term irregular is used in a broad sense to refer to all types of unconventional methods of violence. Irregular threats include acts of a military, political, psychological, and economic nature, conducted by both indigenous actors and non-state actors for the purpose of eliminating

or weakening the authority of a local government or influencing an external power, and using primarily irregular methods. Those groups that practice irregular methods and tactics do not consider themselves “irregular.” They are “irregular” from the perspective of a western nation-state such as the United States.

The framework in which these irregular threats exist will be unique to each future intervention. Brigadier Frank Kitson took the practical approach of an experienced practitioner when addressing the difficult problems concerning the matter of terminology in his 1971 publication of *Low Intensity Operations*. It is not easy to cover every set of circumstances by exactly defined terms, nor in the last resort is it even necessary to do so.¹⁴ This concept will focus on insurgency and counterinsurgency operations. The Marine Corps views insurgency as the most dangerous and likely irregular threat it will encounter in the future. This concept will avoid attempting to address every aspect of stability operations across the spectrum of conflict. Though the purpose or ends of a stability operation with differ, as they will in counterinsurgency, peace operations, and more benign nation building efforts, the ways and means will share common requirements for reaching practical solutions.

Insurgency may be defined as a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities or occupiers in which the non-ruling group consciously uses political resources and violence to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of a legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics.¹⁵ Insurgency can follow more conventional operations as in *Operation Iraqi Freedom* but historically it has developed from a relatively peaceful situation. With the absence of violence, subversion exists which

consists of all measures taken by sections of a population against the ruling authorities in order to overthrow those authorities or coerces them to do things they wish not to do. Though the distinction between insurgency and subversion seems clear on paper in practice this clear divergence does not exist. The transition from relative peace to war can be gradual and confusing.¹⁶ The harder the insurgency is to identify in its early stages the more difficult the problem becomes for the counterinsurgent. Regardless of how quickly an insurgency develops violence is typically preceded by a period of ‘stirrings’, when the insurgent operates largely within the bounds of the law as well as on the edge of legality through subversive tactics.

If an insurgency is a struggle between an insurgent group and government authorities over the acceptance of the legitimacy of the populace then where does the struggle begin and over what? Insurgency begins with a cause. Conceptually, there are two aspects of a cause: the underlying social environment (or some similar “passive” element that provides the background context) and a catalyst, which is an “active” element of the cause. For instance, widespread discontent represents a passive background to a cause for insurgency development and can lead to action and collective violence.¹⁷ The people come to a point that they believe they can have an improved situation by overthrowing the existing regime or evicting an occupier. However, passive elements can be addressed and do not always lead directly to an insurgency without an agent that serves spark insurrection. In most cases, the insurgent elites interject the catalyst element by making people aware of their oppressed state and by committing acts that function as the catalytic agent. In this sense, either the insurgent elites or the acts they commit are the catalytic agents for

insurrection. These agents could be constructive or coercive.

The government or authority derives its legitimacy from the acceptance of the people. Only by fulfilling the expectations of the people can the acting authority maintain its legitimacy and thus its authority. There are two problems with maintaining legitimate authority. First, the expectations of the people are not static. They are dynamic, constantly being influenced through the competition of ideas. The second problem with maintaining legitimate authority is that the expectations of the people are not uniform. Different groups within an environment have differing expectations of legitimacy. When an acting authority is unable or unwilling to address the perceived or real inequities of the people, the people often resort to some form of violent rebellion against those in power. Insurgents are involved in a political struggle that could be based on ideology or on more pragmatic issues or a combination. Their actions will usually attempt to “de-legitimize,” in the eyes of the people, the authority that they are in conflict with in order to bring about social or political change. For a populace to support a violent rebellion, they must clearly see that there is futility in continuing the social debate within the framework of the existing authority.¹⁸ Likewise, if action is taken to meet the needs of the people, even after a rebellion has begun, the insurgency may be undermined and the insurgents ultimately convinced or coerced to work within the system.

In general, every endeavor involving humans will possess some inherent weakness that can be exploited. Insurgency is no different and the history of such affairs bears this out. No two insurgencies will possess the same weaknesses and these points of possible exploitation can

only be recognized with a thorough understanding of the context of a specific insurgency. Unfortunately, potential weaknesses are most vulnerable early on in a campaign when they are more difficult to recognize or understand.

Countering Irregular Threats and Counterinsurgency

As alluded to earlier, Kitson did not ignore the differences between potential threats but went to great lengths to focus on the practical commonalities that existed in reality. He treats the counters to threats in the same way. Kitson compared that although counterinsurgencies and peacekeeping are fundamentally different, there is a surprising similarity in the outward forms of many of the techniques involved.¹⁹

Countering irregular threats requires that the military must have an understanding of the particular character of the conflict, its context, and its participants. Typically this is more difficult in a conflict involving irregular threats as opposed to conventional forces. The U.S. military must have a solid understanding of the catalytic agents involved in order to properly deal with the situation. Essentially, the counterinsurgency effort works to diminish or remove the catalytic agent while also working to improve the background situation (the passive element of the cause) that fueled the rebellion to begin with.

The Security Environment and Policy Objectives

Future conflict will not be dominated by tests of strength that characterize Industrial War.²⁰ Future conflict will be dominated by wars fought among the people where the

objective is not to crush but to influence ideas and wills. Throughout the last half of the twentieth century, the United States national security strategy rested on deterrence in a bipolar world. The delicate stability that existed during the Cold War era was characterized by elaborate deterrence measures by the two super-powers, such as the development and fielding of huge conventional military capabilities, along with thermo-nuclear weapons and delivery systems. To maintain the delicate balance, the two super-powers could not engage each other directly in combat as it would almost certainly lead to a war of almost unimaginable consequences. Therefore, the conflict that ensued predominantly took the form of “proxy wars,” low-intensity conflict, or military operations other than war. Paradoxically, most of the United States military was focused on fighting conventional wars—and therefore developed a conventional force, which was not optimized for fighting wars where combat operations were not decisive.

The collapse of the Soviet Union prompted the emergence of a more complex and unpredictable world in which the Cold War concepts of security and deterrence have less relevance.²¹ A new security environment replaced the one for which the United States military had been organized, trained, and equipped, and in this new environment irregular challenges have become dominant.

Though irregular threats may not be new, they will likely be the predominant threat we will face in future. Deadly violence, extremism and state failure are widespread problems in many parts of the world. The causes of modern conflict and state failure are varied but often include stagnant or deteriorating economies, weak or corrupt political institutions and competition over natural resources. These causes often involve ethnic, religious,

political, or ideological underpinnings. Whatever the dominant theme, most conflicts take on elements of most or all of these trends and cannot be neatly slotted into one category.²²

Future conflicts are likely to be a combination of internal or local strife exploited by and tied to trans-national and global influences. Looking at the internal or local strife first, we see that lack of governance in weak or failing states results in the inability of the state to preempt, counter or contain disaffected groups within national borders. Civil discord is likely to arise in countries suffering from ethnic or religious strife, poverty, a highly unequal income distribution, the vestiges of colonization, weak governmental institutions, ineffective police and military forces, and difficult terrain—condition that allow irregular threats to thrive.²³ Some actors may not be interested in general disorder, but simply want their order—or order on their terms. In other cases, *conflict entrepreneurs* may work to deliberately undermine or even destroy governmental control in a region without the intent of replacing that governmental capability. These groups may desire a form of anarchy in order to leave a space ungoverned so that they are able to operate without regulation or disturbance. Conflict entrepreneurs may seek to undermine stability or to simply remain unmolested and often have easy access to weapons and sanctuary or safe havens from which they create unrest. The gap created in a nation's ability to govern often results, ultimately, in a failed or failing state. This phenomenon can create opportunity and sanctuary for non-state actors.

The trans-national threat the United States faces today is real and is embodied in the regional and theater allies and affiliates of extremist organizations. Many local irregular

groups have existed before or in isolation from the development of transnational extremist organizations and have no ideological linkages in objective. But in other cases, particularly in areas of the world that are historically characterized by ethnic and religious strife as well as poverty, regional and theater-level extremist organizations prey on local groups and issues that serve themselves as well as transnational extremists. In doing so, these regional and theater groups serve as middlemen.²⁴ This global movement is made up of loosely coupled, independent movements and not a monolithic, easily template-able organization. Global players link to and exploit local players through regional affiliates who provide sponsorship and support to the local level.²⁵ This global aspect or nature to conflict adds a new dimension of complexity and may substantially complicate the effort to counter these irregular threats.

Some Precepts for Countering Irregular Threats²⁶

- ***Political Primacy in pursuit of objectives*** ensures that any conflict, including those that involve irregular threats, is understood as a political problem that cannot be solved through a single means.
- ***Legitimacy and the moral right to govern*** create a contract between the governed and the governors based on an idea of governance that derives its powers from the consent of the governed. The government should have viable political competence that can and will manage, coordinate, and sustain security, and political, economic, and social development in a morally and culturally acceptable way.

- ***Understand*** the complex dynamics of the threat, including the wider environment. This includes understanding the causes, ideologies, aims, organizations, capabilities, methods/approaches, external support, and wider environment.
- ***Influence*** human will through the discriminate application of power (including a limitation on the use of firepower) and other means of persuasion. Supplant or pre-empt the ideas of the irregulars while contributing to the welfare of the society.
- ***Unity of purpose*** to coordinate the actions of participating agencies.
- ***Isolate*** the irregulars from their physical and moral support base. Address the conditions that permit the spread of enemy ideologies and provide a viable alternative.
- ***Patience, persistence, and presence*** with no sanctuary. Each area requires a unique approach. Normalize where possible. Do not conduct large operations unless prepared to suffocate the insurgent with the swift introduction of police and a political bureaucracy.
- ***Sustained commitment*** to expend political capital and resources over a long period.

Description of the Military Problem

Combat operations are rarely if ever singularly decisive when countering irregular threats. The U.S. military has not relinquished its conventional view of war based on conceptual thinking that originated immediately following World War II. This conventional view is incomplete when viewed against the backdrop of the environment the military is likely to face in the foreseeable future. Today's military forces struggle with conceptualizing the threat, developing strategies and designing campaigns for countering irregular threats that are not predominantly characterized by combined arms mechanized warfare. The military usually focuses on the line of operation²⁷ it knows best: combat operations. In successful conflict resolution against irregular threats, the combat line of operation is only one line of operation among multiple lines of a comprehensive campaign.

Campaign Design

Most conflict environments are not uniform in character, but rather are more like a complex mosaic or patchwork quilt in appearance. To be effective at countering irregular threats, an intervention force must first understand this mosaic nature that is peculiar to the area of the intervention and will almost certainly have different aspects unique down to each specific sub-region. A deep, rich, and sophisticated understanding of the environment of conflict is a necessary first step in the ongoing journey that an intervention force must take in its role (however involved or limited that might be) toward conflict

transformation or termination. This understanding is an active and ongoing aspiration, and not something that is ever completely achieved. Understanding the environment gives perspective and it probably starts by the intervention force asking what the problem is. Based on a comprehensive appraisal of the problem within the context of the environment, a design logic can be developed that aligns with the intervention's *raison d'être*.

To be successful at effectively countering irregular threats, the military, along with the rest of the intervention force, must view both the problem and the solution more holistically. This holistic approach can only come from a well-conceived campaign. Early in the campaign design process, leaders among the intervention force must establish a *vision of resolution* or desired end-state that is a narrative on how the conflict transformation should ideally unfold. The campaign concept is based on the operational logic and should be viewed as a sort of hypothesis. In the same way, the campaign design itself should be seen as an experiment in which the intervention force tests the operational logic with an expectation that the design is not exactly correct and will need to be changed. The campaign design, when exercised, will be tested and assessed. This assessment is a learning activity and is deliberately interwoven into the design. The idea is that learning will lead to re-design. Therefore, the process can be viewed as a perpetual *design—learn—re-design* activity. In this, learning must occur through action; being discovery in nature. This concept applies not only at the strategic level but also in various forms down at the level of execution—the tactical level.

Understanding to develop context should certainly lead to and enable design, and design should lead to action.

However, sometimes a commander will opt to take tactical or even operational or strategic actions with the specific purpose of developing the situation—of learning. This strategy of “kicking the anthill” to assess the situation and the adversary is in line with the operational learning activity of *design—learn—re-design*.

Learning also enables smart adaptation *vis-à-vis* the adversary and the environment more generally. A successful strategy for countering an opponent in any operational environment includes establishing a tempo of adaptation that your opponent simply cannot sustain. This concept is particularly true in countering an insurgency. Here tempo of adaptation is not defined by raw speed of actions, but rather by a seizure and maintaining of the initiative. The initiative is a form of the offense, which in this sense goes well beyond specific tactical actions. In fact, initiative here relates to the entire campaign throughout all the lines of operation. In this way, the adversary (chiefly the insurgents and their leadership) are forced to react—to remain on the defensive, always trying to determine what the intervention force will do next, and never really able to run the affair according to their desires. Therefore, a tempo of adaptation that allows the intervention force to out-cycle the adversary across all the lines of operation should be a desired element of the operational logic.

The Central Idea

The establishment of a secure environment in which a society can make progress and that supports the particular normality of that society is vitally important. Security cannot be established solely through combat operations and the training and advisement of host nation security

forces. To support the establishment of stability, the military, along with the other government agencies and coalition partners of the intervention force, will need to design an approach to achieving political objectives along multiple, integrated lines of operation. These lines of operation are components of a holistic campaign for conflict transformation. This expanded perspective of campaign design reflects a broader appreciation of both the problem that leads to an intervention activity and the requisite solutions. These lines of operation could include the following: ***combat operations, training and advising host nation security forces, essential services, economic development, promotion of governance, and information.***²⁸ The military must not only understand the impact these lines have on campaign success but must be prepared to lead progress along these lines although some have not been seen as traditional military responsibilities. These lines are not intended to be a success template. Each conflict involving irregular threats will require a different emphasis on the importance, selection and character of each line.

Unity of Purpose

Each intervention campaign will require a relationship construct that fosters a unity of effort and may require the U.S. military to be a supporting element to a government or coalition led campaign. While the military is well accustomed to enjoying unity of command when operating by itself, that relationship within the intervention force as a whole may simply not exist in most cases. The intervention force must look to achieve unity of purpose through a general *unifying theme* for the campaign. Even more broadly (beyond the intervention force itself), not all agencies and organizations in theater

will share the same desired end-state and vision, and general cooperation where possible may be the best situation for which the intervention force can hope. In this sense, informal agreements on the scene may be the most practicable arrangement.

Lines of Operation

The six lines of operation listed above are operational areas for combat development and for combat operations when involved in countering irregular threats. These lines of operation would be most effective if integrated and synchronized within a situation-specific concept of operation. None of the lines of operation exists in isolation, nor should they be planned or executed in isolation of the other lines. “Success” in a singular line of operation may produce a gap relative to the other lines if the effort is not conducted in consonance with the other lines. The assumption must be that the enemy could exploit this “gap” if he senses it.²⁹ For this reason, it is important to acknowledge and maintain the harmonic balance between the lines. Leaders should ask themselves, “What will the effect of this action or effort be on the other lines of operation?”³⁰ All the lines must align with the campaign’s logic which itself is predicated on the intervention’s purpose. In this way, the campaign purpose is central to the entire affair. Likewise, the lines inter-relate among each other. Instead of deconstructing the campaign to understand it, the intervention force planners first conceive it as a whole form.

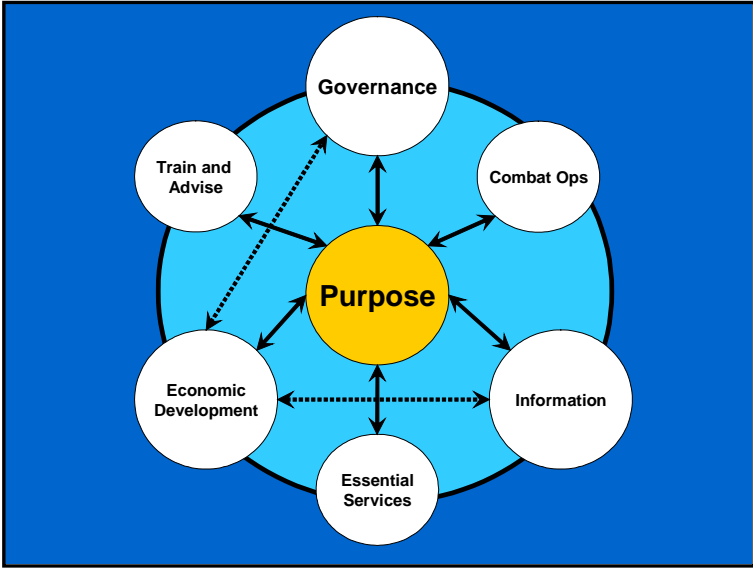


Figure 1. Relationship of Campaign Design Components

The whole is much more than a simple sum of the individual parts since these parts inter-relate and play off each other. The campaign can only be understood when viewed holistically through the prism of the inter-relating lines of operation. Every operation will be particular, and while lessons from previous experiences may apply, there is not a “success template” that can be laid down across the various intervention activities. Each instance of conflict involving irregular threats will require a unique emphasis on the different lines of operation, and that is where the practice of operational art becomes most important.

These lines of operation will require the establishment of criteria for success. Assessment as a learning activity will play a crucial role in the operational application of this concept. Commanders at every level should make assessment a natural, integrated part of the operational activity. When dealing with irregular threats, decision-making is often extraordinarily complex, and progress may come slowly and in unusual and unexpected ways. Assessment is not a function to be performed by a staff officer at some place far removed from the action, but rather it should occur within the domain of execution, where action is specifically taking place. In this sense, an assessment dialogue should exist between senior leaders and the leaders who are actually executing policy. This assessment dialogue represents an expanded view of operational art that relies upon the complete participation of leaders at all levels in the ongoing design and execution of a campaign.

Assessment is based on judgment, intuition, and quantitative as well as qualitative analysis. Commanders should choose criteria carefully so that they align always with the ultimate purpose (and likewise do not cause a unit to deviate from their purpose). Establishing criteria for success should quite naturally lead to the development of criteria for assessment. These criteria are normally observable outputs, and if we have chosen well, will speak to the quality of our inputs. Great care must be applied here as we are often dealing with complex societal issues in which spuriousness can undermine the validity of both the criteria for assessment and the conclusions we chose to draw from them. In an intervention activity, when military leaders are confronted with an “insurgency problem,” these same leaders will usually seek a military solution. However, insurgency is

political, ideological and administrative in the primary sense and military only in the secondary sense.³¹

Marine Corps forces will be engaged in countering irregular threats during all phases of a given intervention activity, and these lines of operation are relevant to all phases. However, a different emphasis may be placed on the various lines during the different phases. The Marine Corps acknowledges that in most cases, the earlier that intervention takes place, the easier it will be to reach a positive conclusion. For this reason, the Marine Corps will make substantial use of forward presence and security cooperation as support activities to enable preemption or early intervention.

Combat Operations

Combat operations consist of purposeful conflict between one or more persons or organizations, often involving the risk of violence and intended to establish dominance over an adversary or favorable conditions within an operating environment. Of the six lines of operation mentioned above, the Marine Corps is optimized for the conduct of combat operations against a regular, industrial state adversary. The combat operations required to counter irregular threats are similar but different. They are often more complex and ambiguous in nature than conventional combat operations because they occur among the people. Combat operations take place in the presence of civilians, against civilians, and in defense of civilians. Civilians are the objectives to be won as well as an opposing force.³² These combat operations will pit Marines against an elusive enemy who will seek to avoid direct combat so that he can survive to strike another day.

Combat operations remain an essential element in counterinsurgency campaign design. However, unlike industrial war, combat in counterinsurgency operations is not as decisive with respect to achieving the political end-state conditions. Moreover, the goals for combat operations are more often focused on supporting the other lines of operation by providing security and by removing the active catalyst of insurgent combatants from the environment.

The experiences of western nations fighting small wars during the last century indicate that small units working with substantially greater independence of action will usually be more successful. Some of the reasons for this phenomenon emanate from the greater ability of small units to act in a timely and discriminate fashion. Moreover, small unit behavior tends to align better with a closer relationship with the populace, which is usually a requirement for counterinsurgency success. There are fewer prescribed solutions in these types of wars, so the small unit leaders will be forced into a dynamic environment in which they will have more autonomy to make decisions on their own—again, in a very fluid manner that simply cannot be governed minutely or specifically by a higher headquarters that is not on the scene.

Small unit leaders will be more comfortable working in and through chaos, to the point they can capitalize on the chaos of the operational environment—to the adversary's detriment. To use a metaphor, instead of attempting the impossible act of drying up the sea of chaos, the Marine Corps will endeavor to teach Marines to be better swimmers than our opponents.

From the standpoint of examining and applying successful principles--and avoiding unsuccessful ones--when considering the combat line of operation, Marine forces should focus on the security of the population and on isolating the insurgents from the population. Policing or constabulary activities will, over time, take precedence. Conversely, large unit operations should not be the norm. The overwhelming priority should not be focused on "kill-capture" the enemy. Of course, this is not to say that larger operations will not occasionally be necessary. However, over time, most insurgencies evolve into small unit actions in which large-scale operations with large units may be less effective. Large unit operations, especially if they are predicated on vague intelligence, are generally imprecise and indiscriminant, tend to disturb the population, and are rarely able to locate the insurgent elites who provide the catalytic agents for the insurgency. In the end, large-unit operations can often create more animosity than positive results (and thus continue to fuel the insurgency).³³

Another important consideration is the placement of military units as close to the population as possible. Large "secure" bases are good for "force protection," but they run counter to the idea of hugging the population. This idea of "hugging" is simply expressed in a desire to base the force and to operate as close geographically as possible to the population. The intent is that the physical proximity and the shared hardship with the people will help establish and reinforce the population's perception of a closer relationship.³⁴ Ultimately, it is the relationship that is most important and anything, which physically or psychologically separates the intervention force from the population, makes forming that relationship more difficult.

Among the many unique features of small wars is the greater reliance on tactical intelligence. The saying that “every Marine is a collector of intelligence” is true. However, acknowledgement of that fact alone will not be enough. The manner by which the existing intelligence networks function may need to be adjusted to be completely effective. Users, that is, the Marine leaders at all levels who will be actually acting on the intelligence, must be the priority when forming a collection plan. The collection effort will be manpower intensive. Human intelligence will take on a dominant role and commanders may elect to form special units specifically tasked with the collection and management of this human intelligence. The success of most intervention forces in small wars has historically revolved around the intervention force’s (and/or indigenous government force’s) ability to win the intelligence battle. The greater the fidelity and accuracy of the tactical intelligence, the better that units will be at conducting timely, discriminative, precise operations to counter insurgent activities. Likewise, as previously mentioned, tempo of adaptation is a crucial factor in success when countering irregular threats. Quality tactical intelligence helps to enable Marine units to adapt faster and more effectively than the adversary.

Some authorities, such as Mao, make great reference to the importance of focusing on the population. However, the population is treated in their writings as some homogeneous whole. There is great risk of oversimplification in that treatment. The reality is that most of the time; factions will exist within the population. For instance, in many parts of the world, tribes tend to play the dominant role. Sooner or later, ethnic or tribal (or factional) influences will need to be addressed—both in terms of dealing with the active insurgency and in terms of planning for a lasting solution.³⁵ A sophisticated

and complex understanding of the populace is necessary to be successful in nearly every case of intervention.

When many military planners consider the role of military forces in a counterinsurgency, the traditional view is one of reinforcing the capacity of indigenous military and security forces. If Marine forces take reinforcing measures along a conventional war inspired paradigm without adopting preemptive measures (measures that pertain to the root causes of the insurrection) that could positively influence the force relationship, the outcome will often only lead to an escalation of conflict. That is to say that simply introducing an increasing number of combat troops to fight in a conventional manner will likely produce a reaction by the enemy that amounts to more violent conflict. A successful strategy should involve a combination of preemptive and reinforcement measures.³⁶ Preemptive measures are efforts taken within the other lines of operation, measures taken to deal with the basic causes of the insurgency.

Train and Advise Host Nation Security Forces

The Marine Corps long ago realized the utility, even crucial importance, of global security cooperation. Together with the U.S. Navy, Marines, especially those serving with Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU), have worked with the militaries of other nations throughout the world. The global cooperation strategy for the future will find Marines increasingly engaged with the militaries of nations in the developing world. The developing world represents areas of relative instability and unrest. The fledgling governments of these nations, if they are able to develop governmental or bureaucratic capacity to govern, represent a hope for stability in the affected regions.

Governments of failed or failing states are unable to provide for the basic needs of the people and unable to provide security within their borders. Consequently, non-state actors and insurgents from neighboring nations are able to take up sanctuary within their borders. To help these nations maintain stability within their borders, the U.S. military will interact with the militaries and other security forces of selected nations whose governments have expressed a desire to engage with the U.S. military. Many of these engagement activities will be aimed principally at assisting these nations with the organization and training of their fighting units and with their police and security forces. While the Marine Corps has created a special unit tasked with training foreign military units, this general task will ultimately be executed on a much grander scale by many units to include, but certainly not limited to the deployed Marine Expeditionary Units.

The temptation will be to train foreign militaries “in our own image.” Marines should resist this urge and instead train the indigenous military in a manner that befits their purpose and situation. For instance, the units that have proven the most effective in fighting an insurgency have focused on obtaining “brilliance in the basics” of small unit, highly mobile operations.³⁷ Together with this point is the issue of level of training. When designing the training of foreign militaries and security forces, Marines should consider their specific purpose, and only train to the level necessary to accomplish that purpose. An example of this idea is that troops involved in static defense simply do not require the skills in unit tactical movement that units involved in long range patrolling require.³⁸

Essential Services

In many of the areas that the Marine Corps becomes involved, the existing government (assuming that there is one) will often have had difficulty providing for the people's needs. The Marine Corps will need to help re-establish (or establish) the procedures and processes that provide essential services such as

food, power, potable water, the handling of waste, and rudimentary medical care. Obviously, the Marine Corps may become involved in an area where there has never been a strong governmental influence and these aforementioned services (which are just offered as examples) may have to be initiated for the first time.

Part of achieving and maintaining stability in a region or country is the ability of the governing authority to meet people's basic human needs. A nuance here is that people residing in rural areas will likely have different needs and expectations than those living in dense urban areas. For instance, those people living in a rural area may have less expectation of having electrical power provided for their use than people living in a city. Marine leaders will need to make best use of their assessment teams that include personnel with expertise in these areas and these teams will be employed by the commander early on during the initial stages of intervention to determine needs and to work with the rest of the staff to develop a plan to deal with these needs. The needs will change over time (perhaps quite rapidly) and Marine leaders need to be sensitive to these changing needs. The establishment of an effective level of essential services requires that commanders and Marines avoid the temptation of

throwing valuable and limited resources at ‘feel good’ projects that are not integrated with the end-state.

Promote Governance

One of the most important aspects of a functioning society is the rule of law. There simply cannot be any lasting stability or order if there are no laws and enforcement of these laws. When Marines become involved in some form of intervention, they quite likely will need to assess the state of the existing government’s legal system. If one does not exist, Marines will need to help the indigenous people develop and implement one. This may seem far a field from the traditional warfighting tasks, but when it comes to building (or re-building) a nation’s capacity to govern itself, this may prove to be one of the most critical areas. A functional legal system must minimally include civil and criminal laws, courts, a judiciary, and a means of incarcerating those people who the indigenous government’s judiciary finds in breach of the laws. The judiciary should be incorruptible and viewed by the people as incorruptible. A police force must exist that can support the judiciary and this force should also be viewed as incorrupt.³⁹

Beyond the rule of law, a governmental bureaucracy must be formed (or re-formed). This bureaucracy or public administration must include ministries established along functional lines to manage the nation’s governmental programs. These ministries will include (but not be limited to) interior functions such as power generation and distribution, water, public health, police (including recruiting, equipping, training, paying and supervising), firefighting, border guards, education (primary and secondary), finance, and infrastructure and transportation

(roads, railroads, etc.), housing and human services, communications, agriculture, and natural resources. The ability of the indigenous government to deliver positive results is vital to winning the allegiance of the population. The legitimacy of the government is closely linked to performance.⁴⁰ Having said that, legitimacy in the early stages of an intervention may be based on acceptance vice full satisfaction. In this vein, Marine leaders, and the indigenous government with which they are working, should attempt to make the best initial arrangements they can—and not aim for perfection right away. The people will accept less, and then want more later (an evolutionary process).⁴¹

Economic Development

When the United States intervenes in the affairs of another state, an underlying principle is that the United States stands for the idea that governments need to help all the people improve their lots, specifically their economic wellbeing. This line of operation must blend seamlessly with the other lines and in fact, may not be able to be acted upon until some measure of security and governmental capacity is achieved. The intent here is to purposefully stimulate economic growth—to “mature” an economy. However, in many cases, before this economic growth can even begin to occur there, must be adequate security for the population. Note that “security” here must be defined from the perspective of the population and not necessarily from the perspective of the indigenous government.⁴² Further, mass unemployment, if allowed to persist for even a modest amount of time, can provide a concrete element of discontent on which an insurgency can capitalize. In many intervention cases, there must be both a short-term and long-term economic plan, and the

short-term plan is to find some productive way to employ a large percentage of the young and middle age men—if only until more enduring employment opportunities can be developed.⁴³ Of course, the long-term plan will entail measures that allow for self-sufficiency (that is, not reliant on U.S. direct financial assistance).

This particular line represents the “staying power” of a stability effort. There can be no perception of partiality or that the government (or the intervention force by proxy) supports some elite element of the indigenous society. Often, this perception of elitism is the very element that leads to insurgencies, and it nearly always undermines the perceived legitimacy of the indigenous government.

Information

Small wars, particularly in modern times, involve an “information war” or “battle” of ideas and ideology. In the case of an insurgency, the rebellion will naturally seek to undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of the existing government. Clausewitz pointed out that war is simply an extension of politics. Nowhere is that concept more apparent than small wars, which tend to have a more nuanced and complex political character. In this political struggle the people are the center of gravity. Both sides will struggle for the people’s allegiance (and support). The information war will be the principal means both sides will use to shape that allegiance. A ministry of public information or communication may need to be established and the Marine Corps may need to work with this indigenous government ministry, using appropriate broadcast means in order to publish civil information. Marine commanders need to ask themselves, “What is it that we ideally want civilians to do in terms of desired

collective behavior?” The answer to that question should help shape campaign design, particularly with respect to the civil information portion of the campaign. Marines need to use information to isolate the insurgents morally in terms of their legitimacy. As one expert noted from the French Algerian experience, “...one of the main weapons of anti-insurgent warfare is to find and magnify internal differences.”⁴⁴ This moral isolation extends beyond the borders of the country in which Marine forces are involved. External support can have moral and political aspects, and information operations should be deliberately aimed at isolating the insurgents from this external support.⁴⁵ Ultimately, for a counterinsurgency to be successful, the indigenous population has to come to the point where it views the insurgents as the outsiders or outlaws.⁴⁶

An important point should be made here, and that is that information operations, as described in this line of operation, does not include deception operations. Although when fighting an insurgency, it may be productive to deliberately fool the enemy, it is never a good idea to lie to the populace in the name of the government.⁴⁷ Credibility and perceived legitimacy are critical, even foundational components of an indigenous government’s ability to counter rebellion, achieve stability, and function. Ultimately, the perceptions held by the populace are more important than reality in the government’s struggle for legitimacy.⁴⁸ Likewise, third party actors like the Marine Corps, who are normally aligned with the indigenous government, must be careful to do nothing to undermine the perceived legitimacy of Marine forces or the government. Therefore, the activities of this line of operation are distinct from any deliberate deception operations conducted in the combat line of operation. Of course, Marines planning in this line

of operation must be cognizant of the deception activities of the combat line of operation.

Perceived legitimacy is so vital to the ultimate success of nearly every intervention activity that it cannot be relegated to an afterthought. One vital aspect to achieving and maintaining some measure of perceived legitimacy is the practice of rectitude in all endeavors. Through this correct conduct and moral uprightness, particularly in dealing with civilians and prisoners, Marines can avoid stimulating the recruitment of new insurgents and may even benefit from some valuable intelligence. The opposite approach, that is a lack of rectitude, is likely to have a decidedly negative effect and will probably be used by the enemy in his information operations campaign.⁴⁹

A final point is in order here, and that is a genuine acknowledgement that the United States, as a republic based on the ideals of democracy, is ultimately no more or less than a reflection of the American people themselves. Small wars are typically protracted in nature, and are often “uncomfortable” due to many factors, not the least of which are the vagueness of concrete goals and what often amounts to a lack of measurable progress. For this reason, the support for the intervention activity is difficult to maintain over the long term with the American people and their elected leaders. The opinion of the American people matters greatly, and to the extent that an activity to counter irregular threats can end with a successful outcome, the military must take positive measures to relate to the American people in a credible, relevant, and forthright manner. Further, American foreign policy, which should reflect the democratic and moral character that the Republic espouses, will align favorably with an intervention activity on behalf of a

legitimate government with bureaucratic capacity to govern. There is a close relationship between the amount of support that America is prepared to afford an intervention activity and the degree of legitimacy and efficiency of the indigenous government on whose behalf U.S. forces would be expected to intervene.⁵⁰

The Lessons of History

This ideas presented in this concept are the result of extensive historical research and assessment, with some of the key case studies summarized in Annex A. Though there is always a risk of oversimplification when an attempt is made to summarize historical lessons, there are, nevertheless, some clear points to bring out which if understood can help future Marine leaders enhance their chances of success in small wars. First, security of the population is of paramount importance. Also, the force used to provide security may not be the force used to apply pressure to the insurgent military forces. Both these functions are of vital importance. Likewise, in nearly every example, success in the “other four” lines of operation proved to be at least as important as combat operations and the training of security forces. Moreover, these tasks cannot be tackled sequentially, but had to be addressed concurrently. The insurgents had to be physically and morally separated from the populace in order for the indigenous government or the intervention force to achieve any meaningful, long-term success. The U.S. military will be called upon to function in all six lines of operation, but these lessons from history show a need to work with other government agencies that have specific competencies in the lines of operation that deal more with establishing a capacity to govern.

Summary

The Marine Corps has a rich history of participating in the nation's wars and military engagements across the range of military operations. Unfortunately, the Marine Corps forgot some of the lessons it learned during hard years of involvement in small wars. The resurgence of interest in the Small Wars Manual is a positive signal, as is the attention that the study of counterinsurgency is now receiving at some Marine Corps schools. For change to occur, that interest must certainly continue. The Corps already combats irregular threats but is poised to more effectively do so in support of the Commandant's Guidance that Irregular Wars will characterize the foreseeable future. Though the Marine Corps will remain a multi-purpose force, its focus will shift more toward what Max Boot calls, "The Savage Wars of Peace."⁵¹ Operations aimed at countering irregular threats will be the area of primary focus for the Marine Corps. In order to realize some of the points proffered in this concept, an extensive combat development analysis will take place. This combat development effort must consider all possible implications. Additionally, the Marine Corps will expand its operational continuum and improve its ability to function along all the lines of operation listed above, even as it acknowledges that combat operations and the training of other nations' militaries and security forces will be its principal attention. For this reason, Marine Corps forces must acknowledge and maintain the harmonic balance between the lines of operation.

Part II—Lines of Operations

Chapter 1 Combat Operations

“...a State that will go to war in South Africa or in the north of India, or elsewhere, and imagine that it is going to win by some simple strategy without preliminary preparation, organization, education, or training, and that it can crush its enemy by mere manifestoes, is a foolish State. That State deserves to be taught wisdom, after a considerable amount of irregular warfare.”

T. Miller Maguire, 1904⁵²

Introduction

In Part I, the Marine Corps argued that when faced with an irregular threat in an intervention activity, combat operations in the conventional sense would rarely, if ever, prove to be singularly decisive. The thesis was that success in countering an irregular threat could only come from a holistic approach that included other lines of operation beyond the combat line of operation and that the combat line of operation should function in consonance and harmony with these other lines (training of host nation security forces, economic development, essential services, promote governance, and information operations). Within the OCIT concept (Part I) there is a description of the combat line of operation, and several sub-theses are proposed. This chapter will develop the ideas and address them in greater detail.

Context

The United States government, and the military in particular, has acknowledged that a new security environment now exists in which irregular threats will pose the dominant security challenge for the nation for the foreseeable future. The U.S. military will be principally focused on countering irregular threats in various forms including intervention activities such as counterinsurgencies and stability operations in failed states that potentially provide unmolested sanctuary to non-state actors. Countering irregular threats will require a somewhat different focus and mindset than military leaders at all levels developed and used in the past, particularly during the Cold War when the concentration was, with the exception of the nation's "proxy wars," almost entirely on a peer competitor. This new environment is substantially more complex than what the military prepared for during the Cold War and it will require a more refined and comprehensive appreciation of operational art.

The Military Problem

Countering irregular threats represent an intervention activity for which few if any western militaries have adequately prepared. The structure, education and training of the U.S. military was appropriate for defeating a conventional threat, but the threat has changed and the military has not yet adapted to remain relevant. The military has not yet acknowledged the uniqueness posed by the new challenges so that new capability requirements can be identified.

Activities in the combat line of operation of countering irregular threats are not simply “conventional war writ small.” A persistent problem exists whereby combat operations are treated in an overly simplistic fashion with an over-emphasis on “kinetic” solutions. In fact, much of the western literature on the topic of small wars from the early 20th century up through the middle of the century tended to treat insurgencies without sophistication. Unfortunately, this rather naive perspective can obscure the real problems and can inhibit the formation of valid solutions.

The Central Idea

In order to achieve greater relevance for a security environment dominated by irregular threats, the Marine Corps must refine its organizational capability to fight small wars or counterinsurgencies. In fact, Marine forces must adapt substantially and develop a specific capacity for this line of work. Within this combat line of operation, the concern is to illuminate how combat can contribute to the overall success of an intervention campaign. The starting assumption is that the military will continue to be involved in small wars activities, such as counterinsurgencies, and that the use of military force (here differentiated from the military force itself) will continue to play a vital—even pivotal role within the context of the overall intervention effort.

The use of military force in the combat line of operation requires a nuanced and broad-spectrum approach that acknowledges limitations on its effective use, and therefore exercises intelligent restraint. Further, the effective use of military force in an intervention activity

necessitates an appreciation for the complexities of the environment by all members of the intervention force and therefore requires leaders at all levels to be participants in operational design and refinement. From grand design on down, our objective when employing force is to win the “clash of wills.” Therefore, when force is used, it must be used in such a fashion that every success aligns with the grand design and supports the effort to prevail in the battle of wills. Ultimately, it is a political result that we desire.⁵³

To ensure that the Marine Corps is ready for unique challenges posed within the combat line of operation, combat development efforts must be focused on producing and refining the capability for the operating forces to function and win in this dynamic and complex environment. However, before any force development can take place, we must start by understanding the nature of the threat and the manner in which Marine forces will function to counter the threat.

The Irregular Threat

Normally, when most American authorities on counterinsurgency write on the subject, they immediately approach the issue as if the first consideration is to “put down the insurrection or the rebellion.” Negative labels such as “criminals” or more lately, “terrorists” are applied to all the people engaged in violent actions against a government or even the intervention force (if a third party force is present). From the perspective of a western democracy, nearly all violence conducted by insurgents is illegitimate—that is unless we are for some reason supporting the rebels. American foreign policy is such that it encourages democratic functions such as voting and

political discourse and counts as illegitimate any acts of violence, even for overtly political purposes. This mentality is reflected in the rhetoric American officials use when speaking of another nation in which an intervention activity is being contemplated.

The military also uses negative rhetoric to describe insurgent violence. However, the insurgents do not see themselves in that light. They may view themselves as freedom fighters or patriots. All too often, the government they oppose has amassed grievances against the people (or a group of the people) and has proven unresponsive to more benign forms of political activity. The insurgents see the use of violence as a political tool to achieve the changes they feel are warranted. Unfortunately, our use of negative rhetoric and the connotations that the labels imply, serves to obfuscate the nature of the political problem, and makes it difficult for military leaders at any level to find relevant solutions. Rather than viewing and speaking of opposition actors in simplistic terms, a better choice is to focus on behavior and to look for characteristics, even a uniqueness, that will engender a greater understanding of the adversary (or potential adversary).

Elements and Progression of Irregular Threats

Though the discussion of different types of irregular threats or even of the style of irregular warfare is not without importance, it is not relevant to this particular discussion. That is to say that guerilla warfare, revolutionary warfare, insurgency, and even terrorist operations may have distinct meanings; however they will all be considered within a singular overarching context when we discuss countering irregular threats.

Irregular threats do not normally seize power and dominance of their country or location in some instantaneous fashion (though coup's can surely happen). Rather, there usually is a building process that leads to an all out revolt or successful grasp of political control.⁵⁴ Whether that political control is asserted against an indigenous government, as is usually the case, or simply represents preeminence of one group among rival factions in an ungoverned region, the important point is that the struggle is normally of a political nature. Power and influence seem to be the common aim. Despite the military aspects and the violence associated, the goal of the actors involved is to attain or maintain prominence, not unlike it is in conventional war.

Historically, insurgencies began with a cause that is often characterized by an environment that has notable social difficulties or even strife (such as extremely uneven distribution of wealth or an oppressive and substantially corrupt government) and with a catalytic agent. This catalytic agent was someone or something that served to ignite the conflagration. Another way of expressing this historical observation is that a difficult, tumultuous social environment alone may not be enough to create a rebellion against an indigenous government. Likewise, the catalyst will probably prove ineffectual at sparking insurrection if the environment is stable and generally favorable to the populace as a whole. Since the characteristics of an environment and the behavior of an insurgent actor serve as instigating factors, any strategy which neglects to consider these same will likely fail in the long term. Understanding the cause of insurgency is foundational to developing sound, coherent strategy for countering the insurrection. Simply stated, insurgency is more a symptom of a "cause" and is therefore not the

direct problem, but rather an important and visible outgrowth of the problem.

A Thinking Adversary

All too often, military planners treat the adversary as a monolithic entity. Irregular threats such as insurgents do not behave that way, and so there is utility in viewing their complexity and applying a nuanced approach to countering these actors. We should play the insurgent groups off against one another—if and when it is to our advantage to do so. When the military planner practices campaign design, he will find it difficult to account for the dynamic nature of the environment and the speed and degree of adaptation by the adversary. A relationship exists between Marine forces and the adversary and the outcome of this dynamic relationship is adaptation on the part of both groups. This adaptation is of critical importance to both parties and could mean the difference between success and failure for either party. A thinking adversary will change his methods, operations and strategy in order to stay ahead of friendly forces. Marine forces must acknowledge this and seize the initiative by establishing a superior tempo for adaptation that keeps the adversary off balance—always in a reactive (defensive) mode. For Marine forces, this effort to keep the enemy off balance though intentionally aggressive adaptation represents a form of the offense.

A tendency exists in virtually every military organization: a subtle form of operational hubris that allows leaders to underestimate their adversary. This tendency is accentuated in the complex environment of small wars. To prevent it from happening, planners should assume that the adversary has guessed or learned our plans and

has devised a means to interfere with or even counter them. The opposition can just as easily think out what the intervention force has thought out. Expect that the adversary is growing in strength and has the perseverance to continue his activities indefinitely, that his favor with the populace is on the rise, and that the populace may actually provide both passive and active support to him. Assume that the adversary has spies out among the population, watching your every overt move. Assume that the adversary is adapting to intervention force tactics faster than you can broadcast countermeasures. In short, make the deliberate assumption that the adversary is at least as competent as you are. This conscious decision will hopefully preclude the subconscious arrogance that all are prone to when dealing with an opponent with an independent will. Too often, a form of complacency develops within the intervention force, characterized by misplaced confidence in the resources and organization of the force. This can amount to the intervention force being caught unaware and unprepared for the sort of struggle into which the force is lured.⁵⁵

An Internal Look: Knowing Oneself

Military philosophers have long extolled the importance of “knowing oneself”—that is of undergoing sufficient self-examination of the friendly force that the commander is aware of his unit’s strengths and weaknesses. Marine leaders are quite familiar with this axiom and its implications, particularly as it applies to preparing the unit for deployment to an intervention activity. However, once engaged in an intervention activity, this effort of self-examination and evaluation assumes a newfound importance. Assessment is an integral part of the practice of operational art and design. Assessment activities are

part of the organizational learning and are just as concerned about understanding friendly actions, as insurgent actions (and reactions) as well as the response of the population more generally (which again must be treated as a separate entity from the insurgents).

Another part of knowing oneself in this sense is the understanding of oneself in relationship to the adversary. This is perhaps nowhere more clearly shown than in the case of Marines at the level of execution who interface directly with their adversary. Regardless of whether they are taking measures to maintain the initiative or not, sooner or later the adversary will take actions against them or against the indigenous government forces. Countering irregular threats is at this juncture, very similar to conventional combat operations in terms of both sides using violence to exert their will on the other side—but with some extremely important twists. For instance, if a Marine patrol or convoy is attacked with a roadside bomb and small arms fire, and has their tedious boredom punctuated with extreme violence, the manner of their reaction plays an important role because of the presence of the population. Insurgents generally do not want to directly harm the population (though they are more concerned with appearances), but they do want to show that the Marines (and government forces) are impotent against the insurgent's attacks. They would like to solicit an over-reaction on the part of the intervention force against the insurgents, which spills over against the populous. It is natural for Marines of any grade to experience an abrupt visceral reaction to insurgent violence directed at themselves or their comrades. Even days following an insurgent attack, Marines out on patrol may harbor residual anger in their hearts and it may take both extraordinary individual discipline and strong

leadership to control that anger and to ensure that it does not spill over into counter-productive actions.

In that moment when the Marine patrol is caught in the violence, perhaps seeing members of their unit horrifically injured or mortally wounded, they will react to the attack as best they can. At the individual level, there will be at first a surreal sensation as the mind tries to grapple with what has just occurred—such as the horribly and gruesomely dismembered body of one or more of the unit members lying right in front of them where a whole person had been only a moment before. Or perhaps the stunning sensation will take the form of a Marine screaming in agony from ghastly wounds he just received. There is a shock to the system to all the patrol members who are in this chaos. The senses may be confronted with the smell of explosives and charred flesh—or of hearing deafening noises (so loud in some instances to cause at least temporary hearing loss). Adrenaline courses thorough their veins and their hearts race to the point that they feel themselves shaking. They feel righteous rage. Though they may not lose their cognitive abilities, the immediate human tendency is often more visceral than rational. Here is where discipline, ethos, and training must take the forefront. The way the Marines respond is crucial. A “natural” response based on the emotions these Marines feel at the time would almost certainly be incorrect and self-defeating. They will probably feel impotent if they cannot direct their anger at the perpetrators of the attack. The insurgents are actually counting on that and plan their attack near innocent people thinking that the Marines will not differentiate between the insurgents and the people—but the Marines absolutely must make this distinction. That is, they must direct their response specifically against the attackers in a surgical manner and not bring any sort of harm to the

populous. Even collateral damage, which is “normal” in conventional warfare, is undesirable here. The Marines must use discrete, proportionate force—or if they cannot isolate the actual insurgents, perhaps no force at all. The individual Marines must see the people as human beings just as they see citizens of their country, and they must be concerned about bringing any harm to these people as they would the citizens of Dallas, Los Angeles, or New York. Their reaction and specific choice of tools of force should reflect this mindset.

The Marines are in a fight for the people and for the will of the people and they can lose that fight if by their actions, they cause the people to revile them. The indigenous people who the Marines are there to help can turn against them and lend passive and active support to the insurgents. The Marines can even “create” new insurgents by reacting inappropriately to an insurgent attack. So what must they do? They must react with discipline, mustering every ounce of restraint, and seek out the perpetrators while showing a particular affectionate concern for the welfare of the population. The indigenous people must come to understand that in the Marines they can have no better friend and the insurgents can have no worse enemy.

Basis for an Approach to Countering Irregular Threats

It would be easy, in terms of categorization, to view the indigenous population as a homogenous whole that could be treated as a singular actor. That is almost never the case in practice. It may actually work to the counterinsurgency effort’s advantage that the population is composed of factions. In fact, part of an effective

counterinsurgency strategy involves first understanding all the groups involved—to include their behavioral characteristics and motivations, and then working “on the seams” between these groups or factions. Further, the counterinsurgency effort must quickly divine whom the faction leaders are and have a proximate comprehension of their agendas. Insurgent leaders should be identified and to the degree that it can be established, their cause should be appreciated.

As noted previously, there are distinct limitations on the use of kinetic force. However, there are some very important functions in the combat line of operations that can—in some cases must—be performed. Insurgent leaders, either by being the catalyst themselves, or by providing the catalyst, spark insurrection. One way or another, these insurgent elites and their closest associates will need to be neutralized. In this sense, neutralization can range the full spectrum from a kinetic killing (preferably with precise, proportionate force) to a political undermining or cooption. The intervention force and the indigenous government should normally seek to use the least violent means of neutralizing the opposition as possible.

The intervention force must practice a strategy of measured or discriminant force that is intense but precise. This means looking to apply force in such a way as to achieve the desired outcome while at the same time keep unintended death and destruction to an absolute minimum.⁵⁶ This philosophy of force application should rightly transcend from the level of strategy to the level of execution. Measured force does not necessarily translate into *minimum force*, which could place an artificial limitation on force application and could give some military members the idea that force itself has negative

connotations. Measured force, in contrast, is a call for flexibility in force choices. Measured force can be equated to the force necessary to accomplish the mission in the specific situation that the Marines find themselves—but with an understanding that wise and pragmatic restraint should be exercised. Marines on the execution side of strategy should be empowered to work in the dynamic environment of combat with the understanding that their application of force will be tailored to achieve the desired result while minimizing collateral damage. This recognition of the proportion in the use of force will require Marines and Marine leaders to strike a situational appropriate balance between the potential good that may come from a military action and the risk of injury to innocent civilians who may be in the area of violence. The use of measured force as a mindset goes far beyond the legalistic backstop of the rules of engagement. Measured force in action requires leaders on the scene to ensure that their units are using the right tools in the correct way with mature discrimination, good judgment and moral resolve.

When countering irregular threats, Marines should, where possible, practice a form of combat that runs counter to intuition called “de-escalation.” This concept of de-escalation was borrowed partly from civilian law enforcement professionals who work in an environment in which restraint is an absolute requirement. De-escalation involves using only the level of force necessary to accomplish the mission, and seeking to remove the energy and emotive drive from a violent or potentially violent situation. In a sense, de-escalation is an effort to avoid even introducing force into a stressful situation. When the introduction of force is required or force is already present, de-escalation philosophy calls Marines to use

force discretely, and then to remove it from the equation as quickly as is practicable.

At the same time that the intervention force and the indigenous authorities are dealing with the insurgent leaders, the counterinsurgent effort must provide the population with security from the tyranny of insurgent violence. The intervention force can help with this, however, before it can, the question must be posed: who or what group exactly poses a security threat to the population group in focus? To be meaningful, this question must be answered as honestly and as specifically as possible. That is, the answer will likely differ depending on location. What represents a security threat to the population in one part of the country may be of little relevance or consequence to another part. This cultural intelligence is crucial to the success of any security endeavor. For example, what on the surface appears to be insurgent violence against “innocent civilians” could in fact be a tribe on tribe grappling for preeminence and have very little to do with insurrection of any kind.

Ultimately (as soon as is realistic), this security function should shift entirely from the intervention force to the indigenous government security forces—or even a local militia if that is appropriate. It is always best to put a local or indigenous face on the security effort. Let the locals do as much for themselves as they are in any way able. This lends perceived legitimacy to the affair and allows the Marine intervention force to extricate themselves from the longer-term security work, which should become more of a policing function.

Implications for Campaign Design and Execution

Many authorities have pointed out that large-scale sweeps do not kill many guerrillas, though they can be of value by harassing them and forcing them to move from familiar to unfamiliar territory. They can in some instances be counter-productive in the sense that they can injure or kill innocent bystanders and they tend to stir up animosity among the populace.⁵⁷ Since the intervention force is nearly always trying to avoid actions that would cause an unfavorable reaction from the populace, the large units sweeps, though they may endow the participants with a feeling of exhilaration, can work cross-purposes with the grand campaign design. Conversely, small-scale operations in the form of constant, aggressive patrolling and ambushes can be rewarding. The success of small-scale operations depends on having highly trained troops and good intelligence.⁵⁸

In terms of selecting a campaign design, conventional operational wisdom has substantiated the strategy of clearing an area of insurgents in order to open up some space for work in the other lines of operation—and ultimately for some sort of local normality to resume. This is simply one strategy in which security was deemed the initial and chief concern, and that execution of a security plan through combat operations and policing functions enabled other activities. This strategy and variations of it are sometimes referred to as the “clear, hold, build” strategy. However, a general rule is that if you are unable to “hold and build” you may want to reconsider whether to “sweep.” If the military sweeps through an area and clears that area of insurgent fighters, and then leaves, the force is essentially withdrawing from an area that has already been fought for. In some cases, the “oil-spot” or defensive enclave strategy might be even

more relevant for a particular area of responsibility. This idea has the force selecting an area for engagement, achieving success, and then growing that success outward in much the same fashion as an oil stain spreads. The point here is simply that a singular strategy cannot be advanced for every campaign design because each situation is so unique.

When Marines begin work in a new area of operations, they will probably know very little about the environment. Combat operations of this type are in reality so incredibly complex and dynamic that designing a campaign can seem impossible. How does a planner know where to begin? For instance, how does he establish priorities within the combat line of operation? All Marines, regardless of rank or position, need to know the purpose of the intervention. Planners in particular must fully appreciate the strategic rationale for U.S. involvement and must seek to understand the causes for the insurgency. Marine leaders at all levels must take part in *campaign design, learning in execution, and re-design*. Due to the complexity of the situation—and recognizing that insurgent activities will take the level of complexity into a whole new dimension, Marines will probably have to begin a process of “intelligent stumbling” which is a form of heuristic or discovery learning. Actions beget actions. In this way, a never-ending cycle of design and execution, followed by a more improved design becomes the way of operating.

Conclusion

The nature of intervention activities and counterinsurgency specifically can render ineffective the unsophisticated use of military force, particularly combat

force used without an understanding of the political and social environment and without harmony with the other lines of operation. In fact, military force can exacerbate the situation and fuel an insurgency if it is not used with the utmost prudence and circumspection. However, an intelligent application of military force is usually a necessary component of a successful counterinsurgency campaign. The challenge is to wield the right type and use of military force so that the affair is productive and does not fall out of harmony with the other lines of operation. The military as a force and the Marine Corps in particular will continue to play an important part in intervention activities. The change required is to make sure that the Marine Corps as a force of professionals has the ability to use combat force in a manner that is congruent with campaign purpose, works in symphony with the other lines of operation and is decidedly productive in approach.

Implications for Force Development

To realize the advantages that a concept for countering irregular threats may portend, assuming it is “operationalized,” there are questions that the Marine Corps as an organization must ask itself. For instance, within the combat line of operation, what force would be best able to benefit from the ideas? Is the multi-purpose force that the Marine Corps currently represents the best force to work in the combat line of operation as it is currently configured? What changes if any would be needed from a combat development standpoint?

Education and Training

The Marine Corps has traditionally placed a high value on both education and training. However, the challenges related to countering irregular threats will necessitate substantially more attention. Starting with what we do know, changes will likely be in order that increase the focus on small unit tactics such as excellence with crew served weapons, patrolling of all kinds (though in practice it will be different in each combat environment), convoy operations, terminal control of combined arms, understanding of battlefield geometry, and techniques for gaining, maintaining, and breaking contact. Moreover, Marines will probably need to learn police-like tactics such as what the British used in Northern Ireland.

As important as training will be, it will be significantly eclipsed for Marines of all grades by the focus on education. The Marine Corps has no ability to predict where all future conflicts will take place, and consequently, there is no way that the service can prepare all Marines for the cultural challenges they will face in the unique environments they will face. However, cultural education will become a significant enabling capability, particularly for the younger Marines and Marine leaders who will be immersed in the environment and be actually executing policy. In the same way, all formal schools will modify their curriculum to reflect a greater emphasis on small wars and counterinsurgency. A liberal education in counterinsurgency theory will best prepare leaders to deal with the challenges they will face in the unknown, put assuredly dynamic and stressful environment. The Marine Corps cannot teach Marines what to do in intervention activities because each is so decidedly unique

that the effort would be futile. However, the organization can teach Marines to “think on their feet”—to use their primary weapon: their minds.

As simple as it may sound, the first step to be taken in combat development as it pertains to education is to acknowledge the role and importance of junior leaders. In small wars, unit leaders at the point of execution, which may extend down to include squads and platoons, will often have greater autonomy and significance than in conventional war. The phrase, “strategic corporal” was coined to address the idea that a very junior man may take actions and have influence that extends well beyond the area of his direct contact. Following on this idea, the Marine Corps must create a mentally agile and mature force that can take on vague missions and adapt rapidly to the uniqueness of the environment.

Structure

One of the strengths of the current force structure is the inherent flexibility it retains. The fact that the Marine Corps is so comfortable “task organizing,” will be a key enabling capability. Task organized forces will become more common as Marine units are brought together for disparate missions that place varied requirements on the force. Operational design will drive the task organization even more comprehensively than it has in the past. For this reason, and because the force has this flexibility, few permanent structural changes are in order. However, at the individual level there will be a demand for certain “new” skill sets. For example, the active component of the Marine Corps needs permanently assigned civil affairs planners as a part of its structure. To completely realize the implications of this concept, a complete organizational

review must be performed that examines the tables of organization and considers all the military occupational specialties. However, this review should begin at the squad level and consider that small units will be asked to operate in a more autonomous or semi-independent manner and may therefore need a somewhat different mix of occupational skills.

Material Capabilities

A. Fires and Maneuver. Activities in the combat operations line will require a force that at the execution level has discrete, proportionate fires and fire support capabilities at its timely disposal. This includes both direct and indirect fires.

Countering irregular threats will often involve small units operating with substantial independence over an operationally significant geographic expanse. To do this effectively, these small units will need the mobility platforms to move with relative freedom. These vehicles must support the command and control requirement as well as the logistical sustainment requirements of the force.

B. Intelligence. The definition of intelligence will have to be expanded, as will the focus of who it supports in order to be most relevant for countering irregular threats. Intelligence will not be driven from “top down.” Intelligence will be a sharing of information, as it is relevant to the situation that participants face. Future systems must support this dynamic and timely information sharing.

- C. Command and Control.** Countering irregular threats will involve a campaign in which dialogue between leaders at all levels is an enabling component to the ongoing campaign design, assessment, and re-design. Command and control as a function should be supported by systems that allow for this rich dialogue between leaders at all levels. In this sense, a network-enabled system is the only “natural” fit, and systems should reflect this network architecture.
- D. Logistics.** The entire concept for logistics will need to be reviewed in light of unique campaign design. In many cases, the intervention force will be spread out geographically, and the provision of logistical support will become particularly demanding. Adversary actions may further complicate logistical support as will political considerations such a possible desire to limit logistical “footprint” on the ground in a host nation. Logistical support systems will need to be particularly sophisticated and (perhaps paradoxically) flexible or adaptable. Perhaps even more than conventional warfare, small wars demand greater independence and autonomy, and therefore the logistics support to a small wars campaign like a counterinsurgency will need to be able to accommodate this unit autonomy.

Some Considerations for Planners

An admitted danger exists in the construction of checklists within the scope of concept development. Checklists are almost never comprehensive despite any desire to make them so, and to the degree that planners use them exclusively; they can become a “crutch” of sorts. The intent here is simply to provide a very brief list

of general considerations that align with this concept and may prove beneficial to planners working in the combat line of operations as they practice operational design in countering irregular threats. These considerations are not aligned with a particular “level” of war or planning.

- Cultural intelligence assumes a prominent role. Make every effort to learn as much about your environment as possible as soon as possible. Human dynamics tend to matter the most.
- Use *measured force*, that is discriminating, proportionate force, whenever and wherever force is required.
- Employ a precise, even surgical approach to firepower.
- Ensure that rules of engagement support the difficult relationship of guiding Marines engaged in combat while encouraging the prudent use of force commensurate with mission accomplishment and self-defense (not necessarily “force protection” which can become overly reactive).
- Battlefield geometry assumes a new importance and should be considered when designing a tactical situation (even something as simple as a traffic control point)—but ‘*battlefield*’ becomes *environmental* geometry when engaged in war amongst the people.
- Identify and employ trustworthy interpreters and linguists. (Make sure that cash is available to support local leaders in this.)
- Identify and focus on “legitimate” tasks for the intervention force. These are tasks the indigenous population and government generally perceive to be productive and appropriate for an outside force.
- After selecting suitable population groups and areas for first contact, extend responses gradually. This is a

variation on the “oil spot” theory that essentially recommends finding an area to focus on achieving success and then extending or “growing” that success to a larger area.

- Win over, exhaust, split, capture or liquidate the top-level insurgent leaders.
- Exploit those insurgent leaders with weaknesses, and encourage the moderates to emerge and grow.
- Frustrate insurgent recruitment and deny base areas (sanctuary).
- Organize a local auxiliary.
- Deny outside patronage (external support). Make every effort to stop the insurgents from importing materiel support from across the indigenous borders. Likewise, insurgents will often attempt to use a neighboring country as sanctuary for training. It is critically important that these bases of sanctuary not be allowed to influence activities in the country.
- If you decide to practice some form of unit sweep strategy, remember to only “clear” what you can hold—otherwise, reconsider your strategy.
- Whenever your men interact with the population, encourage them to treat the people with respect, lest they be working in league with the adversary’s designs to alienate the intervention force from the people.
- When you wake up in the morning, try to imagine what the adversary anticipates that you will do that day—then do something else.

Chapter 2

Training Host Nation Security Forces

“The United States forces seek to restore domestic tranquility as soon as possible and to return the normal functions of government to the country concerned. To accomplish this, the United States Government will usually insist upon the establishment of an efficient and well-trained armed native force, free from political influence and dictatorial control.”

U.S. Marine Corps Small Wars Manual, 1940⁵⁹

Introduction

In Part I, we acknowledged that weak or ineffectual governments in failed and failing states are often unable to control the activities that occur within the geographical expanse of their indigenous borders. These areas can become sanctuaries for indigenous insurgencies and non-state actors. Therefore, it is often in the best interest of the United States to help certain nations develop the capacity to maintain security within their native borders. For this reason, and because security cooperation is a key component of American foreign policy, Marine forces, acting in any number of capacities, will be assigned to assist with the training of the militaries, security forces and police forces of some other nations.

Context

The demands of maintaining forward presence and participating in global security cooperation with security

partners of the United States will require Marines to interact with the militaries of various other countries. During small wars activities, most notably during the 1920's and 1930's, the Marine Corps trained indigenous constabulary forces in Central America. During the Vietnam War, the Marine Corps conducted a Combined Action Program that involved small units of Marines teaming with local popular forces to oppose the Viet Cong insurgents of South Vietnam. In the recent past, The Marine Corps participated in the training of foreign military units during unit deployments. In Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, the Marine Corps trained a substantial number of military and security forces (including police and border guards) so that these indigenous forces could assume the security responsibilities within their respective countries. The point is simply that the Marine Corps has a lengthy history of training the militaries and security forces of other nations, especially as the training related to the internal defense of those nations. In the same way, Marine units on deployment, such as the Marine Expeditionary Units, have engaged for some time with the militaries of other partner nations as a function of security cooperation and engagement.

The Military Problem

The Marine Corps will continue to engage in the training of foreign militaries. In most instances, the training function has been performed out of local necessity rather than grand design. In the case of security cooperation, the deliberateness of the endeavor has been more in keeping with the desire to use training with other nation's militaries as a diplomatic tool for national engagement. While this latter is a worthy purpose, it does not get at the

function and capacity required for foreign internal defense. In the case of the former—the local training based on necessity—this standing alone will not drive combat development to take place. The right force with the necessary capabilities and capacities will simply not materialize, at least not until commanders on the ground in an operational environment have the chance to develop these same qualities in their force. While the Marine Corps has enjoyed considerable success doing exactly that in recent combat operations, it is far better to adapt in advance if possible rather than evolving the force and its functions in reaction to events once combat has begun.

The Central Idea

The United States and its coalition allies is unlikely to be able to “win” a lasting peace against an established indigenous insurgency in any host nation through the use of military force alone. Of equal importance, but often not genuinely acknowledged is that this coalition cannot “win” at all unless that win includes or reflects an indigenous victory. The people of a host nation and their government must outgrow the irregular threat that they face. The intervention force (including all represented agencies) serves two primary purposes: to give the indigenous government some “breathing room” by helping them with their overwhelming security problems, and to help the indigenous government and its people to develop the capabilities and capacities required to outgrow their threat. The required capabilities will certainly extend far beyond pure security and military functions, but that is probably the area that requires the most immediate attention, as security is an enabler for almost all other governmental and societal functions. It is

also an area that the coalition can provide very direct assistance.

The U.S. military, teamed with other governmental agencies and with coalition partners, must be able and ready to help an indigenous nation to develop the military, security, and police forces required by that nation to achieve and maintain stability within its sovereign borders. Whereas irregular threats (indigenous and non-state) pose the most obvious threat to the host nation's ability to do this, these threats will be the principal and legitimate focus of the coalition effort. This assistance can take many forms, including the formation, equipping, and training of indigenous forces. The help may extend to combined operations in which coalition military units fight alongside the newly formed, reformed, or expanded indigenous military units. This latter aspect can have the effect of reinforcing the capabilities of the indigenous effort. It is also a manner of active training. Work in the *Training of Host Nation Military and Security Forces* line of operation may at first seem straightforward to military planners, but in reality, it poses complex challenges and holds implications for both campaign design and for combat development.

Basis for an Approach to Countering Irregular Threats

When participating in an intervention effort to counter irregular threats, in the form of indigenous or non-state actors, the Marine Corps will need the ability to help the indigenous authorities (at the local and national level) to develop their own capability to provide security for their populations. Likewise, the Marine Corps will assist in the establishment and training of indigenous military units, so

that the nation is able to perform its rightful functions related to sovereignty. A couple examples of functions related to sovereignty are the security of the nation's borders and the control of indigenous geography. A nation that cannot control its internal spaces is weak in terms of its sovereignty and is ripe for exploitation by internal insurgents and non-state terrorists who would seek sanctuary. Engagement and security cooperation in the grander sense also remain valid missions and in this vein, Marine units will use training as a vehicle for security cooperation. Where appropriate, this training partnership will focus on helping the security partner develop necessary capacities for countering irregular threats within the confines of that nation's borders.

To plan and work in this line of operation, the Marine Corps will need the requisite expertise in organization and training so that following an assessment of the capabilities required and the resources available (including time), Marine leaders can develop and instigate an effective training program for the security, military and police forces of a host nation. Programs should be as simple as possible and should specifically focus on preparing indigenous units and people for the missions they are likely to perform.

Knowledge of the Irregular Threat

Security forces and the various other related military and paramilitary forces that are established or will be established by a host nation need to know their adversary in order to optimize their preparations to counter the threat. This follows the age-old military axiom of the requirement to know thy enemy. It is particularly relevant here because the organization and training of indigenous

security forces should not necessarily be modeled after the U.S. military, but rather on the requirements for the host nation's security challenges. So planners need to genuinely understand who the opposition is and what they are opposing. What is the motivation for the opposition? Who are they struggling with and what is their apparent operational design and intent? How do they apparently intend to realize that intent through their struggle? How are they organized to accomplish tasks aligned with their operational design? What are their strengths and weaknesses? Having an appreciation for some of these questions (though the answers may not immediately be known) will help with design.

Insurgents and non-state actors typically operate in small, mobile units often with a tribal or cellular structure. While they may use traditional tactics, they will probably do so only when it benefits them. They will normally seek to avoid direct confrontation against the strength of either the intervention force or of the host nation security or military forces. The ancient Chinese philosophical concept of *Yin* and *Yang* appears instructive here. "An important postulate of the *Yin-Yang* theory is that concealed within strength there is weakness, and within weakness, strength."⁶⁰ Applying this philosophy, an intelligent and adaptive insurgent force will look at his adversary's strength and probably find a corresponding weakness. Of course, both the intervention force and the host nation security forces will be doing the same thing when they examine the insurgent. Gaining appreciation of this dynamic furthers understanding of the adversary vis-à-vis the friendly forces and this understanding should drive organization, training, and strategy (here distinguished from strategic level planning). The campaign should be designed to include the appropriate forces and operations to meet the threat as it exists in

reality—not in reflection to the military and security forces that the host nation already has in existence or would be comfortable developing.

Knowing Ourselves

Even before opposition actors are identified, the intervention force planners need to know who the “friendly” force actors are. In the same way, planners must know the national strategic goals are for the U.S. contingent, the rest of the coalition of the intervention force, and of the host nation’s government. Obviously, resolving discrepancies is a function that should begin at the diplomatic level. However, on the ground, differences will still remain and will need to be addressed (or acknowledged) as design continues.

A candid assessment of the indigenous government’s security and military forces is an important first step once an intervention activity actually commences. Depending on the host nation and the particular security threat there, the military forces may include both national troops and local militias. The indigenous government will almost never have adequate troops for the security threat they face, and the troops they do have will seldom be properly organized, equipped, trained, or led.

Strong consideration should be given to the strategy the host nation and coalition will pursue and the specific roles these indigenous forces will play in the short and long term. For instance, if indigenous units are formed into mobile columns that are used to track down and kill insurgent bands deep in outlying rural or jungle regions, they will require substantially more training than static security units used to guard key infrastructure like a

power plant. In the long term, the host nation forces must assume a leadership role in the campaign, otherwise the intervention force will find it difficult to leave and there will be no perpetuation to any established peace once the intervention force does depart.

Assuming that the indigenous government's military and security forces are in need of expansion, re-organization, and training, the intervention force should make assistance in this line of operation a chief component of their campaign design. Of course, we will want to avoid the natural temptation to organize and train the indigenous units to mirror image a western military. However, this is usually a mistake as western militaries are often the wrong model for the host nation's security situation, and the indigenous forces they have may have competent elements that can be of great utility to the effort—a cadre to build upon. Whatever military is formed must be right for the unique security situation and culture of that nation, and must be sustainable once the intervention force departs.

Implications for Campaign Design and Execution

Before the intervention force can help the host nation, it needs to consider the host nation's needs in consultation with host nation authorities, starting with grand strategy, and design forces that can meet those needs. A sovereign nation should be able to defend itself from an intra-regional threat. The nation will probably need a limited offensive capability to realize this strategic (regional) defense. For instance, a small air force would be appropriate, as might a coastal navy for nations with littorals. The host nation should be able to deal militarily with internal threats, or threats that exist within the

geographical confines of its sovereign borders. In some cases, rebel forces may assume conventional tactics and take on the indigenous army units in a force-on-force (symmetrical) engagement. The indigenous army must always prevail overwhelmingly. The army must enjoy freedom of movement throughout the countryside. There can be no areas that the government concedes to the opposition. This represents real governmental authority extension and it is an absolute requirement for credible and functional government, locally, provincially, and nationally.

The chief threat to a weak or fragile state government is probably an insurgency of some sort. An insurgency can push a weak or fragile state into lawlessness and disaster that threatens its neighbors and U.S. interests. That observation does not mean there are no external threats from neighboring countries, which might seek to exploit the host nation's weakness. It only means that, with the possible exception of an actual foreign invasion, the biggest concern for the survival of the government will generally come from within. Therefore, the host nation's military should be organized, equipped and trained with this in mind—with a capability to address the threat that the nation faces. From a practical standpoint, there will probably be relatively little need initially for heavy mechanized forces, but will likely be a substantial need for light, highly mobile infantry units. These infantry units must be capable of operating in relatively small, independent teams that can be dispersed as the mission dictates. Producing the required number of infantry and other general-purpose units can take quite some time—perhaps several years. The intervention force can help with the production, and in the interim, can perform the required military missions until a satisfactory indigenous capacity comes into being. Once the internal threat is

dealt with, the host nation can begin focusing their defense outward, and that may drive the need for heavier, armored forces capable of more conventional, combined-arms combat.

Infrastructure security generally deals with fixed sites like government buildings, electrical power plants, oil and gas refineries, pumping stations and pipelines, railroads, water and sewage treatment plants, and any other facilities related to a functional economy. Governments have a vested interest in securing these sites from rebel or terrorist attacks. Even banks may need governmental security assistance. Infrastructure security must extend to highways and main roads, particularly those roads used for commerce. A form of highway patrol may need to be established so that these thoroughfares remain functional and free from opposition interference.

Police forces will be needed to enforce civil and criminal laws. They preserve the peace. In fact, in terms of counterinsurgency operations, when an area or province attains the necessary stability that a police force is sufficient to deal with the security threats, that area should be considered “stable.” At that juncture, remaining military forces can be pulled back into a reserve, supporting role while the police forces assume the lead. Obviously, the police forces will do substantially more than investigate criminal acts. Police forces must penetrate a community so wholly that they can gain valuable intelligence on insurgent or terrorist activities. Police forces must disrupt the planning efforts of insurgent activists and leaders and foil the execution of their specific acts. This sort of community policing is not typical for all host nations and is probably an area for productive training interaction on the part of the intervention force.

These military, security, and police forces described above represent the desired endstate in campaign design for the intervention force. The campaign design should provide a road map for helping the host nation realize these capabilities, taking into consideration their current state as it relates to the desired endstate—a vision authentically shared by the host nation and the intervention force.

Conclusion

Activities in this line of operation will certainly span the whole spectrum of operations, including actions that never lead to direct intervention. In fact, intervention in the physical sense is the least desired approach as the cost of intervention on the responding nations can be quite substantial indeed. Having stated that, the efforts to collaborate with the militaries and security forces of other nations, particularly weak states in the nascent stages of democracy, should be an ongoing endeavor and part of the grand strategy for the United States and its allies. Cooperation and early involvement with host nations that are struggling to establish sovereignty and to maintain stability in their regions can possibly keep the scale of intervention at a manageable level. This early intervention could also preempt the development of a major insurrection, and the subsequent requirement for a large-scale intervention. Likewise, the United States will continue its struggle against terrorist organizations. Security cooperation with partner nations, whose geographic confines could devolve into sanctuaries for these terrorists, should be an important component of the democratic coalition's international security strategy. When intervention is called for, activities in the *training*

host nation military and security forces line of operation will play a vital role in the overall campaign, representing the establishment of long-term capability for the indigenous government to protect their people and to ensure stability for their nation.

Implications for Force Development

Those necessary qualities that can be accurately forecasted and developed in the future force should be, so that the force is more relevant and ready on day one of intervention. This simple maxim applied in the context of this particular line of operation means that the Marine Corps must first acknowledge the challenges of fielding a force that can train the militaries, security forces and police forces of other nations. With this acknowledgement, the Marine Corps can work to develop a force with the capability and capacity to do exactly that. However, lest the Marine Corps become overly focused to the point of preoccupation with this singular line of operation, the service must consider that this is only one line and this singular line must remain in harmonic symphony with the other five lines.

Education and Training

To make the training of host nation military and security forces more than an afterthought or distant collateral responsibility, it must be addressed and taught in the Marine Corps' formal schools. Finer tenants should be taught in division or regimental schools and by mobile training teams. Foreign internal defense (FID) has been viewed by some (at least since Vietnam) as the domain of Special Forces. Certainly, US Special Forces units will

continue to be involved in this vital mission. However, other more conventional units like the Marine Corps are going to be required to perform this and related missions. The Marine Corps should benefit from what US Special Operations Command forces have learned in this area and formalize it for Marine Corps application.

Some Considerations for Planners

- In design, start by understanding the problem. The function, capabilities, and capacities required for indigenous military, security, and police forces should align with the grand strategy as elucidated in the understanding of the problem and the resultant purpose for operations.
- Understanding the problem requires advance education and thought. The understanding must start at the earliest planning stage with a comprehensive approach to local needs in consultation with local people. All of this will be accomplished in partnership with the host nation's military and government authorities and in consultation with coalition partners and those international organizations that may be involved. While U.S. military power and money may dictate our taking a leadership role, that role should always appear partnered with local authorities if what we hope to achieve is to be considered as legitimate by the host nation's people.
- Establish separate training academies for military and police forces. Staff them with coalition personnel (tap into the talents of as many nations as you can for this).
- Establish mobile training teams and get out into the hinterlands with new tactics.

- Train the indigenous cadres first. These key personnel will stand up new units, man the training academies, and in some cases, man mobile training teams.
- Create among the host nation general-purpose forces and special purpose forces. These special purpose forces will be based on need. For police it could entail the development of a “Special Branch” in the British model. For the indigenous military it could mean Riverine operations forces, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, or other special forces. Additionally, market women are the best source of intelligence in the third world, so recruiting women into new security forces would give an access to that intelligence which male service members are less likely able to provide.
- Put a local face on it as soon as possible. Even before an indigenous unit seems ready by U.S. military standards, it will probably have to start playing a lead role in operations. It will learn from combat. Success begets progress—and confidence.
- It is usually best to recruit local men for the security and police forces. The military units may have more range and so the local aspect may be less of an issue.
- Find ways of adding legitimacy and credibility to the indigenous forces being developed (from the perspective of the population).
- Recruiting usually becomes easier when the pay is good and unemployment is high. Use this to your advantage.
- Conduct “joint” operations with host nation forces and show them that you respect their partnership. All plans should be prepared in partnership with host nation forces once they are ready to work with the intervention force. It is not “your” plan that they are listening to, but rather their plan too.

- In public, where appropriate, show appropriate respect to leaders among the security forces of the host nation with whom you are directly working. The idea is to let the people know that their security forces have earned the respect of the intervention force. The caveat here is that there can be no blind eye turned to abuse—so respect should align with generally upright comportment on the part of the indigenous security forces.
- Put liaison officers with the host nation units. (This will require some combat development in advance to develop these LNOs.) Exchange Liaison officers as early as practicable. Additionally, provide unit advisors for host nation units under development as soon as possible (noting that LNO's and military advisors serve a distinctly different purpose).
- The bureaucracy of military and police organizations becomes important and should receive some early attention from an architecture standpoint. Troops need to be provisioned and paid in a timely manner. Pay should come from the organization—not through the intervention force.
- Identify insurgents who might seek to join the security forces under false pretext. However, encourage insurgents to change sides—welcome them in with an “open arms” policy. Insurgents should have to have their backgrounds vetted before they are admitted to new local forces. Vetting “turncoats” is, ideally, a task for the host nation government in partnership with the country team.

Chapter 3

Essential Services

Introduction

Failed or failing states create turmoil that threatens their neighbors and US interests, and that can require that the US intervene, alone or in coalition, to help restore order and regional security. That is, weak states with governments that are ineffectual or non-existent are usually the nations that face insurrection problems for which they are unable to deal with using organic capability. Consequently, these are the nations that often require outside assistance to cope with an internal insurrection. Weak states are also the states least able to meet their people's fundamental needs. In some cases, the government of these weak states may not only fail to provide for its citizen's needs, but actually interfere with the liberty of the people through exploitive or repressive behavior. This social condition can provide the environment that is a background cause for insurgency. Meeting people's basic needs is what the '*essential services*' line of operation is about.

Context

While every intervention situation is unique, basic provisions like food, water, clothing and blankets, shelter and power are vital to the establishment of stability in a nation in turmoil. Insurgent conflict usually exacerbates the problems that a weak government already has in meeting its citizen's basic needs. There exists here a rather ironic circle of logic in which the nation that is

unable to meet people's needs, is probably also unable to control its geographic interior—which represents a security concern. The United States and its allies may intervene on behalf of an indigenous government to help specifically with the security problem, but intervention success will depend on many factors beyond security. Abraham Maslow's "hierarchy of needs" may be of greater relevance to the average citizen than either the government's promises or the insurgent's demands. Some will see 'security' not only in the personal safety terms, but also as having electricity, water, a local school, access to medical treatment, and even a job.⁶¹ In some cases, some of the social turmoil and chaos in a country can be linked to people's unrealized expectations of their government in terms of meeting their basic needs or in interfering with the freedoms that the people anticipate.

The Problem

In an intervention activity, regardless of how or why the United States and its allies became involved, there will likely be a requirement to help provide essential services to the indigenous people. The U.S. military will almost certainly play some role in this assistance, even if that role is only one of indirect coordination. However, it is also quite possible that for various reasons, such as intractable security problems or austere expeditionary environments that the military will for a time play a leading role in the provision of essential services. Unfortunately, the activities in this line of operation are decidedly outside the planning arena for conventional military operations. Therefore, the military has not given the potential planning and execution challenges much consideration—perhaps believing it to be the domain of "other government agencies." The reality for the future,

if the past is a good guide, is that other agencies may not be immediately capable of assuming this role and the military, being the only agency with the capability, will perform it based on necessity. The intent, however, is that leadership in this line of operation should smoothly transition to other government agencies as soon as this is practical.

The Central Idea

The military will have to plan and prepare to function in this line of operation. Countering irregular threats requires a holistic approach to operational design whereby all the lines work together for the higher purpose. Activities in this line must be planned in harmonic concert with activities in the other lines of operation. The work of actually providing essential services is relatively straightforward, at least for the most basic services. The Marine Corps, acting as a member of the intervention force, must treat this line of operation with the same emphasis and importance as the other lines and must ensure true integration in planning and execution. Marine planners cannot allow the activities of this line to fall on some special staff section where they remain largely uncoordinated with the other lines of operation.

A Team Approach

Marine planners must begin planning for the provision of essential services, even before knowing exactly what the people's needs are. Expressed differently, during pre-intervention planning, the Marine planners should ask themselves what essential services will be needed and evaluate the role of the Marine force in helping to provide

those services. Part of answering this question will involve determining who else, that is what other organizations or agencies, will likely be involved providing this assistance. For example, in a given area, planners may know that certain non-governmental organizations will be present and intend on providing specific services. It would be difficult to coordinate the effort much in advance (for many reasons which are beyond the scope of this concept), but simply being aware of the expected participants and having an idea of their basic capabilities, intent and limitations will assist planners working in this line of operation. This statement is not given as a means of abrogating responsibility for or even lessening the importance of planning in this line of operation. A desire for unity of effort necessitates a cooperative approach that accepts that the military will be involved, but that other players may bring capabilities that are of greater overall or specific importance to the grand design—and we simply will not know who all those players are in any real sense until the intervention force begins operations. Once on the ground, almost all of this can be answered in partnered consultation with local authorities.

The real desire here should be for the military to identify in advance some of the capabilities that they could use help with, even in the early stages of an operation. Accepting that the military may likely be the principle player in all six lines of operation during the initial periods of intervention, the best case is for an early cooperation that truly allows for civilian agencies and organizations to “plug in” to an ongoing affair, without losing the established momentum of the campaign. Therefore, if the military can state in advance to the leadership of other agencies which are likely partners in an intervention effort, what areas and capabilities the

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military could use help with, those other agencies may be able to develop some of these needed capabilities during the pre-intervention period.

Planning for Essential Services

As in all the lines of operation, planning is an ongoing, learning activity. Though the intervention force should usually expect fairly thorough briefing from U.S. government personnel prior to deployment in order to allow focused planning to begin, that will not always be the case. On-the-ground experience will allow the intervention force to fine-tune the work to meet the local needs. Assessment teams will be able to interface directly with the environment and, working with local, regional, and national leaders, will be able to discern more precisely what the specific needs are within the affected areas. With this information, Marine planners can continue the design (the re-design) of the campaign, establishing areas where Marine forces will operate and setting priorities among the areas of involvement. Likewise, the design relates activities to the other lines and looks for ways to harmonize the functions. There is not a separate design for each line of operation, but rather a singular campaign with six lines of operation.

This particular line of operation, probably more so than the other lines, will have observable, even measurable properties. Planners will usually know when they are achieving success in this line of operation. For instance, if the local production of potable water for drinking and cooking is a requirement that Marine forces work to provide (or even assist in providing though some engineering advice), it is easy enough to measure the requirement and whether the volume provided is meeting

the need. This observation does not detract from the work effort involved in providing the water, but simply allows planners to know when they are achieving success, or the degree to which they are doing do. From a qualitative standpoint, planners will know when they are achieving success in providing essential services when they see a happier, healthier local population whose attitude toward the intervention force is moving toward acceptance and friendship. Planners should use a combination of quantitative and qualitative assessment, seeking to find the right balance of the two so that they believe that they have an accurate picture of the actual situation.

Accepting Limitations

As in most endeavors in which Americans become involved, there will be a tendency to believe that, at least with respect to the United States' portion, the intervention force can do anything it plans to do. Unfortunately, that "can-do" spirit of exuberance can lead to an expectation of success that may not be well grounded in reality. If ill-founded expectations such as this develop, planners can be deceived into overestimating their capabilities—a form of hubris. Hopefully, the national or coalition purpose for the intervention effort is sufficiently modest and realistic. Following that, planners at all levels in the intervention force need to set achievable objectives.

Many intervention cases will involve weak states that were unable to provide services such as power, basic sewage handling, water, or even rudimentary medical treatment. Other cases will be more advanced and some essential services will have been provided, but the activities of an insurgency may have disrupted the government's ability or even willingness to provide

services to areas where the insurgents have been active. The fact that this lack of provision may aggravate an already tenuous situation for the government and work cross-purposes with a solution to counter the insurrection may not be obvious to the indigenous government. In either of these cases, the intervention force will have to accept limitations on what they can provide in either the short or long term. The best chance for success in this line of operation involves setting and accomplishing achievable goals, and where possible, working with and through local authorities in the accomplishment of these goals. In the same vein, it is quite important to avoid creating unmanageable expectations.

Make it local

Unlike the typical hierarchal arrangement in which all programs and efforts emanate from a central government, probably located in a faraway capital, the intervention force must work with local leaders who represent the local population and solve local problems. Making the affair a local one allows the intervention force to really get at the services that are most required for the area. It also aligns with activities in the other lines of operation because it supports the concept of “hugging” the population—where the richest and most meaningful intelligence is going to originate.

To make a success of an intervention campaign, the intervention force must not only put a local face on its work but enter into a genuine partnership with local authorities and people. More than just learning what they need to do to restore order, the intervention force should seek to help them prepare for a long-term stability that eliminates the threat to U.S. interests--which brought the

intervention force into the area in the beginning. Local leaders or councils should help with the needs assessment and prioritization. If local leadership in the formal form of a governing authority does not exist, Marine leaders may encourage the locals to form a “town council” to function as a local authority. Most appropriately, the intervention force needs to have the cultural intelligence background to recognize as a government whatever sort of organization the local people have made for themselves, and then use that as a basis for interaction.

Local contractors with local labor should be used whenever practicable. This is true, even if it means paying more for the effort. In fact, leaders of the intervention force may specifically desire to reward a contract to an individual or business entity based on strategic factors beyond the “best value” approach that westerners have come to prize. If the expertise does not exist locally, the next best option is to look somewhere else in the host nation. Bringing in a contractor from another nation is acceptable, but it should ideally not be from a nation in the intervention coalition as this can send the wrong message. Since the provision of essential services is not a temporary thing from the standpoint of the population, indigenous capability should be developed, rather than coming in and doing it for them. The whole effort must be sustainable. The people need to be able to help themselves so that when the intervention force leaves, the region does not suffer conditions that feed instability and chaos.

Approach to Using Essential Services to Counter Irregular Threats

Nothing breeds support like success. Performance has a quality of making an enterprise appear legitimate to the local populace. When people see the governmental authorities (and the intervention force which is working with them) delivering essential services as promised, the people acknowledge the credibility of the governmental authorities—even if that authority is simply a local council of leaders. Generally, it helps to have some quick results to “prime the pump” of local participation and support. This could be something as simple as abundant clean water, a schoolhouse, or some decent local roads.

This observation gets into campaign design. Assessing the apparent short-term and long-term needs of a community (perspective of the intervention force), learning what the community believes to be its needs (a needs perception)—and then reconciling the two (if a difference exists) is the first concern. In general, if this effort is conducted in conjunction with host nation authorities in the beginning, it has a much better chance of being right. Knowing what you are capable of providing is the second concern. These should be woven into a campaign plan that well reflects the political goals the intervention force is trying to achieve. Short-term needs are here defined as needs related to the immediate relief of human hardship and suffering. Included in this category are elements such as basic medical services, food, water, and some fuel as is sufficient for cooking and other basic life functions. Long-term needs, as defined here, are related to higher-order, quality of life and economic enablers such as basic community infrastructure, reliable power, educational facilities, and medical clinics with necessary supplies and equipment.

Adversary Reaction

Insurgents likely will seek to interfere with the provision of services if they perceive this to be a government success story. Or they may attempt to co-opt the effort and claim responsibility. In Vietnam, the Viet Cong allowed for the provision of services because they did not see this provision to be a threat to their grand designs. Perhaps that is an important point; if the insurgents are capable of interference, and they elect not to, it may be a sign that the endeavor is not harmful to the insurgency's cause (and it probably should be—at least in the grand sense). Planners should know why the insurgents are not concerned about governmental success. Conversely, as strange as it may sound, if the insurgents go to great effort to interfere with the provision of essential services to the population, the provision affair is likely to be one in which the insurgency attaches no small importance. This is probably an indication that you are achieving the desired effect—something the insurgency cannot allow if it wants to show that the government and the intervention force are not genuinely interested in the needs of the populace, and therefore not credible.

Conclusion

“Political power, then, I take to be a right of making laws with penalties of death, and consequently all less penalties, for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community, in the execution of such laws, and in the defence of the common-wealth from foreign injury; and all this only for the public good.”

John Locke⁶²

The struggle for the will of the people is the heart of the matter for both insurgents and counterinsurgents. In the American experience with democracy, governments derive their just powers from and at the consent of the governed. This idea can be a recipe for both insurrection and those who would counter insurrection. That is not to imply that stability can only emanate from a democratically elected government. The idea in this theme is simply that self-determination is the strongest tool against an insurgency—and if left neglected, can become a tool for the insurgent’s cause.

The population has interests and a voice, though that voice may not be immediately heard. A failing indigenous government that is unable to meet the population’s expectations of that entity may be viewed by the people as illegitimate or lacking in credibility. This illegitimacy can become an element of instability and ultimately creates an environment ripe for rebellion against that fragile government. Of course, a government that has already failed can have no expectations placed on it since it no longer exists. In either scenario, a power vacuum will likely come into being in which local leaders will take charge, if only by necessity. Societies of people groups will have essential needs, and of course the needs will vary with the people group. A locally acceptable government that is able to meet people’s basic needs will usually have a strong measure of legitimacy.

When the United States and its allies intervene in the affairs of another state in order to counter a developing irregular threat, addressing the essential needs of the indigenous population must be among the first priorities. However, the essential needs may not be what the intervention force initially anticipates. Likewise, the expectations of the populous, both of their government

and of the intervention force, will change over time. To maintain legitimacy and credibility, the effort to provide essential services must be sensitive to the shifts in needs as perceived by the people. The intervention force should expect the opposition forces to interfere where they are able with the effort, if only to undermine governmental legitimacy and to prevent the stability and order that could, from their perspective, ruin their grand designs.

In the end, success in this area of the campaign will not be realized if the intervention force is not able to depart and have the activities continue as necessary. Consequently, the effort from the beginning must be considered with an eye to establish indigenous capability to deliver these essential services.

Implications for Force Development

Providing or helping to provide essential services will undoubtedly place a substantial demand on the logistical capability organic to the intervention force. Though the military has a significant expeditionary logistics capability, it is not always optimized for civil application. For this reason, and because a large military logistics “footprint” may cause negative perceptions, the intervention force may want to minimize the use of their organic capability and, where possible, find a local solution or contract for support from a non-coalition member. Even in this case, there will be a strong need for engineers to supervise the efforts. Likewise, contracting officers who are familiar with the campaign design and well versed in expeditionary campaigning should be integrated at the level of the independent unit.

The functions in this line are not unlike the requirements of some cities, particularly after the city has experienced some sort of natural disaster. In general, the demands of a small or mid-sized city mayor following some sort of crisis are similar to the demands that planners in this line will experience. We should arrange for our campaign planners to spend time with city planners in the United States before they deploy in an intervention activity.

The military cannot wait until an intervention activity begins to start interagency planning. Understanding that a whole of government response is necessary in order to be successful and that the military plays an important role—but that it acts best when it acts in close concert with planners from other agencies, the military should begin a robust dialogue with interagency planners. The various agencies within the intervention force as it will likely come together needs to learn to speak each other’s language, and frankly the onus is on the military to take the first steps. The military must more than meet the other government agencies halfway. When compared to other government agencies, the military enjoys a substantial size advantage as well as a heritage for planning and an expeditionary culture. The military needs to share that culture with other agencies and bring them along as equal and valued partners.

Some Considerations for Planners

- Make this effort a genuine partnership between the intervention force and host nation authorities. Put a local face on your efforts as soon as possible. Use local labor, talent and leadership.
- Plan for a macro assessment effort and a micro assessment effort. Acknowledge up front what you

know and what you do not know about the environment—and begin an honest appraisal of what needs to be accomplished. The macro assessment will likely concern itself with grand campaign design functions, and will be long term in focus. The micro assessment effort will, by necessity, get down to the local level and determine, with regional sensitivity, what the specific and actual needs are in the immediate future.

- Any needs assessment must reflect a great deal of cultural sensitivity, otherwise great attention (read time and expense) could be wasted on something that the people do not consider to be of real value in their tribulation.
- Make a point of establishing realistic, measurable goals, and put in place methods of assessment towards the achievement of those goals. Ask yourself, “How do I know that this effort is important from a local perspective?” If you cannot answer that question, it may not be. Host nation authorities would be a good place to start with this question.
- Intervention activities are interagency activities—whether agencies beyond the military are initially present or not. Form interagency planning teams to discuss design, assessment, and re-design. Learn early to speak an interagency language.
- Meet with representatives from organizations beyond the governmental team. Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) will seldom want to give the appearance of being too closely aligned with the intervention effort. Encourage their participation in planning, even if it means holding meetings in neutral areas. In your meetings with NGOs, help them understand that we have mutual interests in achieving

the intervention force objectives of local stability, security and relief.

- Be as transparent as you possibly can with the local people. Do your best to help people understand what you are doing and why you have decided to go one way or another in a particular effort.
- Give consideration to the role indigenous women play in the society and how this cultural factor may influence the campaign. Every society and culture is unique, and the campaign should reflect that. However, too many campaigns fail to account for this critically important factor.
- Consider that in some intervention affairs, the indigenous people will form an impression that the intervention force (especially the military side of it) has arrived to “save the day.” Understanding this phenomenon and working to keep expectations manageable will help to avoid the frustrations that inevitably come from unrealized indigenous expectations.

Chapter 4

Promote Governance

“The manifestation of insurgency being only a symptom, superficially diminishing, denying or hiding the symptoms conveys neither success over nor end of insurgency. Only the denial of preconditions, catalytic agents and the constituents that help insurgency can make the recovery permanent and deny opportunities for the relapse of the insurgency. The insurgent’s tangible assets even once denied, can appear again unless the very tangible elements are incapacitated or reconciled within the framework of the national perspective.”

Lt.Col. V.K. Anand⁶³

Introduction

Of the six lines of operation listed in Part I, *promoting governance* could at first encounter seem to lack specific application to an intervention effort. Beyond that, what concern or role do the Marines of the intervention force have in “promoting governance?” The concept for Countering Irregular Threats makes clear that this line of operation does indeed play a vital role in terms of the ultimate stability of a nation. In fact, in the grand scheme of things, this line may actually be the most important of the lines. It relates to the ability of the government of the indigenous nation to establish and maintain order, and to perform all necessary governmental activities that pertain to the legitimacy of a sovereign nation and the requisite equilibrium of its society. The intervention force acting in any capacity must well understand the importance and absolute relevance of this line of operation and that

understanding must be reflected in the context of any country campaign.

From a U.S. Government wide perspective, this is the most important long-term line, but perhaps the least likely that the military can successfully affect without substantial collaboration with other government agencies. Conversely it is the most likely to do harm to the United States' image/relations/interests if it is mishandled. It offers three great advantages: (1) grants an exit strategy, (2) prevents the need for a repeat intervention, and (3) offers a long-term solution to the protection of the citizens of the host nation and U.S. interests.

Context

Lessons learned from both Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom show the utility-- indeed the absolute necessity of establishing and promoting governance. These are not necessarily "new" lessons in that even a cursory reading of history as it relates to insurgencies would reveal the importance of governmental capability and capacity. Weak governments are the most likely to be successfully attacked by insurgents. Ineffectual governments are unable to meet the needs of their citizens and are incapable of controlling their territory. Lessons from current operations reflect the fact that without a strong military capability, the indigenous nation will struggle to provide security from insurgent violence for its population.

The Problem

The military is far and away the largest and most visible of the government agencies of the United States that will be actively involved in an intervention. The U.S. military has, from the founding of the United States, played a major role in the execution of external national policy, and that role has only expanded over time. In recent years, the military has, by necessity, performed roles far outside the combat line of operation. This necessity relates to the expeditionary nature of the military services and their inherent capacities, particularly in the areas of security and logistics. The austere and often supremely dangerous environments in which the United States chooses to intervene in the affairs of another nation presents U.S. national leadership with few options but to involve the military. In fact, when security represents the biggest issue relating to intervention—as in the case with most insurgencies—the military may, for a time, be assigned as the lead agency. Unfortunately, the military has not been forced to concern itself with this line of operations and is unprepared to do so despite a history of having been involved in this area. The military has not developed the intellect, training and skills for the demands that this line of operation, promoting governance, will demand.

The Central Idea

The ‘promoting governance’ line of operations has two elements: *the rule of law* and *governmental capability*. These two elements are certainly related, but they are distinct unto themselves. The Marine Corps, as a part of the intervention force, must understand both of these elements as they relate to campaign design. Marine

forces may be required to help establish or re-establish the rule of law and the associated legal and executive structures and agencies to realize the development of this societal requirement. In the same way, Marine forces may be required to help establish government agencies, normally in the form of bureaucratic capacities. That is, most nations will require some form of bureaucracy in their executive government. For many nations, this bureaucratic capacity takes the form of various ministries.

Rule of Law

A core requirement for stability in any society is the rule of law. This precept is particularly relevant (and at issue) for a state that has suffered the chaotic upheaval that comes with an insurrection or where non-state actors have taken up residency and created some form of pseudo state. “True and enduring peace occurs only when there is a genuine return of the rule of law, which is the foundation for a properly functioning and legitimate state.”⁶⁴ Of course, for there to be a “return of the rule of law,” the rule of law must have been in existence. Unfortunately, that is a supposition that cannot be made in many cases—which may be part of the reason for the lack of stability in those states where intervention is warranted. In host nations where the state structure is weak at best, instituting rule of law will be a difficult challenge indeed. However, institution of the rule of law is so vital to the ultimate success of the intervention activity, that any attempt by a host nation to stabilize their state by creating a government, even if it is constituted legitimately through a democratic process, will probably see the state fail if rule of law is not implemented first.⁶⁵

The rule of law requires a certain respect from both those in authority and the people who subject themselves to this legitimate authority. The rule of law governs the relationship between people and other citizens, as well as between the citizen and his government.

There will certainly be different legal systems necessary and appropriate for every nation in which intervention takes place, but there are certain elements that should exist in any rule of law construct. For example, under the rule of law, an independent judiciary, which represents a neutral arbiter between fellow citizens and each other and between citizens and their government, is best.⁶⁶ However, the host nation may have its own functional judicial system, and it is usually best to allow the local solution to remain intact. An effective justice system should include police (with required organizational and functional structure), correctional facilities with appropriate staff, and a court system with judges, prosecutors and defenders.⁶⁷

Before any of this can be effectively implemented, the host nation government must agree on some formal laws. Preferably, these are laws originating from the host nation, but in some cases where laws have not previously existed, some international laws may need to be used during a period of transition to what should ultimately become a locally originated system of laws. In many cases of intervention (perhaps most), state failure has merely disrupted local rule of law routines, which merely need to be restored, perhaps with improvements. A real part of political power for a nation is the right to make laws with penalties of death and all lesser penalties—all for the public good.⁶⁸ This certainly applies to the sovereign nation in which the intervention effort takes place.

The question of the rule of law comes up in virtually every intervention activity. Unfortunately, intervention forces seem to require a re-learning of the lessons regarding the challenges that rule of law necessitates for each case of intervention. Merely the act of considering the pertinent issues in advance will set the intervention force in a more advantageous position once intervention begins.

There are few inviolate conventions when considering the rule of law. However, there are some common precepts to consider. The following list is not prescriptive, but may help planners to understand and frame the problem accurately.⁶⁹

1. Do not force local populations to accept western ideas of law. Imposing western ideals of law usually does not work anyway. The local people may have a very different understanding and it might be seen as inappropriate—or worse to push western legal ideas onto the people of the host nation. It is better that the indigenous nation comes up with its own laws. The intervention force should evidence respect for the indigenous legal system.
2. Local custom should be connected with the more formal laws of the indigenous nation's formal justice system. An intervention effort may be able to help the local people make this connection.
3. "Customary law" which is essentially local law based on local customs (primarily civil law) is often the norm, and should be shown respect.
4. Acknowledge the role of tribal structures, as this is often the source of local "customary" law—what

westerners might call civil law. (This reflects the coalition experience in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom.)

5. The intervention force should only seek to steer the affair in cases where strategic policy is clearly at stake.
6. Show support for the indigenous nation by offering assistance in the form of advice and education.

Every situation will be unique, so there is no practical way of developing answers to the potential rule of law issues when the intervention force does not know what the issues will be until the situation is experienced. Of course, this requires as much general preparation (on the part of planners) as is practicable prior to deploying forces in intervention. Ideally, these preparations would extend to inter-agency planning and coordination for a whole of government response. In cases where the U.S. military is the only government agency present (such as in the early stages of an intervention) the planners will have to consider the implications of the rule of law within the promoting governance line of operation. Military planners may even be forced to take on responsibilities that seem to be far outside the traditional military realm—such as working with locals to establish an interim rule of law construct and organizational structure. The sooner other government agencies join the intervention force, the better (particularly for this line of operation).

Governmental Capability

Even for relatively small nations, a governmental bureaucracy of some sort is an absolute requirement for

the proper administration of government with its related organs. All persons involved, including the host nation leadership and the intervention force leadership, must begin with the understanding that the government with its attendant structure is an outgrowth of the character, culture, needs and resources of the host nation. A western government model may not be appropriate, though the essence of it may help the intervention force as they help the host nation shape or re-shape their government.

Western nations certainly do not have sole expertise on the development of complex bureaucratic hierarchical structures. Some Middle Eastern countries, for instance, follow a socialist government model with an elaborate network of ministries to address virtually every function of government. While there is no singular construct that will work in every case, every nation needs to have departments or ministries that deal with the following issues: 1) defense, including internal and external security, 2) justice, 3) foreign affairs (for external diplomacy), 4) economic development (agriculture may also fall under this department), 5) health and human welfare, 6) interior (this may cover all infrastructure, roads, etc.), and 7) treasury. Most nations will go on to establish other departments or ministries in such areas as education, information management, and energy.

Conclusion

The *promote governance* line of operation is probably the line that best represents the ability of an intervention force to assist an indigenous government. In more rudimentary cases where no government exists at all, this line of operation may involve helping to create and organize an indigenous capacity to govern. In the long run, the

activities in this line of operation may well affect the lives of the people the most and in cases of insurgency, activities in this line may address real or perceived grievances emanating from governmental inattention to people's problems. What does this mean to the U.S. military? Simply put, it means that activities in this line are among the most important of all the lines in terms of establishing lasting stability to a region or nation.

Implications for Force Development

The challenges germane to this line of operation far exceed the traditional capabilities and competencies of the military component of the intervention force. Certainly that gives added impetus for increased cooperation with other agencies within the intervention force, which already have some of the capabilities necessary for activities in this line. However, it also should cause the military to carefully consider the organic competencies that it has and rightly should have (even if some of this competency is limited in depth). Perhaps the military needs to have a greater ability to understand and weave Rule of Law into the campaign design and practice. Likewise, the military almost certainly will require an enhanced ability to work with the civil government of a host nation. This means that some planners within the military side of the intervention force must speak "government."

Some Considerations for Planners

- Encourage local leaders to come to the forefront. If no local council exists, encourage the local populace to create such a body. Teachers, businessmen, and

others who enjoy the respect of the community should be strongly encouraged to come together and form a temporary council and to serve in such capacity until a more permanent organization can be elected.

- Help (or encourage) the host nation's government to remove genuine grievances, expose imaginary ones, dispel the myths and resolve contradictions and incongruities where possible without delay. Note that this may be very difficult to do because 1) the genuine grievances may be hard to ascertain and 2) it may involve the host nation giving up power or control in a fashion that they are unable or unwilling to accommodate.
- Analyze the catalysts and stop (or help the host nation stop) their growth in order to project an image of strength.
- Make only such promises as can be fulfilled in the foreseeable future. (This may help with realistic time-limitations for intervention.)
- Assist the host nation in the induction of competent and responsive executives and strengthen civil services and security forces. This is traditionally difficult to do, and backing an incompetent (or worse) indigenous leader can backfire on the coalition. Be careful, and do not be afraid to step in and make a bold change if necessary. A corrupt official or an official such as a chief of police who is working "both sides" can be doing more harm than good. You may be forced to replace him—if so, move decisively. Even better, choreograph the removal of all officials necessary so that the pain of the affair will be acute, but brief and final.
- Provide accessibility to ensure two-way communication with people, establish rapport with the masses and exploit opportunities and options.

- Exploit those insurgent leaders with weaknesses, and encourage the moderates to emerge and grow.
- Encourage the host nation to grant the merely local demands and meet the constitutionally satisfiable aspirations (of the rebel cause).
- Counter the deep-rooted grudges by boosting the national perspective and challenge other claims (by insurgent leadership) by showing some visible progress in the implementation of the national blueprint (again—best to work with/through the host nation government in this).
- *Provide liaison officers to various host nation government ministries or agencies. Even better, do this in an inter-agency fashion using a team approach. Obviously these proposed teams would differ depending on function.*
- Once the legal system is established or re-established, send someone down to observe first-hand a person or persons moving through the legal system (arrest by police, trial, punishment by confinement to a correctional facility). Ask to see the docket of the judges at the provincial courthouse. If there is no one on it, or if it is full, and there are no proceedings, you may have a problem.
- Rule of law must include an indigenous citizen's right and ability to petition his government for redress of wrongs committed by the indigenous government—or to petition the intervention force for redress of wrongs perpetrated by the intervention force (intentionally or otherwise). Plan for this.
- Effective governance should include a strong focus on providing adequate security for the populace to enable people to resume their lives and livelihoods. Conversely, if that does not seem to be happening (assessment), you may need to reexamine the

effectiveness of the security that you (and the host nation) are providing.

- Whenever and wherever possible, build on extant capabilities. The host nation often has some nascent capability and the intervention force may just need to help them develop greater capacity.

Chapter 5

Economic Development

Introduction

There is a close relationship between a society and its economic state of affairs. Stability or a lack thereof may likewise relate to the economic status of a nation's population. In fact, we know that one cause for societal discontent that can provide the environment for insurrection is an economic situation that represents great income disparities or where large populace groups feel they are being economically disadvantaged (or deliberately taken advantage of) by other, usually more wealthy groups. Economics can play an important role in the onset of an insurgency and economic difficulties can fuel an ongoing insurgency. Further, if there were substantial economic problems that led to the start of the insurgency, and these problems are left unresolved, these economic problems will probably prevent any lasting stability.

Context

Whether an insurgency has a political, ideological, or social cause, work in the economic line of operations will probably play a part in both the specific countering of the insurgency itself and in stability or hope for stability that takes place post-insurrection. For example, even in the case of an insurgency that is fueled almost completely by ideology, if the counterinsurgency intervention effort leaves a large percentage of young males unemployed, these same men, though they are not necessarily

ideologues themselves, may be easily persuaded to join the insurgency.

The Problem

For some time, at least since the post-Vietnam era, military planners have been encouraged to focus on purely military operations, but when countering irregular threats, purely military operations simply do not exist. There will be economic problems in the host nation, and the intervention force will likely be forced to deal with these in some capacity—either directly or in conjunction with or through the host nation’s government. There is a strong linkage between the activities the military is accustomed to being engaged in and the solving of economic problems.

The Central Idea

The practice of operational art and design as it pertains to countering irregular threats in an intervention effort will require the intervention force planners to deal with economic problems and more broadly to conduct economic development. The study of economics is a study of scarcity, usually in material resources. This scarcity is in relation to people’s desire for these resources.⁷⁰ A social or political struggle for power or for a change in the prevailing order may manifest elements of conflict over the control of resources.

Working in the economic development line of operations will require planners to examine societal needs, affected group relationships and power arrangements within the host nation. Understanding the host nation’s culture,

demographics and politics, along with an understanding of the nature of the insurgency (i.e., what the basis or cause is for it and what fuels it), aligns with an economic understanding of the people and the government. This economic development line then feeds off of the other lines and the other lines feed it. The real practice of operational art here is in understanding these economic relationships (which are also political, societal, or power relationships) and to use economic development as a tool to influence the situation in the interest of long-term stability.

Economics and Society

In the concept for Countering Irregular Threats, an explanation was offered on causality theory for rebellion in which two elements were outlined. In basic form, those elements are a background environment in an area (country or geographic region) that leads to unrest (political, economic, or ideological) and a catalyst (defined as a leader of a movement or of actions that the movement takes to instigate insurrection). Though not all irregular threats are based on this insurgency model, the basic theories are very common—and therefore substantially applicable for understanding and campaign planning. In many (perhaps most) cases, whether the background environment is overtly problematic from an economic standpoint or whether the environmental cause seems more of a political or even ideological nature, economics, in reality, probably plays a significant indirect role. That is not to argue that all active insurgencies are caused by economic difficulties in a region. It is however, a factor in most failing and failed states—a factor associated with a weak government, a populous

with unmet economic expectations, and ultimately, the seeds of instability.

In general, the basic theory of economics is that human wants are infinitely expandable and that the means for satisfying those wants are locally or temporarily limited. This sets up a competition for resources (again, the scarcity theory). “The function of the economizing process is to allocate scarce resources to specific ends.”⁷¹ Economic difficulties in a country can contribute to instability in many ways, but essentially it normally comes down, in one form or another, to this competition for scarce resources. Groups within a state or region may come to feel that the status quo is, from their perspective, unsatisfactory. A relationship exists between political power and economic control in virtually every state. An economic disenfranchisement can take the form of a political disenfranchisement—and vice versa. This disenfranchisement can lead to instability in a state or region, or can undermine any progress toward peace and stability in an otherwise successful counterinsurgency campaign. As some analysts have noted, the link between wealth and power may not always be easy to see or understand, but the existence of this likely relationship should be assumed for most cases. Peace and stability will rarely succeed if the political-economic incentives for continued conflict are overlooked and therefore not addressed in the campaign design.”⁷²

So what does this mean for understanding irregular threats like insurgencies? Further, what does it mean for campaign design in an intervention to counter these irregular threats? To start with, irregular threats cannot be supposed to exist in isolation of their specific environment. In other words, we must first understand the environment in which the intervention activity is

expected to take place (or is taking place). That environmental understanding, in terms of campaign design, will involve looking through the prism of all six lines of operation. Understanding the unique economic and political power issues for the particular situation of a host state is tantamount to virtually any real chance of successfully achieving stability in that state. To understand the irregular threat, first understand his environment. Better yet, even before speaking of a threat, seek to understand the societal dynamics, including an understanding of who holds power, who makes decisions, what are the economic drivers and who has control (or what the control relationship is) within a state. When identifying an insurgency for instance, seek to appreciate the foundations for its existence in relationship to the environment. Ask if a competition for control or allocation of resources plays a role in the insurgency or instability, and if so, attempt to define that relationship. Understanding must precede campaign design, but understanding is dynamic, so campaign design, as an ongoing activity, must likewise be dynamic.

Knowledge of Opposition Actors

A catalytic agent of insurrection (such as the insurgent leadership) will often seek to bring the population's attention to a real or perceived societal injustice such as the economic disenfranchisement mentioned earlier, a decidedly exploitative economic arrangement, or a significant income disparity that creates (or allows for) intractable class distinctions. If substantial economic difficulties exist and to the extent that we understand the critical issues (vice superficial issues which tend to distract), the intervention force should work to resolve or at least ameliorate the problems. Marines should initially

presume that the insurgents probably have a better appreciation of the salient issues from the perspective of the population than the intervention force—or possibly even the indigenous government. This presumption, whether proved to be true or not, will preclude a natural arrogance that allows the intervention force to dismiss the grievances for which an insurgency may stand.

Assuming a host nation government exists, the intervention force should work with and through that entity (even if it is inefficient and time consuming to do so) because success in the economic development line of operation must be a lasting affair, and not a “band-aid” placed on a serious (economic) wound. Neither the intervention force nor the indigenous government can afford to leave an insurgency with the cause for insurrection still intact. Stated differently, even if the insurgent catalyst is removed, if the cause for the insurgency remains, insurrection is likely to spring up again, and stability will be short lived indeed.

Basis for an Approach to Using Economic Development to Counter Irregular Threats

In campaign design, the economic development line of operations should include both a short-term and a long-term aspect. The short-term aspect should deal with immediate problems such as large-scale unemployment. This short-term aspect could be colloquially referred to as *stopping the bleeding*. The long-term aspect of the campaign plan should work to stimulate an indigenous capacity that results in economic welfare for the general population of the host nation. This longer-term aspect is akin to a patient’s *recovery* following initial treatment. The stability that a nation experiences will be related in

some part, directly or indirectly, to the economic welfare of the nation's population groups and to the indigenous government. Finally, the patient should be brought to the point that he can care for himself—an "outpatient." That is, he becomes *self-sustaining*. However, this is not a statement advocating an intervention activity that continues until the economic travails of a host nation's government are resolved. On the contrary, it is merely an acknowledgement of the critical link between basic economic welfare of a nation and the ability of a government to meet the most basic needs of its citizenry.

In order to formulate a plan in the economic development line of operation, planners must first understand the society, its culture, and the relevant environment. For instance, in a rural based society, land ownership may be a chief component of any economic development plan (that is it must be acknowledged as of central importance). For a more urban society, employment may be of more general importance. In that latter case, jobs in both the public and "private" sector (government jobs and non-governmental, private industry jobs) may be the biggest issue of contention. If the people are not employed, they have no means of generating income on which to maintain themselves and their families—a sure line to civil discontent and potential turmoil.

Economies that lack sufficient diversification are often at risk of interruption by natural and artificial forces. Natural forces such as changing markets or even the influence of weather are reason enough for a nation to work to diversify its economy. However, when artificial forces are present, such as a disruptive insurgency that directly and indirectly attacks an element of the economy (such as an oil pipeline), the rationale for diversification is thoroughly reinforced.

Implications for Campaign Design and Execution

Virtually any strategy for economic development of and within a state should have both a macroeconomic aspect and a microeconomic aspect. “Macroeconomics is a study focusing on the behavior of the overall economy, including factors such as inflation and deflation, the level of unemployment, and production. It is the opposite of Microeconomics. Microeconomics focuses on the behavior of individual consumers or households. Microeconomics is the opposite of Macroeconomics.”⁷³ Microeconomics also includes businesses, small and large, which are a significant contributor to the society’s economic health. This may seem like fairly involved theory to be integrated into campaign design, and indeed it may very well be, but the elements should be relatively straightforward. For instance, from a macroeconomics perspective, planners might ask themselves what are the natural resources of the nation and how are they being used? What are the major sources of wealth generation for the nation and in a related fashion, what are the major industries? An agrarian society will certainly be very different than an industrialized one. How well is the economy diversified? What are the extant power structures (specifically relating politics with economics)? These questions apply not only at the nation level, but at the provincial and local level as well. So in answering these and other similar questions—very basic indeed—a planner can perhaps begin to understand the macroeconomic aspect of an economy.

To examine the microeconomic aspect of an area, a planner might ask himself about the household income of groups of people in specific areas—relative to an

expected standard of living. What are their “spending habits?” That is, what do they need money for and how do they use it? Remember, in an environment of distinct social change, people will never desire to be worse off—and this point has implications for design.⁷⁴ In most failing or failed states, the income expectation will undoubtedly be extremely modest, but this can make identifying an issue simpler from the standpoint of scarcity theory. What individual businesses exist and how are they doing? Another question from the standpoint of the penetration of governmental influence is whether (and at what degree of compliance) citizens are paying taxes. As ironic as it may seem to some westerners, a citizenry that complies with the payment of taxes to the state is probably evidencing an allegiance to the government, and insurgencies do not traditionally flourish in that environment. Stability is usually an instantiation.

An aspect of economic development that must receive deliberate attention and planning energies is the discipline of finance. Though finance is a broad field, here we are specifically talking of the system that includes the circulation of money, the granting of credit, the making of investments and the establishment and function of a banking industry.⁷⁵ There is certainly a microeconomic aspect to finance, but the immediate concern for the intervention force while working with the host nation is for the macroeconomic aspect. Is there a banking system? Is there a means whereby companies can establish credit and resolve that debt through corporate activity? What role has the host nation established for itself in this field and is there some sort of regulatory agency? These issues will need to be addressed before an economy can reach the state of self-perpetuation.

Conclusion

Fragile and failing states are often fraught with economic difficulties of the first order. There is a certain circular logic here in which a weak or fragile state will have economic weaknesses—which will make it weak in terms of resisting threats from within and without. While a nation can surely be poor and stable, the evidence has historically supported the notion that widespread economic problems within a country are commonly associated with instability. This observation is particularly true in nations with wide economic disparities and obvious and intentional economic disenfranchisement--or even blatantly exploitative practices and relationships. Even yet still, such a situation does not necessarily need to lead to insurrection (and usually does not in any widespread sense). Poverty does not of itself lead to insurrection. However, the seeds are present, and may only require a catalyst to cause germination. Once insurrection begins, economic problems do more than compound a bad situation. They may actually enable the perpetuation of the difficulty.

Working in the *economic development* line of operations may feel strange in the beginning, particularly to military men whose past exposure to this line has been minimal, but it should quickly become natural when a holistic appraisal of the environment is contemplated. When the military is able to collaborate with their cohorts among the other government agencies of the intervention force and host nation leaders, these partners can do the job. Acknowledgement of the role of economic development in design of a specific campaign is the initial important step to a solution. First, understand the problem. A

design that includes both a short and long term plan for economic development generally stands a better chance of success in terms of addressing problems that can influence stability. As operational design takes place and continues to evolve, the activities in this line of operation should naturally augment and work together with the activities in the other lines of operation. For example, a project that brings economic benefit to a community may convince the locals of their government's "reach" and encourage them to support the government instead of the insurgents. More than government involvement though, what you really want to do is work to strengthen micro-economies which are the livelihoods of people and their communities. Often this means supporting programs focused on alleviating poverty or of programs that help provide the financial tools to encourage and bolster small businesses. The work you do should be sustainable, and that means that a local interest must be able to take it on in order to perpetuate the activity once the intervention force departs.

Working in this line of operations does not mean that military planners will have to become economists. However, it does mean that these same planners must understand the situation in a multi-faceted or complete sense, and in campaign design, must demonstrate this understanding. The economic aspects of a situation requiring intervention are undeniably important, and hence any final resolution must reflect that importance, weaving the economic development work of all cooperating agencies into the solution as it is advanced. The ultimate desire relative to the entire campaign, but in this line in particular is to build indigenous capacity. The intervention force has to be able to withdraw intervention force personnel and leave behind a situation that is sufficiently healthy and self-perpetuating

Implications for Force Development

The military does not desire to approach an intervention activity alone. To really be successful, intervention activities require a whole of government approach. This requires something that includes government agencies, and ultimately goes beyond the US government and coalition partners and includes non-governmental organizations whose cooperation may only align with a unifying theme. Military planners should see themselves as intervention force planners and learn to speak a collective language of interagency affairs.

Planners should be campaign designers. The intricacies of this line of operations mean that military planners among the intervention force should work closely with experts in economic and finance. To design an intervention campaign, and to re-design it as learning takes place, planners must have a basic understanding of economic theory as it relates to power relationships and policy. In related fashion, planners should appreciate how activities they design could work toward campaign purpose. They should likewise consider the antithesis: how some of the activities they plan for make work against campaign purpose, and determine how to handle that.

The Marine Corps needs some civil affairs personnel with specific education in the study of economics (and economies), business and business development, and government (public administration).

Contracting takes on a newfound importance in an intervention activity, especially as it involves aligning

monies from the nations of the intervention force with efforts in the host nation. Greater flexibility in contract law is desirable so that activities can be aligned with campaign purpose. This may involve both a change to existing public policy *vis-à-vis* the spending of U.S. government funds and better preparation for officers involved in the contracting process for an intervention activity.

Some Considerations for Planners

- To draw the most out of the local population, work with the host nation to strengthen the economy and the quality of life.⁷⁶ In the long run, it is about supporting the livelihoods of indigenous peoples, which is often an outgrowth of what westerners would call “small business.” In every economy (except perhaps a completely socialized one) business drives the economy. To strengthen the economy, you must find ways of encouraging and supporting legitimate business and business activities. Even the provision of security to allow business to take place is part of this positive business environment that must be present.
- Work with the host nation to ensure that basic and transparent financial practices take place at local banks and within local government.
- After selecting suitable population groups and areas for first contact, extend responses gradually.⁷⁷ This is a variation on the “oil spot” theory in which success is established and spread out much in the fashion of an ink stain.
- Work with the host nation government to reduce unemployment.

- Seek to understand the impact of business activities on “military operations”—and vice versa—in a considered area of responsibility.
- Use economic leverage for penetration of new areas with governmental response. Remember that in many societies, monies are distributed through the tribal or clan networks. For instance, making sure the man of your choosing gets a large contracting job may ensure that many local men are employed—and therefore not as available to the insurgency. You may have to pay more than seems fair for a job, but this form of bribe is cheap indeed if it keeps people out of the hands of the insurgency.
- Ensure that non-compliance has an economic price. Likewise, show early on that compliance pays off. In fact, in the broadest sense, the campaign design should reflect that peace pays.⁷⁸
- No one has a better appreciation of the specific situation than the “man on the ground.” Accordingly, program funds in advance for leaders to use on day one of intervention. Expect some bookkeeping, but otherwise demand only reasonable and limited accountability for these funds.

Chapter 6

Information

“Peace means reconciliation. Reconciliation occurs through integrating the majority of the guerrillas, or at least a majority of their supporters and sympathizers, into the normal political process, that do not per se threaten the regime. Reconciliation depends to a large degree on how the regime fights the war. The time for winning the peace is during the fighting.”

Anthony James Joes⁷⁹

Introduction

Every conflict has a virtual dimension that takes the struggle beyond the obvious physical clash between armed combatants. The virtual place of conflict is within the human mind.⁸⁰ However, in an intervention activity to counter irregular threats, this virtual territory is dominant. Many traditional references on counterinsurgency theory acknowledge the centrality of the population to the problem, even to the point of calling the population the center of gravity. Many of these same references go on to talk about “winning hearts and minds” as a strategy for working with the population to defeat an insurgency. While this theory is valid, it remains insufficiently sophisticated to fully appreciate the situation and to ultimately base a successful strategy. Insurgency and counterinsurgency (if it is to be successful) both function chiefly at the psychological or intellectual level. The *information* line of operations is the line that most directly acknowledges the virtual domain and its direct relevance in campaign design. Planners

must use this understanding to weave the harmonic use of information into their practice of operational art.

Context

Experience in operations to counter irregular threats can bring frustration—and even futility if participants among the intervention force do not have a relatively sophisticated appreciation of the environment as it exists in the minds of the indigenous actors. This mental environment minimally includes the minds of factions among the population, government leaders, and insurgent activists. Small wars, including counterinsurgencies, usually involve a struggle of ideas and a grappling for power and preeminence. Whether they are politically, socially, or exclusively ideologically motivated, a group is struggling for a change to the existing social order, usually the prevailing authority of government: regionally, nationally, or even trans-nationally. In fact, the intervention force itself can quickly become the authority against which various actors, indigenous and non-state, will opt to focus their attention. An understanding of these observations provides a springboard for working effectively in this line of operations to counter irregular threats.

The terms Information Operations (IO) and Information Warfare (IW) have been used so colloquially and have been so expanded in application that they occasionally cause confusion. This line of operation, *information*, involves operations that are particularly focused on the virtual domain, but they are not deliberate deception operations as may be practiced in the combat line of operations. Deliberate deception is usually discovered in

the end and when it is, this deliberate deception undercuts the value of good info ops.

The Problem

Acknowledging the preeminence of the virtual domain and the sophistication of comprehension required to successfully function in this domain, demands that this issue receive prominent attention. However, information operations as they are normally practiced in the military are usually an afterthought. They are often planned and executed by a separate staff than other operations in a manner that is incongruent with these other operations, and this tendency can only cause a disjointed, inappropriate result. In some cases, information operations activities may work cross-purposes with grand campaign design. In practice, a campaign that allows this to happen may never succeed. The adversary protagonists, if they are to be successful, will work masterfully in this line of operation. No amount of military combat force applied by the intervention force will prove singularly decisive in this environment. As paradoxical as it may sound, the application of direct military force of a kinetic nature has decided limitations, and may in some cases de-legitimize the intervention effort in the minds of the indigenous population.

Military leaders spend a great deal of time thinking about the enemy. To be successful in an intervention like a counterinsurgency campaign, military leaders need to see the struggle holistically to the extent that they understand it and are able to successfully function in the associated chaotic environment—of which the adversary is one component. What often follows from this is a reactive or defensive strategy in which the military focuses on killing

insurgent combatants without ever appreciating the insurgent perspective on the contest. Regardless of what message the intervention force tries to overtly communicate, if the principal actions are overwhelmingly focused on eliminating insurgent actors (that is, purely military actions), the insurgents will probably be able to win the war of ideas—even to use intervention force activities as evidence that the occupying force is working against the will of the people.

The Central Idea

A military force that engages in an intervention activity does not actually “win” a fight against an insurgency. That is, the military arm of the intervention force does not by itself defeat an insurgency in the traditional military meaning--and certainly not without working in the other lines of operation. The counterinsurgent simply cannot win by the application of military force alone. Remember that the insurgent “...lives and dies for a popular cause drawing unity, strength, and attraction from its appeal.”⁸¹ This type of warfare has such a dominant social and political aspect, that the counterinsurgent may find himself fighting against something as abstract as a cause, which is something very difficult to do indeed. Countering irregular threats involves first acknowledging the authority of the people in self-determination.⁸² For an insurgency to take hold, flourish, and perpetuate there must be some acceptance or agreement by the population beyond the critical mass of insurgent activists. That does not mean that the general population supports an insurgency directly. Most are probably neutral (at best) in the struggle between the insurgents and the indigenous government—and the intervention force, which usually sides with the indigenous government. However, the

people can choose to give their allegiance to either side in the struggle. Ultimately, an intervention force does not “win” at all in the conventional sense—but rather it helps the indigenous government (if there is one) and the population to outgrow the insurgency.

The information line of operations is principally aimed at working in the virtual domain to influence the population positively, through upright conduct and rhetorical persuasion. This form of influence is more akin to marketing than propaganda. Acknowledging that actions speak louder than words, rectitude in all behavior is very much a part of this line of operation.⁸³ All Marines need a savvy appreciation for the role they play in the information line of operations, including every aspect of their specific deeds and deportment. In this way, information becomes an extension of intervention force actions. Marine planners, showing an appreciation for the importance of rectitude in the comportment of the force, must work this aspect into campaign design. In an ideal world, the Marines would desire to seize the moral “high ground.” Since that is often difficult as an occupying force, the next best thing is to help the indigenous government to deny the insurgent activists the moral upper hand. This was the successful approach used in both the Huk Rebellion in the Philippines with President Ramon Magsaysay and in El Salvador with President Jose Napoleon Duarte. Conversely, if the actions of the indigenous government or of the Marines in the intervention force undermine the message that planners are trying to communicate, the insurgents can very easily obtain the advantage and this represents an important form of initiative—more important than the specific number of adversary combatants.

One of the principal reasons why operations in the information domain are so important is that in intervention campaigns such as counterinsurgency, tactical actions and strategic impact virtually fuse. A clear division between the levels of war simply does not exist in a counterinsurgency campaign, and this poses unique challenges for the intervention force. The actions of a small unit may influence (positively or negatively) the overall endeavor.

There should be no such thing as “information operators”—at least not in the sense that any such persons might be in any way distinguished or function distinctly from the rest of the campaign planners. Planners who work them all, and keep them in harmonic balance, must integrate all the lines of operation in the campaign plan. Coherence can only come from operations that are conceived together as a functioning element of the same whole. Like the other lines of operation—perhaps even more prominently—the information line of operations must be a direct descendant from national or coalition political objectives for the intervention activity. Working in this line of operations, there are a few basic questions we should ask ourselves during planning. What does the U.S. government want? What do we want the indigenous people to do (recognizing that there may be factions that we work with separately)? What do we want insurgent activists to do? What is the relationship of the indigenous government (if there really is one) vis-à-vis the first two questions?

The virtual domain is not some separate form of combat, and viewing it as such will only contribute to the problem. Even rhetoric from leaders that directs subordinates to “cloak” or wrap their activities in information operations may tend to confuse the issue of working in the

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information line to the degree that nothing productive may come of the effort—particularly if this leads subordinate planners to practice some form of deceptive propaganda.

Knowledge of Opposition Actors

Work in the information line of operations is not conducted in a static, benign environment in which one side acts on another inert actor but rather in environment characterized by a clash of ideology with at least two elements (and perhaps more) struggling and adapting constantly. The intervention force should never underestimate the effectiveness of the opposition in their ability to influence the populace with the opposition message. Adherence to the status quo may not be a strong message. Internal contradictions exist in nearly every society, and in general, the more blatant these internal contradictions are the more people will feel justified in their discontent. An opposition entity that comes in and makes promises that address social, religious, economic or political ills may find purchase with its rhetoric. Sometimes the opposition will not proffer a positive alternative to the indigenous government's position, but merely point out the problems with the current order (and the contradictions). Even the very presence of the intervention force can in some cases, be used by the opposition as fuel for their information campaign. Foreign influence is often a concern for indigenous peoples, particularly if it seems to interfere with self-determination.

The intervention force and the indigenous government must find a way to counter the opposition's communications (the defense) and offer rhetoric of their

own that gives the population what they consider a viable substitute for the insurgent's voice (the offense). To effectively counter the adversary's information campaign, the intervention force should work diligently to anticipate and 'wargame' the opposition's likely actions and their reactions to the intervention force's work. A wise man once observed that when involved in small wars, when a leader wakes up in the morning, he should consider what the opposition expects him to do—then do something else. While this is certainly true for combat operations, it is even truer for work in the information line of operations. The idea position is to have the opposition constantly reacting to your activities. Of course occasionally, even in the best situation, you will have to react—that is to counter an opposition message. However, to the degree that you can, you should get out ahead of the opposition with your message with communication that resonates with the population with whom you are working.

Basis for an Approach to Countering Irregular Threats

Communicating the right message is not something that will initially come naturally for the Marines of the intervention force because the local nuance is so distinct, and the challenges do not really become obvious until the Marines are baptized in the environment of the nation. For instance, Marines might desire to induce insurgents to surrender, but even the word "surrender" holds negative emotional connotations. Ramon Magsaysay, who led his nation's successful counterinsurgency against the Huk Rebellion, carefully avoided the word "surrender" in his communications regarding amnesty for insurgent

combatants. “What is essential is that the guerrillas stop fighting, not that they abase themselves.”⁸⁴

Whenever practical and prudent try to recruit the local inhabitants to get the message out. If the Marine Corps achieves a genuine partnership with host nation authorities and/or people, then we can together recruit local people. The message is much more convincing if it comes from a local source. Once local inhabitants are broadcasting your message, your chances of success will increase exponentially. How will you know when you are having success in this line of operation? Of course that will depend on many factors including the campaign design, but one sure way to tell is if you start getting a substantial increase in voluntary, spontaneous intelligence reports from local sources.⁸⁵

Consider that work in the information line should take place at multiple levels within the organization of the intervention force. Certainly there must be a unifying theme, but the issues that a battalion commander needs to talk to are often quite different than something that emanates from the National Command Authority or from the Ambassador’s office. Planners need to learn to work within the unifying theme, but must be afforded the natural flexibility to address the issues pertinent to their area of responsibility—with a message that shows a refined understanding of their audience. This is akin to marketing, and to achieve effective market penetration, the message must be relevant for the culture or even micro-culture unique to a particular area or people group.

Implications for Campaign Design and Execution

The campaign design may have various specific objectives for this line of operation, but there are a few goals that seem to apply generally:

1. Obtain some measure of understanding or even approval for activities of the intervention force directed against the insurgency that might affect the population (such as identification cards, curfews, or census taking).
2. Dissociate or isolate the insurgent from the rest of the population.
3. Gain some level of commitment or at least neutrality from those who might be sympathetic to the cause of the intervention force.⁸⁶
4. Promote understanding between the intervention force and the people and government of the host nation regarding needs, actions, goals, and results.

Conclusion

The virtual domain could, in the long run, be the only decisive domain for an intervention campaign. Unfortunately, it is seldom afforded the sort of deliberate attention that it rightly deserves and requires. More than the other lines of operation, success in this line has an undeniable relationship to success in each of the other lines. In fact, any success in the other lines should be

manifested (and communicated) in this line. However, as tempting as it may be to create a separate information operations campaign plan, that should not be allowed to happen. There is only one campaign plan, and information operations should not exist apart from it. Work in the information operations line is inextricably tied to the work in the other lines—and should be in harmony with the specific activities in the other lines.

The real job of mentally separating the insurgent and his ideology from the people falls to this line, and understanding the environment is a critical first step in the process. A comprehensive and sophisticated approach will be required and leaders must come to the intervention activity well prepared to work with all diligence in this line and to ensure its centrality in the design process. The commander himself must give this his personal consideration and its functions should fall in the mainstream of attention for the intervention force more broadly. Intervention activities take place amongst the people and the people are usually the center of gravity for both an insurgency and the counterinsurgency. In this environment, the only way to succeed as an intervention force is to break the intellectual bond that the insurgent has formed with the people, and work in the information operations line is the manner in which to do this.

Implications for Force Development

While the question of what we must do to realize the capability to successfully work in this line of operation is a complex one that will ultimately require a significant amount of analysis, there are some rather straightforward observations we can make up front. The biggest area for development is in the education of our leaders at all

levels. Even junior leaders must have an appreciation for the role they and their lads will play this line of operation, and the Program of Instruction at every formal school should reflect attention to this line. Obviously, the focus and treatment will change as Marine leaders become more senior and get more into the complex functions and theory of campaign design. More than education alone, this line of operation must be practiced in training among operating force units, preferably in dynamic, ambiguous, and cerebrally challenging scenarios. A mobile training team with some particular competency in training planners how to work effectively in this line will probably be required.

The public affairs military occupational specialty has been the primary domain for officers practicing this line of operation, but in has not become a mainstream activity for the primary staff. To be successful, the public affairs officer should become a central player on the primary staff. We need to train these officers for the challenges they will face working in this virtual domain.

The Marine Corps does not currently have any PSYOPS specialists—in the manner that the US Army does. However, many of the particular functions these trained professionals are able to provide are completely in line with the requirements for successful operations in an intervention campaign generally and with the information operations line in particular. Accordingly, the Marine Corps should strongly consider creating this capability, and making it an organic part of the active component force. This capability should exist wherever a unit anticipates operating with relative command autonomy—usually down to the Marine Expeditionary Brigade. The Marine Expeditionary Unit may need this capability, depending on the operating environment they anticipate.

Some Considerations for Planners

- Publicize insurgent mistakes.
- Be willing to admit your mistakes (or mistakes perceived by the people) and explain these mistakes—including mistakes committed by the intervention force or the host nation government.
- Highlight host nation government successes. You need some rapid results to broadcast. However, do not delay communications until you have a result. Start communications right away and let people know what you are doing and why you are doing it.
- Shape expectations of the populace (sometimes people expect too much too soon, and when the government or intervention force is slow to deliver, the people can become disgruntled).
- Try to refrain from referring to (or even considering) your area of responsibility as a “battlespace” lest it continue to be one. In a conflict amongst the people, terms like *battlefield* and *battlespace* obfuscate the criticality of a symphonic approach and can even misrepresent the real primacy of political objectives in an intervention effort aimed at peace and stability. Moreover, rhetoric has an effect on all involved—even your own people. If you speak of a battlespace, your people will see it that way, and may have difficulty with a holistic approach that transcends kinetic military actions.
- Give the people some way and means of voicing their opinions and grievances—even if that activity appears at first to cause short-term friction with ongoing efforts. This applies not just to the formal political process, but even more so to the informal, local issues (where government actually “touches” the people).

*You need a feedback loop from population to government to ensure needs are identified and to align perceptions.*⁸⁷

- Recognize that various factions are communicating amongst themselves, often working to create alliances of convenience (which usually works to the detriment of the government and/or coalition). Seek out communications with the various factions, as you are able to identify them, and work to prevent unhealthy alliances (as defined from your perspective). Treat the factions as singular entities.
- Conduct audience analysis (ongoing task) and seek to identify key personnel that influence the people at the local, regional and national levels. Seek to determine with great specificity the relevant *lines of loyalty* of a population.
- Take a census as soon as is practicable. Better yet, help the local government to do this (even if it means hiring census takers).
- Assist the government in the production and distribution of identification cards. Obviously, this is an effort to register all citizens—or at least those beyond a pre-determined age. Identification cards may later help you track movement of people which can be useful in catching illicit activity.
- Go the extra mile in the professional treatment of detainees—even if that means they have a standard of existence on par with your Soldiers and Marines. Arrange for local host nation leaders to visit your detention facility. Show them around. If practicable, consider allowing them to speak to some detainees. Likewise, if local news media visit your detention facility, allow them as much access as is prudent (give them a guided tour and explain your procedures). When someone is captured, ensure that Soldiers and

Marines treat the captured persons professionally throughout the handling process until those persons are turned over to the detention facility personnel.

- If you can infiltrate havens of discontent, such as universities, by using informants, by all means do so.
- As soon as possible (assuming you are able), open up a dialogue with the opposition. This does not equate to “negotiating with terrorists” but rather an attempt to open the door to mutual understanding. You may find no common ground and the enmity may be such that nothing specifically or directly will come of the dialogue. However, if you are talking, you are taking the most positive approach—and you may learn something. Do not rely on the host nation to do this. Even though you are working through them, you need (if possible) to have direct discourse with the opposition, even when he is committing seemingly unconscionable acts. You may want to adopt a, “We understand why you fight” mentality—may even want to state this to the insurgent.
- Work to convince leadership among the insurgency that the time for resistance has ended, that indeed there are other ways to accomplish what they desire.
- Consider that an “operational level” issue for us may be a “strategic level” issue for the host nation.
- Take the adversary’s demands and turn them on the adversary. The adversary may seek to profit from internal contractions (a technique the Communists used to some effect). Identify these honestly, and work with the host nation to resolve them where possible—then communicate any success as a sign of improvement.
- Where possible, communicate the message that “the whole world is coming to help you.” In other words, help the people to understand that they are not alone

in their struggle and that the intervention force is robust and persistent and will help them through their present difficulty.

- When you start receiving voluntary intelligence tips on insurgent activity, this can be an extremely positive sign. However, consider that it could also be a case of one tribe or entity manipulating a response from you to harm another tribe or entity with whom they are at odds.
- There is a certain local nature to legitimacy. That is, what passes for legitimacy varies by location. Moreover, it is not a static thing. It changes over time.
- Learn the insurgent's messages or narratives (organizational scheme expressed in story form) and form counter-messages and counter-narratives. The idea is to counter the insurgent's ideology and for that you must understand the specific culture in relationship to the greater indigenous society.
- From John Hershey's Major Victor Joppolo: "Always be accessible to the public. Don't play favorites. Speak Italian whenever possible. Don't lose your temper. When plans fall down, improvise..."⁸⁸

Part III, Annexes

ANNEX A

Countering Irregular Threats—Historical Examples

The United States and other western nations have a rich history of involvement in operations against irregular threats. Many important lessons can be drawn from the study of these episodes of intervention in small wars. Perhaps the chief lesson centers around the importance of operations on an expanded operational continuum. In case after case, to be successful, the military intervention force worked in lines of operation (though they may not have called it that) beyond purely kinetic combat operations. Also, in these intervention episodes, the participants seemed to deliberately blur the lines between types of operations. That is, the military became comfortable working with other agencies and even performed jobs that would not be associated with a traditional military mission. These historical examples will show both some similarities and very notable differences. Small wars are different from each other; at least to the extent that no solutions can be “templated” and doctrine must be written with great flexibility in mind. History can help men understand the character of a conflict by providing context and it can help men prepare for future challenges by showing what worked (or failed to work) in the past.

The Philippine Insurrection

In 1898, the United States acquired the Philippine islands in the aftermath of the Spanish American War. President

McKinley dispatched the U.S. military to the Philippines to seize control of the Philippine islands. Unfortunately, after throwing off the Spanish colonial authority, the Filipinos were not generally in favor of the idea of becoming an American colony and some elites within the country led an insurrection against American occupation. Then as now, the military began what they initially saw as a traditional military operation. However, President McKinley's decision to adopt an assimilation policy in the Philippines (and to assign this role to the US military) forced army officers to devote at least as much attention to civic projects, public works, government, and education as they would to military operations.⁸⁹

*The army's approach to the problem was notable for its diversity, including widespread civil affairs efforts, excellent propaganda, well-planned and executed military operations, effective isolation of the guerrilla, protection of the population, and the involvement of the inhabitants in programs designed for their own protection and the eventual establishment of peace.*⁹⁰

Major General Elwell S. Otis, the first commander of the 8th Corps in the Philippines, had responsibility for the land campaign. "From the beginning he recognized the importance of civil as well as military priorities and the necessity of conciliating the Filipino population."⁹¹ Major General Arthur MacArthur succeeded him and increased the focus on building capacity for the Filipinos to provide for their own governance and ultimate security. The military operations were never decisive on their own, but over time, these two commanders wove effective military operations into the fabric of counterinsurgency and what we would now call nation-building activities. They wore down the insurgents, cut off their re-supply, and chased them into the most remote, rural parts of the

islands (separating them from the populace). Meanwhile, they built infrastructure, formed and trained Filipino police and military forces, established schools and rule of law. Eventually, the military caught up with and captured the leader of the insurgency. By that time, the population had begun to see the advantages of aligning themselves with the Americans and the insurrection essentially came to an end. Perhaps better than other historical references, the Philippine counterinsurgency clearly exemplifies an intervention force working in all six lines of operation concurrently.

USMC Small Wars

During the period immediately prior to WW I and between WW I and WW II, the Marine Corps was engaged in what are now referred to as constabulary operations. Marines were extensively involved in counterinsurgent operations in places such as Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua, and that involvement played a role in influencing young Marine leaders in the intricacies of fighting insurgents.⁹² Many of these small wars operations were akin to constabulary duty. The Marine Corps learned how to work effectively with indigenous quasi-military forces and among indigenous peoples. From this experience the Marine Corps drew some of the lessons it used successfully in Vietnam. For instance, the Marine Corps' emphasis on small unit tactical excellence back in the 1920's made the Marines especially suitable for the types of conflict encountered in small wars. The Marines were comfortable working in small units in extremely remote locations with limited or vague guidance. That observation is not an indication that these operations were

executed in some disjointed, haphazard manner. On the contrary, the Marine leaders involved held a clear vision of success; a purpose, and worked according to that vision. They neither received nor required much in the way of oversight and management by their higher headquarters. In a true sense, the Marine Corps at that time had a small wars ethos.

The Malaya Insurrection

Malaya, a relatively small country of approximately 5.3 million people in the 1950's, was a British colony that experienced a Communist inspired insurrection. The insurgent's primary goal at the beginning of the conflict was to cause maximum disruption of the country's economy and administration.⁹³ In the words of General Richard L. Clutterbuck of the British army (who participated extensively in various phases of the intervention), the story of the British experience in Malaya consists of three parts (or phases): the defensive, in which they prevented the enemy from taking over and precluded the insurgency from escalating; the offensive, in which the insurgent's ability to win was broken; and the victory, in which the Communist insurgents were hunted down and destroyed and an independent Malaya was established. "The theme of the defensive phase was security. The theme of the offensive phase was intelligence—basic police intelligence at the insurgent's own grass roots level. The theme of the victory phase was government."⁹⁴ The British counterinsurgency effort was able to separate the insurgents from the people and wear them down by chasing them into remote jungle areas and occasionally killing them. Without the support of the people, the guerrillas found that their struggle had been

undermined.⁹⁵ The British, following the defeat of the insurrection, worked with the fledgling Malay government to help them build the capacity to govern. The process took some time because it involved educating and training a generation of leaders and developing the infrastructure on which to function. The military moved seamlessly from the purely military tasks to these new challenges. Some military men, such as General Clutterbuck, even stayed on in an advisory capacity for several years after the conflict ended.⁹⁶

The Huk Rebellion in the Philippines

While some experts in insurgency might give the impression that rebellions are somehow naturally bound to succeed, that is simply not the case. The counterinsurgency effort to put down the Huk Rebellion in the Philippines is one good example of how to wage a successful campaign. In that case, a former guerrilla fighter, Ramon Magsaysay, assumed the important post of Defense Minister at a critical time in the rebellion. Magsaysay had the benefit of having an American; Edward G. Lansdale, function as one of his advisors.⁹⁷ Magsaysay reorganized his army for the challenge of fighting the insurgency. He increased the professionalism and discipline of the army and in so doing, impressed upon his army the importance of abstaining from acts of military terrorism. He sent small units out into the jungle in more of a constabulary role to apply pressure to the Huk guerrillas by hunting them down in a piecemeal fashion. Most of the army he turned on to nation building activities like improving access to medical care, repairing roads and bridges, and helping peasants get their rice to market. Additionally, he petitioned the legislature to

grant the rebellion some of the reforms they were fighting for in exchange for laying down their arms.⁹⁸ His two-pronged approach of removing the moral energy from the insurrection while isolating and eliminating chief antagonists proved effective, and the rebellion was ultimately put down.

The Algerian Insurrection

The insurgents in Algeria forced the French army to fight essentially two different wars. On one hand, due to the physical security threat, they challenged the French military to maintain stability. This forced the French military to bring in a large conventional force and to garrison key populated areas. These forces were largely immobilized. The other conflict was predominantly an information war characterized by psychological actions by the Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) (and reactions by the French).⁹⁹ Ultimately the French counterinsurgency effort was tactically successful in terms of isolating the insurgents from re-supply and reinforcement (border control), bringing security to key infrastructure and populated areas, and in wearing the insurgents down by hunting down insurgent fighters. Unfortunately, by the time this eventually occurred, France had also reached a political culminating point. President de Galle agreed to a peace accord that granted Algeria its independence from France in 1962. There are many lessons to be learned here, both at the tactical level, and at the strategic level. The French use of both small, mobile forces and larger, stationary forces is a model for other counterinsurgency efforts. However, perhaps the most important lesson is that the levels of war are inextricably linked (or should be) and that a tactical

victory is hollow without the strategic vision and political will to capitalize upon it.

Vietnam

Historically, the war in Vietnam has generally been considered a failure, and therefore something to be avoided. However, like every real life conflict, there are plenty of good and bad lessons to learn from the intervention effort. Vietnam showed that the American military's predilection for mounting large-scale combat operations with large troop formations and a reliance on massive combined arms in order to dominate the enemy was not always appropriate. Like most small wars, the enemy seized on the advantages of using his asymmetry to his advantage and thereby precluded the U.S. military from being able to take full advantage of its enormous arsenal. Unfortunately, General Westmoreland, who held command on the ground there, never ceased to press for this type of army on army engagements—even though the enemy simply was not operating according to that rule set. The Viet Cong were not playing the game that way and they largely controlled the tempo of the encounters with both South Vietnamese Government forces and U.S. military forces.¹⁰⁰

From our earliest involvement in Indochina in the 1950s, the American military establishment demonstrated a misunderstanding of the nature of the threat. The American Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), responsible for the training and equipping of South Vietnam's Army, modeled the indigenous forces after the U.S. Army. They were trained and equipped to conduct large-scale conventional maneuvers, which included

armor and mechanized operations. This approach seemed to be shaped more by the recent U.S. experience in Korea than by the eight-year struggle the French had recently lost against Vietminh guerrillas. From 1965-1968 General William Westmoreland's directed an American approach that can best be described as attrition warfare. The United States took the war over from the South Vietnamese and marginalized them. The military strategy relied on large-scale search and destroy missions whose success was measured in terms of a body count. In contrast, the Marines tried some creative forms of combat to include the Combined Action Program, something that grew from their experience in the "banana wars" during the 1920's and 1930's. Unfortunately, the Marines could not convince the senior-most American military leadership (who generally maintained a "conventional mindset") to adopt or even support this program.

Another true success story from the Vietnam Conflict was the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program. This enlightened endeavor involved State Department and military personnel as well as some civilian experts in fields as diverse as agriculture, medicine, and construction. The director of the CORDS program, Mr. Robert Komer, focused it on pacification, upgrading the South Vietnamese military forces, and reinforcing the ARVN so that they could assume a greater role in the actual fighting.¹⁰¹ A particularly important lesson from the Vietnam experience was the effectiveness, and ultimately the necessity, of the military working with other government agencies. The inter-agency functionality as noted in the CORDS example proved vital to the success of the pacification campaign. Where other purely military efforts failed to bring a long-term stability or to counter the communist insurgency, the inter-agency activities brought about a measure of

stability, moral legitimacy, and some indigenous capacity to South Vietnam and its government forces. Also, the State Department was able to apply some leverage with the South Vietnamese government during the conduct of this program to press for positive reforms.¹⁰²

El Salvador

The rebellion in El Salvador was a near classic case of insurgency and counterinsurgency. The people were aroused to the point of insurrection by a relatively small group of elites. As usually occurs in a case such as this, the regime reacts inappropriately—which is generally what initially happened in El Salvador. However, something rather unusual occurred in this case. The regime listened to the issues that the people voiced as their reasons for rebellion. The regime made sweeping changes, changes that irked the conservatives among the non-rebelling elite. Interestingly, the changes did not go far enough for the liberal elites who had incited the rebellion in the first place. The changes met the two groups in the middle. Unfortunately for the rebellion, the primary catalytic agents for insurrection no longer existed. The population started to lose interest. Of course the insurgency continued, but without the real support of the populace. The Salvadorian military was able to win most tactical engagements in the field and Duarte ensured that his military cleaned up their civil rights abuses. This rectification of civil rights abuses had the distinctly positive effect of garnering U.S. support as well as the support of the Salvadorian populace. Ultimately, the insurgency lost its energy and languished to the point that it was no longer a genuine threat to the country's stability. President Jose Napoleon Duarte proved to be particularly

insightful when he described the fronts as being political, economic, social, psychological, informational and diplomatic, intelligence, and military.¹⁰³ No doubt his level of understanding helped him make the measured concessions to the rebellion that removed the chief reasons for the revolt. The points here are that El Salvador proved to be a success story, but it was not won through the dominant use of military force (though military force was used extensively to fight the guerrilla forces). El Salvador demonstrated the importance of relying on all the lines of operation and it showed how the U.S. as a third party, can intervene effectively. Looking at the El Salvador example, Marine leaders can see that there are likely to be different levels of intervention for which to plan. Not every instance will demand an enormous force to be on the ground. Sometimes smaller advisor teams may be all that is required.

Part III, Annexes

ANNEX B

Understanding the Problem: Assessment

Once the purpose for an intervention is clear, the first step in design is to begin developing a sophisticated understanding of the environment of the intervention. Understanding the problem is one of the first aspects of this environmental understanding. The questions listed below are aimed at helping to guide intervention force planners in the initial problem assessment as well as the maintenance of that assessment throughout the duration of the intervention.¹⁰⁴

1. Grievances:

- a. Has the general population, or an identifiable sub-group of the population, articulated a list of grievances against the government? (If so, what are they?)
- b. Have the insurgents stated any grievances against the government?
- c. What does the host nation government believe the grievances of the population and/or the insurgents to be?
- d. What are the differences between the grievances articulated by the government and the population (or population sub-group such as a particular region, class of people, or religious sect)?
- e. Has the government made good faith efforts to address any of the population's articulated (or otherwise identifiable) grievances?

2. Characteristics:

- a. What primary characteristics identify the population of the host nation? How homogenous is the society and can you discern differences in the population? Might these differences lead to factions?
- b. Does the insurgency have distinct characteristics or elements that distinguish members from the general populace?
- c. Does the host nation government (assuming one exists) have characteristics that define its leaders?
- d. Are the characteristics of the population and the government profound or even important?

3. Catalyst:

A catalyst can be either the insurgent leadership itself or the cause the insurgents advance. Normally this catalyst must be dropped into a chemical solution (environment) that has the right properties for reaction, and requires only the addition of an accelerant in order to begin the reaction. Identifying the catalyst(s) can help with understanding how to solve the problem.

- a. Are the insurgent leaders themselves the charismatic lightning rod for a developing insurrection (in this they actually represent or personify the cause)—or is their approach more one of simply proclaiming a cause (a populist approach)?

- b. What does the insurgency leadership desire to accomplish? Do they have an identifiable end-state?
- c. Does the leadership of the insurgency have any clear objectives (articulated or unarticulated)? Do these objectives align with the grievances noted among the population?

4. Organization of the insurgency:

- a. Does the insurgency have an identifiable structure—and what is that structure?
- b. Is there more than one insurgency? If so, do these multiple insurgencies exist in the same geographical area, and what is their relationship to each other?
- c. How is the insurgency organized? That is, does it have a cellular structure or a more bureaucratic or hierarchical structure? Is it centralized or relatively de-centralized?
- d. How long has the insurgency been active? (This gets to the maturity of the insurgency movement and its developmental stage.)
- e. Does the/an insurgency actually control any geographical area(s) or territories? Does it have identifiable boundaries?
- f. How well armed and equipped is the insurgency?
- g. How well funded is the insurgency?
- h. Has the insurgency attempted to form alliances with other organizations (i.e., other countries' governments, drug or crime cartels, etc.)

5. Support to the insurgency:

- a. Is the insurgency movement receiving an appreciable level of external material support?
- b. To what extent is the insurgency drawing on popular (local) support?
- c. Who exactly among the population is supporting the insurgency (can you identify this element)?
- d. Is support to the insurgency from internal sources rendered voluntarily or is it coerced?
- e. What influence (if any) does geography of societal factors have on support?

6. Legitimacy:

Insurgencies do not always require active support from the population—at least not in the initial stages. However, there are few cases of successful insurgencies that do not have (or develop) some measure of support from the populace and to do this the insurgency has to have some level of legitimacy (as defined by the local populace).

- a. What efforts has the leadership of the insurgency made to build legitimacy with the local populace?
- b. Is the insurgency attempting to undermine the legitimacy of the government?
- c. Once an intervention effort begins, is the insurgency making an active effort to undermine the legitimacy of the intervention force?

7. History:

- a. How (and when) did the insurgency originate (and among what groups)?

- b. Has the government ever enjoyed control over the areas in which the insurgency is operating?
- c. Have there been other insurgencies in this region before and what if any relationship exists between those previous insurgencies and the current one(s)?

Executive Summary

¹ *Warfighting*, Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1, p.3

² We use the term Lines of Operation in this concept in the thematic sense.

³ Most recently these lines of operations were identified in an article written by Major General Peter Chiarelli and Major Patrick Michaelis titled “Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full Spectrum Operations”, *Military Review*, July-August 2005. But these lines were also pulled from other historical sources from our research of the following wars: Philippine Insurrection (1898-1902), Banana Wars (1915-1934), Malayan Insurrection (1948-1960), Algeria, Vietnam, El Salvador, etc.

Part 1 – The Concept

⁴ MCDP 1, *Warfighting*, (Washington, DC: United States Marine Corps, June 1997) p. 3.

⁵ *Ibid*, p.3

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 85

⁷ Antulio Echevarria, “The Trouble With History,” (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Quarterly: Parameters, Summer 2005), p.138

⁸ Analogy provided by Dr. Echevarria during an interview conducted on 20 September 2005.

⁹ Michael Howard, *Clausewitz*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.51.

¹⁰ Bernard Fall, “The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency,” (Newport, RI: Naval War College Review, 1965), p.1.

¹¹ Robert Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1975), p.xiii.

¹² MCDP 1, p. 3.

¹³ Research American military history during: Gen Nathanael Greene’s campaigns of the Revolutionary War, Indian Wars (Colonial period through late 1800s), the Philippine Insurrection 1899-1902, Banana Wars,

Vietnam, Somalia. This list is an exemplar and not all-inclusive.

¹⁴ Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, (London, England: Faber and Faber, 1971), and p.6.

¹⁵ Bard O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism*, (Dulles, Virginia: Brassey's Inc, 1990), p. 13.

¹⁶ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, (St. Petersburg, Fla: Hailer Publishing, 2005), p.63.

¹⁷ Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 13.

¹⁸ Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1961)

¹⁹ Kitson, p. 144.

²⁰ General Sir Rupert Smith, "*The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*," (United Kingdom: Allen Lane, Sept 2005.).

²¹ Max G. Manwaring, "The Inescapable Global Security Arena" (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2002), p. 3.

²² Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, *Conducting a Conflict Assessment: A Framework for Strategy and Program Development*, (Washington, DC: U. S. Agency for International Development, 2004), p.12.

²³ Stephen D. Krasner and Carlos Pascual, "Addressing State Failure," (New York, NY: Foreign Affairs Magazine, July/August 2005)

²⁴ LtCol David Kilcullen, "Countering Global Insurgency," (Small Wars Journal web site, 30 November 2004), p.10

²⁵ Ibid. P.10

²⁶ This list is was developed from input provided by select participants in the Joint Urban Warrior 2005 Wargame, informed by US, British and Australian doctrine as well as the writings of Kitson, Thompson, Galula and Manwaring.

²⁷ This concept uses the term "lines of operation" in the thematic sense.

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²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Insight provided by Ambassador Edwin Corr, telephonically, 4 Oct 2005.

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³² Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, (England: Allen Lane, 2005), p. 3.

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⁵³ General Sir Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War In The Modern World*, (London, England, Penguin Books, Ltd, 2005), p. 278

⁵⁴ This observation is reflected in the writings of various military theorists, most notably Mao. See Bard O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare*, Brassey's Inc., Dulles, VA 1991, p. 35-36

⁵⁵ V. K. Anand, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency: a Study of Modern Guerilla Warfare*, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi, Deep and Deep Publications, 1981, p. 149

⁵⁶ Ariel E. Levite and Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, "The Case for Discriminate Force", *Survival*, vol 44, Nov 1, 2002, Social Sciences Module pg. 81

⁵⁷ Anthony James Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: the History and Politics of Counterinsurgency*, (2004) p. 215

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⁵⁹ *Small Wars Manual*, U.S. Marine Corps, (Government Printing Office, 1940), SWM 12-3.

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⁷⁸ This idea was proffered in respect to Humanitarian Assistance specifically, but it applies more broadly to an intervention campaign aimed at stability. Stephanie A. Blair, Dana Eyre, Bernard Salome, and James Wasserstrom, “Forging a Viable Peace: Developing a Legitimate Political Economy,” *The Quest for a Viable Peace: International Intervention and Strategies for Conflict Transformation*, edited by Jock Covey, Michael J. Dziedzic, and Leonard R. Hawley, (Washington DC, United States Institute for Peace, 2005), p. 225.

⁷⁹ Anthony James Joes, “Isolating the Belligerents: A Key to Success in the Post-Counterinsurgency Era”, from *Beyond Declaring Victory and Coming Home: The Challenges of Peace and Stability Operations*, edited by Max G. Manwaring and Anthony James Joes, 2000, p. 55-56

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⁸² Thomas Paine in his *Rights of Man* argued the authority of the people to establish their constitution, which he saw as a thing antecedent to the actual government. Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, (Minneola, NY, Dover Publications, Inc, 1999, first published 1791), p. 130

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- ⁹² Larry Cable, *Conflict of Myths: The Development of American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and the Vietnam War*, (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1986), p. 96.
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- ¹⁰⁰ Dr. John Waghelstein pointed out this issue of the guerrilla forces controlling tempo.
- ¹⁰¹ Andrew Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 187.
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- ¹⁰⁴ This list of questions was derived almost exclusively from a Naval War College student tool authored by Colonel John D. Waghelstein, USA (Ret.) and Dr. Donald Chisholm dated February 2006 (NWC 3099). Colonel

Waghelstein has over seven years of counterinsurgency related combat experience including Vietnam and El Salvador and has invested his entire professional life studying counterinsurgency.