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HISTORICAL LESSONS IN CAMPAIGN DESIGN FOR IRREGULAR WARFARE

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JCSP 40	PCEMI 40
Exercise *Solo Flight*	**Exercice *Solo Flight***
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SOLO FLIGHT – HISTORICAL LESSONS IN CAMPAIGN DESIGN FOR IRREGULAR WARFARE

By Major Paul Pembroke

I have a very bad feeling about this.

- Luke Skywalker, Star Wars Episode IV "A New Hope"

INTRODUCTION

The term Irregular Warfare is popular again and is synonymous with the wars of the early 21st century. The military strength of western nations has been negated through the use of assymetric approaches by a weaker enemy. Theorists postulate that the future of warfare is irregular as no enemy is likely to directly confront the military might of the West, yet despite this recent resurgence of interest, there is nothing new about Irregular Warfare. The Ancient Greek Historian Thucydides records how the Athenian General Pericles used an assymetric strategy to negate the invincible armies of Sparta during the Peloponnesian War from 431 to 404 BC.[1]

The thesis of this paper posits that history provides many lessons that can be used to design campaigns for success in future Irregular Warfare, however, unless the desired end state supports the political object and this matches the "kind" of war being fought, ultimate victory is unlikely. Four sections will be used to prove this thesis; firstly, the writings of Clausewitz will be examined to show the importance of understanding the political object of war and how this links to the "kind" of war being fought. Second, the future of war will be examined to show that Irregular Warfare is the likely form future war will take. Third, the writings of classical theorists will be examined to glean lessons from history on how to structure campaigns for success in Irregular Warfare, and finally,

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[1] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Charles Forster Smith (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1923).

these lessons will be incorporated into a prospective campaign design for future war. The campaign design will highlight the critical link between desired end state and political object, exposing the risk of not linking available means to desired ends through appropriate ways.

SECTION ONE – ON WAR

The great Prussian Military Theorist Carl von Clausewitz is the logical starting point for any study on war, and Irregular Warfare is no different. Clausewitz defines war as "… an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will."[2] Clausewitz states that the political object, which is the original motive for the war, will determine the military objective and the amount of effort required to achieve this. This leads to the conclusion that war is "… a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means."[3] War is the means to reach the goal defined by the political object.

Contemporary Military Theorist Antulio Echevarria notes that Clausewitz came to regard war in a "dualistic" sense, according to two different purposes. The first purpose has the goal to defeat the enemy completely, the second has the intention to arrive at a negotiated settlement.[4] Defeating the enemy completely involves matching your effort against his power of resistance; this "power of resistance" is the combination of "the total means at his disposal" and "the strength of his will".[5] Clausewitz is clear that war "… is not the action of a living force upon a lifeless mass… but always the collision of two

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[2] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Indexed ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984) 75.
[3] Ibid., 87.
[4] Antulio J. Echevarria II, *Clausewitz and Contemporary War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 71.
[5] Clausewitz, *On War*, 77.

living forces."[6] Rephrasing this, the opposition also has a purpose, and the ultimate aim

of defeating the respective enemy, applies to both sides. Achieving complete defeat of the

enemy will require the total means at your disposal and the strength of will to carry it to

its ultimate conclusion. Clausewitz does not use the phrase "total war" however this is an

appropriate term to describe the "kind" of war that seeks complete defeat of the enemy. If

circumstances rule out the complete defeat of the enemy, Clausewitz describes this

"kind" of war as "limited", or war to achieve a limited aim.[7] Clausewitz is adamant that

understanding the "kind" of war you are to engage or be engaged in is critical:

> "The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the
> statesman and commander have to make is to establish by that test [the
> motives and situation that gives rise to the war] the kind of war on which
> they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into,
> something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic
> questions and the most comprehensive."[8]

The first step in the study of war is to determine what "kind" of war is being

waged. If the political object is the complete defeat of the enemy, it is "total war", if the

object is any less than this, it is "limited war" and the limited aims must be clearly

defined and understood by both political and military commanders. Confusing "total war"

for "limited war" is the worst strategic error that can be made, as it risks applying

insufficient means to achieve the required ends.

Clausewitz addresses Irregular Warfare under the concept of "The People in

Arms".[9] Irregular Warfare is considered a separate "form" of war, utilizing different

tactics and equipment however it is not a different "kind" of war as it seeks the same

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[6] Ibid., 77.
[7] Ibid., 602.
[8] Ibid., pp88-89.
[9] Ibid., 479.

political object. The exact "form" Irregular Warfare takes is best defined by the US

Department of Defense:

> "Irregular Warfare (IW) is defined as a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will."[10]

What makes this "form" of war irregular is that the people are the focus of the

operations, and the strategic aim is to gain or maintain the support of that population.[11]

Insurgency and counterinsurgency are the core activities in Irregular Warfare and these

have been the focus when assessing lessons from history. Insurgency seeks to overthrow

and replace an established government or society while counterinsurgency aims to

prevent this.[12] The campaign design in Section Four of this paper has been undertaken

from the perspective of the counterinsurgent, fighting an insurgency in a host nation, as

this most closely matches the wars of the early 21st century.

SECTION TWO – THE FUTURE OF WAR IS IRREGULAR

Western militaries have proven themselves to be dominant in conventional war,

and it is highly unlikely they will be challenged to a future "force on force" conflict, on a

battlefield isolated from the population. In the 1980's Military Theorist Martin Van

Creveld predicted future war "… will not be waged by armies but by groups whom we

today call terrorists, guerillas, bandits, and robbers, but who will undoubtedly hit on more

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[10] Department of Defence, *Irregular Warfare: Joint Operating Concept Version 1.0* (Washington: US DOD, 11 September 2007) 6.
[11] Ibid., 9.
[12] Ibid., 10.

formal titles to describe themselves."[13] Van Creveld predicted that as states are

decreasingly less able to fight each other due to the spread of nuclear weapons, the cost

of high technology weapons and the superiority of western militaries, low-intensity

conflict is the likely alternative.[14] Military Theorist Thomas Hammes describes these

conflicts as fourth generation warfare (4GW), where adversaries use "… all available

networks – political, economic, social and military – to convince the enemy's political

decision makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the

perceived benefit."[15] Hammes demonstrates that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the al-

Aqsa Intifada and al-Qaeda, have proven that irregular forces fighting 4GW can stand up

to the most technological and capable militaries in the world.[16] Future counterinsurgents

must understand the importance of maintaining the political will to persist in their

campaigns and protect this will from enemy manipulation.

Counterinsurgency theorist David Kilcullen agrees with Hammes, and describes

modern insurgencies as a self-synchronizing swarm, where independent but cooperating

cells use the internet and social media to create mass movements without mass

organization.[17] The side that wins will be the one who "… best mobilizes and energizes

its global, regional and local supporter base – and prevents its enemy from doing

likewise."[18] Mao Zedong was one of the first insurgents to recognize the influence media

could have on the political level in an insurgency and this is now used as a tool by

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[13] Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991) 197.
[14] Ibid., 194.
[15] Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St Paul: Zenith Press, 2004) 208.
[16] Ibid., 208.
[17] David Kilcullen, "Counter-Insurgency Redux," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* (2006) 117.
[18] Ibid., 119.

insurgents and counterinsurgents alike. The US military recognizes that "… military actions will receive intense media scrutiny, a dynamic that potentially invests otherwise inconsequential actions with strategic importance."[19] Kilcullen suggests that even the most simple and straight forward action taken by a counterinsurgent has the potential to cause significant political impact. Perception and political outcomes need to be considered as more significant than battlefield success.[20] The management of information and promotion of the counterinsurgents message will therefore be crucial to success in future Irregular Warfare.

Complicating the western world's ability to wage Irregular Warfare is the democratic peace phenomenon. Historian Azar Gat demonstrates that modern affluent liberal democracies display an aversion to war, primarily due to increased education, wealth and access to information.[21] In the event a threat to their existence emerges, such as that posed by Imperial Germany in the 1940s, liberal democracies have proven to be efficient at mobilizing their economies and population for "total war" however must be convinced that there is no other way to escape it.[22] Supporting this, Hammes notes that if a democracy gets involved in warfare without its vital interests being at stake, it lacks the incentive for drawn out difficult conflict.[23] The West has shown a preference to support host nation forces in fighting irregular war without moving to a "total war" footing. The US identifies that failed and failing states are of particular concern in the future operating environment as these can lead to "ungoverned spaces", which can become safe havens for

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[19] Department of Defence, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020* (Washington: US DOD, 10 September 2012) 3.

[20] Kilcullen, *Counter-Insurgency Redux*, 111-130, 120.

[21] Azar Gat, *War in Human Civilization* (Croydon: Oxford University Press, 2006) 657.

[22] Ibid., 658.

[23] Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century*, 210.

groups involved in criminal and irregular activities.[24] In these spaces there is no existing government to be supported or lead a counterinsurgency and any substantial intervention, such as nation building, may be impossible to achieve without the complete commitment normally only found in a "total war" context. It is very unlikely an affluent liberal democracy will be able to achieve this unless their vital interests are threatened.

The future of warfare is irregular, and will be waged on physical and virtual battlefields under conditions that negate the strengths of western militaries. Liberal democracies are increasingly less likely to engage in "total war" unless an existential threat appears to challenge their way of life. Western militaries must be prepared to wage irregular wars amongst a civilian population that may be difficult to distinguish from the enemy. These wars may need to be fought in ungoverned spaces under the constant observation of global media where minor events can have a strategic impact. The winner will be the side who best mobilizes their supporter base for the extended duration of this form of war. Fortunately, Irregular Warfare is neither new, nor revolutionary, and history provides many lessons that can be used to successfully conduct irregular campaigns.

SECTION THREE – LESSONS IN CAMPAIGN DESIGN FROM CLASSICAL THEORISTS

No irregular war is the same, however, they have common characteristics that can aid in the design of future campaigns. Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap, arguably the successful practitioner of Irregular Warfare in the 20th century, once stated "My

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[24] Department of Defence, *Irregular Warfare: Countering Irregular Threats Joint Operating Concept (JOC) V2.0* (Washington: US DOD, 17 May 2010) 17.

fighting gospel is T.E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. I am never without it."[25] The

classical insurgents will be the starting point for this study; beginning with Lawrence and

insurgent strategy, moving to the communist insurgencies of Mao and Giap and finishing

with the "foco" theory of Guevara. Counterinsurgent theories will be next, beginning

with the "small wars" of Callwell, moving to the "hearts and minds" approach of

Thompson and Nagl then finishing with the "population centric COIN"[26] of Galula.

Determining Insurgent Strategy – Lawrence of Arabia

T.E Lawrence was a British Officer who planned and led the Arab revolt against

the Turks during the first World War. Lawrence was the first insurgent to determine his

strategy for military victory using a Clausewitzian model. Lawrence assessed his military

strategy in isolation from a political object as the Arabs did not have a united goal beyond

expulsion of the Turks from their lands. The "kind" of war Lawrence engaged in was a

limited one that did not require the complete defeat of the Turkish army. If the Turks

could be convinced to just leave, the Arabs would win. Lawrence identified that more

than half the battle was in the minds of the belligerents and neutral populations.[27] Arab

forces were weaker than their opponents however had the mobility to strike the Turks

rapidly, where they did not expect it. Intelligence was the key enabler to allow this

freedom of movement.[28] Finally, Lawrence knew support of the population was critical,

with victory in each province assured when "… we had taught the civilians in it to die for

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[25] James J. Schneider, "T. E. Lawrence and the Mind of an Insurgent," *Army*, no. July (2005) 32.
[26] COIN is the contemporary abbreviation of "counterinsurgency" however will only be used in this paper as part of the phrase "population centric COIN".
[27] T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, New ed. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1940) 200.
[28] Ibid., 200.

our ideal of freedom."[29] Lawrence would achieve his aim when he had won the population to his cause, he had actionable intelligence on his enemy provided by a sympathetic population and his message dominated the minds of the belligerents and local population.

Communist Insurgency – Mao and Giap

Mao Zedong and his most gifted student Vo Nguyen Giap, had very clear political objects to their revolutionary wars in China and Vietnam; expulsion of occupying forces and establishment of a Communist state.[30] This is clearly "total war", to cause the complete defeat of the enemy. To achieve this object, Mao proposed three phases of "People's War" with the first to earn the population's support. The second consisting of escalating attacks against the government's vital institutions and the third phase to assume control of the country.[31] Giap expanded on Mao's work and elaborates on the transition from the second to the third phase, by establishing three preconditions for entry into the last phase; namely superiority of revolutionary forces; a favorable world situation; and a noticeable weakening of the enemy's resolve.[32] Mao and Giap, like Lawrence, identified that the support of the people is critical to achieve victory and expanded the concept to mobilize international political support for their cause. The last point to draw from the Communist Insurgencies is the time component of Irregular

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[29] Ibid., 202.

[30] John W. Woodmansee, "Mao's Protracted War: Theory Vs Practice," *Parameters: U.S.Army War College* (1973) 30.

[31] Mao Zedong, *Mao on Warfare: On Guerilla Warfare, on Protracted War, and Other Martial Writings* (New York: CN Times Books, 2013) pp170-173.

[32] Vo Nguyen Giap, *People's War People's Army - the Viet Cong Insurrection Manual for Underdeveloped Countries* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2001) pp85-87.

Warfare. Mao's protracted war lasted for over 30 years while Giap fought his war of liberation for 25 years. Time favors the revolutionary force, who can outlast their opponents by simply not losing.

Foco theory – Underestimating the situation

It is worthwhile looking briefly at the writings of Che Guevara, whose book *Guerilla Warfare* is based on lessons from the 1959 Cuban revolution. Guevara, like Mao identified that in a civil war the aim or end state is the complete destruction of the opposing force.[33] The strategy of the Cuban revolution was very similar to Mao's three phases, however where Guevara differs significantly is in the role played by the insurgent band as a "foco"[34] to accelerate the process of revolution. This was successful for the Cuban revolution where the people suffered extreme poverty and hardship and the opposition proved to be particularly inept at counterinsurgency. When attempting to apply this theory in Bolivia in 1967, Guevara was unsuccessful. The Bolivian people proved unwilling to support a revolution while the Government, with American assistance, conducted an effective counterinsurgency leading to Guevara's capture and execution.[35] Victory in an insurgency is not guaranteed, and Guevara demonstrates the risk to the insurgent when the nature of the environment they are trying to manipulate is not truly understood.

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[33] Ernesto Che Guevara, *Guerilla Warfare*, Authorized and Corrected ed. (New York: Ocean Books, 2006) 31.

[34] Foco is the Spanish word for focus and is used by Guevara in his writings to indicate that cadres of small fast moving paramilitary groups can provide a focus for popular discontent against a sitting regime, leading to a general revolution. The intent of the guerrilla band as a focus is to accelerate the process of popular revolution.

[35] Joshua Johnson, "From Cuba to Bolivia: Guevara's Foco Theory in Practice," *Innovations* 6 (2006) 26.

Imperial Small Wars – Punish the Natives

The first of the counterinsurgents to be examined is British Army Officer Charles Callwell, who in 1896 published the first textbook on counterinsurgency. Callwell defines "Small Wars" as "… all campaigns other than those where both the opposing sides consist of regular troops."[36] The object of these "Small Wars" is well short of complete defeat of the enemy and the "kind" of war Callwell describes is clearly "limited war".

Callwell places particular emphasis on the objective of these "small wars". If the adversary can be intimidated into surrender by the capture of their capital or defeat of their army, the selection of objective is easy; however Callwell notes the particular problems if no clear objective exists. In these situations, Callwell recommends actions to punish the population.[37] This concept is clearly contradictory to the insurgents studied earlier who identified the support of the local people as critical to their cause. Callwell advocates the use of fear to achieve social discipline, an approach that is not achievable in contemporary counterinsurgency with modern sensitivities. On the topic of time, Callwell emphasizes that prolonged war is to be avoided as it favors the insurgent while disadvantaging regular troops.[38] Victory in Imperial "small wars" was guaranteed if there was a clearly defined, "limited" objective that was pursued with vigor. Poorly defined objectives with desultory execution were to be avoided and this concept holds true today.

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[36] C. E. Callwell, *Small Wars: A Tactical Textbook for Imperial Soldiers*, New ed. (London: Greenhill Books, 1990) 21.
[37] Ibid., 40.
[38] Ibid., pp97-100.

Countering communist insurgency – "Hearts and minds"

The various campaigns to defeat the Maoist style of communist insurgency would come to be dominated by the phrase "hearts and minds". The phrase was first used by General Sir Gerald Templer, British High Commissioner in Malaya from 1950-52 during the Malayan Emergency, who stated "The answer lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but in the hearts and minds of the people."[39] Templer recognized victory could not be achieved by military actions alone and efforts must focus on winning the people to his cause.

Sir Robert Thompson developed five principles of counterinsurgency based on the lessons of Malaya and Vietnam. First and most important, the government must have a clear political aim: "to establish and maintain a free, independent and united country which is politically and economically stable and viable."[40] Thompson does not mention Clausewitz, however, this political object sounds much like "total war". The remaining principles cover the importance of a single plan that includes all elements of national power and gives priority to defeating political subversion, again, very similar to "total war". The first action that Thompson specifies is the achievement of security to enable freedom of action for other activities.

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[39] Paul Dixon, ""Hearts and Minds?" British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 32, no. 3 (2009) 354.

[40] Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966) 51.

Counterinsurgency theorist John Nagl supports the principles of Thompson in his study of Malaya and Vietnam, and sums up the situation "You cannot win the war without the help of the population, and you cannot get the support of the population without at least beginning to win the war."[41] The insurgents and counterinsurgents agree, the people are the prize.

Population Centric COIN - The French in Algeria

The last word on counterinsurgency will be given to French Military Theorist David Galula, whose writings have heavily influenced modern US doctrine.[42] Galula analyses both the insurgent and counterinsurgent to identify four prerequisites for a successful insurgency; first a cause, second the weakness of the counterinsurgent, third favorable geographic conditions and fourth outside support.[43] The successful counterinsurgent must address and counter each of these issues. Galula identifies that most of the population will be neutral, neither favoring the counterinsurgent or insurgent.[44] The counterinsurgent must therefore remove the insurgent threat from the neutral population before any other actions can have a chance of succeeding.[45]

Galula, like Thompson and Nagl, identifies that the military is one of many tools of the counterinsurgent.[46] The military must necessarily take the lead in all areas until

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[41] John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, University of Chicago Press ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005) 76.

[42] Gian P. Gentile, "A Strategy of Tactics: Population-Centric COIN and the Army," *Parameters: U.S.Army War College* Autumn (2009) 7.

[43] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare:Theory and Practice*, PSI Classics of the Counterinsurgency Era ed. (London: Praeger Security International, 2006) pp11-27.

[44] Ibid., 53.

[45] Ibid., 55.

[46] Ibid., 62.

security is at a point where civilians can replace them however "… to let the military direct the entire process… is so dangerous that it must be resisted at all costs."[47] The transition from military to civilian lead must be based on achieving sufficient security.

Irregular Warfare is hard, however history provides many lessons on how to be successful in its conduct. The classic insurgent theorists including Lawrence, Mao, Giap and Guevara, all agree that a successful insurgency requires, firstly, a cause the people will believe in and support; and the will to continue fighting until the enemy is completely defeated. In other words, that the population is willing to submit to a "total war" approach. Time favors the insurgent who can outlast their enemy. Key enablers to ensure insurgent victory include international support, effective intelligence and an ineffective counterinsurgent. The early counterinsurgent theories of Callwell recommend "limited war", with a clearly defined objective, pursued with vigor for a limited period as the key to success. The phrase "Hearts and Minds" dominates later counterinsurgent theorists such as Thompson, Nagl and Galula who recognized that the support of the people was critical to success in counterinsurgency. Like the insurgents, they identified that intelligence and information management is crucial to success in Irregular Warfare. Interestingly, the later counterinsurgents describe an approach to Irregular Warfare that sounds much like "total war", requiring the commitment of all elements of national power to be successful. The most successful counterinsurgents from the latter part of the 20th century and onwards were the British in Malaya and Northern Ireland, where the approach taken on the ground came close to matching the concept of "total war".[48] The

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[47] Ibid., 62.

[48] Dixon, "Hearts and Minds?" British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq, 353-381

Americans in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan have been less successful, arguably because their strategy sounds much like "total war" without the associated effective application of all elements of national power.[49]

SECTION FOUR – CAMPAIGN DESIGN FOR IRREGULAR WARFARE

A campaign is defined as "A series of related major operations aimed at achieving strategic and operational objectives within a given time and space."[50] It reflects the operational level of war and is the linkage of tactical operations to achieve strategic objectives. Military Theorist Jack Kem notes that modern campaigns require the integration of military and civilian elements of national power to achieve the political object.[51] Campaign design is a method to understand and visualize the complex problem that must be solved to achieve the objective of the campaign.[52] The Canadian Forces process for operational design[53] will be used to design the campaign for success as a counterinsurgent in future Irregular Warfare. Additional points of clarification have been added from the US Military approach to campaign design where these aid in understanding the process.

Strategic Mismatch – Does the political object match the kind of war being fought?

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[49] Gentile, A Strategy of Tactics: Population-Centric COIN and the Army, 5-17, 15.

[50] Department of Defence, *Joint Publication 5-0: Joint Operation Planning* (Washington: US DOD, 11 August 2011) II-22.
[51] Dr Jack D. Kem, *Planning for Action: Campaign Concepts and Tools* (Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2012) 1.
[52] Ibid., 3.
[53] Department of National Defence, *CF OPP NOTES* (Toronto: Canadian Forces College, 15 August 2013) pp10-13.

Clausewitz identified that the kind of war being fought is the critical first question that must be answered in the analysis of war. Classical theory, particularly the communist insurgencies, shows that the insurgent aims to overthrow the state and achieve complete defeat of the enemy. Kilcullen notes that modern insurgent strategy only partly matches the classical model with some insurgencies demonstrating no intent to replace existing governments.[54] Complicating this, the religious ideology of Al-Qaeda and linked groups may have no objective other than to earn gods favor through resistance.[55] Despite not matching the classic theory exactly, contemporary theory suggests that insurgents are still engaged in "total war", using all means at their disposal, combined with absolute will, to defeat an existing societal structure.

Determining the "kind" of war being fought by the counterinsurgent poses an interesting challenge. At first glance, it appears western militaries are engaged in "limited war", as the "total means at their disposal" are not being used. Military Historian Gian Gentile suggests that the nation building approach of US forces is aimed at changing entire societies and this better meets the description of "total war", however "… without the commensurate total support of will and resources from the American people."[56] This is a violation of Clausewitz's number one rule when determining strategy. Historian Colin Gray notes that Irregular Warfare is about the allegiance of local civilians and their beliefs, values and preferred behaviors are authoritative.[57] Attempting significant change to entire societies risks alienating the people and resultant failure. Unless the

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[54] Kilcullen, *Counter-Insurgency Redux*, 111-130, 114.
[55] Ibid., 115.
[56] Gentile, *A Strategy of Tactics: Population-Centric COIN and the Army*, 5-17, 15.
[57] Colin S. Gray, "Irregular Warfare: One Nature, Many Characters," *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, no. Winter (2007) 44.

counterinsurgent wishes a strategic mismatch and likely Clauswitzian catastrophe, they must engage in a war with more limited aims than changing an entire society. Nation building may not be the most appropriate political object for counterinsurgency; rather, Kilcullen suggests permanent containment of insurgents may be a better approach to victory[58].

What is the counterinsurgent's end state?

The campaign's end state[59] must relate to the Political and Strategic end states however a significant friction point for the counterinsurgent is evident here. Liberal democracies have demonstrated in Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan that unending military commitments are unsustainable. The aim of contemporary forces conducting counterinsurgency is to turn over military operations to the host nation and return home. In a functioning state this is achievable but becomes more complicated in the ungoverned spaces of failed states. The campaign end state must vary depending on what can be achieved on the ground. Achieving permanent containment of an insurgency may involve nation building in a failed state, but only if sufficient national power is allocated to achieve this; otherwise it may involve strengthening the political and military capabilities of a fragile state, or limited operations to target a particular insurgent group within an ungoverned space. For the purpose of this campaign design, the end state will be the permanent containment of an insurgency through the strengthening of a fragile state.

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[58] Kilcullen, *Counter-Insurgency Redux*, 111-130, 121.
[59] Canadian doctrine defines the end state as a descriptive statement of the conditions to be attained at the end of operations. US doctrine takes this one step further by stating that the end state consists of those desired conditions that if achieved, meet the objectives of policy, orders, guidance and directives issued to the commander.

History suggests nation building that involves completely changing an existing society, risks confusing "total war" with "limited war" and should be avoided unless all elements of national power can be applied effectively.

Insurgent Center of Gravity (COG)

The classical theorists agree that the insurgent COG[60] is the ability to operate freely within the population. Kilcullen believes that this has changed in contemporary insurgencies and states that the side that will win in modern Irregular Warfare is the one that best mobilizes its supporter base.[61] Hammes agrees with Kilcullen and notes that the target of all operations is the mind of the enemy and their supporters.[62] The contemporary theorists suggest that the insurgent's COG has moved beyond the ability to operate among the population to "the ability to mobilize their supporter base."

The counterinsurgents COG

The counterinsurgent theorists are all in agreement that the political level dominates in Irregular Warfare and the political will to keep fighting must be protected. Hammes agrees and notes that an opponent in 4GW will examine our entire society to

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[60] The US definition of the Center of Gravity is the physical or moral entities that are the primary components of physical or moral strength, power, and resistance. They do not just contribute to strength, they are strength. Canadian doctrine supports this definition.
[61] Ibid., 119.
[62] Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century*, 215.

find vulnerabilities and then attack these.[63] The counterinsurgent's COG is "the

maintenance of political will" and this must be protected.

Objectives and Lines of Effort

Classical and contemporary counterinsurgent theorists are in general agreement of

the objectives[64] being sought in Irregular Warfare. First and most important is the support

of the people and the first objective for the counterinsurgent must be to "Win the People".

The second objective is also in agreement and relates to the gathering of real-time

actionable intelligence to firstly understand the situation and then target the key

influencers within the environment. Gaining intelligence from a sympathetic public is

closely linked to the first objective, as security is a key enabler to convince the public the

counterinsurgent will win. The second objective of the counterinsurgent is "Understand

the Environment".

Contemporary and classic theorists agree on the importance of dominating the

overall message of the war. Gray notes that for an insurgency to grow, it must have a

source of inspiration, either spiritual or political.[65] The counterinsurgent will be in

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[63] Ibid., 216.

[64] US and Canadian doctrine agrees "An objective is the clearly defined, decisive, and attainable goal toward which every operation should be directed."
[65] Gray, *Irregular Warfare: One Nature, Many Characters*, 35-57, 44.

competition with this big idea and must be able to demonstrate to the people that their

message is better. Hammes notes the importance of the media in determining policy of a

liberal democracy will only continue to grow.[66] The counterinsurgent must control the

message at home to protect their COG as well as influence the local population. The third

objective must therefore be to "Control the Message".

These three objectives lead to three logical lines of effort[67] namely, People,

Intelligence, and Information.

Timeline and Phasing

A successful counterinsurgency requires a long term commitment from all levels

of the nation. Military Historian Max Boot has identified that since the last half of the

twentieth century, insurgencies have lasted an average of 10 years.[68] The Main Effort[69]

over these years changes several times and suggests logical phasing in counterinsurgency.

The counterinsurgents all agree that the first phase is to protect the people. The tactics to

achieve this vary depending on the situation however all agree that this phase is

dominated by providing physical security on the ground, including targeting of insurgent

forces in deliberate combat, to demonstrate that the counterinsurgent has the strength to

win.[70] The stability achieved by this security provides the opportunity for the civilian

organs of government to function effectively; convinces the population to provide

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[66] Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century*, 210.

[67] US and Canadian doctrine defines Lines of Effort as a line that links multiple tasks using the logic of purpose rather than geographical reference to focus efforts toward achieving operational and strategic conditions.

[68] Max Boot, "The Evolution of Irregular War: Insurgents and Guerillas from Akkadia to Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs* March/April (2013) 13.

[69] US doctrine defines Main Effort as the effort that will receive the most resources in terms of support. Canadian doctrine supports this definition.

[70] Gray, *Irregular Warfare: One Nature, Many Characters*, 35-57, 49.

information on the insurgents and demonstrates the message that the government is in control. Therefore, phase 1 is "Achieve Stability". Regardless of the campaign end state, successful containment of an insurgency is impossible without stability. Military and police operations will dominate in this phase of the campaign. In this phase, intelligence must identify and counter foreign interference as well as isolate insurgent groups. The message focuses on the legitimacy of the intervention and counterinsurgent successes over insurgent forces. The transition from military to civilian lead will occur when security is sufficient to enable a significant civilian presence. Phase two will commence at this transition point.

Stability enables freedom of action for the counterinsurgent to use all elements of their national power to increase the capacity of the host nation to contain the insurgency. In this phase military operations will be less obvious with an emphasis on enabling the host nation, while civilian agencies concentrate on strengthening governance and development to provide a clear alternative to the insurgency while addressing the root causes of it. Intelligence will enable internal security operations while the message at home focusses on the successes of the host nation and their increasing capacity to operate alone. Therefore, phase 2 is "Increase Capacity".

The final phase will involve minimal foreign presence on the ground and is predominantly civilian focused. It will concentrate on developing the resilience of the host nation to ensure the government cannot be threatened by future insurgency and insurgents do not resort to terrorism. Intelligence is focused on domestic containment of the threat and counter terrorism while the message is focused on the disaffected

population in the host nation to convince them that alternatives exist to insurgency.

Therefore, phase 3 is "Develop Resilience."

The campaign design, incorporating all of these elements, is depicted graphically

in Figure 1. The key events that must occur in each phase, as highlighted by the historical

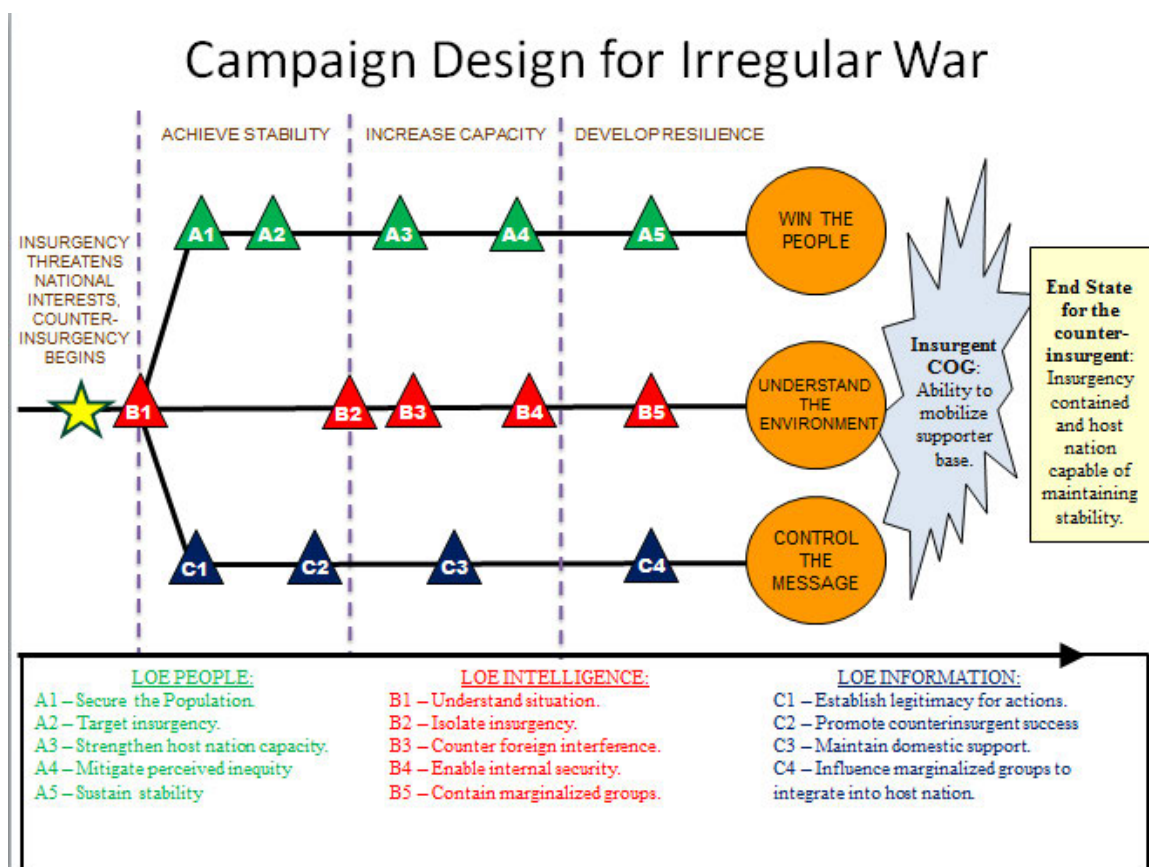lessons in Irregular Warfare, have been included as Decisive Points[71] along each Line of

Effort.

Figure 1: – Campaign Design for Irregular Warfare

CONCLUSION

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[71] Canadian and US doctrine agrees that Decisive Points are a point from which a hostile or friendly COG can be threatened, and when acted upon, give a Commander an advantage over an adversary, or contributes greatly to success.

Irregular Warfare is neither new, nor revolutionary; rather, it is the form of war an inferior enemy uses to negate the strength of their opponent. What makes it irregular, is that the people are the focus of the operations, rather than the opposing military forces. Irregular Warfare, like all other forms of war, seeks to achieve a political object. The political object desired, defines the "kind" of war being fought. If complete defeat of the enemy is the purpose of the war, the total means at your disposal combined with the strength of will to see the war to its conclusion will be required to achieve the political object. "Total war" is the kind of war being fought if complete defeat of the enemy is required. If circumstances rule out complete defeat of the enemy, the purpose of the war must be to arrive at a negotiated settlement to the problem that caused the conflict. The kind of war to achieve a limited aim is "limited war", or anything short of "total war", where a negotiated settlement is desired. Clausewitz is adamant that determining the "kind" of war being fought is the first and most important strategic question.

Future war is likely to be irregular as the wars of the early 21st century have demonstrated the conventional military power of the West can be negated by small, poorly equipped forces, operating among civilian populations. Contemporary theorists have demonstrated that future adversaries will use all available networks, social, economic, political and military to convince their enemy's political decision makers that victory is unachievable. Modern social media enables the use of these networks by creating mass movements, with independent but cooperating cells, that have no mass organization that can be targeted. The role and influence the media has on the domestic and political audience in the West will continue to grow. Adversaries will find it easier to sell their message while the West will need to carefully manage information and maintain

political will to achieve the aims of war. Modern affluent democracies demonstrate an aversion to war that the smart adversary will seek to exploit. Unless an existential threat emerges to western democracies, they are unlikely to engage in "total war".

The lessons of history and contemporary counterinsurgency theorists can be used to design campaigns for future success in Irregular Warfare however, the political object and kind of war being fought must decide the strategy. Attempting "total war", without a commensurate total commitment of national resources and will, invites disaster. "Limited war", with limited aims is the appropriate "kind" of war for the counterinsurgent. The campaign end state that will achieve this object is permanent containment of the insurgency rather than the nation building or complete change to society of contemporary counterinsurgency. Objectives that will allow the achievement of this end state through attacking the insurgent center of gravity are to win the people, understand the environment and control the message. The end state can be achieved over three phases, commencing with achieve stability in the host nation, where security actions will dominate, then moving to increase the capacity of the host nation before developing resilience in the host nation, as civilian efforts to improve governance take effect. History shows that victory is possible for counterinsurgent forces in Irregular Warfare however the desired end state must support the political object of the war, and this must match the "kind" of war being fought. Attempting to engage in "total war" with means appropriate for "limited war" should give political and military commanders a very bad feeling that they have created a strategic mismatch.

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