THE ISLAMIC STATE: IN A HYBRID WAR DOES IT REALLY MATTER IF YOU FIGHT FOR MAHOUMED OR MARX?

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You must know everything you can about military power, and you must also understand the limits of military power. You must understand that few of the problems of our time have…been solved by military power alone.

- John F. Kennedy, 1961, in *"Countering Global Insurgency"* [1]

INTRODUCTION

In the majority of modern insurgent struggles, the end-state was primarily nationalistic (or politically Leftist)[2], with victory at least in 'popular' history delivered by the 'people's army'. The 1979 Iranian Revolution and recent insurgencies in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria in comparison, however, have a decidedly religious focus.[3] A question is raised then as to whether this 'new' form of Islamic insurgency will be able to successfully establish and maintain a Sunni Caliphate in Iraq/Syria or end in the same calamitous manner as the Mahdi's uprising in the Sudan 1882-89.[4]

To provide a background to this central question, this essay will examine the following: a comparison of the irregular or hybrid warfare methods used in nationalistic and religious insurgencies focused on Algeria 1954-62 and Iraq/Syria 2003-15, current Counter-Insurgency (COIN) doctrine requirements described for an insurgent success, and, finally, what are the critical differences between a historically

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[1] David Kilcullen, *Countering Global Insurgency.* Canberra: Land Warfare Studies Centre, Duntroon, 30 November 2004. http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/kilcullen.pdf, p. 46

[2] Charles T. Hapgood. Algeria and Afghanistan: Case Studies on Twentieth Century Counter Insurgency Strategy. June 2005. http://www.hpu.edu/CHSS/History/GraduateDegree/MADMSTheses/files/2005ChuckHapgood.pdf

[3] Max Boot, The Evolution of Irregular War. Insurgents and Guerillas from Akkadia to Afghanistan. Council on Foreign Relations. March/April 2013, p. 8. Religiously motivated insurgencies are not a new phenomenon and in the modern era but can be traced at least in part to the 18th Century proselytizing of Wahhabism and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood of 1928 from a Sunni perspective.

[4] US Library of Congress. A Country Study: Sudan. The Mahdiyah, 1884-98. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/sdtoc.html

successful insurgency and that of the self-proclaimed Islamic State's establishment of

a new Islamic Caliphate based in Iraq and Syria.

These points will show that while there are substantial similarities in methods

and to a degree motivation, ultimately it will likely be a lack of political support that

will determine the fate of The Islamic State (IS).[5]

WARFARE THAT WORKS FOR INSURGENTS

What's in a name: Guerrilla War, Irregular Warfare, Asymmetric Warfare, Unconventional Warfare, Hybrid War, or simply Clausewitzian War?

Irregular Warfare (IW)[6] has long been the approach of choice when a weaker

force is faced with an asymmetric balance of hard power. In many modern (or even

post-modern) situations this has seen irregular or guerrilla forces apply a variety of

non-conventional and conventional means now commonly associated with an

insurgency[7] to overcome state control or to resist foreign power, with an ultimate

objective of achieving the political or social situation that suites the guerrilla or

insurgent. [8] To paraphrase Mao Zedong: when faced with a societal or political

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[5] Richard Barrett. The Islamic State. The Soufan Group, November 2014. This essay will refer simplify to 'IS' or 'The Islamic State' in order to use the current term for what has variously been the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS), or in western terms the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), or prior to virtual expulsion from Iraq as AQI (al Qaeda in Iraq) and/or Islamic State in Iraq (ISI). IS is also referred to as Daesh (al Dawla al Islamiya fi al Iraq wa al Sham). p.11.

[6] Joint Operating Concept (JOC). Irregular Warfare Countering Irregular Threats (IW JOC Version 2.0) 17 May 2010 : "Irregular warfare. A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. Irregular warfare 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. Also called IW." (JP 1-02)

[7] United States, Joint Publication 3-24 (JP23-4) Counterinsurgency Operations, 2009, pp ix-x, Insurgency. The organized use of subversion and violence by a group or movement that seeks to overthrow or force change of a governing authority. Insurgency can also refer to the group itself. (JP 3-24)

[8] JP 3-24 (JP3-24) Counterinsurgency Operations, 2009, pp ix-x, From the executive summary: Insurgency is an internal threat that uses subversion and violence to reach political ends. Conversely, counterinsurgents seek to defeat insurgents and address core grievances to prevent insurgency's expansion or regeneration

situation that does not suit, insurgents seek to achieve change through the gun barrel rather than the ballot box.[9]

The decolonisation wars of the 1950-70s saw an application not simply of Mao's *On Guerrilla Warfare* doctrine in the Far East, but also in the Middle East, Africa, and South/Central America. Outcomes for insurgents or guerrillas have varied from the success of China, Vietnam and Cuba, through independence but ongoing pain of Algeria, to defeat for insurgents in Columbia, Bolivia and Peru.[10] In the cases of a 'successful' insurgency the irregular fighter transitioned to achieve sufficient 'regular' force to overcome the power of the state or foreign power. [11]

As a result of these successes there has been a great deal of reflection and academic writing in recent years on the assorted topics of Guerrilla War,[12] Irregular Warfare[13], Asymmetric Warfare[14], and the even more the recently coined term 'Hybrid War'. Regardless of the name, these terms all stem from a requirement for an insurgent/guerrilla/revolutionary to make effective use of their respective strengths against a 'superior' opponent's weaknesses.[15] A technique also highly regarded in conventional war. While there has been a great deal of discussion about the means

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[9] Mao Zedong. Every Communist must grasp the truth; "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." From "Problems of War and Strategy" (November 6, 1938), Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 224. In the Little Red Book. Retrieved from https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/red-book/ch05.htm

[10] Max Boot, The Evolution of Irregular War. Insurgents and Guerillas from Akkadia to Afghanistan. Council on Foreign Relations. March/April 2013. pp. 7-8 and pp. 10-11

[11] Lawrence Freedman, Regular and Irregular War. In Strategic Datalink, Canadian International Council, august 2008. p. 1

[12] Mao Zedong, On Guerrilla War. Retreived from https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/1937/guerrilla-warfare/ch01.htm

[13] Boot, ibid.

[14] David L. Buffaloe. Defining Asymmetric Warfare. The Landwarfare Papers. No. 58 September 2006.The Insitiute of Landwarfare. US.

[15] Mao Zedong, On Guerrilla War. Ch 1.. "It is a weapon that a nation inferior in arms and military equipment may employ against a more powerful aggressor nation. During the progress of hostilities, guerrillas gradually develop into orthodox forces that operate in conjunction with other units of the regular army … form the military power of a national revolutionary war.

involved, ultimately Clausewitz still provides a definition of warfare as simply "an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will."[16]

JP3-24, however, provides another perspective in contrasting traditional war with irregular war:

> In traditional warfare the conflict focuses on defeating the opposing military through force-on-force engagements, and influencing the government by taking control of their territory, and influencing the people generally through intimidation, fear, and deception; whereas in irregular warfare (IW), the conflict focuses more on the control or influence over, and the support of, a relevant population and not on the control of an adversary's forces or territory.[17]

The term 'Hybrid War' (as described by Scott and Moreland's article *The Islamic State is a Hybrid Threat: Why Does That Matter?)* builds on assorted irregular/asymmetric themes and provides a good summary of IS activities. Although the description includes sophisticated use of social media, the concepts would be equally easily recognised by an Algerian insurgent from the *Front de Liberation Nationale* (FLN) in 1954-62 or a soldier in Mao's People's Liberation Army (PLA) fighting the Japanese or Kuomintang as they would by a Jihadist fighting with IS:

- **Blended Tactics**. Hybrid threats combine conventional military capabilities with small unit guerrilla tactics, asymmetric attacks, and highly mobile standoff engagement systems.

- **Flexible and adaptable structure**. Hybrid threats are generally composed of paramilitary forces that can organize both in massed conventional formations and as small, distributed cells. Hybrid threats create a governance component to establish stability and sustain operations.

- **Terrorism**. Hybrid threats utilize terror campaigns to proliferate hate and despair and to strike fear in adversaries. They target cultural icons and symbols to destroy the identities, heritages, and belief systems that oppose their ideologies.

- **Propaganda and information warfare**. Hybrid threats exploit global communications networks to spread jihadist schemes, raise funds, and recruit.

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[16] W. Alexander Vacca and Mark Davidson. The Regularity of Irregular Warfare. Parameters, Spring 201. p. 19

[17] JP3-24. p. X

- **Criminal activity**. Hybrid threats use crime and fundraising as reliable sources of revenue to fight, train, recruit, govern, and sustain operations.

- **Disregard for International Law**. Hybrid threats cynically view international laws as a constraint upon their adversaries that can be exploited.[18]

While being used to describe IS's means of 'forcing an enemy to do their will', these activities have historic precedent in many, if not most, insurgencies as evidenced by their inclusion in current doctrine as expected behaviours.[19]

A direct comparison with the Algerian insurgency would highlight that the FLN maintained a large 'conventional' force in Tunisia, well equipped, funded and supported by pan-Arabic and communist revolutionary regimes.[20] Also that in Algeria the FLN operated in small groups or up to company-battalion size depending on stage of the conflict.

The Algerian insurgency made highly effective use of terrorist attacks on civilian and military targets, bombing cafés, or massacring regional and metropolitan *colons*. While perhaps not as interconnected financially or by telecommunication as is obviously the case today, news services, newspapers, propaganda and radio were used as mean of disseminating key propaganda messages such as highlighting or threatening attacks.[21]

Criminal acts such as robberies and extortion were also heavily employed in the early days of the Algerian insurgency to fund future actions. These criminal acts occurred in both Algeria and France; however, not on the scale of IS, most likely due

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[18] Jasper, Scott; Moreland, Scott. The Islamic State is a Hybrid Threat: Why Does That Matter? In Small Wars Journal, Dec 2014. p. 3

[19] JP3-24, Information environment, propaganda of the deed , technology, insurgent criminal sustainment are covered. pp. II-24-25.

[20] David Galula, Pacification in Algeria, RAND RM-3878-ARPA, 2006, p xvii and RAND D10671 pp. 8-9

[21] William Weir. The High Cost of Terror: Algeria1954-1962, Guerrilla Warfare: Irregular Warfare in the Twentieth Century (Mechanicsburg, PA, Stackpole Books, 2008),

more to the relatively effective counter-insurgency measures than a lack of desire on the FLN's part.

While both the French and the Algerians committed atrocities and torture, post-independence, victorious Algeria continued the practice particularly in retribution against those Algerians who had not supported or actively fought against the insurgency. [22]

A critical point well-articulated by Mao is the ultimate necessity of Guerrillas (or insurgents) to be able to ultimately generate sufficient power to seize and hold ground from 'conventional' forces. A factor that was not ultimately required in Algeria but that has already seen IS transition from a terrorist organisation to a Hybrid Warfighter capable of securing significant territory and administering a sizable population.

WHAT ARE THE INPUTS REQUIRED FOR A SUCCESSFUL INSURGENCY

Current US Counter Insurgency Doctrine

US Joint Doctrine for Counter Insurgency Operations *JP 3-24, Counterinsurgency Operations* provides an equally useful framework for determining the inputs required of for a nationalistic insurgency or a religious motivated one.[23]

Characteristics of insurgencies as summarised in *JP3-24* include a logical list including: Ends, Scope, Core Grievances, and Prerequisites, Dynamics, Organization,

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[22] Karl Goetzke, A review of the Algerian War of National Liberation using the US Army's Current Counter-Insurgency Doctrine, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 2005,, pp 12-14, Goetz describes the irreplaceable knowledge of the operational environment (cultural awareness, intelligence and knowledge of local terrain) by the Algerian indigenous Harkis, who having sided with the French were massacred following Independence.

[23] JP3-24, A number of key Principles of COIN from *JP3-24* are: Legitimacy Is the Main Objective. Political Factors are Primary. Intelligence Drives Operations. Insurgents Must be Isolated from Their Cause and Support. Security Under the Rule of Law is Essential. Counterinsurgents Should Prepare for a Long-Term Commitment.

Approaches, Recruitment, Causes, Resources, and Information, Vulnerabilities and finally Devolution and Decline. [24]

Insurgents have a number of inherent advantages in their ability to sow chaos and disorder, ideally from safe-bases or areas of limited mobility for security forces and through protraction and local successes to "win by not losing" thereby undermining state strength, credibility and legitimacy. Additional insurgent strengths are preparedness to "achieve their political aims by using time, space, and will. Insurgents will normally accept temporary setbacks with respect to time and space to reach their long-term goals."[25]
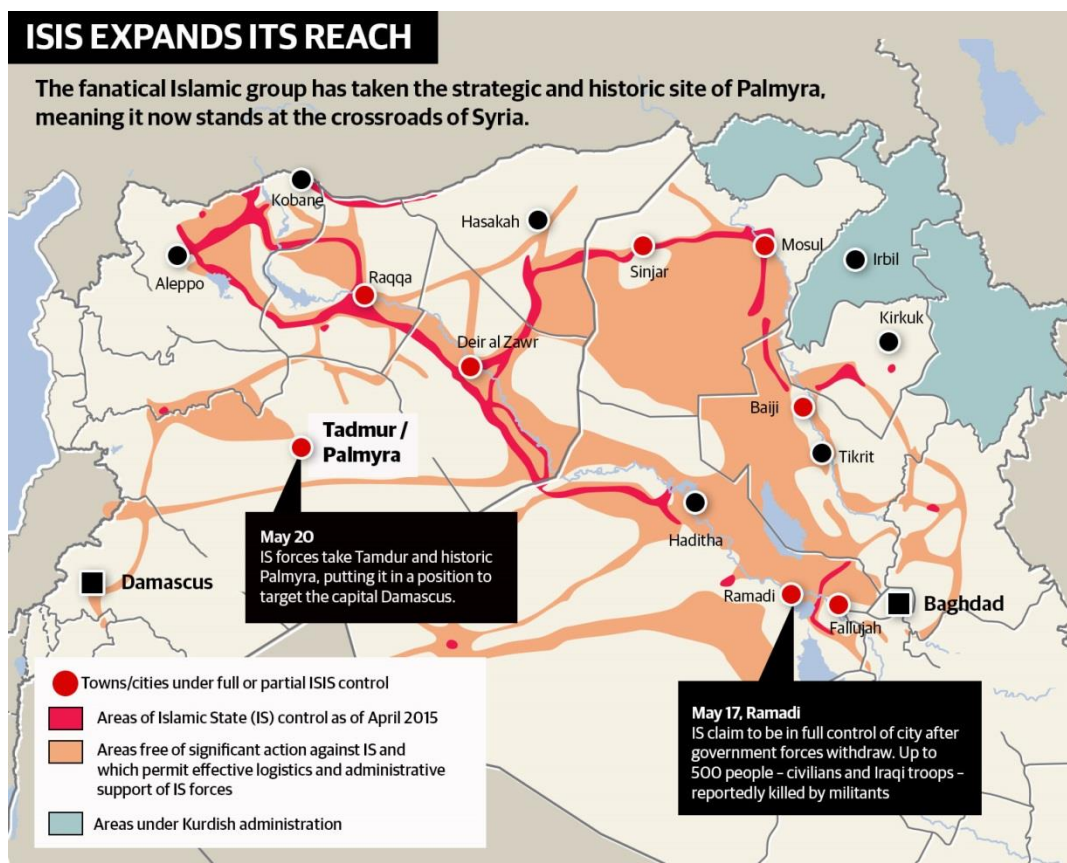
These characteristic have been demonstrated in both nationalistic insurgencies and in religious ones. Algerian nationalists suffered numerous setbacks and perhaps military defeat but were ultimately successful in achieving independence from France.[26] IS has also suffered significant setbacks including effective removal from Iraq during the 2007-2008 Sunni Awakening, decapitation strikes against key leadership cadre and rejection by aligned groups such as Jabhat al Nusra. Since 2012 IS has regained both status in the Global Jihad and significant territory in Iraq and Syria, including Raqqa (Jan 2014), Mosul (Jun 2014), Palmyra and Ramadi (May 2014).[27][28] Coalition airstrikes may have slowed and perhaps even degraded IS operations but they have not stopped recent expansion.

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[24] JP3-24, p. II-3

[25] JP3-24, p. II-4

[26] Goetzke, The French conducted "a major counterinsurgency operation that achieved tactical success, but ultimately failed at the strategic level. The techniques, tactics, and procedures (TTPs) used by the French Army are cited by many military writers as the paradigm for how to conduct an effective counterinsurgency" p.iii

[27] Barrett, pp. 10-11

ISIS EXPANDS ITS REACH

The fanatical Islamic group has taken the strategic and historic site of Palmyra, meaning it now stands at the crossroads of Syria.

Source: www.news.com as at 25 May 15[29]

As described by *JP3-24* in discussing insurgent characteristics "[e]nds, scope, and core grievances are three of the most important aspects of an insurgency." The 'ends' for an insurgency often share common objectives; "political change, overthrow of government, resistance of or against an outside actor or in nullifying political control in an area"[30] Again, in the case of Algeria there is a combination of several objectives in seeking independence from France and gaining political empowerment while simultaneously avoiding apostasy required to achieve 'full' French citizenship. Significantly, these objectives are linked to core grievances such as the terrible economic and social inequality between European *Colons* and native Algerians prior

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[29] News.com 25 May 15. http://www.news.com.au/world/middle-east/islamic-state-fighters-execute-hundreds-in-ancient-syrian-city-of-palmyra-reports/story-fnh81ifq-1227367661395

[30] JP3-24, p. II-4-6. Core Grievances could include: identity, religion, economy, corruption, repression, foreign exploitation or presence, occupation, essential services.

to independence.[31] Years of almost totalitarian rule followed by insurgency and

sectarian violence have likewise created similar conditions in Iraq and Syria ready to

be exploited by IS. Religion, while important and unifying in Algeria, was not the

driving force while nationalism and equality were key drivers, a key difference in

comparison to the situation for IS. As described by Bennett in discussing how IS

attempts to draw its primary legitimacy through its central focus on religion:

> Even a self-declared Caliphate must project a strong ideological-religious appeal, and The Islamic State taps into the widespread belief of Salafists that the Muslim world can and should return to the simplicity and unity that they imagine existed in the earliest days of Islam. … [Also] that the governments in the Muslim countries of the Middle East are corrupt, irreligious, and heavily influenced by the United States and other Western powers … In order to achieve both the revolution within the Islamic world and the purist government that The Islamic State advocates, it exacerbates the political fault line within Islam between Shia and Sunni traditions of belief.

> Its most active supporters are generally insufficiently knowledgeable about their religion to challenge the distortions of Islam preached by the ideologues of The Islamic State. … Their individual motivation for joining has more to do with the dynamics of a social network that provides direction, identity, purpose, belonging, empowerment and excitement, than it does with religious understanding.[32,33]

Prerequisites described by *JP3-24* for insurgent success in a given area rely on

three fundamentals: a vulnerable population, leadership available for direction, and

lack of government control. If all three are present the insurgency can operate with

some freedom of movement, gain the support of the people, and become entrenched

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[31] Robert B. Asprey, War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History, Volume 2. New York: Double day, 1975.pp. 907-908. The inequality of the *colons* vs native Algerians was extreme with the majority of Muslims living without dignity or hope "90 percent of Algeria's wealth in the hand of ten percent of its inhabitants". Offers of full democratic rights were dependent on Muslims effectively denying their faith or remaining politically disenfranchised

[32] Barrett, p. 9.

[33] Graeme Wood. What ISIS Really Want, AP/The Atlantic, March 2015. The essential and fundamental religious focus of IS is a perspective repeatedly highlighted in Wood's article. An additional observation that while using technology to fight to establish an Islamic Caliphate that is a precursor for the end of days IS is derisive of 'moderns' and as evidenced murderous and mediaeval by western standards. pp. 2-4.

over time. Lack of control may be perceived or actual and may also be a specific target of attack to destabilise and highlight the inadequacy of 'state' response.

Terrorist bombings of cafés in Algiers from safe bases in the Kasbah demonstrated insecurity and an already alienated population provided the 'water' in which the FLN 'fish' could swim.[34] In a similar fashion, IS as firstly AQI, then ISI/ISIS, has exploited a population made vulnerable by economic turmoil, sectarian persecution and violence, and disenfranchisement of the Sunni minority in Iraq and Syria following the 2003 invasion and subsequent de-Ba'ath-ification.

The leadership required to exploit a lack of government control and drive the IS insurgency has been readily available from former Saddam Hussein loyalist, de-mobilised Iraqi Armed Forces members and almost ironically former members of the largely secular Ba'ath party. These people have provided IS with the capacity to develop essential service and more importantly for the insurgency create a highly effective military leadership cadre supported by significant quantities of captured equipment, religious fanaticism and extreme ruthlessness.[35]

Additional consideration or requirements for an insurgency described in *JP3-24* may also include: effective and often charismatic leadership, strategic, operational and tactical objectives and a clear ideology. Objectives and ideology have been clearly articulated at the strategic level by IS declaring a Caliphate and in the case of Algeria by the FLN's consistent drive for independence even in the face of military defeat. An additional strategic objective for insurgents is that the population perceives the 'state' as illegitimate and ineffective.

Algerian insurgent activity was initially limited in scale and scope, but occurred in conjunction with rising political aspirations for independence. Critically

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[34] Mao Zedong, On Guerilla Warfare, Ch 6.
[35] Barrett, pp. 19-20.

for the success the insurgency, the French failed to provide a legitimate and inclusive

response to demands for political and economic equality, highlighting the illegitimacy

of the extant system.[36] French political failures led to wide spread Algerian support

(or at least tolerance) for insurgent activity.[37] This failure by the French to 'defuse'

the situation through genuine dialogue with 'moderate' Algerian independence parties

shifted support away from democratic resolution to support for armed violence as

political discourse had failed.[38]

For IS the declaration of a caliphate has been a key step in establishing its own

legitimacy and undermining the Iraqi Government and already unpopular remnants of

the Syrian Government, and also other jihadist groups such as al Qaeda.

> Ultimately, the struggle for supremacy between al Qaeda and The
> Islamic State will turn on two things: the ability of the State to
> consolidate its territorial gains and hold them over time, and the attitude
> of the several thousand foreign fighters who make up over half its core
> membership.[39]

Declaration of a caliphate also supports an ultimate end-game through hastening the

apocalyptic end of days as described by Wood in his article *What ISIS Really Wants*[40].

A convincing or at least plausible ideology is an obvious requirement for an

effective insurgency. It is also an area where the previous pan-Arabic and leftist

ideologies of the Algerian insurgency separate from the purely religious ideology of

IS. While coercion may maintain a certain degree of support, promises of reform or

improvement provide the core of an effective ideology. The core for a nationalist

insurgency was independence for Algeria while alternately a return to pure Sharia law

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[36] Robert B. Asprey, War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History, Volume 2. New York: Double day, 1975.
[37] Asprey, pp. 907-908.
[38] Goetze, pp 2-3.
[39] Barrett. P. 16.
[40] Woods, p. 4 & pp. 11-13. Essentially the establishment of the caliphate and subsequent attack by the army of 'Rome" and defeat of the army of Rome will trigger the final battle and victory for Islam. An additional and potentially alienating point for those not part of IS includes being declared apostate and killed.

is the core for IS. This is core ideology is combined with a narrative and ideological dogma which reinforces the commitment from members of the insurgent group and provides the justification for what may be illegal, immoral or otherwise unacceptable actions for example 'the ends, justifying the means'.

In general terms, a combination of factors including provision or promise of a better future, aids an effective narrative and an acceptable if not agreeable ideology if combined with coercion or simple terror will provide the insurgency with some degree of 'popular' or internal support. Internal support which can range from local indifference through passive support, through to active support of the insurgents and their cause. [41] This is the battle for the 'hearts and minds' of population-centric warfare. [42]

As described by *JP3-24* "External support to insurgency can provide political, psychological, and material resources that might otherwise be limited or unavailable". This support may also include sanctuaries in either an external 'friendly' country as historically provided by Tunisia and Morocco in the case of Algeria or failed/failing states as more recently seen in Syria for IS. Urban areas provide another form of sanctuary and an ability to shield the insurgent from direct strike.[43] Denial of these areas leaves the insurgent vulnerable to attrition and significant reduction in capacity as demonstrated by the French efforts to isolate the insurgency from safe-bases and resupply/reinforcement. [44]

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[41] JP3-24, p. II-13

[42] Kilcullen, p. 36. From the counter insurgents perspective: *The shooting side of this business is only 25 per cent of the trouble; the other 75 per cent is getting the people of this country behind us…The answer lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but in the hearts and minds of the people.* General Sir Gerald Templer, High Commissioner and Director of Operations, Malaya, 1952

[43] JP3-24, p. II-13

[44] Constantin Melnik,. Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 23 April 1964. http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/documents/2006/D10671-1.pdf, ,p.165. French counter-insurgency from 1959 had effectively isolated FLN from bases in Tunisia and Morocco and degraded

In summary the key area where there is a clear difference between a successful nationalist insurgency and a religious insurgency is in population support including political support both internal and external. In Algeria while there was jockeying for position and internal political fighting the end-state of independence was sufficient to keep groups at least cooperating until the French left.[45]

In the case of IS the rigidity of the religious ideology while appealing to some elements of the Sunni community excludes (or demands execution) the greater majority while hardening Shia resolve. This propensity to overreach politically and to maintain potentially fractious coalitions is identified by many such as Eisenstaedt as a key weakness.[46]

Kilcullen's approach to Global Insurgency

Kilcullen's thesis of *Countering Global Insurgency* offers a different view to that provided in *JP3-24.* Kilcullen's more systemic view – although primarily focused on al Qaeda – demonstrates links between jihadist networks, family ties, and key objective of a global caliphate. It provides an alternate view of the requirements for insurgency while demonstrating global links. Focal points include ideological links, linguistic and cultural links, personal history, propaganda, and shared doctrine, techniques, procedures and planning. To deal with these links Kilcullen recommends a whole of government strategy of 'disaggregation' to break up the links between insurgencies/jihadist groups as necessary to defeat insurgents over time. Kilcullen also highlights the difficulties involved in countering the very nature of a global

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the organisation in Algeria to the point that major action was too costly significantly restricting FLN offensive action.

[45] Melnik, pp. 19-22, pp. 62-65. Provide an overview of political manoeuvre. P. 77 discusses the political infighting wher the FLN crushed the MNA. P. 78 the dcocrine of the FLN was simple: independence, unity and sovereignty of the Algerian people and democratic and social revolution.

[46] Michael Eisenstadt. Defeating ISIS. A Strategy for a Resilient Adversary and an Intractable Conflict, Policy Notes, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy No. 20 November 2014, p. 5. http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyNote20_Eisenstadt4.pdf

insurgency with links that are out of reach of the countries that are potentially affected by them.[47] An issue facing the US in the face of IS advances at the moment.
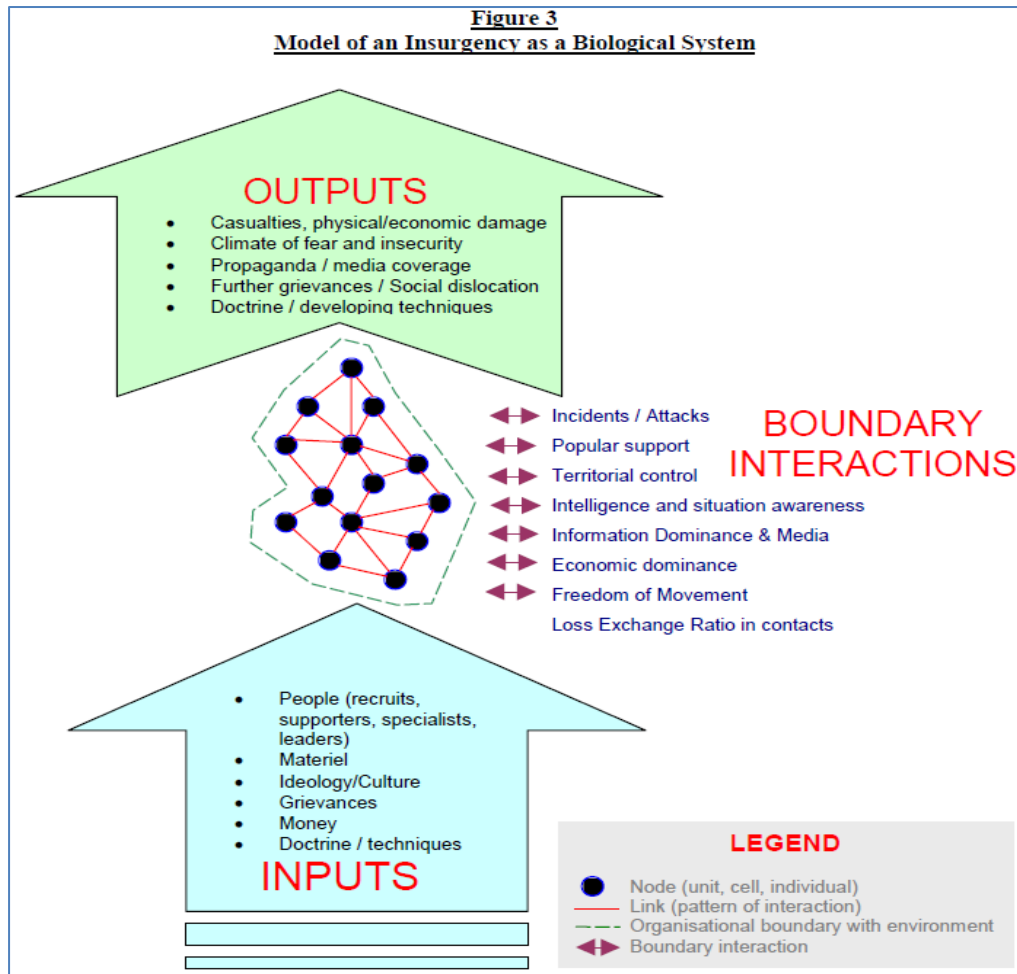
Kilcullen's central thesis is best summarised by his model of an insurgency as a biological system. The insurgency is adaptive, but can be stopped "or the parent society returned to a stable peaceful mode of interaction – on terms favourable to the Security Forces"[48] if sufficient inputs are removed or there is sufficient interaction with nodes to prevent translation of inputs to outputs. If, however, the insurgency reaches critical mass even removing initial causes of insurgency will not cause it to whither. In the case of Iraq initially under US occupation, Kilcullen proposes "the premature disbandment of the Iraqi Army created a large group of unemployed trained soldiers with a grievance against the occupation and no future in an Iraq administered by the Coalition. This provided a key impetus to the development of the Iraqi insurgency".[49] This appears to have been borne out again in the recruitment of Ba'athist leaders to support IS.[50]

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[47] Kilcullen, pp. 18-20
[48] Ibid. p.38
[49] Kilcullen, p. 31
[50] Barrett, pp. 19-20.

Figure 3
Model of an Insurgency as a Biological System

OUTPUTS
- Casualties, physical/economic damage
- Climate of fear and insecurity
- Propaganda / media coverage
- Further grievances / Social dislocation
- Doctrine / developing techniques

BOUNDARY INTERACTIONS
- Incidents / Attacks
- Popular support
- Territorial control
- Intelligence and situation awareness
- Information Dominance & Media
- Economic dominance
- Freedom of Movement
- Loss Exchange Ratio in contacts

INPUTS
- People (recruits, supporters, specialists, leaders)
- Materiel
- Ideology/Culture
- Grievances
- Money
- Doctrine / techniques

LEGEND
- Node (unit, cell, individual)
- Link (pattern of interaction)
- Organisational boundary with environment
- Boundary interaction

Source: Kilcullen, *Countering Global Insurgency*[51]

In the case of Algeria, this critical mass situation was reached before De Gaulle became President. Being politically astute and faced with other priorities, the political decision was made to withdraw from Algeria and grant independence even though the military situation was improved. [52]

Another critical point demonstrated in Kilcullen's article is that "successful counterinsurgency (at the strategic level) depends largely upon generating an effective political solution, while tactical actions to counter the insurgency buy time for the

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[51] Kilcullen, p. 26.
[52] Asprey, pp. 928-930, President De Gaulle shrewdly identified that too little was being promised too late and after offering three self-determination options in 1959 conducted a referendum in 1961 that ultimately supported Algerian Independence.

political solution to be implemented."[53] Additionally, Kilcullen identifies a key point that the return of a society to pre-insurgency may not stop violence if that is the 'normal pattern'. An effective solution should support achievement of 'legitimate aspirations'. [54] What may be more difficult to determine when faced with a religious fundamentalist state such as IS with apocalyptic aspirations is what is acceptable and legitimate when faced with destruction of historic sites, mass executions, and slavery.[55]

For IS the politically self-destructive nature of its extreme polarising ideology and narrative is likely in time to be sufficient to lead to implosion or destruction by a regional power so long as it can be sufficiently contained:

> Given everything we know about the Islamic State, continuing to slowly bleed it, through air strikes and proxy warfare appears the best of bad military options. Neither the Kurds nor the Shia will ever subdue and control the whole Sunni heartland of Syria and Iraq … but they can keep the Islamic State from its duty to expand. And with every month it fails to expand, it resembles less the conquering state of the Prophet Muhammad than yet another Middle Eastern government failing to bring prosperity to its people. [56]

CONCLUSION

There are obvious similarities between a nationalistic insurgency and a religious motivated insurgency as demonstrated by the comparison between the war in Algeria in 1954-1962 and Iraq/Syria in 2003-15. These similarities exist for a number of reasons but primarily that weaker forces are best served by taking advantage of irregular methods to overcome conventional forces of the Government.

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[53] Kilcullen, p.34. historical case studies used to reach this conclusion were Malaya 1948-60, Darul Islam, Indonesia 1948-62, Vietnam 1959-73, Palestine, Al Aqsa Intifada, 2001-2004, and Northern Ireland 1969-2004.
[54] Kilcullen, p. 39
[55] Scott and Moreland, A horrific description of IS's disregard for International Law. p. 8.
[56] Woods. p. 16.

This essay examined the current COIN doctrine requirements for an insurgent success, and compared irregular or hybrid warfare methods used in Algeria and Iraq/Syria and finally identified that the anti-International law, polarising and sectarian nature of IS will limit its ability to generate the political support necessary to prevent containment and eventual collapse from caliphate to simply another failed state, which will contribute to the next cycle of violence from unresolved religions, linguistic and cultural friction.

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