Set Up for Failure: The Use of US Security Force Assistance to Prepare Foreign Security Forces for Traditional Combat Operations

A Monograph

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Abstract

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The United States Armed Forces is currently redefining its approach to Security Force Assistance (SFA). The force structure has shifted to adopt the Regionally Aligned Force (RAF) concept, "Engagement" may emerge as a seventh war fighting function, and the testing of Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs) may yield future programmed fielding. This reexamination of US SFA is occurring simultaneously with a reinvigorated commitment to preparing the joint force for traditional major combat operations. Where these two foundational military imperatives intersect is of both contemporary and historical relevance. Do the SFA lessons drawn from the unconventional warfare focus of the post-9-11 paradigm hold true across the spectrum of conflict, or are there special considerations for SFA in support of traditional warfare? In December of 1941, following years of American-led SFA, the Japanese invaded the Philippines and forced the withdrawal of its defending forces. In 1950, following years of American-led SFA, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) invaded the Republic of Korea (ROK), forcing a defensive retrograde to Pusan. A comparative analysis of these two case studies may yield lessons for contemporary SFA in support of traditional major combat operations.

Contents

Acronyms

AMIK	American Mission in Korea
AOR	Area of Responsibility
DOD	Department of Defense
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
FECOM	Far East Command
FSF	Foreign Security Forces
GCC	Geographic Combatant Command
HN	Host Nation
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JDN	Joint Doctrine Note
KMAG	Korea Military Advisor Group
KPA	Korean People's Army
MDA	Mutual Defense Act
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDA	National Defense Act
NSC	National Security Council
PMAG	Provisional Military Advisor Group
RAF	Regionally Aligned Forces
ROK	Republic of Korea
ROKA	Republic of Korea Army
SC	Security Cooperation
SFA	Security Force Assistance
SFAB	Security Force Assistance Brigade
UN	United Nations

USAFFE	United States Armed Forces Far East
USAMGIK	United States Army Military Government in Korea
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WPO	War Plan Orange

Figures

Tables

Introduction

The US Armed Forces is currently redefining its approach to Security Force Assistance (SFA). The Army force structure has shifted to adopt the Regionally Aligned Force (RAF) concept, "Engagement" may emerge as a seventh war fighting function, and the testing of Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs) may yield future programmed fielding. This reexamination of military SFA is occurring simultaneously with a reinvigorated commitment to preparing the joint force for traditional major combat operations.[1] Where these two foundational military imperatives intersect is of both contemporary and historical relevance. In December of 1941, following years of American-led SFA, the Japanese invaded the Philippines and forced the withdrawal of its defending forces. In 1950, following years of American-led SFA, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) invaded the Republic of Korea (ROK), and forced a defensive retrograde to Pusan. A comparative analysis of these two case studies may yield lessons for contemporary and future SFA in support of traditional major combat operations.

In more recent history, the US military left Iraq in 2009 following six years of SFA. It built an army that was supposed to be able to defend its sovereignty from external threats, only to see its initial defenses fail and much of its territory fall into the hands of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Iraq is the most recent example of SFA failure but it might not be the last; Russia's violation of Ukrainian territory and China's island building in the South China Seas illustrates the provocative nature of near peer competitors as they seek to undercut the international norms of the contemporary strategic environment and challenge the competing sovereign claims of other nations.[2] Accordingly, the United States Government considers SFA a critical part of its national strategy in support of its military alliances and partnerships to counter

[1] US Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review: 2014* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), VII.

[2] Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy: 2015* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 10.

these threats. The aggressive nature of these threats is also proof that preparing partners for the potential of traditional major military operations to defend their sovereignty is still very relevant in this day and age.

Given these circumstances, lessons and continuities drawn from SFA past shortcomings may have bearing on the application of SFA today and in the future. In preparation for major military operations in both the Philippines and the ROK, the onus of security and military cooperation efforts to train and equip these two militaries fell on the United States. In each case the enemy was well defined, the enemy's intent to invade was clear, there was a defense plan in place, and expectations for success were high. So why did the United States fail in its SFA efforts to prepare the Philippines and the ROK to defend their sovereignty through traditional major military operations? Moreover, are the reasons for failure in these case studies synonymous with the traditional reasons for failure associated with the latest unconventional warfare paradigm, or are there unique traditional warfare threads worth extracting?

Whether labeled "implementation divorced from policy", or "theory disconnected from reality," the primary harbinger of failure in an SFA strategy supporting a Foreign Security Force's (FSF) ability to conduct traditional combat operations is the inability to adapt to dynamic deviations in strategic direction. Put another way; SFA failure occurs when the strategy's "means" lose contact with its "ends." US SFA efforts in support of the Philippines and ROK defenses will serve as the case studies to analyze this strategic breakdown.

SFA is a top priority in support of US national policy and strategy development. It is a critical military competency that will continue to be weighted in future force organizational development and a critical activity that supports security interests through the development of partner capabilities for self-defense, and interoperability in multinational operations.[3] This study

[3] US Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy: 2015* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 12.

will seek to build on the already large and increasing amounts of literature on SFA by providing an analytical perspective focused on US SFA shortcomings in traditional major combat operations. It is possible that SFA lessons drawn from recent wars in the post 9-11 era are insufficient to cope with the different challenges of traditional warfare. The purpose of this study is to draw lessons from the comparison of two historical case studies of SFA strategy that failed to prepare FSFs to defend their homelands from invasion. Additional findings that pertain to SFA writ large but outside the scope of major combat operations will be considered as well.

SFA is an essential component of overall US security strategy. It is a subset of Security Cooperation (SC), which involves all Department of Defense (DOD) interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific US security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation.[4] Nested within SC, joint doctrine defines SFA as the strategic use of the military instrument of national power that seeks to enhance the capabilities and capacities of a partner nation or regional security organization through training, equipment, advice, and assistance.[5] Lastly, US Army doctrine defines SFA as the unified action to generate, employ, and sustain local, host-nation, or regional security forces in support of a legitimate authority.[6] The divergence in joint and Army SFA

[4] Joint Publication (JP) 1-0, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), I-15.

[5] JP 1-0, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, I-4.

[6] Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 1-13, *Security Force Assistance*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), I-2. Security Cooperation activities are undertaken by DOD to encourage and enable international partners to work with the US to achieve strategic objectives. It includes all DOD interactions with foreign defense and security establishments, that involves all DOD interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific US interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to a Host Nation (HN). SC is an amalgamation of all the means by which DOD encourages and enables other countries and organizations to work with the US through Service/joint operations and activities to achieve strategic objectives. SC has an overarching functional relationship with Security Assistance (SA), Foreign Internal Defense (FID), SFA, Security Sector Reform (SSR), and all DOD security related activities.

definitions is representative of the need for unified SFA doctrine; a need embedded in the evolving approach that marked the first lines of the study.

There are no “cookie-cutter” SFA strategies; a national, regional, and country specific strategy is theoretically developed, approved, and operationalized to meet the unique challenges inherent to the defense capabilities and capacities of a specific nation through concrete SFA efforts. These strategies are frequently prone to taking on a life of their own as the security environment, national security objectives, priorities, and resource constraints of both the United States and a partner nation undoubtedly evolve over time. The use of SFA as part of an overall strategy to attain national security objectives through major combat operations is the fundamental theoretical framework through which this monograph will progress; the contrast between conventional and unconventional warfare will serve as a conceptual framework to further deduce and isolate SFA implications relevant to major combat operations.

When the US military prepared its allies in the Philippines and the ROK for defensive operations to repel invasion its expectations for success were miscalculated. Three hypotheses guide this study to understand why. First, it is possible that the United States did not fully understand or appreciate the scope and intentions of the threat that it and its partners faced. Second, if the threat was accurately understood, it is possible that US SFA strategy was not sufficient to generate the combat power necessary to defend against that threat. Third, if there was no disparity along the lineage between understanding and execution, there may have been a purposeful assumption of risk.

Seven research questions are used to uncover evidence to determine if these hypotheses are supported. First, what were the US national strategic objectives in each case study and did they change over time? Second, what was the nature and scope of the threat anticipated in each case and were assessments accurate? Third, how did the United States use SFA to generate combat power to counter the perceived threat? Fourth, what was the defensive plan for combat power employment? Fifth, did US partners perform to task and plan? Sixth, why did the initial

defense of the Philippines and the ROK fail? Seventh, why were expectations for success so high?

Limitations of this monograph include classification sensitivities; there will be no classified sources used, classified analysis conducted, or classified conclusions drawn in this study. Additional limitations include access to the breadth of literature available, constraints on page count, and the brevity of time allotted to the study.

The focus of this monograph is Phase 0 and Phase I SFA in preparation for major traditional combat operations, thus, there comes a point in both case studies that necessitate temporal delimitations.[7] The combat performance of the Foreign Security Forces (FSF) will be assessed but only as far as the initial invasions warrant.[8] The natural delimitation in the Korean Conflict is the establishment of the defense at Pusan. At this point the ROK Army (ROKA), Korea Military Advisor Group (KMAG), and the reinforced support of the United States and United Nations (UN) take hold and change the complexion of the conflict. The Japanese seizure of Corregidor in 1942 serves as the equivalent temporal delimitation for the Philippines case study for the same reasons discussed above. A second delimitation is a focus on ground forces. Although SFA efforts in both cases incorporated the air and sea domains, given the limitations imposed on this monograph, it will be referenced sparingly and only when essential.

The primary assumption guiding this research is that the US military will continue to conduct SC and SFA operations in the future, and that these efforts will consider the renewed

[7] JP 5-0, *Joint Operational Planning*, III-42. Joint Operations incorporate six phases; Phase 0– Shape; Phase I – Deter; Phase II – Seize the Initiative; Phase III – Dominate; Phase IV – Stabilize; Phase V – Enable Civil Authority. Phase 0 activities are performed to deter potential adversaries and to assure or solidify relationships with friends and allies. Phase I activities deter undesirable adversary action by demonstrating the capabilities and resolve of the joint force.

[8] JDN 1-13, *Security Force Assistance*, vii. FSF are organizations and personnel under HN control that have a mission of protecting the HN's sovereignty from internal as well as external threats.

focus on major traditional combat operations as well as the trends taking shape in the international strategic environment.

This study is organized into seven sections. Following the introduction is the literature review which will provide the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical logic of the study. Next the methodology section will outline the focused structured comparison approach of the study. This will be followed by two case studies. The first case study will analyze US SFA in the Philippines leading up to the Japanese invasion in WWII, and the second case study will analyze US SFA in the ROK leading up to the Korean People's Army (KPA) invasion of the ROK in 1950. Each case study will uncover evidence seeking to answer the seven research questions proposed previously. Following the case studies will be the findings section which will provide a comparative analysis accounting for continuities and contingencies between the case studies and account for the uniqueness of SFA in conventional combat operations compared to irregular warfare. The seventh and final section will be a conclusion that will synthesize the findings into contemporarily relevant SFA lessons for preparing partners for major traditional combat operations.

Literature Review

Five sections comprise this literature review and establish the framework for research and analysis in this monograph. The first section defines and describes the role of SFA within the broader national security framework. The second section examines the role of strategy for achieving national or theater security objectives, highlighting the use of SFA as part of an overall strategy. The third section describes the fundamental differences between traditional and irregular warfare and seeks to differentiate between them in terms of its potential implications for SFA. The fourth section reviews the contemporary SFA focus on irregular warfare in the post-911 era, and the fifth and final section examines the role and importance of FSF assessments as a determinant of risk in an SFA strategy.

Each era of history has its own unique context, and accordingly its own SFA paradigm. Over the last two centuries SFA has fallen into six general categories: 1) Military advising as a tool of modernization; 2) Military advising as a tool of nation building; 3) Military advising for economic purposes or penetration; 4) Military advising as an ideological tool; 5) Military advising as a counterinsurgency tool; 6) Military advising for fun and profit: the corporate approach.[9] These conceptual boundaries are not mutually exclusive, and their categorical utility is directly related to national interests, objectives and end-states. Generally speaking, SFA preparing FSFs for major combat operations would fall into category four, however recent conflicts point to all six categories as playing a prominent role.

Despite the importance of SFA to national security and national military strategies, the US Armed Forces does not have an official joint doctrinal manual to guide its efforts. Historical and contemporary SFA experience, literature, analysis, and single-service doctrine converged into the working, evolving and unofficial Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 1-13 to be that guide. JDN 1-13 provides goal-oriented attributes of an SFA-trained FSF which are listed as: competent, capable, sustainable, committed, and confident.[10] It further describes SFA imperatives that provide fundamentals for achieving those SFA goals. The imperatives are: understand the operational environment, ensure unity of effort, provide effective leadership, build legitimacy, synchronize information, sustainability, support HN ownership, incorporate principles of good governance

[9] Donald Stoker, *Military Advising and Assistance: From Mercenaries to Privatization, 1815-2007* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 3.

[10] JDN 1-13, *Security Force Assistance*, III-3. Competent; meaning competence across all levels, ministerial to the individual soldier, and across all functions (operational, enabling, sustaining, and institutional). Capable and sustainable; meaning the FSF is appropriately sized and effective enough to accomplish missions, is sustainable over time, and resourced with HN capabilities. Committed; meaning that the FSF is committed to the survival of the state and security of its people, to the preservation of the liberties and human rights of citizens, and to the transition of power. Confident; meaning that the FSF has confidence in themselves and their abilities, that the citizens have confidence in the FSF, that the HN government has confidence in the FSF, and that the international community supports the FSF. Accountable; meaning the FSF is accountable for their use of power within a framework of rule and law, and are accountable to its citizens.

and respect for human rights; link security and justice, foster transparency, and do no harm.[11] These FSF attributes and SFA imperatives are in theory mutually supporting, but they must be realistically tailored to consider the partner and the overall SFA strategy to be viable.

The primary theoretical framework for this monograph is strategy, which amongst its various definitions, interpretations, and theoretical constructs is generally known to be the design and alignment of ends, ways, and means. The use of US SFA (means) to generate FSF combat power capable of executing major combat operations (ways) to satisfy national security objectives (ends) is the theoretical strategic model in use in this monograph.

Contemporary national strategies prioritize building the capacities of partners as the basis for long-term security.[12] Subordinate to national strategies, is the theater strategy that should be informed by the means or resources available to support the accomplishment of its designated end states.[13] A Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) employs theater strategy to align and focus efforts and resources to mitigate and prepare for conflict and contingencies in its Area of Responsibility (AOR).[14] It designates ends as the desired strategic outcomes or end states, ways as the methods, tactics, and procedures used to achieve the ends, and means as the resources required to achieve the ends, such as troops, weapons systems, money, will, and time. The risk assumed in a strategy is often associated with the means allocated against a particular way, thus

[11] JDN 1-13, *Security Force Assistance*, III-5. The imperatives are self-explanatory but some need further elaboration. Sustainability consists of two major components: the ability of the US and other partners to sustain the SFA activities successfully, and the ability of the HN FSF to sustain their capabilities independently over the long term. Additionally, supporting HN ownership requires an understanding of HN interests, politics, and agenda; all of which interacts with, and potentially counteracts US SFA strategy.

[12] Derek S. Reveron, *Exporting Security: International Engagement, Security Cooperation, and the Changing Face of the U.S. Military* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 48.

[13] JP 5-0, *Joint Operational Planning*, II-7.

[14] Ibid., II-8.

the ends must be reasonable given the means available.[15] Figure 1 depicts the shaping of theater security strategy.

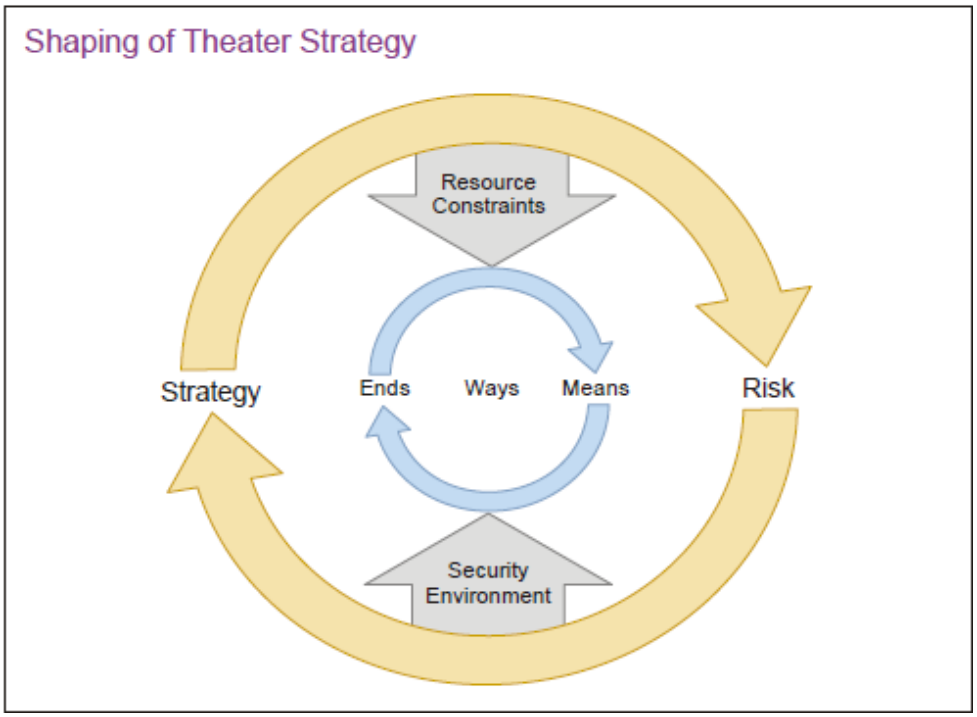

Figure 1. Shaping of Theater Strategy. Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Operational Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), II-8.

Where strategy diverges from its seemingly doctrinal clarity is in its dynamism. Strategy is a continuous effort to maintain a position of relative advantage; it is continuous and evolving.[16] Most critically, any successful strategy must sufficiently align its ends, ways, and means to see it through while simultaneously adapting it to expected and unexpected changes that occur both in the environment and amongst the actors involved. Since strategy is dynamic, the alignment of means to ends must be flexible, adaptive, and dynamic as well. The seeds of strategic failure are sewn when the means are not sufficiently adjusted to meet the demands of changing ways or

[15] Ibid., III-11.

[16] Everett C. Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principles in the Space and Information Age* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

ends. “The state or military that can most quickly adapt, and then integrate change into its strategy and operation, is the one that will reap a relative advantage.”[17]

Although JDN 1-13 is “pre-doctrinal”, it provides a strategic framework that incorporates the most recent compilation of generally agreed upon fundamentals for conducting SFA, including doctrine, guidance, and best practices from recent SFA doctrinal publications and lessons learned.[18] Its model for SFA is depicted in figure 2. The model depicts the means, ways, and, ends for integrating SFA into an overall strategy. The “way” of “major combat operations”, and “end” of “deter/defeat” external threat are depicted on the top, signifying the gravity of both.

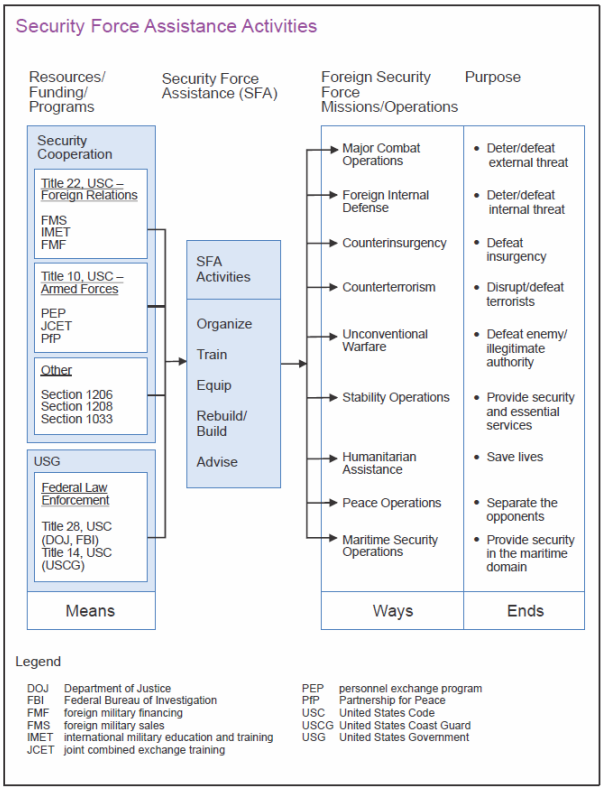

Figure 2. Security Force Assistance Activities. Joint Doctrine Note 1-13, *Security Force Assistance* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), III-12.

[17] Ibid., 131.

[18] JDN 1-13, *Security Force Assistance*, i. Pre-doctrinal means that the JDN is considered a part of the initiation stage of the joint doctrine developmental process. SFA does not have a dedicated JP as of yet, but in recognizing the importance of SFA to the joint force, the JDN was published to fill the doctrine gap until an official SFA JP has been published.

Major combat operations, also known as conventional warfare, large-scale combat, or traditional warfare, is characterized as a violent struggle for domination between nation-states or coalitions and alliances of nation-states.[19] It is further characterized by offensive and defensive operations conducted against enemy centers of gravity focusing on maneuver and firepower to achieve operational and strategic objectives.[20] On the other hand, irregular warfare is characterized as a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population.[21] An enemy using irregular methods will typically endeavor to wage protracted conflicts in an attempt to exhaust the will of their opponent and its population.[22] Ultimately, SFA requires unique considerations for each form of warfare.

The delineations between the two forms of warfare can blur, change, or merge into notions of hybrid warfare that many believe will be the future face of war.[23] Nonetheless, even if combined in a hybrid form, the conceptual notion of each remains distinct and requires different resources in each case to defeat an enemy. In the irregular form, the enemy emphasis on protraction to create exhaustion generally means the time frame of the conflict is much longer and less intense. The extended time-frame and generally low level of intensity conceivably means that there is more time for an SFA force to develop, implement, and even experiment with a strategy. It is also likely that the SFA strategy will be less reliant on equipping and training an FSF with modern equipment capable of overpowering an enemy force. Lastly, legitimacy of the security

[19] JP 1-0, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, I-5

[20] Ibid., I-5.

[21] Ibid., I-6.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Mary Kaldor, "In Defense of New Wars," *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, art. 4 (March 7, 2013), accessed November 1, 2016, http://doi.org/10.5334/sta.at. Analysts and commentators like Kaldor believe that in the era of globalization, a "post-Clausewitzian" type of warfare will take place in the form of a mutual enterprise fought by varying combinations of state and non-state networks.

force in the eyes of the population is essential. JDN 1-13 advises that "leaders, planners, and practitioners at all levels who integrate SFA activities into SC planning efforts must consider how each action may affect popular perceptions, and focus activities that enable the legitimacy of the HN government and FSF."[24]

In contrast, the intensity and gravity of traditional military operations requires different considerations. The general goal of a military force is to prevail against another military force as quickly as possible to conclude hostilities in a manner favorable to attaining a political objective.[25] Much of how traditional warfare is fought changes from epoch to epoch as technology, armament, and other factors change, but certain immutable principles hold true through time.[26] There is no need to review them all, but to emphasize a few. 19th century Prussian theorist, Carl Von Clausewitz simply stated that a superiority of numbers is the most common element in victory; translated further for any era, it is essential to possess the relative strength to win.[27] The implication for an SFA strategy that seeks to prepare a partner nation for traditional combat operations is to properly train, advise, and equip a force with the requisite strength to overcome the relative strength of its external enemy. A second immutable principle of traditional warfare that transcends any era is surprise. Surprise is relevant in any form of warfare but its logic in traditional warfare emphasizes speed and secrecy.[28] The implications of time for a traditional warfare SFA strategy in contrast to irregular warfare is the necessity to get it right the first time; strategies of gradualness or experimentation can prove insufficient.

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[24] JDN 1-13, *Security Force Assistance*, III-5.

[25] JP 1-0, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, I-16.

[26] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare; Theory and Practice.* (London: Praeger, 1964), xii.

[27] Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard, and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: University Press, 1984), 194.

[28] Clausewitz, *On War*,198.

The dominant theme in JDN 1-13, as well as the majority of its predecessor doctrine is the emphasis on stability operations aimed at internal threats. "SFA activities are primarily used to assist an HN in defending against internal and transnational threats to stability (i.e., supporting foreign internal defense [FID], counterterrorism, counterinsurgency [COIN], or stability operations)."[29] This is further emphasized in JDN 1-13's preface detailing supplementary doctrine: "This JDN is designed to supplement the approved joint doctrine contained in many Joint Publications (JP) including JP 3-0, Joint Operations; JP 3-24, Counterinsurgency Operations; JP 3-22, Foreign Internal Defense; JP 3-26, Counterterrorism; and JP 3-07, Stability Operations." This focus appeared fitting given the trends of the post-9-11 paradigm, but shortly after this doctrine note was released, and as noted previously, the US trained Iraqi Army faced an external threat that quickly overwhelmed it and captured large swaths of territory across its country.

Among the key lessons to emerge during the "War on Terror" or "Long War" SFA paradigm was the need for US advisors to have extensive language skills, cultural training, and the need to adapt US organizational concepts, training techniques, and tactics to local conditions; the lesser importance being on technical and tactical skills training.[30] Much of the SFA literature describes obstacles related to language and culture, but it is difficult to attribute overall SFA mission failure to lack of cultural awareness or language training. Furthermore, it begs the question about an oft cited cause of SFA failure that may err more towards myth than fact; building foreign militaries in the model of the US military. JDN 1-13 notes that, "While it is

[29] JDN 1-13, *Security Force Assistance*, vii. FID is the participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in the programs of another government to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to their security. It is separate from SFA but under the umbrella of SC.

[30] Robert Ramsey, *Advising Indigenous Forces: American Advisors in Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador; Global War on Terrorism Occasional Paper 18* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006), iii.

important to assist HN forces to develop professionally, a mirror image US model may not be the optimum solution for some FSF, because of sociocultural factors."[31] SFA failure concretely attributed to the imposition of a US model on an FSF does not exist in the literature.

A prominent issue permeating the military literature of the post 9-11 era is that SFA lessons in Korea (post-1950), Vietnam, and El Salvador, were lost to time and forgotten as the bitter taste of difficulty and failure was replaced by desires to prepare for the next conventional war. Since these lessons were not captured in doctrine, they had to be relearned the hard way when the United States faced similar unconventional warfare SFA scenarios in Iraq and Afghanistan.[32] This is an important point; by focusing on conventional warfare post-Vietnam, the US military convinced itself to forget the hard lessons learned through bloodshed. The question is, did it relearn all of the forgotten lessons while engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan, or just some of them?

There is currently a seemingly singular focus for what constitutes SFA in the post 9-11 era on unconventional warfare. This singular focus of building an army to conduct irregular warfare is captured in Figure 3. The figure depicts a slide presented by General David Petraeus in an SC presentation to the Combat Studies Institute in 2006. As presented, the ability of the Iraqi Army to conduct counterinsurgency warfare was the only goal of the SFA strategy at that time (the same Iraqi Army that would face invasion from ISIS a few years later.) Also significant in the figure is the slide's depicted purpose; the assessment of progress made by the Iraqi Security Force towards a transition of responsibility. This brings the literature review to its last section; that of FSF assessment and its potential impact on SFA strategy.

[31] JDN 1-13, *Security Force Assistance*, III-5.

[32] Ramsey, *Advising Indigenous Forces*, iii.

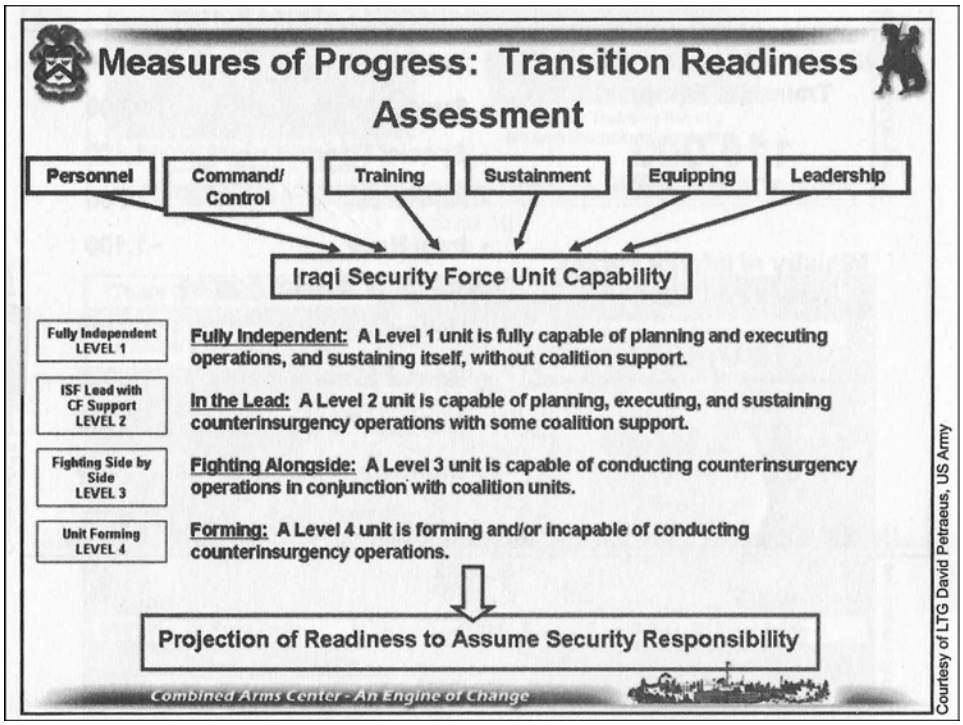

Figure 3. David Petraeus, Keynote Address Slide, Security Assistance: U.S. and International Historical Perspectives; The Proceedings of the Combat Studies Institute 2006 Military History Symposium (Fort Leavenworth; Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006), 18.

Deliberate strategic efforts are constrained by a lack of omniscience; however, whether a strategy is deliberate or emerging, the more fact-based, and less-assumption based a strategy is, the better chance it has at employing the proper means and succeeding. In SFA, assessments of FSF capabilities often blur that fact/assumption line. Assessment is the continuous monitoring and evaluation of a situation and progress of an operation toward mission accomplishment.[33] To reference Figure 3 again; merely because a coalition entity designated a particular Iraqi Security force as "Level 1" qualified does not mean it is objectively capable of "planning and executing counterinsurgency operations, and sustaining itself, without coalition support." This is a

[33] JP 5-0, *Joint Operational Planning*, III-44. Assessments involve deliberately comparing forecasted outcomes to actual events to determine the overall effectiveness. Generally, assessments ask two fundamental questions: Is the organization doing things right, and is the organization doing the right things? Assessments identify opportunities and requirements for course correction resulting in modification to plans and orders. Current doctrine uses Measures of Performance, and Measures of Effectiveness as part of a process of continuous assessment to determine whether desired effects are created to support achievement of objectives.

subjective designation influenced by a myriad of contextual factors such as pressure to succeed, timeline for transition, Relief in Place operations, etc. Assessment frameworks are so dynamic in the post 9-11 SFA era, that separate research on the topic would prove unwieldy. For the purposes of this monograph, the emphasis is on the subjectivity of the process and where the ultimate responsibility resides. The onus rests with the senior military commander and his/her overall capabilities assessment informs overall strategy and their understanding of risk and potential for failure. Inaccurate or misguided FSF assessments can serve to reaffirm or "double-down" on the supposed efficacy of a failing SFA strategy.

Methodology

This monograph will utilize the focused and structured comparison approach methodology to evaluate the Philippines and ROK SFA case studies. This section will describe the methodology, introduce the cases and outline the research questions that will guide the analysis.

The structured focused approach and comparison is a method that isolates certain aspects of the historical case studies, structures general questions that reflect the research objective, and standardizes data collection to enable systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings.[34] The research objective in each case is to determine where along the lineage from strategy development to implementation and tactical execution did US SFA fail to prepare the Philippines and the ROK militaries to defend their countries.

United States Armed Forces Far East (USAFFE) built and assisted an army in the Philippines that failed to repel the 1941-42 Japanese invasion during WWII. Nine years later, the US Army and the KMAG built and assisted the ROKA to defend its sovereignty from invasion by the DPRK and also failed. In each case the enemy was well defined, the enemy's intent to invade

[34] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, "The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison," in *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 67.

was clear, the purpose of the trained military was explicit, there was a defense plan in place, and expectations for performance and success were high.

Seven research questions will be used to uncover evidence to determine why these SFA efforts failed. To reiterate overall expectations in terms of the hypotheses, it is expected to be likely that there was a misinterpretation of FSF capabilities and combat power that resulted from disparities in the ends, ways, and means of the US SFA strategy. This research opines to prove that the causes for these disparities in each case may have some fundamental continuities between them, that those continuities may have bearing on future SFA in support of major combat operations, and that they may stand apart from contemporary notions of SFA failure born of the recent unconventional warfare era. This section will discuss what each research question expects to uncover and how it supports the research. Questions one and two establish the strategic context. Questions three and four focus on the SFA plan and execution. Questions five and six focus on the defense plan and execution. Question seven analyzes expectations for success.

First, what were the US national strategic objectives and did they change over time? This monograph expects to determine what the United States hoped to accomplish in each case to establish the strategic lineage within which the miscalculations occurred. It is expected that the strategic objectives changed over time. This research question will provide the foundational framework to begin assessing the progression towards execution of the defense.

Second, what was the nature and scope of the threat anticipated and were assessments accurate? This monograph expects to determine that the nature and scope of the threat was well known, and that it was not a matter of "if" an attack of the Philippines and the ROK would occur, but of precisely when and where. This question furthers builds upon the first research question to establish the causal framework from which the SFA strategies can be researched and assessed.

Third, how did the United States use SFA to generate combat power to counter the perceived threat? The research in support of this question will likely uncover details that describe the SFA line of effort, means employed, resources allocated, and priorities ordered in support of

each of the SFA missions will serve to support one of the hypotheses proposed. It will begin to trace discernable disparities between strategic end-states and implementation of ways and means

Fourth, what were the defensive plans for combat power employment? This research question seeks to uncover evidence that describes the design of the Philippines and ROK defense plans and determine any root causes for failure prior to turning attention to partner nation performance. This monograph expects to find some foundational defects between partner capabilities and expectations of performance essential to proper execution of the plan.

Fifth, did the FSFs perform to task and plan? This monograph seeks to evaluate the performance of the FSFs as they executed their prepared defenses. Expectations are that the FSFs did not perform to task and were in fact set-up for failure. The reasons for the poor performance will help to determine where the break in the lineage from strategy formulation to tactical action was most impactful.

Sixth, how did SFA contribute to the failure of the initial defenses? Was it a failing of understanding, strategy, implementation, tactical execution, or a combination thereof? Relevant to this question is the determination of whether combat power was ever or could have ever been generated through SFA to an appropriate level for any defense plan to succeed.

Seventh, why were expectations for success so high? This research question expects to uncover evidence that expectations for success were high because of the existence of authoritative subjective assessments pertaining to FSF capabilities that were perhaps divorced from reality. Whether these assessments were legitimate claims or misguided will help to better assess why the failures occurred.

The data and evidence collected will comprise of both primary and secondary sources. Authoritative training plans and directives from USAFFE and KMAG, as well as Congressional reports and Department of State reports will be used where available and relevant

Using the structured and focused comparison approach, this monograph will use seven research questions to compare evidence of SFA efforts in preparing the Philippines and the ROK

for major traditional combat operations. The questions will seek to establish the strategic setting, determine SFA strategy, assess FSF employment and performance, and analyze SFA shortcomings. The findings of each case study will then be compared to determine if there are discernable continuities that lead to SFA failure in support of traditional combat operations. Resultant continuities discovered in the case studies and outlined in the findings will then be compared with contemporary irregular warfare lessons to determine unique traditional warfare considerations.

First Case Study: The Philippines

This monograph will now explore the use of SFA as part of the US effort to prepare the Philippines to defend against the Japanese invasion of 1941. It will begin with an overview of the case, establishing a timeline of critical events broken into three phases. Phase I covers the events and conditions prior to the establishment of USAFFE in July 1941, Phase II covers the events between the establishment of USAFFE and the Japanese invasion in December of 1941, and Phase III covers the period between the invasion and the Japanese seizure of Corregidor in May of 1942. Following the case overview will be the uncovering of evidence that answers the seven structured focus questions that guide the analysis of this case.

Overview of the Case

Phase I is defined by the implementation of an SFA strategy that emphasized eventual Philippine independence, HN legitimacy, and HN control of FSF from 1934 to July 1941. In 1934, after 36 years of US colonial rule, the US Congress passed the Tydings-McDuffe Act, paving the way for Philippines independence following a transition period as a US commonwealth.[35] Subsequently, the Philippine National Assembly passed a National Defense

[35] Louis Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), 5. The commonwealth "transition period" allowed for the President of the United States to call into service the armed forces organized by the Philippine Government.

Act (NDA) in 1935 which embodied a plan proposed by General Douglas MacArthur (serving as military advisor to the Philippines), calling for a small regular army modeled after the US Army, a conscription system, a ten-year training program of two classes a year to build up a reserve force, a small air force, and a fleet of small torpedo boats capable of repelling an enemy landing.[36] Since the Philippines would eventually become independent, the plan assumed that there would be no US Army forces in the islands in 1946, reinforcing Philippine national integrity in as much of the administration of the armed services as possible.[37]

Phase II is defined by Philippine Army activation, mobilization, and new strategy development as the prospects of war increased. In July of 1941 Japan occupied naval and airbases in southern Indochina effectively surrounding the Philippines. MacArthur was appointed Commanding General on July 27, 1941 of the newly formed USAFFE and President Franklin Roosevelt approved an executive order calling the military forces of the Commonwealth into active service of the United States.[38] MacArthur began mobilization of the Philippine Army on September 1, 1941 gradually calling the ten reserve divisions into service one regiment from each division at a time, and anticipating completion by December 15, 1941. The gradualness was to maintain the Commonwealth's overall defense program and national integrity while

[36] Ibid., 9. General MacArthur and the new president of the Philippine Commonwealth, President Quezon worked together to plan for a Philippine National Defense System that would seek to defend the islands at the coasts with mobile forces and minimal US support. The very premise was at odds with War Plan Orange and with policy makers and politicians in Washington who favored total US withdrawal and abandonment or a limited defense. The aid and support that was provided to the Philippines would fall into line with War Plan Orange until 1941.

[37] Ibid., 14. The development of the army, air corps, and torpedo boat fleet was slow. There were many challenges, including creating a strong officer corps, training, language barriers, poor discipline, training facilities and equipment were non-existent, and there was a major shortage of personal equipment. Phase I was also marred by diverging interests. The seven-year time frame naturally provides for ebbs and flows; differences between each country's national interests, as well as internal divisions certainly contributed to SFA difficulties. From 1939-1941, President Manuel Quezon and the Philippine National Assembly de-emphasized defense program opting for a neutrality policy in the event of war and the US War Department failed to subsidize the Philippine Army as MacArthur requested.

[38] Ibid., 17.

simultaneously mobilizing and training the Philippines Army.[39] However when war came, not a single division was completely mobilized and there was rampant disorganization.

In October of 1941, MacArthur reviewed the RAINBOW 5 and WAR PLAN ORANGE 3 (WPO-3) plans that had existed and been modified for decades in accordance with overall US strategy in the case of war. MacArthur deemed the plan inadequate, passive, and pessimistic, favoring instead an active mobile defense forward at the beaches. In early November, 1941 the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) approved MacArthur's new optimistic plan and gave him the highest priority to see it through. By late November MacArthur declared his forces ready for any eventuality.[40]

Phase III is defined by the execution of the defense. The Japanese began bombing the Philippines on December 8, 1941 destroying half of the Philippines air force on the ground. USAFFE was caught between plans and was not situated for either WPO-3 or the new plan. The Japanese rapidly achieved air superiority, the Philippine defense at the beaches crumbled, and by December 23, MacArthur recognized that his plan to defend at the beaches failed.[41] MacArthur abandoned his plans for the defense of Luzon, ordered a withdrawal to Bataan and Corregidor, and relocated the Asiatic Fleet and Far East Air Force to Java and Darwin 1500 miles away from Manila.[42]

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[39] Ibid., 25.

[40] Ibid., 72.

[41] Ibid., 166. The original supply plan for WPO-3 was cancelled when MacArthur chose to fight it out on the beaches and he made no contingency to revert to the original concept.

[42] Ibid., 170. On December 26, Manila was officially declared an open city. US and Filipino forces fought valiantly during the retrograde enabling the eventual hold on Bataan and Corregidor to last longer than expected, but by February 8, additional Japanese troops from China poured in to finish the job and MacArthur under orders from Washington left for Australia. On April 9, General Edward King of the US II Corps surrendered all troops on the Bataan peninsula and Corregidor fell one month later.

First Research Question: What were the US national strategic objectives for the Philippines?

The US strategic objectives in the Philippines evolved from 1934 to 1941; changing significantly in the latter half of 1941. Initial US strategy in the case of war was to minimally defend, delay, and assume the Philippines as a tactical loss to buy time for the US war machine to mobilize and for the Pacific fleet to make their way across the ocean to liberate it.[43] This strategy changed when USAFFE was established in July 1941, and MacArthur began to formulate a new concept for a forward and active defense that would in turn impact overall strategy in the Pacific.

There are four critical factors that coalesced to form the changing US strategic objectives for the Philippines prior to the onset of WWII in the Pacific. First, its symbolic importance; the Philippines was still a commonwealth of the United States and Americans considered it an extension of US territory. Second, the independence movement; the Philippines was on the road to complete independence and the United States sought to protect that path where feasible. Third, its perceived strategic importance, which was considered low until General MacArthur raised it and prioritized it after taking command of USAFFE. Lastly, the perceived defensibility of the Philippines, which evolved in direct relation to its perceived strategic importance; favoring at first a limited strong-point defense before committing to a large mobile active defense.

When the Japanese attacked the Philippines in December 1941, it was still a commonwealth of the United States, and although it was on the road to independence, it was still considered a US territory. Since 1898 and Commodore Dewey's victory over the Spanish, the Philippines was a symbol of American power and influence in Asia and its eventual defensive stand in WWII would inspire nationalism and a call to arms.[44] In addition to the American public's perception, many important American officers rotated through the Philippines, devoting

[43] Ibid., 61.

[44] James Birdseye "Japanese and Philippine-American Logistics: The Philippine Dilemma, 1935-1942" (PhD diss., University of Alabama, 1993), 21.

time, blood, and sweat to its defense and progress; most significant of whom was General MacArthur who had a long history in the Philippines, bestowing upon it a level of importance and personal ownership not necessarily in line with traditional US strategic thinking.

Setting the conditions for eventual independence in 1946 were the US Tydings-McDuffe Act of 1934 and the Philippines NDA of 1935. The US Tydings-McDuffe Act provisioned for full Philippine independence after a ten-year transition period as a US Commonwealth. The NDA provided for a regular force of 10,000 men and a reserve force that was expected to reach 400,000 by the middle of 1946, organized into ten commonwealth military districts. Since the Philippines would eventually be independent, the plans were based on the assumption that there would be no US Army forces in the Islands.[45] In 1936, MacArthur said "the underlying principle was to create a defensive force of such strength and to take advantage of the terrain's enormous defensive advantages, so as to make an invasion so costly in lives and money that no country who accepts the opinions of its military staff would willfully attack the Philippines."[46]

The perceived strategic importance of the Philippines evolved dramatically. WPO was a strategy that originated in the beginning of the twentieth century based on the assumption that the Philippine islands were un-defendable and would require relief operations. The plan had a long of history of development, modification and debate; especially as it considered the growing possibility of a two-front war.[47] It eventually called for a "Europe first" strategy, assuming a defensive posture in the Pacific and Far East and recognizing Germany as the main enemy should

[45] Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 11. Despite the provision for the large army, and the Philippines being an archipelago, the NDA made no provision for a Navy. It instead sought to establish a small off shore patrol and small air force for seacoast defense by 1946 with the capability to "compel hostile forces to approach cautiously and in small detachments."

[46] Ibid., 11.

[47] Birdseye, "Japanese and Philippine-American Logistics: The Philippine Dilemma, 1935-1942," 22. WPO was modified after the Philippines NDA of 1935, and its latest version prior to the conflict, WPO-3 embedded in the RAINBOW 5 plans prepared by the Joint Planning Board, was world-wide in its provisions and conformed to agreements made with the likely allies, most importantly Britain.

the United States join in the war against the Axis.[48] WPO already embraced the likely loss of the Philippines, but the "Europe First" 1941 version RAINBOW accepted outright the loss of the Philippines, Wake, and Guam**.**

Despite the growing possibility of war with Japan, Congress had been reluctant to spend in preparation, and as the war seemed more imminent, spending priorities became contentious. The demand for planes and weapons was great and the supply was limited. Hawaii, Alaska, and Panama formed a strategic triangle whose defense was considered essential to the safety of the continental United States so those requirements were filled first. The Philippines was only one of many bases that needed reinforcing and defensive upgrades, and in line with the RAINBOW plans, was not deemed to be a high priority.[49]

Perceptions of the Philippines began to change when MacArthur was recalled to active duty to command USAFFE.[50] With MacArthur in charge and other factors like the growing potential of air power, there began to churn an optimistic view in the War Department that the Philippines could be successfully held.[51] This optimism in July and August of 1941 for potential defensive success raised the fervor of strategizing a defense of the Philippines that could actually defeat an invasion and prevent Japanese domination of the western Pacific.[52] MacArthur rejected the RAINBOW Plan because it failed to recognize either the creation of a high command for the Far East or the mobilization of the Philippine Army, and urged that the "citadel type defense" of

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[48] Kent R. Greenfield, "The Decision to Withdraw to Bataan," In *Command Decisions,* 151-172 (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1959), 156.

[49] Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines,* 14. Until 1940, the American and Philippine defense was deemed completely inadequate to defend the Islands from the onslaught of a major power.

[50] Catherine Porter, "Philippines Enlarging Preparations for National Defense," *Far Eastern Survey* 9, no. 6 (March 13, 1940), 70–71.

[51] Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 31. The success of the Army's B-17 operations in Europe and its high potential for utility in the Pacific induced this optimism.

[52] Ibid., 18

Manila Bay in WPO-3 and RAINBOW plans be changed to an active defense of all the islands in the Philippines.[53] The reinforcement of the Philippines was then also given the highest priority in the War Department.[54] MacArthur's overconfidence coupled with the complete backing of the War Department fed off each other reinforcing reciprocal misconceptions for tactical success that directly influenced overall strategy.

Second Research Question: What was the nature and scope of the threat anticipated against the Philippines?

US intelligence accurately depicted Japanese capabilities and predicted the general plan for invasion. Actual Japanese strength dedicated to the Philippines operation turned out to be less than USAFFE's plan assumed.

In December 1941, most of Japan's resources were dedicated to ongoing operations in China, Manchuria, Korea, Formosa, and Indochina, leaving only a small fraction available to execute operations against the Philippines, Malaya, Netherlands Indies and against the US Pacific Fleet.[55] The Japanese 14th Army commanded by General Masaharu Homma was tasked with taking the Philippine Islands, however the Philippines invasion was only a secondary component in the overall Japanese offensive which prioritized Malaya and the Netherland Indies.[56]

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[53] This was accepted by the War Department in early November, 1941, solidifying the new top priority of the Philippines defense. The rationale behind the increased importance of the Philippines, as stated by General Marshall, was the result of the alignment of Japan with the Axis, followed by the outbreak of war between Germany and Russia. As realistic as Marshall's rationale was, the impetus for the deviation in strategy to prioritize the defense of the Philippines was conceived and lobbied for by MacArthur; thus, unlike in the original WPO-3, the plan played a larger part in informing strategy than strategy had in informing the plan.

[54] Ibid., 18. MacArthur was given latitude to reorganize as he saw fit, including near instant approval for men and supplies requested over September and October of 1941.

[55] Ibid., 54. At the beginning of December, 1941 the total strength of the Imperial Japanese Army was 51 divisions, a cavalry group, 59 brigade-size units, and an air force of 51 air squadrons organized into area commands scattered throughout the Far East, as well as ten depot divisions in Japan.

[56] Ibid., 56. The 14th Army consisted of the 16th and 48th Divisions, the 65th Brigade, 5th Air Group, and elements of the 11th Air Fleet and 3rd Fleet.

Both WPO-3, and MacArthur's revised defense plan rested on similar rather accurate assessments of Japanese strength and intentions. Planners believed that the Japanese would send an expedition of 10,000 men to capture Manila and its harbor defenses, that it would be undertaken with secrecy and without declaration, and that it would occur in the dry season in December or January. They expected early bombardment to destroy American air power, followed by a joint, ground, air, and naval effort supporting simultaneous, feinted, and secondary landings to spread the defenses thin, and they expected the main effort to be concentrated on Luzon.[57]

On 24 November, USAFFE recognized that a US agreement with Japan was unlikely and that "a surprise movement in any direction, including attacks on Philippines or Guam was a possibility."[58] As negotiations were terminated, it was US policy that if war were to occur, Japan would have to commit the first overt hostile act. During the last week of November, USAFFE was alerted and told to take appropriate defensive measures against the possibility of a Japanese invasion of the Philippines.[59] Although the exact timing of the invasion was not predicted for 8 December, USAFFE had an accurate understanding of Japanese intentions and capabilities, and was prepared for imminent hostilities. Lack of understanding or appreciation of the threat was not a contributor to strategic failure.

[57] Ibid., 61. It was also assumed that the Japanese would have extensive knowledge of the terrain and US Filipino strength and dispositions, as well as receive support from the 30,000 Japanese in the Islands.

[58] Ibid., 71.

[59] Ibid., 72.

Third Research Question: How did the United States use SFA to generate combat power to counter the perceived threat?

Since 1898, eighty percent of the $1.6 billion in US expenditures in the Philippines was in support of the Philippine Army.[60] The Philippine Army was the largest single element available to defend the Philippines, and included one regular army division, and eleven reserve divisions.[61] Each division was authorized three regiments and an artillery regiment. The infantry regiments of the Philippine Army were modeled after their triangular counterparts in the United States with three rifle battalions, an anti-tank company, a headquarters company, a service company for logistics, and a medical company.[62] Each battalion and line company also followed a triangular organizational pattern.

Proper equipping, as in most SFA scenarios, succumbed to issues of cost and priority. Before the Commonwealth soldiers were federalized by the United States in August 1941, they purchased and fielded the economic but dated Enfield rifle from the War department. Upon federalization, the equipping of Philippine units with more advanced equipment was a matter of priority, and the War Department directed that production go to US units first and foremost.[63] The artillery regiments were equipped with obsolete weapons purchased from surplus Allied stocks, and every infantry and artillery regiment severely lacked motor transport and ammunition when the war started.[64] To magnify the endemic issues of equipment shortfalls and the fielding of

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[60] Catherine Porter, "The Philippines as an American Investment," *Far Eastern Survey* IX, no. 19 (September 25, 1940): 219–25, 220.

[61] Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 10. Divisions were the foundational tactical unit at 7,500 men with arms and equipment suitable to the economy and terrain of the Philippines. The NDA provided for a regular force of 10,000 men and a reserve force that was expected to reach 400,000 by the middle of 1946 divided into ten commonwealth military districts.

[62] Birdseye, "Japanese and Philippine-American Logistics: The Philippine Dilemma, 1935-1942," 112-113.

[63] Ibid., 116-117.

[64] Ibid., 120-121.

archaic weapons was their lack of utility in Philippine terrain. Philippine army units had only flat trajectory guns instead of howitzers that could fire on a high arc; this proved mostly ineffective in the jungles of the Philippines.[65] Naval and air components proved to be inadequate as well.[66]

Manning and mobilization was a serious issue as the Philippine army prepared for war. MacArthur's mobilization plan called regiments up to service one by one from each division during the latter half of 1941. The first was ordered to assemble on September 1, the second on November 1, and the third on December 9.[67] Each division was authorized 7500 men, and although they were supposed to be led by Filipino officers, in the summer of 1941 the Commonwealth had only half of the officers it needed. To fill the void, American officers and staffs commanded the Philippine reserve divisions, and the Filipino officers that did assume key positions mostly lacked the requisite training and know-how to supply and train their units.[68]

Despite all the weaknesses of the Philippine Army in training, manning, equipping, it did possess a strong national will to resist.[69] Whereas the focus on maintaining national integrity as part of the Philippines defense strategy likely impeded its speed and progress during mobilization, it is also likely that it fostered ownership and served to reinforce Filipino national pride and will

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[65] Ibid., 123.

[66] Ibid., 134-140. MacArthur did not neglect either the Philippine Air Force or the Philippine Navy and considered them essential to his defense force, however neither was built to capacity or used effectively. The US Asiatic Fleet was "little more than a sacrificial lamb to the façade of defense" possessing neither the bases nor the units to deter let alone defend. The Philippine naval component that was originally designed to be small in the 1935 designs fell woefully short of fifty torpedo boats, and possessed only two at the onset of hostilities. The Philippine Air Force had some of the best pilots on the Allied side, organized and trained by Filipinos (a successful vignette of military autonomy), and qualitatively more experienced than their American counterparts in the Philippine Army Air Corps. However, the Army Air Corps overlooked these assets when the Philippine Air force was federalized, possibly due to supposed US racial superiority in piloting and technical skill.

[67] Ibid., 127.

[68] Ibid. A common thread amongst the reserve divisions is that the further away a unit was from Luzon the more problems it would have meeting the basic supply needs of the troops.

[69] Ibid., 129.

to resist. This is a tension with respect to traditional combat operations; where urgency is high, the preservation of HN ownership may need sacrificing in favor of more centralized US control.

Fourth Research Question: What was the defensive plan for combat power employment?

Under the original WPO-3 the mission of the Philippine garrison was to hold the entrance to Manila Bay and deny its use to Japanese naval forces, sufficiently concentrating limited combat power at the decisive point, and avoiding over-extension. There was no intention that American troops would fight anywhere but in central Luzon.[70] In MacArthur's revised joint RAINBOW plan, the Philippine Coastal Frontier, which had been defined as consisting of Luzon and the land and sea areas necessary to defend that island, was redefined to include "all the land and sea areas necessary for the defense of the Philippine Archipelago."[71] In effect, this gave MacArthur authority to defend all of the Philippine Islands.

General MacArthur's new plan divided US and Philippine Army troops into five forces making use of all ten partially-mobilized Philippine Divisions, the US Philippine Division, Philippine Scout units, and newly assigned US units.[72] They were the North Luzon Force, South Luzon Force, Visayan-Mindanao Force, Harbor Defense Force, and Reserve Force.[73] This was a stark reorganization and remission from WPO-3. Instead of the order to withdraw to Bataan when

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[70] Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 62.

[71] Ibid., 62.

[72] Ibid., 59. The two major commands in the Philippines were the Asiatic Fleet and USAFFE. USAFFE had three basic elements: the American troops which included the Philippine Division, Philippine Scouts, and coastal defense forces, the Far East Air Force which included the Philippine Army Air Corps, and the Philippine regular and reserve units. American troops totaled 40,000; 22,000 of which were combat troops.

[73] Ibid., 69. The Northern Defense Force was commanded by General Wainwright with four infantry divisions and one cavalry regiment, the Southern Defense Force was commanded by General Parker with two infantry divisions; The Visayan-Mindanao Force was commanded by General Sharp with three infantry divisions; the reserve force was commanded by General MacArthur's headquarters with two infantry divisions including the US Philippine division; the Harbor Defense Force was commanded by General Moore.

overmatched in the old plan, the most important order given in the new defense plan, was to "defend the beaches at all costs," and that there will be "no withdrawal from beach positions."[74]

Fifth Research Question: Did the Philippine Army perform to task?

The Philippine troops did not perform as well as MacArthur had hoped or expected. "The performance of the untrained and poorly equipped Philippine Army troops was the clearest sign of disaster….at the first appearance of the enemy they had broken and fled to the rear in a disorganized stream."[75] "It was the quality not the quantity of his troops that was responsible for the failure to halt the Japanese. Until the invasion, General MacArthur seemed to have had the greatest confidence in the fighting qualities of the Philippine Army reservists, and in the ability of his forces to hold the Central Luzon plain; actual events on the ground forced a revision of the view."[76]

The Philippine troops had not been adequately prepared for combat either by training or doctrine.[77] Aside from training shortfalls, history frequently demonstrates a steep learning curve when non-combat tested force faces an experienced fighting force, as was the situation here. "MacArthur never publicly acknowledged the poor performance of the Army he had done so much to organize and train, but it was noted by every American who served with the Philippine Army units and is the central fact that emerges from a study of the first days of the campaign."[78]

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Greenfield, "The Decision to Withdraw to Bataan," 161.

[76] Ibid., 164.

[77] Birdseye, "Japanese and Philippine-American Logistics: The Philippine Dilemma, 1935-1942," 200.

[78] Greenfield, "The Decision to Withdraw to Bataan," 164.

Sixth Research Question: How did Phase 0/Phase I SFA contribute to the failure of the Philippines' initial defense?

Although the focus of this monograph is the use of SFA, no assessment of the failed defense can be made without first acknowledging major tactical events impacting the ultimate outcome in which SFA had little to no tangible role. As demonstrated, the Japanese intent to attack was not a surprise, however, the breadth and simultaneity of the attack across the Pacific was.[79] Even if MacArthur did not adopt his new plan and used WPO-3 to hold out in Manila Bay until the US fleet made its way across the Pacific to counterattack, the attack at Pearl Harbor removed that possibility and ensured that even if the Philippines defense was able to hold out longer than the Japanese anticipated, no US reinforcements would be available to commit to its retention.

More directly relevant to the failure of the Philippines defense was the destruction of a large part of the Far East Air Force on Clark Field at the opening of hostilities. There is much controversy surrounding this event which is beyond the scope of this monograph, but the ramifications of it are indisputable. Despite the imminent threat, the Far East Air Force's bombers were grounded, destroyed, and in one stroke, the Japanese removed the single greatest obstacle to their invasion.[80] The power of the B-17s that helped to inspire the War Department's renewed optimism in the potential to hold the Philippines was lost as an essential element of combat power for the remainder of the defensive campaign.

The SFA strategy in the Philippines had an original intent and purpose aligned with an original plan for defense. The change in the plan and purpose of the defense did little to alter the constraints imposed by the initial SFA strategy, which left a large deal of autonomy in the Philippine military for supply and mobilization, and left them ill-equipped due to years of neglect.

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[79] US planners failed to recognize the Japanese capacity to attack so many targets all at once, creating multiple dilemmas for US response. The Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor effectively cut off the Philippines from any potential reinforcements in support of their defense.

[80] Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 90.

Although this autonomy could be considered a prudent measure if the defense succeeded, inspiring confidence and self-substantiated legitimacy in its military institutions, it was risky given the enemy situation and the change in defensive scheme. Not one of the ten Philippines divisions were fully mobilized when the Japanese attacked.

Training, doctrine, and equipping are integral issues to any SFA strategy and this was no exception. The significant deviation in the defensive plan required changes in training and "certification" that USAFFE and the Philippine Army just did not have time to execute properly; even with American reserve division commanders. Given the disaster at Clarke airfield, it is impossible to provide a counterfactual of the Philippine defense actually holding at the beaches against such a formidable enemy. Regardless, the Philippine Army, as trained, tasked, and arrayed, was not suited for the new task; the means and the ways were not aligned once the ends of the strategy deviated.

Seventh Research Question: Why were expectations for success so high?

General MacArthur was the driver of optimism in this case. His personal ownership of the development of the Philippine Army undoubtedly contributed to his optimistic assessment of their capabilities. His closeness to the situation likely precipitated a loss of objectivity and perspective. MacArthur completely overestimated Filipino readiness and convinced the War Department that they would be ready for any eventuality, "confident that we could resist any effort made against us."[81] The uptick in "splendid support" from General George Marshall (Chairman of the JCS) and the War Department likely helped to grow his optimism.[82] Arrogance likely also played a role, as "even the most ardent critic would concede that professionally the

[81] Carol M. Petillo. *Douglas MacArthur The Philippine Years* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1981),199.

[82] Ibid., 199. General MacArthur was quoted as stating that "no field commander could have received better support from a Chief of Staff than I have from Marshall."

General never tasted defeat either in war or peace prior to December 1941."[83] MacArthur was known to have a sense of his own infallibility, was confident that he could solve any problem, dismissed opposition, rejected advice, and rationalized his ways.[84] One thing can be certain; his optimism was not grounded in reality.

Second Case Study: Korea

This monograph will now explore the use of SFA as part of the US effort to prepare the ROK to defend against the DPRK invasion of 1950. It will begin with a brief overview of the case, establishing a timeline of critical events broken into three phases. Phase I covers the events and conditions from when US troops entered Korea at the end of World War II until it transitioned responsibility to the newly formed ROK. Phase II covers the events between the inauguration of the ROK on August 15, 1948 and the DPRK invasion on June 25, 1950. Phase III covers the period between the invasion and the defense of Pusan beginning on August 4, 1950. Following the case overview will be the uncovering of evidence that answers the seven research questions that guide the analysis of this case.

Overview of the Case

Phase I began on September 8, 1945, when US troops entered Korea, accepted the surrender of Japanese forces in Korea and established the US Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK).[85] With the Soviets occupying North Korea, the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) attempted bilateral negotiations to come to an agreement on the unification and independence of Korea which ended in failure and reference of the issue to the

[83] Jeffrey Furbank. "A Critical Analysis of the Generalship of Douglas MacArthur as Theater Commander in the Pacific during World War II" (master's thesis, Air War College, 1990), 8.

[84] Ibid., 6.

[85] US Department of State. *The Conflict in Korea; Events Prior to the Attack on June 25, 1950*. Far East Series 45 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1951), 13.

UN. From 1945 to 1948 US forces defended the 38th parallel and built a Korean Constabulary to perform internal security for the newly formed ROK. The US strategic objectives include the containment of communist expansion, unification of Korea, and reduction of its overextended worldwide military presence.

As the United States was debating the wisdom of pulling out of Korea, on March 10, 1948 the JCS authorized the augmentation of the Korean constabulary from 20,000 to 50,000 along with the transfer of equipment and vehicles from withdrawing US units as a stop-gap measure to enhance Korea's internal defense and ease the burden of the US military.[86]

Phase II began on August 15, 1948, when the Government of the ROK was inaugurated and the USAMGIK was terminated.[87] ROK President Syngman Rhee and General John Hodge (USAMGIK Military Governor) signed an Interim Military Agreement to bridge the gap between US military responsibility and the establishment of ROK defense forces by establishing a PMAG (Provisional Military Advisor Group) to train the constabulary to perform traditional military functions. The ROK Constabulary faced a myriad of internal rebellions amidst the US withdrawal, forcing the US to delay their timeline. On November 30, 1948, the new Korean Congress passed the ROK Armed Forces Organization Act which finally converted the paramilitary constabulary brigades into ROK Army divisions as part of a complete national defense organization.[88]

On March 23, 1949, President Harry Truman approved National Security Council (NSC) Resolution 8/1 to complete the US withdrawal from Korea on June 30, 1949 and abided by the JCS recommendation to withhold commitment of US air or naval support in case of a conflict in

[86] Young-woo Lee, "The United States and the Formation of the Republic of Korea Army; 1945 1950," (PhD diss., Duke University, 1984), 133.

[87] US Department of State, *The Conflict in Korea; Events Prior to the Attack on June 25, 1950,* 17.

[88] Lee, "The United States and the Formation of the Republic of Korea Army; 1945-1950," 142.

Korea.[89] Despite President Rhee's desire to build an army 100,000 strong, NSC Resolution 8/1 provided for military assistance and equipping of a 65,000-man army, and gave permanent status to the PMAG to train and advise it. In June, 1949, the withdrawal of US tactical troops from Korea was completed, and in July, the KMAG was established.[90]

Phase III began on June 25, 1950, when the KPA launched a general invasion of the ROK, resulting in a massive ROKA retrograde south. The UN passed a resolution calling for a cease fire and another providing for assistance. The United States led the UN troop contributing nations into Korea to stave off the ROKA collapse, and the KPA's initial advance was repelled at Pusan following UN reinforcement.

First Research Question: What were the US national strategic objectives for the Republic of Korea?

As the United States commenced its reign as one of two hegemonic superpowers, Korea was only one of the "free" countries reliant on it for aid and assistance in the post-WWII era. The United States was forced to weigh its commitment to Korea against the competing requirements of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Greece, Turkey, Iran, the Philippines, and other countries endangered by communism.[91] Furthermore, in Asia specifically, the occupation of Japan, and the commitment to the defense of Formosa following the communist victory in China held higher strategic priority than Korea. Additionally, conventional wisdom was that Korea held

[89] US Department of State, *The Conflict in Korea; Events Prior to the Attack on June 25, 1950,* 6-7. Among the conclusions of NSC 8/1 was that while the US would have to provide continuing technical, economic, and military assistance to the ROK, the effectiveness of that support should not be reliant upon the retention of US troops in Korea, or any commitment that would draw the US into war. This was also in light of a recent UN General Assembly resolution that recognized the independence of Korea, and recommended "that the occupying Powers withdraw their occupation forces from Korea as early as practicable."

[90] US Department of State, *The Conflict in Korea; Events Prior to the Attack on June 25, 1950,* 20.

[91] Ibid., 9.

little value in a potential nuclear war scenario.[92] The United States sought Korean unification, first through bilateral negotiations with the USSR, and then through the UN, but ultimately saw Korea as an unnecessary liability.[93]

The United States was looking to withdraw from Korea in order to relieve itself of the financial and military burden, while simultaneously maintaining prestige in the Far East, upholding the Truman Doctrine, and dissuading the Soviets, Chinese, and North Koreans from exploiting South Korean vulnerability.[94] In 1948, the National Security Council advised President Truman of three options; continue the status quo of maintaining military responsibility for Korea, abandon Korea, or extend aid and assistance to train and equip its own security forces.[95] President Truman approved the aid plan "as a means of facilitating the liquidation of the US commitment of men and money in Korea with the minimum bad effect."[96]

When the United States left Korea in 1949, the JCS designed a strategy in Asia based on the assumption "that under no circumstances would the United States engage in the military defense of the Korean peninsula."[97] The JCS strategic view was that any US military commitment of military force in Korea would be "ill-advised and impracticable in view of the overall world situation and the heavy international obligations of the United States as compared with its current military strength."[98] As in most high level strategic decision-making processes, there were

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[92] Lee, "The United States and the Formation of the Republic of Korea Army; 1945-1950," 153.

[93] Ibid., 154.

[94] Ibid., 134. The Truman doctrine was an American foreign policy created to counter Soviet geopolitical spread during the Cold War; also known as containment.

[95] Ibid., 135.

[96] Donald S. MacDonald, *U.S.-Korean Relations from Liberation to Self-Reliance; The Twenty Year Record* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), 5.

[97] Ibid., 156.

[98] Ibid., 158.

dissenters, which in this case included Chief of Staff of the Army Omar Bradley, as well as many members of Congress, who feared that withdrawal of US forces could precipitate a North Korean invasion. The dissenters' premonitions proved prescient, but the questions remained; how viable was the threat of invasion, and how would the ROK defend itself?

Second Research Question: What was the nature and scope of the threat anticipated against the Republic of Korea?

The ROK was faced with three kinds of security challenges; internal communist-inspired revolts, frequent border attacks by North Korean forces, and the potential of an all-out invasion by North Korea.[99] The ROKA spent much of its formative years contending with internal communist-inspired revolts, but its focus for 1949 and 1950 under KMAG auspices was to prepare itself to defend against an all-out invasion. US and ROK intelligence had a rather accurate picture of the KPA's capabilities in the winter and spring of 1950. Furthermore, the Koreans, the KMAG, and the US intelligence community saw the invasion coming; it was not a matter of if, but when.[100]

The DPRK followed a very similar timeline as the ROK. As transfers of authority were occurring in the south, they were occurring in the north; as the US withdrew from the ROK, the USSR withdrew from the DPRK.[101] By June 1950, the KPA contained eight infantry divisions at full strength, two infantry divisions at half strength, a separate infantry and motorcycle regiment, an armored brigade, and five brigades of border constabulary troops; all included, their total strength was 135,000 men.[102] The most significant advantage that the KPA had over the ROKA

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[99] US Department of State, *The Conflict in Korea; Events Prior to the Attack on June 25, 1950,* 9.

[100] Alan R. Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951; They Came from the North* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 43.

[101] US Department of State. *Korea, 1945 to 1948; A Report on Political Developments*, Far East Series 28 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1948), 21.

[102] Robert K. Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War* (Washington, DC: United States Army Center of Military History, 1988), 105.

was their endowment of T-34 Soviet medium tanks and the SU-76 self-propelled tracked 76mm gun.[103] There was no weapon in the ROKA arsenal that could penetrate the armor or turret of a T-34.[104] The KPA order of battle and capabilities were well known in the ROK and US intelligence communities by June 1950.[105] It was assessed, and accurately so, that the KPA had completed all phases of combined arms training at the battalion and regimental level.

Third Research Question: How did the United States use SFA to generate combat power to counter the perceived threat?

The ROK defense forces progressed from a constabulary earmarked for 20,000 men stood up from scratch in 1946, to an augmented constabulary of 50,000 men in February 1948, to an official ROK Army in December 1948.[106] On December 15, 1948, six months prior to the withdrawal of US forces from Korea and 18 months prior to the KPA invasion, the Korean Constabulary officially transitioned into the ROK Army. Following three years of training on purely internal security measures, not only was a new name given to the constabulary, but a new role as defenders of sovereignty was bestowed upon it. In July 1949, eleven months prior to the invasion, the US withdrawal of combat forces was complete and a military advisory mission was established to advise the ROKA to execute this new role.

In mid-November 1945, USAMGIK initiated the steps towards creating a Korean national defense force.[107] In order to prepare for the eventual independence of Korea, the first

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[103] Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951; They Came from the North,* 32.

[104] Ibid., 35.

[105] Ibid., 32. Army intelligence staffs put the KPA's T-34 tank strength at over 100 (by June 1950 final numbers stood at 151 T-34s, and 176 SU-76s). In addition, the Soviets provided the KPA with an aviation regiment's worth of Yak-9s and IL-10s close support aircraft totaling 180.

[106] Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War,* 41.

[107] Grant E. Meade, *American Military Government in Korea* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1951), 78.

Director of National Defense, Colonel Arthur Champeny developed his "Bamboo Plan" to build a 25,000-man constabulary set to activate in 1946.[108] The plan called for one regiment to activate in each of the eight Korean provinces at the rate of one company at a time, to draw equipment from old Japanese cast-off stocks, and to use and train on American doctrine. The young constabulary faced intense internal Korean political turmoil including occasional uprisings, and also dealt with rival competition from the national police. External defense and border security was performed by the US XXIV Corps, which also retained the mission to maintain order south of the 38th parallel in support of the constabulary.[109]

When the United States decided it would withdraw, it was debating the wisdom of whether to establish a new South Korean Army or augment the existing constabulary.[110] The constabulary became the ROK Army in December 1948 amidst considerable disunity including mutiny, defection, political favoritism, and charges of collaboration with the Japanese and communists.[111] Despite the turmoil, the United States committed to equipping and training a 65,000-man six-division army primarily through the KMAG as part of the American Mission in Korea (AMIK).[112]

The new Korean Army received equipment from departing US forces and was supplemented with aid. The ROK was one of many nations receiving US military aid under the Mutual Defense Assistance (MDA) Act of 1949; part of the Truman Doctrine to prevent the encroachment of communism. Of the appropriated $1.3 billion, $10.2 million was allocated to

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[108] Bryan Gibby, "Fighting a Korean War: The American Advisory Missions from 1946-1953" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2004), 36.

[109] Gibby, "Fighting a Koran War: The American Advisory Missions from 1946-1953," 39. The XXIV Corps mission was given low priority with respect to the MacArthur-led occupation of Japan; it was often an afterthought.

[110] Lee, "The United States and the Formation of the Republic of Korea Army; 1945-1950," 134.

[111] Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951; They Came from the North*, 27.

[112] Lee, "The United States and the Formation of the Republic of Korea Army; 1945-1950," 160.

Korea as provision for the 65,000-man army and its current obsolete equipment. The MDA by all accounts was not sufficient to insure an effective defense against invasion.[113] It did not provide for tanks, 155mm howitzers, or other heavy equipment.[114] At the behest of KMAG, AMIK, and the ROK, an additional program was authorized amounting to $9.8 million that provided for aircraft, tanks, and artillery that would bring the ROK security forces to a theoretically satisfactory level of defense. However, the augmented Korean military aid program equipment necessitated new procurements and was only in the initial stages of fulfillment at the time of the North Korean attack.[115]

For a training and advising strategy, General William Roberts, the KMAG Commander, envisioned aligning an American officer to every division, regimental, and battalion commander in the ROK Army in a "counterpart" system.[116] President Rhee recognized the relative shortcomings of a 65,000-strong army to defend itself and grew the Army to eight divisions and 100,000 strong. The KMAG could not provide comprehensive coverage due to the augmentation, and many ROK battalions went unadvised.[117] Battalions and brigades are critical lynchpin organizations in conventional warfare.

A training schedule was drawn up based upon the US Army's Army Mobilization Training Program for wartime training and was tailored to the uniqueness of the ROK Army.[118] The KMAG's mission to organize, administer, equip, and train the Korean Security Forces was

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[113] Ibid., 180.

[114] Lee Suk Bok, *The Impact of US Forces in Korea* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1987), 65. The decision not to include tanks and howitzers was made, in part, because the items could not be fitted into the dollar limitations of the military aid program. The KMAG also believed that the roads and bridges in South Korea did not lend themselves to efficient tank operations.

[115] Lee, "The United States and the Formation of the Republic of Korea Army; 1945-1950," 182.

[116] Ibid., 162.

[117] Ibid., 161.

[118] Ibid., 165.

largely successful despite many impediments to progress. The major obstacles included lack of training facilities, equipment, advisor shortage, and significant guerilla activity that required dedicated security efforts during what would have otherwise been training time. The most significant flaw in the plan according to General Roberts, the one that would not be overcome, was that "time just ran out."[119]

The restraints on the development of the ROKA were significant. As mentioned previously, its strategic priority to the United States was low, its advisory mission was undermanned, and its military aid program was underfunded. The ROKA had no offensive capacity, no armor, no air support, no heavy artillery, no forward supply depots, and lacked the vehicles to be able to provide any sustainable logistical capabilities.[120] In June 1950, South Korean Forces totaled 151,000 men; 95,000 in the ROKA, and the other 56,000 serving in the Coast Guard, Air Force and National Police. [121] Its armament included M3 105mm howitzers, M1 57mm guns, and around fifty M2 or M8 armored cars and tracked vehicles; the ROK Air Force had a negligible assortment of liaison aircraft.[122]

Fourth Research Question: What was the defensive plan for combat power employment?

The defensive scheme was a defense-in-depth along the important road corridors, based on prepared positions and roadblocks.[123] Due to lack of equipment and ongoing internal security issues, the KMAG assessed that it was impractical for the ROKA to deploy along the entire

[119] Ibid., 171.

[120] Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951; They Came from the North*, 24.

[121] Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War*, 106.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951; They Came from the North*, 24.

length of the 38th parallel.[124] Instead, the KMAG recommended that the ROKA occupy a series of strong outposts blocking probable avenues of approach, weighting the approaches to Seoul.[125]

The ROKA's near 100,000 men were divided into eight divisions and one cavalry regiment. The 1st, 7th, 6th, and 8th Divisions were assigned strongpoint sectors along the border along with one regiment from the Capital Division assigned to defending the Ongjin Peninsula in the west.[126] The Capital Division was tasked with defending Seoul, and the 2nd, 3rd, and 5th Divisions were in strategic reserve.[127] The basic mission of the ROKA was to stop any North Korean invasion force north of Seoul; the basic premise of the defense plan was to evacuate the Ongjin Peninsula in the west, for the units west of the Imjin River northwest of Seoul to withdraw to the south bank providing for a natural defense line along the river, and for the reserve divisions in the south to move north and counterattack or reinforce on order.[128]

The terrain favored a defense in depth since the mountains and rivers provided natural barriers that would keep the KPA road-bound and vulnerable to counter-mobility efforts. The terrain was used suitably and the plan might have worked if the ROKA had the proper equipment and training.[129] Nonetheless, the KMAG believed that the ROKA could contain and repel and invasion from the KPA.[130] This feeling was reinforced as the ROKA crushed internal guerilla activity in April of 1950 just prior to the invasion.[131]

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[124] Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War,* 109.

[125] Ibid., 110.

[126] Ibid., 110.

[127] Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951; They Came from the North,* 34.

[128] Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War,* 110.

[129] Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951; They Came from the North,* 34.

[130] Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War,* 110.

[131] US Congress, *House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Background Information on Korea* (81st Cong., 2d sess., 1950. H. Res. 206), 41. The ROKA and police climaxed a winter offensive against

Fifth Research Question: Did the Korean Army perform to task?

After the first week of fighting, the KPA destroyed most of the ROKA and occupied all of the territory north of the Han River. Almost half of the ROKA's 90,000 had been killed, captured, or declared missing, and most of the remaining troops jettisoned their equipment and weapons during the retreat. Battalion and regimental commanders, who went mostly unadvised due to lack of KMAG coverage could not coordinate deliberate and organized retrogrades. Only the 6th and 8th divisions were able to retrograde with their weapons and equipment.[132] Despite occasional local successes (in Seoul particularly), the ROKA could not stand against the KPA artillery and armor supported by good infantry.[133] Despite the valiance of many KMAG officers during the initial weeks of the conflict, there was much confusion as to their role in war as opposed to peace.[134] In addition to the hamstrung SFA effort, this indicated an overall lack of thought given to the realities of actual war if it were to occur. The only thing that saved the ROKA, and the ROK for that matter was US and UN intervention.[135]

Sixth Research Question: How did Phase 0/Phase I SFA contribute to the failure of the ROK's initial defense?

The transition from the constabulary into the ROKA was not met with the requisite US commitment or resources to effectively implement. The result was the willing or unwitting

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northern-supported guerillas operating in South Korea by smashing two guerilla battalions totaling 600 men after they crossed the 38th parallel; this strengthened morale amongst the ROKA.

[132] Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War*, 134.

[133] Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951; They Came from the North*, 95.

[134] Ibid., 121. The Department of the Army had not specified what KMAG's mission would be in the event of war.

[135] Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951; They Came from the North*, 85. The first week of fighting proved all of the optimists wrong. The results of the KPA attack looked as if the Communists had destroyed the ROK until the US committed its own armed forces to save South Korea and managed to do it under the altruistic blue flag of the UN.

permission of significant vulnerabilities to arise in the ROKA defense force that could only be overcome with more time or increased commitment. This vulnerability was ultimately exploited by the KPA.

The lack of SFA commitment is most discernable when compared to the soviet SFA effort to train and equip the KPA. The Soviets were sending thousands of North Koreans to the USSR for specialized training beginning in 1946 while the United States was defining terms of national defense and internal security in South Korea.[136] While US military advisors were assisting the South Korean Constabulary cope with internal security problems from 1946-1949, the KPA developed eight combined arms divisions trained and certified in mechanized maneuver warfare under dedicated and focused Soviet advisors.[137] The KPA was endowed with fighter planes, the renowned T-34 tanks, and superior artillery, whereas the ROK armament was limited to light howitzers, armored cars, no tanks, and no planes.[138]

There is no way to know if any alteration in the US use of SFA would have prevented the invasion or at least avoided the embarrassing tactical defeats of late June 1950 but hindsight always offers possibilities. An earlier establishment of the ROKA, a firmer commitment to train and equip, comprehensive coverage of ROK middle echelons, extended presence of US military capability to deter aggression as the ROKA was developing, or merely more time for the already authorized procurement of tanks, planes, and equipment to arrive may have changed the course of the invasion, delayed it, or with accompanying political developments averted it altogether.

When the United States recognized the imminent threat and the mismatch in capabilities, an adjustment was made and more equipment was allocated. However, even if the tanks and planes made it to the ROK in time, the KMAG would have needed to develop a new and intense

[136] Ibid., 106.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid.

training regimen for mechanized combined arms warfare at a time when they were being asked to downsize their overall manpower.[139] Suffice it to say, the seeds for disaster were sewn when the expedited withdrawal of US troops abandoned an infant ROK Army unable to prepare itself to fight a conventional war against a strong conventional enemy.[140] The talented but token KMAG was not resourced with the money, equipment, or time to build up the short-fall in ROKA capability before the invasion.

Seventh Research Question: Why were expectations for success so high?

Despite evidence indicating significant deficiencies in comparison to the KPA, the KMAG and other Army officials were optimistic of the ability of the ROK to defend itself. General Roberts said the ROKA included "the best doggoned shooting Army outside the United States."[141] Major General Charles Wiloughby, Far East Command (FECOM) G-2 stated "it appears that the South Korean Security Forces are capable of successfully defending against an invasion by the North Korean People's Army."[142] This assessment was further echoed by the Central Intelligence Agency, and was ultimately accepted by General MacArthur, as well as the JCS.[143] It was also testified to on June 13, 1950, when William C. Foster of the Economic Cooperation Administration admonished to the Senate Appropriations Committee that "the rigorous training program has built up a well-disciplined army of 100,000 soldiers…prepared to

[139] Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War,* 112. In April 1950 the Department of the Army directed General Roberts to prepare for the gradual curtailment of the KMAG.

[140] Gibby, "Fighting a Korean War: The American Advisory Missions from 1946-1953," 4.

[141] Lee, "The United States and the Formation of the Republic of Korea Army; 1945-1950," 188.

[142] Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951; They Came from the North,* 84.

[143] Ibid., 99.

meet any challenge by the North Korean forces."[144] More realistic assessments like those of the US ambassador to Korea carried little weight once the unjustified optimism took hold.

There is no complete accounting for the optimistic assessment that took hold with Roberts and carried through the Army to the President's administration.[145] Successful internal security operation certainly played a role, but it could also have been a desire to appear successful, an unwillingness to admit failure, organizational pressure to appear successful, or pure rationalization and perception of a subjective truth. No matter the reason, the optimistic assessment of the ROK Army to defend itself from invasion was divorced from reality.

Findings and Analysis

This monograph will now review the findings from the structured focus questions in each case study and determine if the hypotheses were supported, not supported or if there was a mixed outcome. Table 1 provides a summary of the findings, and Table 2 provides a summary of the analysis.

[144] US Congress. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and Committee on Armed Services, Mutual Defense Assistance Program, 1950, Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Armed Services, 81st Cong., 2d sess., 1950. 79-80.

[145] Lee, "The United States and the Formation of the Republic of Korea Army; 1945-1950," 189.

Table 1. Case Study Findings

Findings		
Research Question	**Philippines**	**Korea**
1 - What were the US strategic objectives and did they change over time?	Yes change: 1- Delay/Forfeiture 2- Defend and Hold	Yes change: 1- Contain/Defend with US 2- Contain/Defend with ROKA
2 - What was the nature and scope of the threat, and were US assessments accurate?	Hostile/ Imminent/ Accurate Highly capable Well-equipped	Hostile/ Imminent/ Accurate Highly capable Well-equipped
3- How did the United States use SFA to generate combat power?	US Model; HN tailored/ HN independence and autonomy prioritized	US Model; HN tailored/ HN independence and autonomy prioritized
4 - What was the defensive plan for combat power employment?	Change: 1- strong point defense 2- “defend at the beaches"	Change: 1- US border security/ HN internal security 2 - HN border security/ HN internal security
5 - Did the FSF perform to task and plan?	No; not trained or equipped for new mission	No; not trained or equipped for new mission
6 - How did SFA contribute to the failure of the initial defense?	FSF incapable of performing new mission/ low initial commitment; recommitment too late	FSF incapable of performing new mission/ low initial commitment; recommitment too late
7 - Why were expectations for success so high?	FSF assessments divorced from reality	FSF assessments divorced from reality

Source: Created by Author.

The first research question was what were the US national strategic objectives for each country prior to the onset of hostilities? This is a fundamental question in determining overall priority and commitment of US efforts to build and train FSFs. Although the strategic context of each case study was markedly unique, each case demonstrated a trend whereby the United States executed SFA according to an initial strategy, that strategy underwent a pronounced deviation, and the means for executing the changed strategy were not sufficiently adjusted. The United States had to balance each country’s path to independence and sovereignty with its perceived strategic value and defensibility.

For decades, the strategy for the Philippines defense assumed that the islands would likely be forfeited in a major war with Japan. War Plan Orange required a consolidated strong

point delaying defense of Manila Bay to that end. The relatively low priority and commitment of US aid and SFA effort between 1936 and 1941 matched the reality of that strategy. MacArthur's deviation to a new defense plan to hold the Philippines required new means to execute it and more time than he had available. This deviation in strategy was the critical moment where an army built and trained to do one thing was asked to do another precipitating failure.

Although seeking to unify the Koreas, the United States considered South Korea a strategic liability in the face of a nuclear war with the USSR or China. The US military defended South Korea from North Korea, Russia, or Chinese communist incursion, and built a Constabulary to guard against internal communist threats. A continued devaluation of Korean strategic importance amidst a military drawdown underwrote the decision to withdraw the US military and stand up the ROKA. When the US military withdrew, it left a vulnerable army ill-prepared to meet the demands of conventional warfare. The deviation from internal security force to sovereign defense force required radically new means to execute and the lack of priority and commitment from the United States was not sufficient to see it through.

The second research question asked what the nature and scope of the threat anticipated against each country was? This question determines if there was a failure in understanding the purpose towards which SFA sought to generate FSF combat power. Each case study revealed markedly similar circumstances regarding the external threat. Both cases revealed accurate assessments of the capabilities and intentions of the threat. In each case, invasion was thought to be likely and imminent; the only unknown was the exact timing. The United States used SFA to generate FSF combat power to counter a well-defined enemy. The only significant difference between case studies was the multidimensional threat in Korea that forced SFA efforts to focus on internal security first, before transitioning the ROKA's responsibilities to include defending from external aggression upon the US withdrawal.

The third research question asked how the United States used SFA to generate combat power to counter the perceived threat. Again, despite differing contexts and situations, the

underlying trends were markedly similar. Issues of changing US priorities, US commitment, perceived strategic value, roads to independence, HN government legitimacy and preferences, defensibility, and understanding of the threat coalesced into doomed SFA strategies. Both armies were modeled on the US Armies of the time and further molded to better serve the character and identity of each country. Both armies were saddled with varying degrees of equipment shortfalls, lack of training resources, cultural learning curves, and language barriers that hindered SFA effectiveness and efficiency. Each nation's respective road to independence resulted in requirements to legitimize HN military efforts by divesting authority and accountability to the HN; this long-term goal competed with the hindsight requirements of major combat operation preparation which generally necessitates more centralization and control of armed forces. Both armies were gradually built and trained with a specific end-state in mind, that end-state changed, and neither army was afforded the time to reach that new end-state. The notion of urgency potentially requiring the sacrificing of HN ownership is counterintuitive to contemporary notions of successful SFA; this is a tension inherent to major combat operations.

The fourth research question asked what the defensive plan for combat power employment was. How was the combat power generated through SFA harnessed in terms of a concrete plan of action? The findings indicate both continuities and incongruities between the case studies. The continuities were in the fact that two armies were positioned to execute defenses that they were ill-prepared and ill-equipped to execute. In the case of the Philippines, the Philippine Army was overextended, logistically ill-prepared, and under-trained to execute the ambitious coastal defense that MacArthur devised. It is feasible to assume however, that the Philippine Army had the training and capabilities to execute the Manila Bay strong point defense that they were initially designed to execute. In the case of Korea, the ROKA was positioned defensively as best as the situation allowed given the continued domestic threat. The defensive plan, as advised by the KMAG, was the best that could be devised in the wake of the US withdrawal.

The fifth research question asked if the FSFs performed to task. Neither army was capable of executing the mission they were asked to execute. Of important note in each case, in comparison to common illustrations of contemporary SFA built armies in Iraq and Afghanistan, was the determination and will to resist. Failure in each case did not emanate from a lack of desire or commitment to the cause. Despite forced withdrawals in each case, there were episodic vignettes of courage under fire and minor tactical successes. The findings also bore out the lack of equipment, lack of training, lack of organizational leadership, and lack of experience that would hinder any army played a significant role. Lack of training and leadership ability under fire was most pronounced at the middle echelons of battalion and brigade who could not coordinate tactical action, and lead to crumbling formations and massed withdrawals. The findings did not indicate however, that the inability to perform to task was resulted from the use of US doctrine, the US organizational model, or due to any cultural divisions that may have fostered performance inadequacies.

The sixth research question asked how Phase 0 and Phase I SFA contributed to the failure of each country's defense? The findings indicate a failure of coherent strategy to align SFA resources with SFA end-states. There are certainly important additional criteria outside of the SFA scope that led to failure in each case such as tactical uncertainty (had the grounded USAFFE air force on Clark Field not been destroyed, there is a chance that air support may have changed the course of the defensive effort in the Philippines), however it was predominantly a case of strategy mismanagement that created exploitable vulnerabilities in each army. Deviations in end-states for each FSF required deviations in SFA resources, commitment, and approach. Each force needed more time to get to the level of training, equipping, and readiness required of them. Each force required more advisory coverage at the critical middle echelons of battalion and brigade. Each SFA strategy may have been able to self-correct had it not been for misguided FSF assessments, which leads to the final research question findings.

The seventh and final research question asks why expectations for success were so high. The findings here are entirely circumstantial but there are interesting continuities between the case studies (and to contemporary SFA efforts.) Each case contained optimistic assessments divorced from reality that took hold at the senior commander level (MacArthur in the Philippines and Roberts in Korea) and each assessment permeated through the senior levels of the military and presidential administrations. Simultaneously, realistic and pessimistic assessments were made at the ground level amongst the advisors. In the Philippines, there was no getting around General MacArthur; his personality and influence directly let to the misinterpretation of combat power. The reason for the optimistic assessment in Korea was harder to uncover. It is feasible that since the KMAG was asked to do the impossible, the only way for the KMAG (and thus the KMAG commander) to be judged as successful, was to convince the authorities that the impossible had been done. The idea that the ROKA was satisfactorily trained and ready is what everyone wanted; reality would have just gotten in the way.

Ultimately, only one of the three hypotheses in this monograph were supported (see Table 2). The first hypothesis sought to prove that the failure in SFA strategy was related to a misunderstanding of the threat. This was unsupported in both case studies as the threat proved to be well understood. The second hypothesis sought to prove that the failure in SFA strategy was related to the inability of the United States to align means with changing ends and ways. This was supported in both case studies as changes to US strategic objectives altered the required capabilities needed of the FSFs; the means were not adjusted to compensate for those deviations. The third hypothesis sought to prove that the deficiencies of the SFA strategy were understood and assumed as risk. This was unsupported in both case studies as misguided assessments of FSF capabilities assumed the potential risk away and reinforced failing strategy.

Table 2. Case Study Analysis

Analysis		
Hypothesis	**Philippines**	**Korea**
1 - The U.S. did not fully understand or appreciate the scope and intentions of the threat	Unsupported	Unsupported
2 - US SFA strategy was deficient in aligning resources to meet objectives	Supported	Supported
3 - Known threat and known FSF deficiencies; accepted level of risk	Unsupported	Unsupported

Source: Created by Author.

Conclusion

Planning for war in an unknowable future is a complicated endeavor, and the ability to anticipate and adapt is directly tied to learning from the past; "the failure to absorb readily accessible lessons from recent history is in many ways the most puzzling of all military misfortunes."[146] The historical lessons of SFA are many and the literature is vast, but it was in the original purpose of this study to harness continuities from two conventional war SFA case studies and distill them from the commonly understood lessons of unconventional warfare SFA. It is from this purpose and resultant research that two threads of conclusions were born. The first thread and original purpose deals with the uniqueness of SFA as a means to generate an FSF capable of successfully conducting major combat operations as opposed to the irregular warfare focus of the current era. Emergent from this focused analysis is a second thread of findings which question the dominant norms and attribution of failure in SFA born of recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

When assessing US SFA for both conventional and unconventional operations, there are trends and issues that generally receive the most attention and are portrayed as the harbingers of failure. The two most common of these threads are the complications stemming from a cultural

[146] Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes; The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 52.

divide, and from building an army in the "American mold." While both historical threads contain degrees of truth, they are generally over-emphasized, and neither are the precipitators of failure that many think them to be; this is especially true in conventional operations.

Culture and language issues are commonalities of every SFA mission the United States (and every other SFA force) undertakes. Unfamiliarity, unpreparedness, language difficulties, lack of cultural awareness, all manifest themselves into a certain level of degradation in an overall SFA effort. This degradation is rarely, if ever, a risk to mission failure. It may impact timelines, effect efficiency, require additional measures to overcome, but there was no historical evidence based in the Philippines and Korea case studies that it necessarily results in the failure of an SFA mission.

The same can be said about designing a defense force based on US military structure or doctrine. In both the Philippine and Korea cases, the blueprints for their respective defense forces were naturally based on US organization and doctrine. The point of departure often missed, is that these organizations were then tailored based on each of the countries diverse make-ups. The KMAG came to learn what it meant to save or lose "face" in the oriental tradition, but no amount of protecting "face" could make up for the lack of tanks against the KPA onslaught.

The real harbingers of failure deserve more attention. Strategy matters. No strategy based in the real world will achieve complete coherence or clarity; the world is just too complex. However, whatever strategy is developed must inform the realities on the ground and vice versa. Means that are aligned to achieve ends for one strategy, must be realigned to account for the changes in a strategy's direction. Precipitous deviations in strategy assume significant risk when the means to achieve its new ends are not realigned. This was the dominant theme in both case studies. A Philippine force, designed, trained, and equipped to execute internal security and a subsequent centralized strong-point defense was suddenly tasked to decentralize and "defend at the beaches." A Korean Army, born of the constabulary, and predominantly focused on internal guerilla threats was then tasked to defend itself without tanks and planes in the face of a

mechanized enemy invasion. These massive deviations in strategy were not accompanied by appropriate deviations in means (time, equipment, men, money, and training.) The blueprint for force design matters very little as a concept unto itself; its meaning is revealed in its intended purpose.

Reality matters. Skewing the assessment of the realities on the ground in order to satisfy lofty expectations of strategy, prove success, arrogance, or a litany of other reasons is a second true harbinger of failure and inciter of failing strategy. In both Korea and the Philippines optimistic assessments divorced from reality were formed at the unit commander level reinforcing unwarranted belief in a failing strategy. This is not unique. Contemporary SFA efforts fell victim to optimistic assessments regarding the efficacy of the Iraqi and Afghan Security Forces. These assessments were generally invalidated in combat, but a major difference in these contemporary unconventional conflicts as opposed to major combat operations is that unconventionally focused SFA forces have the time to fix deficiencies and reformulate SFA strategy; which brings the conclusion to the second thread of findings; conventional versus unconventional.

Time matters. An Army built for internal security purposes as opposed to conventional operations has time on its side; it is not unlimited by any means, but the urgency required to prepare for the existential threat of invasion can hardly be compared. This could possibly mean sacrificing the legitimacy of a host nation and its long term goals to impose the control necessary to expedite certain processes. It could also mean maintaining US military units in a country longer to ensure deterrence as an FSF develops to the appropriate level as deemed necessary by a particular strategy. Time as a critical variable in major combat is further distinguished when it is compared directly to unconventional operations. In unconventional operations, there is time to build, time to reset if required, time to experiment, time to retrain, time to search for answers. This is not to say that time management is not important to unconventional warfare; it is just to highlight the stark difference and the criticality of getting it right the first time in major combat operations.

Relative strength matters. If the United States undertakes an SFA effort to prepare an FSF for conventional operations, it must be prepared to commit itself through all the mechanisms of SC to ensure that nation possesses the relative strength compared to its enemy (or provide the deterrence itself). Shortcomings in strength are universally exploited in traditional combat. Different eras dictate what that strength may look like; i.e. numbers, armaments, technology, domain, etc., however it is the relativity of that strength to the enemy that is essential to the notion of viability in traditional combat.

Echelon matters. SFA in support of a guerilla conflict may give no scope to the middle echelons of battalion, regiment, or brigade and focus its efforts on small-unit leaders and regional commanders, but in more conventional forms of warfare, these middle echelons may prove the critical lynchpins to success.[147] These echelons were not given the coverage they required in the Philippines or Korea prior to major combat. Every soldier was a supposed marksman and every division either had a US commander in the case of the Philippines or a US counterpart in the case of Korea, but given the limited initial commitment, and the lack of time and resources, neither SFA force gave heed to the middle echelons that ultimately crumbled during invasion. SFA in preparation for major combat operations must consider prioritizing "middle management."

Whether conducting SFA for unconventional or conventional operations, it is the purpose or end-state of the trained force (guided by national strategic objectives) that is the sun around which the other elements of strategy must orbit. As Clausewitz points out, "The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive."[148] This notion of purpose and type of war that

[147] Cohen, *Military Misfortunes; The Anatomy of Failure in War*, 26.

[148] Clausewitz, *On War*, 89.

Clausewitz describes bears on SFA in the same manner, however it is not to say that purpose or end-state cannot change; they almost certainly will. The true failure is in mistaking it for something that it is not.

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