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PARALLELISM WITH IRAQ WAR

Counter Insurgency Operations in the Philippines: Parallelism with Iraq War

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Class 58, H100

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March 18, 2008

## Outline

Topic #1: Compare and contrast two counterinsurgency campaigns covered in H100 and analyze the root causes of success or failures in each conflict. Your analysis will identify three critical factors that led to success or failure on the battlefield as well as the overall importance of tactical success in achieving strategic goals. In your conclusion, synthesize the insights gained from your analysis that Soldiers can apply to Global War on Terrorism.

1. Thesis Statement. An easy victory over a splendid little war fought in a foreign soil of the Philippines. Unaware, the United States military found themselves conducting unconventional operations to counter the insurgency. Iraq was a quick victory fought in a foreign soil but has spiraled to an un-winnable war. Two operations waged by the United States. Over a century apart, yet the parallelism is so apparent that learning from the operations with the Philippines might just be the answer to winning in Iraq.

2. Major Points. (Parts of the strategies and conclusions were derived from personally written ethical dilemma paper submitted on December 24, 2007 to the Sergeants Major Course)

a. Keeping it local concept – adaptive and innovative leadership at local level.

b. Going native – success of the COIN is defined by the degree and intensity of indigenous support it is able to secure.

c. Center of gravity which is the American public support and American Soldiers’ resolve.

d. The Iraq War (current situation) - Parallelisms

3. Supporting Points of Evidence.

a. “Policies of Attraction and Chastisement in Action—Mindanao, 1902 – 1904” - (H105)

b. “Full Spectrum Operations—Vera Cruz, 1914” - (H105)

### Abstract

The Philippine War was a “splendid little war” that was waged in a foreign soil. It was quick and victorious; at least, that was what America believed. The sequence of events following America’s decisions in annexing the islands, led to an operation never been encountered by the military. America faced a formidable task that required implementation of new strategies. The Americans faced a new type of warfare called the small arms warfare. It required a protracted approach known as the counter insurgency (COIN) operations which decades later would provide the tactics, techniques, and procedures that will be highly beneficial to future full-spectrum operations of the United States military. Considered as one of the world’s longest running COIN, the Philippines’ struggles gleaned insights of depth and credential to the study of small arms warfare in the American military.

### Counter Insurgency Operations in the Philippines: Parallelism with Iraq War

Iraq is not the beginning of unconventional warfare for the United States military. Insurgency began a century ago in the islands of the Philippines (Niskanen, 2004). A “splendid little war” as it was termed by the policy makers because it was short lived, at least in their eyes (Birtle, 1998). An easy victory over a splendid little war fought in the foreign soil of the Philippines. Unaware, the United States military found themselves conducting unconventional operations to counter the insurgency. Iraq was a quick victory fought in a foreign soil but has spiraled to an un-winnable war. Two operations waged by the United States. Over a century apart, yet the parallelism is so apparent that learning from the operations with the Philippines might just be the answer to winning in Iraq.

### Philippine-American War

The war actually began vast oceans away in Central America, in the country of Cuba. On the night of February 15, 1898, the *USS Maine* was attacked and sunk, killing the 274 men on board. Commodore George Dewey, then the Commander for the Asiatic Squadron, received orders to attack the Spanish *Armada* off the coast of Manila Bay in the islands of Philippines.

On May 1, Commodore Dewey victoriously defeated the Spanish fleet. On June 12, the United States accepted the surrender of the Spaniards and purchased the islands of the Philippines for \$20 million dollars (Deady, 2005). Unbeknownst to the Filipinos, the Americans signed the Treaty of Paris that led to the annexation of the Philippines. This clandestine action angered the Filipinos and more disagreements led to the war.

The power projected by the combined force of American fleets and ground troops were no match for the Filipinos. Realizing that the American forces were too overwhelming, General

Aguinaldo ordered his troops to conduct guerilla warfare (Birtle, 1998). The insurgents deviated from conventional warfare to guerilla tactics to better enhance their disadvantaged situation.

This shift only resulted in the Americans acting more ruthlessly, implementing the policy of chastisement. The Americans began taking no prisoners through the use of strategies such as burning the whole village called “scorched earth”. Other strategies were routinely shooting surrendering Filipino Soldiers, looting, beating prisoners or captures, water cure, death by firing squads, torturing prisoners, and inhumane treatment of suspected guerilla sympathizers.

Filipinos were referred to as savages and were treated in the same way the US treated the Indians in the midst of war between the Americans and the Indians. The United States did not let down in their approach with the locals. Further maltreatment continued in their strategy.

#### Vera Cruz

After the Mexican-American War, the US continued its business interest with Mexico. On April 19, 1914, the Mexicans arrested a group of US Sailors. According to Stewart (2005), the resentment of Huerta towards President Wilson’s lifting embargo to assist Carranza, leader of the Constitutionlists aggregated the arrest of the US Sailors. After much negotiation, the Sailors were released. The Navy Commander demanded an apology from Huerta but Mexico refused. President Wilson retaliated and ordered an invasion of Vera Cruz (Stewart, 2005). As usual, the policy makers in Washington were in disagreements regarding the administration of the city of Vera Cruz. President Wilson did not specify any objective except that there was a need to conduct limited intervention.

US Marines and Soldiers were unified under the command of General Funston, a lesson learned from previous joint operations. General Funston was faced with civil administration.

Learning from the US Army's administration of the "policy of attraction" in the Philippines, he immediately established an administration for civil affairs.

General Funston was a far cry from the Funston who served in the Philippines. Completing the establishment of government, General Funston continued with extensive nation building and pacification. He pursued vigorous civil campaigns to show America's benevolent intentions hoping that it would inspire the Mexicans after the occupation was over. He continued by ridding the city government of corruption and reformed the city's finance administration. He implemented strict sanitation codes, improved the prison system, started a vaccination program, re-opened schools, built an institution to improve the education system. He decreed a campaign eradicating the city of gambling, vices, and drugs. He reinforced his program by punishing Soldiers and Marines who veered off from his doctrines. The most honorable gesture of change by Funston was his adherence to Army policy of respecting native institutions. By the end of his tenure, the city of Vera Cruz had been transformed (Birtle, 1998).

#### Compare and Contrast the Strategies

The policy of attraction and chastisement were only successful when combined but not as a stand alone policy. The policy of attraction, although favored by the American officers, failed to completely subdue the fighting. Mainly because the Filipinos took it as if the Americans were too soft in their dealings and therefore could easily be defeated.

According to Elihu Root, then the Secretary of War, "it is evident that the insurrection has been brought to an end both by making a war distressing and hopeless on the one hand and by making peace attractive", (Stewart, 2005, p. 359). The success of combating the insurgents in the Philippines was mainly because of three strategies that became a foundation for future full-spectrum operations by the United States and not only because of the policy of chastisement and

attraction (Serchuk & Donnelly, 2003). These strategies were also utilized during the Vera Cruz Campaign and were deemed a success.

The first strategy was to keep the fight at the local level (Serchuk & Donnelly, 2003). This meant that there was a need to have innovative and flexible leaderships down at the very bottom of the echelon. Eliminate the bureaucratic policy making and allow the local leadership to employ strategies that are conducive to their area of responsibility. In the Philippines, tactics that were implemented in the Luzon province were not appropriate for the Moro province.

The second strategy is “going native” (Serchuk & Donnelly, 2003). For counterinsurgency to prevail, it was highly dependent on the support that it acquired from the indigenous population whether through policies of attraction or chastisement as evident. Commanders employed some type of “carrots and sticks policy” to entice and cower the Filipinos into submission (Stewart, 2005). The force breached the resistance while positive measures undermined it. Neither would have been effective without the other but finding the balance between coercion and benevolence was very difficult (Stewart, 2005). Winning the hearts and the minds of the locals was the foundation of the strategy. In the Philippines, the northern region was easier to pacify than the Moro region.

The third is the real strategic center of gravity (Serchuk & Donnelly, 2003). The real center of gravity was the American public support and the resolve of both the American people and the Soldiers. As a nation, it had to unite and support the Soldiers fighting. The Nation had to face the fact that counter insurgency was a protracted war. Complacency and disagreements would only have been the defeat of United States’ efforts.

Parallelism with Iraq War

There were numerous significant parallelisms between America's occupation of the Philippines and Iraq. Foremost, America waged war against Spain across the vast ocean and waged "War on Terror" across the vast ocean. During their Philippine occupation, America brought in an exiled national hero to be Philippines' first President. They held an election but battled Filipinos who decried the Americans. The increased conventional tactics were to deter the Americans with hopes that President McKinley will be defeated during the re-election, thus allowing for his rival who was anti-imperialist to win and withdraw the US troops. Ostensibly, America brought in an exiled leader Chalabi to be the Coalition Head of the Government. In Iraq an election was held and insurgents employed unconventional warfare (UW) to deter the Americans and the rest – fill in the blanks.

Secondly, the first Philippine President waged war against America and was later captured and laid arms, but the fighting continued. Subsequently, Americans captured Saddam and fighting continues. In retrospect to the American peoples' support of the war, in the Philippines, they felt that the ideals of American democracy were betrayed. With Iraq, the current thoughts on the war was betrayal of the American people by creating a false rationale for going in to get public support. How did this come about? Simple, President McKinley sold to the American public that the occupation was necessary for the betterment of the Filipino people, but the true reason was a strategic reason to annex Philippines as a power projection platform for future operations with China. In hindsight, the propaganda was to lay foundation of freedom in the center of an antagonistic Middle East; to combat the "War on Terror". But in reality, the reason was more deceiving than that.

Lastly, in the Philippine occupation, the US Army did not waste time in demonstrating their superiority over Aguinaldo's troops. But force may have been sufficient to win the war but not

enough to contain the pacification. The fighting turned into a full blown COIN but US forces learned how to combat this UW. Similarly in Iraq, the upsurge of US forces toppled the remaining remnants of the Republican Army, but not enough “Boots on the Ground” to conduct reconstructions. Insurgency continues to be the biggest threat to the success of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

### Conclusion

The insurgents of the Philippines diligently pursued convincing the populace for support of their political agenda. The insurgents used every avenue available to make their case known. They captivated the populace through an intense persuasion, appealing to their patriotism and nationalism. Their message was simple; a self-governing country. The Philippines should be ruled by its own people and not by some wanton and arrogant imperialistic government.

Today in Iraq, the United States is the one that is vigorously trying to establish a country governed by Iraqis and the insurgents are the ones who aggressively continue to spread fear to the rest of the country. They are barbaric and repulsive. They are coward to say the least. They distort the truth for furtherance of their twisted agenda. The only actualization of their principles is through savagery and violence.

In this realm of “War on Terror”, the United States has a distinct advantage ideologically that never before been isolated in many previous "small wars". The main lesson from both of these wars is that they emerge from other concerns, turned out to be more severe and protracted (enduring) than expected. One thing remains constant, we can not allow the terrorist to win and make Iraq the platform for terrorism. Ensuring Iraq’s stability is the key to the equanimity in that region and the demise of the terrorist groups. Most importantly, we can not allow letting the lives of those great American Soldiers who sacrificed their all, to go in vain!

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