

Running head: COMPARE AND CONTRAST

The Local Civilian Population as an Obstacle or Key to Victory

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CLASS 58

Compare and contrast two counterinsurgency campaigns covered in H100 and analyze the root causes of success or failure 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 the Global War on Terrorism.

Obstacles to victory in counterinsurgency campaigns are not new, but understanding the root causes can equip modern-day Soldiers to succeed in today's complex battlefields.

- I. Introduction: British operations during the American Revolution, and US military actions during the interventions in Mexico (1914-1916) exemplify factors that contributed and ultimately resulted in either successful or failed execution of strategic goals.
- II. Analysis of the factors that led to success and failure in achieving strategic goals, using specific examples provided by past military campaigns.
 - A. British Operations during American Revolution: Three critical factors leading to the success of the Revolutionary Army.
 1. British commanders' goals and lack of a well-defined mission.
 2. Campaign design of the American forces versus that of the British Army.
 3. Despite winning the battles, it is still possible to lose the War.
 - B. American operations during the American interventions of 1914-1916, and three critical factors for success in the Mexico campaigns.
 1. Campaign design of the US Army versus that of the Mexican.
 2. US commanders' goals and clearly defined mission.
 3. Application of current theories on "small wars."
 - C. American operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.
 1. Campaign design of the US forces in OIF and OEF.
 2. Commanders' goals and missions.
 3. Current operations compared to guidelines set forth in the Small Wars Manual.
- III. Conclusion: By synthesizing the lessons learned from past successes and failures of British, Mexican, and US forces, today's Soldiers can gain valuable insight that will help them adapt successfully and creatively to modern-day warfare and the ever-changing battlefields involved in fighting the Global War on Terrorism.

Abstract

By synthesizing the lessons learned from past successes and failures of past British, Mexican, and US campaigns, today's Soldiers can gain valuable insight that will help them adapt successfully and creatively to modern-day warfare and the ever-changing battlefields involved in fighting the Global War on Terrorism.

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The Local Civilian Population as an Obstacle or Key to Victory

Compare and contrast two counterinsurgency campaigns covered in H100 and analyze the root causes of success or failure 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 the Global War on Terrorism.

Obstacles to victory in counterinsurgency campaigns are not new, but understanding their root causes can equip modern-day Soldiers to succeed in today's complex battlefields. In this paper I will cover the following operations and how each one relates to today's battlefield. British operations during the American Revolution, and US military actions during the interventions in Mexico (1914-1916) exemplify factors that contributed and ultimately resulted in either successful or failed execution of strategic goals. By synthesizing the lessons learned from past successes and failures of British, Mexican, and US forces, today's Soldiers can gain valuable insight to help them adapt successfully and creatively to modern-day warfare and the ever-changing battlefields involved in fighting the Global War on Terrorism. I will analyze the factors that led to the success and failures in achieving strategic goals, using specific examples provided by past military campaigns. I will use Mission, Enemy, Terrain, Troops, Time, and Civil considerations (METT-TC) as the bases for understanding why units routinely succeed or fail.

British operations during the American Revolution failed to execute in three critical areas intimately tied to achieving strategic goals. These three areas are (1) having a well defined mission, (2) understanding the local population, and (3) focusing on winning the war as a whole,

and not just individual battles. To analyze this particular example, we must first understand the strategic goal of the British Crown and the importance of following clear objectives. England's strategic goal was to recruit thousands of Loyalists, in order to regain control of the colonies (Stewart, 2005). The Southern territories were considered isolated by the British, and thus if key avenues of approach were successfully blocked, the British—in theory—could regain control of this possible strong point for future mission against the colonists, with a solid platform from which to launch their attacks. At the time, the British forces numbered over 10,000 men, with reinforcements due to arrive in the spring (Stewart, 2005). Traditionally, the timing of operations tends to be the side of the force with the “home field” advantage, and this is even more so the case when dealing with a counterinsurgency opponent. The civil considerations that the British overlooked by assuming that all American colonists would be loyal to the Crown ultimately constituted a great miscalculation on their part, and only served to further strain relationships between the British forces and the colonists. The limitations encountered by the British in America were best articulated our Singapore classmate during his country brief when he stated that “you cannot own what you do not protect” (in reference to Singapore's own eventual independence from British rule).

The British forces had a clear mission, but how they carried out their orders had an effect on the outcome of the war. During the early portion of the Southern theater of operations the British had several tactical victories, but each battle placed a heavy toll on the British forces and without replacements the British were be placed in a position that would rely on the Loyalists fighting to save the British rule in the colonies (Stewart, 2005). Also, after the British won battles and secured the prisoners of war, the British were said to have executed the prisoners (Bicheno, 2003). Thus, the strongest army can lose the war by giving the local population a

reason to rally against occupying forces—even when those forces are a liberating army. A comparison can be drawn from Iraq, as US forces lost major global and media support when prisoner abuse and torture were suspected to have taken place at Abu Ghriab prison, at the hands of US soldiers.

On the other hand, American operations during the Mexican interventions of 1914-1916 hinged on three critical factors for success. Those factors are the following: (1) Campaign design of the US Army versus that of the Mexican, (2) a clearly defined mission and strategy on the part of US commanders, and (3) the successful application of “small wars” theory. The United States had vested interests in a stable Mexican government, and sought to avoid a situation in which it would have to manage the affairs of the Mexican people. However, military forces were sent to Veracruz, Mexico on 21 April 1914 to protect American interests—both political and economic (Woodrow Wilson, 2007). Without going into great detail about the reasons behind the invasion, I will focus on the military counterinsurgency operations the US Army faced during the Veracruz campaign. Once the Army moved into Veracruz, its soldiers found themselves in an environment unfit by modern standards. The commander of the US forces was Brigadier General Funston, and he was given very clear guidance from the State department (Eisenhower, 1993). Those orders were simple: *Hold Veracruz* (Eisenhower, 1993). Commander Funston was an outstanding planner and had his marching orders. However, history tells us he disagreed with those orders and wanted to push towards Mexico’s mainland instead. He evaluated the METT-TC and found that his most important link to success in Veracruz was the civil consideration. It is likely that came to this conclusion after comparing the situation to the approach the British had taken during the American Revolution.

Furthermore, Funston's sound strategic goals and his clearly defined mission enabled him to control the local population without force. Those orders were to include collection of customs and taxes, and the maintenance of order (Eisenhower, 1993). His first order of business was to clean the city of Veracruz, which was unfit by modern standards. The people of this town had suffered from years of disease due to the lack of sanitation, and Funston won many hearts by helping the people (Eisenhower, 1993). Funston also realized that medical doctors treating Veracruz residents, to include the engineering programs to lower the threat of yellow fever, controlled the population better than the heavy hand of military actions would have been able to. The British had not realized that the one advantage the Crown had was the Loyalist—instead, they diminished any chances of receiving local Loyalists' support away by treating all colonists (Loyalists or not) with a rough hand—and by withholding aid to the colonies during this crucial. By this token, the death rate in Veracruz dropped by 25 percent while Funston programs were in effect, but once the American forces withdrew from Veracruz the population went back to its old ways (Eisenhower, 1993). There is a great possibility that this could also be the case once US forces leave Iraq. Will the people of Iraq ultimately revert to the way of life and government they knew prior to OIF, or will they continue on the road to democracy and stability? Only time and the actual withdrawal of US forces will tell. Originally, the forward thinking by the American forces in Veracruz is in line with the current doctrine being used in OIF and OEF and the Small Wars Manual published by the USMC during the early 1940s. This manual gives commanders clear guidelines to fight counterinsurgent operations in future wars.

Now that we understand factors affecting past counterinsurgent movements, let us now focus on current operations and analyze how lessons learned in past battles can help equip modern Soldiers with the knowledge required to fight today.

Current American operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are as complex as any past war or police action taken by the United States military. However, by ensuring that every Soldier understands the mission and the purpose of the operation we can increase the likelihood that the population will continue to support our Soldiers and their plan to rebuild both nations. Campaign designs for US forces during OIF and OEF have changed several times since the original invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. With each change of mission, Soldiers have been given clear objectives and rules of engagement to follow—which ensures that military forces are moving forward to achieve a common goal. However, the Army was not prepared to face the strong insurgent opposition that arose in both theaters of operation. This placed commanders in a frustrating position, since the Army had trained and prepared them to fight their enemy on a more traditional battlefield, with clearer objectives and fewer unpredictable tactics.

Thus, the US military found itself in the middle of a counterinsurgency war that it was not fully prepared to fight from a doctrinal perspective—with the only solution being to adapt to the new threat or be defeated. As a result, US forces quickly equipped themselves with a new doctrinal approach led by one of America's top Generals on how to deal with counterinsurgency in Iraq (Nagl, n. d.). Gen. Petraus, like BG Funston in Veracruz, is a forward-thinking leader whose training and leadership style enabled him to take a bad situation and turn it into a positive. Likewise, both leaders used economic and political means to bring improvements to—and thus gain the favor of—the local population in their area of operations.

The current mission in OIF and OEF—combined with the guidelines set forth in FM 3-24—equip the American Soldier with the knowledge needed to fight counterinsurgent action. However, the manual's guidance alone is not enough to guarantee success—because armies must have tough and confident leaders on the battlefield at all levels and at all times. Leaders on the

ground secure strategic objectives and allow the units to be successful—which in turn builds strong relationships with the local population to further ensure support at grassroots level. Soldiers must ask themselves everyday “what can I do in this fight to help the locals?” rather than ponder “How can the locals help me?” Needless to say, the British lost control of the colonies by asking the wrong questions. Even though the British won most of the battles they still managed to lose the war to the revolutionaries, because they failed to understand counterinsurgency operations.

Throughout this paper I have compared and contrasted three different actions in history and how the outcome of each favored the military force that best understood and successfully addressed the important role that the local population played to determine an outcome of success or defeat. The British failure in the American Revolution illustrates how it is possible to win most battles yet still lose the war as a result of not successfully garnering the support of the local loyalist population—a mistake that would ultimately cost them the control of the American colonies. On the opposite side of the spectrum, the occupation of Veracruz, Mexico by US forces during the intervention of 1914-1916 exemplifies how earning the local population’s support (by taking their welfare into consideration and recognizing their needs as a crucial element in the strategic planning process) can help facilitate a victorious outcome. In the case of Veracruz, the local population’s support and sympathy was earned by making changes to the urban infrastructure that noticeably improved the city’s health and sanitation. This simple action allowed the US to maintain peace and benefit from the locals’ cooperation during the occupation period. Lastly, the lesson we can derive from these two contrasting approaches to military action is that winning in GWOT requires the support of not only the US government and its population, but also the support of the host nations we are currently protecting and occupying. By

synthesizing the lessons provided by history (in this case from past successes and failures of British, Mexican, and US forces) today's American Soldiers can gain valuable insight that will help them adapt creatively to—and ultimately prevail in—modern-day warfare tactics and the ever-changing battlefields in which the Global War on Terrorism is being fought currently.

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