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As global conflicts grow ever increasingly complex, nations involved find themselves expending increasing amounts of national blood and treasure to attain strategic goals. The use of indigenous forces to augment an intervening nations forces is a viable option especially when conducting irregular warfare. Training, equipping, and advising indigenous forces with a small team of advisors can make an effective force through which national strategic objectives are obtained while maintaining a small footprint and reducing the financial cost and risk of increased casualties for the intervening nation.

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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

Effective Utilization of Indigenous Forces in Irregular Warfare

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Executive Summary

Title: Effective Utilization of Indigenous Forces in Irregular Warfare

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Thesis: Partnering with indigenous forces to conduct military operations is an effective method to achieve national strategic objectives, limiting the expenditure of national blood and treasure while providing the partner host nation forces a stake in their future.

Discussion: As global conflicts grow ever increasingly complex, nations involved find themselves expending increasing amounts of national blood and treasure to attain strategic goals. With global conflict not showing any signs of extinction any time soon, nations are faced with hard questions with regards to strategic goals. How might a nation involved in a conflict accomplish its policy objectives while reducing the financial cost and risk in casualties? Is partnering small teams of advisors with indigenous forces a viable solution? How have indigenous forces been used effectively in the past? What lessons learned may a nation use to shape future strategy when getting involved in conflicts?

Conclusion: While using indigenous forces is not always feasible, their use can be very effective especially when conducting irregular warfare. Training, equipping, and advising indigenous forces with a small team of advisors can make an effective force through which national strategic objectives are obtained. The indigenous forces provide knowledge of the terrain, culture, customs, and language. Their knowledge can provide insight on the enemy's tactics and techniques, locations of safe havens and supply lines, thereby providing the edge needed to defeat the enemy. Using indigenous forces in conjunction with small advisory teams allows for a smaller footprint, while reducing the financial burden and risk of mounting casualties for the intervening nation. With the appropriate training and the leading role, the indigenous forces become invested in their future and maintain support of the population. The goal of the intervening nation should be to attain their strategic goals while giving the indigenous forces the ability to form a stable nation with a legitimate government.

Introduction

The use of indigenous forces is an effective method by which a nation can attain its strategic goals while reducing the investment of its own personnel and resources. It can be mutually beneficial to use indigenous troops for it empowers the host nation as they become a vested partner towards achieving a common goal. Indigenous forces are invaluable for their knowledge of local customs, dialects, and the environment. Indigenous forces are especially effective in counterinsurgencies where the enemy may be difficult to discern from the civilian populace. The indigenous combatants may consist of government armed forces, or they may consist of native peoples with only rudimentary military training and equipment. There are many instances where the United States has assisted indigenous forces to conduct irregular warfare. The range of examples include the use of Native Americans during the Revolutionary War to the employment of indigenous forces to fight against Islamic extremism in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. Partnering with indigenous forces to conduct military operations is an effective method to achieve national strategic objectives, limiting the expenditure of national blood and treasure while providing the partner host nation forces a stake in their future.

The Philippine War is used in this paper as a case study because it is an early example of effective counterinsurgency (COIN) tactics by the United States. Many of the lessons learned were applied to some extent and were a model for U.S. COIN tactics during the Vietnam War. The indigenous forces were used as scouts, augments to U.S. forces, informers, and village auxiliaries to protect the populace from the guerilla fighters. They were excellent fighters and their use decisively turned the war around towards the U.S. side and their capture of the guerilla leader quickly and decisively ended the conflict.

El Salvador as a case study provides the reader a more contemporary example of successful use of indigenous forces by the United States over a long-time period. El Salvador is considered by many experts to be a “textbook” example of U.S. success in the region. The U.S. in a partnership with the El Salvadoran Armed Forces (ESAF) conducted COIN, foreign internal defense (FID), and security force assistance (SFA) to achieve its national strategic objectives with a minimal force of U.S. advisors. It is an interesting case study because through the example set by U.S. advisors, they were able to change the culture of the ESAF. Morale and warfighting effectiveness increased in the Salvadoran military and as a result the government of El Salvador was able to bring the guerillas to the bargaining table and achieve peace. An added benefit of U.S. involvement was El Salvador becoming a democratic government bringing stability to the region.

The final case study of Algeria is presented in this paper because it is an example of a successful use of indigenous forces by a non-American military. France has a long history of using indigenous forces to achieve national strategic objectives. In Algeria, indigenous forces served as commandos, scouts, informers, and auxiliaries protecting villages from the insurgents. The Algerian War from 1954 – 1962 is an example of military success on the battlefield utilizing indigenous forces, but ultimately doomed to fail as political will in France waned. It is an interesting case study because even though it was a successful operational and tactical strategy, it was not enough to defeat the insurgent forces. In the end, France abandoned Algeria to the nationalists.

Employing indigenous forces is especially advantageous when conducting irregular warfare (IW) as the case studies presented in this paper show. The use of indigenous forces is beneficial as well in conflicts where the situation on the ground is complex, such as in Syria

today as a contemporary example. The purpose of these case studies is not to provide the reader with a step-by-step process for success in future conflicts where the use of indigenous forces is warranted. On the contrary, the purpose of presenting these case studies is to provide context of why the use of indigenous forces was successful in these situations and to provide a starting point for how indigenous forces may be employed successfully in future conflicts. Every situation is unique; what works in one instance does not necessarily work in the next. Planners must analyze the situation, discern if using indigenous forces is advantageous towards achieving national strategic goals, and make adjustments if the situation on the ground changes.

Philippine War 1899 – 1902

The first case examined in this paper is the Filipino insurgency following the Spanish-American War. The insurgency not only destabilized the Philippines, but it hindered pacification efforts, and the establishment of effective governance. American forces conducted counterinsurgency (COIN) and stability operations (SO) with indigenous forces to defeat the insurgents in order to regain stability in the Philippines and establish effective governance.

The Spanish-American War lasted from April to August 1898. On May 1, 1898, the U.S. fleet under command of Commodore George Dewey defeated the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay. Following the battle, the Americans controlled the waters surrounding the Philippines, but the Spanish still held the capital city of Manila and the Philippine archipelago. The next day, President William McKinley, with the ultimate goal of annexing the Philippines in mind, made the decision to send an expedition under the command of Major General Wesley Merritt to capture Manila. Merritt gathered together an expedition as best he could, but was unable to gather as many U.S. Army regulars as he wanted. Many of the soldiers were volunteers from the western states who lacked training and were ill-equipped for fighting in the tropics. The first

elements departed San Francisco in late May with the remaining force a month later; over 10,000 ground troops were in the Philippines by July.¹

An uneasy peace was maintained between the Filipino forces and the U.S. Army as both sides awaited final ratification of the Treaty of Paris by the U.S. Senate in February 1899. President McKinley instituted a policy of “benevolent assimilation” with regards to the U.S. annexation of the Philippines and directed the army to protect life and property, maintain governmental services, and reopen the Filipino economy to trade. However, tensions between the Filipinos wanting independence, under the leadership of Emilio Aguinaldo, and the American forces continued to rise in Manila. The Filipino forces’ refusal to vacate the trenches around Manila fueled the hostilities forming and both sides exchanged verbal insults with occasional gunfire as each side edged closer towards conflict. Open warfare was not long in coming and on February 4, 1899, Private William Grayson, opened fire on a Filipino patrol that did not answer his challenge; the Philippine War had begun.²

Aguinaldo’s goal was to wear down the U.S. Army and make it too costly both in blood and treasure to remain in the Philippines. Aguinaldo hoped that guerilla tactics would prolong the war and turn public opinion in the United States against the war thereby driving the United States out.³ The guerillas needed to treat the civilian population with dignity in order to maintain popular support and drive a wedge between American forces and the civilian populace. This popular support would provide the insurgents with the necessary supplies, money, food, shelter, and intelligence regarding the presence of U.S. troops. Shadow governments were formed to control many of the towns and villages in order to organize and maintain the support given to the Filipino insurgency. Initially the Filipino insurgents created an effective system with an overwhelming amount of civilian support. However, as the war progressed the insurgents

resorted to increasing amounts of violence and intimidation against Filipinos who were suspected of collaborating with the Americans.⁴ Public support for the Filipino guerillas began to wane as the populace experienced the brutality of their terrorism.

As the war progressed from conventional warfare to guerilla warfare, the United States Army realized it needed to "...develop counterinsurgency policies and methods..." in order to defeat the Filipino insurgency quickly with minimal lives lost.⁵ As long as the insurgency was allowed to continue, the United States would expend more lives and resources to quell the insurgency, hence risking public support back home. The Filipino insurgency would also hinder the U.S. goal of establishing governance in the Philippines and creating a stable colony. While the United States policy of "benevolent assimilation" (which entailed garrisoning towns to protect the population from guerillas, instituting governmental reforms, restoring municipal and social services, building infrastructure, schools, and police forces and establishing civil governments) was helpful towards stabilizing the Philippines, it was not enough to defeat the insurgency. The guerillas were gaining momentum and U.S. forces were in danger of losing control and becoming involved in what could become a long drawn out counterinsurgency fight.

In May 1900, Major General Arthur MacArthur became commander of U.S. forces in the Philippines. With the change of command came a change in American strategy and it was the turning point in the war. As cited by Lieutenant John Ward, U.S. Army,

...when the Army enlisted natives to serve as scouts a new era began. They knew the people, the language, their organizations and leaders, whom to watch, and the country, better than a white man could ever hope to know these things. Through them and their friends information came in, and results were attained. The greater the number of scouts enlisted, the more people broke away from insurgent organizations, until every time the guerillas came out of their mountains into the plains, around the villages and towns, it was at once reported, and they ceased to ...rob and...it became harder for them to live.⁶

The Americans recognized that U.S. forces were at a disadvantage when it came to seeking out and destroying the guerilla forces due to lack of knowledge of local dialects, customs, and terrain. Many of the soldiers and leaders who fought in the Philippine War were veterans of the Indian Wars and knew how to employ native scouts effectively. “A need for indigenous fighters who knew the Filipino revolutionary, his tactics, and his hideouts emerged in the minds of those senior officers who witnessed the utility of using Indian scouts to assist the U.S. Army during the American Indian Wars.”⁷ MacArthur’s overall strategy to involve the Filipinos in their own fight against the revolutionaries—to participate in their own self-defense and have a stake in their future.⁸ In order to defeat the insurgency quickly, establish effective governance, and protect the populace, the U.S. Army increased the recruitment of indigenous forces to help fight the guerillas.

Small numbers of Filipino indigenous forces had been used by the U.S. Army in the Philippines since 1899. Initial uses of indigenous forces provided satisfactory results that native troops were loyal and could be trusted.⁹ These results, along with previous U.S. Army experience in utilizing native scouts, and General MacArthur’s insistence that more Filipinos needed to be involved in their own self-defense provided the impetus to enlist more indigenous forces. In January of 1901, there were 1,402 Filipino scouts assisting the U.S. Army against the insurgency, by the middle of June 1901 there were over 5,400 Filipino scouts in service with the U.S. Army. This was to augment approximately 70,000 U.S. troops present in the Philippines towards the end of 1900.¹⁰

Indigenous troops were enlisted by the U.S. Army through an appeal to patriotism and the need to provide their own self-defense from insurgent terrorism. Troops were armed either paid wages or received payment from a reward system for turning in rifles captured from insurgents

or providing verifiable intelligence regarding insurgent activity.¹¹ Filipino troops were hardy, tough fighters, accustomed to fighting in the tropics and living off the land. Hence, the Filipinos could travel light as they needed less equipment and were less likely to become sick from drinking the water or eating the native food unlike their U.S Army counterparts.¹² The indigenous forces were less likely to be incapacitated by exhaustion and disease thence they were able to endure the “hardships of tough terrain” and were able to endure the rigors of long, tough campaigns.¹³ Without the assistance of these hardy, tough troops, many of the campaign against the insurgents would have failed.

The Filipino native troops were employed in a variety of ways. As constabulary forces, the Filipinos garrisoned and provided security for the towns in order to free up American forces to fight the guerillas. Indigenous auxiliaries augmented U.S. forces in the field in the direct fight against insurgents. As scouts and guides, the indigenous troops were invaluable in their knowledge of the local terrain, villages, and inhabitants. The Filipinos’ ability to “...distinguish between members of the native population, their knowledge of Filipino languages and customs...and their access to intelligence data...,” provided a huge advantage for U.S. forces to combat insurgents.¹⁴

By working with the indigenous forces, U.S. forces gained an understanding of the enemy. Through leveraging this understanding, U.S. forces with their indigenous partners, attacked the guerillas vulnerabilities and defeated them on the battlefield. Effective counterinsurgency tactics were employed to reduce the effectiveness of the insurgents. American and indigenous forces increased their operational tempo and pursued rebel forces relentlessly through aggressive patrols, troop deployments against suspected guerilla strongholds, destruction of guerilla food stocks, and prosecution of suspected guerilla abettors.¹⁵

Another effective tactic used by American forces to defeat the insurgency was through the use of former revolutionary leaders and soldiers employed as indigenous troops—especially in the role as informers, spies, and guides.¹⁶ These former guerillas knew the insurgents' tactics, where and how their former comrades would fight, hide, and cache weapons. Subsequently these former revolutionaries were especially effective at disrupting the shadow governments and infrastructure established by the guerilla forces.¹⁷

U.S. forces also leveraged the historic intertribal rivalries and hatreds some tribes felt towards the insurgent forces whose majority was made up of peoples of the Tagalog tribe.¹⁸ Use of indigenous forces from the Macabebe and Ilocano tribes are examples of this strategy; recruited by the U.S. Army and formed into the Macabebe and Ilocano Scouts respectively. Native troops from both tribes were used to help fight the revolutionaries and gain vital intelligence as they were familiar with the local geography as well as the local dialects and customs. The U.S. Army developed close relationships with the Macabebes and Ilocanos and ensured for the security of their tribes in return for their service.¹⁹

Through the effective combination of indigenous troops, relentless pursuit of the insurgents, popular support of the civilian population, destruction of guerilla infrastructure, the Filipino insurrection could not hope to last very long. The Filipino insurrection ended with Aguinaldo's capture when a group of eighty-one Macabebe Scouts posing as Tagalog insurgents along with a handful of American troops posing as their prisoners, conducted a long march into Aguinaldo's insurgent enclave in northern Luzon, capturing him and several of his key leaders.²⁰ Soon after his capture, peace negotiations were established and the hostilities ceased by the summer of 1902.²¹

The utilization of indigenous forces in the Philippine War was an effective strategy by the United States to fight an insurgency and conduct pacification. Through the use of native troops, America achieved its strategic goal of maintaining the Philippines as a stable colony of the United States. The U.S. ended the insurgency in two years through increased use of indigenous troops in a region as complex as the Philippines. Not using indigenous forces would have prolonged the war further decreasing popular support in the U.S. and Philippines and increasing the cost both financially and in lives lost. The native troops were loyal, tough fighters who needed minimal support and were an invaluable source of: local knowledge of the terrain, customs, and language, intelligence on enemy troop locations and strength, and knowledge of the enemy's tactics and techniques.

Effective use of indigenous forces disrupted the guerilla's infrastructure, weakened their popular support, and delegitimized their cause. In return, U.S. forces ensured that they protected the indigenous forces and their families from guerilla reprisals. After realizing they could not do it alone, American military leadership made it a priority in their new strategy to use indigenous forces to conduct counterinsurgency. This gave the Filipino people a role in maintaining peace and stability in the Philippines and through this the Filipinos showed themselves capable and trustworthy allies. They gained the American's trust and therefore, were given a bigger role in providing security for themselves and performing local governance. This combined with "benevolent pacification" methods, increased popular support for the United States and helped quell the insurrection much more rapidly than with U.S. forces alone. The counterinsurgency campaign was a success: stability was regained, it allowed for stable governance of the Philippines by the United States, and it produced effective indigenous forces needed by the U.S. to maintain peace and security in the Philippines.

El Salvador 1980 – 1992

The next case examined in this paper is the conflict in El Salvador between the Faribundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the Salvadoran government. The insurgency was not only destabilizing to the country, but it was destabilizing to the region. El Salvador is an example of American forces conducting security cooperation which included security force assistance (advise and assist operations) and foreign internal defense (FID) with indigenous forces in order to regain stability in El Salvador and the region.

In October 1979, a group of military officers overthrew the conservative government of General Carlos Romero and established a military-civilian government comprised of both central and left-leaning representatives.²² The coup and establishment of the junta in 1979 brought turmoil to El Salvador over the ensuing years in the form of civil war as various political and economic reforms were enacted and opposition groups sought to overthrow the government of El Salvador. The coup was a result of dissatisfaction within the El Salvadoran Armed Forces (ESAF) with the state of affairs of the country. El Salvador faced decades of political and social upheaval since the early 1930s. Throughout the subsequent decades, pressures began to mount in El Salvador which contributed to the start of the civil war. By the 1970s, El Salvador was in crisis. The country faced an "...economic crisis fed by a global recession and a sharp drop in world coffee prices; popular disenchantment with the landed oligarchy; a growing and discontented middle class; a clamorous Left inspired by Marxism-Leninism and liberation theology; and the ineptitude and harshness of successive military governments."²³ In response, multiple guerilla groups emerged to challenge and overthrow the Salvadoran government. In 1980, five guerilla groups joined forces and established the Faribundo Marti National Liberation

Front (FMLN) which would eventually comprise about 12,000 fighters with the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) as their political front for the movement to overthrow the government.

In 1981, the FMLN conducted what they considered their “final offensive” against the El Salvadoran government forces. Although the guerillas were unable to overthrow the government, they caused severe setbacks to the ESAF and the FMLN’s military capabilities began to exceed the ESAF. By 1981, the FMLN controlled most of the countryside, were able to operate fairly unhindered especially at night, and had gained tactical proficiency. In response to the deteriorating situation in El Salvador towards the end of 1981, the United States increased its involvement through increased military and financial aid support as it sought to prevent the overthrow of the Salvadoran government.²⁴

In El Salvador, the indigenous forces that interacted with the U.S. military were the ESAF. From the beginning, in order to prevent the El Salvadoran civil war from becoming an “American war,” the United States limited its combat troop involvement. The U.S. imposed a 55-man limit to the number of advisors allowed in the country to help assist the ESAF. Additionally, the U.S. advisors were restricted from involving themselves with direct combat operations. As American support evolved in El Salvador, a strategy was enacted by the United States emphasizing three key elements: “[c]ontrol of the paramilitary war; retraining and reequipping the Salvadoran military; and an escalating air war to contain the mounting insurgency.”²⁵ The U.S. military advisors sought to reform and professionalize the Salvadoran military in order to allow it to fight the insurgency more effectively. American advisor support consisted of training Salvadoran forces with an emphasis on conducting counterinsurgency operations, providing equipment, and “...offering strategic advice and intelligence support.”²⁶

As American advisors became increasingly involved with training the Salvadoran army, they realized that they had a long road ahead.

Prior to U.S. military involvement, the Salvadoran armed forces were in poor shape. The ESAF was not modernized and was still heavily focused on conventional methods. Death squads and paramilitary groups roamed the countryside enacting human rights abuses on the civilian population and suspected guerillas. These death squads were tolerated by, and in some cases, participated in by the Salvadoran army. The human rights abuses and heavy-handed military tactics did nothing to engender the populace's support for the Salvadoran government. In addition, the ESAF experienced "...command and control breakdowns, poor morale, widespread corruption, high rates of casualties and surrenders, and low reenlistment."²⁷ In order to effectively counter the insurgency and prevent the overthrow of the Salvadoran government, the American military advisors' task was to provide the conditions which would bring about the legitimization of the Salvadoran armed forces by helping reorganize, reequip, and professionalize the ESAF, reduce or eliminate the human rights abuses, and train the ESAF in the appropriate methods to employ in order to fight a successful counterinsurgency. Training was conducted by U.S. advisors in El Salvador, as well as in the United States and in the neighboring countries of Panama and Honduras where training facilities were established.²⁸

United States military advisors arrived in El Salvador in the fall of 1981. By 1983, assistance from American advisors with increased financial aid from the United States had helped stabilize the Salvadoran military. The ESAF was no longer in danger of being defeated by the armed insurgency of the FMLN. Major improvements had been implemented and the ESAF was on its way towards being a more modern and professional force. It was also realized by the U.S. military advisors that the counterinsurgency fight would take longer than initially

expected and that the advisors would need to work not only with the small military units, but with the six main Salvadoran brigades. In order to increase command and control functions as well as the coordination between the military and national government, advisors were emplaced at all the brigade headquarters to assist the brigade staffs with improving their planning and operational capabilities as well as intelligence operations.²⁹

As U.S. military advisors worked with the brigade staffs the advisors at the unit levels worked towards revamping the Salvadoran army away from conducting a conventional fight against the guerilla forces and towards a more effective counterinsurgency warfare strategy. One of the key counterinsurgency strategies U.S. military advisors emphasized was the implementation of human rights to increase popular support for the Salvadoran government. The advisors constantly enforced and pressured the ESAF to respect human rights.³⁰ Due to this constant pressure from the U.S. advisors and the example they set, the heavy-handedness of the Salvadoran army was reduced as well as the acts of the right-wing death squads. Human rights violations were reduced which improved the relationship between the populace and the Salvadoran government.³¹ In addition, with the decrease of human rights abuses by the ESAF, the FMLN lost another propaganda method by which to increase support for their cause.

The role U.S. military advisors played was crucial to the resurgence of the Salvadoran armed forces and to the significant gains the ESAF made against the guerilla forces. Through U.S. security cooperation efforts, the Salvadoran army was transformed from a defensively minded organization with no strategy for how to deal with the insurgency, to a more effective fighting force.³² U.S. training, advising, and equipping made the Salvadoran armed forces a more tactically proficient, strategically minded, and professional force. Morale improved and the ESAF conducted more aggressive offensive operations; long-range and night patrolling

became the norm. The Salvadoran armed forces became more effective in counterinsurgency warfare and made better use of intelligence assets and information to execute their counterinsurgency strategy. Improvements were made in the Salvadoran air force; U.S. trained pilots conducted a well-planned air campaign against the guerillas to include use of vertical lift to conduct assault operations FMLN strongholds.³³ Indiscriminate bombing and strafing were reduced as Salvadoran pilots became more accurate and care was taken to reduce collateral damage when conducting air strikes.

Ultimately, the U.S. military advisors had a transformational effect on the Salvadoran armed forces and affected a positive outcome for the country of El Salvador and the region. By maintaining advisors in El Salvador throughout the conflict, the United States signaled a long-term commitment to ensure El Salvador became a stable, democratic country; as a result of their efforts, El Salvador became a democracy and a strong ally of the United States. The professional transformation of the ESAF was one of the crowning achievements of the military advisors. U.S. advisors set the example and were key to holding the Salvadoran armed forces to a higher standard. Through their efforts, paramilitary killings were reduced and the ESAF decreased their heavy-handedness with the civilian populace.³⁴

The low footprint maintained by the U.S. produced maximum benefits for the El Salvador while providing minimal cost and risk to the United States. The limit on the number of advisors forced the U.S. military to remain in a supporting role and placed El Salvador in the leading role. The Salvadorans received advising, equipment, and training, but it was up to the Salvadoran government to shape their future. The United States gave ownership to the Salvadoran government to defeat the insurgency—the U.S. would not allow the conflict to become “Americanized.” Americanization of the conflict would have given the FMLN

propaganda to delegitimize the Salvadoran government by accusing them of being a puppet government of the United States.

As time progressed, the ESAF gained more skill and experience; they became better at coordinating and planning a military strategy that supported the political effort of the Salvadoran government. U.S. advisors working hand-in-hand with the ESAF helped create stable political and social conditions that allowed El Salvador to stand against the insurgency.³⁵ While it is true that the ESAF never achieved total victory over the FMLN, El Salvador did not fall. The ESAFs' offensive actions in the mid-1980s and beyond against the FMLN allowed the government of El Salvador to gain strength, regain legitimacy, and bring stability to the country. On the opposing side, by the early 1990s, the FMLN realized they could not overthrow the government of El Salvador; they could not defeat the Salvadoran armed forces in battle, their popular support had not gained traction, and financial and material support from communist countries had waned. Due to the stalemate, both sides began peace negotiations in 1990 after over ten years of fighting. Two years later, in January 1992, the concluding cease fire and peace accord between the FMLN and Salvadoran government were signed.³⁶

Assisting and advising the Salvadoran armed forces accomplished the strategic goal of the United States: to increase the capabilities of the ESAF to defeat the FMLN thereby stabilizing El Salvador and the region. U.S. advisors assisting indigenous forces in El Salvador for over ten years showed the dedication of the United States to seeing the conflict through to a successful conclusion. By maintaining a reduced footprint and not involving combat troops, the U.S. maintained public support at home and minimized the cost in blood and treasure to the American people. Through training, advising, and setting a good example, the U.S. military advisors transformed the ESAF into a professional, effective force. Reduction of death squad

actions and heavy-handed tactics by the ESAF on the civilian populace increased popular support for the Salvadoran government. In addition, placing the burden of conducting combat operations to the ESAF provided ownership to the Salvadoran leadership. This ultimately ensured its success and El Salvador was able to bring its civil war to a successful conclusion. As a by-product of stabilizing El Salvador, the United States gained a democratic partner nation in the region.

Algeria 1954 – 1962

The final case examined in this paper is the conflict in Algeria between Algerian nationalists and the French government. The French forces used indigenous forces to conduct a counterinsurgency campaign against the Algerian nationalist forces. Operationally and tactically, the French effectively used indigenous forces and militarily had defeated the insurgency. Unlike El Salvador, France does not achieve complete victory due to various factors, chiefly the loss of political will to remain in Algeria.

In December of 1848, the French government declared Algeria as a department of France after an eighteen-year campaign. In the years following, colonizers settled Algeria in ever increasing numbers. As a colony of France, initially Algeria was governed by the French military. By 1870, the French colonizers (*pied noir*) had grown over 200,000 and began to chafe against military rule.³⁷ They formed an uprising and forced the French government to give them more rights and control over their affairs—more akin to the “...forms of government enjoyed by metropolitan Frenchmen.”³⁸ For the native Algerian, they were considered French subjects and did not have the rights afforded to French citizens. The process to become a French citizen was difficult, which precluded many Algerians from becoming citizens of France even though many Algerians served France both in the military and in government institutions. As the Algerians

were pushed out by the French colonizers, becoming more marginalized in the process, frustration began to grow among the Muslim population. French attempts to diffuse this growing frustration with various social and political reforms over the years fizzled and did not bring change to the Algerians.³⁹ Dissatisfaction with French rule and the lack of assimilation over the years produced a nationalist movement for Algerian independence that gained traction during the anti-colonial movements following World War II and the French defeat in Indochina.

From 1954-1962, France was involved in a war against Algerian nationalists seeking independence. The Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) was the main group of antagonists the French fought against. It was a vicious war with both sides carrying out atrocities towards each other and the civilian population. The war dragged on for years, and the French were not gaining ground against the guerilla forces. If anything, the French were continuing to lose territory, especially out in the rural areas where the guerillas held sway over the local populace. The insurgents were elusive and conducting the tactics of conventional warfare against this guerilla force was not achieving the desired results.

In order to regain control of the Algeria, a new strategy was needed by the French and it came in the form of using indigenous forces to hunt down the guerilla nationalists. These indigenous forces were Muslim locals called *harkis* and their increased use became part of the counterinsurgency strategy enacted by General Maurice Challe, Commander-in-Chief of the French forces in Algeria in 1959. Through Challe's insistence, the *harkis* were increased from 26,000 to 60,000.⁴⁰ Many of these *harki* units were used to provide security of their villages.⁴¹ This alleviated French forces from the need to expend additional personnel to provide security in the rural areas affected by the insurgents. Because the *harkis* were used locally, they were familiar with the area and were effective at tracking down insurgent forces in their safe havens

located in the rural areas.⁴² French forces with assistance from *harki* units pursued the rebel forces to their mountain and desert hideouts seeking through continual attacks to wear down the guerilla forces until they could no longer resist the French and were forced to submit. In addition, Challe formed special Commando units built around the *harki* units consisting of Frenchmen and indigenous forces. These Commando units were effective at hunting down the enemy, destroying them in battle, and disrupting the guerilla infrastructure. The Commando units lived off the land and were in constant radio contact with headquarters which allowed them to call in assault troops brought in via helicopter to trap and destroy the enemy when the guerilla forces were too large to handle alone.⁴³

Tactically and operationally, the French use of indigenous forces in Algeria was effective. The indigenous forces in conjunction with the French weakened the FLN to the point where the insurgency was close to submitting in defeat. Ultimately, it was too little, too late. By 1959, the savagery had increased on both sides and the Algerian nationalists resolve to achieve independence had hardened. With no foreseeable end in sight, the war became unpopular in France. Use of torture and other heavy-handed tactics by the French military estranged the Muslim populace and disillusioned the French people with continuing to maintain Algeria as part of France.⁴⁴ In addition, international outcry over the abuses of the French military and negative views towards colonization by the international community caused the French political leadership to waver with maintaining control of Algeria. Eventually, the French lost the political will to continue to fight to preserve *Algerie Françoise*.⁴⁵ France withdrew its forces and conceded Algeria to the nationalists.

Conclusion

While it is not always feasible to utilize indigenous forces, their use in irregular warfare is very effective if they are trained and used appropriately. With small teams of advisors and suitable training, advising, and equipping, indigenous forces can effectively conduct the five sub-categories of irregular warfare as required by the situation: unconventional warfare, counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, foreign internal defense, and stability operations. As shown in the Philippines and Algerian cases, employing native troops provides knowledge of the local dialects, customs, and terrain. Often, using indigenous forces (especially “turned” insurgents) provides knowledge of the enemy’s tactics and techniques, intelligence on locations of enemy safe havens and supply lines. As shown in the El Salvador case, use of indigenous forces allows for a much smaller footprint for the intervening nation, providing a more economical use of force, reducing the risk of increased casualties and financial cost. Putting the majority of the fighting on the indigenous troops provides ownership for the natives and helps prevent the intervening nation becoming the face of the conflict. The indigenous troops will be the ones providing security and stability once the intervening nation departs; giving them a leading role allows the indigenous forces the opportunity to invest in their future, legitimize their cause, and gain support of the populace.

When a nation conducts irregular warfare, it is paramount that the intervening nation involve the use of indigenous forces as soon as feasible, a lesson learned in the Philippines. It is crucial that the indigenous troops get the appropriate training and support to empower them to fight; to put the face of the indigenous people on the conflict as early as possible. Develop the appropriate indigenous forces to conduct operations appropriate for their use (spies, informants, fighters, etc.). Understand that building the capacity and capabilities of the indigenous forces may take significant time; it is important to build quality forces and not quantity.

Finally, the intervening nation needs to make clear strategic goals when getting involved in irregular warfare with indigenous forces. The military strategy must match the political goals of the nation. Just as in the El Salvador example, advisors, providing the appropriate guidance and setting a good example can help set the conditions necessary to foster an effective indigenous force who will help the intervening nation achieve their strategic goals. Provide the advisors with the necessary resources to advise and assist the indigenous forces under their charge. In return for indigenous forces working under advisors, ensure they and their families are protected from retribution from insurgents similar to what U.S. forces did in the Philippines to protect the indigenous forces families. Prepare to invest (time, resources, and personnel) long-term if necessary to ensure strategic goals are accomplished and the outcome desired is achieved. An intervening nation who does these things will have an effective indigenous force, will achieve a successful campaign, and the indigenous people will be left with a stable nation and legitimate government.

¹ Brian McAllister Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 1-3.

² *Ibid*, 12.

³ *Ibid*, 16.

⁴ John Morgan Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), 159-164.

⁵ Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902*, 20.

⁶ Lieutenant John W. Ward, U.S.A., "The Use of Native Troops in Our New Possessions," *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States*, 31 (July-December 1902): 794, quoted in Allan D. Marple, "The Philippine Scouts: A Case Study in the Use of Indigenous Soldiers, Northern Luzon, The Philippine Islands, 1899" (master's thesis, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 1983), 95.

⁷ Allan D. Marple, "The Philippine Scouts: A Case Study in the Use of Indigenous Soldiers, Northern Luzon, The Philippine Islands, 1899" (master's thesis, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 1983), 5.

⁸ Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags*, 212.

⁹ *Ibid*, 196.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 205, 213.

¹¹ Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902*, 54, 76, 110.

¹² Marple, *The Philippine Scouts*, 96-97, 104.

¹³ *Ibid*, 105-106.

¹⁴ Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags*, 240.

¹⁵ Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902*, 25, 43.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 80-81, 155.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 146.

¹⁸ Marple, *The Philippine Scouts*, 71-72.

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- ¹⁹ Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902*, 76-77, 81-82.
- ²⁰ Marple, *The Philippine Scouts*, 117.
- ²¹ *Ibid*, 117.
- ²² Todd Greentree, *The Crossroads of Intervention: Insurgency and Counterinsurgency Lessons From Central America* (Annapolis, Md: Naval Institute Press, 2008), 78.
- ²³ A.J. Bacevich et al., *American Military Policy in Small Wars: The Case of El Salvador* (Washington D.C.: Pergamon/Brassey's, 1988), 3.
- ²⁴ *Ibid*, 4-5.
- ²⁵ Joy Hackel and Daniel Seigel, "El Salvador: Counterinsurgency Revisited," in *Low Intensity Warfare: Counterinsurgency, Proinsurgency, and Antiterrorism in the Eighties*, ed. Michael T. Klare, et al. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 115.
- ²⁶ Bacevich, *American Military Policy in Small Wars*, 5.
- ²⁷ Hackel, "El Salvador: Counterinsurgency Revisited," 116.
- ²⁸ John D. Waghelstein, "El Salvador: Observations and Experiences in Counterinsurgency" (Carlisle Barracks, Pa: US Army War College, 1985), 35-45.
- ²⁹ Cecil E. Bailey, "OPATT: The U.S. Army SF Advisers in El Salvador," *Special Warfare* 17, no. 2 (December 2004): 19-20. <http://search.proquest.com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/199430474?accountid=14746>.
- ³⁰ *Ibid*, 26.
- ³¹ Victor M. Rosello, "Lessons From El Salvador," *Parameters* 23, no. 4 (Winter 1993): 104. <http://search.proquest.com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/1306226409?accountid=14746>.
- ³² Angel Rabasa et al., "El Salvador (1980-1992)," *Money in the Bank: Lessons Learned From Past Counterinsurgency (COIN) Operations* (Arlington, VA: RAND, 2007), 47.
- ³³ Hackel, "El Salvador: Counterinsurgency Revisited," 118.
- ³⁴ Bailey, "OPATT: The U.S. Army SF Advisers in El Salvador," 25-26.
- ³⁵ Rosello, "Lessons From El Salvador," 102.
- ³⁶ Greentree, *Crossroads of Intervention*, 153-154.
- ³⁷ Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 29-30.
- ³⁸ *Ibid*, 32.
- ³⁹ *Ibid*, 35-36.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 331-333.
- ⁴¹ Robert M. Cassidy, "The Long Small War: Indigenous Forces for Counterinsurgency," *Parameters* 36, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 54. <https://search-proquest-com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/198027875?accountid=14746>.
- ⁴² *Ibid*.
- ⁴³ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 335.
- ⁴⁴ Peter Chalk et al., "Algeria (1954-1962)," *Money in the Bank: Lessons Learned From Past Counterinsurgency (COIN) Operations* (Arlington, VA: RAND, 2007), 24.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid*.

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