

OPERATIONAL ISSUES OF INSURGENCY/COUNTER INSURGENCY: THE MACCABEAN REVOLT

**A MONOGRAPH
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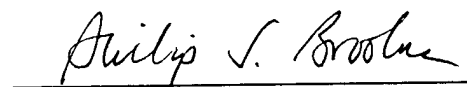
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ABSTRACT

Operational Issues of Insurgency/Counter Insurgency: The Maccabean Revolt

The Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid Empire was a classic example of a successful insurgency. Though it occurred 2,000 years ago, it contains many elements of modern leftist insurgencies. The conflict demonstrates that the nature of insurgency, like the nature of war as a whole, is timeless. For although the characteristics of conflict may change, the nature of warfare is unchanging.

This monograph examines the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid Empire as a case study of insurgency from the religious right. It attempts to highlight the nature of an insurgency from the religious right, and the differences with insurgencies originating from the secular left. The Monograph begins with a review of U.S. Army doctrine for Counter Insurgency. This is followed by an operational narrative of the revolt using the doctrine as a frame work for analysis.

The monograph concludes that while there are many similarities between insurgencies from the religious right and secular left, there are fundamental differences. These differences are caused by the synergistic interaction of religious ideology with the root causes of conflict. This creates a paradox of religious ideology coupled to secular objectives. For most revolts from the religious right do not draw their ideology and objectives purely from issues of faith. Rather, their ideology and objectives are a mixture of religious beliefs, secular grievances and the "violence, hatred and enmity" that grow out of the struggle. The keys to defeating a revolt from the religious right, which the Seleucid Empire failed to do, are first to de-couple the religious from the secular issues, and second to avoid excessive use of force which normally drives more people into the insurgency.

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I INTRODUCTION:

The threat of violent conflict caused by or involving religious extremism has become a significant threat in recent times and is likely to play an even greater role in the near future. These conflicts are often likely to be, or at least begin as, insurgencies. However, contrary to most past insurgencies which the U.S. Army has faced, these particular conflicts will come from the religious right rather than the radical left of the political spectrum.

The Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid Empire was a classic example of a successful insurgency.¹ Though it occurred 2,000 years ago, it contains many elements of modern leftist insurgencies. Both the insurgents and the government forces bear startling resemblance to modern actors. The conflict demonstrates that the nature of insurgency, like the nature of war as a whole, is timeless. For although the characteristics of conflict, which are based on technology and geography, may change, the nature of warfare, which is determined by human nature, is unchanging.

The Maccabean revolt was led by charismatic leaders who focused and guided the people's anger against unjust government policies. They initially directed a guerrilla campaign in sparsely populated rugged terrain. Their area of operations was bordered by sanctuary areas which they used to avoid government pressure. The insurgents possessed a superb intelligence network due to their popular support. The insurgents received the recognition and external support of other nations and peoples. As the insurgents gained strength and control over the population, they shifted tactics from guerrilla to mobile warfare. When defeated by government main army forces, they reverted to earlier guerrilla tactics until they regained their strength.

The Seleucid Empire experienced the problems commonly faced by modern counter-insurgents. They were unable to concentrate resources, protect the loyal population or deal effectively with the zealotry of the insurgents. They initially suffered humiliating defeats as their supposedly powerful army was defeated by supposedly rag tag bands of insurgents. They adopted new tactics and eventually gained military victories over the insurgents but found that tactical victories did not bring an end to the

conflict. They eventually realized that an end to the conflict would have to include political, social and religious activities along with military actions. Although it never threatened the survival of the Empire, the Maccabean revolt consumed resources and fixed the attention of the Empire's rulers. It contributed to the general weakening and eventual destruction of the empire by the combination of external enemies and internal dissension.

There was no sudden, clear cut victory. The ultimate solution to the conflict was political and diplomatic rather than military. Though ultimately victorious, the Maccabean leadership which emerged from the conflict had more in common with the worldly Hellenistic rulers they had deposed than the spiritual zealots they had once been. The Maccabean revolt had the same level of extraordinary violence seen in modern conflicts involving religious extremism. Like these conflicts in Northern Ireland, Yugoslavia and elsewhere, the Maccabean revolt was not solely a religious struggle. From the beginning, there were economic, political and social issues that provided fuel for the religious spark to ignite. These issues continued to provide fuel for the conflict long after the Seleucid government granted all of the Maccabee's religious demands.

While clearly the Maccabean revolt had many things in common with modern leftist insurgencies, the differences if any, are not as clear. What is the nature of an insurgency, and is it the same for insurgencies originating from the secular left as from the religious right? Was the Maccabean Revolt an essentially religious conflict? If religious ideology was not the primary cause of the conflict, what were the other factors? Do the root causes of the conflict, lie in the same political, economic and social relationships as predicted by U.S. doctrine for leftist insurgencies? Once ignited, did the Maccabean revolt follow the normal pattern of other insurgencies? How did the Seleucid Empire respond to the revolt and are there any lessons from their experience? Most importantly, what operational aspects of the Maccabean revolt are relevant to the modern counter-insurgent facing revolt from the religious right?

Before the differences between the Maccabean and modern insurgencies can be determined, it is necessary to examine the nature of an insurgency. This requires a review of the doctrine in order to develop a framework for analysis. Specifically, to

examine Low Intensity Conflict(LIC), Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency and Operational Art. Understanding the dynamics and imperatives of LIC will provide a framework for analysis for examining the nature of insurgencies. The principles of counter-insurgency will likewise provide a basis for applying Operational Art as it pertains to counter-insurgency.

At first it may appear that LIC, insurgency and Operational Art are not particularly relevant to the Maccabean revolt. Not every LIC becomes an insurgency and many insurgencies have become Mid-Intensity Conflicts. This is certainly true of the Maccabean revolt which saw several large battles and prolonged sieges. However, every insurgency does begin as a LIC. It is therefore important to study LIC to identify the origins of an insurgency. The analysis of counter-insurgency will reveal that insurgencies cannot be defeated by military actions alone. Insurgencies can only be countered by a carefully orchestrated combination of military, economic, political and informational actions. This careful orchestration of actions demands the use of Operational Art, even in theaters with small geographic areas or force levels.

LIC is “a political-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional war and above routine, peaceful competition.”² LICs are usually localized but can have much broader security implications. They are caused by five dynamic forces; Change, Discontent, Poverty, Violence and Instability. It is these factors which must be addressed in countering a LIC rather than the military forces or capabilities of the belligerents. Forces involved in LIC must practice five imperatives of LIC; Political Dominance, Unity of effort, Adaptability, Legitimacy and Perseverance.³ These are slightly different from the current principles of Operations Other Than War which are; Objective, Unity of Effort, Legitimacy, Perseverance, Restraint and Security.⁴ Both place the most emphasis on the importance of the political objective and the minimum use of force. The doctrine cautions that “A deep understanding of host nation culture is indispensable in making decisions and avoiding costly mistakes.”⁵ One of the most important things to understand is how the host nation culture differs from American culture.

An insurgency is one of the four types of LIC. It is “an organized, armed political struggle whose goal may be the seizure of power through revolutionary takeover and replacement of the existing government”⁶ Insurgency differs from the other categories of LIC in that there is an expectation of combat actions either by U.S. forces or host nation forces. An insurgency gone unchecked can lead to mid or high intensity war. An insurgency “assumes that appropriate change within the existing system is not possible or likely...”⁷ U.S. doctrine states that insurgencies have root causes that motivate people to seek violent solutions outside normal political channels. It is these root causes that must be addressed, rather than military actions/re-actions, if the conflict is to be ended. These root causes come from the change, discontent, poverty, violence and instability which are the dynamics of Low Intensity Conflict. Insurgencies arise because governments fail to address these root causes of conflict. There appears to be no peaceful mechanism for resolving these conflicts.⁸ The people consider these conditions so intolerable that they are willing to risk violent death to effect change. The population supports the insurgency because they see it as being in their best interest. They will continue to support the insurgency as long as they think that they have a better chance of achieving their objectives, eliminating the root causes of the conflict, with the insurgents than with the government.

The initial goal of the insurgent is to mobilize the population in support of the revolt. Mobilization means channeling the intense popular feeling aroused by the root causes into organizations capable of challenging the government. The insurgency leaders organize the population into groups able to fight, raise money, gather supplies, collect intelligence, steal weapons and spread their ideology. The insurgency leaders ensure unity of effort by silencing supporters of the government and limiting factionalism within the insurgent movement. During this phase, there is relatively little violence towards the government. The insurgent’s are not strong enough to wage a guerrilla war. As the insurgency reaches a certain critical mass, it is no longer necessary for every member of the population to willingly support the revolt. They now have no choice but to help the insurgents because the government can no longer protect those who are loyal to it. Once the insurgency has completed this initial “latent and incipient” phase, it can move on to

phase II guerrilla warfare. While in phase I, the insurgency ensured its own support, in phase II it destroys the government's support. Once the insurgency is strong enough, and more importantly the government has been sufficiently weakened, the insurgents transition to the final phase III, mobile warfare. In this phase they challenge the government forces in pitched battle using conventional tactics in an effort to complete the destruction of the existing state.⁹ Insurgencies are sometimes forced to revert from one phase to the next. An ill-timed transition to mobile warfare, may result in the destruction of the insurgent military forces by still powerful government troops. If sufficiently decisive, the insurgents may lose their popular support and revert all the way to phase I. Now they are not even guerrilla leaders, but simple fugitives trying to convince the people that they can make a desired change. It is this political strength provided by control or support of the population that gives the insurgency its power. The counter-insurgent must attack this political strength rather than the insurgency's military power if it is to achieve a lasting peace.

The primary job of the insurgency's **leadership** is to destroy the government's legitimacy while enhancing their own legitimacy. They must continually demonstrate that the government is not responsive to the grievances of the people and it cannot protect those who support it nor punish those who oppose it. The insurgent leadership must simultaneously demonstrate that they are the legitimate leaders by protecting their supporters, punishing opponents, providing vision and aligning their policies with popular aspirations. The leadership may be charismatic and rely on a few magnetic leaders. This helps the insurgents ignite the passions of the people but also makes it vulnerable to the counter-insurgents targeting those leaders. The leadership may be systemic with no well known personalities to fire popular passions. However, it is much more resilient than a leadership based on personalities.

The most common method the leadership will use in establishing legitimacy for the insurgency is through **ideology**. "Ideology guides the insurgents in offering society a goal."¹⁰ The ideology must explain why the government has failed and how the insurgents will succeed. It must paint a picture of a brighter future that makes all of the violence and suffering worth the cost. By studying the insurgency's ideology, the

government may gain insight into possible schisms within the insurgency. It may also identify those sectors of the population targeted by the insurgents.

The ideology of the insurgency will normally determine the **objectives** of the insurgency. The strategic end state is usually to replace the existing government with some new system that is in accordance with the ideology. The operational and tactical objectives that lead up to that end state may vary widely. Insurgents may often do things that do not make military sense because they contribute to the perception of legitimacy among the people. The counter-insurgent must be very careful that they do not focus on winning battlefield engagements while the insurgents focus on accomplishing operational objectives.¹¹

Often the objectives chosen by insurgents will be determined by the nature of the **external support** provided by outside powers both to the insurgents and to the government. External support can be Moral, Political, Resources or Sanctuary. The nation that provides the external support can usually not be attacked by the government fighting the insurgency. Determining how to cut off external support, without widening the conflict to include general war with the provider of the external support, is one of the key tasks of the counter-insurgent.¹² The nature of external support is often determined by the **environment and geography**. The insurgents must have some means of contact with the provider of the external support if it is to receive arms or supplies.

The **proper use of phasing and timing** is critical to the insurgent. They must correctly gauge the level of popular support and the weakness of the government before they expose their organizations.¹³ If the insurgents time these incorrectly they can be destroyed as the still powerful government forces mass against them while the population refuses to aid them. To predict the phases and timing of an insurgency, the counter-insurgent must understand the **operational and organizational patterns** of the insurgency. The four basic patterns are; Subversive, Critical-cell, Mass-oriented and Traditional.¹⁴ Most insurgencies will be a combination of patterns and this combination may change as the insurgency evolves.

Once the insurgency has been analyzed, the counter-insurgent can then develop a plan to defeat it using the principles of counter-insurgency; Unity of effort, Maximum

use of intelligence, Minimum use of violence and Responsive Government.¹⁵ Consistent with the principles for LIC and OOTW, these principles emphasize that the conflict cannot be resolved solely by force. A solution can only be brought about by a carefully orchestrated sequence of military, economic, political and informational actions. The primary objective for both sides in an insurgency is the support of the population. The decisive key terrain lies not on a battlefield, but in the hearts and minds of the people.¹⁶

II Prelude and Root Causes of Conflict

The origins of the Maccabean revolt are complex and go far beyond the issues of religious or cultural intolerance. It is clear that the edicts of Antiochus IV in B.C. 167 drove the mass of Jews into revolt. However, the edicts against the Jewish religion did not occur in a vacuum. They were an ill considered response to an existing internecine conflict among factions of Jews. This uprising was caused by a long series of events and a unique set of circumstances. Many of these root causes of the conflict also caused the revolt to persist long after the repeal of the edicts. These root causes which generated the unrest were; the change and instability caused by the clash between Hellenistic civilization and Mosaic law, the economic disparity between the urban aristocracy and the urban poor or rural Jews of all stations, the political struggles of the Oniad and Tobiad families over the office of High Priest, the personality and actions of Antiochus IV "Epiphanes" and the political instability of the Seleucid Empire caused by multiple external and internal threats. While these issues led to violent unrest, there was no insurgency against the Seleucid government. The violence was between factions of Jews, all still nominally loyal to the Seleucid government. It was in response to the violence and disorder accompanying the internecine conflict that Antiochus issued his edicts attacking the Jewish faith. This in turn, led to the revolt.

The impact of Hellenization upon most oriental societies was fairly benign and had little effect on the practice of religion. Hellenization in these cultures effected only a thin layer at the top of society. It did not significantly effect the lifestyle of the lower classes. In Judea, the situation was very different. While the benefits of Hellenization

effected only aristocracy as in other cultures, the other aspects reached down throughout the society.¹⁷ However, this was not always the case. Initially during the Hellenistic period there was relatively little economic or social interaction between most Jews and the other members of the Hellenistic society. Only a few of the wealthier Jews adopted the more cosmopolitan ways of Hellenistic civilization. These “Hellenized” Jews found that they had greater social and economic opportunities than those who shunned contact with Gentiles.¹⁸ This separation was aided by the role of the Jewish High Priest as both spiritual and political leader. As the tax collector and political intermediary, he insulated the Jewish community from political interaction with the Hellenistic government. Judea had existed within the Ptolemaic Empire for 100 years without conflict due to careful separation of the two. The Ptolemies were willing to take a laissez-faire approach to Judea. It existed as a “Temple State” ruled by its own laws and left unmolested as long as taxes or tribute were paid.¹⁹

Over time, more of the Jewish aristocracy sought the social and economic advantages of Hellenization. In particular while still under rule of the Ptolemies, Joseph son of Tobias, a tax farmer and High Priest, transformed traditional methods and customs along Hellenistic lines and brought greater social and economic opportunities to those who adopted them.²⁰ The unintended consequence of this action was that it accentuated the existing gap between rich and poor. Under Tobias a new class of merchant and money lender grew up that was resented by the poor whom they exploited. The increased luxury of the Hellenizers was resented by the poor and even by those tradesmen who benefited from the greater consumption of the Hellenizers.²¹

This activity became even more pronounced after the Seleucid conquest of Judea by the Seleucid Emperor, Antiochus III in B.C. 198. Unlike the Ptolemies, the Seleucids encouraged Hellenization of all their dominions. They sought a more intrusive regime to increase the power and cohesiveness of their heterogeneous empire.²² Unlike the Ptolemies, they had no natural boundaries or unifying religion. Antiochus IV in particular sought to spread an “empire wide ruler cult meant to complement, not replace, the other local cults.”²³ Antiochus IV named himself Epiphanes “...by action a god made manifest” in order to increase the central authority of the state²⁴ This was not unusual as

it was common practice for Hellenistic rulers to be worshipped as gods. By engendering a ruler cult, Antiochus IV sought to increase the cohesion and state power of the Empire. This normally would cause no problems in polytheistic societies where the Hellenistic deities were simply overlaid with the existing pantheon.²⁵ This “liberal and tolerant policy” went over well in Babylon for example, but produced problems in Judea.²⁶

Antiochus IV was faced with a unique set of problems. The Seleucid Empire had lost most of the Seleucid possessions in Asia Minor under Antiochus III. They also owed the Romans a large indemnity. The crowning indignity occurred during Antiochus IV’s second war with Egypt. He had conquered most of the country and was about to take Alexandria, when the ambassador from the Roman Senate ordered him to stop and return home. Antiochus IV’s wars with Egypt and the indemnity to Rome caused a cash flow crisis. He raised taxes in Judea and elsewhere and sought other opportunities to raise funds.

Coincident with Antiochus IV’s money problems, there occurred a political and family squabble within the Jewish aristocracy over control of the Temple and its treasury.²⁷ Antiochus IV chose to involve himself in the dispute and deposed Onias the reigning High Priest and appointed his more pliant nephew Jason in his place. Jason bought the High Priesthood by promising to pay greater taxes and to make Jerusalem more like a Hellenistic city. Both of these offers greatly pleased Antiochus IV who saw himself as “a radiant champion of Hellenism.”²⁸ Jason and his supporters introduced many Hellenistic reforms. They sought to change Judea from a temple state to a Polis. A Polis would have much greater political, social and economic standing. In other societies the creation of the Polis created little conflict since the common people had few rights under their old government. In Jerusalem which was ruled by Mosaic law, the creation of a Polis had the effect of disenfranchising most of the Jews and making them foreigners in their own land.²⁹

The Hellenizing Jews did not intend to violate the Mosaic law. They sought to incur the social, political and economic benefits of Hellenism without adopting the religious trappings. From a cosmopolitan, Hellenistic point of view, this should not have been impossible.³⁰ However, from a devout, Jewish point of view it was an anathema.

The creation of a Gymnasium and the sight of Jews exercising and engaging in other pagan customs greatly upset devout Jews. Although the Hellenizers felt that they were very careful to avoid erecting statues in honor of Greek gods or in paying tribute to Greek temples,³¹ this did not appease the devout or fundamentalist Jews. The fundamentalist Jews felt that they had survived as a people by a strictly disciplined devotion to Mosaic law and by avoiding contact, and therefore contamination, with other cultures. What the Seleucids misunderstood was that while the Hellenizing Jews had greater economic power and influence with the Seleucids, they were always a minority of the population. The Seleucids mistook Hellenizer support for that of the majority. In reality, the fundamentalists represented the vast majority of the population, especially in rural or outlying areas. Therefore, although the Hellenistic reforms were initiated by the Jewish aristocracy, by acquiescing to and encouraging them, the Seleucids were blamed for the reforms in the eyes of many devout Jews. Adding to the discontent was further interference by the Seleucid government in internal Jewish political squabbles.

Just as Jason had usurped the High Priesthood by offers of greater tax revenues, he was now replaced by Menelaus of the Tobiad family, who promised Antiochus IV still greater sums of money. The majority of the Tobiad family were ardent Hellenizers. They saw themselves as allies of the Seleucids against the Ptolemaic leaning Oniads.³² The appointment of Menelaus outraged many Jews because they saw their High Priesthood being bought and sold in the Seleucid court. Menelaus caused further outrage by plundering the Temple treasury to pay his debts to Antiochus IV. He also arranged the deaths of Onias and other prominent Jews who opposed him.³³ Violence erupted within Jerusalem between supporters of Menelaus and supporters of Jason. Menelaus called out the local Hellenic militia which defeated the supporters of Jason and drove them from the city. The situation was further aggravated by the rapacious conduct of Antiochus IV. On his march home from his first war with Egypt, he stopped in Jerusalem and robbed the Temple treasury. Clearly, the old days of light control were over.³⁴

By B.C. 168 Judea possessed many characteristics of a society in conflict and ready for revolt. The root causes of political, social and economic dislocation resulting from Hellenization were compounded by the selfish and short sighted actions of

Antiochus IV, Jason, Menelaus and their supporters. The external political problems of the Seleucid Empire created further stress. At this time, religious ideology was not the major factor in the incipient conflict. While devout and fundamentalist Jews felt threatened by Hellenism, there had been no direct attacks or threats against the Mosaic law or the practice of Judaism. However, each successive act by the Seleucids caused an increase in the tension pushing the Non-Hellenizing or traditional Jews to the verge of revolt.

III Initial disturbances and Seleucid Persecutions

In B.C. 168 Antiochus IV again attacked Egypt. He had been successful and was besieging Alexandria at the height of his victory, when he was humiliated and forced to withdraw by the Roman ambassador. This political defeat generated rumors of Antiochus IV's death in Egypt, triggering the initial revolt. Jason and his supporters seized the perceived opportunity to raise a revolt and depose the Seleucid puppet, Menelaus.³⁵ Menelaus was defeated and the Polis abolished, however the fighting got out of hand and Jason too was run out of the city by the common people who regarded him as a Hellenizer, almost as bad as Menelaus.

It is important to note the objectives of each side at this stage of the revolt. The mob of traditional Jews, who ousted Menelaus and Jason in turn, did not desire political independence for Judea. Their objectives at this time were not even religious toleration. For although the Seleucids and their Hellenizing supporters had greatly angered the traditional Jews and the creation of a Polis denigrated the importance of Mosaic law in political affairs, there had been no attacks on Judaism itself. The objectives of the revolt at this stage were no more than a return to the status quo. They wanted Judea to be not a Polis but a Temple State, subject and loyal to the Seleucid Empire. They wanted the High Priest who was their spiritual leader and political connection to the Seleucid Empire to be chosen by the Jewish Elders from among the hereditary house of David. Perhaps most importantly, they wanted a return to the traditional values of Judaism and an end to the vulgar social climbing of the Hellenizers. They wanted their aristocracy to model traditional Jewish values, not ape the worldliness of a materialistic, pagan culture.

Antiochus IV returned from his humiliation by the Romans to find Jerusalem in revolt against him. He reacted savagely and slaughtered many people both during the re-taking of the city and in reprisals.³⁶ As soon as Antiochus IV departed, the people again rose up and the new revolt was put down by the local governor Apollonias. After this second revolt, Jerusalem lost its Polis status and became not a Temple State but a garrison city with a Seleucid garrison installed in a citadel in the inner city. Many Jews were forced out of their homes when their land was confiscated for the Seleucid garrison or for redistribution to loyal Hellenizers. This created a second wave of refugees flowing out of the city. The soldiers of the Seleucid garrison conducted their normal religious services in their new station which happened to be within the Jewish Temple precincts. This action by the Seleucid troops was not intended to have any religious implications for other groups. However, the Jews were incensed to have foreign gods worshipped on Temple grounds and complained bitterly. In response to the renewed complaints, Antiochus IV over-reacted and issued the edicts known to the Jews as the "Abomination of Desolation," re-dedicating the Jewish Temple to Zeus Olympias, forbidding Jewish practices such as circumcision, offering sacrifices or dietary restrictions, abrogating Mosaic law and burning the Torah, and compelling celebration of Greek religious holidays to include eating unclean foods.³⁷ Those who refused to comply were put to death. The uniqueness of this act in Hellenistic history is significant to understanding the revolt. The Seleucid Empire and other Hellenistic governments almost never persecuted specific religions or practices. While they would tolerate almost any religious practice, no matter how eccentric they perceived it to be, they would not tolerate political disobedience. Antiochus IV perceived the political disobedience of the Jews to be a direct outgrowth of their religion. He sought to stamp out the religion and with it the cause of the revolt. The result however, was the exact opposite. This action turned struggle from internecine political squabble to a war of religious and national survival, making the stakes much higher for both sides. All Jews except for dedicated Hellenizers now were against Seleucids.³⁸ The differences between this revolt and the typical revolution from the left are striking. It is normally the failure of the government to use, or ineffective use of, violent force at the critical moment of an insurrection that allows

society to go over the edge into revolution.³⁹ In this case it was the use of excessive violence against the insurrection that precipitated the revolt. The second difference is in the goals of the government and those in revolt. The pressure for rebellion normally comes from the left in support of change. The government seeks to preserve the status quo which blocks the aspirations of the revolutionaries. In the Maccabean revolt, the pressure to rebel came from the right in protest against government sponsored change. The rebels sought return to a former status quo. In contrast to most secular revolutionaries seek to destroy the present in the hope of achieving a more perfect future, the traditional Jews sought to restore a perfect or idealized past. The Hellenizers and the Seleucid government sought not to preserve the current system but usher in a more perfect Hellenistic, cosmopolitan future.⁴⁰

The Seleucids began to enforce the edicts in Jerusalem and throughout Judea, but not in the rest of the empire. This action created further refugee flows as devout Jews sought to avoid the choice of death or defilement at the hands of the Seleucids. The spark for the official beginning of the insurgency occurred at Modiin. Matathias, a prominent local person refused to comply with the edicts and therefore defile himself. Instead, he killed the king's messenger and his collaborators. Matathias and his sons fled into the local hills and raised the standard of revolt. They were quickly joined by others, many of whom were refugees from the initial violence or subsequent edicts and persecutions.

One of the decisive groups in the conflict and first to join Matathias, were the Hasidim. Their exact identity and the origin of their opposition to the Seleucids are subject of debate.⁴¹ They were in organized opposition to the Seleucids prior to the emergence of the Maccabees as leaders of the revolt. They and other groups are described in I Maccabees as joining with the Maccabees as organized groups after the incident at Modiin. This is significant because it clearly shows that the Maccabean revolt did not originate with Matathias and his sons.⁴² It was instead a popular uprising over which the charismatic Maccabees assumed control and provided essential leadership. When Matathias committed his act of defiance, the Ideology(Mosaic Law) and Objectives(return thereof) of the revolt were already clear in the minds of most of the

people. This is important in defining the Maccabean revolt as a revolt from the religious right rather than secular left of the political spectrum. There was no campaign or education necessary to raise the people's consciousness. There was no propaganda required to make people willing to lay down their lives. The initial actions of the Seleucid government destroyed its legitimacy and caused the majority of Jews to view the revolt as a battle for the survival of their race and religion. The political squabbles, economic disparities and social jealousies that helped to spawn the conflict were forgotten in the flaming passions aroused by the persecutions. Therefore the Maccabean revolt began as an insurgency focused on the very specific religious grievances of Antiochus IV's edicts and persecutions. It was only under the leadership of the Maccabees, that it was to evolve into a war of religious and national liberation with much broader political and economic goals.

IV Guerrilla warfare

Their religious ideology and shared objectives allowed the Maccabees to greatly shorten the latent and incipient phase of the insurgency. The latent and incipient phase of most insurgencies is normally a very difficult struggle. The insurgents must struggle desperately to survive, increase their numbers and spread their ideology. This process is necessary so that the insurgents have the required popular support before they move on to phase two, guerrilla warfare. In contrasted, the Maccabees had widespread support from the beginning. This gave the Maccabean insurgency a remarkable strength and coherence very early during this initial phase.

The insurgents were particularly fortunate to have such charismatic leaders as the Maccabees. The Maccabee family provided not only Matathias, who had been a respected community leader before the revolt, but also Judas, Jonathan and Simon in turn as leaders of the revolt. In addition two other sons, Eleazar and Johanon would be killed in the course of the struggle. The Maccabees provided the focus for the insurgency and a core around which it could form. After killing the king's officials and the collaborators, Matathias and his supporters fled into the rugged hill country to the north and east of

Modiin.⁴³ There they collected and integrated the many groups who would form the insurgency. Some, like the Hasidim, “stout fighting men of Israel”⁴⁴ were already in violent opposition to the Seleucids. Others were simply refugees, their property and way of life destroyed by the edicts, they were readily turned into insurgents against their oppressors. The insurgency was once again fortunate in the location of the initial uprising against the Seleucids. The Gophna hills are very rugged with many caves and few roads. The area was ideal for conducting the defensive strategy of an early insurgency.⁴⁵ Not only did the hills provide shelter and limit the means or approach, but their higher elevations provided a good view of those approaches. This allowed the Maccabees to see the enemy approaching while they were still far away. The Maccabees could then retreat to avoid the enemy or maneuver into the best spot for an ambush. While the hills are not accessible, they are not remote. The rebels were close enough to their own and other Jewish villages to draw supplies, information and other support. The immediate willingness of the local Jews to provide this support marks was a key factor in allowing the Maccabees go almost directly to guerrilla warfare, without a long period of mobilization of the populace.

The initial objectives of the were simply to preserve themselves against the Hellenizers and prevent further enforcement of the edicts. They also made it clear that any Jews who went along with the Hellenizers could not be protected.⁴⁶ They developed and expanded an intelligence network to inform them of any Hellenizing or Seleucid military movements.⁴⁷ This confirmed Maccabean control over the population, guaranteeing logistical support and timely warning of any Hellenizer or Seleucid activity. During this time the Seleucid government continued its persecutions in areas outside the Maccabee’s control, which drove increasing numbers of Jews into the ranks of the insurgents.

As the Maccabees gained control of a larger area, they were able to attempt a bolder strategy. They attacked the Hellenizers and any small detachments of Seleucid troops who moved through their area of control. Mao’s “fish in the sea” analogy gives a vivid picture of the Maccabee’s tactics. Like a fish moving through the water, the guerrillas could swiftly move undetected throughout Judea, drawing their support from

the surrounding people. They could materialize from nowhere, strike the Seleucids and then vanish back into the body of the populace, which like the ocean, closes back over them leaving no sign of their presence.⁴⁸ They began a slow process of blockading the Hellenizers and their protective Seleucid garrison in the citadel in Jerusalem. The Maccabean base in the Gophna hills allowed them to interdict the lines of communication between Jerusalem and the coastal cities and the seat of the strategos for Judea which was in Sammaria.⁴⁹ The pleas from the garrison and the increasing power and support of the Maccabees provoked a response from the local Seleucid governor, Apollonius.⁵⁰ In B.C. 166 he raised a force of Hellenizers and local Seleucid militia and moved south from Samaria against the rebels. The Maccabees learned of the attack in time to muster a defensive force and select an appropriate ambush site. The Maccabees' tactics in this battle were a slight modification of those they had been using against the Hellenizers. The previous year of struggle against the Hellenizers had taught them the guerrilla art of ambush, raid and night attack. The Maccabees decision to fight by ambush rather than face the formidable Seleucid heavy infantry⁵¹ on level ground was classic guerrilla technique and demonstrates the timelessness of the method.⁵² Sympathizers told Judas Maccabaeus the exact route of the Seleucid force of approximately 2,000 soldiers. This allowed him to pick the most advantageous site for an ambush. Having reconnoitered the terrain, he divided his own force of roughly 600 into four groups. One was to block the path of the enemy, two were to attack from the heights on either flank while the fourth closed off the rear. The tight confines of the defile prevented the Seleucid troops from deploying properly and maximized the effects of the lightly armed Jews. Apollonius was killed and his force destroyed.⁵³

While a tactical victory, the operational results of this battle were far more important than the destruction of the 2,000 soldiers. The battle was an important step in securing the support of the population which is what gives an insurgency its power. It secured the northern approaches to the Maccabean base area for the immediate future.⁵⁴ While the ideology of the revolt ensured that the Maccabees had the sympathy of all traditional Jews, it did not guarantee their active support. By demonstrating that they could stand against and defeat Seleucid troops, the insurgents proved that they could

protect their supporters. Likewise, it proved that the Seleucid government could not protect its supporters. It raised the morale of the Maccabees and traditional Jews throughout Judea. It brought more recruits into the Maccabean camp and discouraged the Hellenizers. By validating the Maccabean methods, it set the pattern for future engagements. One of the keys to the Maccabean method was their intelligence system. It consisted of the body of devout Jews throughout Judea and the coastal plains. It provided timely warning of any enemy approach. The base in the Gophna hills allowed the Maccabees to move on interior lines to any threatened area fast than the Seleucids could who had to move from the outside towards the center.⁵⁵

The victory provoked a second campaign to relieve the garrison in Jerusalem in B.C. 165. The Seleucid general Seron led a larger force of regular Seleucid soldiers, civilian Gentile militia and Hellenizing Jew from the coastal plains east into the hills in pursuit of the Maccabees. Judas again used his superior intelligence network to identify the approach route of the enemy and select a suitable ambush site. The ambush resulted in another victory as Seron was killed early in the fighting and his troops routed. There are two interesting additions in this battle. The first is that Judas had to rally and motivate his troops who were afraid of the Seleucid forces. In doing this he stressed the religious ideology of the cause. This actions shows him emerging as not just a military but a religious leader. The second is that the Seleucid host again falls into an ambush. A professional Seleucid force must be assumed to have sent reconnaissance forward and to the flanks and been familiar with counter-ambush procedures.⁵⁶ Yet the Maccabees were able to avoid the Seleucid reconnaissance and conduct an effective ambush. This demonstrates a very high level of skill and discipline for a guerrilla force.

This victory further strengthened the revolt and cemented Judas' position as military and political leader of the insurgency. It set the stage for a third attempt to relieve the garrison by an even larger and better trained Seleucid force. At the same time, BC 165⁵⁷, Antiochus IV had to move to Persia to put down a revolt of the eastern satrapies that was viewed as more dangerous than the revolt in Judea. The force sent to Judea under Nicanor was not the main Seleucid army but was composed of regular soldiers and much more powerful than the first two attempts. The Seleucid regular units

were augmented by local Gentiles and Hellenizers. Wary of ambush, the Seleucid force established a fortified camp in pro-government territory at Ammaus from which they intended to clear the surrounding heights before attempting an ascent of the main army along the road to Jerusalem.⁵⁸ This battle shows a slight modification in Maccabean tactics while maintaining the themes of superior intelligence and surprise. The Seleucids, who were aided by Hellenizing informers, learned of the location of the Maccabean camp at Mizpah, and sent out a large raiding party under Gorgias to destroy it. The Maccabees superior intelligence informed Judas in time to evacuate the camp and launch a counter-raid against the Seleucid base camp at Ammaus. It is possible that Judas allowed the location of his camp to become known as part of a deception operation to set up the Seleucid base camp.⁵⁹ The Seleucid raiding force struck an empty camp and spent the night in pursuit of Maccabean “rear guard” who’s mission was to distract them from returning to the camp at Ammaus.⁶⁰ The main Maccabean strike force consisting of picked men conducted a rapid night march to attack the Seleucid camp in early morning. They rushed the complacent camp at breakfast time, defeated the government forces before they could organize a proper defense and chased them down the valley towards the coast.⁶¹ Judas rallied his men and did not allow them to plunder the camp. Gorgias upon returning from his fruitless pursuit, saw the Maccabees prepared for him and decided not to give battle but returned to the coast.

This battle shows an extraordinary level of training and discipline in the Maccabean force. They conducted a 27 km night march over difficult terrain, defeated a powerful entrenched force and then had the discipline to halt their pursuit and plunder in order to be prepared for a counter-attack. Judas took part in an elaborate religious ceremony at Mizpah prior to the battle. This reinforced the ideological basis and motivation for the fighters and identified him with their ideology. Although the Maccabees did not plan the three battles as a coordinated campaign, they had a similar effect. They forged the guerrillas into a well trained, disciplined force that was now well armed with captured Seleucid weapons. They confirmed Maccabean control of the region and allowed the Hellenizers to be driven out. The revolt had now reached the stage where they could compel support from those few Jews who did not share their

ideology. From the Seleucid perspective, it had not been a campaign at all. Instead the three disjointed attacks had confirmed their inability to enforce governmental decrees or protect those who will still loyal to it. This was caused by the shortage of troops and the low priority of the Judean theater compared to other conflicts within the Seleucid Empire.

The new defeat convinced Lysias, the Emperor's regent in the west, to personally conduct the next campaign. He attempted negotiations to buy time while he assembled his forces. These forces were part of the Seleucid regular army although the main effort was still campaigning with Antiochus IV on the Tigris.⁶² Having learned from the previous three defeats, Lysias chose to approach Jerusalem from the south through friendly Idumaea. This would avoid the Maccabean intelligence network and allow the Seleucid force to ascend into the mountains prior to meeting the rebels.⁶³ Lysias attacked and seized the town of Beth Zur on the border of Idumaea and Judea. While in the vicinity of Beth Zur, Lysias learned of the death of Antiochus IV in Persia. He ended the campaign and withdrew his army and returned to Syria in order to secure his position in Antioch.⁶⁴ The Seleucid government granted an amnesty to the rebels and revoked the edicts of persecution.⁶⁵ At some point during the campaign, the Maccabeans had attacked the Seleucids and achieved a minor success against an advance guard or outpost. They claimed a great victory and credit for the withdrawal of the government troops.

Although the deliberate and unhurried withdrawal of the Seleucid army shows that there was no decisive battle, the Maccabeans skillfully used propaganda to turn a doubtful tactical victory into a huge operational triumph. They spread the word that for a fourth time, God had granted the poorly armed but righteous few a great victory over the richly armed yet wicked many.⁶⁶ Judas took advantage of Lysias's and his army's absence to move his forces to Jerusalem. He fixed the garrison and Hellenizers in the citadel and then refurbished and rededicated the Temple in BC 164. He also fortified the area immediately surrounding the Temple.⁶⁷ This action had an immense psychological effect on the course of the revolt.⁶⁸ The news spread far beyond Judea and ignited support for the revolt among the Jews of the Diaspora. Jews from Egypt, Pergamum and parts of the Seleucid Empire outside Judea sent money and arms. Jewish soldiers from

these areas arrived to lend their services.⁶⁹ The victory is also highly likely to have encouraged external support from rivals of the Seleucids. The rulers of Egypt, Pergamum and Rome all had an interest in destabilizing the Seleucids. The Romans signed a friendship treaty which provided at least moral support with the Maccabeans. Pergamum and the Ptolomies were in position to allow or encourage their Jewish subjects to support the revolt with money and skills.⁷⁰ The Maccabees now controlled all of Judea except for the citadel in Jerusalem. They were able to train and recruit without hindrance from Hellenizers and solidify their popular support which was now almost universal in Judea.

The Maccabees had achieved the objectives of their revolt. The edicts of Antiochus IV were withdrawn and the Mosaic law was restored.⁷¹ However this did not bring an end to the fighting. Although the Maccabees had triumphed over most of the Hellenizers and gained a respite from the Seleucids, the Maccabees now faced another threat. The Gentiles in Judea and the surrounding area had become alarmed at the shift in power and attacked the Jews in their communities. These Jews appealed for help and Judas responded with a "lightning campaign"⁷² aimed at liberating the outlying Jews from their enemies and evacuating them to Judea. These actions helped to cement Judas' role as not only military protector of the Jewish Religion, but leader of the Jewish nation. It also began to change the objectives of the movement from religious toleration to political independence.

In this campaign, the Maccabees received external support from the Nabatean Arabs living east of the Transjordan. The Nabateans were enemies of the Seleucids and now offered sanctuary to the Maccabees. In some cases if the communities were strong enough, Judas did not evacuate the Jews but strengthened their defenses and left them in place.⁷³ The widespread nature of the attacks caused the Maccabees to divide their forces. Judas left a force in Judea to hold Jerusalem. He sent his brother Simon with 3,000 men to Galilee and took 8,000 to relieve the Jews in Gilead. He avoided the Seleucid garrisons in Transjordan and used the aid of the Nabatean Arabs to approach Gilead from an unexpected direction. He conducted a punitive campaign and destroyed the towns of Bosora, Bosor, Alema, Casphor, Maker and Carnaim. His forces conducted

reprisals and committed atrocities to match those inflicted on the Jews. The Maccabees stormed the large town of Dathema and defeated a Gentile response force at the Raphon Brook. They gathered the evacuees and brought them to Judea, storming and sacking the city of Ephron which had dared to bar their way. In his absence, junior Maccabean commanders had suffered a defeat. Judas' arrival restored the balance of power and he destroyed two coastal towns that had persecuted their Jewish inhabitants.⁷⁴

In this stage of the conflict the Maccabees demonstrated sophisticated command and control of their forces. They conducted simultaneous and sequential operations as one force held Jerusalem, another campaigned in Galilee and the main effort rescued Jews in Gilead. They no longer conducted individual battles forced upon them by the enemy, but sequenced a series of engagements to accomplish an operational objective. Judas' force in the Transjordan, seized key towns such as Dathema to serve as a base of operations. Then they would seize other towns such as Maker or other key terrain to preempt Seleucid interference with his rescue operations. Having secured their intermediate objectives, the Maccabees would then collect the Jews and conduct reprisals on their persecutors. Once these were completed, the Maccabees would withdraw along with the evacuees. This campaign solidified the consciousness of the Jews as a nation and Judas Maccabaeus as their leader. However, despite the successes against the Gentiles, the Maccabees had still not secured Judea against all threats.

V Transition to Mobile Warfare

The success caused Judas to think beyond the original goal of restoring Mosaic law or the subsequent goal of protecting Jews from Gentiles as well as Hellenizers. The Maccabees now wanted not just their religious freedom but their political freedom as well. The Hasmoneans (Judas Maccabee and his brothers) were able to set new objectives for the revolt because they had established themselves as effective military, political and religious leaders. They had gained the support of the population and the original traditional insurgency had now become a mass insurgency. The Maccabean

army had consistently demonstrated that it was the rightful protector of traditional Jews. Judas and his brothers demonstrated that they were the legitimate political leadership in Judea and more worthy of support than the Seleucid government or the few remaining Hellenizers.

While the Maccabees controlled most of Judea, they viewed the presence of the Seleucid garrison in the Citadel in Jerusalem as a continual threat to their political and religious freedom. The conclusion of the campaign against the Gentiles and the continued absence of Lysias due to his occupation with Seleucid internecine conflicts caused Judas to perceive a window of opportunity. In BC 162 Judas attempted to storm the citadel in Jerusalem. When that failed he laid siege to it. The garrison and Hellenizers appealed to Lysias for help.⁷⁵ Lysias settled his political affairs and organized the largest army yet for a punitive campaign in Judea. Up to this time, the Judean revolt had always been a secondary effort for the Seleucid Empire. However, for his second campaign in Judea, Lysias brought along war elephants which was in contravention of their peace settlement imposed by Rome on Antiochus III.⁷⁶ This indicates the seriousness with which the Seleucid empire now regarded the Maccabean revolt. Lysias repeated his strategy and moved into Judea from the south, besieging and capturing Beth-Zur once more. Judas lifted the siege of the citadel and attempted a set piece defensive battle at Beth-Zechariah. This was the Maccabees first attempt to engage a Seleucid army in a fixed battle. Their campaigns against the Gentiles had included sieges and some large battles, but had primarily retained the guerrilla methods which had been so successful against the Seleucids.⁷⁷

The Maccabees occupied a defensive position in a narrow valley at Beth-Zechariah. Judas' force now included heavy infantry to match the Seleucid Phalanx and at least some cavalry.⁷⁸ Lysias had also prepared. He secured the heights on either side of the battle field to prevent ambush, and employed a combined arms formation of elephants carrying archers in armored towers surrounded by phalangites and cavalry. The elephants broke the Maccabean infantry by firepower, protection and shock effect while the Seleucid infantry and cavalry protected the elephants from enemy infantry.⁷⁹ Despite the improvements to their forces, the Maccabees were not able to stand against

the Seleucid troops. Judas broke contact and withdrew his force through Jerusalem into their former base in the Gophna hills.

Lysias relieved the besieged citadel and laid siege to the recently fortified Temple. Judas and the main Maccabee force were unable to interfere. Before the Temple surrendered, Lysias was again called away to settle Seleucid internal political problems. He offered terms to Judas guaranteeing the religious freedoms that had been won by the Maccabees two years before during Lysias' first expedition.⁸⁰ The Hellenizers were left in the citadel but Menelaus, the Hellenizing high priest, was put to death in Syria by the Seleucids.⁸¹ The defeat at Beth-zacharia forced the Maccabees to revert from mobile to guerrilla warfare. They had underestimated the Seleucids and suffered a setback but were not destroyed. They retained the support of most of the population and retained control of all Judea except for the citadel. Each time the Seleucids negotiated with the Maccabees it increased their legitimacy as the political leaders of the Jews and gave them another breathing spell to rebuild before the next clash.

Later in BC 162, the new Seleucid Emperor, Demetrius I sent an army under Bacchides to install Alcimus, a moderate Hellenizer, as high priest in Jerusalem. The Maccabees did not challenge Bacchides and he occupied Jerusalem without incident. He conducted several small counter guerrilla operations against the Gophna hills but none that achieved any decisive effect. The Maccabees contented themselves with attempting to maintain control of the population outside Jerusalem. Since the Mosaic law had been restored and the persecutions ended, some of the Hasidim and others gave up the insurgency. Leaders of the Hasidim attempted to negotiate with Alcimus. Instead of deftly applying the principle of divide and rule, he bungled the effort and had some of the Hasidim executed.⁸² The actual number of people who abandoned the revolt upon the restoration of Mosaic law is unclear. Despite their defeat in fixed battle and transition to nationalistic objectives, the Maccabees still controlled the majority of the population outside Jerusalem.⁸³ Their guerrillas dominated the countryside and had the support of the people. The unanswered question is how the new religious situation and political objectives effected recruiting or retention of soldiers?

Nicanor, the Seleucid Strategos or governor of Judea attempted to negotiate with Judas to end the guerrilla war. Judas refused because his objective was now political freedom. Nicanor then attempted to capture Judas using trickery, and when that failed to destroy him by force.⁸⁴ Judas defeated Nicanor at Kafar Salama and forced him to retreat to the citadel. Judas did not besiege him there perhaps due to lack of forces, but more likely due to fear of provoking another major Seleucid invasion. Judas choose to wait until Nicanor left the citadel in BC 161 in order to link up with reinforcements coming from Antioch.⁸⁵ The fact that the Seleucid garrison had to link up with the reinforcements force outside the city is his indicative of the strength of the Maccabean forces that controlled the countryside. At Adasa Judas again chose to fight a pitched battle on level terrain. The Maccabees killed Nicanor and destroyed his forces. As the Seleucid troops fled towards the nearest friendly fort at Gezer, the local villagers came out and cut down the stragglers.⁸⁶

This battle reestablished the dominance of the Maccabees in Judea. It demonstrated that the Maccabees could defeat the Seleucid army in pitched battle and confirmed popular support for fighting to secure political as well as religious independence. In BC 161 Judas concluded a treaty of alliance with Rome which along with Nicanor's defeat provoked another major Seleucid attack under Bacchides in BC 160.⁸⁷ Bacchides and his army of Seleucid regulars marched south from Syria. He captured the Maccabean fortress of Arbel in Galilee and massacred the defenders. He had learned from the past Seleucid experiences with the Maccabees. Bacchides selected the most difficult and indirect approach to Jerusalem. He moved from Galilee, down the Jordan valley and then west along the Gilgal road, making a very steep ascent in a desert environment. While this maneuver was difficult, it negated the Maccabean advantage in intelligence. The area was sparsely populated and there were few Jewish inhabitants to inform Judas of the enemy's approach. Having negated Judas's information advantage he established a base of operations at Beeroth in the foot of the Gophna hills.⁸⁸ Being surprised by the enemy, Judas was unable to set up the customary ambush on carefully prepared terrain, which had been so successful in the past.⁸⁹ Bacchides did not take Jerusalem but instead began to establish his control of the population in the surrounding

area. He persecuted the people and killed anyone loyal to the Maccabees. His purpose was to force Judas to fight on level terrain of Bacchides choosing where the Seleucid heavy infantry and cavalry would be at greatest advantage.⁹⁰ As a political leader Judas could not stand idly by and allow his people to be slaughtered. He therefore accepted a pitched battle with the Seleucid on flat ground which was an exception to his normal tactics.⁹¹ The Maccabean army was by no means a purely guerrilla force in BC 160. They contained a heavy infantry force to engage the Seleucid Phalanx. This may not have been a complete Hellenistic style formation, but it was capable of standing against the Seleucid Phalanx for at least a short period as demonstrated in the battles of Beth-zacharia, Adasa and Elasa. The Maccabees also possessed some cavalry.⁹² These forces probably came from or were trained by Jews who had served in the Seleucid, Ptolemaic or Pergamum armies and rallied to the Maccabees after the purification of the temple.⁹³

Bacchides knew that simply defeating Judas' force would not end the revolt due to his support among the people. He thought that if he could kill Judas, the revolt might break up without his leadership. Having maneuvered Judas into battle against his will, Bacchides developed a battle plan to capture or kill Judas and thereby end the revolt. Normally the Maccabees, like any guerrilla force would run away once the battle started to go against them. Bacchides needed a plan that would hold the Maccabees so that they could be destroyed. He had his phalanx engage the Maccabean heavy infantry while holding his cavalry back. He knew that Judas had won many of his battles by killing the Seleucid general who doctrinally fought with the cavalry on the right flank. Bacchides simulated a retreat by the right flank cavalry to tempt Judas into attempting to kill him and win in his traditional manner. Judas took the bait and began to pursue Bacchides at the head of his own flank cavalry. The Seleucid left flank cavalry defeated their opponents and maneuvered around behind Judas and the pursuing Maccabean cavalry. The right wing with Bacchides then halted its flight and crushed Judas and his force between the two Seleucid cavalry forces.⁹⁴ Judas was killed and the Maccabean survivors were driven from the field, chased out of the Gophna hills and found refuge only in the desert sanctuary of the Nabateans.⁹⁵

VI Jonathan and Simeon Maccabaeus

After the Battle of Elasa, Bacchides occupied all of Jerusalem and drove the Maccabees out of Judea. He cemented his control by fortifying key towns, such as Bethzur, and installing loyal garrisons in them. Bacchides had killed the leader of the revolt, scattered its army, seized its base area in the Gophna hills and established control over most of the population. This decisive victory coupled with the continuing toleration of the Mosaic law should have ended the insurgency. It would have, if it had still been a traditional insurgency with a purely religious ideology. However, the revolt had evolved into a mass insurgency based religious and nationalist ideology. The objective was no longer restoration of the Mosaic law, but independence of Judea from Seleucid rule.

The revolt had lost many adherents, such as the Hasidim, with the restoration of Mosaic law. However these religiously devout, if politically ambivalent Jews, would rally to the Maccabees the moment that any new attack on the Mosaic law occurred. Additionally, many Jews felt that they would never be completely free of the Hellenizers and their Greek influence, and therefore free to worship and live as they chose, as long as the Seleucid Empire ruled Judea. Unlike the Hasidim, Hellenizers or the vast majority of the polytheistic people in the Hellenistic world, the Hasmonians could not separate religious and political activity. They could not accept religious toleration within a Hellenistic society because the nature of Hellenism violated their religious beliefs⁹⁶ This visceral hatred of Greek culture and the upper class Jews who embraced it had preceded the religious issues of the conflict and now remained once the religious questions had been answered.⁹⁷ This belief was reinforced by the Gentile attacks on Jews outside Judea after the purification of the Temple in B.C. 164. Judas and the other Hasmonians had provided prompt, effective leadership in rescuing those Jews who now formed a strong block of support for the Hasmonians. These Jews and many others had come to view the Hasmonians as their leaders and protectors not just against the Seleucids or Hellenizers but against all enemies. The last reason to continue the revolt was the

“violence, hatred and enmity”⁹⁸ caused by the long and brutal war. The long series of atrocities and reprisals had ignited a burning hatred among traditional Jews for the Hellenizers and their Seleucid backers. Whatever the military setbacks and policy considerations were, the passion of the people for justice or revenge could not be easily cooled.

For all of these reasons, the Maccabees never had to revert to phase I, the latent and incipient phase, of an insurgency. They never had to rekindle the ideological passions of the original traditional insurgency. There was always a hard core of supporters who would never compromise or give up the fight. These diehards could be augmented by a ready body of Jews who would rally to the cause at the first sign of interference in religious affairs by the Seleucids or Hellenizers. The Maccabees, though much reduced in numbers, always had the support of the people. The ideology was now a synthesis of the Mosaic law, nationalism and racial/class hatred which kept the insurgency always just below the boiling point among the Jews no matter what the Seleucids did. It could boil over into open revolt with any false step by the Seleucids or the Hellenizers.⁹⁹ Although the revolt continued, it did have to revert to phase II, guerrilla warfare for the second time. The transition to what Mao termed phase III mobile warfare against regular enemy units, had been ill-timed. The Maccabees had defeated Nicanor’s second rate troops but could not stand against the first rate Seleucid regular army.

With the Gophna hills base area captured, the Maccabean soldiers fled to the desert beyond the Jordan river and the sanctuary provided by the Nabatean Arabs. Though they may have retained the sympathy of most Jews, they lost control of the population throughout much of their area. This limited the amount of popular support for the insurgency. For in order to have popular support, the insurgents must not only have the sympathy of a significant portion of the population, it must also be able to exert some measure of control over the population. Otherwise they cannot collect the food, money, weapons and information that their sympathizers might provide. Nor can they compel support from those who do not sympathize. If the government forces control the actual population, they can prevent any aid from reaching the insurgents and take action against

those who attempt to provide it. The Seleucid government and the remaining Hellenizers were able to compel support in the areas where the Maccabees had been driven out. A famine forced many Jews to cooperate with the Hellenizers and local Seleucid government in order to obtain food.¹⁰⁰ The large number of troops kept the pressure on the Maccabees who were only able to conduct guerrilla operations which were much less effective now due the distance of their base from Jerusalem. The Maccabees were forced to curtail much of their activities. However, the Seleucid government could not maintain such high force levels in Judea indefinitely. They required those forces for other duties in the Empire. The sudden death of the high priest Alcimus in B.C. 159 removed an important point of friction between the Hellenizing and traditional Jews. The reduced tensions between Hellenizers and traditional Jews and allowed Bacchides to return to Syria.¹⁰¹ From the Seleucid perspective, the revolt may have appeared to be over. The leader was dead, his remaining hard core followers were driven beyond the Jordan. The relatively low level of guerrilla activity that these remnants engaged in was probably not significantly greater than the endemic violence of the Nabateans themselves.

What the Seleucids failed to realize was that the revolt had evolved into something new. It now had secular nationalistic objectives to accompany the old religious grievances. Although the Seleucids controlled the population with their garrisons they did not have the sympathy of a significant number of the people. Therefore they never gained popular support for their government. The revolt did not revert to the latent and incipient stage but retained a resilient guerrilla movement no matter how battered. Jonathan Maccabee, brother of Judas, assumed the leadership of the revolt. Although not as charismatic or militarily gifted as Judas, Jonathan was a superb strategist who would exploit the internal Seleucid dissension with masterful skill.¹⁰² He reorganized his forces and conducted guerrilla operations as Judas had before him. They avoided any large Seleucid forces by fleeing to their sanctuary among the Nabatean Arabs.¹⁰³ Though they were fighting for national objectives, at times the struggle took on the vengeance oriented nature of an ethnic feud. Johanan Maccabee, younger brother of Jonathan, was killed by local Arabs on his way to the Nabateans. To avenge his murder, Jonathan and Simeon ambushed and massacred a wedding party from

the offending family, to include women and children.¹⁰⁴ Jonathan continued to rebuild his forces and began preying upon the Hellenizers and isolated Seleucid forces. The resurgent power of the Maccabees caused the Hellenizers to once again call for help. Bacchides returned, chased Jonathan out of Judea and besieged the Maccabeans in a desert fortress at Beth-basi. Jonathan left Simeon to defend the fortress and slipped out himself to raise more troops. During the siege, Bacchides was harried by the garrison within the fortress and by the guerrillas along his lines of communication outside the fortress. In frustration, he executed a number of his Hellenizer advisors and lifted the siege. He concluded a peace with Jonathan that recognized the traditional Jews led by the Hasmoneans(Maccabee family) as the dominant party in Judea.¹⁰⁵

The revolt of Alexander Balas in B.C. 153 caused the reigning king, Demetrius I, to grant broad concessions to Jonathan in return for his support. This allowed the Maccabees to regain control of all Judea except for the citadel in Jerusalem and some of the Seleucid fortresses. Alexander Balas made a counter-offer which included the high priesthood. Jonathan made an astute analysis of the relative strengths of the two contenders and picked Alexander Balas who defeated and killed Demetrius I in B.C. 150. It is significant that neither side made even a pretense of acknowledging the Hellenizers, who by now had lost all power in Judea.¹⁰⁶ The assumption of the high priesthood by a Hasmonean is very significant. The Maccabees had been the de-facto political leaders of the revolt for many years. The Maccabees has established their political leadership of the Jews by demonstrated competence as military leaders while showing great deference to and interest in the religious ideology of the revolt. It was their charismatic leadership that blended nationalistic aspirations into the basically religious ideology of the struggle. As high priest, Jonathan was now the official religious and political leader of all Judea. This allowed the Hamoneans to pursue political, economic and social objectives under the guise of religious war.¹⁰⁷ However, it did not erase the schisms in the struggle against the Seleucids based on religious versus political ideology or objectives. The office of high priest normally belonged to a descendant of the House of David. Jonathan alienated some traditional Jews by violating this custom. The Hasmoneans would find

that the fractiousness and refusal to compromise they had encouraged and benefited from as insurgents could be very difficult to deal with as rulers.¹⁰⁸

In B.C. 147 Demetrius II laid claims to his father's throne and made war on Alexander Balas. The governor of Coele-Syria, Apollonius Taos, went over to Demetrius II but Jonathan stayed loyal to Alexander Balas and defeated Apollonius near Ashod. The Maccabees deftly avoided conflict with the Ptolemies who backed Demetrius II and conquered more areas along the coast. Jonathan laid siege to the citadel in Jerusalem, but before it fell, Demetrius II defeated Alexander Balas who was later killed, and became king. He summoned Jonathan to explain his attack on the Seleucid garrison in the citadel. Jonathan gave up the siege, then bribed and cajoled his way into Demetrius' favor. Demetrius II recognized Jonathan as high priest and added four additional regions to Judea which extended the country about twelve miles to the north and west.¹⁰⁹ Jonathan furthered insinuated himself with Demetrius II when he provided Jewish troops to crush a rebellion in Antioch. Jonathan's soldiers not only protected Demetrius II, but inflicted great slaughter upon the inhabitants of Antioch whether they were insurrectionists or bystanders. This incident clearly shows how far the Maccabean revolt had evolved from the days in the Gophna hills. The Jewish mercenary troops under Jonathan Maccabee were just as savage and effective in crushing a popular revolt against a cruel tyrant as those under Judas had been in when they revolted against the government of this same empire.¹¹⁰

Demetrius II reneged on his promises to the Maccabees and soon faced a revolt by the Seleucid general Tryphon. Tryphon made Simeon Maccabee strategos of Coele-Syria which included far more than Judea or even pre-Babylonian Israel. Fighting for Tryphon the Maccabees conquered Gaza and Ashkelon. They attempted to seize more of the coast but were defeated by the army of Demetrius II in upper Galilee. They in turn defeated Demetrius at Hamath. Jonathan's success caused Tryphon to fear him as a rival. Tryphon used a trick to capture Jonathan at Beth-shean.¹¹¹ Simeon assumed the leadership and continued the struggle. Tryphon attempted to attack Judea via the southern approach through Idumea used by Lysias. He used Jonathan as a hostage and tried many different threats, tricks and other stratagems to defeat Simeon but was

unsuccessful. A freak snowstorm forced Tryphon to withdraw but not before executing Jonathan. Demetrius II agreed to grant Judea complete independence in exchange for their support against Tryphon. In B.C. 142 Judea became independent for the first time in four centuries. Despite the official recognition and ending of tribute, Simeon still had to reduce the citadel in Jerusalem by force. He besieged it for the last time in that same year and it surrendered in B.C. 141.¹¹² After its capture, Simeon had the hill that it stood on leveled so that now the Temple was the highest spot in Jerusalem.

Simeon continued the policies of his brothers, including a relatively new policy that had been initiated under Jonathan. When Jonathan captured key cities outside Judea such as the port at Jaffa or the town of Gezer which connected Jaffa and Jerusalem, he drove out the Gentile inhabitants and repopulated them area with Jews. He answered Seleucid protests at his ethnic cleansing by stating that these areas had once been part of Israel and he was reclaiming ancestral lands. In other towns, he gave the Gentile inhabitants the choice of conversion to Judaism or expulsion.¹¹³ In the siege of Gezer it is clear how far the Maccabean army has evolved. Not only do the Maccabees conduct a successful siege which is an extraordinarily difficult task, but they use a “Helepolis” or mobile siege tower to breach the enemy walls.¹¹⁴ This large mechanical device was highly complex and expensive and required the highest levels of technology and engineering to build and employ.¹¹⁵

Simeon had a long and relatively peaceful reign but was assassinated not by a Seleucid or Hellenizer, but by his own son in law in an unsuccessful coup attempt. He was succeeded by his son John Hyrcanus who faced another invasion by the Seleucid king Antiochus VII in B.C. 134. Antiochus VII besieged Hyrcanus in Jerusalem. The Seleucids lifted the siege in return for Judea once again becoming a vassal state of the Seleucid Empire. The citadel was not rebuilt, but the Hasmoneans did have to pay tribute and provide soldiers to the Seleucid Empire.¹¹⁶ Internal Seleucid problems allowed the Hasmoneans to stop paying tribute and to expand at the expense of their neighbors. One of their victims were the Samaritans who were neither Gentiles nor fully Jews. The Hasmoneans attempted to secure port cities and the border of ancient Israel. They fought frequent wars with their Gentile neighbors, destroying many Greek cities

and even fought their old allies the Nabatean Arabs. John Hyracanus renewed the treaty with Rome and attempted to use them as a buffer against the Seleucids.¹¹⁷ He and his descendants acted increasingly like Hellenistic kings in their dress, manners, court and political practices, rather than Jewish high priests.¹¹⁸ However, they did not wield the absolute power of a typical Hellenistic king. The Hasmoneans were frequently opposed by various different factions of Jews. The Hellenizers vanished as a party and were replaced by Sadducees, who also irritated devout Jews with their worldliness. The Hasidim disappeared or perhaps evolved into the Pharisses,¹¹⁹ who were more devout than the Sadducees and criticized the high priest's adopting the trappings of Hellenistic monarchy. When the Hasmoneans faced a rebellion by the Pharisees, they had hundreds of them executed. The Hasmonean dynasty ruled the largest area of Israel since the time of Solomon. They continued to rule until the coming of the Romans in B.C. 63.¹²⁰ With their subjugation by the Romans, the Jews did not regain their independence until another successful insurgency in A.D. 1948.

VII Conclusion

What had the Jews gained for their revolt? The traditional Jews of B.C. 134 still had many of the same complaints that their fathers or grandfathers had in B.C. 168. They were ruled by a Jewish aristocracy (Hasmonean rather than Oniad or Tobiad) that paid lip service to the Mosaic law while aping the vulgar manners and ungodly ways of the Greeks. This aristocracy collected high taxes and pursued a foreign policy that brought most Jews no benefit. They treated the common Jews not as free men, but more like the serfs that inhabited most Hellenistic states. It was true that freedom to worship was restored, but they had not lost that until the revolt against the Hellenizers was already under way in B.C. 167. Further, the restoration of Mosaic law occurred within the first few years of the revolt in B.C. 164.

If the principle, religious, goal of the insurgency against the Seleucids was accomplished within the first years, why did the revolt continue for so long? The answer

lies in two other factors. These two factors were the dynamics of (Low Intensity) conflict and the violent nature of the revolt. These two factors interacted synergistically with the religious issues and each other to cause the revolt's ideology and objectives to evolve over time. The ideology and objectives are the most important items in the framework for analysis that the U.S. Army uses to understand insurgencies. Understanding how the ideology and objectives of the Maccabean revolt grew out of an interaction of religious, secular and military issues will offer some insights into understanding other revolts from the religious right.

Army doctrine states that most insurgencies are caused by the dynamics of conflict. Change, discontent, poverty, violence and instability cause a desire for reform in the government, which if unanswered, leads to revolution. In the Maccabean revolt these were the clash between Hellenization and the Mosaic law, rising taxes and government demands upon the Temple treasury and family political squabbles. These issues caused the initial insurrection against the Hellenizers and continued to effect the ideology of the revolt even after the revolt became centered on the edicts of persecution of Antiochus IV. Once the edicts were withdrawn, they again provided secular objectives to the revolt. These political, social, military and economic goals may not have been publicly stated by the rebels, or even understood at the beginning of the revolt, but they became clear as the revolt progressed. The second factor lies in the nature of the revolt itself. The initial violence and atrocities that accompanied the edicts of Antiochus IV welded the potentially separate secular and religious issues into a single burning ideology fueled by hatred and desire for revenge. Over the years, each successive act of violence, atrocity and reprisal provided additional passion and hatred to maintain the fires of revolt.

This synergy of religion, secular issues and violence caused the Maccabean revolt to spiral up, under the dictates of circumstances and the leadership of the Hasmoneans, from a traditional insurgency based on a religious ideology and objectives into a mass insurgency based religious/nationalist ideology and objectives. The revolt no longer sought simply religious toleration of the Mosaic law but eventually challenged the political and military legitimacy of the Seleucid government. The synergy also allowed

the revolt to maintain its religious character in the years after B.C. 167 despite the transition to secular objectives. The Seleucids found themselves confronted by an opponent who was fiercely motivated by a basically religious and political ideology thirty years after the Seleucids had acquiesced to their religious demands.

This paradox of religious ideology coupled to secular objectives is the key to understanding Maccabean revolt and many other revolts from the religious right. For most revolts from the religious right do not draw their ideology and objectives purely from issues of faith. Rather, their ideology and objectives are a mixture of religious beliefs, secular grievances and the “violence, hatred and enmity” that grow out of the struggle. These conflicts begin as people seek religious explanations or answers to fundamental grievances caused by economic, political or social change. They become insurrections when attempts to redress these grievances are repressed, punished or ignored by the government. Because the aggrieved party views its problem through a religious lens, each unwelcome act or failure to act by the government becomes not just an unwise or illegal act against men, but an affront to God. Each act builds the sense of persecution in the members of the movement and desire for revenge. Whereas religion may have tolerated the government or other faiths to some extent before the revolt, the spiral of violence causes the revolt to become a struggle for survival. This makes it almost impossible to defeat a religious insurgency by destroying its military power. Each insurgent defeat simply creates a new group of martyrs and a new group of volunteers to replace them, feeding the revolt.

While these other factors make a revolt from the religious right more difficult to understand, they are also the keys to defeating it. For victory in a counter-insurgency does not mean killing guerrillas or seizing terrain. Victory is achieved when the majority of the people no longer support the insurgency. In a true, purely religious insurgency, this is impossible. Devout people cannot be convinced or compelled to give up their beliefs. However, devoutly religious people can be convinced that the insurgents do not represent the true faith but have manipulated it for worldly ends. The government can convince people that it will respect their religious beliefs while it punishes criminals and those who support them. The keys to defeating a revolt from the religious right, which

the Seleucid Empire failed to do, are first to de-couple the religious from the secular issues, and second to avoid excessive use of force which normally drives more people into the insurgency. For once the people no longer willingly or unwillingly support the rebels, the insurgency is over. The guerrillas are not longer like fish swimming in a protecting and nurturing sea. They are instead, like fish whose sea has dried up. They flop about violently in progressively smaller pools of water, gasping for life and are easily collected up by the fisherman. The failure of the Seleucid government was to confuse the secular and religious grievances of the traditional Jews. Their meddling and inappropriately violent response served to solidify and focus, rather than dissipate, the insurrection.

The importance of fundamentalist religious beliefs as a source of the insurgents ideology in revolt from the religious right leads to several other differences between it and a secular insurgency. The first is that the desire to challenge the government comes from the right. It is essentially a conservative movement that does not seek not progressive change, but reacts against it. Revolutions from the secular left begin as protests against the old regime and the old way of doing things. The government supported status quo interferes with the aspirations of the revolutionists.¹²¹ The Maccabean revolt, like other revolts from the religious right, began as a protest against the new regime(Hellenizers) and their new ways of doing things. The Seleucid government's backing of the progressive(from their perspective) changes in the status quo interfered with the religious and secular aspirations of traditional Jews.

Another difference was in the government's use of force against the initial violence of the insurgency. In most secular revolts, the government's use force is tentative and ineffective. It is perceived by the insurgents as a sign of weakness. In the Maccabean revolt, the Seleucid government's use of force was immediate and overwhelming. However, it did not intimidate the insurgents but simply spurred on the revolt. In this case, the use of force was regarded as a religious persecution which justified the use of violence by the insurgents.

A third difference caused by the religious basis of the ideology lies in the phases and timing of the revolt. The religious insurgency does not require the long period of

mobilization, that is the training cadres, building support and indoctrinating the people in the ideology of the revolt. Devout or fundamentalist believers in the religion are already “true believers” in the ideology of the revolt. While they may not be the misfits or possessors of “irredeemably spoiled lives” that are sometimes drawn to secular revolts, they are willing to die for their cause. They need no propaganda to understand that they are fighting to destroy a corrupt present in order to **return** to a more virtuous **past**.¹²² Insurgent cadres are provided by the fundamentalist clergy who have already prepared the way for the insurgents. The clergy continues to preach the faith, which is now the message of revolt. The clergy are respected community leaders and normally educated enough to provide leadership on issues other than religion. They can lead their flocks out of the place of worship and into their place on the battle line. This pre-mobilized populace allows the leadership of the revolt to greatly shorten its latent and incipient phase. Further, this support does not lessen with battle field defeats or occupation by government forces. The insurgency can always maintain at least phase II, a state of guerrilla war, due to this unwavering popular support. This was very clear in the Maccabean revolt. No matter what the Seleucid government did or reverses the revolt suffered, the Maccabees could always count on the support of most Jews as soon as the government troops turned their backs.

The religious nature of the Maccabean revolt also effected the external support that it received. The Maccabees received the normal external support that can be expected of any secular revolt. All of the enemies of the Seleucid government, such as the Nabatean Arabs, Rome, Pergamum, and Egypt saw it in their interest to help the enemy of their enemy. However, the Maccabees received another very important source of external support. That was the support of the Jews of the Diaspora who lived throughout the ancient world. They provided money, arms and sometimes themselves to support the revolt. They provided this support whether they lived in a state that was hostile to the Seleucid Empire, neutral or in many cases outside Judea but within the Seleucid Empire itself. Without this support it is doubtful if the Maccabees could have fielded the heavy infantry and cavalry forces that allowed them to stand against the

Seleucid Regular Army later in the revolt. The Diaspora Jews were probably also crucial in the conduct of siege operations, in particular the construction of siege engines.

Despite the importance of religious belief to understanding the framework for analysis and the success of the revolt, there were two key areas that were not religious issues. These were environment and geography and the leadership. The rugged Judean hills with the empty desert to the east across the Jordan river are ideal guerrilla country. They provided the two key requirements of an insurgency, a place to hide and a source of food and other support. The rough terrain and lack of roads meant that the insurgents could almost always avoid battle if they chose. Should the insurgents choose to fight, there were many places in which to conduct an ambush or other tactic designed to take maximum advantage of the guerrilla strengths while minimizing the government troops advantages. There was enough population to support the insurgents, yet it was broken up and dispersed in many small villages. This made it difficult for the government troops to mass and exert their control over the population and thereby deny support to the insurgents. The Seleucids could not garrison every single village in Judea. Whenever their forces left a village, the guerrillas returned and received the people's support while persecuting anyone who had co-operated with the Seleucids.

The reason that the people cooperated with and supported the insurgents had originally been their hatred of the Hellenizers and Seleucids due to the edicts of persecution. As the years passed, it became increasingly due to the charismatic leadership of the Hasmonean(Maccabee) family. Many revolts, secular and religious have possessed charismatic leaders. However, few have possessed an entire family of gifted, charismatic leaders like Matathias, Judas, Jonathan and Simeon Maccabee. The Seleucid thought that if they could kill the leader of the revolt, that it might collapse. Yet after each brother was killed, another took his place with little loss of effectiveness. While there must have been other quality leaders in the revolt, there is little mention in the available sources of leaders other than the Maccabee family. Had their family not become involved in the revolt, it is possible that it would have turned out quite differently.

What is particularly interesting about the Maccabean revolt as a religious struggle is that the Hasmonean family were not members of the clergy or other religious class. In fact the assumption of the high priesthood by Jonathan Maccabee caused a great deal of protest from devout Jews because he was not of the house of David. What would be the effect of a non-clergy person leading a modern revolt from the religious right?

Would this offer an opportunity to the counter-insurgent for driving a wedge between the insurgents and the body of the religious fundamentalists? If the leader were a religious office holder, would neutralizing(killing, capturing, co-opting, discrediting) him or her end the revolt or would another member of the clergy simply take their place? In the Maccabean revolt there were schisms within the clergy. The High Priests were Hellenizers while the scribes and lower clergy supported traditional Jews. Within the upper ranks of the clergy, the Oniads and Tobiads feuded. Could a counter-insurgent from another culture develop the intelligence data base and the cultural sensitivity to manipulate these fault lines within an insurgency? Or would they end up backing the wrong party, as the Seleucids did with the Hellenizers, because they appeared the most reasonable or friendly?

Having studied the doctrine and the Maccabean revolt, what then is the modern counter-insurgent faced with a revolt from the religious right, to do? Clausewitz cautions that that the study of history does not reveal the answers to current problems. However, it may reveal some of the questions to ask as we address those problems.¹²³ Many of the questions may come from doctrine. The frame work for analysis seems effective as do the imperatives of LIC and principles of counter-insurgency. The need to use operational art to synchronize the government's political, military, economic and informational actions also appears to be very important. However, the current lexicon of operational art does not talk directly to counter-insurgency as the other doctrine listed above does. Do insurgents have a Center of Gravity (COG) or do they share the same COG with the government (the support of the people)? If the support of the people is the Center of Gravity, then what are the decisive points? Would the Hasidim, the Temple and the Citadel be decisive points in the Maccabean revolt? It appears that control of these groups or positions did effect the support of the people. Less clear are the concepts of

culmination and lines of operation. They both are dependent on the support of the people and thus become a circular argument with the center of gravity. Perhaps operational art in counter-insurgency must be understood and employed in a manner different from that currently described for mid to high intensity war. Perhaps even more important and most difficult for conventional militaries to confront, is the issue of violence. How does a profession that prizes the decisive use of force and feels comfortable with the oxymoron "surgical strikes", address a situation in which the use of force is counter productive?

The Maccabean revolt and other more modern conflicts suggest that in many non-western countries, issues of religion are closely intertwined with political and military, power, economic opportunity and social standing. The key for the counter-insurgent is to identify the potential fault lines between religious beliefs and secular issues and exploit them while preventing the religious insurgency from making the transition to a secular mass insurgency. The best strategy may be to avoid changing or challenging traditional structures in the first place. When the U.S. becomes involved in an area containing fundamentalist religious movements, perhaps it should not recommend or appear to herald modernization. It may wish to stand up for the old order and traditional values. It should clearly convey a message of respect if not admiration for the fundamentalist beliefs and a public acknowledgment that western style democracy is not the only valid system of government. Whatever actions are taken, must be done quickly. In these situations in which passion and chance play such a greater role than policy, the law of unintended consequences grows very large. Problems that cannot be solved quickly are not likely to ever be solved. A continued presence simply deepens the mire.

The most disturbing question raised by the study of the Maccabean revolt is; how can a purely religious revolt, one without any secular agenda, be countered? What if there are no underlying social, economic, political or military issues which the government can ameliorate to diffuse the revolt? What if the leaders are motivated by purely religious zeal and intolerance? It would appear that there is no answer to this phenomenon. That the only answer is to back away from the situation and remain neutral. Some might counter and state that there is no answer acceptable to Americans. That other people have addressed these conflicts by genocide, ethnic cleansing or other

extreme measures. However, these measures also have often failed. It was the violence of the Selucid response which caused a relatively small insurgency to explode into a huge revolt. In fact, it appears clear that one of the key actions of preventing a religious insurgency from spreading is to minimize the use of violence and other coercive measures by the government so as to avoid inculcating a persecution complex in the followers of the religion.

It would appear therefore that the initial and most fundamental question that the modern counter-insurgent must ask when confronted with a revolt from the religious right, is whether the revolt is a purely religious act or are there secular motivations and root causes. Is the conflict the result of overwhelming religious beliefs and passions or is there an element of policy involved? Between the play of passion and policy what is the role of chance? Although it is a difficult stretch to fit Clausewitz to counter-insurgency, he does provide some useful points to consider. "The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment 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."¹²⁴

Notes

- ¹ "An organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict." U.S. Department of the Army. FM 101-5-1, Operational Terms and Graphics(Final Draft). (Washington: Government Printing Office, 15 July 1995), 1-149.
- ² U.S. Department of the Army, FM 100-20 Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict. (Washington: Government Printing Office, Dec. 1990), 1-1.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 1-5
- ⁴ U.S. Department of the Army, FM 100-5, Operations. (Washington: Government Printing Office, June 1993), 13-0.
- ⁵ FM 100-20, 1-8
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 2-0.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 2-0
- ⁸ James N. Fletcher, Campaign Planning in Low Intensity Conflict. (Carlisle, PA.: US Army War College, 1989), 29.
- ⁹ FM 100-20, D-2. see also: Mao Tse-Tung, On Guerrilla Warfare. Trans. S.B.Griffith. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1961), 20-22. and: Douglas Pike, PAVN: People's Army of Vietnam. (Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1986), 215-218, 221.
- ¹⁰ FM 100-20, 2-2
- ¹¹ The Tet offensive in South Vietnam 1968 is perhaps the most famous example of a terrible tactical military defeat being a tremendous political and strategic victory. Although the Viet Cong were effectively destroyed as a combat force, the scenes of bloody streetfighting convinced the American people that the military and government had lied to them and the war was unwinnable.
- ¹² This point is disputed by Larry Cable, Conflict of Myths. (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 5. Cable argues that while partisans depend heavily upon outside support. Insurgencies do not. They may benefit from external support but they in no way allow it to shape objectives or policy. Cable's thesis is that U.S. pre-occupation with mythical world wide communist support for the Viet-Cong led to many policy errors which actually drove the Viet-Cong into the hands of North Vietnam and the Soviet Union.
- ¹³ Mao Tse-Tung, On Guerrilla Warfare. Trans. S.B.Griffith. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1961), 20-21. see also: U.S. Department of the Army FM 90-8 Counter guerrilla Operations. (Washington: Government Printing Office, Aug. 86), 1-4.
- ¹⁴ FM 100-20, 2-7.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2-9.
- ¹⁶ Skip Thornton, A Working Theory of Operational art in Modern War. (Fort Leavenworth: School of Advanced Military Studies, 1989), 20.
- ¹⁷ Abraham Schalit, The World History of the Jewish People: The Hellenistic Age. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1972), 6.
- ¹⁸ F.E. Peters, The Harvest of Hellenism. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), 254.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 247.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 252. See also: Schalit, 112.
- ²¹ Schalit, 112-114.
- ²² Edwyn R. Bevan. The House of Seleucus. 1902 (Chicago: Ares Publishing, 1985), 154.
- ²³ Peters, 252.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 232.
- ²⁵ Bevan, 153.
- ²⁶ Peters, 233.
- ²⁷ Simeon, of the Tobiad family and a temple official, lost a quarrel with Onias who was the reigning high priest. Onias was of the Oniad family who were the hereditary High Priests. Angry at Onias and knowing of the kings cash flow problems, Simeon went to Antiochus IV and told him of the vast wealth accumulated in the Jewish Temple. The Temple treasury contained funds not only for purely religious purposes, but also community funds such as those for widow and orphan relief. It also contained some funds belonging to individuals as well. Some of these funds may have belonged to Hyracanus the Tobiad, an enemy of his own family and supporter of the Oniads. Therefore a confiscation of Temple funds would raise Simeon's stock

with the Seleucids, hurt Onias's image with the Jews and punish Hyracanus for splitting from the family. Antiochus IV sent his ambassador Heliodorus to inventory and collect the funds. Onias denied Heliodorus and was called to Antioch by the Emperor to explain himself. Onias sent his nephew Jason to explain the problem to the emperor. Instead, Jason bought the High Priesthood from Antiochus IV by promising to pay greater taxes and to make Jerusalem more like a Hellenistic city. Both of these offers greatly pleased Antiochus IV who saw himself as "a radiant champion of Hellenism." This was unprecedented for the Hellenistic king to appoint the High Priest. However, since Jason was still of the Oniad family, it did not provoke an immediate backlash.

²⁸ Bevan, 148. This point is contested by Peters, 232. who holds a significantly more favorable view of Antiochus IV.

²⁹ Peters, 254-257. see also Schalit, 128. In creating a Polis, the central government would designate a 3-5,000 person Demos. This Demos, made up of wealthy and influential Hellenizers were the only people who actually voted or otherwise participated in government. It did not include the majority of the people in a city. In most oriental cities this created few problems since the common people had no rights under their prior form of government.

³⁰ Schalit, 128.

³¹ Bevan, 169.

³² Schalit, 120-122.

³³ Ibid., 129.

³⁴ Ibid., 121. see also: Peters, 256.

³⁵ Schalit, 130.

³⁶ Ibid., 134. see also: Peters, 257.

³⁷ II Maccabees, 6:1-12. see also: Peters, 258.

³⁸ Joseph Sievers, The Hasmoneans and Their Supporters. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 15. see also: Bevan, 174-175.

³⁹ Crane Brinton, Anatomy of Revolution. (New York: Random House, 1938), 88.

⁴⁰ Eric Hoffer, The True Believer. (New York: Harper and Row, 1951), 83.

⁴¹ Peters, 264-265. describes them as a class of scribes who interpreted the Mosaic Law under the temple state. They had perhaps the most to lose under the edicts of Antiochus IV of any group of Jews, because the insult to their faith was accompanied by a loss of job and status. Schalit, 115. has a slightly different view. He describes the Hasidim as "a group imbued with an extreme religious-national spirit which regarded not only the Syrian kings in general, and Antiochus Epiphanes in particular, but also all Greeks and Hellenized Jews as the most dangerous enemies of the people of Israel and its religion." Both agree that the Hasidim left the revolt with the repeal of the edicts. Joshua Efron, Studies on the Hasmonean Period. (New York: E.J. Brill, 1987), 15. considers the Hasidim not an organized group but simply extremely devout and nationalistic Jews. Efron sharply attacks any suggestion of secular expediency in their motivations and insists that they were loyal to the Maccabees and their cause throughout the struggle. Sievers, 38. suggests that their origin cannot be pin-pointed.

⁴² Peters, 264. see also: Schalit, 149.

⁴³ Bezalel Bar-Kochva, Judas Maccabaeus. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 194. see also: Schalit, 149.

⁴⁴ I Macabees, 2:40

⁴⁵ If one considers the factors of "OCOKA" (Observation, Cover and concealment, Obstacles, Key terrain and Avenues of approach) that the U.S. Army uses as a mnemonic devices for analyzing terrain the results are interesting. From the heights of the Gophna hills the Maccabees could see the approach of any threat (Observation) in time to react. They could also be warned by villagers who reported the passage of enemy troops. There were ample living, hiding and fighting places (Cover and concealment) throughout the area. The few roads (Avenues) could be easily blocked (obstacles) by supplementing the naturally steep terrain. They could easily control the few places that roads intersected, larger villages or defiles (Key terrain) through which an invading army had to pass.

⁴⁶ Bar-Kochva, Judas Maccabaeus, 199.

⁴⁷ Chaim Herzog and Mordechai Gichon, Battles of the Bible. (New York: Random House, 1978), 194.

⁴⁸ Mao, 28.

⁴⁹ Schalit, 150.

⁵⁰ Bar-Kochva, Judas Maccabaeus, 202.

⁵¹ The great strength of the Seleucid or any other Hellenistic army lay in its Phalanx, a body of heavy infantry who were armored and armed with six meter long pikes know as Sarissas. Arrayed in a dense rectangular formation the phalanx combined shock and brute force to overcome its opponents. Most oriental peoples had no countermeasure to this formation, although the Romans were able to defeat it with their own heavily armored infantry armed with short swords and throwing spears. The phalanx required fairly level ground to work properly. The individual phalangite was not very effective at one to one combat. This is why attacking the Seleucid force in a defile where they cannot form the Phalanx is so effective. The Seleucid army also contain other types of soldiers such as; archers, slingers and other missile troops, peltasts and specially trained mountain troops. These highly skilled soldiers would probably not be present in the militia or local forces controlled by Apollonias or Seron but would be kept with the main Seleucid Army. The local forces would rely mainly on the Phalanx which did not require a high degree of individual skill and a smaller number of more skilled peltasts(light infantry). For detailed descriptions of the Seleucid forces and tactics see: Bezalel Bar-Kochva, Judas Maccabaeus. see also: Bezalel Bar-Kochva, The Seleucid Army. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976), and: Nick Sekunda, The Seleucid Army. (Stockport, England: Montvert Publications, 1994).

⁵² U.S. Department of the Army FM 90-8 Counterguerrilla Operations. (Washington: Government Printing Office, Aug. 86). see also: Bernard Fall, Street Without Joy. (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), 185. and: Daniel P. Bolger, Savage Peace: Americans at War in the 1990s. (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1995). The similarities between the fates of Apollonius, Seron , Mobile Group 100 and Task Force Ranger demonstrate the timelessness of guerrilla techniques.

⁵³ Herzog, 197.

⁵⁴ Schalit, 156.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁵⁶ Bar-Kochva, Judas Maccabaeus, 217.

⁵⁷ Sievers, 42.

⁵⁸ Bar-Kochva, Judas Maccabaeus, 245. Bar-Kochva relates how this site was also home to Vespasian's Legion and a British police fortress during those insurgencies.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 258. This action, like many others is similar to guerrilla techniques in Vietnam, in which base camps would be attacked after their protective forces had been drawn away or weakened by false intelligence.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

⁶¹ Bar-Kochva, Schalit and Herzog disagree on the nature of the battle. Bar-Kochva states that the Maccabees drove in the Seleucid cavalry pickets and other guards and were among the Seleucid in their camp before they could organize a defense. Schalit states that they struck the Seleucids as they left their camp but before they could form up for battle. Herzog states that they were already outside the camp and formed up but that the Maccabees drove off the cavalry guarding the flank of the phalanx and got in-between the Seleucid soldiers where the Sarissas were to no advantage. Neither Schalit nor Herzog explain why the Seleucids would leave a fortified camp to do battle in the open since the whole purpose of creating a fortified camp was to guard against surprise.

⁶² Bar-Kochva, Judas Maccabaeus, 275.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 284. see also: Schalit, 162.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁶⁵ Schalit, 163. and II Maccabees, 9:18. I Maccabees, 6:55, does not record the revocation of the edicts until Lysias's second campaign in B.C. 162 which is the date accepted by Herzog, p. 215. Bar-Kochva, 541, states that it was a conditional amnesty after Lysias' first expedition in B.C. 164.

⁶⁶ I Maccabees, 4:34

⁶⁷ Sievers, 46.

⁶⁸ I Maccabees, 4:36-61

⁶⁹ Bar-Kochva, Judas Maccabaeus, 84-86.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁷¹ Schalit, p. 164.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 164. see also: Sievers, 57.

⁷³ Ibid., 165.

⁷⁴ I Maccabees, 5:1-68. and: Schalit, 168-171. see also: Peters, 267, and Josephus, 26-30.

⁷⁵ Herzog, p. 215.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 216.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 217.

⁷⁸ Bar-Kochva, Judas Macabaeus, 69.

⁷⁹ The one exception being the heroic self sacrifice of Judas' brother Eleazar who fought his way through the protecting infantry and killed one elephant but died in the attempt (Herzog, 218). Eleazar's martyrdom is still a typical reaction of infantry to their first experience with enemy armor. The major difference after 2,000 years consists of the martyr placing a shaped charge against the tank instead of thrusting a sword into the elephants belly. In both cases, the anti-armor soldier who survived extreme odds to get next to the tank/elephant, is usually killed along with his target.

Unknown to the Maccabees, the Romans had developed an effective method of opposing the elephant/infantry combination. They used missile weapons to strip away the accompanying infantry and then cut down the elephant from behind where it cannot see its antagonists. This method also has its modern parallels as the Chechen rebels demonstrated for the Russians in their insurgency which began as a traditional religious revolt and has transitioned into a mass insurgency.

Schalit, 172. suggests that the Seleucids also employed a flanking maneuver up one of the parallel valleys to threaten the Maccabees from the rear.

⁸⁰ Bar-Kochva, 541. and I Maccabees, 6:55.

⁸¹ Bevan, 184.

⁸² Bar-Kochva, 348. see also: Bevan, 200. In contrast, Schalit, 174, states that Judas lost much of his support as large numbers of Hasidim abandoned the cause. This is hotly contested by Efron, 49, who stridently insists that the Hasidim were religious/nationalists who fought to the end.

⁸³ The Maccabees had long ago reached the point where they were able to compel involuntary support to augment the willing efforts of traditional Jews. It is unlikely that the Maccabees were so damaged that they could not compel the support of any remaining Hellenizers outside Jerusalem.

⁸⁴ Bar-Kochva, 349. This Nicanor is no relation to the Nicanor defeated at Ammaus.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 359.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 368.

⁸⁷ Herzog, 221.

⁸⁸ Schalit, 178-180.

⁸⁹ Bar-Kochva, Judas Maccabaeus, 384.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 385.

⁹¹ Ibid., 394.

⁹² Ibid., 64, 70-76.

⁹³ Ibid., 85.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 396-399.

⁹⁵ Schalit, 178.

⁹⁶ Peters, 282

⁹⁷ Ibid., 265.

⁹⁸ Carl Von Clausewitz, On War. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 89. Clausewitz describes war as a trinity composed of policy which is the realm of the government, chance which is the realm of the commander and the army and violence, hatred and enmity which are the realm of the people. A theory of war has to take all three into account.

⁹⁹ Michael Grant, The History of Ancient Israel. (New York: Charles Scribner's sons, 1984), 216. see also: Schalit, 180. and: Sievers, 70-71.

¹⁰⁰ Sievers, 73.

¹⁰¹ Schalit, 186.

¹⁰² Ibid., 183.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 184.

¹⁰⁴ Josephus, 45. see also Schalit, 184.

¹⁰⁵ I Maccabees, 9:58-73. see also: Schalit, 186. and: Peters, 270.

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- ¹⁰⁶ Schalit, 188.
- ¹⁰⁷ Schalit, pp. 198-199. This is not to imply that the Hasmoneans had the universal approval of all Jews. As Jonathan and his successors established their dynasty, there were many dissenters for many reasons. The Pharisee Vs Sadducee conflict was begun at this time.
- ¹⁰⁸ Peters, 288.
- ¹⁰⁹ I Maccabees, 11:30-37.
- ¹¹⁰ Schalit, 193.
- ¹¹¹ Ibid., 196.
- ¹¹² Ibid., p. 201. see also: Bevan, 232.
- ¹¹³ I Maccabees, 13:43-48. see also: Schalit, 200. and: Peters, 286-287.
- ¹¹⁴ I Maccabees, 13:43.
- ¹¹⁵ John Warry, Warfare in the Classical World. (London: Salamander Books, 1980), 90.
- ¹¹⁶ Schalit, 213.
- ¹¹⁷ Ibid., 220.
- ¹¹⁸ Grant, 221.
- ¹¹⁹ Peters, 288.
- ¹²⁰ Grant, 217-222
- ¹²¹ Britton, 80.
- ¹²² Hoffer, 67-68. Hoffer's true believer seeks a better future.
- ¹²³ Clausewitz, 170-172.
- ¹²⁴ Clausewitz, 88.

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