

**Fourth Generation Warfare:
The Need for a Comprehensive Approach**

**A Monograph
by
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Infantry**



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Abstract

FOURTH GENERATION WARFARE: THE NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH
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This study explores whether the current United States military strategy should focus more on a comprehensive interagency approach as a more efficient way of focusing all elements of national power to defeat our enemies in the Long War on Terrorism. The method used to determine this question is initially accomplished by framing the scope of the current operating environment in the context of Fourth Generation Warfare. The definition of Fourth Generation Warfare is developed based on Col. Thomas X. Hammes' writings and then is further developed to show relevance and applicability to current operations in the Long War on Terrorism.

A comparative analysis is conducted by utilizing a single case study of the United States experience during Vietnam. This is done to develop an understanding of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program in order to gain an understanding of the lessons learned while conducting interagency operations during the Vietnam conflict. The analysis identifies how the collaboration and coordination of all governmental agencies was used to conduct operations during Vietnam. These lessons are then compared to the current written policy and guidance and then assessed to determine if an appropriate level of synchronization and coordination are currently being utilized to meet our National objectives in the Long War on Terrorism within the context of the current operating environment.

The findings of this study are that the current United States military strategy is making considerable progress within this context. This study also concludes that the national strategy, however, should focus even more on a comprehensive interagency approach as a more efficient way of focusing all elements of national power to defeat our enemies in the Long War on Terrorism.

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Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States' development of technology and its application to the military has significantly increased the Nation's ability to strike at threats to the national interests abroad. These advancements were developed based on the United States military facing a traditional symmetrical threat. The focus on military power through the use of precision weaponry and a more mobile force have given American leaders the ability to use preemptive strikes that threaten the Nation's security. The successful conflicts that the United States has been involved with since the early 1990's were due to the use of overwhelming force, superior tactics, and the application of technological advancements. Examples of such overwhelming and quick decisive success can be seen in the first Gulf War with the United States Coalition Forces reestablishing Kuwait's sovereignty from Iraq's offensive action or in the Balkans with the United States Coalition intervention and its application of precision munitions.

Most recently, the United States military's success in Afghanistan, with the removal of the Taliban government, and in Iraq, with the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime, were accomplished utilizing technological advances in weaponry to accomplish military objectives in a short period of time and with relatively few losses to American Soldiers. These recent conflicts have also created a higher level of expectation in the eyes of the American public as well as with the international community in the use of military force and how and when America should use its military power to achieve its political objectives. However, these conflicts were successfully fought against or with the United States' military strengths which had been developed to ensure the nations superiority globally. There have been recent conflicts which indicate that the enemies of the United States recognize a new type of warfare, Fourth Generation Warfare, in which the objective is not to defeat United States military strengths but to win by defeating the Nation's political will. This precedent may have started as early as Vietnam, but most recently, can be seen

in the United States involvement in Somalia, Iraq, and in the Long War on Terrorism with Al-Qaeda.

If such a shift in the enemy's objectives of the United States is true, then America's role in the world and its use of the military instrument of power may not hold the answer to settling areas of instability. A more comprehensive approach that incorporates all elements of national power through the interagency process would present a more effective and balanced solution at settling areas of instability, which threaten America's national interests.

This study explores whether the current United States military strategy should focus more on a comprehensive interagency approach as a more efficient way of focusing all elements of national power to defeat United States enemies in the Long War on Terrorism.

In order to determine if the United States military should focus on a more comprehensive interagency approach and its viability in the Long War, initial effort will be placed on defining the current operating environment. In framing the environment, this monograph primarily utilizes the writing of Col. Thomas X. Hammes, who has developed a theory on the evolution of Fourth Generation Warfare and how the threats to the nation are using this form of warfare as a basis for conducting operations against the United States. With the enemy utilizing this form of warfare, the American approach to countering its enemies needs to focus more on an approach that synchronizes all elements of national power. To understand some of the challenges and difficulties of utilizing such an interagency approach, this study references a historical case study of Vietnam. In looking at Vietnam, an analysis of the program "Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support" (CORDS) is used in order to explore the successes of the program and the future need for collaboration of all elements of national power through the interagency to conduct successful operations in a contemporary or future environments.

With the nature of the operating environment defined, and an analysis of the United States interagency approach in Vietnam, the next section examines current United States government written policy and guidance. First, an examination of the National Security Strategy,

Defense Strategy, Quadrennial Defense Review, and current National Security Presidential Directives will be referenced to determine the level of interagency priority and what focus has been placed to develop effective interagency synchronization. This integration of mechanisms within the interagency processes is essential in order to ensure that all elements of national power are being utilized to counter the current threats America faces in the Long War on Terrorism.

The combined use of military and non-military elements of national power is not a new concept in the application of United States foreign policy. Americans have used all elements at differing times since the nation's beginning, during various times of stability and instability that threatened the national interests at home and abroad. The various agencies that represent the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic elements of national power can be utilized independently or in conjunction depending on the particular crisis. This particular study will assume that the complexity of the crisis requires the necessity for the use and integration of all elements of national power.

The analysis section assesses whether there is currently a sufficient level of interagency integration to counter the threats the nation faces in the Long War on Terrorism with regard to the primary research question. There are many possible explanations for the difficulty in integrating the interagency to counter threats effectively. This study accomplishes this by comparing similarities and differences from America's past experience in Vietnam with ongoing operations in the Iraq Theater in the War on Terrorism. The evaluation criteria used for analysis include: unified action due to a clear formal communication process between agencies; flexibility due to an agency's resources that are available, resulting in an ability to adjust, change, or modify easily to the changing environment; and legitimacy that influences the necessary will to obtain national objectives which could be interpreted as an organizational bias between different federal agencies.

This study concludes that the current United States military strategy should focus more on a comprehensive interagency approach as a more efficient way of integrating all elements of

national power to accomplish United States national objectives in order to defeat America's enemies in the Long War on Terrorism.

On a personal level, my interest and experience with the interagency has been varied. Initially, I became aware of the difficulties of an interagency approach as an Infantry Company Commander in Iraq in 2003 and 2005, for 1st and 4th Brigades respectively, of the 3rd Infantry Division. Additionally, in the beginning months of 2007, I had the good fortune to work in the Department of State, Bureau of Political Military Affairs in the Office of Plans, Policy and Analysis as part of their Counterinsurgency Initiative. This experience was important as it allowed me to see the interagency interactions at the national level, particularly between the Department of Defense and Department of State from a completely different perspective. This is especially poignant as I worked everyday in a business suit, which resulted in some of my colleagues being very open in the views they represented or personally believed.

During my assignment at the Department of State, I worked in the Harry S. Truman (HST) building in Washington, DC. One day, I literally ran into the importance of the interagency process and how it impacts the operational and tactical level of warfare. In April 2007, I was walking out the main entrance of the HST building, for a meeting at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) where Dr. David Kilcullen was addressing a group on the interagency in a counterinsurgency fight. Upon leaving the building, I bumped into BG Edward C. Cardon, who was currently serving as the Assistant Division Commander Support (ADCS) of the 3rd Infantry Division. He was my brigade commander in Baghdad, Iraq, in 2005. I asked him if he needed help getting in the HST and what he was doing at state. He told me part of the 3rd Infantry was getting ready to redeploy to Iraq, and that there was an issue with the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in the division's area of operations. I began to question why he needed to make a trip to Washington, DC, to fix this problem. I further began to question if this was an example of interagency success or an example of a failure of the interagency process? Upon further reflection, I believe it to be an example of an interagency failure. Further, with my

experience in Iraq and the difficulties that I experienced with helping Iraq set up local government and institutions that would be representative of their needs, I wanted to research possible solutions.

The Current Operating Environment and IV Generation Warfare

In order to determine if the United States military should focus on a more comprehensive interagency approach and its viability in the Long War on Terrorism, several criteria must be analyzed, including defining the current operating environment. The first question to ask is the Global War on Terror really a war being fought against terrorism? Many professional military, government think tanks, and academics have debated this point, as terrorism is a tactic utilized and not a specific entity, such as a nation state. One such controversial account is that of Robert Kaplan, where he makes a comparison of the Global War on Terror and the Indian Wars fought during the United States expansion to the west in his article, "Indian Country."¹ Dr. Jeffrey Record poses a more comprehensive analysis in his paper, "Bounding the Global War on Terrorism."² A comparative historical example would be to look at World War II. During the inter-war period, the German *Wehrmacht* brought maneuver warfare back to the battlefield by emphasizing deep armor penetrations and the eventual envelopment of enemy forces to win quick decisive battles. This tactic was coined in the west as a "blitzkrieg." The *Wehrmacht* never embraced this term for their operations as they saw their tactic as an evolution of warfare that emphasized the strengths of current technology and efficiently utilized maneuver warfare.³ So then, did the western powers go to war against the German "blitzkrieg" or was it war against Nazi

¹Robert D. Kaplan, "Indian Country," *The Wall Street Journal*, 25 September 2004, <http://www.opinionjournal.com/extra/?id=110005673> (accessed 27 January 2008).

²Dr. Jeffrey Record, "Bounding the Global War on Terrorism" (Monograph, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 2003), <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/Pubs/Display.Cfm?pubID=207> (accessed 27 January 2008).

³James S. Corum, "Myths of Blitzkrieg-The Enduring Mythology of the 1940 Campaign," *The Historical Society*, Boston University VI, no. 4 (March-April, 2005), <http://www.bu.edu/historic/hs/marchapril05.html#corum> (accessed 24 April 2008).

aggression and Hitler's desire for regional hegemony and to further expansion of the Aryan race throughout the European continent? The strategic goals of each side can be debated, but the bottom line is that the western powers did not fight World War II against the German "blitzkrieg." Instead, it fought against Axis aggression. A similar case can be made in correctly identifying the threat currently faced in the war on terror and fighting against an enemy that utilizes terror as a tactic.

Therefore, in the current operating environment, the decision to start calling the Global War on Terror the Long War on Terror more accurately defines the nature of the type of conflict that this generation currently finds itself fighting. A counter view of using the Long War on Terror is that it has negative connotations as the title signifies length. More specifically, the belief that American culture deplors anything that takes a long time to develop, solve, win, or which has too high a cost. A perfect example of this is the United States actions in Mogadishu, Somalia, as the Clinton administration quickly pulled support for UNOSOM II after the ambush in October 1993. "This was done after Task Force Ranger lost 18 rangers, 78 wounded, 1 POW, five downed M11-60's, and numerous vehicles."⁴ The administration's response was predictable since it had failed to clearly articulate its Somalia policy to Congress or the American public.⁵ Further, the American response set an unwanted precedent by reinforcing the perceptions of its current enemies that staying power is an American weakness. Therefore, it is imperative to identify the type of conflict the nation is embarking on to grasp the complexities of the threat faced in the current operating environment by realizing that America's current enemy views this conflict as generational, lasting decades as opposed to the quick and decisive conflicts that the United States

⁴Roger N. Sangvic, "Battle of Mogadishu: Anatomy of a Failure" (Thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, Leavenworth, KS, 1998), 20.

⁵Ibid., 24.

has recently experienced. Further, by understanding that the conflict is generational enables the United States to develop a comprehensive strategy that develops an effective solution to tackle the problem at hand. Hence, the correct identification of the type of war the United States is waging is the first step in preparing the American public to identify exactly what is currently being faced in order to gain domestic support or national will that is critical. Also, it enables government agencies to understand the nature of the enemy and the complexities of the environment to organize in conjunction with the military to develop an effective interagency approach to meet the challenges currently faced to secure the national interests domestically and abroad. The debate over what future warfare will look like has always been a mystery that complicates how to allocate national resources to protect the national interest and it is no different today.

Next, to better understand the threat faced in the current operating environment, one must also look at the past to see how the current system of nation-states helped create the problems in today's world. This is important, especially since the current tensions in the world did not just occur in a vacuum. For example, the planned agreement between the Europeans that created national boundaries throughout much of the Middle East had an impact on the current international system. The Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916, divided the Middle East and eastern Anatolia according to the interests of Britain, France, and Russia.⁶ This partition was made to meet the relative interests and needs of the respective nations. This fact is interesting because in general, partition is considered a source of conflict over time if not administered properly. According to Chaim Kaufman, "among most international organizations, western leaders, and scholars, population exchanges and partition are anathema. They contradict cherished western values of social integration. . . . The legal costs of ethnic separation must be compared to the

⁶Matthew Hughes, *Allenby and British Strategy in the Middle East, 1917-1919* (London: F. Cass, 1999), 1.

human consequences, both immediate and long term.”⁷ Generally, in the past, partition has been utilized to alleviate disagreements, or as was done in the Middle East, to allocate the spoils of war. Still, the regulating powers need to address the points of contention or continue to suppress the true sources of the problem or conflict will arise again. As is the case in the Middle East, this dividing of parts of the Arab world certainly created a substantial number of years of peace and relative security. However, the repercussions of this partition are being felt today and definitely provide motivations for United States enemies. Any study that neglects the impact of historical decisions, such as the Sykes-Picot agreement, and the implications that those actions have on the current system of states and the cultures of those nations would be incomplete.

As mentioned, a region’s culture is an additional dimension that derives from a group of people’s history and the historical interactions with other nations. In her book, *Knowing the Enemy*, Mary Habeck explains some of the motivations of America’s current enemies and provides excellent insights to some of their motivations.⁸ In the current operating environment, cultural awareness is a key component that cannot be overlooked. As Ambassador Eric Edelman, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, stated at a conference in September 2006, “to truly have an impact, and to do more good than harm, we must understand the social power structures that informally govern societies as well as the internal motivations of the enemy and the people. In short, we need to develop an anthropological approach to understanding our enemies.”⁹ This insight on culture shows an appreciation for the importance and impact of cultural components in the current operating environment.

⁷Richard K. Betts, *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace* (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2005), 345.

⁸Mary R. Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2006.

⁹Eric Edelman, Ambassador, U.S. Department of Defense News Transcripts (Remarks at the Department of State and Department of Defense Counterinsurgency Conference, 28 September 2006), <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=3739> (accessed 22 December 2007).

Another component of the current operating environment is the exponential pace with which change occurs and the ability of the system to adjust and counter those changes that caused the system to be in a state of imbalance. The characteristic of speed on the current operating environment makes connections to causal changes even more difficult today than in the past due to the environment's complexity. Throughout United States national history, there has been a reliance on the military to defend the national interests. Historically, the United States has utilized the types of warfare that were applicable for the time, relied on the nation's wealth of resources to mobilize, and had a heavy reliance on the superiority of technology to overwhelm America's enemies initially and then made adjustments, as necessary, during the conflicts to counter the threats faced. This method worked in the past due to United States geography and the focus on destroying the opponent's military power. However, in the current operating environment, the relevance of this approach depends significantly on the speed with which changes are made and instituted. The result needs to effectively counter one's enemies with a focus not just on defeating military power but also in changing the enemy's ideas. Just as the popular Zurich insurance commercial states, "change happenz," and the ability to stay ahead of change is essential in the business world to maintain relevance.¹⁰ Similar parallels can be made to the United States role in the world. The world is becoming more interconnected through technology. The implications of speed and complexity are far reaching, from simply bringing people of similar interests together that are separated by oceans, to states being more dependent on each other financially and economically do to business interest resulting in the necessity for international trade.

Thomas Friedman is another contemporary author, which needs mention in the definition of the current operating environment. He discusses the dichotomy between the Cold War system and globalization. During the Cold War, the period after World War II, the world operated in a

¹⁰Zurich North America, Zurich American Insurance Company, 2002-2008, <http://www.zurichna.com/zdu> (accessed 26 January 2008).

system that balanced power between the United States and the Soviet Union. Friedman identifies the current system of globalization as a system which now balances three systems: the traditional balance of nation-states, the system between nation-states and global markets, and the system between individuals and nation-states.¹¹ It is therefore important to recognize the relevant speed with which systemic change occurs, and the complex balance of systems in which nations must maneuver in the current world and the current operating environment. The result is that nation-states currently remain primary actors on the world stage but with globalization the power and influence of the individual actors and non-state actors has and will continue to increase to a level of parity with nation-states or with an even greater influence.

With this system of three sub-systems, the need to maintain a preeminent military force is still necessary. As Max Boot writes, “Today, the possibility of conventional interstate war is lower than at any time in the past five hundred years, but it has not disappeared altogether.”¹² He notes that democracies are no longer willing to suffer the casualties of the past and have come to expect quick, decisive victories with little cost to life or to national treasure. This illustrates another component of the current operating environment, improving capabilities while maximizing resources and lowering costs. Also, since the beginning of the information age, the need to maintain the qualitative edge through innovation is necessary not only technologically, but this also creates an impetus to change organizationally to focus on threats currently faced across the spectrum of conflict.

Simply to apply past methods of operating in the global system, which the nation and military have done to date, is naive in today’s complex world. America’s enemies have modified their approach to warfare by adapting to the complexities of today’s world and have adopted

¹¹Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2000), 13-14.

¹²Max Boot, *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History, 1500 to Today* (New York: Gotham Books, 2006), 472.

lessons from past theorists to conduct warfare today. William Lind posed the question of changing warfare to a Fourth Generation in a post-Westphalia setting in the October 1989, *Marine Corps Gazette*. He developed a potential framework for a Fourth Generation of War to appear and noted that the “first to recognize, understand, and implement a generational change can gain a decisive advantage.”¹³ He identified four critical elements that carry over to Fourth Generation Warfare; “the whole of an enemy’s society, a decreasing dependence on centralized logistics, more emphasis on maneuver, with a goal of collapsing the enemy internally rather than physically destroying him.”¹⁴ To counter an adversary that utilizes this approach, “success will depend heavily on effectiveness in joint operations as lines between responsibility and mission become very blurred.”¹⁵ Lind further identified possible forces that could be at the core of Fourth Generation Warfare, a technology-driven, an idea-driven, or some combination which he questioned could be, “at least the beginnings of a fourth generation of warfare.”¹⁶ Similar to Lind, contemporary author Col. Hammes also developed a theory on Fourth Generation Warfare in which America’s enemies have developed a strategy that is a more “complex, long-term type of conflict that has grown out of Mao’s People’s War.”¹⁷

Col. Hammes further identifies Fourth Generation Warfare’s goal as “using all available networks-political, economic, social, and military-to convince the enemy’s political decision makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit. It is an evolved form of insurgency. Still rooted in the fundamental precept that superior political

¹³William Lind, Col. Keith Nightengale, Capt. John Schmitt, Col. Joseph Sutton, LtCol. Gary Wilson, “The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation,” *Marine Corps Gazette* (October 1989): 22.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁷Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2004), 5.

will, when properly employed, can defeat greater economic and military power, 4GW [Fourth Generation Warfare] makes use of society's networks, it directly attacks the minds of enemy decision makers to destroy the enemy's political will. Fourth-generation wars are lengthy-measured in decades rather than months or years."¹⁸ It will be useful to take a closer look, according to Col. Hammes' theory, as to the origins of Fourth Generation Warfare to better understand how America's enemies are using it in the current operating environment.

Mao Tse-tung developed a method to counter the ruling power in China. He essentially adopted a strategic approach by not directly confronting superior forces also Mao studied Clausewitz's writings. Instead, Mao thought that the best approach would be to gain the support of the numerically superior peasants in order to gain the true will and political support needed to substantiate the true change within China that he sought. "Thus, 4GW began evolving in the same way its predecessors had. Faced with specific tactical and operational problems, practical fighters developed effective solutions," to have tactical, operational, and strategic success in meeting specific objectives.¹⁹ To further understand, in Mao Tse-tung's teachings and development of insurgency warfare, he identified three specific phases that his protracted war would pass through. "The first stage covers the period of the enemy's strategic offensive and our strategic defensive."²⁰ This is a period when the insurgent focuses on gaining and building local support of the populace, which is an essential component in the later phases. "The second stage will be the period of the enemy's strategic consolidation and our preparation for the counter-offensive."²¹ During this stage, the insurgent continues to gain strength but is in a position to effectively influence or govern certain portions of the country and is actively engaging the counter insurgent.

¹⁸Ibid., 2.

¹⁹Ibid., 50.

²⁰Tse-Tung, Mao, *On Protracted War*, (1938) Selected Writings of Mao Tse-Tung (Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 2007), 210.

²¹Ibid., 210-211.

Mao then identifies the third stage as a “period of our strategic counter-offensive and the enemy’s strategic retreat.”²² This is when the insurgent has gained enough support to counter the government forces with statistical advantage. Although the three-stage model appears outwardly simplistic, it does show a deep understanding of the nature of war, and in particular, insurgent warfare. Col. Hammes also identifies strength in Mao’s three stages in that they “show a sophisticated understanding of the powerful political, economic, and social elements that constitute the “base” of military power.”²³ Mao’s theory is also in keeping with western military theorists.

One such military theorist is Carl von Clausewitz. The primary similarity is the recognition that gaining the people’s will is essential in conducting war. Clausewitz’s theory on war identifies the passions of the people as a key component of warfare. Clausewitz identifies his trinity as “the people; the commander and his army; and the government.”²⁴ He states, “these three tendencies are like three different codes of law, deep-rooted in their subject and yet variable in their relationship to one another.” He further states, “A theory that ignores any one of them or seeks to fix an arbitrary relationship between them would conflict with reality to such an extent that for this reason alone it would be totally useless.”²⁵ Even though his theory is based on the concept of total war, his trinity is also relevant in lesser forms of warfare, especially Fourth Generation Warfare. It is important to address this concept in Clausewitz’s theory on war in comparison with one of the key concepts in countering Fourth Generation Warfare as defined earlier. That is America’s opponents effectively use information to shift the national will and political view of the world. This concept has evolved over time and adapted to the speed with

²²Ibid., 211.

²³Hammes, *Sling and the Stone*, 52.

²⁴Carl von Clausewitz, Michael E. Howard, and Peter Paret. *On War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 101.

²⁵Ibid.

which information can be sent around the world. Specifically, in today's current operating environment, information can be strategically targeted not only locally, but also at the opposing threat, targeting its political leaders and concurrently at the opposing populace. This advance in technology makes the use of information even more effective at influencing national and political will. America's current enemies are very adept at designing strategic information campaigns that further their causes. This will be explored further in the case study to follow.

Another key component of Fourth Generation Warfare is the use of internal and external networks. Mao realized the power in utilizing networks to further his message. His political maneuvering internally enabled the message of his "People's War" to flourish by gaining and maintaining the necessary support to continue the long war. The recognition of the importance to control information was crucial for his continued support and allowed him to maintain control. Mao did not stop with the internal networks that were necessary to gain support and ensure the security of the populace, but he also realized the importance of external or international networks.²⁶ The ability to gain influence and to take advantage of what is now known as safe havens was only part of the genius of Mao. He also saw the distinct advantages of manipulating foreign support politically to add to the legitimacy of his movement. These ties to external relationships can be theoretically compared to Jomini's lines of operation in that they ultimately helped Mao to gain a source of influence that either put pressure on his foe, or left other countries neutral or non-committal, which helped to further his cause.

A final point is to refute Col. Hammes' 2007 article identifying the emergence of a "Fifth Generation of Warfare."²⁷ In defining the Fifth, he utilized the same framework of Fourth Generation Warfare as the utilization of all available networks and then accounts for the

²⁶Tse-Tung, *On Protracted War*, 197.

²⁷Col. Thomas X. Hammes, "Fourth Generation Warfare Evolves, Fifth Emerges," *Military Review* 87, no. 3 (May-June 2007), 14.

emergence to a Fifth Generation deriving from technological changes within a particular networks capability.²⁸ Ultimately, what he is identifying is the maturation of systems and the development of technology that enables less mature systems to interact. This enables other actors the opportunity to compete as rivals on the world stage in a non-contiguous environment. Therefore, the question becomes, is the ability for interconnectivity between potential rival networks truly representative of a new generation of warfare? Or has the exponential pace of technological advancements in Fourth Generation Warfare enabled potential rivals the ability to compete on the world stage?

This section identified the nature of the threat and the scope of Fourth Generation Warfare in the current operating environment, by primarily utilizing Col. Hammes' definition of an advanced form of insurgency derived from Mao's people's war. Additionally, within the current operating environment, there are four things that define the complex nature of the threat and the environment, which the United States currently faces. The first is the historical impact and the resulting cultural aspects that influence a region and provide motivations for America's enemies. The second is Friedman's current system of globalization as a system which now balances three systems: the traditional balance of nation-states, the system between nation-states and global markets, and the system between individuals and nation-states. The third is the exponential pace with which change occurs, making it necessary to have a networked system that can adapt quickly to changes in the environment. Finally, is Boot's concept of improving capabilities while maximizing resources and lowering costs and his thoughts on innovating organizationally, and lastly an understanding of Col. Hammes definition of how the enemies of the United States have modified their approach to warfare by adapting to the complexities of today's world. The enemies of the United States have evolved by utilizing a strategy, which

²⁸Ibid., 20-21.

places an emphasis on a long-term approach that targets the national will to conduct warfare today through Fourth Generation Warfare.

Vietnam Case Study and CORDS

I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.

-Thomas A. Edison

Much has been written about the United States experience in Vietnam. It occurred during a time in which the dichotomies of the current United States military force structure and that of the military force structure during the time of Vietnam are numerous. For example, today the United States military is a professional all volunteer force compared to a draftee military during Vietnam. Another difference is that today the military recognizes the importance of Joint Operations. Furthermore, the fact that the nation's role in the world is currently viewed as a global hegemonic power and arguably a lone superpower or hyperpower emboldens the perception by other nations in the international community that the United States is becoming more insensitive to other ideals. According to Elliot Cohen, the French coined the term hyperpower and in general, Americans prefer to shy away from it since they object to the notion of being a global hegemon or of having imperial preeminence. The impact of this according to Cohen is the manner in which American politicians interact with foreign leaders tends to be more authoritarian rather than that of a peer or colleague.²⁹ Despite these differences, there are several reasons to look closely at the United States experience during Vietnam and the lessons learned from the experience. The first reason to look at Vietnam is that Ho Chi Minh utilized a strategy that fits within the parameters of Fourth Generation Warfare as defined in the earlier section. Second, although it was not the first historical use of the United States interagency process, it provides insights to past experience that formed the initial foundation and provides lessons

²⁹Eliot A. Cohen, "Supreme Command in the 21st Century," *Joint Forces Quarterly* no. 31, (Summer 2002), 51.

learned which helped to form the structure and programs utilized within the current United States interagency process. Finally, it also helped to shape current policy and legislation which impacts how federal agencies currently interact with each other today.

To further explain how Vietnam is part of Fourth Generation Warfare, one must recognize that the nature of the threat was a Communist insurgency that threatened the Republic of Vietnam. Col. Hammes explains that the United States completely misunderstood the nature and type of conflict in which America was engaged in. He further explains that Ho Chi Minh studied Mao and that Ho “and his followers modified that three phased approach to succeed in Vietnam.”³⁰ Ho even publicly stated his strategic approach in February 1951 to the Viet-Nam Worker’s Party.³¹ Col. Hammes further explains that Ho Chi Minh and his followers developed modifications to the approach that were the impetus for the United States failure in Vietnam. These modifications can be seen on all levels of war. The most significant change being at the strategic level in which “they shifted the focus from the battlefield to the political arena.”³² They also were able to keep this focus nested down to the tactical level, furthering their ability to erode the United States political will. Col. Hammes argues that, “Ho understood that the U.S. center of gravity was our political will.”³³ This point is significant in that it shows the complexity and depth of Fourth Generation Warfare and that the strategic focus of the enemy can be at the domestic home front. Technologically, numerically, and economically weaker enemies have the capability to overcome their disadvantages by striking further and deeper into the rear of their opponent, not necessarily with direct physical contact but through ideas and information to attack political leaders or gain influence through the domestic populace.

³⁰Hammes, *Sling and the Stone*, 59.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., 69.

³³Ibid., 71.

Also, according to the traditional military theorist Clausewitz, this type of action is very sound in that it directly attacks two corners of his trinity, the political leaders and the people. Further, if the opponent does not recognize or address an erosion of both political and societal will, the implications of this imbalance in the system will certainly spell failure, as was ultimately the case with the United States experience in Vietnam. Since the enemy was focused on social change through an insurgency in Vietnam and their strategy was focused on eroding the United States political will. What did the United States do to counter the enemy?

The different federal agencies that were involved in Vietnam conducted operations and support activities in support of the United States pacification effort. The initial decentralized strategy of each agency and the lack of coordination led to the development of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support, or CORDS. The development of the CORDS organization in Vietnam went through several evolutionary steps. According to Thomas Scoville who served in CORDS from December 1967 to June 1968 and published a study, “Reorganizing for Pacification Support,” CORDS evolved through three distinct periods of reorganization before its final organization in 1967. The impetus for each period of change was based on different external pressures to improve operational success some of which were due to political impatience from the Johnson administration and some were due to changes on the ground in South Vietnam.³⁴ Also noted during each period was the internal resistance of each agency to accept the proposed changes as the agencies saw the changes as infringing on their jurisdiction. However, the end result was a “large organization . . . intone with what the war and the American response had become . . . it drew resources and emphasis from the U.S. military by aggressive innovation, force of personalities, and working from within as part of the military structure.”³⁵

³⁴Thomas W. Scoville and Center of Military History, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1982), 6.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 83.

In reflection of the United States experience in Vietnam, and the before mentioned problems with the conflict are there any positive lessons to be gained? As with most experiences not everything is negative. The key is to not make the same mistakes of the past, and to reinforce the positive lessons gained. Although Col. Hammes argues about the misidentification of the type of conflict the United States was involved in during Vietnam, General William Westmoreland has a different opinion. He states in his book, *A Soldier Reports*, that he did indeed recognize the nature of the enemy he was facing. This was evident in the priority given to Ambassador Komer with Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support. This complex structure of interagency was an initial starting point. Also recognition is made that it was not the universal solution for the interagency and the structure needed to work on complex problems. However, it did begin to charter new ground. "CORDS was unique in that for the first time in the history of the United States, civilians in a wartime field organization commanded military personnel and resources."³⁶ During 1965, General Westmoreland and Ambassador Komer began to devise "a plan to merge OCO (Office of Civil Operations) and MACV's (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) pacification directorate."³⁷ What was unique about their approach was that in developing the structure the individuals "who headed the program at each level depended upon the best man available, not whether he was military or civilian."³⁸ This type of organizational innovation is imperative especially today in countering threats in the current operating environment. This did, however, meet resistance in the stove piped organization of the United States government interagency. This resistance was less distinct with experimental programs such as PHOENIX and the hamlet evaluation system or HES.³⁹ General Westmoreland alludes to the

³⁶Scoville and Center of Military History, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, v.

³⁷William C. Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports* (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1989), 214.

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹*Ibid.*, 216.

fact that in regard to programs such as these, “a cardinal principle in pursuing pacification was that it was primarily a South Vietnamese task. The Americans could only help with advice and resources. The goal was to provide the people with security, social justice, education, medical care, and economic opportunity, and in the long run only the South Vietnamese government could achieve that.”⁴⁰ But the question remains, how did these programs operate?

PHOENIX was “aimed at identifying and excising the VC political infrastructure and run by the South Vietnamese primarily under direction of CIA advisors.”⁴¹ According to Ambassador Komer, “it was a program that required a massive and sophisticated intelligence effort to identify and locate members of the Viet Cong political underground.”⁴² It was a controversial program, which further eroded United States domestic support for Vietnam in some measures due to the negative media coverage labeling the program as sanctioning activities such as assassination and torture. In the end, the program was unsuccessful in large part because the effort required a complicated structure that required experienced intelligence analysts that worked with each agency through similar goals, “it never succeeded in identifying and locating the heart of the Viet Cong underground movement.”⁴³ So what lesson can be learned? There are four primary lessons starting with the development of an organization that integrated the interagency in an effort to support the Government of South Vietnam. Second, the intent of the program to put the host nation and its forces in the lead element of offensive, defensive, and stability operations to provide security within South Vietnam in order to increase United States legitimacy in the eyes of the Vietnamese populace. Third, if additional emphasis had been placed on unity of a command versus relying on organizations to work through competing tasks greater efficiency could have

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Phillip B. Davidson, *Vietnam at War, The History: 1946-1975* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1988), 460.

⁴³Ibid.

been obtained. Fourth, greater effort should have been placed on educating the populace through information operations in Vietnam to inform the Vietnamese on the goal of the program. This would have further helped to gain public acceptance instead of public revulsion. Such transparency in the goals and effectiveness of the program may have also improved its image domestically. Most importantly, the fact that the effort was utilized in conjunction with Government of South Vietnam aligns with General Westmoreland's before mentioned goals and would have increased the will of the populace, as the program would have been seen as Vietnam taking responsibility for and trying to improve security within their nation.

Similarly, HES was developed by Ambassador Komer as, "another statistical device attempting to measure progress in an unmeasurable and often irrational war."⁴⁴ The success of this program, however, was more favorable. "HES required hundreds of advisors to rate thousands of South Vietnamese villages and hamlets against a list of eighteen factors which were then converted into a grade from A (secure) to F (VC-controlled)."⁴⁵ Again, what lessons can be learned from this program? Similar to PHOENIX, the organization of the program involved numerous agencies in support and also involved the host nation. Additionally, the intent to understand the nature of the enemy's progress in gaining support of the local populace was critical to the program's success. The idea of using statistical data and value judgments based on specific evaluation criteria to monitor relative progress in gaining security at the hamlet level during offensive operations against an enemy force was cutting edge and crucial. This type of quantitative data collection in order to gain relevant information is essential to understanding progress in the war of ideas. Caution, however, needs to be taken in any analysis such as this, in order to not be misled by causal relationships from criteria being evaluated as critical to reporting successes or in the quality of the data being collected. Yet, the use of such measures may still

⁴⁴Davidson, *Vietnam at War*, 461.

⁴⁵Ibid.

have applicability in the current operating environment as long as a large enough population is surveyed in order to reduce the effects of flawed sampling error and the quality of the questions asked are clearly defined or do not show any bias.

The United States link between the operational and strategic level was not effectively coordinated and often strained in the early portions of the Vietnam conflict in particular between the years of 1965 to 1968. Scoville alludes to this in his report when he explains that, “until the creation of CORDS in 1967, many Americans involved in South Vietnam, depending on their outlook or on which government agency they worked for, saw pacification as either civil or military but not as a joint civil-military process.”⁴⁶ Attempts were made at the operational levels to coordinate and take advantage of the strengths of the interagency prior to the development of the CORDS program. This was accomplished generally through personal relationships and ad-hoc agencies with similar objectives. Initially the breakdown came at the strategic levels in providing appropriate levels of reach back and support due to organizational and agency turf battles. Further, the lack of a unified national strategy to counter the type of fight that was being conducted on the ground in Vietnam definitely was a contributing factor to the eventual failure and withdrawal. As Phillip Davidson writes,

Our pacification program drifted haplessly between agencies and individuals from the early sixties until 1967...even then it was a stepchild. The emphasis, both in Saigon and Washington, was on the big-unit war and on ROLLING THUNDER. Throughout the war both the United States and South Vietnam gave little thought to the political, economic, and psychological effects of their military operations.⁴⁷

This statement is in agreement with the current Joint Publication definition of strategy, “a prudent set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives.”⁴⁸ As can be seen

⁴⁶Scoville and Center of Military History, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, 4-5.

⁴⁷Davidson, *Vietnam at War*, 800.

⁴⁸Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 17 September 2006), GL-29.

from the case study of Vietnam, the overarching United States national strategy had an initial lack of interagency coordination that was due to an inaccurate definition of what pacification encompassed. This also hampered further interagency progress at the operational level as a result of agencies having to compete for resources that should have been allocated and prioritized at the strategic level. Remarkably, substantial progress at the operational level was made through coordination of the interagency despite the lack of national strategy to support operations at the operational level.

The last point that needs to be mentioned is based on the American propensity and expectation for quick results. Ho Chi Minh understood this weakness as he developed his strategy to win in Vietnam. The North Vietnamese were able to endure extreme hardships over time because Ho developed a long-term strategy for the independence and unification of Vietnam. From the United States perspective, an assemblage of academics in 1986 noted the lessons learned from Vietnam as the following:

The United States does not have the necessary staying power to fight a long drawn-out war in a faraway land. Policy implications may be drawn, (a) the United States should never again commit American combat troops to fight a Vietnam-type war. (b) if American combat troops have to be sent overseas, they must be given a clear mission, and that mission must be completed in a relatively short time; and (c) if the United States gets involved in a Third World conflict, it should try beforehand to reach a national consensus on who are its friends and then it should help them in a consistent and dignified manner to prosecute their own war, limiting U.S. assistance strictly to a supporting role.⁴⁹

These lessons further acknowledge the necessity for initially gaining domestic support and continually reenergizing that support to maintain the necessary will of the nation.

To conclude the section on the Vietnam CORDS experience, Frank Jones in the autumn 2005 *Parameters* article writes of six successes attributed to Komer's collaborative work with Westmoreland's headquarters and the South Vietnamese government.

⁴⁹Lawrence E. Grinter and Peter Dunn, *The American War in Vietnam: Lessons, Legacies, and Implications for Future Conflicts* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 22.

The first was the integration of the organization into the U.S. mission and MACV headquarters. Second, he developed effective lines of communication with CORDS staff and the South Vietnamese government. Third, he strengthened South Vietnamese pacification programs that had become stagnant. Fourth, he convinced the South Vietnamese government to stand up to contested areas after the TET offensive. Fifth, he centralized the pacification effort resulting in better overall coordination between agencies. Sixth, he was able to influence the South Vietnamese government to address the problems of corruption.⁵⁰

Moreover, in terms of the enemy that the United States faced, Ho Chi Minh made a modification to Mao's people war by focusing politically at the opponent's political and domestic will. Also during the early stages of the conflict, the United States national strategy was indecisive on how to approach the instability in Vietnam that ultimately filtered to an initial lack of unity of effort at the operational level. Next in general terms, coordination between United States military and civilian government agencies initially was conflicted as a result of indecision on how to move forward effectively. As a result initial relationships were the result of goals depending on the respective agency, which did not necessarily equate to unity of effort. This ad-hoc structure eventually evolved into its final organizational structure of CORDS that gave the needed unity of effort and unity of command between the United States interagency assisting the Government of South Vietnam. Last is that of domestic will or American staying power. This also has its origins in an understanding of the nature of the threat faced. Even though American's love a quick decisive victory, knowledge is power, and informing the American public of the threats faced will only strengthen American resolve.

Current Written Policy and Guidance

We are participants, whether we would or not, in the life of the world. The interests of all nations are our own also. We are partners with the rest.

-George Washington

⁵⁰Frank L. Jones, "Blowtorch: Robert Komer and the Making of Vietnam Pacification Policy," *Parameters* 35, no. 3 (Autumn 2005): 115-116.

The next section of this paper examines current written policy and guidance, to assess if the integration of mechanisms within the interagency processes has been addressed, in order to ensure that all elements of national power are being utilized to counter the current threats the nation faces in the Long War on Terrorism. To accomplish this task, the current United States *National Security Strategy* will be looked at to assess overall guidance from the office of the president. Then the Department of Defense strategy and the *Quadrennial Defense Review* will be assessed for the Defense Department's interpretation of the national strategy. In conclusion, other government documents are examined to assess whether a significant effort has been placed in instituting the structural and operational changes that are necessary to meet the challenges the nation faces in countering an enemy utilizing Fourth Generation Warfare in the current operating environment.

Several additions have been made between the 2002 and 2006 *National Security Strategy*. To begin with the 2002 Strategy did identify the need for institutional transformation in section nine. Within the section it states, "The major institutions of American national security were designed in a different era to meet different requirements. All of them must be transformed."⁵¹ However, this transformation did not necessarily mean changes in how agencies interact with each other. It also states that the United States Government "will ensure that the Department of State receives funding sufficient to ensure the success of American diplomacy."⁵² This particular statement is subjective in the meaning of sufficient to ensure success. Yet it is mentioned because the initiation of certain legislation in 2004 that would provide funding for the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction was introduced, by Senators Richard Lugar and Joe Biden, but still is in the process of becoming law and will be looked at later in this section.⁵³

⁵¹The White House, *National Security Strategy*, September 2002, 29.

⁵²Ibid, 30.

⁵³GovTrack.us, Tracking the 110th United States Congress, 2008, <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=s110-613>, (accessed February 24, 2008).

The current *United States National Security Strategy* addresses at length the use of military force as well as the use of other agencies in combating terrorism. It seems that United States senior leaders clearly identified the challenges, which face the nation and developed the initial plan that lays the groundwork for integration of the interagency. The 2006 *National Security Strategy* is founded upon two pillars, “the first is promoting freedom, justice and human dignity-working to end tyranny, to promote effective democracies, and to extend prosperity through free and fair trade and wise development policies. . . . The second is confronting the challenges of our time by leading a growing community of democracies.”⁵⁴ It also recognizes the need for government institutions to be transformed to meet the challenges and opportunities in the 21st century. Additionally, it clearly identified three priorities in the way ahead: (1) Sustaining the transformation already under way in the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and Justice; the FBI; and the Intelligence Community, (2) Continuing to reorient the Department of State towards transformational diplomacy in which specifically mentioned is the new director for Foreign Assistance to ensure that foreign assistance is used most effectively, pinning the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction with integrating all relevant United States government resources in conducting reconstruction and stabilization operations, and development of the civilian reserve corps to manage the human resources of the American people for skills and capacities needed for international disaster relief and post-conflict reconstruction, and (3) Improving the capacity of agencies to plan, prepare, coordinate, integrate, and execute responses covering the full range of crisis contingencies and long-term challenges.⁵⁵ Additionally, the current *National Security Strategy* identifies three specific priorities in Iraq. They include political, security, and economic.

⁵⁴The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, March 2006), Introduction.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 44-46.

The Defense Strategy and the *Quadrennial Defense Review* also recognize the changing nature of the threat currently faced as framed in the previous section on Fourth Generation Warfare. Specifically, the 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review* has a section on achieving unity of effort that recognizes the need for organizational change within the Department of Defense in order to bring the weight of all elements of national power more effectively. It says, “This requires more than mere coordination: the Department must work hand in glove with other agencies to execute the National Security Strategy. Interagency and international combined operations truly are the new Joint operations.”⁵⁶ The document further addresses why this new approach is essential, and recognizes that the Department of Defense’s organization was designed to face the threats of the Cold War and is no longer sufficiently agile to defeat the networked enemy the nation currently faces. Additional focus has been placed on the strengthening and development of interagency operations. Noting that, “increasing unity of effort to achieve the nation’s security policy priorities across the agencies of the Federal Government is essential,” to best utilize all elements of national power to counter the current threats the nation faces in the long war on terrorism.⁵⁷ The document also recognizes shortfalls in the organizational structure between the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and other agencies in that the Department of Defense tends to be the short term fix during complex operations due to legal and or resource constraints of the other agencies. “The QDR recommends the creation of a National Security Planning Guidance to direct the development of both military and non-military plans and institutional capabilities.”⁵⁸ It further identifies the need to better align each agency’s strategy, budget, and planning functions in order to more efficiently execute national ends. It recommends other ways of supporting the interagency through strengthening organizational changes such as

⁵⁶Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 83.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 84.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 85.

increased resources to the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stability as well as the Civilian Reserve Corps. These are positive steps that could potentially make a huge difference in addressing the complexities faced in the long war on terrorism. Particularly in the form of civil-military capability but the actual development of the civilian reserve corps has yet to materialize beyond an idea.

Even though there appears to be a nesting of the national strategy to the federal agencies, there have been some tensions in responsibilities that have been addressed in the issuance of National Security Presidential Directive-46. According to Christian Beckner, “A major goal of the new NSPD was to resolve discrepancies among previous presidential directives and chronic conflicts among agencies with overlapping responsibilities: The State and Defense departments have wrangled over jurisdiction for the war on terrorism in countries where the United States is not at war, and the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security have had similar turf disputes at home.”⁵⁹ This represents a key hurdle that needs to be overcome in the interagency process and makes legitimate actions impossible when the cultures of each organization cannot see the forest for the trees. Additionally, unity of effort is compromised and the end result is that an apparent weakness is shown to enemies, which they can easily exploit.

Since 11 September 2001, with the on going operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, there is a demonstrated need for additional improvement in interagency cooperation. “Difficulties experienced in these countries, combined with several independent studies issued on this topic, prompted Congress to introduce several bills calling for changes in the interagency collaboration

⁵⁹Christian Beckner, “US News Previews NSPD-46/HSPD-15” *Homeland Security Watch* (16 March 2006), <http://www.hlswatch.com/2006/03/16/us-news-previews-nspd-46hspd-15/> (accessed 2 February 2008).

structure.”⁶⁰ Most notable of the several different bills introduced is The Lugar-Biden Bill, which has already passed the Senate. It is similar to other federal initiatives in design by giving ultimate responsibility to the creation of the “Office of International Stabilization and Reconstruction, headed by a Coordinator, in the Department of State,” with various responsibilities (see Appendix A). It also authorizes the creation of two response forces: a response readiness corps of 250 persons trained in stabilization and reconstruction activities and a response readiness reserve meant to complement the corps. Additionally, it requires that the 250 persons at The Department of State and USAID designated as the response readiness corps be subject to mandatory deployment. The bill also authorizes specific training and education curriculum at the Foreign Service Institute, the National Defense University, and the Army War College. The last thing that makes this bill notable is that it authorizes federal dollars in the sum of \$100 million for contingency fund, to be replenished each fiscal year as needed in addition to other money for personnel and training.⁶¹ A unique aspect of this bill is that funds are made readily available. The lack of funding has been but one in a series of challenges for initiatives that have been started most recently for interagency reform.⁶² Lack of funding programs by American politicians leaves the perception that the real challenge to fixing the problems the interagency faces is disingenuous.

⁶⁰A Congressional Research report identifies the following studies as among the most influential: (1) *Play to Win: The Final Report of the bi-partisan Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Association of the U.S. Army, 2003 (a book-length version was published in mid-2004, *Winning the Peace: An American Strategy for Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, Robert C. Orr, ed.); (2) *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era*, CSIS, March 2004; (3) *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*, (Washington, DC: Center for Technology and National Security Policy, 2004); (4) *On the Brink: Weak States and US National Security*, Center for Global Development, May 2004; and (5) *Transition to and From Hostilities*, Defense Science Board, December 2004. “Peacekeeping and Post-Conflict Capabilities: The State Department’s Office for Reconstruction and Stabilization,” Congressional Research Service, 19 January 2005, 4. Bernard Carreau, *Transforming the Interagency System for Complex Operations, Case Studies in Defense Transformation Number 6*, Center for Technology and National Security Policy, 2007, 7.

⁶¹Bernard Carreau, *Transforming the Interagency System for Complex Operations, Case Studies in Defense Transformation Number 6* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, Center for Technology and National Security Policy, 2007), 8-9.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 17-18.

Beyond funding, another key aspect to measure success in an interagency environment is the establishment of a formalized communication and coordination process, which was also alluded to in the United States CORDS experience. The complexity of integrating the interactions between government agencies is no simple task. Robert Axelrod and Michael Cohen write about external and internal methods of organizing to facilitate the interactions of agents in Complex Adaptive Systems.⁶³ In addition, if one applies their methods with Henry Mintzberg's thoughts on strategic planning as a process that requires "integrated decision making" the complexities of coordination and planning within large organizations are self-evident.⁶⁴ Furthermore, if applied to the communication and coordination problems between the Department of State and the Department of Defense, the complexities of coordination become apparent at the national level. A simple illustration in how each agency currently assigns areas of responsibility in order to address geographic areas throughout the world in response to the United States needs within a region. If one looks specifically at the Unified Command Plan that establishes assigned missions and assigns a geographic region that the combatant commanders are responsible for in order to support United States foreign policy. Six of the commands are assigned a specific geographic region USNORTHCOM, USPACOM, USSOUTHCOM, USCENTCOM, USEUCOM, and the coming addition of USAFRICOM once it is stood up. Additionally, there are three functional commands USJFCOM, USSRATCOM, and USTRANSCOM (see figure 1).⁶⁵ The last command is USSOCCOM, which has both the roles of a geographic command and a functional command. This system was developed to enable the Department of Defense command structure to more

⁶³Michael Cohen and Robert Axelrod, *Harnessing Complexity, Organizational Implications of a Scientific Frontier* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 78-92.

⁶⁴Henry Mintzberg, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning: Reconceiving Roles for Planning, Plans, Planners* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 11.

⁶⁵Department of Defense, DefenseLink website, 2008, <http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/unifiedcommand>, (accessed 1 February 2008).

effectively address regions and in order to more effectively control forces within an assigned region to protect United States national interests.



Figure 1. The World with Commanders' Areas of Responsibility
Source: Department of Defense, DefenseLink Website, 2008. <http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/unifiedcommand> (accessed 1 February 2008).

The United States Department of State is similar to the Department of Defense in dividing the world into geographic regions. The Department of State has six regional Bureaus, which deal with United States foreign policy and diplomatic relations, with countries that are within each assigned area of responsibility. If the Department of Defense's Unified Command Plan with the addition of USAFRICOM geographic area of responsibility is overlaid with the Department of State one sees potential areas of friction where geographic boundaries are not completely seamless (see figure 2).⁶⁶ This unparalleled structure of each agency has worked to date to engage foreign countries relative to the interests of each agency to respond to the interest

⁶⁶United States Department of State, Security Assistance, 2008, <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/c17251.htm> (accessed 1 January 2008).

of the nation. Any necessity for agency coordination has been accomplished through several different Regional Bureaus or Geographic Combatant Commands depending on the point of view. Though this organizational structure has worked thus far, it may need adjustments to meet the demands within Fourth Generation Warfare. This is applicable if the cultural component is a dimension as defined in the previous section when framing the current operating environment. Samuel Huntington argues that conflicts of the future will primarily be cultural clashes between civilizations and that “the fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.”⁶⁷ This holds true when looking at non-state actors or organizations like Al-Qaeda that do not abide by the traditional system of nation states and are ultimately looking to reestablish the Islamic State or caliphate.⁶⁸ Especially when organizations such as these are trying to exploit areas that are on the fringes and all elements of a nation’s power are not being focused in an effort to counter their actions.

The study of the United States’ current written policy and guidance in this section has highlighted several aspects of interagency structure and coordination. This was done to examine if there has been an integration of mechanisms within the interagency processes to ensure that all elements of national power are being utilized to counter the current threats the nation faces in the Long War on Terrorism. The conclusion made from this section is that although the documents that were looked at identify the need for changes both structurally and operationally on many levels, the actual changes have not been made or are still in the process of evolving. At all levels were acknowledgements that the current government structure needs better unity of effort to face the networked asymmetric threat the nation currently faces today. In particular the military identified the need to strengthen interagency operations to improve the implementation of foreign

⁶⁷Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?,” *Foreign Affairs* (Summer, 1993), 22.

⁶⁸Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, 4.

policy.⁶⁹ This acknowledgement is a step in the right direction, however the urgency is the issue. Taken in the context of Fourth Generation Warfare and the current operating environment, one of the key components was speed. If this premise is correct, then the implementation of organizational changes needs to also take corrective action.

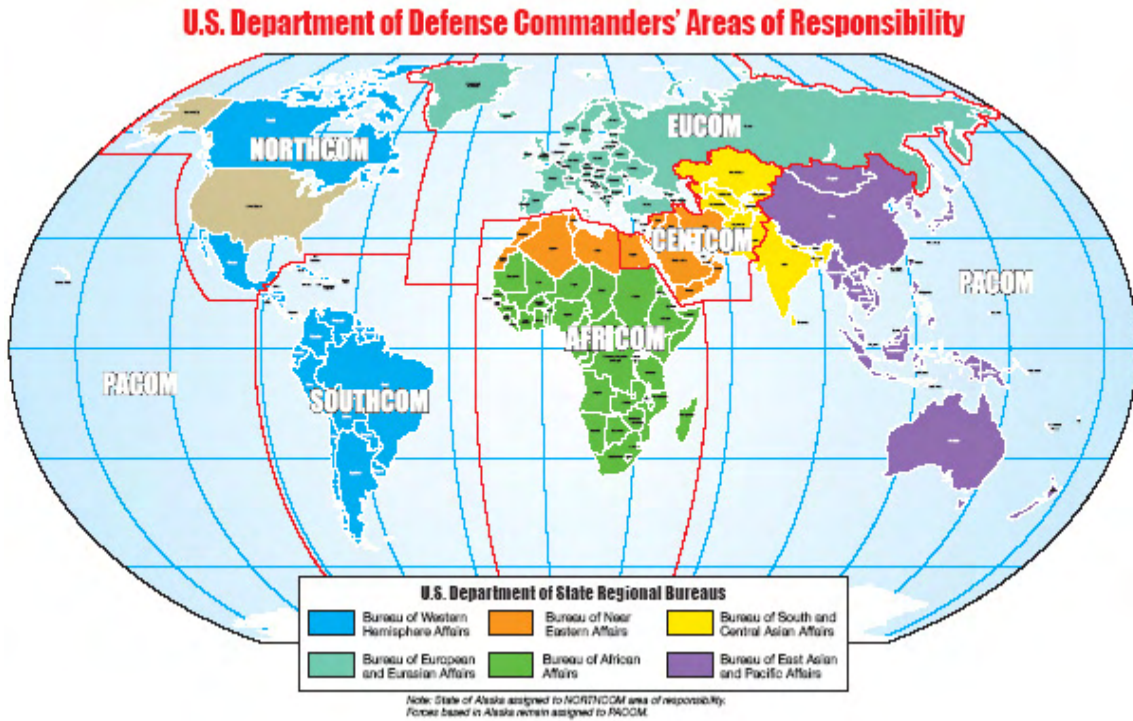


Figure 2. Political-Military-Administered Security Assistance
 Source: United States Department of State, Security Assistance, 2008, <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/c17251.htm> (accessed 1 January 2008).

Analysis

The question then develops, how does the United States military currently conduct operations against terrorists in the Iraq Theater of Operations? Further, are any of the lessons learned from past experience being applied to our current conflict? This section will attempt to

⁶⁹Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 84.

assess whether there is currently a sufficient level of interagency integration to counter the threats the nation faces in the Long War on Terrorism with regard to the primary research question. There are many possible explanations for the difficulty in integrating the interagency to counter threats effectively. The evaluation criteria that will be used for analysis include: unified action due to a clear formal communication process between agencies; flexibility due to an agency's resources that are available resulting in an inability to adjust, change, or modify easily to the changing environment; legitimacy that curtails the necessary will to obtain national objectives, this could be in the form of an organizational bias between organizations.

In conducting this assessment, the current joint definition of strategy will be used, which defines strategy as the art and science of developing “a prudent set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives.”⁷⁰ This definition will determine if the current interagency process is being used effectively during current operations against Al-Qaeda.

To begin, the first criterion is a lack of unified action, which is defined as a lack of a clear formal communication process between agencies. Looking at the Vietnam case study, this was a problem in the early years of CORDS as the initial interactions between the interagency were ad-hoc lacking a formal communication process. Over the course of the conflict, CORDS evolved due to recognition that these informal inter personal relationships needed to be formalized in order to improve the efficiency of coordination and provide more unity of effort. This lack of coordination resulted in feeding the erosion of the American will, as progress in Vietnam was viewed as failing or at best stagnant which was never reversed.

In retrospect, the United States military learned a lesson from this as is written in the current Quadrennial Defense Report. “Cooperation across the Federal Government begins in the

⁷⁰Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-0, GL-29.

field with the development of shared perspectives and a better understanding of each agency's role, mission and capabilities."⁷¹ Again, the focus is on the informal communication processes and not the formal. There have been recent initiatives that would formalize the process such as General Petraeus's "An Interagency Engine of Change," in which he identifies the center for complex operations that would be headed by the Department of State and would have seats for all government agencies.⁷² Or the United States military support of the development of the Civilian Reserve Corps and the Conflict Response Fund.⁷³ These initiatives are moving in the right direction, however, the time that it takes to institute these formalized processes could prove to be detrimental, as was the case in Vietnam.

In the current fight against Al-Qaeda in Iraq, the interaction between the interagency has followed the same process of the past as an initial ad-hoc organization that relies on the informal coordination process. Col. Dahl also identifies the "difficulties we face when policy decisions are not fully developed and resourced by a coherent interagency process," as a problem in the initial progress of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq which resulted in months of infighting before a memorandum between the Department of State and Defense was formalized.⁷⁴ The United States military can, and should, do better at wielding its power through a synchronized and integrated fashion with other agencies in implementing strategy for the United States as an element of national power.

The second evaluation criterion is a lack of flexibility due to an agency's resources that are available resulting in an inability to adjust, change, or modify easily to the changing

⁷¹Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 84-85.

⁷²David H. Petraeus, U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Initiative, "An Interagency Engine of Change," <http://www.usgcoin.org/events/conference2006/conference2006.cfm> (accessed 24 November 2007).

⁷³Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 86.

⁷⁴Kenneth R. Dahl, *New Security for New Threats: The Case for Reforming the Interagency Process*, (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2007), 7.

environment. When looking at the Vietnam case study this also was a point of contention. During Vietnam, each agency was competing for the pool of resources based on what that particular agency viewed as the end state, how to achieve pacification. This is particularly true in the beginning stages prior to the final structure of CORDS. A clearer definition of what pacification meant would have made the allocation of those available resources more efficient, and improved the overall synchronization of all elements of national power.

With this particular evaluation criterion, the United States military is making progress but still should do more. In particular, the Department of Defense should do better at helping other agencies such as the Department of State obtain additional funding in order to start some of the initiatives that have been proposed. This is by no means an easy task, however, this is also identified in the *Quadrennial Defense Review* through the “support of broader Presidential authorities to redirect resources and task the best-situated agencies to respond, recognizing that other government agencies may be best suited to provide necessary support in overseas emergencies.”⁷⁵ This can only be done by informing members of congress that the military cannot meet the needs of the nation alone and that the other agencies require more authorizations.

A

perfect example of congress providing funding for initiatives that would improve the interagency process is the Lugar-Biden bill that has yet to pass. This also fits within the definition of strategy developing a prudent set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power.

In the current fight against Al-Qaeda, the disproportionate allocation of resources between the interagency has forced the military to temporarily take on tasks that it lacks particular expertise. The other agencies of the United States would be better suited to handle this effort but the military realizes the need and has taken on these tasks as an interim solution. But if the United States wants a response that truly synchronizes and integrates all the instruments of

national power, this also needs improvement to face threats within the current operating environment.

The last evaluation criterion is a lack of legitimacy that curtails the necessary will to obtain national objectives. This could be in accordance with the laws or rules as defined in the Oxford Dictionary or it could be in the form of an organizational bias between organizations which affects the local and domestic populace's will. The Vietnam case study showed that this particular problem initially arose between the interagency as a lack of coordination, which resulted in a disenfranchisement of the local populace as to American national objectives. Several ideas were instituted to reverse this with programs such as the Hamlet Evaluation System and PHOENIX. However, these programs lacked the necessary anthropologic measures to identify the true erosion of host nation support that ultimately turned the American domestic will against the national objectives in Vietnam which led to ultimate failure.

With this particular evaluation criterion, the United States military is making considerable progress as a component of the United States national power, however, further progress needs to be made at the national level in order to maintain and improve on progress made at the lower levels. For example, our professional military has a better understanding of the origins that provide motivations for our enemies. The *Quadrennial Defense Review* also recognizes the need for "language and cultural awareness to facilitate the expansion of partner capacity."⁷⁶ From personal experience prior to the liberation of Iraq in 2003 my company received limited language and cultural training, which ultimately proved to be inadequate to respond to the needs of the local Iraqi populace in Baghdad. In particular was the initial ability to communicate at an advanced level. Local interpreters were quickly hired but the true loyalties remained suspect during the crucial transition period of major combat operations to stabilization

⁷⁵Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 86.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 23.

operations and the need to provide local security. This contributed to an initial erosion of local populace support. Similar to Vietnam, there are anthropologic programs within deployed units being instituted through the use of Human Terrain Teams to provide legitimacy to United States national objectives through skilled cultural data research and analysis for Brigade level commanders.⁷⁷ However, the impacts of future programs such as these are still uncertain in regard to progress in Iraq but current indications show that progress is moving in the right direction.

In the current fight against Al-Qaeda, this point sets the precedent for their strategic objective. According to Fourth Generation Warfare the adversary utilizes, “all available networks-political, economic, social, and military-to convince the enemy’s political decision makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly.”⁷⁸ If the enemy is using known social networks, then the United States military should intuitively devote more effort to developing an understanding of human terrain within their area of operation in order to counter them. By conducting operations that account for cultural norms units will ultimately garner support for coalition objectives.⁷⁹

Conclusion and Recommendations

If we revisit the initial question asked when I met my brigade commander at the Department of State, is this indeed an example of interagency success or is it an example of an interagency failure? The answer to the question I believe there is an interagency failure. A developed structure should have already been in place to address inconsistencies in the operational plans of the division and the roles of the interagency within their area of operation.

⁷⁷Jacob Kipp, Ph. D., Lester Grau, Karl Prinslow, and Captain Don Smith, “The Human Terrain System: A CORDS for the 21st Century,” *Military Review*, (September-October, 2006), 9.

⁷⁸Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone*, 2.

This particular chance meeting happened in the spring of 2007, five plus years after the 11 September 2001, attacks on our nation and with the insights of agencies operating in Afghanistan and Iraq. Furthermore, this study draws the following conclusion that the current United States national strategy should focus even more on a comprehensive interagency approach as a more efficient way of focusing all elements of national power to defeat our enemies in the Long War on Terrorism. Again, the United States military is making considerable progress in coordinating with other government agencies to ensure unity of effort and providing United States legitimacy while conducting global operations in the Long War on Terrorism. A deficiency is found at the national level in integrating a comprehensive interagency approach. To date the lead agency approach has been the primary structure to address the integration issues inherent during complex operations. However, as pointed out earlier insufficient resourcing provides a considerable obstacle in utilizing this approach in all contingencies. This approach could create nothing more than a facade. Until the deficiency of resourcing can be adequately addressed, further oversight should occur at the national level. This could easily be accomplished with direct oversight from the National Security Council, which would provide the necessary representation of all elements of national power but would also instantly address the evaluation criteria proposed in the analysis section of unified action, flexibility, and legitimacy.

In reflection of the scope of Fourth Generation Warfare in framing the current operating environment and the identification of the properties, which define the complex nature of the threat in the environment the United States currently faces. First are the historical impacts and the resulting cultural aspects that influence a region and provide motivations for enemies of the United States. Understanding the importance of these factors will enhance the nation's ability to institute programs that will legitimize American national objectives, both with the host nation

⁷⁹Kipp et al., "The Human Terrain System: A CORDS for the 21st Century," 11.

populace and with the nation's domestic populace. The result will provide the legitimacy and the national will required to sustain operations in a generational conflict.

Additionally, the current system of globalization and the pace with which change occurs necessitates a networked system that is flexible enough to adapt quickly to change with the ability to counter a networked asymmetric enemy, such as Al-Qaeda. This study identified several initiatives that have been proposed that would initially address the complexity of networking multiple government agencies; unfortunately none have reached full implementation. One of the conclusions for this is a lack of funding. This of course can only be fixed by congressional action or through innovative uses of monies, which could be adequate in the near term.

In order to address the coordination of all elements of national power through unified action again several initiatives have been proposed. One of the problems identified is a result of organizational turf battles and the resistance of organizational change. These interagency rivalries are, unfortunately not a new phenomenon. In the recent past, the military was forced to address such issues with the implementation of the *Goldwater-Nichols Act*. To address such issues, this study proposes a similar act to provide the impetus needed for interagency change in an effort to focus all elements of national power to defeat our enemies in the Long War on Terrorism.

Appendix A

The Lugar-Biden Bill:

State Department Coordinator

The bill authorizes the President to engage civilian agencies and non-federal employees in stability operations if he determines it is in the national interest to do so. It creates the Office of International Stabilization and Reconstruction, headed by a Coordinator, in the Department of State. The Coordinator shall:

Monitor worldwide political and economic instability.

Assess civilian agency resources and capabilities.

Plan to address requirements for stabilization and reconstruction.

Coordinate with civilian agencies to develop interagency contingency plans.

Identify state and local government and private sector personnel to participate in a civilian reserve corps.

Ensure adequate training and education for civilians.

Coordinate plans with UN, allies, and non-governmental organizations.

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