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"Planning in a Counterinsurgency: How We Use the Process"

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Abstract

The United States is immersed in a counterinsurgency struggle in Iraq that has challenged its military in a realm of warfare it has not fought on such a large scale since the war in Viet Nam. This type of warfare is not new to our country or it's military but there have been many lessons re-learned and, as a result, our counterinsurgency doctrine was in dire need of being re-written to meet the current setting. Characteristic of this operating environment is our ability to conduct planning in a dynamic atmosphere against a highly adaptive enemy.

The purpose of this paper is to examine these counterinsurgency characteristics and the way in which we utilize the current planning process at the operational-level of war to develop lines of operation. The thesis of this research is that the planning process, in its current construct, needs to adapt in order to allow planners to develop lines of operation in a COIN environment that are alternatives to our traditional kinetic approach to warfare and enable us to gain greater efficiencies in our operational objectives. This paper will analyze the planning cycle, not from a scientific point of view, but rather under the lens of the "art of war" and how we need to expand our thinking to adapt a planning process to fight a long or protracted counterinsurgency war.

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Chapter 1: Introducing Counterinsurgency

Introduction

The counterinsurgency (COIN) struggle that America finds itself immersed in today in places like Afghanistan and Iraq is nothing new to our warfighting history or culture. In fact, insurgencies and counterinsurgencies have been fought throughout the ages and our own independence from Great Britain can be traced to our ability to successfully fight in this environment. Given the war on terrorism that we find ourselves fighting today, there are enduring characteristics of counterinsurgency (COIN) that must be addressed if we are to succeed in the future once again. The purpose of this paper is to analyze these characteristics and the way in which we utilize the planning process at the operational-level in order to develop lines of operation in a COIN environment. The thesis of this research is that the planning process, in its current construct, needs to adapt in order to allow planners to develop lines of operation in a COIN environment that are alternatives to our traditional kinetic approach to warfare and enable us to gain greater efficiencies in our operational objectives . This paper will analyze the planning cycle, not from a scientific point of view, but rather under the lens of the "art of war" and how we need to expand our thinking to adapt a planning process to fight a long or protracted counterinsurgency war.

This topic is relevant today than almost any other time in our nation's history. The military services of the United States are adequately prepared to conduct operations in a conventional war, as evidenced by the lightening fast seizure of Baghdad in May 2003. The ensuing struggle to maintain stability amidst the growth of the insurgency in Iraq since early 2004, however, has demonstrated that we are less capable of adapting to this type of struggle. Therefore, we must step back and analyze for a moment how we approach and define the

problem that we are faced with today – principally the ability to recognize that counterinsurgency and conventional, high intensity, warfare does not take the same form and that the planning process that we are utilizing was developed for that high-intensity conventional fight. If we are to succeed in the COIN realm we must adapt our current planning process to meet this different style of warfare. The planning process of our past with its force-on-force ratio analyses, doctrinal enemy templates and relative combat power estimates will not suffice in a COIN struggle; instead we must leverage our other intellectual tools to defeat the insurgent we are fighting. This thesis assumes that the wars in our near-future (defined as the next 10 years) will be more apt to be unconventional (insurgent/counterinsurgent) struggles as the enemy we face is less likely to try and match our overwhelming conventional military power/prowess.

Background & Definitions

The first step required in understanding the dilemma we face today is to define the type of warfare we are conducting. Joint Publication 1-02 defines COIN as, "those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency."[1] Therefore, insurgency is defined as, "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict."[2] The issue between these two definitions is how today's military planners can either adapt our current planning process to accommodate these factors (military, paramilitary, economic, psychological and civic actions) or else determine that a new planning process is required. Based on personal observations in developing a year-long campaign plan in Al Anbar Province, Iraq, in 2005, our experiences demonstrated that we

[1] FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (December 2006) 250.
[2] Ibid., 251.

tried to apply the Marine Corps' Planning Process (MCPP) to fit the COIN paradigm and found that, it was often like trying to fit a square peg in a round hole. If we can assume that future conflicts will involve insurgency / COIN, then the time is now for us to adapt our current planning construct or develop a whole new set of procedures.

This research will examine two case studies of insurgency/COIN and highlight the different planning solutions that were employed to develop a long-term campaign plan to defeat the enemy. The first of these case studies will analyze the counterinsurgency fought in Malaya from 1948-1960, specifically looking at the implementation of the Brigg's Plan in 1950. The second case study will focus on Vietnam, specifically the different approach that was employed by the III Marine Amphibious Force compared to the program developed under Military Advisory Command in Viet Nam (MACV). Finally, this chapter will compare and contrast these to case studies to ascertain any lessons learned that are applicable to the military planner today.

Next, this paper will analyze the current planning process employed at the operational-level as well as the MCPP to determine if these two processes are capable of adapting to the demands of the military-paramilitary-political-economic-psychological-civic actions factors when developing lines of operation in a COIN campaign plan.

Lastly, this paper will look at the current planning construct employed in Iraq today and offer solutions on how this process could be improved or modified to make it more efficient.

Relevance of Counterinsurgency Today

By accepting the premise that we are engaged in a counterinsurgency fight in Iraq and Afghanistan today and will remain engaged in COIN for the foreseeable future, then it is

clear that it is time for us to re-evaluate the way in which we view insurgency? Steven Metz's essay on "Rethinking Insurgency" challenges us to analyze the context of the insurgencies we find ourselves committed to in the twenty-first century. Metz argues that the definition of "insurgency" that we developed in the mid-twentieth century was forged from our experience in the Cold War. Our fear was that the Soviet and Chinese support for insurgencies would lead to the overthrow friendly regimes and have a long-term cumulative effect on U.S. interests and self-confidence.[3] The insurgency that we are immersed in today in Iraq is not the same insurgent struggle of Malaya and Vietnam. Based on this premise, we must frame the conceptual context of insurgency in the twenty-first century based on the motivations of our enemy before we can ever consider developing an operational (or strategic) plan for COIN. Metz writes, "Insurgency matters today because it is linked to the phenomenon of transnational terrorism. Insurgents have long used terrorism in the operational sense, deterring those who supported the government and creating an environment of violence and insecurity to erode public trust in the regime. But now terrorism plays a strategic role as well. Insurgents can use terrorism as a form of long-range power projection against outsiders who support the government they are fighting…It is easy to imagine, for instance, that the already fragile backing for American involvement in Iraq would erode even further if the Iraqi insurgents launched attacks in the United States. Even more important, an insurgent movement able to seize control of a state could provide a base of support for transnational terrorists. The idea is that insurgents have demonstrated an affinity for violence and extremism which would flavor their policies if they came to power."[4] Therefore, U.S. policies like containment are not applicable today and as a result

[3] Dr. Steven Metz, "*Rethinking Insurgency*" (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute) 8.
[4] Ibid., 7.

the Bush administration has developed the “containment strategy” of the new century – a policy of prevention that uses pre-emptive means to prevent another terrorist attack on the scale of 9/11. Prevention has applicability in an overall strategy but has little effect in COIN because of the dispersed, global network that is available to the insurgent and our inability to be “everywhere all the time.” Given our resources, it is highly unlikely that we can prevent every insurgent planning activity or attack. Instead, we must analyze the factors of COIN that are timeless in order to determine how they can be applied against our adversary in Iraq (as an example for this analysis) and determine if new factors can be developed and applied in our planning process. Once developed and successfully applied, this new process could be coupled with the policy of prevention and produce a new paradigm has been “proofed” for further successful application in other conflicts elsewhere in the world.

Chapter 2: Counterinsurgency Case Studies

Introduction

This chapter will explore two insurgencies and attempt to determine how the planners at the operational-level of war developed their strategy for a COIN campaign. The first of these studies will explore the successful British experience in Malaya from 1948-1960. The second study will examine the COIN approach applied by the U.S. Marines and their Combined Action Program (CAP) in Vietnam. At the conclusion of this chapter will compare & contrast of these two COIN programs.

Case Study #1: Malaya

The British experience of fighting a COIN in Malaya began in 1948 when Communist Chinese insurgents attacked colonial laborers and planters. The British High Commission declared a state of emergency and deployed military and police personnel to counter the insurgent rebels. This experience lasted until 1960 when the Malayan government announced the last pockets of insurgent resistance had been defeated.[1]

Orientation and Background

The purpose of this section is to describe the physical characteristics of the country of Malaya and provide an analysis of the motivations of the insurgent movement.

Malaya is a peninsula of some 50,000 square miles with a short land border with Thailand. A mountain chain extends 300 miles south from the Thai border and divided the peninsula in two halves.[2] Approximately 90% of the population lived in the coastal plain that extended 10 miles deep along the western coast. In 1948 its territory consisted of 80%

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[1] David Ucko, *Network Centric Operations Case Study, The British Approach to Low-Intensity Operations: Part II* (U.K. Ministry of Defence Technical Report 12 February 2007) 1.
[2] Walter C. Ladwig III, *Managing Counterinsurgency: Lessons from Malaya* (Military Review May-June 2007) 57.

uncultivated jungle. The inhabitants of Malaya emigrated from Melanesia and mostly occupied the coastal plains and pushed the aboriginal natives into the jungles. When the British first established a colony in Malaya at the end of the eighteenth century they brought in Chinese immigrants to work the tin mines and rubber plantations. The main population centers of modern Malaya included Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh and Taiping, each of which began as Chinese mining camps. By 1901 the Chinese formed 65% of the total population of the state of Selangor and 46% of the state of Perak. The Malayan population consisted of 5 million inhabitants by 1947, of which half were ethnic Malay and another 2 million were ethnic Chinese. Despite the fact that they constituted almost half of the population, few of the Chinese inhabitants were citizens and there was no movement by the government to extend this privilege to them.[3] Given the Chinese population density by the end of World War II, they refused to be ruled by the Malays. In the fall of 1945 the British sent military personnel to reoccupy the country but by this time in their history these soldiers had lost their aura of invincibility that they had established through World War II thus allowing the Communist insurgents the belief that they could succeed through armed struggle.[4] In 1948 the Chinese conceded that they would accept a government ruled by the British but regarded the Malays with contempt. The relevance of Malaya for the British government at this time rested on the economic importance it derived from the export of rubber and tin. Any disruption in these exports would have had profound economic impact in post-war Britain.[5] The government of Malaya was not officially part of the British Crown. Instead, the country was made up of nine states that were protected as a British Colony. Each of these states had its own ruler

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[3] Ibid., 57.
[4] John A. Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya to Vietnam; Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers) 60-62.
[5] Walter C. Ladwig III, *Managing Counterinsurgency: Lessons from Malaya* (Military Review May-June 2007) 58.

along with a designated British representative. The overall British representative was the High Commissioner of Malaya, Sir Henry Gurney. These states were loosely organized into a federation. The High Commissioner had the power to make decisions on defense and foreign relations but was limited in his abilities to impose domestic legislation. Meanwhile, a sultan ruled each of the nine states and, as stated earlier, had a British advisor to provide guidance but could not possess any executive powers. The Malay states were further subdivided into seventy-one districts that were controlled by a district officer of the Malayan Civil Service. The ability of the nine states to coordinate COIN efforts against these insurgents would prove to be most difficult.[6]

Seeds of Insurgency

The Malayan Communist Party (MCP) was formed in April 1930 with the stated intent of forming a Soviet Republic of Malaya. By 1948 the opposition to the Malayan government was the Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA) which was the armed wing of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). Over 90% of the MRLA were ethnic Chinese with almost 7,000 armed fighters. The Communist strategy at this time was to carry out attacks throughout the country against civic officials and the managers of the rubber plantations and tin mines. The MRLA believed that this would draw combat forces away to protect communications and supply lines and allow the Communists to establish liberated zones in areas that the security forces could not cover.[7]

Development of a COIN Strategy

The purpose of this section is to outline the plan developed by Lieutenant General Sir Harold Briggs and the British Lines of Operation he developed to defeat the insurgency.

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[6] Ibid., 57-58.
[7] Ibid., 58.

At the onset of the insurgent movement in 1948 the British response followed a familiar pattern: authorities lacked adequate command and coordination structures and initial efforts to bridge these coordination efforts were ineffective. Meanwhile, the military had only ten battalions of troops available (two British, five Gurkha, and three Malay) and approximately 9,000 police officers.[8] As the insurgency progressed from 1948 to 1950 High Commissioner Gurney assessed three key points regarding their COIN efforts thus far. First, the Communist leadership was not affected and their recruitment efforts were not diminished. Second, the British/Malayan security forces had reached their culminating point and required time to refit, rest and rearm. Third, the Malayan police force needed to be expanded (to include new Chinese policemen) and a renewed training effort for non-commissioned officers and inspectors were necessary.[9] The British government responded to this report with the appointment of Lieutenant General Sir Harold Briggs as the new Director of Operations in March 1950. This decision to select Briggs was made based on his extensive background during World War II. Within two weeks Briggs arrived in Kuala Lumpur and began the planning, coordination and direction of COIN operations (military and police) against the MRLA. Prior to outlining his overall plan of action, Briggs assessed the situation and provided the following key points:

1. The Communist insurgent cells had successfully remained undetected and untouched.
2. Communist propaganda was more effective than the British/Malayan efforts and the local press was sympathetically supportive of the Communists.
3. Communist operational-level communications were poor but tactical-level communications were good.
4. The terrain supported the insurgent and provided him with the initiative.
5. If the British/Malayan forces could remove the insurgent's sources of supply and information then the tactical tasks of their security forces would be made

[8] Nagl, 65.
[9] Anthony Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya: 1948-1960* (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc.) 231.

easier as then the insurgent would have to fight these security forces in the areas of their choosing.
6. Control of the Chinese population would be attained through their ability to be represented in government.
7. Financial approval for emergency tasks would have to be sped along.
8. The primary task of the police forces would be to secure the population and eliminate the Communist cells.[10]

From this assessment Briggs then developed a short-term and long-term plan of action that was presented to the High Commissioner on May 24, 1950.

In his short-term plan he recommended doubling the number of troops, enabling them to provide strike forces to each of the states. These forces would develop headquarters locations in populated areas in order to demonstrate their resolve to the local populace and deny insurgents the use of these areas for sources of supply and recruitment. The overall purpose of the military forces was to defeat the MRLA, starting in the southern portion of the country and progressing northward.

The long-term plan was designed to re-organize the government in order to reach greater efficiencies in not only defeating the insurgents but also denying them the ability to return to Malaya at a later date. One of the first steps Briggs took was to create the Federal Joint Intelligence Advisory Committee. The purpose of this committee was to collect, analyze and distribute intelligence on insurgent locations, activities, and plans from a variety of sources including civil, police and military. This committee would ensure that the strategy designed by Briggs was being followed. The strategy's primary focus was to separate the insurgents from their sources of supply and recruits amongst the local population.[11] Briggs' second priority was to win the support of the people rather than defeating the insurgents by force. The key way Briggs intended to accomplish this was by placing the police in the

[10] Ibid., 235.
[11] Nagl., 71.

primacy of command and subjugating the military as a supporting element. This was rather revolutionary in the sense that the military had always been used as a supported element and this new relationship would take some time to take hold, especially as it applied to intelligence collection and dissemination.[12]

In terms of an operational-level planning process that was applied by the British in the execution of their COIN strategy in Malaya there appears to be little evidence that Briggs, or his staff, utilized any formal process. Instead, all evidence suggests that his planning process was intuitive and built upon the following lines of operation:[13]

1. Training
2. Equipment
3. Personnel
4. Information
5. Doctrine & Concepts
6. Organization
7. Infrastructure
8. Logistics

From these lines of operation (LOO) we are able to gain insight into Briggs' approach toward defeating the insurgency. His approach was focused inwardly on the British and Malayan organization rather than on the Chinese Communists. For example, when Briggs looked at Training and Equipment, he was principally focused on the British Army's ability to regain lost jungle-warfare skills and the use of RAF assets to resupply long-range patrols and provide close-air support. His arguments for Personnel were compelling to raise the number of police forces because these were the capabilities he felt were necessary for the long-term success of the Malayans to defend themselves and maintain order. In the realm of Information, Briggs realized that the disenfranchised Chinese inhabitants of Malay were

[12] Ibid., 72.
[13] Ucko, 8-25.

complicity supporting the insurgents because they felt that was the only group that understood their needs and desires. Once Briggs (and later the new High Commissioner in 1952, Sir Gerald Templar) provided security to the Chinese and granted Chinese squatters equal protection, they became an excellent source of information that led to actionable intelligence. This information was synthesized by the Special Branch, an intelligence fusion cell under the auspices of the police that provided "awareness of the political context of the counterinsurgency, which in turn led to measures geared toward co-opting the civilian populace through a hearts and minds campaign."[14] Under the Doctrine and Concepts LOO Briggs (and later, Templar) sought to capture the lessons of COIN and move away from the "ad hoc"[15] process that they had employed for nearly three years. The realm of Organization is where Briggs' greatest impact is likely to have taken place. It was through his demand that a truly interagency process be adopted that the efficiencies of the COIN program were achieved. This process stretched from the federal, state and district level and enabled the COIN strategy the flexibility to adapt to each of these respective areas based on the level of insurgent activity (both actual and perceived). Lastly, in the realm of infrastructure and logistics, because Malaya was mostly covered in a thick tropical jungle it made resupply to ground forces and locating the enemy difficult. Briggs sought to overcome these challenges by locating likely enemy escape routes and covering these areas with military forces, then ensuring their resupply was delivered by aircraft so that their length of patrols were less dependent on what the individual soldier could self-deploy. This extended the length of their patrols and provided focused terrain on which to target the insurgents rather than conducting

[14] Ibid., 20-21.
[15] Ibid., 22.

large-scale search and destroy missions that had not yielded any appreciable gains prior to this new strategy's inception.

By October 1951 Briggs had completed his assigned mission and had been replaced by Sir Gerald Templar. Templar extended the approach developed by Briggs and offered the observation that defeating the insurgent in the jungle was less important than winning the "hearts and minds of the people."[16] From 1952 to 1954 the COIN strategy in Malaya became progressively more effective as nearly two-thirds of the MRLA were killed or captured and the Communist attacks declined from 500 per month in 1951 to fewer than 90 per month in 1954. Likewise, security force casualties were reduced by 80% during this same reporting period. By 1954 the transition toward Malayan independence was re-emphasized, Templar returned to England to become the chief of staff of the British Army and the MRLA was classified as a defeated force. At the end of August 1957 Malaya became independent.[17]

Case Study #2: Vietnam

The decision to commit sizeable U.S. forces into Vietnam was made in 1965 when the 3rd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment was dispatched from Okinawa to land at Danang in order to protect the local air base from enemy incursion. Prior to this deployment the Marine Corps had been actively reviewing COIN operations and incorporating these lessons into a series of exercises called Silver Lance, which was patterned on the emerging situation in Vietnam.[18] These exercises were developed by LtGen Victor Krulak in 1964 when he assumed command of Fleet Marine Forces Pacific where he was responsible for all Marines in the Pacific area of operations. Previously, General Krulak had served on the Joint Staff

[16] Ibid., 63.
[17] Ibid., 64.
[18] LtGen Victor H. Krulak, First to Fight: An Inside View of the U. S. Marine Corps (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press) 180-181.

from 1962-1964 where he was the focal point for COIN operations and training. During this time he studied the complex nature of COIN and had several meetings with Sir Robert Thompson following the British successes in Malaya.[19] Building upon the lessons prescribed by Sir Thompson, Krulak's COIN exercise program focused on the following:

> "Fighting both large units and small bands of guerillas; handling situations involving the local civilian population; supporting training and cooperating with the indigenous military; dealing with our own diplomatic representatives; and meeting the challenges of a privileged sanctuary, where a bordering, ostensibly neutral country is used as a base and a route of approach by the enemy."[20]

Once the decision was made to commit forces nearly one-third had participated in the SILVER LANCE exercise program. However, when they landed at Danang they fell under the operational command (OPCON) of General William Westmoreland, Commander of the U. S. Military Advisory Command (COMUSMACV). Their mission was to protect the Danang air base from enemy attack; not what the Marines had trained toward during their SILVER LANCE program. After some high-level negotiations with the senior Vietnamese commander in the I Corps' zone, General Nguyen Chan Thi, the Marines were allowed in April of 1965 to begin limited patrols around the air base. Within six months the Marines had expanded their area of operations from eight square miles to eight hundred square miles and, as important, they had assumed responsibility for several Vietnamese villages that were under the control of the Viet Cong (VC) forces.[21]

Differing Strategies

The Combined Action Program was developed by the Marine Corps in response to the insurgency in Viet Nam and was considered one of the most effective COIN efforts of

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[19] Ibid., 180.
[20] Ibid., 181.
[21] Ibid., 182-183.

that war.[22] Despite its success it was never expanded throughout the country because of the strategy outlined by General Westmoreland. Westmoreland's strategy sought to use conventional tactics to force the defeat of the Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese (NVA) in open warfare and was in direct contradiction to the slow-paced approach advocated by LtGen Krulak and Major General Lew Walt (Commanding General of the III Marine Amphibious Force, the senior Marine commander in Vietnam). The Army's approach to warfare is characterized by Andrew Krepinevich as,

> "The product of an organizational character that has evolved over time and that, because of its high regard for tradition, has become deeply imbedded in the service's psyche, or memory. The Army Concept is, basically, the Army's perception on how wars ought to be waged and is reflected in the way the Army organizes and trains its troops for battle. The characteristics of the Army Concept are two: a focus on mid-intensity, or conventional, war and a reliance on high volumes of firepower to minimize casualties – in effect, the substitution of material costs at every available opportunity to avoid payment in blood."[23]

For the Marines, the approach that was seen as most likely to succeed was one of pacification. In order to achieve pacification LtGen Krulak outlined a three-pronged approach: (1) pacify the enclaves and then expand the pacified areas as rapidly as possible but only as fast as the Vietnamese police and military forces could maintain security, (2) cut off the NVA's military supplies before they left their North Vietnamese ports of entry, and (3) eventually move out from the enclaves and engage the VC/NVA main force units. [24] The background for this approach was derived through the history of the Marine Corps and their involvement in small wars. Their approach was defined in their *Small Wars Manual*:

> "In regular warfare, the responsible officers simply strive to attain a method of producing the maximum physical effect with the force at their disposal. In small wars, the goal is to gain decisive results with the least application of force and the consequent

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[22] Dr Paul Melshen, *The US Marines Combined Action Program: The Formulation of Counterinsurgency Tactics within a Strategic Debate* (Portland, Frank Cass Press, Summer 2000), 74.
[23] Andrew F. Krepinevich, The Army and Vietnam (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986) 5.
[24] Melshen, 67.

minimum loss of life. The end aim is the social, economic, and political development of the people subsequent to the military defeat of the enemy insurgent. In small wars, tolerance, sympathy, and kindness should be the keynote of our relationship with the mass of the population."[25]

From this doctrine, General Walt issued orders to his combat units to conduct patrols and ambushes from sundown to sunup (when insurgent activity was at its peak) yet keep the use of firepower to a minimum so as to not harm the civilian population they were deployed to protect.[26]

The contradiction between the strategy employed by the Army (the Army Concept) and the Marines' approach was defined by one of the early architects of the Marine strategy, LtCol William Corson: "The blunt fact is that if Krulak is right, Westmoreland is wrong. The issue between Westmoreland and Krulak transcends the continuing rivalry between the Army and the Marine Corps. It goes to the heart of insurgency warfare – what is the proper role of external (in this case U.S. troop) forces in pacification? The conventional wisdom holds that external forces cannot work directly with the people, that there must be an intermediary in the form of the existing government."[27]

Evolution of the Combined Action Program

Generals Krulak and Walt knew that the military and civic action was paramount to success in any pacification effort. One of the chief reasons Walt and Krulak felt this was the correct approach was derived from the corporate knowledge that they had developed in their formative years as junior officers and their understandings of the concepts outlined in the *Small Wars Manual*, "which stressed that in early stages of an insurgency, the formation of constabulary forces officered by 'qualified [Marine] noncommissioned officers' and manned

[25] Small Wars Manual page ??
[26] Krepinevich, 172.
[27] William Corson, *The Betrayal* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.) 177.

by 'native troops' for the 'protection of persons of property' was vital for the safety and well-being of the populace."[28] Because many of the Marine camps were located adjacent to Vietnamese villages and hamlets they could easily implement a military-civic action program. Thus, every Marine battalion was tasked by General Walt with developing a program and the Combined Action Company program was borne.[29]

The application of this approach evolved through the efforts of Captain Jim Cooper, the commanding officer of a rifle company operating outside of the Vietnamese village of Chulai. Capt Cooper grew increasingly frustrated by his inability to stem the enemy's ability to move in and amongst the local populace, especially in the village of Thanh My Trung. Once he deployed Marines inside this hamlet and incorporated the local Popular Forces (PF) into this new security apparatus (living in the village and conducting night patrols from this location), they were able to force the VC to abandon this village. The success of this plan quickly caught on with adjacent Marine units and by 1966 there were fifty-seven CAP units in I Corps. The mission employed by Capt Cooper's Marines called for them to destroy the insurgent infrastructure while organizing local intelligence networks and training the PFs.

One of the early "proof in concept" CAPs was developed and led by 1stLt Paul R. Ek. Ek had previously served as a Marine advisor to U. S. Army Special Forces in Vietnam and had attended the Vietnamese language school. Ek was charged with conducting a two-week orientation course to U. S. Marines that were about to be deployed in support of a Combined Action Company. Additionally, instruction was also provided to the PF troops that were to serve with the Marines. One Marine rifle squad would be deployed with each PF Platoon. The Marines would be augmented with a Navy Corpsman and an assistant squad leader for a

[28] Melshen, 69-70.
[29] Corson, 176-177.

total of fifteen personnel. They would join a PF platoon of approximately thirty-five personnel before deploying to their assigned village.[30]

By 1967 these CAP companies had achieved steady state success and were capable of defending themselves against enemy forces four to five times their size by employing the capabilities of the local Vietnamese security forces alongside their Marine counterparts.[31] Within the expansion of the CAP capabilities, the following missions were applied to both the Marines and their PF counterparts:

1. Destroy the VC infrastructure within the village or hamlet area of responsibility.
2. Protect public security and help maintain law and order.
3. Protect the friendly infrastructure.
4. Protect bases and communication axes within the villages and hamlets.
5. Organize people's intelligence nets.
6. Protect in civic action and conduct propaganda against the VC.[32]

Pacification

The CAP was the tactical extension of the Pacification Program which was the operational-level approach to win "hearts and minds' within I Corps' area of responsibility. One of the early innovations of this program was called the "County Fair" concept of operations. This was a combined approach between the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) soldiers with their Marine counterparts. Typically, one or two Marine companies would cordon off a VC controlled village at night to prevent infiltration by reinforcements and prevent escape. The following morning the ARVN soldiers would enter the village in order to flush out the VC personnel. Once the village was determined to be secured, the personnel would be assembled to take a census and issue identity cards. Meanwhile, the

[30] Melshen, 70.
[31] Corson, 179.
[32] Melshen, 72.

Marines would provide medical and dental care while simultaneously issuing food and providing entertainment. While the COUNTY FAIR operations were gaining success during the rice harvests of September and October, the 9th Marine Regiment conducted GOLDEN FLEECE operations. These pacification efforts were designed to saturate the rice producing villages with small-unit patrols and night ambushes. This "persistent presence" disrupted the VC's abilities to exploit these harvests and extract the rice from local farmers. Over time these operations gained local intelligence from the village inhabitants based on the trust and cooperation that they were able to garner between the Marines and villagers.[33]

In the final analysis the CAP and Pacification Programs were seen as the only effective COIN effort utilized in this war. At the peek of the CAP program in 1969 there were just over one hundred villages protected by a CAP platoon. Within I Corps there were 2.7 million Vietnamese inhabitants occupying hundreds of small villages. The one-hundred and fourteen CAPs (comprised of two-thousand Marines and two-thousand seven-hundred PFs) protected a small percentage of these villages.[34] By 1969 when the decision was made to begin reducing U. S. personnel from Vietnam there had not been enough time to reap the full benefits of this program.

Relevance Today

Vietnam is a classic study in divergent strategies but clearly only the CAP and Pacification Programs were targeting the defeat of the insurgency. The approach outlined by General Westmoreland was designed to defeat the North Vietnamese conventional forces in conventional warfare. The lesson that is applicable for military leaders today is to determine what type of war you are fighting. If we agree that we a fighting an insurgency in Iraq then

[33] James A. Warren, *American Spartans: The U. S. Marines: A Combat History from Iwo Jima to Iraq* (New York: Simon & Schuster) 218-221.
[34] Melshen, 74.

we have to fight a strategy employing COIN tactics. If we agree that we are fighting a conventional fight in Iraq then we must employ a strategy of conventional warfare. But the chief lesson of Vietnam is that we cannot fight both strategies simultaneously because their applications are in direct contrast with one another, in fact, they require distinctly different uses of combat power, resources, use of host nation capabilities, and lead to inefficiencies in their strategic application. As the lessons of COIN have demonstrated, they take time to take effect and demonstrate their successes.

Lessons Learned from Malaya and Vietnam

The strategies of Malaya and Vietnam are quite similar. Clearly LtGen Krulak learned much in his discussions with Sir Robert Thompson and his lessons from Malaya. The ability to apply these lessons into a strategy of COIN in Vietnam met with resistance from COMUSMACV and the Army senior leadership in Vietnam. In both the cases of Malaya and Vietnam the strategies were developed by men that had years of military experience fighting small wars and an intuitive sense of how to defeat an insurgent force and the strategy that would be required to do so. In both cases it appears that there was no formal process to use for making COIN-related decisions like the planning process we have in use today. The important point from this is that if we are to continue to fight insurgencies in the War on Terrorism then perhaps there needs to be a formal process to incorporate the lessons learned from these two COIN experiences into our planning process. An assessment of how these two COIN experiences were applied is required to determine the key aspects that would help a planner today to understand how to develop a COIN strategy.

Differences

There are a number of differences between the COIN strategies employed in Malaya and Vietnam but specifically this paper will briefly address four overarching differences: (1) intelligence fusion, (2) Combined Action Program, (3) Joint & Interagency application, and (4) a unified strategy.

First, the Marines in Vietnam failed to develop an intelligence fusion capability like Briggs employed in Malaya like the Joint Intelligence Advisory Committee (JIAC). Instead, the Marines attempted to gain their intelligence through each of their CAP units.[35] The JIAC was an effective tool in a COIN fight because of its ability to coordinate the collection, analysis and distribution of intelligence on insurgent activities through the organizations of civil, police and military forces. The assessment of this paper is that the JIAC should serve as a model of success and future application is a necessity.

Second, the CAP program was not modeled as effectively in Malaya as it was in Vietnam. The ability to join U.S. and Vietnamese forces was similar to those used by the British and Malays but the key difference was that the CAP in Vietnam actually assigned them a village to live in and be responsible for. The assessment by LtGen Krulak and the Marines who served in these villages was that this program was enormously beneficial in gaining and maintaining the trust of the local populace. The counter argument to this approach was echoed by the U. S. Army who felt that the Marines were not engaged in large scale combat operations and thus allowed the VC/ NVA to move freely about the battlespace.[36]

Third, the Marines did not employ the same model of staff organization or series of committees that Sir Templar had so effectively created with regards to Joint & Interagency

[35] Corson, 186-187.
[36] Krepinevich, 174-175.

(IA). Templar's success was due in large part to his ability to fuse the efforts of the social, political, economic, police and military realms under the Federal Executive Council.[37] This centralized command allowed more efficient decentralized execution because it was coupled with an on-going assessment cycle to determine if the police & military forces were being used in the most effective manner. Templar's assessment model was based on six key points:

1. Get the priorities right.
2. Get the instruction right.
3. Get the organization right.
4. Get the right people into the organization.
5. Get the right spirit into the people.
6. Leave them to get on with it.[38]

The Marine approach under their CAP plan was decentralized planning and decentralized execution and did not include much, if any, outside support from their IA partners like USAID or others. Most evidence suggests that once a CAP unit was identified and trained, it was then sent to its assigned village and left there to complete its mission until relieved by a PF force thereby excluding any capabilities that the IA could provide.

Fourth, the Marines in Vietnam did not have the ability to extend their CAP strategy outside of their assigned battlespace in I Corps. The key difference between the Marines in Vietnam and the British soldiers in Malaya is that the Marines had to work under MACV which was not employing a plan like CAP. Instead, General Westmoreland felt that the CAP was a wasted effort and that the Marines would have been better served to conduct search and destroy missions like their U. S. Army counterparts.[39] This inability to extend their strategy to their higher headquarters in Saigon did nothing more than create friction and failed to achieve the kind of efficiencies Briggs and Templar were able to achieve in Malaya.

[37] Nagl, 100.
[38] Nagl, 90.
[39] Krepinevich, 175.

Also, it would deny MajGen Walt the ability to create an organization like the Federal Executive Council that harnessed all the resources of the IA and provided a really efficient COIN approach to success.

Similarities

The most important similarity between the two approaches was the identification that gaining the support of the local population was the key to defeating the insurgency. The importance of this plan is borne out in the after-action assessment of the war in Vietnam and the criticisms of General Westmoreland's 'search and destroy' approach.

> "Viewed from this perspective, the [U. S.] Army's conduct of the war was a failure, primarily because it never realized that insurgency warfare required basic changes in Army methods to meet the exigencies of this "new" conflict environment. MACV's strategy of attrition represented a comparatively expensive way of buying time for South Vietnam, in human and material resources. The strategy's great reliance on large amounts of firepower did not in the long run serve, as in previous wars, to reduce U. S. casualties and wear out the enemy. In effect, MACV attempted to adapt what had been the low-risk strategy of attrition in a mid-intensity conflict environment to a low-intensity conflict in the hope of achieving similar results. The nature of insurgency warfare, however, made such a strategic approach a high-cost, high-risk option for MACV by mandating a quick victory before the American public grew weary of bearing the burden of continuing the war." [40]

The Marines had clearly identified a strategy that was effective and, like the British in Malaya, developed the correct priority in achieving that goal. In both instances, the British in Malaya and Marines in Vietnam, each applied differing approaches toward gaining and maintaining popular support but in each case they achieved the same results. The lesson learned from this analysis is that the Marines in Vietnam were never going to succeed at the operational-level because they never had the support of their senior most commanders in Vietnam. Therefore, future COIN planners must realize that employing COIN tactics

[40] Krepinevich, 259.

requires a holistic approach from the most senior military headquarters and a unified identification of what the priorities will be in defeating the insurgent force(s).

Chapter 3: The Planning Process

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate two planning processes in order to assess their ability to develop a coherent strategy for planning a COIN campaign for the Joint Force Commander (JFC). The two processes chosen for evaluation are the Joint Operational Planning Process (JOPP) and the Marine Corps' Planning Process (MCPP). The reason for selecting a "joint" and "service-specific" process is to try and show similarities & differences in how each of these processes supports the commander's decision-making process in a COIN planning environment. Additionally, this chapter will conduct an analysis of "effects-based" thinking as a possible tool to enrich the JOPP/MCPP processes as they seek to help the operational-level commander's visualization in determining lines of operation (LOOs).

Operational Art & Design

The purpose of any planning process is to support the commander in his decision making process. This process gives the commander options for decisive actions. This process is both an art and a science. The operational-level of war is truly the nexus for the fusion of art and science in the planning process and the commander who can better balance the available resources he has at his disposal with the "art of the possible" will usually find himself the victor. Operational art is, "the thought process commanders use to visualize how best to efficiently and effectively employ military capabilities to accomplish their mission."[1] Operational art is one of the key aspects a commander must articulate to his joint force, to include any interagency partnerships that have been identified, in order to promote unified action. Without this unity and framework the JFC is doomed to fail. The JFC must articulate a broad vision while maintaining the flexibility to anticipate. This "vision" relates to the

[1] Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning* (26 December 2006) xvi.

commander's ability to use the art of war more than the science of war: "The JFC uses operational art to consider not only the employment of military forces, but also their sustainment and the arrangement of their forces in time, space, and purpose."[2]

Operational art, once developed, must be coupled with the framework of operational design. Operational design is the "practical extension of the creative process. Together they synthesize the intuition and creativity of the commander with the analytical and logical process of design. The key to operational design essentially involves (1) understanding the strategic guidance (determining end state and objectives); (2) identifying the adversary's principal strengths and weaknesses, and; (3) developing an operational concept that will achieve strategic and operational objectives."[3] As a planner, operational design is paramount in establishing focus for the JFC. If "operational art" is the key responsibility of the commander, then "operational design" is the responsibility of the planner working directly with the commander. There are seventeen elements of operational design[4] of which development of lines of operation is one of them. This one design element will be the focus of this study as it applies to COIN planning.

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[2] Ibid., xvi.
[3] Ibid., xvii.
[4] Per JP 5-0, the elements of Operational Design are:

1. Termination
2. End State & Objectives
3. Effects
4. Center of Gravity
5. Decisive Points
6. Direct versus Indirect
7. Lines of Operation
8. Operational Reach
9. Simultaneity and Depth
10. Timing and Tempo
11. Forces and Functions
12. Leverage
13. Balance
14. Anticipation
15. Synergy
16. Culmination
17. Arranging Operations

Once the commander has articulated his operational art and design, he is ready for his planners to commence the planning process. Before communicating this process, it is necessary to discuss what the initial lines of operation are and how they relate to the JFC. Lines of operation can be either physical or logical. A logical line of operation is, "a line that connects actions on nodes and decisive points related in time and purpose with an objective(s)." A physical line of operation is, "a line that defines the interior or exterior orientation of the force in relation to the enemy or that connects actions on nodes and decisive points related in time and space to an objective(s)."[5] In more simplistic terms, LOOs are those areas that provide focus of effort for the dedication of resources (e.g., time, space, economic, personnel, equipment, etc.). In order to determine the LOOs that will be most effective in achieving decisive results, the commander and his planners utilize the planning process; a logical sequence of solving complex problems in a linear fashion.

Planning

The Joint Operation Planning Process is the Chairman's authoritative process for planning joint operations within the U.S. military, with other agencies and for use in involvement with multinational partners.[6] Joint Operation Planning falls under the larger rubric of Joint Strategic Planning and is on par with Security Cooperation Planning and Force Planning. Under the construct of Joint Operation Planning are Contingency Planning and Crisis Action Planning. For the purposes of this research, as it applies to COIN, we will analyze the seven-step contingency planning process. Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning, outlines the fact that joint operation planning and planning for a campaign are not separate planning activities. This joint doctrine considers joint operation planning to

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[5] Ibid., IV-20.
[6] Ibid., i.

encompass planning for any type of joint operation to include COIN-planning. So, with this in mind we will set forth to examine this process in detail and Chapter 5 will assess if the JOPP (and/or the Marine Corps Planning Process) are best suited to plan in COIN.

The Joint Operation Planning Process (JOPP) is "an orderly analytical planning process, which consists of a set of logical steps to analyze a mission, develop, analyze, and compare alternative course of action (COAs), select the best COA, and produce a plan or order."[7] The JOPP begins with the initiation of planning and includes the following steps: Mission Analysis, COA development, COA analysis and wargaming, COA comparison, COA approval, and ends with the development of a plan or order. This process strives to provide an assessment of the interrelated systems that "comprise the operational environment, relative to a specific joint operation."[8] Ultimately, this process seeks to provide the commander with a broad range of realistic options he can select from to achieve his desired endstate and the objectives that have been established by his higher headquarters.

The first step in the JOPP is Planning Initiation. This step begins when a higher authority recognizes a potential for military capability to be established to meet the needs of a potential or actual crisis.

The second step in the JOPP is Mission Analysis. The purpose of mission analysis is to identify the problem and purpose of the operation and then issue appropriate guidance that will drive the rest of the planning process. A primary consideration for a supported combatant commander during this step is to determine the national strategic endstate, broadly expressed in terms of the political, military, economic, social, informational and other

[7] Ibid., xiii.
[8] Ibid., xv.

considerations that should exist after the conclusion of a campaign or operation.[9] Mission analysis is aided by identifying fifteen key steps:

1. Determine known facts, current status, or conditions.
2. Analyze the higher commander's mission and intent.
3. Determine own specified, implied and essential tasks.
4. Determine operational limitations.
5. Develop assumptions.
6. Determine own military endstate, objectives and initial effects.
7. Determine own and enemy's center(s) of gravity and critical factors.
8. Determine initial commander's critical information requirements (CCIRs).
9. Review strategic communication guidance.
10. Conduct initial force structure analysis.
11. Conduct initial risk assessment.
12. Develop mission statement.
13. Develop mission analysis brief.
14. Prepare initial staff estimates.
15. Publish commander's planning guidance and intent.[10]

The third step is course of action (COA) development. A COA consists of the following information: what type of military action will occur; why the action is required (purpose); who will take the action; when the action will begin; where the action will occur; and what the method of employment of the forces will be. In order for a COA to be valid it must be adequate, feasible, acceptable, distinguishable and complete. Adequate means that the COA can accomplish the mission within the commander's guidance. Feasible means that the COA can accomplish the mission within established time, space and resources. Acceptable means that the COA can balance cost and risk with the advantages gained through that particular action. Distinguishable means that each COA is sufficiently different from one another. Complete means that the COA incorporates the objectives, effects, tasks, major forces required, concepts for deployment & employment, sustainment, time estimates,

[9] Ibid., III-20 - III-21.
[10] Ibid., III-21.

endstate and mission success criteria.[11] At the theater-level, each COA should have a theater-strategic or operational concept and should outline the following:

1. The major strategic and operational tasks to be accomplished in the order they must be accomplished.
2. The capabilities required.
3. The task organization and related communications systems support concept.
4. The concept for sustainment.
5. The concept for deployment.
6. The estimate for the time required to reach mission success or termination criteria.
7. The concept for maintaining a theater reserve.[12]

The next step in the JOPP is to conduct COA analysis and wargaming. In this step the commander and his staff analyze the tentative COAs separately and identify advantages and disadvantages. The purpose of the COA Analysis is to determine:

1. Potential decision points.
2. Any required task organization adjustments.
3. Data for use in a synchronization matrix or other decision-making tools.
4. Identification of any branch plans or sequels.
5. The identification of any high-value targets.
6. A risk assessment.[13]

Wargaming is a way to test each of the tentative COAs and improve their understanding of the operational environment through a detailed analytical approach. The goal of wargaming is to obtain insights that might not have been previously seen. The output of wargaming is a Wargame Brief, revised staff estimates, refined COAs, and commander's feedback through the COA Decision Brief.[14]

[11] Ibid., III-28.
[12] Ibid., III-29.
[13] Ibid., III-30.
[14] Ibid., III-31.

The fifth step in the JOPP is COA Comparison. The goal of this step is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the COAs so that the commander can select the one with the highest likelihood of success. The selected COAs should:

1. Mitigate risk to the force and mission to an acceptable level.
2. Place the force in the best posture for future operations.
3. Provide maximum latitude for initiative by subordinates.[15]

The second to last step is for the staff to present to the commander the best COA for his approval. This approval process typically is conducted in the form of a COA Approval Briefing. The purpose of this briefing is to highlight the COA Comparison and Wargaming steps, to include the completed Staff Estimates and any other updated information that will be relevant for the commander's decision-making process.

Once a COA has been selected and approved by the commander, the final step in the JOPP is to the development of the COA into a concept of operations (CONOPs) and orders dissemination. The CONOPs is a clear and concise expression of what the JFC intends to accomplish and how he intends to accomplish it with his available resources. Further, it describes the actions of the joint force components and supporting organizations and how they are integrated, synchronized and phased to accomplish the mission (to include branch plans and sequels). The characteristics of the CONOPs are:

1. The commander's intent.
2. The approach the JFC intends to utilize to accomplish the mission.
3. The sequencing, synchronization and integration of forces and capabilities in time, space and purpose (to include interagency and multinational organizations).
4. Describes when, where, and under what conditions the supported commander intends to give or refuse battle, if required.
5. Focus on friendly and enemy centers of gravity (COG) and their associated critical vulnerabilities.
6. Avoids patterns and exploits ambiguity and deception.

[15] Ibid., III-33.

7. Enables the JFC to control the tempo of operations.
8. Visualizes the campaign in terms of the forces and functions involved.
9. Nests the JFC's objectives and desired effects with the next higher headquarters and other organizations as required.[16]

Effects-Based Planning

Prior to delving into the specifics of Effects-Based Planning, it is necessary to consider what Effects-Based "thinking" provides to us. General Gary Luck, USA (Ret.) says that this is nothing new and that good commanders have intrinsically used effects-based thinking as they evaluate the "art of war." But what GEN Luck does see as "new" is our ability to use this approach to help harmonize the application of all elements of national power (Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic) against an adversary's interdependent systems environment of PMESII (Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information, Infrastructure). GEN Luck argues that there are three key elements:

1. The dialogue between commander and staff with their fellow national and international leaders that evolves into Combatant Command-level campaign objectives (the ends).
2. The relevant stakeholders define the desired conditions of the complex environment to achieve the stated objectives (the ways).
3. The stakeholders develop a set of actions to attain those desired effects, and harmonize the military actions with those stakeholders to attain the desired effects and achieve the objectives (the means).[17]

The effects-based planning process has been borne from Joint Forces Command as a way to institutionalize what GEN Luck referred to as that intrinsic capability of a commander to reach a more efficient decision. This effects-based approach to planning is meant to represent a more "inclusive effort that will bring greater robustness and precision to the JOPP

[16] Ibid., III-35.
[17] GEN Gary Luck, Joint Warfighting Center, *Insights on Joint Operations: The Art and Science Best Practices; The Move Toward Coherently Integrated Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Operations* (Joint Forces Command, 10-11.

while enhancing the opportunities to promote unified action."[18] Joint Publication 1-02 defines unified action as, "A broad generic term that describes the wide scope of actions (including the synchronization of activities with governmental and nongovernmental agencies) taking place within unified commands, subordinate unified commands, or joint task forces under the overall direction of the commanders of those commands."[19]

To compliment the current JOPP and not create an entirely new planning process with "effects" as its backbone, the following analysis is provided to determine how effects-based planning works.

The effects-based approach to planning in JOPP is meant to fully integrate military actions with the other instruments of national power and achieves the JFC's objectives.[20] Effects-based planning further stipulates that the JFC must have a shared common understanding of the effects required in order to achieve his campaign objectives before tasks are identified and supporting/supported relations are developed with agencies outside of the military but will be operating within the operations area.[21] In theory, this effects-based approach enhances the likelihood that objectives can be translated more accurately into actionable direction by the JFCs. Critics of effects-based operations counter that all aspects of operational warfare are related either directly or indirectly to the objective to be accomplished, "therefore, reducing its importance or arbitrarily changing its content will reduce warfare to simply firing at selected targets or target sets. It would ultimately not only eliminate operational art but also tacticize both policy and strategy. This negative trend is

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[18] Joint Forces Command, *Commander's Handbook for an Effects-Based Approach to Joint Operations*, Joint Warfighting Center, Joint Concept Development and Experimentation Directorate, Standing Joint Force Headquarters, III-23.
[19] JP 1-02, 565.
[20] Ibid., III-1.
[21] Ibid., III-23.

well underway in the U.S. military today."[22] This counter-position is quite intriguing but for the purposes of this research we will assume the theories in the JFCOM handbook for effects-based planning are valid.

Lines of operation remain critical in an effects-based planning environment as they form the framework for identifying the timing of decisive points and assessment actions.[23] In order to determine these LOOs, the commander and his planners use the JOPP along with effects-based thinking. In the mission analysis step, the JFC seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the purpose and objectives of the operation: the primary aims toward which all activities should be directed?
2. What desired effects (conditions), across the operating environment (OE) systems, need to be created or supported to achieve the objectives?
3. What undesired effects, across the operating environment, need to be avoided?
4. What friendly capabilities and resources can or cannot be used to attain the desired effects?
5. What friendly actions are required, or are counterproductive, to attain the desired effects?[24]

By the end of mission analysis there should be an objective statement that includes:

1. Establishes a single goal: a desired result providing a concise "end" toward which operations are directed.
2. Is system specific: it identifies the key system, node or link to be affected.
3. Does not infer causality: no words (nouns or verbs) that suggest ways and/or means.[25]

Ultimately the effects are drawn from their designated objectives. They help bridge the gap between objectives and tasks and describe the conditions that need to be established or avoided within the operating environment to achieve the desired endstate. This "task

[22] Milan Vego, *Effects-Based Operations: A Critique*, Joint Force Quarterly 2d Quarter 2006, 52.
[23] *Commander's Handbook for an Effects-Based Approach to Joint Operations,* III-23.
[24] Ibid., III-4.
[25] Ibid., III-3 – III-4.

determination" must begin during mission analysis and extends through COA development and selection. Ultimately it provides the basis for the tasks that are assigned to the subordinate and supporting commands in the operation plan or order.[26]

This change in the way we think about conducting planning is likely most applicable in today's COIN environment because it forces the planners to push away from their computers long enough to really think about the nuances of fighting in a COIN and how the "other instruments of power" can be leveraged to support the endstate. How we know we're achieving the right results are measured in the assessment process. Measures of effectiveness (MOEs) are typically quantitative measures that can show commanders certain trends, as well as progress, relative to a designated criteria or area. During planning, MOEs are designed to "help refine the set of effects statements during planning and, second, to give JFC's tangible indicators that the operation is doing the right things during execution…They can also measure the causal relationship between the strategic or operational effects and the tactical tasks or actions. In sum the totality of MOEs informs the JFCs if the battlespace is conforming to the desired strategic or operational effects or end state."[27]

In the remaining steps of the JOPP, the planner must articulate the common understanding of the problem to be solved and determine a solution within the boundaries in which to solve it. In COA development (Step 3 of the JOPP) the planner must determine the sequence of actions in time and space to accomplish the mission. A good COA will attain the JFC's desired effects while trying to avoid undesired effects and position the joint force for future operations while simultaneously providing enough flexibility to meet unforeseen events during execution. During COA analysis, the focus is on determining which COA will

[26] Ibid., III-8.
[27] Ibid., III-10.

most effectively accomplish the mission. During wargaming, the planners refine their COAs and ensure they are developed within the guidelines of the prioritized effects list (PEL).[28] Ultimately, the planner develops a plan (or order) for the JFC's signature that develops a selected COA into a concept of operations (CONOPs). This document is the summation of the planning process and articulates the operational design (including such elements as the center of gravity analysis, the lines of operation and the decisive points). The CONOPs should include the following items in an effects-based plan:

1. Should state the commander's intent to include the desired and undesired effects.
2. Should link the strategic objectives to the strategic and operational effects (to include the designated tasks for the subordinate and supporting commanders).
3. Should provide for the application of sequencing, synchronization, and integration of forces (and their capabilities) in time, space, and purpose.
4. Should include a description of the contributions of the other instruments of national power.
5. Should describe when, where, and under what conditions the supported commander intends to give or refuse battle (if required).
6. Should focus on friendly and adversary COGs and their associated critical factors (e.g., critical vulnerabilities, critical capabilities, critical requirements).
7. Should provide for controlling the tempo of the operation.[29]

Developing LOOs in an effects-based plan is the best way to organize ends, ways and means over the multiple phases of an operation. They provide a way for the commander to visualize "what" and "how" the campaign objectives will be achieved. Tasks are designed to support multiple LOOs and a single LOO can support multiple effects and objectives.[30] In the JOPP, LOOs can help achieve the commander's end state by conveying effects or their associated tasks. By further linking the LOOs to specific effects (and objectives), the

[28] Ibid., III-12 – III-14. The *Commander's Handbook for an Effects-Based Approach to Joint Operations* defines the PEL as the effects that a JFC identifies to guide planning, execution and the assessment of an operation.
[29] Ibid., III-16.
[30] Ibid., III-20.

commander can maintain his focus of individual actions in their appropriate context and help him identify the timing of decision points and assessment actions.[31]

Marine Corps Planning Process (MCPP) and Chaos Theory

The MCPP is a service-specific process meant to support planning efforts from the operational to the tactical level. The Marine Corps defines planning as "envisioning a desired future and arranging a configuration of potential actions in time and space that will allow us to realize that future. Planning is thus a way of figuring out how to move from the current state to a more desirable future state – even if it does not allow us to control the transition precisely."[32] Planning is seen as the way to influence events before they occur rather than allow them to be dictated upon us (proactive vs. reactive). The value of planning is seen as the ability to help the commander's decision-making by anticipating requirements and adapting to them in advance (otherwise known as, anticipatory decision-making).[33] The act of planning provides value when it improves the current situation, using methods that are appropriate to the conditions and activities being planned. As it relates to effects-based thinking, the Marine Corps' planning process contemplates future actions and their effects, but acknowledges that it cannot isolate individual cause and effect in a "complex phenomenon like war." War is not seen as a single problem but rather a complex system of interdependent problems the solution to which affects the outcomes of all the others.[34] This explanation leads us to analyze the definition of chaos theory as it has direct applicability in the understanding of Marine Corps doctrine and potential applicability in understanding counterinsurgency warfare (as this chapter will attempt to define).

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[31] Ibid., III-23.
[32] Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 5, *Planning* (Headquarters, United States Marine Corps 21 July 1997) 4.
[33] Ibid., 14.
[34] Ibid., 22.

Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication #1, Warfighting, addresses chaos by stating that,

"the occurrences of war will not unfold like clockwork. We cannot hope to impose precise, positive control over events. The best we can hope for is to impose a general framework of order on the disorder, to influence the general flow of action rather than to try to control each event. If we are to win, we must be able to operate in a disorderly environment."[35]

The doctrine goes further to explain that Marines should thrive in an uncertain environment and seek to create disorder as a weapon against their adversary. As we analyze this approach by the Marine Corps, coupled with the definition of counterinsurgency defined in the first two chapters of this thesis, then it is necessary to explore the definition of chaos (and two associated theories) and how it can serve to help provide focus to the operational planner trying to develop a counterinsurgency plan.

Any military action taken by a force is not the monolithic execution of a single decision by a single entity but rather the interrelated decisions and actions made by a number of actors. Trying to centralize all decision-making is naturally inconsistent with the complex and distributed nature of war.[36] As we peel the implied definition of complexity from the Marine Corps' doctrine we find the essence of it lays in chaos theory. Chaos theory has several definitions and interpretations. The most relevant definitions (applied to this research) are as follows:

"Chaos theory describes a specific range of irregular behaviors in systems that move or change. What is a system? To define a system, we need only two things: a collection of elements – components, players, or variables – along with a set of rules for how those

[35] Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1, *Warfighting* (Headquarters, United States Marine Corps 20 June 1997) 11.
[36] Ibid., 12.

elements change – formulas, equations, recipes, or instructions."[37] This definition provides us an understanding that chaotic systems can have disproportionate changes in their behavior when small changes are introduced into their control parameters. The value of this understanding is that in warfare (of any type) there are always external features driving decisions and actions that are unforeseeable and/or unexpected. Therefore, chaos theory is essential to the military planner because it helps him know when erratic outputs are being generated by non-random processes thus making long-term trends far less reliable. In the end, this definition provides usefulness because it explains that trying to understand something as complex as counterinsurgency requires us to fully understand the "system" in which this form of warfare was borne.

Another useful definition for chaos is provided by the renowned scientist, Edward Lorenz. Lorenz's definition describes chaos as a behavior that is deterministic "or is nearly so if it occurs in a tangible system that possesses a slight amount of randomness, but does not look deterministic."[38] Lorenz explains that chaos refers to processes that appear to proceed according to chance even though their behavior is in fact determined by precise laws. The example he uses to articulate this point is that of a cuckoo clock. The regular swinging of the clock's pendulum may not appear to be disrupted but subtle disturbances in the air (caused by someone walking past) or in vibrations (the slamming of a door nearby) that may have influences on the clock's operation.[39] The relevance to military planning and operations, especially in COIN, is the understanding that a number of factors play a significant role in determining the behavior of an adversary and the ability to predict that enemy's behavior is

[37] Major Glenn E. James, USAF, *Chaos Theory: The Essentials for Military Applications* (Newport, RI: Center for Naval Warfare Studies) 3.
[38] Edward N. Lorenz, The Essence of Chaos (Seattle: University of Washington Press) 8.
[39] Ibid., 5.

far too complex to predict. Extending Lorenz's definition of chaos further, there is a study of random and deterministic sequencing. Random sequence is "simply one in which any one of several things can happen next, even though not necessarily anything can ever happen can happen next. What actually is possible next will then depend upon what has just happened."[40] Meanwhile, deterministic sequence is "one in which only one thing can happen next; that is, its evolution is governed by precise laws. Randomness in the broader sense is therefore identical with the absence of determinism. It is this sort of randomness that I have intended in my description of chaos as something that looks random."[41] So, utilizing this logic, if the insurgent wishes to create an insurgency he can. If an opposing force wishes to "counter" this insurgency then it must. A study of how to plan to counter an insurgency will be examined below.

Why is it important that the planner know and understand these theories? The Marine Corps has determined that the planner is well advised to understand these theories if he is to embark upon planning in a COIN environment. The Marine Corps' Planning Process is similar to the Joint Planning Process (JOPP). The key differences are that the MCPP starts with Mission Analysis then transitions to COA Development, COA Wargame, COA Comparison & Decision, Orders Development & Transition.[42] The following table compares both processes:[43]

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[40] Ibid., 7.
[41] Ibid., 7.
[42] Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 5-1, Marine Corps Planning Process (HQMC: Quantico, VA) 1-2.
[43] The purpose of demonstrating these two processes is that in a Joint Force Headquarters, planners will typically use either the joint process or a service-specific process. Therefore, an assessment of both processes is worth comparing & contrasting.

Steps/Process	Joint Operations Planning Process	Marine Corps Planning Process
Step 1:	Planning Initiation	Mission Analysis
Step 2:	Mission Analysis	COA Development
Step 3:	COA Development	COA Wargaming
Step 4:	COA Analysis & Wargaming	COA Comparison & Decision
Step 5:	COA Comparison	Orders Development
Step 6:	COA Approval	Transition
Step 7:	Plan (or Order) Development	N/A

References: JP 5-0 & MCWP 5-1

Upon comparison of the key steps within these two processes, there a numerous similarities within them that makes them mutually supportive of one another and ultimately achieve the same results. The following section will determine how this planning process (and the associated Chaos Theory) is used in COIN planning.

COIN Planning

In December 2006 the U.S. Army and Marine Corps released their joint doctrine for fighting an insurgency. This field manual, FM 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5: *Counterinsurgency*, is an outstanding articulation of "how to fight" an insurgent. The Marine Corps unveiled two documents six months before the release of FM 3-24 that defines how we should "think" about military activities in an the irregular environment, like the ones we find ourselves fighting today in Iraq and Afghanistan. These documents[44] acknowledge that in order to counter an irregular threat, combat operations will play a lesser role to the political and cultural aspects of the conflict (as outlined in Chapter 2 of this thesis). Further they state that the current U.S. military has mastered the traits to fight in a conventional combat campaign but have not spent the same amount of time and energy determining how

[44] The Marine Corps' Combat Development Command released these two documents in June 2006: *Countering Irregular Threats: A Comprehensive Approach* and *A Tentative Manual for Countering Irregular Threats: An Updated Approach to Counterinsurgency*.

to develop the capabilities to fight an irregular campaign.[45] The Marine Corps feels that its Maneuver Warfare doctrine is best suited to fight against an irregular enemy; mixing skills and abilities to attack its enemies from multiple angles at once, wearing them down and gaining the support of the local populace. In order to accomplish this, today's Marines must learn to decide when to fight kinetically and when to fight with information, humanitarian aid, economic advice, and supporting good governance for the local people.[46] We will start with an examination of the Marine Corps' analysis because it provides an excellent intellectual approach (why) to develop a counterinsurgency strategy, then transition to FM 3-24 to outline the practical execution of this strategy (how).

These two Marine Corps documents chart out a long-term approach for planners, from the battalion to Marine Expeditionary Force levels, to utilize in developing a common understanding for an irregular warfare campaign strategy because it views insurgency as the most dangerous and most likely threat environment we will find ourselves engaged in the future.[47] The Marine Corps defines insurgency as a struggle between a ruling group and a non-ruling group intent on using political resources and violence to destroy, reformulate or sustain the basis of a legitimacy of its politics.[48] The leaders of an insurgency believe they can improve their situation by overthrowing the existing regime. Meanwhile, planners in a counterinsurgent force must know the "catalytic agents" that are involved in starting an insurgency.[49] "In most cases, the insurgent elites interject the catalytic element by making people aware of their oppressed states and by committing acts that function as the catalytic

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[45] Marine Corps Combat Development Command; Concept & Plans Division, *A Tentative Manual for Countering Irregular Threats: An Updated Approach to Counterinsurgency* (Quantico, VA) 1.
[46] Marine Corps Combat Development Command, *Countering Irregular Threats; A Comprehensive Approach* (Quantico, VA) 5.
[47] Ibid., 14.
[48] *A Tentative Manual for Countering Irregular Threats*, 8.
[49] Ibid., 11.

agent."[50] In this understanding, the insurgent clearly has an advantage because he can determine the exact time and place of his actions. Meanwhile, the ruling authority must try to manage the expectations of its people and not allow the insurgent to undermine its authority. The challenge in this is that the expectations of the people are always changing and rarely are they the same and the insurgent will use these factors to foment chaos, disorder and suffering.[51] This is exactly why a clear understanding of Chaos Theory is important to the planner because he must try to balance the needs of the populace while simultaneously defeating the insurgent by not enabling him to convince the populace that he can provide them an improved situation. The Marine Corps seeks to address this "duality" of purpose by identifying six traditional lines of operation (LOO) that aid the planner in defeating the insurgent. These lines are designed to be applied at the local, regional and transnational level and are articulated in the campaign design[52]:

1. Combat Operations. This LOO is what traditional military personnel are designed, trained, and equipped to conduct, yet in an irregular warfare environment this LOO must be handled differently. Security of the population and an isolation from insurgents are far more important than large-scale combat operations. The goal of this LOO is to support the other LOOs by providing security and removing the catalytic agent from the insurgency.
2. Training and Advising the Host Nation Security Forces. We must help train the indigenous military to fight small unit, highly mobile operations because these type operations are what they will need to learn in order to fight the insurgents.[53] Teaching military operations beyond this scope is really not

[50] Ibid., 9.
[51] Ibid., 10.
[52] The Marine Corps defines this understanding in this way: "Early in the campaign design process, leaders among the intervention force must establish a vision of resolution or desired end-state that is a narrative on how the conflict transformation should ideally unfold…In the same way, the campaign design itself should be seen as an experiment in which the intervention force tests the operational logic with an expectation that the design is not exactly correct and will need to be changed. The campaign design, when exercised, will be tested and assessed. This assessment is a learning activity and is deliberately interwoven into the design. The idea is that learning will lead to re-design. Therefore, the process can be viewed as a perpetual design – learn – re-design activity." *A Tentative Manual for Countering Irregular Threats*, 17.
[53] Ibid., 28.

important because it would not help defeat an irregular enemy and is a loss of training efficiency.

3. Essential Services. Marine forces must be trained and equipped to assist the host nation in the establishment (or re-establishment) of essential services such as: food, power, potable water, waste removal, and basic medical care.[54] As important as it is to help provide these services, Marine planners must prepare to have a process established to assess the "specific" needs of the area they are operating so this list of essential services will likely expand (or be more focused in one or more areas than another).
4. Promote Governance. The underlying premise here is that there cannot be any stability or order without laws and the ability to enforce these laws. A functioning legal system must include criminal and civil laws, courts, judiciary, and prison system. Likewise, a police force must exist that can enforce the established laws.[55] The challenge for Marine planners is to not create, or be perceived of creating, the laws for the indigenous population. The population must create their own laws based on their beliefs, norms, and mores.
5. Economic Development. Once the basic security has been established then the Marine planners must have a plan prepared to encourage economic stimulation in order to mature the economy over time. Long-term economic growth and development must strive to achieve economic self-sufficiency for the host nation.[56]
6. Information. Irregular warfare conflicts have long been seen as a battle for ideas (and ideology). While the insurgent seeks to undermine the legitimacy of the existing government, the counterinsurgent force works to maintain the government's allegiance to the people and prove to the populace that the insurgents are outsiders (or outlaws).[57] This LOO is one of the most difficult because the counterinsurgent force cannot lose credibility, or any perception of legitimacy, to the populace.

These LOOs help the planner outline a strategy for defeating an irregular (insurgent) force. A key ingredient for this strategy includes establishing a "tempo of adaptation"[58] that the enemy cannot maintain. This tempo is not defined as just the speed of actions, but encompasses the ability to seize the initiative and maintain it as it applies to the six LOOs mentioned above. Ultimately the counterinsurgent force must establish a tempo of

[54] Ibid., 29.
[55] Ibid., 30.
[56] Ibid., 31-32.
[57] Ibid., 32-33.
[58] Ibid., 18.

adaptation that enables it to out-cycle the adversary across all the lines of operation.[59] Major Glenn James (USAF) outlines this theory in his book, "Chaos Theory: The Essentials for Military Applications." Major James' theory is predicated on the understanding that in order to "outpace an enemy" we should,

> "expect ranges of control parameter values where the system behavior is relatively consistent; but we also should note parameter ranges where small adjustments produce drastic changes in system response. This phenomenon is not sensitivity to initial conditions. Rather, it relates the sensitivity of the system structure and changes in parameters, or adjustments to the control knobs, if you will."[60]

So, what does this mean to the planner? He must understand the system behavior; determine what the parameter values are, and then assess how to produce a response to the system. Once these factors are determined, the planner outlines the strategy into a campaign plan built along the six LOOs. Inter-relating the effects of these LOOs in time, space & purpose is the main focal point for the planner. Being able to assess their progress as they correspond to the system behavior and parameter values is the next step. Assessment is seen as a learning activity and is conducted at every level of command. Assessment is based on judgment, intuition, and quantitative & qualitative analysis. Commanders should then choose criteria that align with the overall purpose of the operation.[61]

The Joint analysis for fighting a counterinsurgency campaign was updated by FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual,* in December 2006. The purpose of this FM is to re-introduce the doctrine for how the U.S. military will conduct counterinsurgent activities. This FM outlines the way in which insurgency and COIN are broad categories of irregular

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[59] Ibid., 18.
[60] Major Glenn James, *Chaos Theory: The Essentials for Military Applications* (Newport, RI: Center for Naval Warfare Studies) 64.
[61] *A Tentative Manual for Countering Irregular Threats*, 22.

warfare.[62] The FM provides an excellent reference for the historical underpinnings of insurgency and COIN and lays out the steps necessary to fight in this type environment. It acknowledges the definitions of LOOs that are defined in Joint Publication 1-0, and defines Logical Lines of Operation (LLOs)[63] in a COIN as a representation of a "conceptual category along which the host nation (HN) government and COIN force commander intend to attack the insurgent strategy and establish HN government legitimacy. LLOs are closely related. Successful achievement of the end state requires careful coordination of actions undertaken along all LLOs."[64] Commanders are expected to select LLOs based on their understanding of the nature of the insurgency and what the COIN force must do to counter it. FM 3-24 goes on to articulate that commanders at all levels should select LLOs that are most capable of achieving the desired end state in accordance with the commander's intent.[65] The FM does not prescriptively detail the LOOs as did the Marine Corps' manual for *Countering Irregular Threats*, but does "suggest" six LOOs:

1. Conduct information operations (this LOO is not separate and distinct but is embedded within the other five LOOs).
2. Conduct combat operations/civil security operations.
3. Train and employ HN security forces.
4. Establish or restore essential services.
5. Support development of better governance.
6. Support economic development.[66]

By comparison with the LOOs identified in the Marine Corps' manual for Countering Irregular Threats, the LOOs in FM 3-24 are very similar. So similar in fact that there is little

[62] Irregular Warfare is defined by the DoD's *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept* (Version 1), dated 11 September 2007 as, "A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will."
[63] Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations* defines Logical Lines of Operation as, "A logical LOO connects actions on nodes and/or decisive points related in time and purpose with an objective(s)."
[64] U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 154.
[65] FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 158.
[66] Ibid., 158.

effort required to compare and contrast them. So what does that mean? The Marine Corps is a bit more prescriptive than the FM and that could lead some to believe that these LOOs are unalterable. Likely that is not the intent of the Marine authors. More importantly, the similarities between these two services demonstrate that the U.S. has correctly identified the LOOs that must be approached in a COIN fight. How we apply these LOOs in our planning process is the next challenge and, as importantly, the ability to assess them is critical.

Assessment

The assessment of these LOOs enables a commander to qualitatively and quantitatively determine if he is accomplishing the right things and doing things right. These assessments are determined through the establishment of Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) and Measures of Performance (MOP). MOEs assess changes in system behavior, capability, or operational environment. They can measure the attainment of end state, the achievement of an objective or the creation of an effect. The measurement of "are we doing the right things" is done with the establishment of Measures of Performance. MOPs measure task performance and are usually quantitative (they can be observed through direct observation of an event).[67] FM 3-24 determines that assessment assists the commander, and his staff, with the following:

1. Completion of tasks and their impact.
2. Level of achievement of objectives.
3. Whether a condition of success has been established.
4. Whether the operation's end state has been attained.
5. Whether the commander's intent was achieved.[68]

Further, FM 3-24 states that in COIN operations, MOEs & MOPs should be designed with four common characteristics:

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[67] JP 3-0, IV-32 – IV-33.
[68] FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 189.

1. Measurable. They should be designed with quantitative or qualitative standards against which they can be measured. Most effective would be a combination of qualitative and quantitative in order to avoid inaccuracies in the findings.
2. Discrete. Each MOE/MOP must be capable of measuring a separate and distinct aspect of the task, purpose or condition of the LOO they are designated to assess.
3. Relevant. MOEs and MOPs must be relevant to the measured task, outcome and condition.
4. Responsive. The tools designed to help develop the operational assessment must be capable of detecting environmental and situational changes quickly and accurately in order to help the commander (and his staff) develop effective responses or counters.[69]

Chapter 3 Conclusion

Both of the planning processes evaluated here, JOPP and MCPP, are excellent tools to help a commander develop a plan at the operational and tactical levels of war. Both appear to have merit in developing COIN planning (specific evaluation of this will occur in the next chapter). While the steps in each of these processes do not specifically address the nuances of planning in a COIN environment, they were designed to be broad enough in nature to encompass planning for a full range of military operations.[70] The area that deserves the most attention for a planner in a COIN environment is in the realm of operational design. It is during operational design that the commander and his planners determine the lines of operation to be developed as an aim-point during COIN operations. Only the joint doctrine discusses operational design, and the subsequent development of LOOs. The Marine Corps infers that the development of LOOs is done during their planning process but no where in their process do they outline how LOOs are developed. Regardless of this lapse, the Marine Corps has done a superb job articulating the LOOs that should "typically" be used in a COIN environment in their manual for Countering Irregular Threats. These LOOs provide an

[69] Ibid., 190.
[70] JP 5-0, IV-2.

excellent example for planners to use in the development of a campaign plan for a COIN environment.

Chapter 4: Counterinsurgency in Iraq

Introduction

The counterinsurgency struggles that the U.S. and her allies find themselves embroiled in Iraq today have enormous implications. The belief that if, "it can work there it can work anywhere" has largely driven our foreign policy objectives in this region.[1] The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the ongoing COIN struggle in Iraq with an objective approach toward the evolution of the insurgency then assess how planning for COIN has been accomplished to date. Lastly, this chapter will assess how COIN has been included into our U.S. strategy and how it has impacted operations in Iraq.

Evolution of an Insurgency

The geographic landscape of Iraq entails some 437,000 square kilometers of land that has long been regarded as the crossroads of the Middle East politics and conflict. The mostly arid nature of 80% of this land constricts the population to exist in dense bands along the branches of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. This concentration of the population explains the overwhelmingly urban nature of the insurgency.

The human demographics of contemporary Iraq demonstrate the diverse nature of that environment. Arabs make up 75-80% of the countries 26 million people. Kurds account for 15-20%, and the Turcomen, Assyrians, and "others" account for 5%. Further dividing this landscape are the religions. While 97% of Iraqi's practice Islam, the majority (60-65%) belong to the Shiite tradition, a minority sect in the Muslim world. Although Sunni Arabs and Kurds belong to the larger, more predominant, Sunni branch of Islam, they are divided

[1] Steven Metz, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (The Washington Quarterly, Winter 2003-04) 25.

by ethnic animosity. The Kurds suffered greatly at the hands of Saddam Hussein and have little in common with their Shiite countrymen.[2]

The Shiite's would likely prefer a theocratic state under the control of their religious leaders. They are subdivided by two smaller factions. The Grand Ayottollah Ali al-Sistani is the official leader of the Iraqi Shiites, but Muqtada al-Sadr commands a considerable following in the south.[3] These competing interests have added a degree of complexity to the counterinsurgency struggle for Coalition leaders & planners and will be addressed further on in this chapter.

The human landscape in Iraq is further complicated by the intricate web of family, clan and regional loyalties that represent a complex social web of tribes, lineages and vengeance groups (known as, Khamsahs). Under Saddam Hussein the country was plunged into a one-party (Baath) cronyism that levied stiff hardships on any group that was not part of this party.

During the first year of the insurgency, the conflict resided largely within the Sunni-Arab community and was supported by foreign terrorists while, near simultaneously, fighting ensued between the radical cleric, al Sadr, and the coalition.[4] The factions drew apart by their political agendas. First, the Islamists wanted a state governed by Sharia law, an outcome opposed by the secular Sunnis and Kurds. Foreign fighters advocating for Al Qaida were engaged in a jihad against the coalition and were content to kill Americans. Targeting the Americans had two main objectives: produce casualties and erode domestic support for

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[2] Thomas R. Mockaitis, *The Iraq War: Learning from the Past, Adapting to the Present, and Planning for the Future* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College) 21.
[3] Ibid., 21.
[4] Ibid., 26.

the war in America, and to provoke U.S. forces into overreacting to attacks.[5] For most Iraqis, liberation meant the removal of Saddam and any outside presence. The Arab world has, over the course of time, been intolerant of outside intervention and occupation, especially by non-Muslims. Violation of this tradition has been largely met with stiff resistance and extreme violence.[6]

In the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq in 2003, unemployment skyrocketed to a record high of 67%, this due in large part to deliberate U.S. policy decisions of de-Baathification. In addition to the 500,000 people laid off because of their connection with the previous regime, Ambassador Paul Bremer laid off another 150,000 people with no apparent reason. Further exacerbating the unemployment problems, the U.S. policy on issuing contracts caused further problems because it precluded Russian contractors familiar with the Soviet-era energy grid from participating in the reconstruction efforts. Meanwhile the average Iraqi could not comprehend the slow pace of reconstruction efforts by a country that had so quickly removed their dictator with their vast resources and military prowess.[7] In June 2003 the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) announced its plan to rebuild the Iraqi military from the bottom up. Its plan called for an initial forces size of 12,000 soldiers the first year and an ultimate goal of 40,000 – a number deemed suitable for national defense but not so large as to threaten its neighbors or provide the new government with an instrument of future aggression.[8]

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[5] Ibid., 32.
[6] Steven Metz, *Learning from Iraq: Counterinsurgency in American Strategy* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute) 28.
[7] Mockaitis, *The Iraq War: Learning from the Past, Adapting to the Present, and Planning for the Future* , 39-40.
[8] Metz, *Learning from Iraq: Counterinsurgency in American Strategy*, 33.

During the first year of the insurgency, multiple groups (mostly small, localized bands) competed for legitimacy (defined as: exposure, recognition, recruitment, and financial support). Their attacks typically were uncoordinated attempts to affect a psychological impact on the coalition troops. This initial strategy has been categorized as one that sought to inflict "mayhem" on the coalition with the overarching endstate of making the country appear ungovernable to the U.S. and the majority Shiites. Over time this insurgency settled on a four-part strategy: (1) cause steady U.S. casualties in order to erode American will, (2) prevent a return to normalcy, (3) attack Iraqis supporting the new political order and (4) cause spectacular attacks to retain the psychological initiative.[9] Therefore, the insurgent typically assumes that the constant disruption to daily lives and commerce by the forces trying to protect them, in this case the coalition, will further alienate the population from the authorities and create the impression that the security forces are oppressors rather than protectors.[10]

Politically on the coalition side, things did not progress rapidly until the Bush Administration turned over sovereignty to the Iraqi government on June 28, 2004. By October of that same year the Iraqis approved a new constitution and by December they had elected members of their new parliament. Soon thereafter the core U.S. strategy focused on rebuilding the Iraqi security forces (Police, Military and Border Defense forces) and gradually deploying them, first in support of, and ultimately to replace, coalition troops.[11]

Insurgents Rise Against the Coalition

[9] Ibid., 20.
[10] Bruce Hoffman, "Insurgency & Counterinsurgency in Iraq" *Rand: National Security Research Division* (June 2004) 16.
[11] Metz, *Learning from Iraq: Counterinsurgency in American Strategy*, 41.

Soon after the liberation of Baghdad in May 2003, coalition forces found themselves in a brief honeymoon period from the violence that had confronted their invasion from Kuwait. The first area to erupt again into violence was the city of Fallujah. Fallujah was an insular, conservative, intensely religious and extremely resistant to outside control. It had been an area that had long attracted radical clerics. Traditionally this town had been a hotbed of smuggling and an area where tribal connections mattered above all else. Fallujah was so contentious that even Saddam Hussein had largely left it alone.[12]

Complicating matters in May of 2003 several thousand Shiites marched into Baghdad demanding an immediate transfer of power to an elected government. The Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani subsequently issued a fatwa condemning the idea of a constitutional council named by the American occupation force. Sistani's argument was that the Iraqis should draft their own constitution. This was a critical time period because it saw the emergence of Moqtada al-Sadr in the southern neighborhoods of Baghdad as a force to be reckoned with by coalition forces. Al-Sadr's opposition of American forces garnered him great support and admiration by the Shiite lower classes. Meanwhile, to the north in the area known as the Sunni Triangle, a series of initial attacks began to increase. Initially these attacks lacked sophistication and any form of coordination. But, as the number of unemployed former military personnel increased (recently disbanded by Ambassador Bremer), the resistance began to show classic signs of guerilla operations. Armed bands began to target areas that were extremely vulnerable such as isolated checkpoints and slow-moving convoys. Iraqis that worked for the Americans or were part of the new administrative structure came under increasing attack. The growth of the insurgency saw attacks targeting the electrical grid, water system and oil

[12] Ibid., 2.

pipelines.[13] How did the American forces respond? A British Army officer, Brigadier Nigel Aylwin-Foster observed after his own time in Iraq that the U.S. Army was, "developed over time a singular focus on conventional warfare, of a particularly swift and violent style, which left it ill-suited to the kind of operation it encountered as soon as conventional warfare ceased to be the primary focus."[14] The U.S. Army was not well-prepared for a COIN fight because it had largely resisted stabilization operations through the 1990s – an area they often referred to as, "window washing." Now, in Iraq, their Phase IV Reconstruction efforts would revolve almost exclusively around COIN – the most complex form of stabilization operations. However, the Army's doctrine for COIN was decades old and designed around the Cold War-style rural "people's war." The doctrine they had in 2003 viewed COIN as a supporting effort to an existing regime and this was not a suitable situation for them in Iraq because the conditions were so incredibly different from anything they had trained for or war-gamed to-date.[15] The public quickly affixed blame on the Americans for their suffering following the removal of Saddam and by the end of the summer of 2003 the Sunni Arab community began exploding with violence against their American occupiers whom they felt were ultimately responsible. These events coincided with the arrival of foreign jihadists who saw an opportunity to "fuel the fire" against the non-Muslim invaders and turn the struggle from a political one to a spiritual conflict.[16]

Planning for COIN: Strategic Thinking

In November 2005 the White House unveiled its new "*National Strategy for Victory in Iraq*." This was the administration's first effort to articulate a comprehensive approach to

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[13] Ibid., 4.
[14] Nigel Aylwin-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," *Military Review*, Vol. 85, No. 6, November-December 2005, p. 6.
[15] Metz, *Learning from Iraq: Counterinsurgency in American Strategy*, 23.
[16] Ibid., 31.

countering the nearly two-and-a-half years of COIN warfare that had ensued in Iraq. This strategy clearly outlined a comprehensive, long-haul approach to COIN that was based on three broad "tracks": political, security and economic. The political track called for the isolation of extremists from the general population in an attempt to obtain their support for the new Iraq, the engagement of people outside of the political process through peaceful participation means and the building of a stable environment with effective governmental institutions. The security track called for clearing areas held or controlled by the insurgents, holding those areas so that the insurgents could not return and building Iraqi Security Forces (ISF: Police, Border Defense Forces and Iraqi military) so that they could have the capacity to deliver services, "advance the rule of law, and nurture civil society."[17] The economic track called for a total restoration of the long neglected infrastructure, coupled with reform of the country's economy in order to make it more self-sustaining so that Iraq could eventually rejoin the international community and thereby improve the quality of life for all Iraqis.[18] This strategy was clearly well-thought and almost too late to implement and achieve the results it was intended to produce.

For the first year of the insurgency the U.S. responses had been overwhelmingly reactive and ad hoc. The chief criticism was that if the U.S. military was going to engage in these type operations again in the future it would need to develop plans for a protracted internal security operation following the conclusion of traditional conventional military operations.[19]

At the onset of planning for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, military planners assumed that a significant portion of the Iraqi security forces – military and police – would not directly

[17] Mockaitis, *The Iraq War: Learning from the Past, Adapting to the Present, and Planning for the Future* , 47.
[18] Ibid., 47.
[19] Ibid., 52.

engage in military operations against the coalition, but rather "sit in their barracks and then reemerge to form the core of the post-Saddam military and police with new leaders at their fore." Combined with this overly simple assessment was the underestimation that the state of the Iraqi infrastructure was not as bad as it turned out to be. [20] In fact, the Iraqi infrastructure was dilapidated to the point that it took months to restore even the basic services – all the while the Iraqi people were developing lasting impressions of what their post-Saddam life would be like. While it would have been difficult to have predicted a counterinsurgency in Iraq following the removal of Saddam and his regime, the fact that planning did not fully take into account the possibility of the Iraqi political dimension helped breath life into an insurgency that took hold and gained rapid momentum. This apparent neglect in the planning for post-invasion stability operations, coupled with the planners apparent inability to consider the possibility of sustained and organized resistance that could gather momentum quickly and organize itself into an insurgency reflect a problem that has long afflicted nations fighting in a COIN environment – the conditions required for an insurgency to develop and the ability to stop its growth before it achieves traction that leads to momentum. [21] Bruce Hoffman's allegation against the planning effort might have serious merit. Sir Frank Kitson, the celebrated commander & writer on Low-Intensity Conflict, aptly stated that the first consideration that commanders and planners must embark upon when considering COIN is that there can never be a purely military solution because, "insurgency is not primarily a military activity."[22] So, while the United States adjusted to a COIN environment in the first year of the insurgency in Iraq, so too did the insurgent forces evolve.

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[20] Metz, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (The Washington Quarterly, Winter 2003-04) 27.
[21] Hoffman, "Insurgency & Counterinsurgency in Iraq" , 2-3.
[22] Quoted in DGD&D 18/34/56 Army Code No 71596 (Parts 1 & 2) *Army Field Manual, vol V, Operations Other Than War, "Section B: Counter Insurgency Operations, Part 2 The Conduct of Counterinsurgency Operations,"* (London: Prepared under the direction of the Chief of the General Staff, 1995), p. 3-1.

One of the most ominous events that occurred was the introduction of foreign fighters (jihadists) into the country, some of whom were closely affiliated with al-Qaida. While these jihadists comprised a relatively small amount of the overall insurgent forces, they helped escalate the violence to record levels which in turn raised the fear level amongst every Iraqi. This, in turn, raised the strategic stakes of the conflict, making it intrinsic to the overall War on Terror (WOT).[23] This first year then turned out to be a period of rapid learning for the U.S. military. In most cases the operations that were deemed successful militarily were political and psychological losses, thus inspiring new supports and recruits for the insurgency. The final strategic assessment that was learned from this time period was that the United States needed a broader strategy and doctrine for stabilization and transformation which would include classic counterinsurgency as well as other types of internal conflict, including post-intervention warfare and state failure. The strategy for post-intervention or post-state failure conflict would include three phases: intervention, stabilization and hand-over.[24]

The U.S. State Department (DoS) has recently unveiled its perspective on COIN titled *Counterinsurgency for U.S. Government Policy Makers*. This document serves an excellent example for that "outside the military" perspective for approaching planning in a COIN environment. The DoS's "Comprehensive Approach to Strategy" takes the classic COIN *components* of Security, Political, Economic and Information and re-labels them as *functions*. The key to effective COIN planning is to integrate the civilian and military capabilities across each of these functional areas. Integrating them requires a "whole-of-government plan that should specify the following:

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[23] Neil MacFarquhar, "Rising Tide of Islamic Militants See Iraq as Ultimate Battlefield," *New York Times*, August 13, 2003, p. 1.
[24] Metz, *Learning from Iraq: Counterinsurgency in American Strategy*, 82.

1. The over-arching goal to be achieved
2. The critical assumptions about the environment
3. The critical assumptions about cause and effect
4. The major mission elements necessary and sufficient to achieve the goal
5. The essential task areas within each major mission
6. The sequencing of essential tasks
7. The resources available to support the plan (skilled people, relationships, expert knowledge, money, materials and time)
8. The metrics to assess progress toward the overarching goal and major mission elements[25]

This construct closely aligns with the Mission Analysis step of the Joint Planning Process and appears to consider the use of effects more so than the JOPP. A military planner would be well-advised to study this document in order to gain further insights into one agencies perspective for dealing with an insurgent enemy other than the "traditional" military viewpoint.

The most recent military compendium for considering COIN operations is FM 3-24, *The U.S. Army & Marine Corps' Counterinsurgency Field Manual*. This document really does an excellent job of extending the DoS's "effects-based" thinking to the next level in terms of not being overly prescriptive with a step-by-step approach to military decision-making in a COIN environment, but gives excellent examples for commanders and planners alike to consider before, during and after engaging in a COIN struggle. The examples set forth in how to develop logical lines of operation, coupled with the operational assessment process, and the integration of interagency partners and non-governmental organizations serve as outstanding tools. One of the best tools outlined in this publication for an operational-level planner to consider when developing a COIN campaign is the key design considerations:

1. Conduct Critical Discussion
2. Conduct systems thinking

[25] United States Department of State, *Counterinsurgency for U.S. Government Policy Makers: A Work in Progress* (United States Government Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative, October 2007) 24-25.

3. Conduct model making
4. Conduct intuitive decision making
5. Conduct continuous assessment
6. Conduct structured learning[26]

This process is designed to be iterative and that is the key to success. The planner who can master these design elements and properly implement them along the logical lines of operation in a COIN campaign will have an enormous advantage. The reason why there will be an advantage is that the process serves to be more dynamic than the JOPP or MCPP processes that are truly designed for a traditional, conventional conflict. While there is certainly still merit in using the steps of the JOPP to frame the problem and determine the mission, develop COAs, etc, these key design considerations outlined above will help a planner think critically about the problem before embarking upon the planning process as they are typically taught – using conventional methods to achieve conventional results.

Chapter 4 Conclusion

So, what have the past five years taught us about COIN in Iraq? We now know that the insurgents we are fighting have no clear leadership, strategy and ideology that would unite the disparate groups against the U.S. and her Coalition allies. At the point we are at today, the core of the insurgency is made up of remnants of the old Saddam regime. However, even a weak insurrection can weaken or undercut the fledgling government of Iraq and cause national leaders to alter policies.[27] While the U.S. military largely underestimated the insurgency and its motivations in the first two years, we are now embarked upon executing a comprehensive and coherent COIN strategy that synergizes the collective resources of the U.S government. As a planner, we must remember to realize the full range

[26] FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 141.
[27] Metz, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq*, 25.

of consequences that arise from our military operations. Assuming that the Iraqi military and people would welcome us as liberators in 2003 has proven to be quite naïve. As we look to future engagements we must consider the real potential for insurgent activities to occur at any time in our military phasing construct and then build mitigation techniques to try and avoid this environment from getting started while simultaneously preparing our conventional and unconventional forces to meet this threat should it still emerge.

Chapter 5: Summary

The key issue for planners to recognize when developing a COIN strategy, or campaign plan, is that it has less to do with the *process* we follow (whether that is the JOPP or the MCPP) and has more to do with how we *think* about the environment we are going to fight in. A successful COIN campaign requires a set of capabilities that do not traditionally reside in the U. S. military. An example of these capabilities would be effective governance, judicial and legal support mechanisms. The research conducted here was intended to address the thesis proposition that the planning process, in its current form, needed to be adapted in order to allow planners to develop lines of operation in a COIN environment thus leading to greater efficiencies in determining operational objectives. The critical learning point from this research is that the planning process is effective at finding solutions for problems in COIN and, most importantly, planners must focus on how they apply critical thinking skills in these processes in order to achieve optimal solutions in this type of warfare environment.

Therefore, the conclusion of this research asserts that the critical thinking required in defining the problem needs some refinement and it must begin at the strategic-level and extend into the operational-level. Schools such as the Joint Advanced Warfighting School (JAWS), School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) and School of Advanced Warfighting (SAW) are excellent examples of formal military education that teach critical thinking skills. But, we live in an environment where demand for these type graduates has exceeded supply. These graduates provide the operational-level commander with the critical thinking skills necessary to adapt from conventional thinking to the unconventional thinking skills necessary in the irregular warfare arena that COIN resides. Implied in this critical thinking is the ability to adapt to effects-based thinking; the ability to foresee the second and

third order effects of our actions. Chapter 4 of FM 3-24, *The Counterinsurgency Field Manual,* is focused on designing COIN campaigns and operations. This chapter of FM 3-24 illustrates the point about how we need to approach the problem from a cognitive perspective. It outlines the key design considerations as the following:

1. Critical discussions. This is defined as providing shared understanding and leveraging collective intelligence and experiences of many people.
2. Systems Thinking. Defines the development of an understanding of the relationships within an insurgency and the environment in which the insurgency exists. It also explains the interconnectedness, complexity, and wholeness of the elements of the system as they relate to one another.
3. Model Making. The model includes the operational terms of reference and concepts that shape the language governing the conduct of the operation.
4. Intuitive decision making. Defined as the ability to reach a conclusion which emphasizes pattern recognition based on knowledge, judgment, experience, education, intelligence boldness, perception, and character.
5. Continuous Assessment. Because of the complexity of COIN operations, there is a very real need for continuous assessment to occur that will identify if the design of the operation is being achieved and how it needs to be adapted (if required).
6. Structured learning. Developed to provide a reasonable initial design and then learn-adapt-improve that design as the COIN situation unfolds.[1]

The critical thinking employed by Sir Harold Briggs and Sir Gerald Templar had more to do with their intuitive skills that they had developed over years of military experience and had less to do with any formal process that led them to the development of LOOs, enabling the police to receive support from the military and develop an intelligence fusion capability. Likewise, the differences in strategies employed in Vietnam had more to do with the experiential backgrounds and personalities of Generals Walt & Krulak versus General Westmoreland. The Marine leaders had their perceptions formed early in their careers in places like Nicaragua and the Philippines, and were reinforced in the South Pacific

[1] U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 141-142.

during World War II. General Westmoreland's background on the other hand was developed in Europe and Korea – where he exclusively employed conventional tactics to resolve conventional military problems. These experiences culminated for these men in Vietnam which was an operating environment that had more to do with irregular warfare activities than any conventional warfare example the U.S. Army had experienced since the Revolutionary War. The tactics developed by Generals Walt and Krulak had appreciable gains and could have had a larger impact if they had been expanded beyond the I Corps' zone of action. These tactics were considered "outside the box" by the leading military thinkers of their day, but they serve as an excellent example of critical thinking skills because they found alternative solutions to a military problem.

Both examples, Malaysia & Vietnam, are the type that we should project to military planners and commanders alike as the kind of thinking that we need to fight in the COIN environment we find ourselves in today. Planners must have formal teaching in the planning process (both Joint and Service-specific) but more emphasis must be placed on how to develop critical thinking skills to be able to objectively analyze a problem before employing a process to solve that problem. COIN operations fall under the larger rubric of irregular warfare (IW). IW activities largely reside in the realm of the government and the local population.[2] Therefore, the planner and his commander must be capable of recognizing that military solutions sometimes involve non-military capabilities. Synchronizing the activities involved in unified action can be accomplished in the planning process as we have it today, but they can be far more efficiently employed by the planner who fully realizes the operating environment he is operating in and can employ a range of options that might not be considered "traditional." The most optimal time for this analysis to occur is during step two

[2] Department of Defense, *Joint Operating Concept for Irregular Warfare Version 1.0* (11 September 2007) 9.

of the JOPP, mission analysis. During this phase the military planner must analyzed the problem from the vantage point of trying to determine the most effective tools the commander might possess in his military capabilities portfolio, but also be able to recommend problem solving solutions that reside outside of the normal scope of military capabilities.

Therefore, in order to summarize these conclusions the following points are suggested:

1. The Joint and Marine Corps planning processes are applicable in both the conventional and irregular warfare environments.
2. Planners must place greater emphasis on defining the problem when developing a COIN strategy/campaign. More time is required in the Mission Analysis step of the process.
3. The JOPP and MCPP both provide a framework for determining Lines of Operation in a conventional and irregular environment.
4. Planners must be cognizant that the capabilities needed to resolve an insurgency will often reside outside of the capabilities traditionally seen in military organizations.
5. Critical thinking skills are essential for planners when designing a COIN strategy/campaign.
6. Knowledge and understanding of theories such as Chaos and Complexity are critical in expanding these critical thinking skills because they enable the planner to use the linear planning process but apply non-linear thinking skills to develop a solution.

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LtCol Michael H. Brown was born in 1965 in Washington D.C. and graduated from St. Viator High School in 1983. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps in 1988 following his graduation from St. Anselm College. He has held a variety of billets ranging from Rifle Platoon Commander, Officer-in-Charge of Officer Selection Station Milwaukee, Company Commander, and Battalion Inspector-Instructor. His staff billets include time as an Operations Officer for a Headquarters Battalion, Planner for II Marine Expeditionary Force and Operations Officer for 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit.

He has deployed numerous times. On his first deployment in 1990 he participated in Operation *SHARP EDGE*, Monrovia, Liberia, in support of the U.S. Embassy during that country's civil war. In 1991 he deployed to the Mediterranean Sea with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) and in 1996 to Okinawa, Japan as part of the Marine Corps' Unit Deployment Program (UDP). In 1997 he participated in Operation *DYNAMIC STRIKE* in the country of Bosnia-Herzegovina with the 26th MEU (SOC). From September 2002 to May 2003 he deployed in support of Operation *IRAQI FREEDOM* as an individual augment to the Special Operations Component, Central Command. In 2004 he deployed with 22d MEU (SOC) to Afghanistan in support of Operation *MOUNTAIN STORM*. In 2005 he deployed with II MEF (Fwd) to Iraq in support of Operation *IRAQI FREEDOM 04-06*.

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