

It Was Sheridan's Fault Not Custer's: LTG Sheridan's Campaign Plans Against the Plains Indians and the Ties to Current Planning

**A Monograph
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Abstract

IT WAS SHERIDAN'S FAULT NOT CUSTER'S: LTG SHERIDAN'S CAMPAIGN PLANS AGAINST THE PLAIN INDIANS AND THE TIES TO CURRENT PLANNING by MAJOR Hubert L. Stephens, US Army, 77 pages.

Martin van Creveld, a noted theorist, contends that the concept of operational art did not take off in the United States (US) until after the Vietnam War. Conversely, James Schneider, a prominent military theorist, asserts that operational art began in the American Civil War. This monograph provides a holistic analysis of four Plains Indian War Campaigns. Lieutenant General (LTG) Philip Sheridan conducted all four campaigns. This analysis illustrates several enduring principles of both operational art and counterinsurgency (COIN) operations. The purpose of the monograph is to explain the initial failure of LTG Sheridan's 1876 Centennial Campaign against the Sioux and Cheyenne Indians. Additionally, this explanation relates the significance of LTG Sheridan's planning to contemporary COIN campaign planning. The overall methodology is the incorporation of four case studies to test the theory of sanctuary control and elimination of resources to defeat insurgencies.

The four case studies include: the 1868-1869 Cheyenne War, the 1874-1875 Red River War, the 1876 Centennial Campaign, and the 1876-1877 Sioux Campaign. The case studies use three essential structural variables or frameworks. The first framework evaluates the strategic context to deduce the strategic aims and operational objectives. This provides the ends that the Army or tribe attempted to achieve. The second structural analysis uses the elements of operational art described to assess the campaigns. The third aspect of the case study evaluates tenets of current US Army COIN principles.

The monograph contains three key findings. The first key finding is that the failure at the Little Big Horn was LTG Sheridan's fault not LTC Custer's, and this directly relates to the second finding. The second key finding is the importance of operational art in designing a campaign plan to link tactical actions to strategic objectives. The third finding is the efficacy of some of the current COIN tenets. The doctrinal analysis of the four campaigns, using the elements of operational art, illustrates the importance of three elements of operational art to the success of LTG Sheridan's campaigns. The three prevailing elements in at least three of the four campaigns are: operational reach, tempo, and simultaneity and depth. When each of the three elements was interdependent and when the approach was designed correctly, LTG Sheridan had success. The four common successful COIN characteristics are: understanding the environment, intelligence driven operations, isolation of insurgents from their cause and support, and establishing control of the operational area to secure the population. Ultimately, this monograph demonstrates the utility of a strategy of exhaustion and its resulting operations to control terrain and insurgent sanctuaries as well as to deny the enemy resources to defeat an insurgency.

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Introduction

Many authors have written thousands of pages about Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) George Armstrong Custer and the Battle of the Little Bighorn. With each author there is a different explanation as to what went wrong and where fault existed. For the most part, authors either vilify or exalt Custer and his tactical actions during the battle. For those that support Custer, the blame usually lies with Major Marcus Reno or Captain Frederick Benteen for their alleged failures to support LTC Custer. The arguments against LTC Custer generally debate his overzealousness or poor tactical judgment. However, they are all wrong. The failure was an operational failure and the blame truly belongs to the operational level commander, Lieutenant General (LTG) Philip Sheridan.

LTG Sheridan, Commander of the Department of the Missouri and later the Division of the Missouri from 1867 to 1883, had a different perspective on operational art and the importance of the population in Counterinsurgency (COIN) operations. LTG Sheridan had a very harsh view towards the Plains Indians and believed in a strategy of destroying resources and controlling key areas to defeat the Plains Indian insurgency. This is important because in current military operations, debate continues on the appropriate COIN strategy and whether it should be a population-centric strategy or an attrition strategy focused on the enemy. A similar debate occurred after the Civil War as the United States' (US) political and military leadership attempted to address the best strategy for dealing with Indians. Secretary of the Army, General (GEN) William T. Sherman, selected LTG Philip Sheridan to deal with the "Indian Question" based on their shared understanding of the strategy of exhaustion, often called "Total War," from the Civil War.¹ The same strategy carried over to their actions against the Indians in the West. LTG Sheridan had great success during this period, conducting four major campaigns against the Plains Indians. However, LTG Sheridan had one major failure in 1876 during his Centennial Campaign. This monograph explains what led to the initial failure of LTG Sheridan's 1876 Centennial Campaign against

¹ Robert M. Utley and Wilcomb E. Washburn, *Indian Wars*, 1 ed. (Mariner Books, 2002), 210.

the Sioux and Cheyenne Indians and how this relates to contemporary COIN campaign planning. The monograph further illustrates that LTG Sheridan's failed 1876 Centennial Campaign directly resulted from his inability to stop additional Indians, "Summer Roamers," from leaving the reservations and joining the warring tribes of Sioux and Cheyenne. Additionally, the monograph provides new insights on the Plains Indian Wars by using contemporary doctrine embedded in a proper strategic context.

LTG Sheridan had great success from 1867 to 1883, conducting four major campaigns against the Plains Indians. First, the Cheyenne War, which lasted from 1868 to 1869, culminated with LTC Custer's defeat of the Cheyenne at the Battle of Washita. The second campaign, the Red River War, fought from 1874 to 1875, ended with the defeat of the Comanche, Cheyenne, and Kiowa Indians. The third campaign, the Centennial Campaign against the Sioux and Cheyenne, from March to September 1876, included several significant failures that did not occur in the first two campaigns. Major failures included the operational culmination of General Crook at the Battle of the Rosebud and the annihilation of LTC Custer and five companies of the 7th Cavalry at the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Both of these defeats led to LTG Sheridan's operational failure. LTG Sheridan's fourth major campaign began in September 1876, and lasted until May 1877, when Crazy Horse and his band of Sioux warriors surrendered. The 1876 - 1877 Sioux Campaign was a follow-up operation with a new operational approach to defeat the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne Indians. In hindsight, this campaign completed the quest to subdue the Plains Indians. Some historians, like Andrew Birtle, consider the Indian Wars to represent the beginning of US COIN doctrine. Key lessons from LTG Sheridan's four campaigns apply to current COIN doctrine, most notably, the importance of denying insurgents sanctuary and resources. Another important consideration for COIN doctrine is to develop an understanding of indigenous tribal societies.

LTG Sheridan integrated his concept of total war developed during the Civil War to meet the demands of the Plains Indian Wars. There was little to no written doctrine on fighting Indians or Irregular Warfare. However, commanders adjusted existing doctrine to meet the demands of Indian warfare. There are few operational histories from the major Plains Indian Wars. Most historians focused on individual battles or much broader overviews of the Indian wars with little consideration to specific campaigns and

operational art. What is important is how LTG Sheridan and his department commanders pursued three distinct campaigns and how planning and fighting evolved over the eight years of fighting Indians. LTG Sheridan suffered a major operational setback during the Centennial Campaign. It is important to conduct a detailed analysis of the insurgency or irregular warfare doctrine, techniques, and training to determine the manner that the Frontier Army planned to fight and assess how and why they actually fought in the manner they did. It is also important to understand the prominent elements of operational art during this timeframe. This analysis uses the existing elements of operational art from Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Change 1, *Operations*, as well as current COIN doctrine from FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, to contrast the manner that LTG Sheridan pursued his campaigns against the Plains Indians to current COIN campaign planning doctrine. Finally, it is important to understand the larger context of the campaigns with respect to the military's organization, the technology available, and the influence of society on the planning and execution of campaigns.

This monograph consists of four sections. Those sections are: literature review, methodology, four case studies, and a summary and conclusion. The literature review provides a critical summary of the current available literature on the Plains Indian Wars and demonstrates a gap with respect to operational art. The methodology section contains a general discussion of qualitative case study methodology with a particular emphasis on the measurement of the aspects of COIN operations. Each of the four case studies gives a critical analysis of the strategic context, elements of operational art, and COIN variables. The summary and conclusion section discusses the highlights of each campaign while the conclusion discusses the appropriate and applicable lessons for current COIN campaign planning. Ultimately, the monograph illustrates the importance of controlling critical resources through a strategy of exhaustion and denying sanctuary to insurgents as opposed to winning the hearts and minds of the population.

Literature Review

The literature review for this monograph examines history, theory, and doctrine to understand LTG Sheridan's campaigns against the Plains Indians. The review consists of three subjects. The first subject is a critical review of the Indian Campaign literature. The current body of historical work available on the Indian Campaigns primarily consists of three topics. The first topic concentrates on Indian policy. The second area relates to general campaign overviews. The third theme is organization and tactics. What is consistently absent from all of the writing is a discussion of operational art explaining the linkage between tactical and strategic actions. This leads to the second subject of the literature review.

This second portion of the literature review establishes the analytical framework for the campaigns based on existing theory and doctrine. The purpose is to identify structural variables or frameworks to assess the historical cases of LTG Sheridan's four campaigns. The analytical framework comprises three aspects. The first aspect is strategic context, which provides an understanding of what led to the circumstances of each campaign and the associated opportunities and risks. The second subject is operational art theory and doctrine, which serves as a framework for analyzing LTG Sheridan's Plains Indians campaigns. The third area focuses on COIN theory and doctrine, also used to analyze the four campaigns.

This review identifies the three variables of the campaigns as well as the gap on operational assessments of the Plains Indian Wars. This literature review also provides the accepted definitions and thought, past and present, on the application of operational art as well as current COIN doctrine. This is important because these views and definitions provide the basis for analyzing the campaigns. The last portion of the literature review is a summary of the significant findings from the review as well as a description of the range of variables discussed during the case studies.

Indian Campaign Literature

This section is a review of the significant primary and secondary sources for each of the four campaigns. A large volume of works discusses the larger political, military, economic, social,

infrastructure, and informational aspects of the operational environment during the Plains Indian Wars. Peter Cozzens and Robert Wooster, both noted Indian war historians, provides valuable insight into the policy and thinking of the US government and key individuals supporting the actions of the Army during the Plains Indian Wars. In *The Army and the Indian*, Cozzens illustrates the divide amongst key leaders on Indian policy through selected works by leaders such as Brigadier General (BG) John Pope and GEN Sherman, the former a subordinate to LTG Sheridan and the latter his senior. As Cozzens states, “the relationship between soldier and Native American is far more complex than that of simple antagonists.”² In April of 1873, GEN Sherman wrote that enforcement of Indian policy was a more difficult task under President Grant’s Peace Policy than it was if the Army were at war with the Indians and had fewer constraints.³ Cozzens provides a contrasting view in his book about BG Pope. He has the following thoughts about the ‘Indian Question’ stating that “...to the Army officer, a state of peace with Indians is, of all things, the most desirable, and no man in all the country east or west would do more to avert an Indian war.”⁴

Likewise, Wooster demonstrates that public perception as well as policy affected Army actions.⁵ In *The Military and United States Indian Policy, 1865-1903*, Wooster ties the thread between culture, politics and policy, and Army operations. Two particular problem areas that Wooster highlights include the issues between the Army and the Bureau of Indian Affairs as well as the overall size of the Army. Both issues negatively affected the Army’s ability to effectively deal with the Indians on the Great Plains.⁶ Some of these same concerns and considerations continue into current COIN theory and doctrine.

There is no shortage of information on specific battles from the Indian Wars or Indian policy in

² Peter Cozzens, *The Army and the Indian*, ed. Cozzens Peter (Stackpole Books, 2004), Xi.

³ Ibid., 110.

⁴ Ibid., 140.

⁵ Robert Wooster, *The Military and United States Indian Policy, 1865-1903* (University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 41.

⁶ Ibid., 77-78.

general and the Plains Indian Wars in specific. However, there is limited literature that looks at the operational aspects of the campaigns of the Plains Indian Wars. Nevertheless, a thorough synthesis of the material on the battles can provide for an operational analysis of the various campaigns. The three best primary sources are: the Secretary of War's annual *Report of the Secretary* from 1869-1877, and two books by Peter Cozzens which are collections of articles written by participants from the campaigns. The first book is *Conquering the Southern Plains*.⁷ The second book is *Eyewitnesses to the Indian Wars, 1865-1890: Vol. 4*.⁸ There are several secondary works covering the entire Plains Indian Wars along with some books that address specific campaigns. The most prominent works are by Robert Utley. Robert Wooster, another notable frontier historian, called Utley, the dean of frontier military historians.⁹ His key work is *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891*.¹⁰ Several other sources provide valuable insight into each of the four campaigns. Jerome Greene's *Washita: The U.S. Army and the Southern Cheyenne, 1867-1869* best covers the 1868-1869 Cheyenne War.¹¹ J. Brett Cruse's *Red River War* is a recent book on the Red River War and provides archeological perspectives on the campaign.¹² The most detailed work on the 1876 Centennial Campaign is John Gray's book of a similar title, *Centennial Campaign: the Sioux War of 1876*.¹³ Interestingly, each of these books on the individual campaigns link to Robert Utley, either through his contributions to the work in the way of writing the foreword, the latter two works, or by the dedication from Jerome Greene for Utley's inspiration and

⁷ Peter Cozzens, *Conquering the Southern Plains*, ed. Cozzens Peter, 1 ed. (Stackpole Books, 2003).

⁸ Peter Cozzens, *Eyewitnesses to the Indian Wars, 1865-1890: Vol. 4*, ed. Cozzens Peter (Stackpole Books, 2004).

⁹ Combat Studies Institute, *Armed Diplomacy: Two Centuries of American Campaigning* (Combat Studies Institute, 2003), 72.

¹⁰ Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891* (Bison Books, 1984).

¹¹ Jerome A. Greene, *Washita: The U.S. Army and the Southern Cheyennes, 1867-1869* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2008).

¹² J. Brett Cruse, *Battles of the Red River War: Archeological Perspectives on the Indian Campaign of 1874* (Texas A&M University Press, 2008).

¹³ John S. Gray, *Centennial Campaign: The Sioux War of 1876* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1988).

friendship.

The *Reports of the Secretary* provide the most direct understanding of what actually occurred during this period, at least from the Army's perspective. They provide valuable insight into the thinking and ideology of the key leaders within the Division of the Missouri. One such example is LTG Sheridan's remarks about Indian actions in 1869. LTG Sheridan states, "The Indians have run riot along the line of our Western settlements and the emigrant and commercial lines of travel for many years, murdering and plundering, without any adequate punishment, and the government has heretofore sought to give protection to some of its best interests by making presents to these savages."¹⁴ LTG Sheridan goes on to describe the need for governance and the rule of law. LTG Sheridan illustrates his contempt towards the Indians through his harsh language about Indians. The following passage exemplifies his attitude, "the Indian is a lazy, idle vagabond; he never labors, and has no profession except that of arms, to which he is raised from a child; a scalp is constantly dangled before his eyes, and the highest honor he can aspire to is to possess one taken by himself."¹⁵ Annual department situation reports (SITREP) provide the same level of understanding for each of LTG Sheridan's department commanders. These SITREPs were part of the Division of the Missouri SITREP, included in the annual *Report of the Secretary*.

Peter Cozzens works provide firsthand accounts for the two campaigns on the Southern Plains in *Conquering the Southern Plains*. He provides the same level of understanding for the 1876 campaign on the Northern Plains in *Eyewitnesses to the Indian wars, 1865-1890: Vol. 4*. Robert Utley develops the framework for understanding the broader context of frontier operations as well as specifics into each of the campaigns in *Frontier Regulars: the United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891*. Most other literature on the Indian Wars agrees with the general characteristics or patterns for Army fighting on the Frontier as described by Utley.

One work, *The Encyclopedia of Indian Wars: Western Battles and Skirmishes, 1850-1890*, by

¹⁴ *Report of the Secretary of War*, 41st Cong., 2nd sess., 1869, 37.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

Gregory Michno, does provide a counter view.¹⁶ Michno uses actual battle statistics to demonstrate that winter campaigns were not the preferred campaign method. His data shows only 36 percent of battles (363 of 1,015) occurred in the winter, from the period 1866 to 1880.¹⁷ However, large expeditions or campaigns like LTG Sheridan conducted only accounted for 10 percent of all battles, and a larger percentage of these battles did occur during winter months.¹⁸ Further analysis shows winter campaigns were still preferred in general, and specifically by LTG Sheridan.

Army doctrine from this period discusses only regular warfare, although the Army did have extensive theory on Indian warfare as well as tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) to combat Indians. Andrew Birtles's *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941* best captured this informal doctrine.¹⁹ The *Prairie Traveler* written by Captain Randolph Marcy in 1859 provides the closest form of an Army Field Manual on frontier operations.²⁰ The book *US Army in the Plains Indian Wars 1865-1891*, by Clayton Chun provides an overview of Army doctrine and organization for the military that fought in the Plains Wars from the 1860s through the 1870s.²¹ Additionally, several collections of primary and secondary sources add to the overall understanding of the topic. These sources describe the policy towards Indians and the best ways for the government to deal with the "Indian Question." One of the best primary sources is Peter Cozzens' *The Army and the Indian*. Another good primary source is *The Indian Question* by Francis A. Walker, a former US Commissioner of Indian Affairs.²² An excellent secondary source that provides a great perspective on the US Government's policy towards Indians is Robert Wooster's *The Military and United States Indian Policy*,

¹⁶ Gregory F. Michno, *Encyclopedia of Indian Wars: Western Battles and Skirmishes, 1850-1890*, 2nd printing ed. (Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2003).

¹⁷ Ibid., 357.

¹⁸ Ibid., 369.

¹⁹ Andrew J. Birtle, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941* (United States Government Printing, 1997).

²⁰ Randolph B. Marcy, *The Prairie Traveler* (Applewood Books, 1993).

²¹ Clayton Chun, *US Army in the Plains Indian Wars 1865-1891*, 1st ed. (Osprey Publishing, 2004).

²² Francis Amasa Walker, *The Indian Question* (University of Michigan Library, 2006).

1865-1903.

A short overview for each of the books identified illustrates the mindset and context for US COIN practice towards the Plains Indians during LTG Sheridan's four major campaigns. Birtles's *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941* describes the US Army's operations during irregular warfare or counterinsurgencies from the Civil War until World War II. Birtle provides an understanding of theories, concepts, and methods employed in the conduct of frontier operations in chapter three, "The Constabulary Years, 1865-1898." Some historians contend that Army doctrine for counter guerrilla, pacification, and nation-building activities before World War II were nonexistent; however, Birtle provides evidence to the contrary. Birtle illustrates continuity in the Frontier Army's performance through evidence of incorporation of central principles governing such operations into official Army doctrinal literature. His work demonstrated that while some things change, fighting irregular warfare remains surprisingly constant.²³ Birtle establishes the significance of how preparation to fight regular warfare is beneficial in irregular warfare.

Captain Randolph Marcy provides a how-to manual for surviving on the plains in *Prairie Traveler*. Marcy describes the details for how to conduct significant "convoy operations" in Chapter 1 that any modern soldier conducting a combat logistics patrol could appreciate. Randolph Marcy was a soldier with over 25 years experience on the plains. He wrote his book to aid travelers crossing the Plains, particularly, the Southern Plains. He states that his main object is to explain the best methods for performing the duties devolving upon the prairie traveler.²⁴ He also believes that West Point was successful at teaching about civilized warfare but did not prepare officers for frontier service.²⁵ One element that Marcy identifies as important for the selection of a captain is still important today. That is,

²³ Birtle, 55-98.

²⁴ Marcy, 1.

²⁵ Ibid.

“good judgment, integrity of purpose, and practical experience are the essential prerequisites.”²⁶

Chun’s *US Army in the Plains Indian Wars 1865-1891* provides the details for the organization of US forces during this time period. Chun’s overview of the Plains Army highlights the combat mission, doctrine and training, unit organization, and tactics. This book establishes the baseline for evaluating Sheridan’s Division of the Missouri during the Plains Indian Wars. Chun describes the Army mission as peace enforcement between the settlers and Indians, treaty compliance, and infrastructure protection in support of Western expansion.²⁷ Chun highlights how the frontier Army remained focused on key aspects of doctrine and training necessary to counter European countries and that perceived threat. The Army did not see the Indians and the series of continued engagements on the frontier as the primary threat.²⁸ Chun points out that successful commanders, such as Sheridan, adapted conventional doctrinal concepts and Civil War experience to the campaigns on the Plains. One of the primary concepts to emerge from this offensive action was the use of converging columns to locate, close with, and destroy the enemy.²⁹ Sheridan employed this form of operational maneuver in all four of his campaigns and historians discuss this primary maneuver in practically every publication on the Plains Indian Wars. In addition to converging columns, some commanders employed winter campaigns to target the Indians during a vulnerable period.³⁰ Another successful practice was the establishment of posts in hostile territory to provide security and population protection.³¹ Chun illustrates the changing unit organization during the period because of congressionally mandated drawdowns as well as adaptations to the mission. The drawdowns resulted in an end strength of 54,302 soldiers in 1869 down to 27,000 soldiers in 1874.³² Chun’s work provides an appreciation of the varying influences on the frontier Army and how they

²⁶ Marcy, 9.

²⁷ Chun, 12.

²⁸ Ibid., 14.

²⁹ Ibid., 15.

³⁰ Ibid., 16.

³¹ Ibid., 17.

³² Ibid., 33-34.

shaped LTG Sheridan's operations.

Analytical Framework

The analytical framework for this monograph consists of assessing three factors: strategic context, operational art, and COIN operations. The first aspect of the literature review identifies methods for analyzing the strategic context. The second portion of the literature review looks at the evolution of operational art with a particular emphasis after the Civil War and then at existing Army doctrine to establish the elements to assess each of LTG Sheridan's campaigns. The third part of the review looks at COIN theory and doctrine to identify acceptable variables to evaluate the absence or presence of accepted COIN tenets in LTG Sheridan's campaign plans.

Evaluating the strategic context requires a framework to gain a holistic understanding of the environment, which enables planners to identify potential risks and opportunities. Colin Gray, a noted British-American strategist, provides a useful heuristic to evaluate the strategic context.³³ Gray asserts that understanding war requires contextualization and he provides a framework for strategic context, which includes seven elements: political, socio-cultural, economic, technological, military-strategic, geographical, and historical.³⁴ Another similar framework to evaluate strategic context is environmental scanning using PEST analysis. This PEST framework consists of an evaluation of political, economic,

³³ Colin S. Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations: An Introduction to Strategic History (Strategy and History)* (Routledge, 2007), 3-8. Gray's framework looks at the course of history in a strategic perspective over the last 200 years and provides six general themes: 1. Continuity and discontinuity in strategic history; 2. Relationship between politics and war; 3. Relationship between war and warfare; 4. Relationship between politicians and soldiers; 5. Dependency of war on society; 6. The relations between war and peace, and between peace and war.

³⁴ Ibid., 10-12. Political context - the fuel for the strategic strand in history, it is what war is about; the decisions to fight or not are part of the political process. Socio-cultural context – societies approach war shaped by their prevalent values and beliefs; those values and beliefs evolve over time, but they provide a context in which policy and strategy are made. Economic context -links defense preparation and actual warfare are exercises in economic choice; a major competitive economic shortfall ultimately proves strategically fatal. Technological context - identifies opportunities and limitations. Military-strategic context - is a contemporary state of the art of military affairs in a country and the balance of military power. Geographic context – refers to spatial relationships and the relationships of neighboring states and the arrangement of land and sea as well as resources. Historical context – everything happens in a chronology; there are deep, proximate, and intermediate causes that are arranged in a chronology for an event.

social, and technological factors. PEST analysis is used in the business world to assist in identifying risk and opportunity based off trends in the environment. Francis J. Aguilar, a Harvard Business School professor, introduced PEST in 1967 in his book *Scanning the Business Environment*.³⁵ Army doctrine provides another similar framework called PMESII to analyze the elements of the operational environment. PMESII analysis looks at the political, military, economic, social, infrastructure, and information aspects of the environment.³⁶ The historical context is one important characteristic that Gray provides, which is absent from the other two frameworks. This provides greater clarity on causal factors for issues and opportunities within the strategic environment.

Operational art is the second part of the analytical framework. This section provides a review of operational art theory and doctrine from the 1860s and 1870s as well as on current operational art. LTG Sheridan demonstrates the application of Operational Art in each of his campaigns against the Indians. No available literature on the Plains Indian Wars or campaigns specifically addresses operational art or is written in a manner that highlights the elements of operational art as described in FM 3-0, Change 1. Some scholars contend there was no operational art at the time in the US. Robert Wooster, for example, wrote a paper “The frontier Army and the occupation of the West, 1865-1900” in which he contends operational art did not exist.³⁷

In *Vulcans Anvil: The American Civil War and the Foundations of Operational Art*, James Schneider contends that operational art began during the Civil War.³⁸ Schneider describes operational art, as practiced by Grant during the Civil War, as a transformation due to the Industrial Revolution. Schneider contends that Grant used “deep chisel-like sweeps of maneuver and hammer blows of battle

³⁵ Francis J. Aguilar, *Scanning the Business Environment*, *Studies of the Modern Corporation* (New York,: Macmillan, 1967), 158.

³⁶ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations* (January, 2011), 1-5 – 1-8.

³⁷ United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, *Armed Diplomacy: Two Centuries of American Campaigning: 5-7 August 2003*, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas (Combat Studies Institute Press, 2003), 65-76.

³⁸ James J. Schneider, *Vulcan's Anvil: The American Civil War and the Foundations of Operational Art* (SAMS/USACGSC, June 1992).

and created great three-dimensional masterpieces.”³⁹ Schneider illustrates how changes in technology and advanced logistics transformed armies. This transformation allowed armies to conduct simultaneous and continuous operations in depth.⁴⁰ Schneider argues that operational art at the time, included eight elements: the distributed operations, the distributed campaign, continuous logistics, instantaneous command and control, operationally durable formation, operational vision, the distributed enemy, and the distributed deployment.⁴¹ It is significant to point out that Schneider contends that for operational art to occur, both sides must be similarly organized and equipped. However, the asymmetric or irregular warfare by the Plains Indians was anything but similar.

Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, superseded all operational art doctrine as stated on page i.⁴² However, planners can still use the elements and concepts of operational art defined in the February 2011 FM 3-0, Change 1 as the framework for analyzing operational art for each of LTG Sheridan’s campaigns. The elements of operational art provide a methodology to extract relevant lessons from historical campaigns.

ADP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, the new capstone document for the Army dated October 2011, describes how Army operations intend to integrate with Joint, Interagency, and Multinational partners. ADP 3-0 is a continuation on past doctrine, building on the three-dimensional construct of AirLand Battle and full spectrum operations constructs.⁴³ The underlying premise is “Army units seize, retain, and exploit the initiative to gain and maintain a position of relative advantage in sustained land operations to create conditions for favorable conflict resolution.”⁴⁴ ADP 3-0 defines operational art as, “the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time,

³⁹Ibid., 32.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 34.

⁴¹ Ibid., 35-37.

⁴² Department of the Army, *ADP 3-0, Unified Land Operations* (October, 2011).

⁴³ Department of the Army, *ADP 3-0, Unified Land Operations*, 3.

⁴⁴ Army, *ADP 3-0, Unified Land Operations*.

space, and purpose.⁴⁵ Although ADP 3-0 superseded FM 3-0, Change 1, it does not provide a construct for the elements of operational art. Therefore, this monograph uses the eleven elements described in chapter seven of FM 3-0 Change 1 as a basis for analysis. The eleven elements of operational art are: endstate and conditions, center of gravity, approach (direct or indirect), decisive points, lines of operations / efforts, operational reach, tempo, simultaneity, phasing and transitions, culmination, and risk.⁴⁶ Appendix B (Terms) provides a complete list of definitions.

The third part of the analytical framework is COIN operations. This section provides a review of the current thinking on COIN theory and doctrine. The focus of the literature review of theory is based on population centric COIN theory, which is the leading theory underpinning current Army COIN doctrine. In addition to the theory, a review of the key aspects of FM 3-24 captures the essential doctrinal framework for assessing LTG Sheridan's campaigns. This review is not focused on determining if population centric COIN is right or wrong but in providing the key tenets of population centric COIN doctrine. This monograph reviews three key COIN theorists: David Galula, David Kilcullen, and Roger Trinquier. Their respective works are: *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, *Counterinsurgency*, and *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*.

In *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* Galula provides a logical flow that describes an insurgency, and then provides a counterinsurgency strategy and tactics to defeat the insurgency.⁴⁷ Galula describes four prerequisites for a successful insurgency: an attractive cause, weakness in the COIN forces, a not-too-hostile geographic environment, and outside support.⁴⁸

According to Galula there are four laws in the strategy of a counterinsurgency: support of the population, support of an active minority, support is conditional, and intensity of efforts and vastness of

⁴⁵ Army, *ADP 3-0, Unified Land Operations*, 9.

⁴⁶ Army, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations*, 7-5.

⁴⁷ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* First ed. (Praeger Pub, 2006).

⁴⁸ Galula, 17-39.

means are essential.⁴⁹ Galula asserts that there are eight steps derived from the four laws. Those steps are: concentrate forces to destroy or expel insurgents, detach sufficient troops in the area to oppose a comeback, establish contact with the population, destroy local insurgent political organizations, establish new authorities through elections, test the authorities, group and educate leaders, and win over or suppress remnant insurgents.⁵⁰

In *Counterinsurgency*, Kilcullen provides a funneled approach that begins with COIN principles and cases and then leads to a new theory of counterinsurgency to defeat terrorism.⁵¹ This approach is conducive in relating to his overall premise that a functional approach to COIN is more appropriate than a structural approach.⁵² Kilcullen's underlying premise throughout his work is to focus on governance but through a functional model developed by Joel Migdal.⁵³ The model assists in analyzing the effectiveness of government in four functional areas: penetration of society, regulation of social order, extraction of resources, and application of resources to meet societal needs. Kilcullen asserts popular support follows power and effectiveness, and to defeat an insurgency COIN forces must establish effective governance from the bottom up.⁵⁴

In *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, Trinquier describes the essential prerequisite as identifying the guerilla's weakness and concentrating the army's main effort at that weakness.⁵⁵ Trinquier also suggests that the enemy's strength comes from the support of the population

⁴⁹ Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, 74-80.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 80.

⁵¹ David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁵² David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, (Oxford University Press, 2010), 149- 151.

⁵³ Ibid., 150. This model allows COIN forces to assess the strength and effectiveness of insurgents to provide governance compared to the established government system.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 150. Insurgents are not the strongest in areas where they have the support of the people. People support insurgent groups where they are they are most powerful and provide the four functions of government better than the established government.

⁵⁵ Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, First ed. (Praeger, 2008), 61.

and that support is indispensable.⁵⁶ However, Trinquier also believes that, “total dependence upon terrain and population is also a guerilla’s weak point.”⁵⁷ Therefore, he contends, COIN forces should both separate the guerilla from his terrain and the populations by interrupting his food supplies and loosening the guerilla’s grip on the population by destroying his combat organization. In short, Trinquier provides three principles for fighting guerillas: cut the guerilla off from the population, render guerilla zones untenable, and coordinate the actions over large areas and time.⁵⁸

Field Manual 3-24: Counterinsurgency provides established doctrine and fundamental principles for COIN operations.⁵⁹ The target audience for the manual is leaders and planners at the battalion and above level.⁶⁰ FM 3-24 draws a distinction between 20th century insurgencies and insurgencies prior to World War I (WWI). The view is insurgencies before WWI focused on defending terrain, leadership, or culture. Twentieth century insurgencies are more political.⁶¹ The manual outlines eight historic principles for successful COIN Operations: legitimacy, unity of effort, primacy of political factors, understanding the environment, intelligence driven operations, isolating insurgents from cause and support, security under the rule of law, and long-term commitment.⁶² There are also five contemporary COIN imperatives provided in the manual. Those imperatives are: manage information expectations, use appropriate level of force, learn and adapt, empower the lowest levels, and support the host nation.⁶³ FM 3-24 lists five primary requirements for successful COIN operations. One, attack the insurgent strategy and establish host nation legitimacy. Two, establish control of the operational area and secure the population within those areas. Three, secure support for the government by the population and maintain legitimacy. Four,

⁵⁶ Trinquier, 63.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 64.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 65.

⁵⁹ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency* (December, 2006).

⁶⁰ Ibid., vii.

⁶¹ Ibid., 1-3.

⁶² Ibid., 1-20 – 1-24.

⁶³ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency*, 1-24 – 1-26.

regain control of insurgent areas and expand areas to support the population. Five, employ information operations to influence the population.⁶⁴ Additionally, FM 3-24 provides five recommended logical lines of operations (LLO) for COIN: one, civil security operation, two, HN security forces, three, essential services, four, governance, and five, economic development. The elements of a successful COIN along with the LLO provide another lens and framework to analyze LTG Sheridan's campaign planning and to assist in extracting relevant historical factors for consideration in future COIN campaign planning.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature review of theory, history, and doctrine highlights several variables to assess for the campaign analysis. The independent variables prominent in most of the campaign literature include; the level of sanctuary control by the Army, the enemy the Army was facing, and the time of the year of the campaigns. These factors contributed to the dependent variable, which was the outcome of the campaign. More importantly, the literature review highlights a gap in the study of the Plains Indian Wars in general, and of LTG Sheridan's campaigns in particular. That gap is the assessment of operational art, which provides the linkage between the tactical and strategic actions as well as the policy of the United States. The literature review also illustrates the need for a review of the strategic context and the impact on the operational objectives of LTG Sheridan. The structural variables of evaluating the strategic context, analyzing the elements of operational art, and assessing the principles of COIN provide the method to evaluate the campaigns. Figure 1 is a complete list of all of the variables assessed for each campaign.

⁶⁴ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency*, 5-1 – 5-2.

Figure 1: Range of Monograph Variables

Monograph Variables			
Campaign Variables	Strategic Context Variables (Structural)	Operational Art Variables (Structural)	COIN Variables (Structural)
Outcome (DV)	Political	End State and Conditions	Legitimacy
Campaign Time (IV)	Socio-cultural	Centers of Gravity	Unity of Effort
Enemy Tribe (IV)	Economic	Direct or Indirect Approach	Primacy of Political Factors
Control of Sanctuary (IV)	Technological	Decisive Points	Understand the Environment
	Military-strategic	Lines of Operation	Intelligence Driven Operations
	Geographical	Operational Reach	Isolate Insurgents from Cause and Support
	Historical (Deep, Intermediate, Proximate)	Tempo	Security under the RoL
		Simultaneity	Long-term Commitment
		Phasing and Transitions	Manage Information Expectations
		Culmination	Use Appropriate Level of Force
		Risk	Learn and Adapt
			Empower the Lowest Levels
			Support the Host Nation
			Attack the Insurgent Strategy and Establish HN Legitimacy
			Establish control of the operational area and secure the population
			Operate from areas of strength, control population centers, secure government support base
			Regain control of insurgent areas, expand areas to support the population, and eliminate insurgent control of regions
			Employ IO to influence the population
			Combat Operations / Civil Security Operations
			HN Security Forces
			Essential Services
			Governance
			Economic Development

Methodology

The overall methodology for this monograph is the incorporation of four case studies to test the theory of sanctuary control and elimination of resources to defeat insurgencies. The specific methodology used for evaluating the four campaigns is a controlled comparison using qualitative case studies. The controlled comparison consists of using either contrasts or similarities to develop the hypothesis.⁶⁵ In this monograph, the controlled comparison focuses on the similarities of three of the four campaigns and the contrast for the one unsuccessful campaign. The controlled comparison incorporates the method of difference to illustrate the change in the independent variables' (campaign time, enemy tribe, and level of control) impact on the dependent variable (outcome of the campaign).⁶⁶ According to Stephen Van Evera, the method of difference is preferred when cases have similar general characteristics but with different impact on the study variable.⁶⁷ The four campaigns selected were all planned and led by LTG Sheridan. The justification for using only campaigns planned and led by LTG Sheridan is to eliminate other independent variables such as campaign leaders and to maintain as much consistency in cases as possible. There are three essential structural variables; strategic context, elements of operational art, and COIN principles and imperatives, used to measure the success or failure of each of the campaigns. The four cases will demonstrate the validity of this theory through the method of difference and illustrate the congruence between expectations and observations with the different outcomes.

When examining LTG Sheridan's four campaigns, there are three essential structural variables for the cases. The first consideration is the strategic aims and operational objectives of both the Indian tribes and the US Army, which provides the ends the Army or tribe attempted to achieve. The second set of

⁶⁵ Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Cornell University Press, 1997), 68.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 55-57. Van Evera contends that case studies can serve five main purposes: testing theories, creating theories, identifying antecedent conditions, testing the importance of antecedent conditions, and explaining cases of importance. For this monograph the case study is used to test a theory. The use of the controlled comparison is to explore the observations between the four case studies and illustrate the difference in the one unsuccessful campaign.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 57.

structural variables is an evaluation of the elements of operational art. The third aspect of the evaluation is a review of operations using current US Army COIN principles. After reviewing each of the three parts for each campaign, this monograph will provide an assessment of why LTG Sheridan initially failed during the 1876 Centennial Campaign through the method of difference between each campaign. The last section of the monograph will summarize and provide conclusions. This section links the significant findings of the research to current COIN campaign planning and doctrine to provide current relevance.

It is important to understand the methodology and application of each of the criteria used to assess the four campaigns. There are four primary categories for assessment of each campaign. The first portion of each campaign analysis consists of a campaign overview highlighting; the period, tribes and units involved, outcome of the campaign, level of control of the reservations, and the significance of the campaign. The second category is the analysis identifies the strategic context and the political aim or object and the strategic objectives for the campaign along with the operational objectives to meet the strategic objectives. Evaluating the strategic context requires a framework to gain a holistic understanding of the environment, which enables planners to identify potential risks and opportunities. The third part is an analysis of the elements of operational art. The fourth category is a COIN analysis to review the campaigns with respect to current COIN Lines of Effort (LOE) and key principles from FM 3-24. After analyzing each of the four components, the key synthesis is a contrast of current COIN doctrine with accepted practices and beliefs during the historical campaigns followed by an identification of acceptable practices to support contemporary COIN campaign planning.

1868-1869 Cheyenne War

The Cheyenne War began in October 1868 after an unsuccessful summer campaign by BG Alfred Sully. LTG Sheridan employed three columns for his winter campaign. The first column, led by Major A.W. Evans, maneuvered from west to east from Fort Bascom, New Mexico. The second column, led by MG Eugene A. Carr, maneuvered to the southeast from Fort Lyon, Colorado. The third column, led by LTG Sheridan along with BG Sully and LTC Custer, maneuvered south from Fort Dodge, Kansas.⁶⁸ See Map 1: 1868-1869 Cheyenne War Campaign Map for a graphic overview of the campaign. The three primary tribes involved during this campaign were the Cheyenne, Comanche, and Kiowa. The campaign consisted of seven major battles that were part of two major operations.⁶⁹ The outcome of the campaign was a significant defeat of the three tribes that culminated with a large portion of each of the tribes going onto established reservations in Indian Territory. However, there was no lasting peace and LTG Sheridan executed another campaign in 1874 to ultimately subdue the tribes of the Southern plains and to establish a lasting peace. A major contributing factor to this initial outcome was the level of control of the reservations and the establishment of new forts to maintain control over the hostile Indians.

Strategic Context

A review of the strategic context and societal pressures during the 1868-1869 Cheyenne War using Gray's framework for strategic context reveals several strategic and operational challenges and opportunities. The advancement of technology, specifically, the railroad, provided one of the most significant opportunities to frontier forces by increasing LTG Sheridan's operational reach. The ability to sustain forces over long distances supported LTG Sheridan's operational concept of a winter campaign. The strategic problem for the US government was how to uphold the treaty obligations of Medicine Lodge and Fort Laramie, while allowing for westward expansion and protection white settlers. The

⁶⁸ Utley, 223. Stan Hoig, *Tribal Wars of the Southern Plains*, 1st ed. (University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 252-253.

⁶⁹ Michno, 224-229.

political aim was to support continued westward expansion simultaneously with a peaceful Indian policy of placing Indians on reservations and providing for their needs. The strategic objective for the campaign was to compel the Indians to move to the reservations on the Southern Plains. LTG Sheridan identified two operational objectives to meet the strategic objectives. Those operational objectives were to destroy the villages of hostile Indians to force them back on the reservations, and to demoralize the remaining Indians to prevent future hostilities.⁷⁰ Although the campaign was a short-term success, there was not a lasting peace because not every tribal element was subdued and compelled to accept reservation life.

Analysis of Elements of Operational Art

Using the 11 elements of operational art as defined in FM 3-0, Ch. 1, it is clear to see how LTG Sheridan arrayed tactical actions to achieve strategic objectives. Appendix C, Figure C-1, of this monograph provides a detailed analysis of the elements of operational art displayed during the 1868-1869 Cheyenne Campaign. Based on that analysis, LTG Sheridan effectively employed all 11 of the elements of operational art. LTG Sheridan pursued a course of action that consisted of an indirect approach with simultaneous offensive operations to destroy hostile Indian villages and defeat hostile warriors. He maneuvered his forces over hundreds of miles, engaged in eight major battles, destroying two major villages and vast amounts of supplies belonging to both Cheyenne and Comanche Indian. LTG Sheridan's five most significant elements of operational art were; use of decisive points, extension of his operational reach, continuous offensive tempo, use of simultaneity, and the risk that he took to achieve his desired end state. LTG Sheridan had six decisive points during the Cheyenne Campaign. They included; establishing three supply depots in hostile territory, shaping operations along the Republican River, LTC Custer's victory at Washita, the establishment of Fort Sill, shaping operations to destroy Comanche villages, and key leader engagements. LTG Sheridan accomplished his campaign objectives through the employment of simultaneity and depth by conducting three simultaneous operations that limited the

⁷⁰ *Report of the Secretary of War*, 45.

Indians ability to outmaneuver his forces using their exceptional mobility. The tempo of LTG Sheridan's operations made it difficult for tribes to consolidate and employ their superior numbers. LTG Sheridan extended his operational reach by establishing new bases of operations closer to the Washita River area of operations. LTG Sheridan accepted risk to his forces through their exposure to the harsh plains winter. LTG Sheridan mitigated this risk by extending the logistics and stockpiling supplies at the forts and newly established supply depots. LTG Sheridan viewed the opportunity as greater than the risk because Indians were most vulnerable during this period of harsh weather due to their decreased mobility. The opportunity provided LTG Sheridan the ability to seize and maintain the initiative before spring and summer when the Indians could regain their mobility.

LTG Sheridan's reconstructed mission, using current Army vernacular, would read: The department of the Missouri conducts offensive operations no later than October 1868. The purpose is to destroy hostile Indians' vital resources (villages, ponies, food, and supplies) in order to compel hostile tribes (Arapahos, Cheyenne, Comanche, and Kiowa) to occupy reservations provided by the US government and allow for continued unimpeded western expansion. LTG Sheridan actually issued a similar order to LTC Custer before his attack of the Cheyenne village at Washita. In the order LTG Sheridan stated, "Proceed south, in the direction of the Antelope Hills, thence towards the Washita River, the supposed winter seat of the hostile tribes; destroy their villages and ponies; kill or hang all warriors, and bring back all women and children."⁷¹

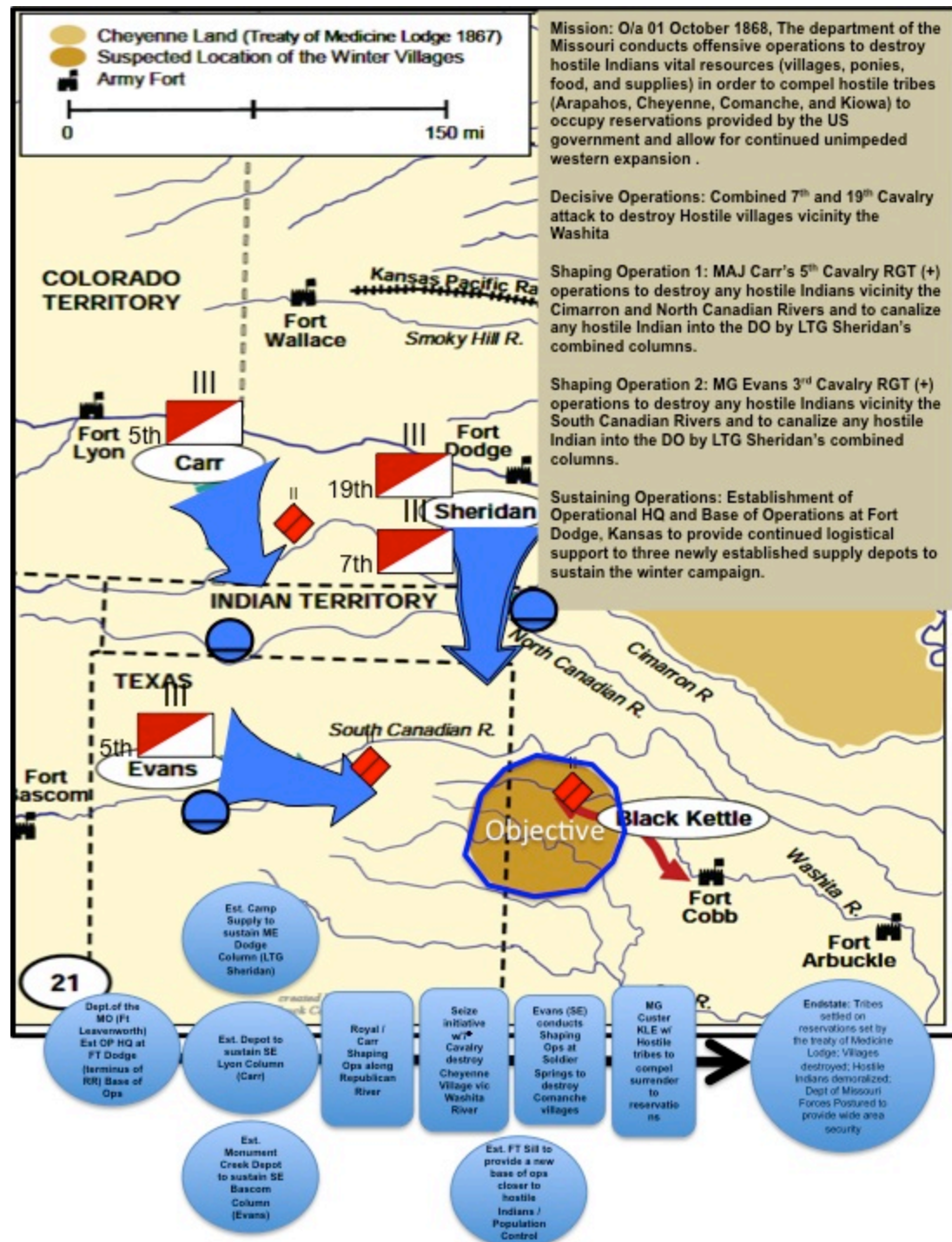
LTG Sheridan's presumed intent: The purpose of this operation is to destroy the ability of hostile Indians to make war and depredations against the US government and its people. The conditions at the end state are: hostile tribes no longer maintain the initiative and resources and their offensive operations have culminated, friendly forces have seized the initiative and are prepared for follow-on operations against other hostile Indians, and key terrain in Indian Territory is retained to provide a base for follow-on

⁷¹ De Benneville Rand Keim, *Sheridan's Troopers on the Borders: A Winter Campaign on the Plains* (University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 103.

operations.

LTG Sheridan's campaign consisted of three phases (Phase II (Seize Initiative), Phase III (Dominate), and Phase IV (Stabilize)). Phase II (Seize the Initiative) had two decisive points to establish the conditions for transition to Phase III. The decisive points were: the Department of the Missouri's establishment of three logistics depots in the area of operations and pursuit of hostile tribes. Phase III (Dominate) had five decisive points focused on dominating hostile tribes and establishing government control within the Department of Missouri. The first and most important decisive point was the destruction of hostile villages and supplies near the Washita River. LTG Sheridan's combined operations defeated the hostile tribes' warriors, the operational Center of Gravity, using an indirect approach. The Department of the Missouri's operations focused on seizing the initiative and forcing the Indians to culminate by destroying their resources and denying their mobility and ability to fight, thus compelling them to move to reservations. The Department of the Missouri's executed simultaneous operations with three converging columns and logistics operations enabled by rail and supply depots. Logistics operations extended the reach and supported the attacks throughout the depth of the theater of operations. The decisive operation (DO) for Phase III was LTG Sheridan's Fort Dodge columns offensive operations to destroy the Cheyenne villages in vicinity of the Washita River. LTG Sheridan had two shaping operations (SO) for Phase III. Shaping operation one (SO1) was the Fort Bascom column's operations to block Indian forces in the West. Shaping operation two (SO2) was the Fort Lyon column's operations to destroy hostile villages and block Indian movements. Sustaining operation focused on establishment of the three supply depots and continued provisioning of supplies to the operational columns.

Figure 2: 1868-1869 Cheyenne War Campaign Map⁷²



⁷² Charles D Collins, *Cheyenne Wars Atlas* (Combat Studies Institute, 2010), 49.

COIN Analysis

When analyzing LTG Sheridan's operation with respect to COIN, LOEs and key principles from FM 3-24, it is clear that LTG Sheridan's operational approach focused on the military nature of defeating the Southern Plains Indians. This is in contrast to the primacy of a political approach as advocated in current COIN doctrine. LTG Sheridan's actions focused on offensive operations to control terrain and to deny or destroy resources as part of an attritional strategy to compel the Indians onto the reservations. A contrast of current COIN doctrine, with accepted practices and beliefs during that timeframe, illustrates the presence of four historical COIN principles, two contemporary COIN imperatives, three overarching requirements for successful COIN operations, and one COIN LOE. Five of the 23 categories contain relevant aspects of planning that could still be used to support current COIN campaign planning.

The four principles identified in this campaign were; legitimacy, understanding the environment, intelligence driven operations, and isolation of insurgents from their cause and support. The legitimizing authority for the US government's actions against the Southern Plains Indians was the Medicine Lodge Treaty. The US treaty system with the Southern Plains Indians placed the Indians on reservations in exchange for payments and annuities. When the Indians did not stay on the reservations and continued to attack settlers, they were in violation of the treaty. LTG Sheridan designed his campaign plan based on his understanding of the environment. LTG Sheridan developed a campaign plan based off failures from the 1868 summer campaign as well as lessons learned from MG Hancock's failed campaign in 1867. LTG Sheridan realized the need to exploit intelligence in order to find, fix, and finish the hostile Indians. LTG Sheridan exploited the intelligence gained from the prisoners taken at Washita to aid the targeting effort to find, fix, and finish the other tribes along the Washita River, which provides one example of using intelligence to drive operations.⁷³ LTG Sheridan introduced converging columns and the use of a winter

⁷³ Greene, 163.

campaign.⁷⁴ LTG Sheridan believed in total warfare and subjecting the enemy population to war. This was part of his attempt to isolate the insurgents from their support.⁷⁵

The two applicable contemporary COIN imperatives were; learn and adapt, and empower the lowest level. LTG Sheridan's reflection on action is evidenced by how he adjusted from his summer campaigns of employing single columns in direct actions to attacking the Indians using converging columns. LTG Sheridan provided broad guidance and allowed decentralized execution by his subordinate commanders to achieve his intent, which is consistent with the current concept of Mission Command and empowering the lowest level.

The three overarching requirements for successful COIN operations evident in the Cheyenne Campaign were; attack the insurgent strategy and establish host nation legitimacy, establish control of the operational area and secure the population, and operate from areas of strength, control population centers, and secure government support base. LTG Sheridan used an indirect approach to attack the insurgent strategy and to establish government authority in Indian Territory. LTG Sheridan's plan was to punish the hostile Indians by forcing the tribes onto the reservations established by the treaty of Medicine Lodge.⁷⁶ LTG Sheridan stated, "the immediate effect of a victory would be to demoralize the rest of the hostiles, which of course would greatly facilitate and expedite our ultimate success."⁷⁷ Sheridan planned to demonstrate to the Indians that the winter season would not provide them rest. Their villages and livestock were vulnerable and their only security would come from obeying the laws.⁷⁸ One way LTG Sheridan established control over the operational area was by establishing Fort Sill in Indian Territory. This allowed his forces to operate from areas of strength. This all occurred along the one line of effort,

⁷⁴ Robert M. Utley, 222.

⁷⁵ Utley, 143.

⁷⁶ Philip Henry Sheridan, Author, *Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan, General, United States Army* (University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 631.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 806.

⁷⁸ *1868 Report of the Secretary of War*, 45.

Combat Operations and Civil Security Operations. The five most relevant aspects from this campaign for current planning were; understand the environment, need for intelligence driven operations, isolate insurgents from their cause and support, empower the lowest levels, and attack the insurgent strategy and establish host nation legitimacy.

1874-1875 Red River War

The Red River War that began in July 1874 and lasted until the spring of 1875 encompassed much of western Oklahoma and northern Texas.⁷⁹ LTG Sheridan used five separate formations for this campaign, continuing the use of his converging columns. The requirement to oversee two departments increased the complexity of command and control. His operations included two subordinate departments, the Departments of the Missouri and Texas. There were two columns from the former and three from the latter. The first column, led by Colonel Nelson A. Miles, maneuvered from north to south from Fort Dodge, Kansas towards the Washita River valley in Indian Territory. The second column, led by Major William R. Price, maneuvered to the east from Fort Union and Fort Bascom, New Mexico. The third column, led by LTC John W. Davidson, maneuvered west from Fort Sill, Indian Territory. The fourth column, led by LTC George P. Buell, maneuvered northwest from Fort Griffin, Texas. Colonel Randal S. Mackenzie led the fifth column, which maneuvered north from Fort Concho, Texas.⁸⁰ See Figure 2: 1874-1875 Red River War Map for a graphic depiction of the campaign. The three primary tribes involved during this campaign were the Cheyenne, Comanche, and Kiowa. The campaign consisted of eleven major battles that were part of the overall operation.⁸¹ The outcome of the campaign was an end to all major hostilities by any of the tribes on the Southern Plains. The tribes lost two decisive battles at Palo Duro Canyon and Sappa Creek. This campaign provided for a lasting peace on the Southern Plains and LTG Sheridan described it as, “the most successful of any Indian Campaign in this country since its settlement by the whites.”⁸² Two of the most decisive elements in LTG Sheridan’s campaign were the level of control established by the military on the reservations and the ruthless tempo maintained by subordinate commanders to exhaust the hostile Indians.

⁷⁹ Cruse, 17.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 17-18 and Hoig, 295-296.

⁸¹ Michno, 276-290.

⁸² Robert G. Carter, *On the Border with Mackenzie; or, Winning West Texas from the Comanches* (Texas State Historical Assn, 2011), 525.

Strategic Context

A review of the strategic context during the 1874-1875 Red River War points to several strategic and operational challenges. The strategic problem for the US government was how to address the continuing Indian issue. President Grant's policy focused on subduing the Indians through kindness. However, the Piegan Massacre in January 1870 remained a contentious issue highlighting problems concerning the military's treatment of Indians.⁸³ COL Grierson, one of LTG Sheridan's subordinate commanders, believed the cause for all of the Indian depredations and problems was the government's failure to deliver on its promises.⁸⁴ This presented the government with a challenge of how much force to use.

The political aim in 1874 was to subdue the Southern Plains Indians and put an end to the hostilities by placing all of the Indians on reservations and allowing for westward expansion. Cheyenne, Comanche, and Kiowa warriors raided all over the Southern Plains in the spring and summer of 1874, culminating with an attack on Buffalo Hunters at Adobe Walls, Texas.⁸⁵ LTG Sheridan, now the Commander of the Division of the Missouri, which encompassed all of the Northern and Southern Plains, requested permission to conduct offensive operations against the hostile tribes. Sheridan felt the separation of military and civilian responsibility for Indians on the reservations had failed.⁸⁶ After several years of attempting to live on the reservations, the tribes continued to experience problems with food and lifestyle. The proximate cause was the advance of buffalo hunters into Indian Territory and the building of the Adobe Walls trading post on their lands. BG Pope, Commander of the Department of the Missouri, believed the cause for the Cheyenne uprising was due to white incursions. "There can be no doubt, from the facts that have reached these headquarters from good authority, that the present difficulties with the

⁸³ Utley, 191.

⁸⁴ Paul A. Hutton, *Phil Sheridan and His Army* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 230.

⁸⁵ Utley, 213.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 214.

Cheyenne were mainly caused by the unlawful intrusion and illegal and violent acts of white hunters.”⁸⁷

The strategic objective for the campaign was to maintain control of the reservations and compel hostile Indians onto the reservations. LTG Sheridan's operational approach was similar to the approach adopted in 1868, only on a larger scale, and it began in the summer as opposed to the winter.⁸⁸ LTG Sheridan developed a post hostility plan with three key elements for dealing with the hostile tribes. The plan included; a military commission to try and execute hostiles who committed murder, imprisonment for known key leaders, and complete disarmament.⁸⁹ LTG Sheridan identified four operational objectives to meet the strategic objectives. The 1874-1875 Red River was an overwhelming success and resulted in a lasting peace between the US government and the Indian tribes of the Southern Plains.

Analysis of Elements of Operational Art

Appendix C, Figure C-2, of this monograph provides a detailed analysis of the elements of operational art displayed during the 1874-1875 Red River War. Based on that analysis, LTG Sheridan used all elements of operational art during the campaign. LTG Sheridan pursued a course of action that consisted of an indirect approach with simultaneous offensive operations to destroy hostile Indian villages and defeat hostile warriors. LTG Sheridan's combined maneuvers of the five columns covered over a thousand miles, engaged in eleven major battles, and destroyed two major villages and vast amounts of supplies belonging to both Cheyenne and Comanche Indians. LTG Sheridan's four most significant elements of operational art were; his use of decisive points, tempo, use of simultaneity, and the measures employed to mitigate the risk of future depredations by hostile tribes. LTG Sheridan had four decisive points during the Red River War. These decisive points included; establishing population control at Fort Sill and Darlington Agency, destruction of hostile Cheyenne villages in the vicinity of the Washita River,

⁸⁷ *Report of the Secretary of War*, 1875, 30.

⁸⁸ Utley, 219.

⁸⁹ Hutton, 255.

and destruction of hostile Comanche villages in the vicinity of the Red River. LTG Sheridan accomplished this through the employment of simultaneity and depth. He conducted five simultaneous operations that limited the Indians ability to outmaneuver his forces using their exceptional mobility. The tempo of LTG Sheridan's operations made it difficult for any of the tribes to consolidate and employ their superior numbers. LTG Sheridan devised an operational concept to deal with hostile leaders and tribes at the completion of offensive operations. LTG Sheridan had two concerns on this matter. First, he was concerned with the risk of how to handle the hostile Indians once they surrendered. Second, he was hesitant to place the Indians under agency control of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. To mitigate this risk, LTG Sheridan planned for a military commission to try murderers and execute those found guilty and to imprison lesser offenders. Additionally, he required all hostile tribes to surrender their weapons.⁹⁰ The US Attorney general, however, ruled that LTG Sheridan could not conduct any trials using military courts because it would require a state of war and no such war existed. LTG Sheridan still had 72 warriors imprisoned at FT Marion, Florida.⁹¹ Although, LTG Sheridan would have preferred a winter campaign, necessity compelled him to begin operations in the summer. Furthermore, a severe drought in 1874 provided the opportunity to seize and maintain the initiative going into the winter when the Indians would be most vulnerable. There is no evidence that the Indian tribes used operational art since the warriors mainly reacted to LTG Sheridan's actions and maintained a defensive posture throughout the campaign with the exception of two attacks against vulnerable wagon trains.

LTG Sheridan's reconstructed mission, using current Army vernacular, would read: On or about 20 July 1874, the Division of the Missouri conducts offensive operations to destroy hostile Indians' vital resources, villages, ponies, food, and supplies, in order to compel hostile tribes, Cheyenne, Comanche, and Kiowa, to occupy reservations provided by the US government and allow for continued unimpeded western expansion. The order to Colonel Mackenzie, one of the subordinate column commanders from

⁹⁰ Hutton, 255.

⁹¹ Ibid., 258. Cruse, 151.

the Department of Texas, read, “the object of the proposed Campaign against the hostile Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, and others from the Fort Sill Reservation, is to punish them for recent depredations along the Kansas and Texas frontiers.”⁹²

LTG Sheridan’s presumed intent: The purpose of this operation is to destroy the ability of hostile Indians to make war and depredations against the US government and its people. The conditions at the end state include tribes settled on reservations at Darlington Indian Agency and Fort Sill; villages destroyed; Southern Plains Indians no longer hostile or able to conduct raids in Kansas, Texas, or Indian Territory; and Division of Missouri Forces Postured to provide wide area security

LTG Sheridan conducted troop actions in three distinct phases. The first phase was the Population Control Phase where US forces enrolled Indians at one of two reservations to differentiate between hostile and friendly Indians. LTG Sheridan's forces transitioned to offensive operations to defeat the remaining hostile Indians and destroy their villages once they established population control.⁹³ The third phase of the operation occurred once forces completed offensive operations. During this punishment phase, the Army intended to try key leaders and disarm all the hostile tribes. LTG Sheridan’s phased operation had five decisive points. Those decisive points included; the separation of hostile and friendly Indians, COL Miles offensive operations against the Cheyenne in the vicinity of the Staked Plains, COL Mackenzie’s offensive operations to destroy Comanche villages in the vicinity of the Red River and Palo Duro Canyon, and LTG Sheridan’s actions to punish the hostile tribes at the completion of the offensive.⁹⁴ The most important decisive point was the destruction of hostile villages and supplies near the Red River. LTG Sheridan employed an indirect approach as he executed combined operations to defeat the hostile Indians warriors, the operational Center of Gravity. The Department of Texas operations seized the initiative and forced the Indians to culminate by destroying their resources and denying their mobility and

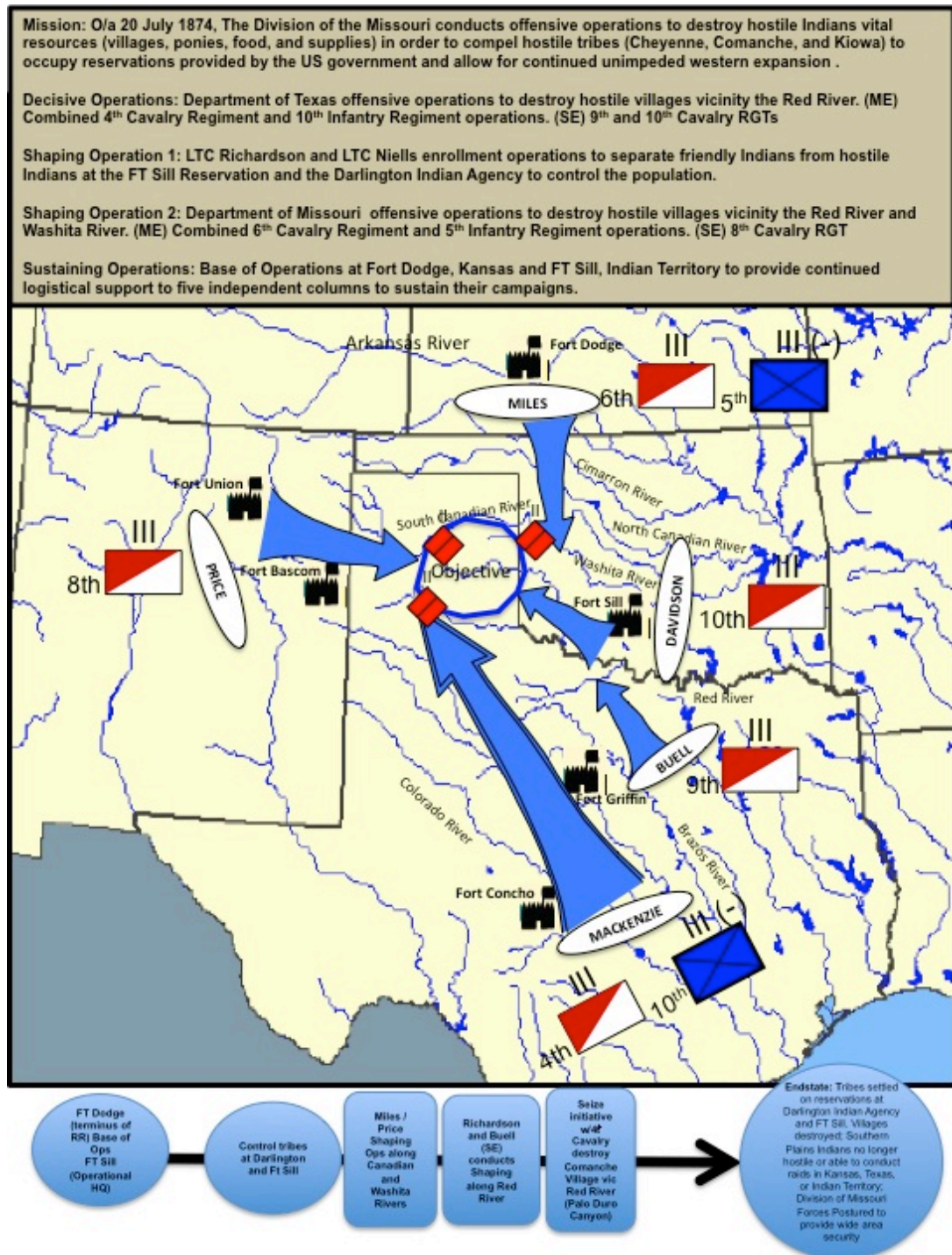
⁹² Carter, 475.

⁹³ Utley, 221.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 223.

ability to fight. This compelled them to move onto the reservations. The Division of the Missouri executed simultaneous operations with five converging columns from two separate Departments, Missouri and Texas. The decisive operation (DO) was the Department of Texas' offensive operations to destroy hostile villages in the vicinity of the Red River. The main effort (ME) for the DO was the combined 4th Cavalry Regiment and 10th Infantry Regiment operations in Palo Duro Canyon. The supporting efforts (SE) were the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments operations to canalize Indian tribes. LTG Sheridan executed two shaping operations. Shaping operation one (SO1) included the efforts of LTC Richardson and LTC Neil to enroll all the Indians at the Fort Sill Reservation and the Darlington Indian Agency to control the population. Shaping operation two (SO2) included the Department of Missouri's offensive operations to destroy hostile villages near the Red River and Washita River. BG Pope's (ME) was the combined 6th Cavalry Regiment and 5th Infantry Regiment operations to destroy Indian villages along the Washita River. LTG Sheridan facilitated sustaining operations from his bases of operation at Fort Dodge, Kansas, and Fort Sill, Indian Territory to provide continued logistical support for the five independent columns to sustain their campaigns.

Figure 3: Red River War Campaign Map.⁹⁵



⁹⁵ Cruse, 19.

COIN Analysis

An analysis of LTG Sheridan's operations during the Red River War shows a continued focus on one COIN LOE, the Combat Operations and Civil Security Operations LOE. LTG Sheridan's main objective is offensive operations to control terrain and to deny or destroy resources as part of an exhaustion strategy. Using the key elements of FM 3-24 COIN doctrine to view LTG Sheridan's campaign, the case study reflects four historical COIN principles, two contemporary COIN imperatives, and four overarching requirements for successful COIN operations. Six of the 23 categories contain relevant aspects of planning that could still be used to support current COIN Campaign planning.

The four principles identified in this campaign were legitimacy, unity of effort, understand the environment, intelligence driven operations, and isolate insurgents from their cause and support. The Medicine Lodge Treaty continued to serve as the legitimizing authority for operations against the Southern Plains Indians. Unity of effort was important because two separate military Departments from the Division of the Missouri participated in the campaign in coordination with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. All three elements had to cooperate to achieve the desired political aim and strategic end state of placing the hostile Indians on the reservations. LTG Sheridan used his understanding of the environment from six years of operations on Southern Plains to design a successful campaign. Army commanders relied on civilian scouts and Indian auxiliaries to collect intelligence on the hostile tribes. At the end of the Red River War, the US Army used tribal informants to identify high value targets and key leaders who LTG Sheridan had incarcerated at a military prison at Fort Marion, Florida.⁹⁶ LTG Sheridan used his five separate columns along with two separate forces at the Darlington Agency and Fort Sill reservation to isolate the hostile Indians or insurgents from their support. The two applicable contemporary COIN imperatives were learn and adapt, and empower the lowest level, which were the same principles from the 1868-1869 Cheyenne Campaign.

⁹⁶ Cruse, 151-153.

The Red River War Campaign had four overarching requirements for successful COIN operations. The first was to attack the insurgent strategy. The second was to establish control of the operational area and secure the population. LTG Sheridan accomplished this by population separation operations at Fort Sill and Darlington Agency, which separated hostile and friendly Indians. LTG Sheridan placed the military in control of enrolling and accounting for friendly Indians at the two reservations.⁹⁷ The third was to operate from areas of strength, control population centers, and secure government support base. The fourth was to regain control of insurgent areas, expand areas to support the population, and eliminate insurgent control of regions. LTG Sheridan employed five converging columns to encircle the hostile tribes and to regain control of the area in vicinity of the Red River.⁹⁸ The Red River War contained five COIN categories most relevant for current planning. Those categories were: unity of effort, intelligence driven operations, isolate insurgents from their cause and support, establish control of the operational area and secure the population, and separate the insurgency from the populace.

⁹⁷ Utley, 221.

⁹⁸ Cruse, 2.

1876 Centennial Campaign

The Centennial Campaign began in March 1876 and lasted until September 1876. LTG Sheridan used three separate formations for this campaign, continuing the use of his converging columns. However, the first offensive action by BG Crook was an independent action because the other two columns failed to initiate operations when directed. LTG Sheridan had increased command and control problems for this campaign since the operation included two subordinate departments, The Departments of the Platte and Dakota. The force included one column from the former and two from the latter. The first column, led by BG Crook, maneuvered from south to north from Fort Fetterman, Wyoming Territory towards the confluence of the Powder and Rosebud River valleys in uncontrolled territory. The second column, led by Col Gibbon, maneuvered to the east from Fort Ellis, Montana Territory. The third column, led by BG Terry and LTC Custer, maneuvered west from Fort Abraham Lincoln, Dakota Territory. See Map 3: 1876 Centennial Campaign Map. The two primary tribes involved during this campaign were the Cheyenne and Sioux. The campaign consisted of six major battles that made up the overall operation.⁹⁹ The outcome of the campaign was an operational loss for LTG Sheridan that included two major tactical defeats and the operational culmination of all of his forces. This campaign resulted in several significant political changes and an additional campaign to provide for a lasting peace on the Northern Plains. Limited situational understanding, unity of effort, and strategic issues denied LTG Sheridan the ability to control the Indian sanctuaries. He was unable to stop the flow of support to the hostile Indians from the reservations.

Strategic Context

A review of the strategic context and societal pressures during the 1876 Centennial Campaign using Gray's framework for strategic context points to several strategic and operational challenges. The strategic problem for the US government was how to compel the Sioux Indians to cede the Dakota

⁹⁹ Michno, 293-298.

Territory. Another concern was how to deal with the increasingly belligerent groups of Sioux Indians. The political aim was to gain possession of the potentially prosperous Black Hills. The strategic objective for the campaign was to compel the hostile Indians onto the reservations. LTG Sheridan stated, “[they] need to be compelled the Northern non-treaty Sioux under the leadership of Sitting Bull to settle down.”¹⁰⁰ Sheridan identified 20 years of failed policy of teaching and integrating the Indians through the reservation system as part of the compounding problem.¹⁰¹ LTG Sheridan felt the best way for the government to handle the Indian situation was to give control of the Indians to the military. LTG Sheridan, in his annual report to the Secretary of War stated, “To civilize, make self-supporting, and save many more of these poor people than otherwise will be saved, I believe it best to transfer the Indian Bureau to the military, and let it be taken under the general administration of the Army, governed and controlled.”¹⁰²

Analysis of Elements of Operational Art

Appendix C, Figure C-3, of this monograph provides a detailed analysis of the elements of operational art displayed during the 1876 Centennial Campaign. Based off that analysis, LTG Sheridan’s plan considered most of the 11 elements of operational art. However, subordinate commanders only executed three of those elements. LTG Sheridan adopted an indirect approach with simultaneous offensive operations using three converging columns. He directed a winter offensive to mitigate the Indians mobility. LTG Sheridan’s forces engaged in six major battles, with the last two resulting in operational culmination for two of his columns. LTG Sheridan’s three most significant elements of operational art included his lines of operations, operational reach, and risk. LTG Sheridan designated four decisive points during the Centennial Campaign. They were: establishing population control, which he

¹⁰⁰ *Report of the Secretary of War*, 44th Cong., 2nd session, 1876, 28.

¹⁰¹ *Report of the Secretary of War*, 1875, 57.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 57.

was unable to do because of political constraints; finding the winter roamers; establishing a forward supply depot on the Powder River; and seizing the initiative by destroying key villages along the Rosebud or Powder River. LTG Sheridan attempted to accomplish this through the employment of simultaneity and depth. He conducted three simultaneous operations that limited the Indians ability to outmaneuver his forces using their exceptional mobility. LTG Sheridan attempted to launch his preferred winter campaign but logistical issues prevented two of the three columns from executing those winter operations. The most significant aspect of operational art employed by LTG Sheridan was risk. The primary risk that LTG Sheridan and his subordinate commanders did not acknowledge was the combining of forces of the winter and summer roamers, which put over 2,000 warriors together at one location.¹⁰³ LTG Sheridan saw the large villages as an opportunity to find and destroy the Indians. They did not believe the Indians would stay united or stand and fight a large force. They believed that any of the three independent columns possessed the capability to defeat the hostile Indians. The Indian tribes' use of operational art is not as evident because the warriors mainly reacted to LTG Sheridan's actions and maintained a defensive posture throughout the campaign. However, the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne fought in a manner not experienced by LTG Sheridan on the Southern Plains. The hostile Indians led by Sitting Bull stood and fought two significant defensive actions at Rosebud and Little Big Horn to preserve their way of life.

LTG Sheridan's reconstructed mission, using current Army vernacular, would read: On or about 07 February 1876, the Division of the Missouri conducts offensive operations to destroy hostile Indians vital resources (villages, ponies, food, and supplies) in order to compel hostile tribes (Cheyenne and Sioux) to occupy reservations provided by the US government and to allow for continued western expansion. LTG Sheridan's directive to BG Crook and BG Terry was, "The War Department has ordered operations against hostile Indians."¹⁰⁴ He provided an additional directive to BG Terry to develop a plan and submit his plan to LTG Sheridan for approval. LTG Sheridan was aware already of BG Crooks plans

¹⁰³ Gray, *Centennial Campaign: The Sioux War of 1876*, 36.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

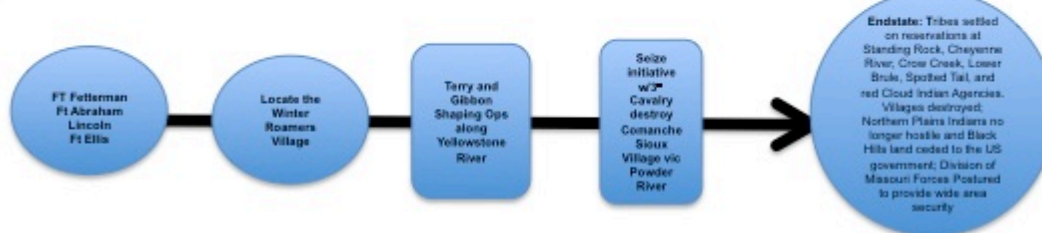
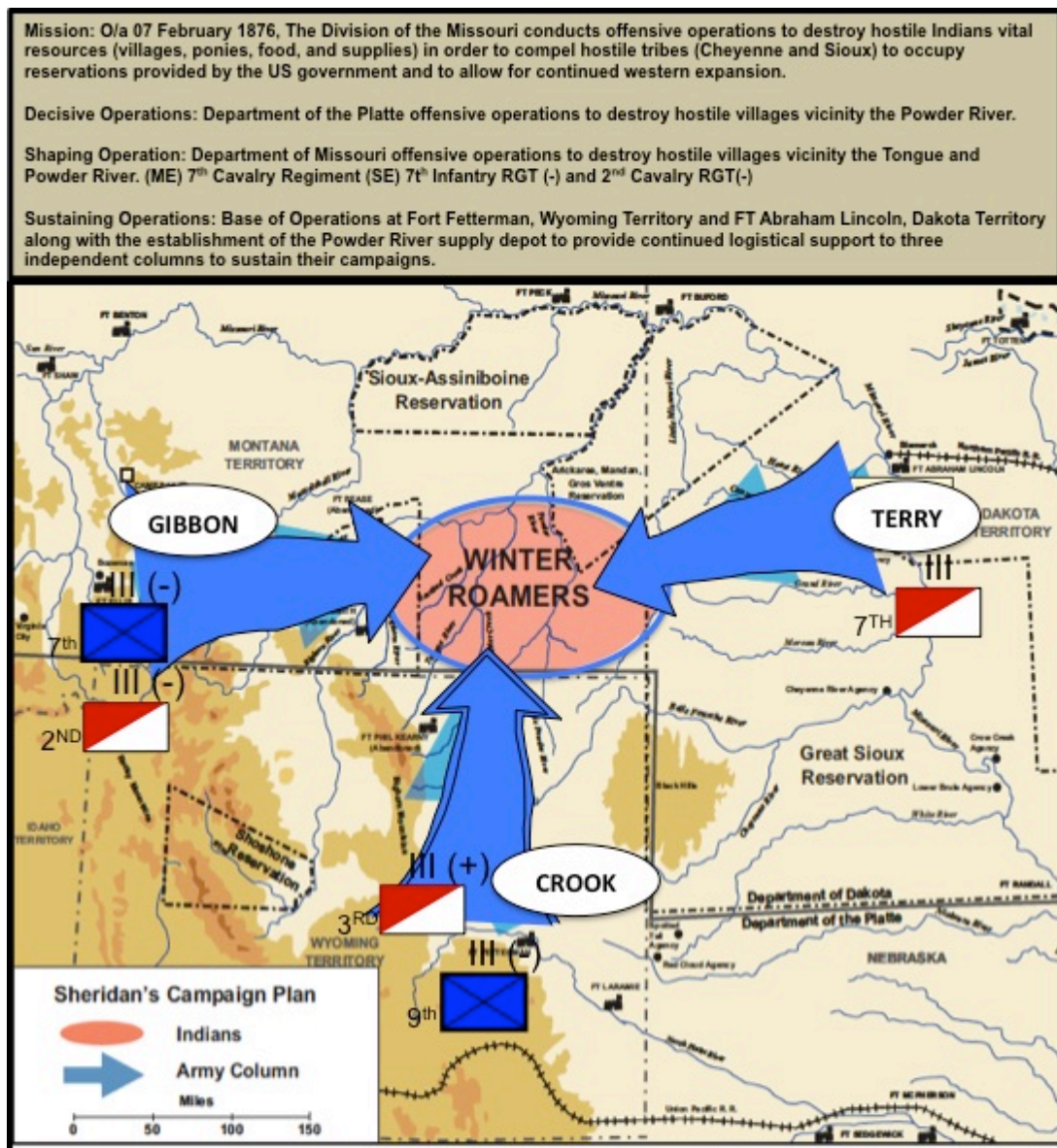
based off an earlier meeting in November 1875.¹⁰⁵

LTG Sheridan's presumed intent: The purpose of this operation is to destroy the ability of hostile Indians to make war and depredations against the US government and its people. The conditions at the end state included tribes settled on reservations at Standing Rock, Cheyenne River, Crow Creek, Lower Brule, Spotted Tail, and Red Cloud Indian Agencies; villages destroyed; Northern Plains Indians no longer hostile and Black Hills land ceded to the US government; Division of Missouri Forces postured to provide wide area security

LTG Sheridan's did not conduct troop actions in the distinct phases as in his two previous campaigns. LTG Sheridan attempted to gain permission to establish military authority over the Indian Agencies before offensive operations but did not receive that authority from General Sherman or the Secretary of War. Additionally, LTG Sheridan was unable to attain approval to build two forward operating bases in the area of operations to support the sustainment of his forces and ultimately control the region. The absence of these two supporting operations would have telling consequences for the decisive operations of BG Crook and the offensive operations of BG Terry.

¹⁰⁵ Gray, *Centennial Campaign: The Sioux War of 1876*, 37.

Figure 4: 1876 Centennial Campaign Map.¹⁰⁶



¹⁰⁶ Charles D. Collins Jr., *Atlas of the Sioux Wars*, 2nd ed. (Combat Studies Institute, 2006), 14.

COIN Analysis

A COIN analysis of LTG Sheridan's 1876 Centennial Campaign shows a similar pattern from his two previous major operations against the Southern Plains Indians. LTG Sheridan's operational approach for this campaign also had the military object of defeating the Northern Plains Indians. However, FM 3-24, as well as other historical COIN principles, has the political approach as the primary aim. LTG Sheridan's actions focused on offensive operations to destroy the Indians' resources, as part of an attritional strategy but this campaign did not feature actions to control the population or territory. Using current COIN doctrine as a lens to analyze LTG Sheridan's operations illustrates the presence of two historical COIN principles, one contemporary COIN imperative, one overarching requirement for successful COIN operations, and one COIN LOE. This campaign actually provides better negative examples of what not to do in COIN campaign planning. The Centennial Campaign had five negative aspects of the 23 COIN categories. These five categories are illustrative of what to avoid in COIN campaign planning.

The two principles identified in this campaign were legitimacy and intelligence driven operations. The legitimizing authority for the US government's actions against the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne was the Fort Laramie Treaty. This treaty provided certain lands for the Indians to use as hunting lands but stipulated the Indians were to reside on reservations. When the Indians did not return to the reservation then they were declared hostile.¹⁰⁷ LTG Sheridan and his subordinate commanders used intelligence on the disposition of the Indians to drive their operations. Human intelligence from Indian agents and other reservation Indians along with Indian, military, and civilian scouts provided relatively accurate information. On 6 June 1876, LTG Sheridan passed an intelligence report to his subordinates stating, "1800 lodges were on the Rosebud and about to leave for the Powder River...and they have about 3,000

¹⁰⁷ Gray, *Centennial Campaign: The Sioux War of 1876*, 31.

warriors.”¹⁰⁸

The one applicable contemporary COIN imperative was to empower the lowest level. LTG Sheridan believed he had competent subordinate commanders and continued to provide broad guidance and intent and left the detailed planning and execution up to his subordinate commanders. An example of this broad authority is present in a directive from LTG Sheridan to BG Terry on the upcoming campaign. The directive stated, “I am not well enough acquainted with the character of the winters and early springs in your latitude to give any instructions, and you will have to use your judgment as to what you may be able to accomplish at the present time or early spring.”¹⁰⁹ This guidance was in reference to BG Terry’s belief that his column from Fort Abraham Lincoln would be unable to begin a winter campaign as originally directed by LTG Sheridan.

The one overarching requirement for successful COIN operations evident in the Centennial Campaign was to attack the insurgent strategy. LTG Sheridan used his same successful concept from his two previous campaigns. This was an indirect approach to attack the insurgent strategy and to establish government authority in Indian Territory using converging columns in a winter campaign. However, BG Terry and his forces from the Department of the Dakota were unable to commence operations in the winter. Therefore, LTG Sheridan’s unified operations along the one line of effort, Combat Operations and Civil Security Operations, did not commence in full until May.

The three major negative examples from this campaign for current planning were unity of effort, understand the environment, and establish control of the operational area and secure the population. The first example was unity of effort. A lack of unity of effort surfaced on occasion during other campaigns, although, never as pronounced as during the Centennial Campaign. The Department of Platte Commander, BG Crook, and the Department of Dakota Commander, BG Terry, did not work together towards common goal. BG Crook never reported his battle and culmination on 17 June 1876 at the

¹⁰⁸ Gray, *Centennial Campaign: The Sioux War of 1876*, 198.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 37.

Rosebud River to BG Terry.¹¹⁰ GEN Sherman had recommended to LTG Sheridan to place BG Crook in overall command of the operation to allow for unity of command. Additionally, LTG Sheridan left the detailed coordination up to the two commanders. LTG Sheridan told GEN Sherman, “I have given no instructions to Gens. Crook or Terry...as I think it would be unwise to make any combination in such a country as they will have to operate in.”¹¹¹

The second major shortcoming was understanding the environment. LTG Sheridan applied the same operational approach from the Southern Plains and did not take into account the changing dynamics of the of the Winter and Summer Roamers or the capability and staunch resistance of the Sioux. The Indian political alliance between the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne constituted a formidable military alliance prepared to defend their territory between the Black Hills and the Yellowstone River.¹¹² Sitting Bull became the leader of the hostile Sioux, unifying the Yanktonais, Sihasapas, Hunkpapas, and Mineconjous. Sitting Bull was part of a new centralized authority for unified action against the United States.¹¹³ The primary risk that LTG Sheridan and his subordinate commanders did not acknowledge was the combining of forces of the Winter and Summer Roamers which put over 2,000 warriors together at one location. LTG Sheridan saw the large villages as opportunity to find and destroy the Indians. They did not believe the Indians would stay united or stand and fight a large force. LTG Sheridan believed that any of the three independent columns was capable to defeat the hostile Indians. LTG Sheridan demonstrated his lack of understanding of the environment when he commented to BG Terry on, “the impossibility of any large number of Indians keeping together as a hostile body for even one week.”¹¹⁴

The third and last example of improper COIN planning was LTG Sheridan’s inability to establish

¹¹⁰ Hutton, 313.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 305.

¹¹² Jeffrey Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee (Studies in North American Indian History)* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 52.

¹¹³ Ibid., 52.

¹¹⁴ Hutton, 312.

control of the operational area and secure the population. However, this shortcoming was not a planning oversight but a limitation imposed on LTG Sheridan by Congress. LTG Sheridan wanted to build to forward operating bases in the heart of Sioux hunting lands but did not get permission. Additionally, LTG Sheridan requested permission to control the reservations to prevent material support from flowing to the hostile Indians. LTG Sheridan, in his annual report to the Secretary of War stated, "To civilize, make self-supporting, and save many more of these poor people than otherwise will be saved, I believe it best to transfer the Indian Bureau to the military, and let it be taken under the general administration of the Army, governed and controlled."¹¹⁵ This action was also denied. It was not until after the Custer disaster that LTG Sheridan received permission to conduct both actions.

¹¹⁵ *1875 Report of the Secretary of War*, 57.

1876-1877 Sioux Campaign

The Sioux Winter Campaign began in September 1876 and lasted until May 1877. LTG Sheridan used three primary formations for this campaign, but dispensed with his usual converging columns due to the dispersion of the hostile Indians into smaller bands. The force included; one column led by COL Miles, one column led by BG Crook, and another column led by COL Sturgis, whose primary mission was reservation occupation. These three columns were part of LTG Sheridan's revised operational approach to control territory, deny or destroy resources, and to disarm and punish the Northern Plains Indians. Part of this revised approach included the establishment of two cantonments deep in hostile territory, an approach that LTG Sheridan had advocated since 1874. To support this approach, LTG Sheridan deployed two regiments from The Department of the Missouri. One regiment was the 4th Cavalry, commanded by Col Mackenzie, who had provided great results for LTG Sheridan on the Southern Plains. The other regiment was the 5th Infantry, commanded by COL Miles. COL Miles conducted continuous offensive operations along the Tongue River between Fort Peck and the Tongue River Cantonment. COL Sturgis and the newly regrouped 7th Cavalry Regiment moved from Fort Abraham Lincoln to secure all the Indian Agencies along the Missouri River. BG Crook conducted continuous offensive operations between Fort Fetterman and the newly established Powder River Cantonment. See Map 4: 1876-1877 Sioux Winter Campaign Map. The two primary tribes involved during this campaign were the Cheyenne and Sioux. The campaign consisted of eleven major operations or battles that made up the overall campaign, all of which were tactical successes for the US Army.¹¹⁶ The outcome of the campaign was the defeat of the Northern Cheyenne and hostile Sioux tribes, which culminated with the surrender of Crazy Horse and over 900 warriors in May 1877 along with the fleeing of Sitting Bull and approximately 400 warriors to Canada.

¹¹⁶ Paul L. Hedren, *Great Sioux War Orders of Battle: How the United States Army Waged War on the Northern Plains, 1876-1877* (Arthur H Clark, 2011), 123-151.

Strategic Context

A review of the strategic context during the 1876-1877 campaign revealed the same problem from the previous campaign. That problem was how to compel the Sioux Indians to cede the Dakota Territory and give up their claims to the land. However, the strategic environment changed in LTG Sheridan's favor. The tactical defeat and annihilation of LTC Custer and part of the 7th Cavalry did not provide Sitting Bull with a continuing strategic advantage. Custer's defeat was the impetus for change that provided four significant opportunities for LTG Sheridan. First, in July 1876, Congress authorized a temporary increase of 2,500 soldiers to the Army end strength. Second, Congress authorized LTG Sheridan to build the two Forts in the Sioux territory. Third, the President and the Department of the Interior authorized LTG Sheridan the authority to place the Army in temporary control of Indian agencies and reservations. Fourth, Congress passed the Sioux Appropriations bill in August 1876 that stipulated four demands. The Sioux had to give up claims of all unceded territory and reservation lands west of the 103rd meridian, which included the Black Hills. They had to grant right of way for three roads across remaining reservation lands to the Black Hills. The Indians had to receive supplies from the government at the Missouri River to reduce transportation costs. The Sioux had to agree to a plan that would make the tribes fully self-supporting.¹¹⁷ The political aim was clearly defined in the Sioux Appropriations bill, which was to gain possession of the potentially prosperous Black Hills.

Analysis of Elements of Operational Art

Appendix C, Figure C-4, of this monograph provides a detailed analysis of the elements of operational art displayed during the 1876-1877 Sioux Winter Campaign. Based off that analysis, LTG Sheridan's plan considered most of the 11 elements of operational art. LTG Sheridan's revised operational approach focused on five essential areas of operational art. The five areas of focus were; the three lines of operations along with an additional line of effort employed by both Department

¹¹⁷ Gray, *Centennial Campaign: The Sioux War of 1876*, 261.

Commanders, the extension of operational reach, the constant tempo of operations, the simultaneity of actions, and the clear phasing and transitions.

LTG Sheridan outlined three lines of operations for his two subordinate commanders that would attack the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne using an indirect approach. The warriors maintained a degree of mobility that the US Army could not match. LTG Sheridan did not believe he would be able to bring the Sioux to a decisive engagement and destroy them. He focused his approach on denying the enemy resources and defeating them by starvation and exhaustion.¹¹⁸ The three physical lines of operations were established to satisfy six decisive points along with a corresponding diplomatic line of effort to satisfy another decisive point. LTG Sheridan's three lines of operations originated from three separate bases of operation; Fort Peck and the Tongue River Cantonment, Fort Abraham Lincoln, and Fort Fetterman and the Powder River Cantonment. COL Miles and BG Crook executed the diplomatic line of effort. Both commanders used diplomacy and key leader engagements to convince the Indians to surrender and to pursue reconciliation.¹¹⁹ One example of this effort was the surrender of 800-900 hostile Indians at the White River Agency in April 1877 because of talks with COL Miles.¹²⁰ Additionally, Crazy Horse surrendered in May 1877 based on the prospect of a separate reservation for his tribe.¹²¹ The agreements with the hostile Indians to surrender were a byproduct of the continued offensive operations of COL Miles and BG Crook, which exhausted the Indians and denied them the opportunity to sustain themselves.¹²² These actions were first enabled by LTG Sheridan's ability to extend his forces operational reach. LTG Sheridan extended his operational reach by the establishment of the two major cantonments on the Tongue and Powder Rivers. BG Terry stated, "The garrisons of these posts will be large, and no small body of hostile Sioux will be able to remain within a long distance of them...having these two

¹¹⁸ Hutton, 325-328.

¹¹⁹ Ostler, 78.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 79.

¹²¹ Ibid., 83.

¹²² Ibid., 84.

bases, troops operating will be able to move with great rapidity without wagons and with but small trains of pack animals. General Sheridan, with great foresight, has long urged the establishment of these posts. Had his advice been heeded the results of the campaign might have been very different.”¹²³

Two decisive points in the campaign were the establishment of the two primary cantonments. These cantonments were part of LTG Sheridan’s new strategy to occupy the hostile Indian Territory and control the reservations and agencies.¹²⁴ According to LTG Sheridan, “these posts would not only have been the means of preventing the assembling of Indians in large bodies in that great buffalo region, but they would have given us depots of supplies and shelter for troops that could, on account of short distances from these supplies, operate at any season of the year.”¹²⁵

There were three other decisive points during the campaign. First, the disarmament of Sioux at the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail Agencies to prevent the “non-hostile” Indians from providing material support to the remaining hostile bands. This occurred in October 1876, along with the 7th Cavalry’s securing the agencies along the Missouri River.¹²⁶ The second decisive point was COL Miles’ shaping operations along the Tongue River to neutralize or defeat Sitting Bull. The third decisive point was COL Mackenzie’s destruction of a Northern Cheyenne Camp of 1,500 hostiles led by Dull Knife in the vicinity of the Powder River in November, 1876.¹²⁷

LTG Sheridan’s forces maintained a constant tempo that was enabled by the establishment of a base of operations in the enemy’s area of operations. By placing forces in the Sioux hunting grounds, LTG Sheridan could maintain an offensive tempo that would harass the Indians and starve them onto the

¹²³ James S. Hutchins, *The Army and Navy Journal on the Battle of the Little Bighorn and Related Matters, 1876-1881*, 1st ed., Custer Trails Series (El Segundo, Calif.: Upton, 2003), 112.

¹²⁴ Hutton, 322-323.

¹²⁵ Hutchins, 118.

¹²⁶ Ostler, 69. Gray, *Centennial Campaign: The Sioux War of 1876*, 265.

¹²⁷ Ostler, 71-88.

reservations. The Army would control the reservations, disarm, and punish the hostile tribes.¹²⁸ LTG Sheridan's subordinate commanders maintained constant pressure throughout the winter, which ultimately led all but two bands of Indians to surrender by May 1877. LTG Sheridan used simultaneous operations while abandoning the converging columns. The operations were directed at the three major groups of Sioux and Northern Cheyenne, led by Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and Dull Knife. The operations of Mackenzie and especially Miles forced continuous movement by the Sioux and Cheyenne. BG Terry and BG Crook were both working towards LTG Sheridan's new operational objectives of disarming the tribes and denying them critical resources, operating simultaneously towards a single purpose.¹²⁹

LTG Sheridan's reconstructed mission, using current Army vernacular, would read: On or about September 1876, The Division of the Missouri conducts offensive operations to secure all Indian Reservations and Agencies and destroy hostile Indians vital resources (villages, ponies, food, and supplies) in order to compel hostile tribes (Sioux and Cheyenne) to occupy reservations provided by the US government.

LTG Sheridan's presumed intent: The purpose of this operation is to control the Indian reservations and agencies along with key terrain along vital hunting and watering areas in order to deny hostile Indians the required resources to live off of the reservations. The conditions at the end state included tribes settled on reservations at Standing Rock, Cheyenne River, Crow Creek, Lower Brule, Spotted Tail, and Red Cloud Indian Agencies; villages destroyed; Northern Plains Indians no longer hostile and Black Hills land ceded to the US government; Division of Missouri Forces postured to provide wide area security

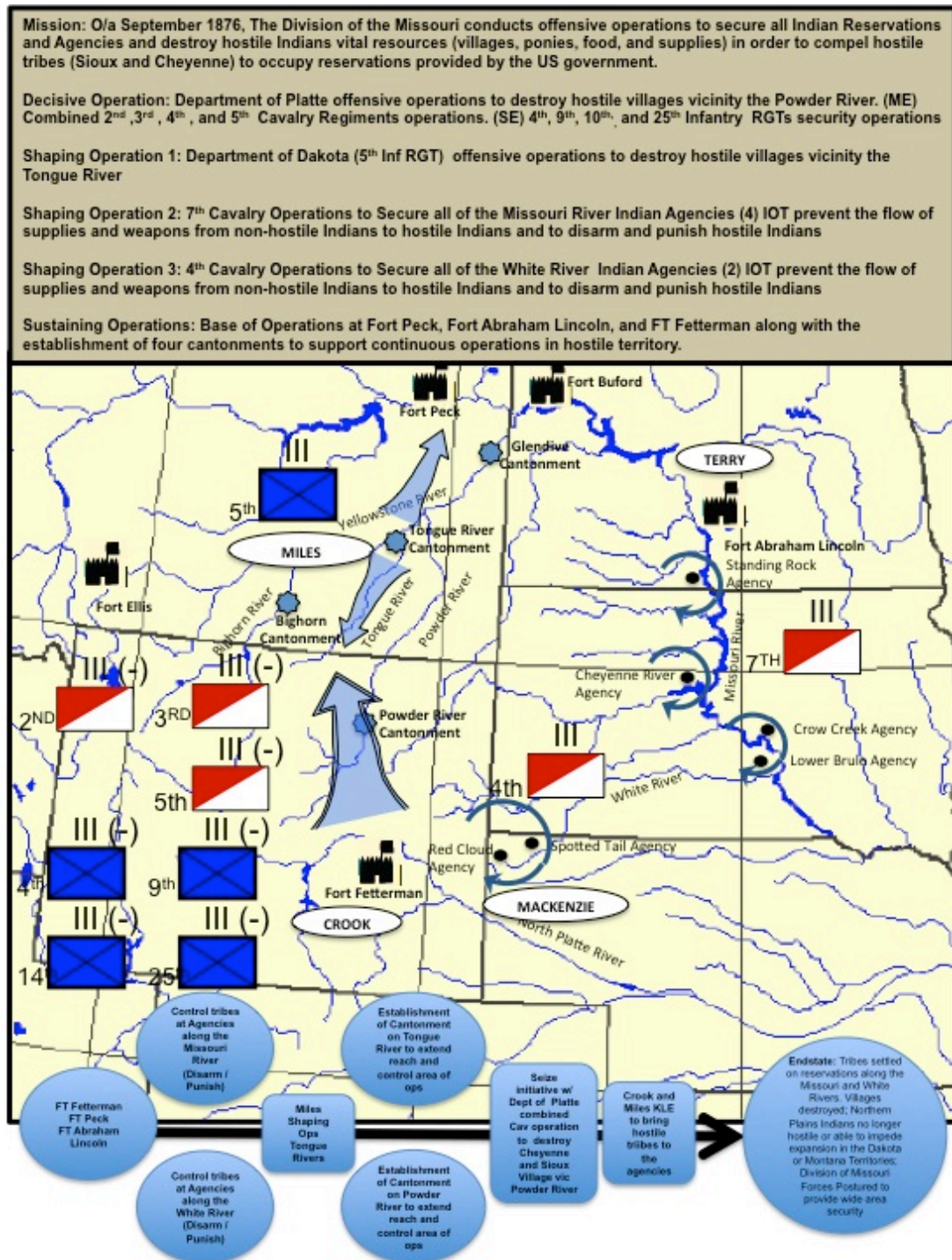
LTG Sheridan's operations had three distinct phases similar to his two successful campaigns on the Southern Plains. The first phase was the preparation phase. The second phase was the control phase. The third phase was the offensive phase. LTG Sheridan gained permission to establish military authority

¹²⁸ Hutton, 322.

¹²⁹ Hutchins, 108.

over the Indian Agencies along the White and Missouri Rivers. LTG Sheridan also obtained authorization to build two forts or cantonments to serve as forward operating bases. These new authorities set the conditions for success and allowed LTG Sheridan to design an operational approach that would help him reach the desired end state and satisfy the strategic objectives of the US government. The decisive operation was the Department of Platte's offensive operations to destroy hostile villages vicinity the Powder River. There were three shaping operations to support LTG Sheridan's decisive operation. Shaping operation one (SO1), conducted by COL Miles under the Department of Dakota, consisted of the 5th Infantry Regiment's offensive operations to destroy hostile villages near the Tongue River and to harass the Sioux warriors under Sitting Bull. Shaping operation two (SO2), conducted by COL Sturgis and the 7th Cavalry Regiment, consisted of actions taken to secure the four Missouri River Indian agencies to prevent the flow of supplies and weapons from non-hostile Indians to hostile Indians and to disarm and punish hostile Indians. Shaping operation three (SO3), conducted by COL Mackenzie and the 4th Cavalry Regiment, consisted of actions to secure the two White River Indian agencies for the same purpose as shaping operation two. The sustaining operations included those actions from the bases of operation at Fort Peck, Fort Abraham Lincoln, and Fort Fetterman along with the establishment of four cantonments to support continuous operations in hostile territory.

Figure 5: 1876-1877 Sioux Campaign Map.¹³⁰



¹³⁰ Collins Jr., *Atlas of the Sioux Wars*, 32-35.

COIN Analysis

When analyzing LTG Sheridan's operation with respect to COIN LOEs and key principles from FM 3-24, it is clear that LTG Sheridan's operational approach shifted during the 1876 -1877 Sioux Campaign. The object of defeating the Northern Plains Indians was still the same. However, a key action on the Combat Operations and Civil Security Operations line of effort was to secure the populace and to secure the borders. A review of LTG Sheridan's operations using current COIN doctrine illustrates the presence of four historical COIN principles, two contemporary COIN imperatives, five overarching requirements for successful COIN operations, and one COIN LOE. Six of the 23 categories contain relevant aspects of planning that could still be used to support current COIN Campaign planning.

The four principles identified in this campaign were; legitimacy, understand the environment, intelligence driven operations, and isolate insurgents from their cause and support. The Fort Laramie treaty continued to serve as the legitimizing authority for the US government's actions. LTG Sheridan adjusted his campaign plan based off failures from the Centennial Campaign. LTG Sheridan's subordinate commanders used intelligence to drive operations and to find, fix, and finish the hostile Indians. COL Miles quickly developed a human intelligence system that was very formidable at determining the locations and intentions of Sitting Bull and his followers. COL Miles used one of the most notable scouts of all time, Buffalo Bill Cody, to conduct his scouting operations.¹³¹ LTG Sheridan's resumption of a winter campaign and high paced tempo of offensive operations was part of his attempt to isolate the insurgents from their support and to exhaust the Indians. The two applicable contemporary COIN imperatives were learn and adapt and empower the lowest level. The evidence of LTG Sheridan's reflection on action can be seen from how adjusted from his failures during the Centennial Campaign.

There were five overarching requirements for successful COIN operations evident in the 1876 - 1877 Sioux Campaign. The first requirement was to attack the insurgent strategy. LTG Sheridan used an

¹³¹ Cozzens, *Eyewitnesses to the Indian Wars, 1865-1890: Vol. 4*, 433.

indirect approach to attack the insurgent strategy by placing forces in the Sioux hunting grounds. LTG Sheridan could maintain an offensive tempo that would harass the Indians and starve them onto the reservations. The Army would control the reservations, and disarm and punish the hostile tribes.¹³² LTG Sheridan's subordinate commanders maintained constant pressure throughout the winter, which ultimately led all but two bands of Indians to surrender by May 1877. The second requirement was to establish control of the operational area and secure the population. LTG Sheridan ordered the building of cantonments in the operational area to support continued operations. LTG Sheridan saw the solution to the Sioux problem as occupying their territory and controlling their sanctuary.¹³³ Operations focused on disarming, dismounting, and punishing the Indians to force compliance and compel them to surrender. The third requirement was to operate from areas of strength, control population centers, and secure government support base. LTG Sheridan accomplished this by placing forces in the Sioux hunting grounds. This enabled LTG Sheridan to maintain an offensive tempo that would harass the Indians and starve them onto the reservations. The fourth requirement was to regain control of insurgent areas, expand areas to support the population, and eliminate insurgent control of regions. LTG Sheridan received permission to build two new posts on the Yellowstone to provide a base for continuous operations against the Sioux.¹³⁴ He also received authority in August 1876 to take full control of the Indian Reservations to demand unconditional surrender and unarm all of the Indians.¹³⁵ The fifth requirement was to employ information operations to influence the population. LTG Sheridan used public outrage to his advantage as he requested and received additional troops, authority to control the reservations, and approval to build two forts. These operations all occurred along the one line of effort, Combat Operations and Civil Security Operations. There were six COIN principles from this campaign that were most relevant for

¹³² Hutton, 322.

¹³³ Ibid., 321-322.

¹³⁴ Gray, *Centennial Campaign: The Sioux War of 1876*, 209.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 234.

current planning. Those principles were: understand the environment; intelligence driven operations; isolate insurgents from their cause and support; attack the insurgent strategy and establish host nation legitimacy; establish control of the operational area and secure the population; and regain control of insurgent areas, expand areas to support the population, and eliminate insurgent control of regions.

Summary and Conclusion

Summary

This monograph answers the question of what explains the initial failure of LTG Sheridan's 1876 Centennial Campaign against the Sioux and Cheyenne Indians and how this relates to contemporary COIN campaign planning. The initial failure of LTG Sheridan's 1876 Centennial Campaign had less to do with the inability of his subordinates to launch a winter campaign and more directly resulted from their inability to isolate the hostile Indians and control the reservations to stop additional Indians "Summer Roamers" from leaving the reservations and joining the warring tribes of Sioux and Cheyenne. The significance of these findings are the demonstrated importance of designing an operational approach that isolates the insurgents from their cause and support as well as establishing control of the operational area and securing the population to deny resources and sanctuary from insurgents. These answers surface using history, theory, and doctrine. Figure 6, Campaign Variables provides a summation of the relevant historical, doctrinal, and theoretical variables from the four campaigns.

Figure 6: Campaign Variables.

Campaign Variables					
		1868 Cheyenne War	1874 Red River War	1876 Centennial Campaign	1876 - 1877 Sioux Campaign
History	Outcome (DV)	Win	Win	Loss	Win
	Campaign Time	Winter	Summer (Drought) and Winter	Summer	Winter
	Enemy Tribe	Cheyenne / Commanche	Cheyenne / Commanche	Sioux / Cheyenne	Sioux / Cheyenne
	Control of Sanctuary	Control	Control	No Control	Control
Doctrine	Existing Doctrine / COIN Principles	Converging Columns; native guides and auxiliaries; use of advance guards, flankers, and rear guards; employment of encirclement tactics or cordons; use of forts and posts in enemy territory; offensive strategy	Converging Columns; native guides and auxiliaries; use of advance guards, flankers, and rear guards; employment of encirclement tactics or cordons; use of forts and posts in enemy territory; offensive strategy	Converging Columns; native guides and auxiliaries; use of advance guards, flankers, and rear guards; use of skirmishers (Rosebud); no encirclement or cordon; no forts and posts in enemy territory; offensive strategy	No Converging Columns; native guides and auxiliaries; use of advance guards, flankers, and rear guards; employment of encirclement tactics or cordons; use of Infantry (COL Miles); use of forts and posts in enemy territory; offensive strategy
	Current COIN Doctrine /Principles	Understand the environment; Intelligence driven operations; Isolate insurgents from their cause and support; Empower the lowest levels; Attack the insurgent strategy and establish host nation legitimacy.	Unity of effort; Intelligence driven operations; Isolate insurgents from their cause and support; Establish control of the operational area and secure the population; Separate the insurgency from the populace.	Unity of effort; Understand the environment; Establish control of the operational area and secure the population	Understand the environment; Intelligence driven operations; Isolate insurgents from their cause and support; Attack the insurgent strategy and establish host nation legitimacy; Establish control of the operational area and secure the population; Regain control of insurgent areas, expand areas to support the population, and eliminate insurgent control of regions
	Current operational art	Decisive points; Operational reach; Tempo; Simultaneity and depth; Risk	Decisive points; Tempo; Simultaneity and depth; Risk	Lines of operations; Operational reach (not extended); Risk (unmitigated due to lack of understanding the enemy)	Lines of operations; Operational reach; Tempo; Simultaneity and depth; Phasing and transitions
Theory (RMA) and Strategic Context	Organization	1868 Army End Strength - 37,000	1874 Army End Strength - 27,000	1876 Army End Strength - 25,000	1877 Army End Strength - 27,500. Authorized the addition of 2500 Cavalry soldiers in August 1876 as a result of the Custer massacre
	Society	Treaty System and clash of cultures; "Manifest Destiny" and westward expansion; debate over cruelty and harshness towards non-combatants	Treaty System and clash of cultures; "Manifest Destiny" and westward expansion; slaughter of bison; debate over cruelty and harshness towards non-combatants	Treaty System and clash of cultures; "Manifest Destiny" and westward expansion; slaughter of bison; economic pressure driving change	Treaty System and clash of cultures; "Manifest Destiny" and westward expansion; slaughter of bison; outrage over Custer "Massacre"
	Technology	Railroads	Railroads and superior weapons	Riverboats and superior weapons	Riverboats and superior weapons

The answers from history are first evident in the literature review. The literature review highlights three variables to explain why LTG Sheridan failed in the Centennial Campaign but was successful in three other major campaigns against the Plains Indians. The three variables were; campaign time (winter or summer), primary hostile Indian tribes (Cheyenne and Comanche, and Sioux and Cheyenne), and control of sanctuary. There is debate amongst scholars on the relative importance of campaign time with most concluding that winter campaigns were more successful. The outcome of the four case studies demonstrates success in the winter and failure during the summer campaign. LTG Sheridan preferred the winter campaign because it provided an opportunity to strike the Indians when they were vulnerable. The second variable often debated is the difference in the tribes of the Northern and Southern Plains. While there are distinct cultural differences, the major difference has less to do with tribes and more to do with unity of effort of the tribes. In 1870, the Sioux and Cheyenne began defensive operations in their winter and summer hunting grounds; in the winter in NE Montana - north of the Yellowstone, and south of the Yellowstone in the summer. The tribes were united by Sitting Bull and fought as a coalition.¹³⁶ This was never witnessed on the Southern Plains. The last variable was sanctuary control. The literature provides numerous examples and references to LTG Sheridan's ability to control the reservations and establish forward operating bases in Indian Territory. LTG Sheridan was successful in every case when he achieved this control.

Colin Gray provides a framework and theory on understanding the strategic context to identify problems, as well as opportunities. Using that framework, three consistent strategic themes are apparent during the timeframe of the four campaigns. The first strategic issue was the treaty system and the overarching policy on how to deal with the Indians. The Medicine Lodge Treaty and the Fort Laramie Treaty prescribed official policy for mitigating issues between two distinct cultures. The US emigrants and the Plains Indians were clashing due to US westward expansion. The treaty system became more problematic during economic hardships and concerns over mistreatment of Indians diminished after the

¹³⁶ Ostler, 52.

Custer disaster at the Little Bighorn. The second important theme was the clash of civilizations. Westward expansion encroached on Indian culture and depleted the Bison herds, which were a critical requirement for the Plains Indians way of life. The last theme was the strategic advantage and opportunity provided by advances in technology. The advancing transportation capabilities and technological advances in weapons provided two significant force multipliers for LTG Sheridan's forces. The use of the railroads, telegraphs, and waterways increased LTG Sheridan's operational reach and provided a sustainment capability that supported operations in all seasons. Without the improved logistics, LTG Sheridan's forces would not have been able to sustain their winter campaigns. The issue of the 1873 Springfield rifle or carbine, which represented over 40 percent of all types of weapons used by the Army, provided long-range firepower not matched by the Indians. Archeological studies from the Red River War and the Battle of the Little Bighorn found only 50 percent of the warriors were armed with firearms, the majority being short-range repeaters.¹³⁷ The strategic environment provided the context for the operational approach and sequencing of tactical actions to meet the strategic aim.

The doctrinal analysis of the four campaigns using the elements of operational art illustrated the importance of three elements of operational art to the success of LTG Sheridan's campaigns. The three prevailing elements in at least three of the four campaigns were; operational reach, tempo, and simultaneity and depth. Each of the three elements was interdependent and when the approach was designed correctly, LTG Sheridan had success. LTG Sheridan extended his operational reach in the three successful campaigns by establishing supply depots or cantonments to serve as forward operating bases in hostile Indian Territory. LTG Sheridan's actions sustained the tempo and allowed the forces from the Division of the Missouri to stay inside the Indians operational cycle and cause them to continuously react. The tempo of operations exhausted both the Southern and Northern Plains Indians and forced them to culminate because they lacked the resources to sustain continued resistance. LTG Sheridan used simultaneous converging columns in three of the four campaigns. These columns maintained pressure on

¹³⁷ Cruse, 145.

the Indian tribes and limited their advantage of increased mobility. The columns also helped to find and fix the hostile Indians.

Conclusion

In analyzing what explains the initial failure of LTG Sheridan's 1876 Centennial Campaign, several questions come to mind when examining the failure of one campaign against the success of two previous campaigns and one subsequent campaign. The first variable was the campaign time. Two successful campaigns occurred in the winter and one encompassed both summer and winter. The failing campaign occurred in the summer. The second variable was the level of control LTG Sheridan maintained over the Indian reservations in the area of operations. The third changing variable was the different Indian tribes LTG Sheridan fought against in each campaign. Sheridan fought the first two campaigns against the same tribes, Cheyenne, Comanche, and Kiowa, while the last two campaigns focused on the Sioux and some Cheyenne Indians. Ultimately, the failure during the Centennial Campaign was not the fault of LTC Custer. His tactical actions were consistent with what most commanders at that time would have done. The failure was due to LTG Sheridan. He did not design and execute an appropriate operational approach for his campaign against the Northern Plains Indians.

According to John Lewis Gaddis, history and historical methods are very relevant in understanding what happened in the past. However, you have to understand the context in which things occurred to really have any capability to identify causality or probable causes.¹³⁸ Understanding military history is an important aspect in developing new military theory and doctrine. G.S Isserson, a prominent Soviet Operational Theorist, provides a framework of using historical context, a review of existing theory, and a comparison with the current military context to develop new theories and approaches to current

¹³⁸ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 97.

military problems.¹³⁹ With that in mind, there are several appropriate and applicable lessons from LTG Sheridan's Plains Indian Campaigns to apply to current COIN campaign planning.

COIN theory and doctrine provides a basis to evaluate the counterinsurgency efforts demonstrated by LTG Sheridan's forces from the Division of the Missouri over the course of nine years from 1868 to 1877. There are 23 principles and elements for successful COIN practice identified in FM 3-24. LTG Sheridan's action consistently illustrated four of those tenets and principles in at least three of the four campaigns. The four common characteristics were: understand the environment, intelligence driven operations, isolate insurgents from their cause and support, and establish control of the operational area and secure the population. LTG Sheridan demonstrated an understanding of the environment through reflection on action in three of the four campaigns. LTG Sheridan adjusted his successful Cheyenne War campaign from a failed summer campaign in 1868. LTG Sheridan continued to use that operational approach with design modifications to reflect the changing environment. However, LTG Sheridan did not fully appreciate the extent of the coalition of the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne warriors. Additionally, political constraints did not allow him to apply his concept of extending his reach and controlling the operational area during the Centennial Campaign. All four campaigns illustrated the significance of using Indian auxiliaries as scouts and guides as well as establishing a human intelligence network on the reservations and amongst the hostile tribes. LTG Sheridan was able to isolate the hostile Indians from the friendly Indians in all three of his successful campaigns by placing the Army in temporary control of the reservations and agencies. LTG Sheridan took actions to enroll the population and maintain an accurate count on the reservations. Subordinate commanders also disarmed the reservation Indians and stopped the flow of contraband off the reservations. LTG Sheridan also demonstrated a propensity to establish control of the operational area and secure the population. He accomplished this by active measures to build cantonments and supply depots in the operational area to support continued operations and occupy and

¹³⁹ Richard W. Harrison, *Architect of Soviet Victory in World War II: The Life and Theories of G.S. Isserson* (McFarland, 2010), 105-141.

control sanctuary areas and deny resources.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Hutton, 321-322.

APPENDIX A (Terms)

Approach - The approach is the manner in which a commander contends with a center of gravity.

The direct approach is the manner in which a commander attacks the enemy's center of gravity or principal strength by applying combat power directly against it. However, centers of gravity are generally well protected and not vulnerable to a direct approach. Thus, commanders usually choose an indirect approach. The indirect approach is the manner in which a commander attacks the enemy's center of gravity by applying combat power against a series of decisive points while avoiding enemy strength. Both approaches use specific combinations of defeat or stability mechanisms depending on the mission.¹⁴¹

Center of Gravity - A center of gravity is the source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act (JP 3-0).¹⁴²

Composite Approaches and Coalitions (Insurgent Approach) - As occurred in Iraq, contemporary insurgents may use different approaches at different times, applying tactics that take best advantage of circumstances. Insurgents may also apply a composite approach that includes tactics drawn from any or all of the other approaches. In addition—and as in Iraq at present—different insurgent forces using different approaches may form loose coalitions when it serves their interests; however, these same movements may fight among themselves, even while engaging counterinsurgents (FM 3-24).¹⁴³

Conspiratorial (Insurgent Approach) - A conspiratorial approach involves a few leaders and a militant cadre or activist party seizing control of government structures or exploiting a revolutionary situation. In 1917, Lenin used this approach in carrying out the Bolshevik Revolution. Such insurgents remain secretive as long as possible. They emerge only when success can be achieved quickly. This approach usually involves creating a small, secretive, “vanguard” party or force. Insurgents who use this approach successfully may have to create security forces and generate mass support to maintain power, as

¹⁴¹ Army, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations*, 128-129.

¹⁴² Ibid., 128.

¹⁴³ Army, *Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency*, 1-8.

the Bolsheviks did (FM 3-24).¹⁴⁴

Culmination - The culminating point is that point in time and space at which a force no longer possesses the capability to continue its current form of operations.¹⁴⁵

Decisive Point - A decisive point is a geographic place, specific key event, critical factor, or function that, when acted upon, allows commanders to gain a marked advantage over an adversary or contribute materially to achieving success (JP 3-0).¹⁴⁶

End State - The end state is a desired future condition represented by the expressed conditions that the commander wants to exist when an operation ends.¹⁴⁷

Identity-Focused (Insurgent Approach) - The identity-focused approach mobilizes support based on the common identity of religious affiliation, clan, tribe, or ethnic group. Some movements may be based on an appeal to a religious identity, either separately from or as part of other identities. This approach is common among contemporary insurgencies and is sometimes combined with the military-focused approach. The insurgent organization may not have the dual military/political hierarchy evident in a protracted popular war approach. Rather, communities often join the insurgent movement as a whole, bringing with them their existing social/military hierarchy. Additionally, insurgent leaders often try to mobilize the leadership of other clans and tribes to increase the movement's strength (FM 3-24).¹⁴⁸

Lines of Operation and Lines of Effort - Lines of operations and lines of effort bridge the broad concept of operations across to discreet tactical tasks. They link objectives to the end state.¹⁴⁹

Line of Operations - A line of operations is a line that defines the directional orientation of a force in time and space in relation to the enemy and links the force with its base of operations and

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 1-5.

¹⁴⁵ Army, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations*, 137.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 131.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 128.

¹⁴⁸ Army, *Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency*, 1-8.

¹⁴⁹ Army, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations*, 131.

objectives.¹⁵⁰

Line of Effort - A line of effort is a line that links multiple tasks and missions using the logic of purpose—cause and effect—to focus efforts toward establishing operational and strategic conditions.¹⁵¹

Operational Reach - Operational reach is the distance and duration across which a unit can successfully employ military capabilities (JP 3-0).¹⁵²

Military-Focused (Insurgent Approach)- Users of military-focused approaches aim to create revolutionary possibilities or seize power primarily by applying military force. For example, the focoist approach, popularized by figures like Che Guevara, asserts that an insurrection itself can create the conditions needed to overthrow a government. Focoists believe that a small group of guerrillas operating in a rural environment where grievances exist can eventually gather enough support to achieve their aims. In contrast, some secessionist insurgencies have relied on major conventional forces to try to secure their independence. Military-focused insurgencies conducted by Islamic extremist groups or insurgents in Africa or Latin America have little or no political structure; they spread their control through movement of combat forces rather than political subversion (FM 3-24).¹⁵³

Phasing and Transition - A phase is a planning and execution tool used to divide an operation in duration or activity. A change in phase usually involves a change of mission, task organization, or rules of engagement. Phasing helps in planning and controlling and may be indicated by time, distance, terrain, or an event. Transitions mark a change of focus between phases or between the ongoing operation and execution of a branch or sequel.¹⁵⁴

Protracted Popular War (Insurgent Approach) - Protracted conflicts favor insurgents, and no approach makes better use of that asymmetry than the protracted popular war. The Chinese Communists

¹⁵⁰ Army, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations*, 132.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 132.

¹⁵² Ibid., 134.

¹⁵³ Army, *Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency*, 1-5.

¹⁵⁴ Army, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations*, 136-137.

used this approach to conquer China after World War II. The North Vietnamese and Algerians adapted it to fit their respective situations. In addition, some Al Qaeda leaders suggest it in their writings today. This approach is complex; few contemporary insurgent movements apply its full program, although many apply parts of it. It is, therefore, of more than just historical interest (FM 3-24).¹⁵⁵

Risk - Risk is a potent catalyst that fuels opportunity. The willingness to incur risk is often the key to exposing enemy weaknesses that the enemy considers beyond friendly reach. Understanding risk requires calculated assessments coupled with boldness and imagination. Successful commanders assess and mitigate risk continuously throughout the operations process.¹⁵⁶

Simultaneity and Depth - Simultaneity and depth extend operations in time and space. Simultaneity has two components. Both depend on depth to attain lasting effects and maximum synergy. Simultaneous combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability tasks overwhelm enemy forces and their will to resist while setting the conditions for a lasting, stable peace. Simultaneous actions across the depth of the operational area place more demands on enemy forces than enemy forces can effectively respond to them.¹⁵⁷

Tempo - Tempo is the relative speed and rhythm of military operations over time with respect to the enemy.¹⁵⁸

Urban (Insurgent Approach) - Organizations like the Irish Republican Army, certain Latin American groups, and some Islamic extremist groups in Iraq have pursued an urban approach. This approach uses terrorist tactics in urban areas to accomplish the following: Sow disorder, Incite sectarian violence, Weaken the government, Intimidate the population, Kill government and opposition leaders. Fix and intimidate police and military forces, limiting their ability to respond to attacks, and create

¹⁵⁵ Army, *Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency*, 1-6.

¹⁵⁶ Army, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations*, 137.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 135.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 135.

government repression. Protracted urban terrorism waged by small, independent cells requires little or no popular support. It is difficult to counter. Historically, such activities have not generated much success without wider rural support. However, as societies have become more urbanized and insurgent networks more sophisticated, this approach has become more effective (FM 3-24).¹⁵⁹ (1-6)

¹⁵⁹ Army, *Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency*, 1-6.

APPENDIX B (Elements of Operational Art)

Figure B-1: 1868-1869 Cheyenne War Elements of Operational Art.

1868 Cheyenne War Elements of Operational Art		
	US ARMY COMMANDER	Native American Commander
End State and Conditions	Endstate: Tribes settled on reservations set by the treaty of Medicine Lodge; Villages destroyed; Hostile Indians demoralized; Dept of Missouri Forces Postured to provide wide area security The only remedy was to subjugate the savages immediately engaged in the forays by forcing the several tribes to settle down on the reservations set apart by the treaty of Medicine Lodge	Endstate: Tribes able to continue to live and hunt in their normal areas outside of reservations. The nomadic buffalo hunting lifestyle preserved. Not every major leader signed the Medicine Lodge Treaty. Additionally, Tribal Chiefs did not maintain complete control over all of the members of the tribe
Centers of Gravity	Cheyenne Warriors (Dog Soldiers)	None identified by adversary
Direct or Indirect Approach	Indirect Approach.	Direct approach with attacks against military forces occurring more often during the campaign as opposed to raids against settlers.
Decisive Points	Establishment of Camp Supply; Battle of Washita; Fort Cobb Key Leader Engagement between MG Custer and the Kiowa Chief Satanta; Establishment of Monument Creek Depot Establishment of Ft Sill; Capture of Comanche Village by Evans at the Battle of Soldier Springs	None identified
Lines of Operation	Three lines beginning from three separate posts (Fort Bascom, Fort Lyon, and Fort Dodge).	None identified
Operational Reach	Extended by establishing Camp Supply and Monument Creek depot to provide logistical support for the extended operation into Indian Territory	Range and mobility greatly limited during winter months due to the weakness of the ponies due to limited food and forage. Indian tribes tied to prominent hunting areas and water sources.
Tempo	LTG Sheridan maintained the pace of offensive operations after the success of the 7th Cavalry at Washita. He exploited the intelligence gained from the prisoners taken at Washita to aid the targeting effort to find, fix, and finish the other tribes along the Washita River.	None
Simultaneity	LTG Sheridan used simultaneous converging columns to maintain	None
Phasing and Transitions	Prep Phase (Supplies and additional troops) To get ready for a winter campaign of six months gave us much to do. The thing most needed was more men, so I asked for additional cavalry, and all that could be spared-seven troops of the Fifth Cavalry was sent to me. Believing this reinforcement insufficient, to supplement it I applied for a regiment of Kansas volunteers, which request being granted, the organization of the regiment was immediately begun at Topeka. It was necessary also to provide a large amount of transportation and accumulate quantities of stores, since the campaign probably would not end till spring. Another important matter was to secure competent guides for the different columns of troops, (Engagements aimed at destroying villages and supplies); Consolidation Phase (Opportunity for the Indians to settle on reservations)	None
Culmination	Culmination prevented by establishing supply depots in hostile territory to extend reach and prevent logistical culmination during a hard winter campaign.	The Cheyenne and Comanche's culminated after two primary villages were destroyed along with all of their supplies. Although, a few warring parties did move north of the Arkansas River to continue to fight (Hoig, 268)
Risk	Exposure of the force and animals to harsh plains winter. Mitigated the risk by extending the logistics and stockpiling supplies at the Forts and newly established supply depots. The opportunity was even greater since the Indians were most vulnerable during this period of harsh weather due to decreased mobility. The opportunity provided LTG Sheridan the ability to seize the initiative and maintain the initiative prior to the Spring and Summer when the Indians could regain their mobility.	The greatest risk was that taken by prominent Chiefs who sought peace. Black Kettle, the Cheyenne Chief, demonstrated this risk by losing support of some of his tribe as well as the devastating destruction at Washita shortly after Black Kettle sought peace at Fort Cobb.

Figure B-2: 1874-1875 Red River War Elements of Operational Art.

1874-75 Red River War Elements of Operational Art		
	US ARMY COMMANDER	Native American Commander
End State and Conditions	The objective of the Campaign was the removal of hostile Indians to established reservations to allow increased settlement by Americans from the east.	Endstate: Tribes able to continue to live and hunt in their normal areas outside of reservations.
Centers of Gravity	Comanche and Cheyenne Warriors	None identified by adversary
Direct or Indirect Approach	Indirect Approach. LTG Sheridan used an indirect approach to attack the enemy center of gravity which were the warriors. LTG Sheridan continued approach of using converging columns to locate and attack Indian villages just as he did in the 1868-1869 campaign.	Indirect approach - Cheyenne and Comanche tribes attempted to cut the US Army's lines of operations by attacking their supply trains and by continuous movement to extend the US lines of operations.
Decisive Points	Separation of Hostile and Friendly Indians, LTG Sheridan placed the military in control of enrolling and accounting for friendly Indians at two reservations (Ft Sill, led by LTC Davidson, and Darlington Indian Agency, led by LTC Neill). (Utley, 221) COL Miles offensive operations against the Cheyenne vicinity the Staked Plains to destroy Cheyenne villages. (Utley, 223); COL Mackenzies' offensive operations to destroy Comanche villages vicinity the red River and Palo Duro Canyon (Utley, 225-226) COL Miles offensive operations at Sappa Creek which defeated the remaining hold-outs of Cheyenne (Utley, 230)	None identified
Lines of Operation	Extended from 5 separate bases of operation. Only one subordinate commander, COL Mackenzie, took actions to build up a new base of operations to extend the reach and depth of his column. Launched 3 columns – COL Mackenzie (4th Cav) from the Rio grande to the headwaters of the Brazos (Mackenzie's Supply Camp) to operate North to the headwaters of the Red River to catch all Indians driven SW by COL Miles coming from Antelope Hills. The third column was coming from FT Sill to move up the Washita and drive to the same point all Indians who might be found on the river. A 4th column led by LTC Buell (11th INF) at the same post to advance up river and drive the Indians to MacKenzie to force the hostiles to the vicinity of COL MacKenzie.	None identified
Operational Reach	LTG Sheridan used Camp Supply and FT Sill, both established in the 1868-1869 campaign to extend his reach.	The Comanche and Cheyenne both had great range with the exception of the Winter months. However, a severe drought on the Southern Plains significantly limited their range during the LTG Sheridan's campaign. The drought coupled with the relentless tempo of the US Army's offensive operations exhausted the Indians and forced many to surrender at the onset of Winter.
Tempo	LTG Sheridan's columns maintained almost constant pressure on the Indians for over ten months with the exception of two operational pauses taken by COL Miles and LTC Davidson due to logistical problems. LTG Sheridan was focused at keeping the Indians on the move to exhaust them and their supplies (Hutton, 249)	None
Simultaneity	LTG Sheridan employed five converging Columns to encircle the hostile tribes in the Area of Operations with each column except Col Mackenzie's beginning operations in August, 1874.	None
Phasing and Transitions	No Phases or transitions were specified in an order but LTG Sheridan's troops actions conducted in Three distinct Phases. First was the Population Control Phase where Indians were enrolled at one of two reservations to differentiate between hostile and friendly Indians. LTG Sheridan's forces transitioned to offensive operations to defeat the remaining hostile Indians and destroy their villages. The third Phase occurred once offensive operations were complete. This phase was the punishment phase to try key leaders.	None
Culmination	Culmination was not prevented for two separate operations due to inadequate logistics preparation for COL Miles and LTC Davidson.	Once each major tribes villages and supplies were destroyed the tribe culminated.
Risk	LTG Sheridan was concerned with the risk of how to handle the hostile Indians once they surrendered and were put under agency control under the Bureau of Indian Affairs on the reservations. To mitigate this risk Sheridan developed a plan to punish the key leaders	Two Cheyenne leaders (Bull Elk and Medicine Arrows) risked continued fighting with the US Army and did not surrender. They moved their bands North to join the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne.

Figure B-3: 1876 Centennial Campaign Elements of Operational Art.

1876 Centennial Campaign Elements of Operational Art		
	US ARMY COMMANDER	Native American Commander
End State and Conditions	Compel the Sioux Indians and Northern Cheyenne to return to the Indian Reservations and cede the Black Hills territory.	Maintain control of the unceded territory and the right of hunt in the areas obligated under the Ft Laramie treaty.
Centers of Gravity	Sioux Warriors	None identified by adversary
Direct or Indirect Approach	Indirect Approach. LTG Sheridan used an indirect approach to attack the enemy center of gravity which were the warriors. The Sioux maintained a degree of mobility that the US Army could not contend with. LTG Sheridan attempted another Winter Campaign but logistics did not support the operation. LTG Sheridan still sought out the Villages of the Sioux and Cheyenne.	Direct approach - The hostile Indians led by Sitting Bull stood and fought two significant defensive actions at Rosebud and Little Big Horn IOT preserve their way of life.
Decisive Points	Establishment of Powder River Depot; Scouting and identification of Sioux Village; Battle of the Rosebude; Little Big Horn	None identified
Lines of Operation	Three lines beginning from three separate posts (Fort Ellis, Fort Abraham Lincoln, and Fort Fetterman/Dodge).	None identified
Operational Reach	Operational reach for the main column from Abraham Lincoln was extended by the Yellowstone River and the use of river boats to supply the column.	None
Tempo	LTG Sheridan's subordinate commanders did not maintain the pace of offensive operations and were slow to act after LTC Reynolds failure on the Powder River.	None
Simultaneity	LTG Sheridan used simultaneous converging columns to maintain pressure on Indian tribes and to limit the advantage of their increased mobility, however the slow start of the other two columns in May compared to March did not compel continuous movement by the Sioux and Cheyenne.	None
Phasing and Transitions	No distinct Phasing and transitions until after the operational culmination of two of the three columns.	None
Culmination	Two of three of LTG Sheridan's columns culminated. BG Crook culminated at Rosebud and BG Terry culminated at Little Big Horn.	Once the Buffalo Herds moved away and the combined villages were too large to sustain themselves by remaining together.
Risk	The primary risk that LTG Sheridan and his subordinate commanders did not acknowledge was the combining of forces of the Winter and Summer Roamers which put over 2,000 warriors together at one location. LTG Sheridan saw the large villages as opportunity to find and destroy the Indians. They did not believe the Indians would stay united or stand and fight a large force. They believed that any of the three independent columns was capable to defeat the hostile Indians.	Tactical victory from standing and fighting would lead to operational or strategic failure.

Figure B-4: 1876-1877 Sioux Campaign Elements of Operational Art.

1876-1877 Sioux Campaign Elements of Operational Art		
	US ARMY COMMANDER	Native American Commander
End State and Conditions	Compel the Sioux Indians and Northern Cheyenne to return to the Indian Reservations and cede the Black Hills territory.	Endstate: Tribes able to continue to live and hunt in their normal areas outside of reservations. The nomadic buffalo hunting lifestyle preserved. Maintain control of the unceded territory and the right of hunt in the areas obligated under the Ft Larami treaty.
Centers of Gravity	Sioux and Cheyenne Warriors	None identified by adversary
Direct or Indirect Approach	Indirect Approach.	Indirect Approach - The Sioux and Northern Cheyenne did not remain unified beyond August of 1876. They mainly sought to avoid contact with the US Army and only engaged when forced to fight.
Decisive Points	Disarmament of Sioux at the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail Agencies to prevent the "non-hostile" Indians from providing material support to the remaining hostile bands; Destruction of Northern Cheyenne Camp of 1500 hostiles led by Dull Knife; Establishment of Cantonment Reno by BG Crook. Transfer of 1,000 Northern Cheyenne south to Indian Territory to consolidate with the other defeated Cheyenne tribes; Establishment of the Tongue River Cantonment by COL Miles.	None identified
Lines of Operation	Three lines beginning from three separate posts (Fort Peck and then the Tongue River Cantonment, Fort Abraham Lincoln, and Fort Fetterman and then the Powder River Cantonment COL Miles and BG Crook both used diplomacy and key leader engagements to convince the Indians to surrender and to pursue reconciliation.	None identified
Operational Reach	Operational reach was extended by the establishment of the two major cantonments on the Tongue and Powder Rivers.	Range and mobility greatly limited during winter months due to the weakness of the ponies due to limited food and forage. Indian tribes tied to prominent hunting areas and water sources.
Tempo	By placing forces in the Sioux hunting grounds LTG Sheridan could maintain an offensive tempo that would harass the Indians and starve them onto the reservations. The Army would control the reservations and disarm and punish the hostile tribes.	None
Simultaneity	LTG Sheridan used simultaneous operations while abandoning the converging columns. The operations were directed at the three major groups of Sioux and Northern Cheyenne, led by Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and Dull Knife. The operations of MacKenzie and especially Miles forced continuous movement by the Sioux and Cheyenne.	None
Phasing and Transitions	The overall campaign had three distinct Phases: Prep Phase, Control Phase, Offensive Phase. Transfer of personnel - moved COL Mackenzie (6 Cos of the 4th Cav) from FT Sill in August.	None
Culmination	Culmination prevented by establishing two major cantonments on the Tongue and Powder Rivers in hostile territory to extend reach and prevent logistical culmination during a hard winter campaigns and controlling the reservations and agencies.	Once the Buffalo Herds moved away and the combined villages were too large to sustain themselves by remaining together. Sustained winter offensive forced the Indians to seek terms or face starvation. With their unity broken most of the tribes began to surrender.
Risk	The primary risk that LTG Sheridan took was splitting his force and allowing subordinates to continue offensive operations in the face of numerical disadvantage after what happened to LTC Custer. LTG Sheridan did not see Sitting Bull as a major threat and believed the Indians would not be able to maintain the alliance.	Two leaders took the risk of continuing to fight: Sitting Bull and Lame Deer.

APPENDIX C (Elements of COIN Analysis)

Figure C-1. COIN Variables.

COIN Elements Comparison					
8 Historical Principles for COIN / 5 Contemporary COIN Imperatives / 6 Overarching Requirements for Successful COIN / 2 of 5 LLOs	Key Tasks	1868 Campaign	1874 Red River Campaign	1876 Centennial Campaign	1876-77 Sioux Campaign
Legitimacy		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Unity of Effort		No	Yes	No	Yes
Primacy of Political Factors		No	No	No	No
Understand the Environment		Yes	No	No	Yes
Intelligence Driven Operations		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Isolate Insurgents from Cause and Support		Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Security under the RoL		No	Yes	No	No
Long-term Commitment		No	No	No	No
Manage Information Expectations		No	No	No	No
Use Appropriate Level of Force		No	No	N/A	N/A
Learn and Adapt		Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Empower the Lowest Levels		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support the Host Nation		N/A	N/a	N/A	N/A
Attack the Insurgent Strategy and Establish HN Legitimacy		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Establish control of the operational area and secure the population		Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Operate from areas of strength, control population centers, secure government support base		Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Regain control of insurgent areas, expand ares to support the population, and eliminate insurgent control of regions		N/A	Yes	No	Yes
Employ IO to influence the population		No	No	No	Yes
Combat Operations / Civil Security Operations	Secure the populace	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	Separate insurgency from the populace	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	Secure borders / isolate insurgency	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	Integrate HN forces / transition responsibility	N/A	No	Yes	Yes
HN Security Forces	Identify and recruit leaders	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes
	Identify and recruit members	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
	Establish training infrastructure	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Develop organizational infrastructure	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Employ HN forces w/ COIN forces	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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